

School Leadership: Principals'
Experiences of Change and Reward

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ABSTRACT

This study explores principals' experiences of school leadership. Through synthesis of varying definitions of leadership, the conceptualisation of the three foci of leadership namely, "person, practice and context" offers an initial organisational framework for this study. The democratic South Africa provides the context of change which is operationalised around issues of the pass rate, desegregation and democratic school governance. The existing landscape of leadership theory is then grafted with the South African context of change to set up the *theoretical framing* of this study.

This study is positioned differently from dominant leadership studies in that the leader (principal) is fore-grounded rather than the "practice" of leadership. An interpretive paradigm is invoked to facilitate the acknowledgement, activation and inter-woveness of the researcher's dual positioning as researcher and as school principal. This ambivalent positioning creates a *methodological* paradox that simultaneously privileges and imprisons the production of knowledge. Coherent with the methodological choice of *narrative methodologies*, an award winning literary play "Copenhagen" is used as a creative representational device. This play highlights issues of "personal, political, moral and scientific" challenges which become key pivotal points with which to connect all the chapters of this study.

Six principals of previously disadvantaged schools, facing similar challenges of leadership participate in this study. Narrative methodologies guides both the *data production* and *data analysis* strategies. It also intentionally focuses on "personal, political and moral" challenges. Lengthy interviews produce richly detailed co-constructed mindscapes of leadership. The voices of principals and their stories are represented as individualised "reconstructed career narratives". These provide complex, themed and descriptive understandings of leadership at the first level. At the second level, the researcher's voice becomes dominant while meshing together data, theory and first level analysis to provide cross-case analysis providing deeper insights into experiences of school leadership. These insights challenge the dominant theoretical landscape of leadership.

The main finding of this study suggests that principals "personal" experiences re-define relationships between key components of the context of change and in this way determine understandings of leadership. Principals consider the pass rate to be most important at a systemic level. However, their "personal/biographic" experiences with regard to "**validation**" and "professional **experience**" mediate that consideration and influence particular understandings of leadership. Similarly, principals' "personal" experiences together with institutional **histories** play a significant role in understanding leadership in relation to issues of desegregation (**geography**). Principals' "personal" experiences also determine how democratic school governance is understood with regard to **accountability**, **consultation** and **agenda** constructions. Finally, leadership is understood to be intricately linked to the concept of reward. The "scientific" construct of a Trefoil knot is used to develop an explanatory model and posit the basis of a "*Relational Reward Theory*" of understanding leadership. The thesis concludes with a discussion of the implications of pushing back contextual, methodological and theoretical boundaries in understanding school leadership.

DISCLAIMER

I hereby declare that this thesis is my original work. It has not been submitted before to any other institution for assessment purposes.

I have acknowledged all sources used in this thesis and I have cited these sources in the reference list.

.....

Researcher: Shabier Omar

.....

Promoter: Professor Michael Samuel

DEDICATION

To the children and young adults that
I have had the privilege of teaching.

Through your eyes, I (re)learnt
to see the world differently.

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NOTES ON TERMINOLOGY AND ABBREVIATIONS

The Educational policies of the new South Africa classified the stakeholders in education using slightly different terminology from that of the past. These new terms are used consistently in all correspondence from the Department of Education. Bearing this in mind, I too adopt the same classification as a way of pointing to the context of this study. In addition, I have regularly used certain “labels”, acronyms and abbreviations in this study. All of these are explained below:

1. **Educator.** This refers to teachers of all grades. I use “educator” generically to refer to all teachers.
2. **Level One Educator.** This is a teacher who does not hold any school promotion post.
3. **Head of Department.** This is often, but not always a Level two educator. This educator holds a promotion post and is part of the management structure in schools.
4. **School Management Team (SMT).** This comprises the principal, Heads of Departments and usually a level one representative / teacher union representative.
5. **Non-educator.** This refers to school personnel other than the teaching staff. For example, the school secretary is a non-educator.
6. **Learner.** This refers to the child/young adult in school. Previously, this was referred to as “pupil”.
7. **School Governing Body (SGB).** This is a statutory committee comprising representatives of different stakeholders (parents, Department of Education, Educators, non-educators and learners).
8. **Representative Council of Learners (RCL).** This refers to the democratically elected Council made up of representatives of each of the grades at a school.
9. **Senior Educational Manager (SEM).** This is the immediate accounting of the school principal. Typically a SEM will have a cluster of schools under his/her administrative control.
10. **Circuit.** This refers to an arbitrarily demarcated area which contains a cluster of schools in close proximity that are administratively controlled by a single SEM.
11. **Matric.** This is part of the “old” terminology that refers to the current Grade twelve classes. It is the final year for secondary school learners.
12. **Post Provisioning Norm (PPN).** This refers to a statistical calculation based on the total number of learners at a school. Among other things, this calculation determines the amount of State paid educators, the amount of State funding, and the curriculum choices at a school.
13. **Outcomes-Based Education (OBE).** This refers to the changed teaching approach that underpins South Africa’s revised National Curriculum.
14. **Department.** I use this term to refer to the Department of Education. This is a general term that includes both the Provincial and National Departments of Education.

15. **Staff.** I use this term to refer to all the educators (including educators who are management members)

Notes: Labelling of Race and Classification of schools

I use the terms “African, White, Coloured and Indian” to refer to the different race groups. While it is tempting to see all citizens as part of the “rainbow nation”, I maintain the racial labels not to entrench racial divisions, but to acknowledge the specifics of each group and to address how our racialised past has and is, influencing experiences of leadership.

Public schools prior to 1994 have three separate origins based on the racially divided Houses of the Tricameral Parliament of South Africa before transition:

HoD: House of Delegates for Indians

HoR: House of Representatives for Coloureds

HoA: House of Assembly for Whites. During the transition period, these schools were referred to as Model C schools.

African learners not living in homelands were under the control of the Department of Education and Training (**DET**)

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PROLOGUE

In 1998, Michael Frayn's satirical play "Copenhagen" opened in London. This play won the Tony Award¹ for best play in 2000 and it is ostensibly about a factual meeting between two famous physicists²- a half-Jewish Dane³ called Niels Bohr and a German⁴ called Werner Heisenberg during the Second World War. The play is fictional and is set in contemporary times with the "spirits" of the now long dead physicists meeting to discuss their previous meeting held in Copenhagen in September 1941. At issue are the recollections of both physicists, especially since they cannot agree on the actual events of that fateful meeting. Why was this meeting so important? Heisenberg was heading the German quest to develop the first atomic bomb at the time. Bohr was under scrutiny from the Nazis in occupied Denmark.

The "Copenhagen meeting" sets the stage for framing several questions: Why did Heisenberg go to Copenhagen to seek a meeting with Bohr? What happened to the once-close relationship between the two men who now find themselves on opposite sides of a World War? How did World politics influence the war and subsequently influence the development of the atomic bomb? Could the two men ever work together again, especially in the field of nuclear physics? Heisenberg would later be investigated by the Nazis as his work was considered to be too much in the "Jewish" style. How will this influence the relationship between the men?

The Copenhagen play is essentially about friendships, politics and science within an ethical/ moral conundrum. To illustrate this, I present the collaboration between Heisenberg and Bohr, related scientific developments and the challenges that these present along a timeline in Table 1.

¹ The Tony Award is a prestigious award bestowed annually by the American Theatre Wing since 1947

² Heisenberg (1901-1976). Nobel Prize winner in 1932 who led the German atomic bomb team at the time
Bohr (1885- 1962). Nobel Prize winner in 1922 and initial mentor of Heisenberg

³ Denmark was a small Nazi-occupied State at the time

⁴ Germany was a large World super-power poised for victory in World War 2 at the time

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Time-line	Bohr / Heisenberg: Collaborations and Achievements	Related Scientific Developments	Related Political Developments	Challenges Presented
1895		Discovery of the electron		Scientific challenges
1922	Heisenberg(student) meets Bohr (mentor) for the first time. Relationship develops into friendship. Bohr wins Nobel Prize for Physics for developing the theory of Complementarity			Personal challenges: Friendship and academic rivalry set against scientific developments.
1924-1927	Bohr and Heisenberg begin collaboration (as colleagues) in Quantum theory in Copenhagen. (Theory for the physics of sub-atomic particles)			
1925	Heisenberg considered as one of the founding members of Quantum Mechanics	Advances in Quantum Mechanics – first version called matrix mechanics		
(1927-1941)	Heisenberg appointed as professor to University of Leipzig (Germany)			
1927	Heisenberg discovers Uncertainty Principle			
1928	Bohr combines his Complementarity Theory with Heisenberg's Uncertainty Principle to make the basis of a consistent theory. Produces Copenhagen Interpretation of Quantum Mechanics.			
1932	Heisenberg wins Nobel Prize for Physics			
1935	Heisenberg's promotion blocked on the grounds that it is in the "Jewish style"			
1939		Advances in Nuclear Fission– implications for developing atomic bomb		
(1939-1945)	Heisenberg is German and Head of the Nazi regime's project to harness atomic energy. Bohr is half-Jewish and lives in Nazi- occupied Denmark		World War 2	
1940		Critical mass calculations. First nuclear reactor produced by Russia		
1941	Heisenberg appointed as Director of Kaiser Wilhelm Institute for Physics in Berlin September: Heisenberg meets Bohr in Copenhagen		December: Japanese attack Pearl Harbour. Germany declares war on America	Moral challenges: <i>What was the purpose of Heisenberg's visit to Bohr?</i>
1945		First atomic bomb produced	America unleashes first atomic bomb over Hiroshima	

Table 1. Timelines: The Copenhagen Challenges

What purpose does raising the challenges of the Copenhagen play have for this study? While the play may be about many things, the author of the play makes a critical point:

“The heart of Copenhagen is how we know why people do what they do and even how one knows what one does oneself” (Frayn, 2002)

Adopting Frayn's position, I ask:

“How do we know why principals do what they do and how will I know why I do what I do?”

A common answer to the above question is “***what gets rewarded gets done***”. Is this necessarily true for school principals and the leadership challenges that they face? In this study, I explore the experiences of school principals using the challenges highlighted by the Copenhagen play namely: personal, scientific, political and moral challenges (as represented in Table 1). I conclude this study by commenting on these challenges in the Epilogue.

CHAPTER 1

RATIONALE

“Exactly where you go as you ramble around is of course completely determined by your genes and the various physical forces acting on you. But it’s also completely determined by your own entirely inscrutable whims from one moment to the next. So we can’t completely understand your behaviour without seeing it both ways at once, and that’s impossible” (Fraysn, 1998, pp. 69-70).

1. Introductory Remarks

This study arises out of my scholarly endeavour to explore notions of school leadership within the context of the new South Africa. As a school principal myself, I begin this dissertation presenting my professional story in order to provide the background and contextualise but also more importantly, to problematise the need for this study. In keeping with the narrative approach adopted for this study, I focus on the “personal” challenges raised by the Copenhagen play in the Prologue section. My personal story further points to the range of considerations that need to be taken during the framing of the critical question. Included in this consideration is the potential of the critical question to respond to the issue of “rewards” in relation to principals’ experiences of leadership. After I formulate the critical question, I provide an overview of all the chapters as a means of orientation to the dissertation as a whole.

2. Rationale: My Professional Story (Narrative)

Based on the assertion that research has the potential of expanding theoretical boundaries in the field of school leadership, I use my “professional” story as research to develop the critical question for this study. My professional story is based on my journey

as a school principal in the new⁵ South Africa. In this story, I do not attempt to generalise about all principals in this country and nor do I engage in exploring the possibilities of different experiences of principals. In order to present my experiences as a narrative, I use Lather's principle of the "practice of self-reflexivity" as a guide to writing my professional story (Lather, 1991, pp. 79-82). This choice enables me to use "reflexivity" and "critique" of my "social experiences" to write a story in which I embed critical issues to develop the basis for this study.

I was appointed to a secondary, public, school as principal in an urban area in 2000. Given the fact that this was six years into democracy, my expectation was that the new political dispensation would have prioritised the aspirations of those who were marginalised in the apartheid era. This was the political mandate on which the ruling party was unanimously elected. While there is an unsettled debate about the validity of claims of marginalisation by the different racial groups, my personal experiences as an Indian growing up in the apartheid era in South Africa were clear indicators that serious issues of disenfranchisement existed. This disenfranchisement led to large disparities between the racial groups, especially in the field of education. As an adult, I looked forward to the new political dispensation and its promise of addressing the past disparities. My appointment as a school principal also presented me with an opportunity to redress such disparities. This romanticised view of seeing myself as some kind of saviour was quickly challenged by the instability brought about by the rapid and endless changes, and revisions of policies, procedures and structures in education. All of these changes challenged me on both personal and professional levels. My past experiences did not even offer me relevant insights into the state of flux that characterised education policies. While this was the case, the challenges that I faced also presented unique opportunities for me to learn and to grow. My challenge was not about embracing the new political dispensation but, instead, it was about the resulting chaotic school environment that I started to experience. These events represented transformation⁶ and my inability to cope with its rapid and unsettling pace. Soon my understandings of school leadership and governance were challenged. Almost on a daily basis, I had to

⁵ Post apartheid South Africa

⁶ In Chapter 2, I discuss the changes to Education in Post-Apartheid South Africa in more detail

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make critical decisions that were either unfamiliar to me, or for which I never received any form of formal training. Lack of support from the Department of Education, whose role seemed to be that of simply formulating promotional material and policy statements, further compounded my difficulties. An academic term hardly ended without a new, revised, or even imported policy introduction. This meant principals had to lead in the process of implementing changing policies, all of which meant attendance to endless meetings. While the Department of Education itself seemed to be struggling with the demands of an overhauled and radically changed education system, I was struggling to resolve the challenges that broader systemic changes in the education system brought to my school. All of these experiences inevitably problematised the concept of leadership for me. I was socialised with the embedded and almost naive belief that a principal ought to have solutions to all types of leadership challenges at school. The destabilisation of this narrow understanding often left me paralysed with fear when faced with some of the new leadership challenges. At the same time, my belief was that the principal, more than anyone else at school, always makes the right decisions. It is such unrealistic expectations that caused a sense of uneasiness about my role.

All of these experiences are in spite of the fact that I was an educator for over twenty years. This was mainly due to my experiences of school leadership that had little to do with democracy. The complex segregation mechanisms of the apartheid government ensured that I effectively remained separated from other race groups. Under these circumstances, the particular type of autocratic school governance in “Indian” schools represented the norm for me. The context did not allow training in democratic governance philosophy. For most of my teaching career, my interaction was limited to Indian learners and educators. As a consequence of this, I was unprepared to deal with teaching learners (as educator) and leading educators (as principal) of other race groups. As democratic changes in education received legal approval after 1994, I found that the change of mindsets (including mine) proved to be slow and difficult. Thus, in the context of change, I had to take decisions at school against a backdrop of unfamiliar territory. Under the context of uncertainty, it was possible to take wrong decisions. This could potentially harm the lives of the over one thousand and one hundred learners that were at my school. My unease about my leadership role began to be even more complex.

As I was going through these dilemmas, I got involved with academic studies. I felt honoured to be invited by the University of KwaZulu-Natal to be part of a research team whose endeavour was to explore “inclusion and exclusion” of learners in South Africa (INEXSA)⁷. This was part of a larger international research project funded by the Department for International Development (DFID) in the United Kingdom. Involvement in this research project enabled and facilitated access to other schools, opportunities to engage in research design and data collection, and the opportunity to present some of the research findings at an educational conference. Participation in these academic endeavours broadened my conceptualisation and understanding of theoretical insights about education and school leadership. Exposure to educational challenges in different countries and in different types of schools furthermore, “opened” my eyes to looking beyond my school. The exclusion of learners, for instance, is a phenomenon that was not just happening in my school. I began to reflect more deeply about my leadership practice. I was not convinced that it was always in the best interest of the education of the child. The real question for my study though is: “what was in the best interest of the child?” Questions and doubts filled my head. Am I doing the right thing or am I doing “things right”? Such questions further exposed limits in my understanding of school leadership.

In spite of these perplexing developments, my experiences as a school principal brought about a strange and peculiar sense of personal gratification. It was gratifying, for instance, to see the beginning of new opportunities, to be able to teach children of other races, and to teach with educators from various race groups. The school began to reflect the racial demographics of the larger South African society. I was presented with an opportunity to make a difference in the new South Africa and to practically contribute to the education of African learners, a racial group that experienced worst forms of oppression and discrimination. Fulfilling as these opportunities may be, they had to be negotiated within the reality of intense frustration.

⁷ Inclusion and Exclusion in South Africa (INEXSA)

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The main source of frustration came from what I saw as “mixed messages” from the Department of Education. On the one hand, the Constitution of the Country and National Educational policies, particularly the South African School’s Act (Department of Education, 1996) presented the transformation of schools as a priority⁸. On the other hand, the local education governance structures (Circuit office)⁹ responsible for the administration of localised clusters of schools mounted incredible pressure to maintain a high grade twelve pass rate. The only way to achieve this was through “micromanaging” my school in respect of the grade 12 pass rates only. This localised emphasis on standards facilitated the maintenance of high pass rates and schools succeeded in this and were rewarded by Provincial education structures. My concern though was that there was no reward for pushing the National Government’s transformation agenda with regard to school de-racialisation and desegregation. This agenda included the admission of African learners (typically from under-resourced rural and township schools) to better resourced schools that were producing high pass rates¹⁰. This agenda caused an obvious tension: a risk to the pass rate as most of the disadvantaged learners had a history of poor schooling, through no fault of their own. In my new appointment as principal to a school where the pass rate had dropped considerably, I quickly came to understand that the price of improving the pass rate would result in less risk taking thereby addressing the tension. This meant that the transformation/desegregation agenda would have to be sacrificed. While I was aware that other schools were fiercely protective of their high pass rates, I make no claim concerning how this was achieved. This is *my* professional story. I use my specific experiences (not those of others) to highlight issues of my own experiences of school leadership and use this to develop the rationale for this study.

My school is located in an urban, administratively demarcated region called eThekweni¹¹. This region boasts the highest grade twelve pass rates in the Province of KwaZulu-Natal¹². In terms of the history of schools in this region, this was not a surprise. Most of the schools in this region were former Model C schools and exclusive

⁸ The development of education policy is detailed in Table 2 (Chapter 2)

⁹ A local education administrative office with a number of Senior Education Officers (SEM’s) each of whom are responsible for supervising the administration of a cluster of schools

¹⁰ These schools were well resourced urban schools, to which African learners were denied access

¹¹ eThekweni – an urban, centralised geographical region

¹² One of nine provinces in South Africa

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private schools that set very high school fees. The high grade twelve pass rate of the schools in this circuit was well publicised as league tables in the local newspapers. These league tables had historically been seen as a very effective indicator of school success and the eager public awaited this publication each year. The media and the public had come to understand that the schools in the eThekweni region were all “excellent” schools. The eThekweni school administrators and principals took ownership of this achievement and protecting the high pass rate became a high priority. This together with the Department’s lavish Annual Awards ceremonies celebrating the high pass rates as school success, enhanced principals’ and administrators’ reputations. The publication of league tables also played an important role in the desegregation of schools. The high pass rates in these schools attracted many learners, especially African learners from rural and surrounding areas. Protected by the Constitution of the country and emboldened by the South African Schools Act, learners started to demand admissions at schools in the eThekweni region. This demand for admission was keenly felt by all the schools in this region. My school (prior to my appointment), had already decided to promote the admission of learners of all races in the early days of transformation, while other schools adopted different strategies to address the increased demand for admission from African learners.

The obvious question concerning my school’s decision is: Why was desegregation promoted at a time when it was not common practice? Was it due to the need to comply with new legislation? Was it due to a moral imperative to contribute to the education of previously disadvantaged learners? Was it a strategic decision in order to swell learner enrolment numbers at a time when such numbers dictated the job security of educators? Was it simply a case of increased demand from African learners for admission at the school? Whatever the reasons, the school’s racial composition in terms of learner demographics had changed from being exclusively Indian to being almost exclusively African. While the excitement of the transformational agenda was being embraced at the school, the school’s pass rate was beginning to decline. Six years into the new democracy, the school’s pass rate had dropped from a high of a hundred percent to a low of thirty four percent. The temptation to blame the declining pass rate on the desegregation agenda was great. But was this necessarily the case? The Department had

not given any recognition or support to this school for its desegregation agenda. This school was one of only two in the entire eThekweni region that had a pass rate of below fifty percent. The Department labelled such schools as dysfunctional and threatened them with closure (Berkhout, 2007). The local Indian community also started to view the school in a negative light and almost overnight stopped sending their children to this school. It is under these disheartening circumstances that my appointment was effected.

The obvious immediate goal for me was to improve the pass rate. The Department made it clear that it expected my first priority to be the improvement of the pass rate. I knew why the Department wanted this to become my main priority but I was unsure about why I also wanted this. What possible rewards could this have for me? I am certain that my reason went beyond the need just to “prove” myself as a “good” principal. I have struggled with the assumption that high pass rates meant school success. I had to concede however, that the pass rate had to improve in order to save the school from closure. Improving the pass rate thus became an internalised priority for me.

My new start became the implementation of more effective teaching and learning strategies, some of which included enlisting the help of subject-specialists¹³, instituting greater supervision of educators, implementing improved testing programmes, and organising staff-development programmes to promote academic and personal growth. These initiatives were soon complemented by the manipulation of the curriculum (ensuring that “difficult” subjects like mathematics and Afrikaans were replaced with “easier” subjects like Business Economics and isiZulu for African learners) and strategic gate-keeping mechanisms¹⁴ (ensuring a stringent criteria is used to promote learners from grade eleven into grade twelve) to ensure that the pass rate improved. Decisions to implement these strategies paid off. Within two years after their implementation, the pass rate improved significantly from thirty four to seventy two percent. This achievement suddenly transformed the school’s “pariah” status. I was hailed as a saviour and great leader, all of which was confirmed by my school’s success in securing an

¹³ These are specialists in specific academic fields (subjects / learning areas) from the Department of Education

¹⁴ Other types of “exclusionary” mechanisms are documented in the INEXSA report (Soudien & Sayed, 2004)

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award for excellence at the Annual Awards road show hosted by the Department of Education. My priority of “saving” the school had been “rewarded”, but I wondered about the cost of this reward. I tried to justify my actions by the fact that teaching and learning had improved and that learners had benefited from this. But a nagging thought remained: How about the learners who were excluded by my gate-keeping processes? This ethical dilemma spoilt the joy of receiving the award. I tried to justify the “sacrifice” of a few for the benefit of the majority. I tried to justify the “gate-keeping” because I knew that this is what other principals were also doing. But no matter how hard I tried, my attempts at justifying my actions brought me no consolation. I turned to the Department of Education for help: “surely they would be able to clarify these issues for me”, I thought to myself. I voiced my concerns about the pass rate being privileged as an indicator of school efficiency in this critical period of our country’s transformation. Disappointingly, no member of the Department of Education that I contacted, was interested. Some Department officials could not even understand what the problem was. I had dramatically improved the pass rate and, as a result, was regarded as a great principal, all of which was validated by the Department. What then was the problem? The problem with these attitudes was the simplistic view of the role of leadership with regard to the pass rate. No-one asked about the unique circumstances of my school that had led to the drop in its pass rate in the first place. The assumption was simply that our low pass rate meant that our school was a “bad” school. But I knew of several other reasons that impacted negatively on the pass rate. No Heads of Departments were appointed for five years at the school due to an impasse between the educator union and the fledgling school governance structures. This lack of academic leadership had a disastrous effect on the teaching and learning at the school. There was minimum support for the educators who, while struggling to teach a new and unfamiliar curriculum, had to contend with the challenges of teaching second language English learners. Did this mean that the school was “bad”? It was no wonder then that the recent accolades lauded on the school when its pass rate increased, brought little joy to me. Given these observations, the next question for me was: what had happened to my understanding of school leadership in the context of my experiences? While it was clear that improving the pass rate raised many issues of ethics to me personally, I began to wonder about the ethical considerations of every “leadership” decision that I had made. I questioned the rationale

for all actions and wondered if my decisions generally were motivated by the desire to comply with particular policy imperatives, self-aggrandisement, or for ethically and educationally sound reasons. I then began to write my thoughts about issues that concerned me. Critical reflection on these writings caused me to be intrigued about ways in which I came to understand several issues of leadership. I began to realise that my understandings of school leadership were complex and changing. I reflected consciously on my reasons for having particular understandings of leadership and ended up with more questions than answers. I started to wonder about the high pass rate of the other schools in the eThekweni region broadly. Out of my interaction with other school principals at our regular Principals Forum¹⁵ meetings, I realised that they had their own stories to tell. I wondered about how other principals were making sense of their leadership practices in this confusing time of change. My interest was not in the mechanics of the new dispensation but in the personal journeys of principals. I wanted to know about other principals' experiences of school leadership. More importantly, I wanted to understand whether principals came to understand leadership from their particular experiences while leading their schools during the tumultuous "context of change" that they experienced.

3. Critical Question

My professional story raises many complex issues of leadership. The main issues revolve around:

- political / democratic changes, in particular to the education system;
- the pass rate as an indicator of school success;
- increased demand for admission of African learners into urban schools.

Formulating a critical question that was broad enough to embrace the complexities of the above issues while simultaneously making it narrow enough to delimit the study for a doctoral study proved to be one of my biggest challenges. Numerous attempts at formulating the critical question differently, threatened to move the focus away from

¹⁵ A non-statutory association of public school principals within a particular circuit

principals' experiences and pull the study towards an array of different fields, such as policy-practice debates, political reform, social justice, school reform, school evaluation, school improvement, and psychological studies of leadership perceptions and conceptions. Ultimately, I refined the three issues of leaderships identified in my professional story (and stated above) and adopted them as key considerations in the framing of the critical question of this study. At the outset I knew that this would present challenges to the way in which “experience”, “context” and “leadership” would be interpreted. However, since I wanted the principals to be the unit of analysis, my challenge was in exploring leadership “as-told” by the principals. Therefore, in the critical question, I focussed on principals and *intentionally* framed the issues of “leadership” and of “change” as broadly as possible.

The critical question thus is:

“What are principals’ experiences of school leadership in the context of change in South Africa?”

The broad framing of the critical question includes the possibilities of principals' experiences being different to my own. It also allows the literature review (rather than my experiences) to determine conceptions of leadership that are relevant to this study. This critical question further allows the literature review to problematise and set up the need for the study based on how the “context of change” and “theories of leadership” are defined, understood, delimited, and theorised in the context of this study.

By answering the critical question of this study, I hope to add to the knowledge base of understanding leadership and “maybe I will even understand myself.”¹⁶

I expand the rationale and problematise the need for this study in the literature reviews called “literary” stories. These stories explore both systemic educational changes (Chapter 2) and theoretical landscapes of school leadership (Chapter 3). Through the

¹⁶ Adapted from Frayn (1998, p.53) “Maybe you’ll even understand yourself”

arguments developed in the “literary” stories, I demonstrate the need for this study and also develop a relevant theoretical and analytical framework for it. I conclude the rest of this chapter by providing an orientation to each of the chapters in this dissertation. Although the Prologue and Chapter One have been completed, I include an orientation to these in order to present a more holistic view of all the components of this dissertation.

4. Overview: Orientation to the Chapters

[Prologue]

In the Prologue, the critique of Michael Frayn’s play “Copenhagen” raised issues of personal, scientific, political and moral challenges¹⁷. The heart of the play is aimed at understanding why people do what they do amidst these challenges. The use of this play set up this study so that each of “Copenhagen” challenges could be integrated into the thesis in order to better understand “why principals do what they do”.

[Chapter 1]

Using the principles of critique and reflexivity, I developed the rationale for this study using my professional story. This story focussed on “personal” challenges and integrated my dual position as both school principal and researcher. The experiences embedded within this dual positioning and within in the context of the new South Africa provided the background, contextualised the study and problematised the need for this study. After careful consideration of the issues raised by “personal” experiences of leadership and the need to do this study, I formulated the critical question.

Chapter 2

In this study, the literature review extends over three chapters, each highlighting one of the three challenges of the Copenhagen play. In this chapter, I highlight “political”

¹⁷ These challenges form the organising framework based on the Copenhagen for this study. In this orientation to the chapters, the Copenhagen challenges are highlighted in each chapter to demonstrate their consistent use throughout this study

challenges to address the contextual framing of the study. South Africa experienced unprecedented political changes in the last decade. The first challenge is to explore what these “changes” mean in the context of this study. In this chapter I also discuss the “context of change” as it relates to systemic changes and the implications that this has for the study. This includes the effect of global changes and its effect on South African systemic issues relating to education such as political changes, educational policy changes and the resultant changes in the education systems. From the review of systemic changes, I crystallise key components at this **contextual** level to develop the first part of the theoretical framing of this study. These key components are “Pass Rate”, “Desegregation” and “Democratic School Governance”. I explain in detail what these components mean and what their relevance to this study is.

Chapter 3

In this chapter I continue with the literature review on the “context of change” but focus on the theoretical landscape of change, school leadership and rewards. Throughout this focus, I highlight challenges of “**morality**” and seek to understand the **theoretical** underpinnings of the leadership articulations. Within the theoretical continuum of change theory, I concentrate on three constructs, namely: power, culture, and resistance to change as they relate to field of school leadership. Thereafter, through the review of leadership theories, I explore traditional leadership role of principals, theories of leadership in general, and theories of school leadership in particular, in relation to the critical question. I define what I mean by “rewards” and enter into the debates around the internal/ external classification of rewards and the role of rewards in educational systems. I also extend the theorisation of rewards to include the influences of learning theories and educational frameworks governing school leadership on rewards.

I then bring the (earlier) theoretical continuum of change theory into dialogue with the review of leadership theories and thereby develop the theoretical framing relevant to this literature. Finally, I integrate this part of the theoretical framing with the contextual framing from Chapter 2 to develop a coherent framework through which to develop this thesis.

Chapter 4

In this chapter I discuss the research methodology of this study. I highlight “personal” challenges by a methodological choice that focuses on individual biographies. The aim of the critical question is to explore principals’ experiences of school leadership in the context of change. I use this “exploratory” aim to locate this qualitative study firmly in the **interpretive paradigm** of social science research and to choose a “narrative approach” as the methodological choice for this study. This chapter is divided into two main sections. In the first section I theorise the implications of using narrative methodology as data production and data analysis strategies (theory). In particular, this section explains how the theoretical, conceptual and analytical frameworks were developed and considered in this study. In the second part I discuss how the theorising of the methodology was implemented in this study (practice).

Chapter 5

Each principal in this study has his/her own story to tell. In this chapter, I highlight the “personal” challenges of principals. Within these stories, challenges of “politics” and of “morality” become focal points. Principals’ stories are *reconstructed* from several interviews and from participants checking of the stories. These stories revolve around the principals’ *careers*. Using a grounded approach, I develop an organising framework for the stories, representing nine key constructs to present the data as a *narrative* for each principal. Therefore, in this chapter, principals’ stories are represented as “*reconstructed career narratives*”. The way in which the stories are written is deliberate, with more attention being given to staying “true” to the data rather than to issues of language and grammar. This narrative analysis represents descriptive experiences and understandings of school leadership.

Only three of the six reconstructed career narratives are represented as exemplary stories and they point to a range of leadership experiences. Coherent with the narrative methodology that I employ in this study, this chapter represents the “*narrative analysis*” of the data. In the co-production nature of this thesis, the representation of these stories

is also reflective of the deep respect for the participants' voices to be heard. Additionally, these stories serve as important reference points in the absence of the voluminous, coded, raw data sets.

Chapter 6

In this chapter I consider a deeper analysis of the data in relation to the critical question. In Chapter 5, "reconstructed career narratives" represented the narrative analysis and focussed on the first part (experiential leadership) of the critical question. In this chapter, I continue to highlight "personal" challenges. I also move from narrative analysis to analysis of narratives and focus on the second part of the critical question, namely: experiences of leadership in the *context of change* (pass rates, desegregation of schools and democratic school governance - as delimited in Chapter 2).

While it is evident that these three issues are not isolated, I separate them in order to present cross-case analysis to highlight each of these issues relating to the context of change. Throughout the analysis I am aware that my focus is not on the context of change in itself, but on principals' experiences of leadership within this context. I use the first part of the analytic framework (as discussed in Chapter 4) to focus on principals' experiences in the *context of change*. I integrate theory, data and analysis in a more comprehensive way to illuminate emerging trends. In the analysis, I use the concept of "congruents" to group principals who share sets of similarities. I explain these similarities in the analysis.

After the analysis, I synthesise the range of findings into the "main findings" of this study which attempt to answer the critical question. It addresses the questions of: "*what* are principals' experiences of leadership?" and "*how* do principals' understand leadership?" However, these findings form only the building blocks of theorising about "**WHY**" principals do what they do, given their understandings of leadership.

Chapter 7

In this chapter, I begin by explaining how existing theories of leadership cannot adequately explain the findings of this study. I use this to make a case for theorising “reward” as a construct with which to understand school leadership in a way that answers the critical question more comprehensively. From the challenges dictated by the Copenhagen play, the “personal, political and moral” challenges were highlighted in the analysis of the data (Chapters 5 and 6). In this chapter, I highlight the remaining challenge of “science” to theorise “rewards” in the understandings of school leadership.

I use the “scientific” construct of a “Trefoil knot” to develop an explanatory model to explain the concept of rewards in understanding leadership. The use of this “scientific” construct does not contradict the narrative approach, as it is not reductionist and it is used simply to extend the theorisation of the narrative findings. In this way, I develop a “Relational Reward” leadership explanatory model. I apply this model to contemporary leadership settings and evaluate the use of this model against the current thrust of globalisation. With this model, I re-visit the existing field of leadership theory and suggest how a “Relational Reward Theory of Understanding School Leadership” may be developed. Taking this further, I use the Relational Reward model to “talk-back” to the dominant leadership theories to understand how this model succeeds in pushing back contextual, methodological and theoretical boundaries, and to consider the implications of this on school leadership studies.

Epilogue

To conclude I reflect on the writing process during the thesis. I reflect on why I (as a person in general and as both researcher and principal in particular) produced a particular type of thesis at this time (in the context and history of South Africa). I do this by referring once more to the Copenhagen play and in particular to the “personal, scientific, political and moral challenges” that I raised in the Prologue.

5. Concluding Thoughts

In this chapter, I presented my “professional” story as a narrative with which to develop the rationale of this study. Using the principles of reflexivity and critique, I synthesised the rationale by outlining the issues that must be considered in the formulation of the critical question. Based on these considerations, I framed the critical question. In the rest of this chapter, I presented an overview of the chapters (including the Prologue and Epilogue) as an orientation to the dissertation. The literature review sections extend over the next three chapters.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

LITERARY STORY (Part 1): CONTEXT OF CHANGE IN SOUTH AFRICA

“...you have no absolutely determinate situation in the world, which among other things lays waste to the idea of causality, the whole foundation of scienceThey're either one thing or the other. They can't be both. We have to choose one way of seeing them or the other. But as soon as we do we can't know everything about them” (Frayn, 1998, pp. 68-69).

1. Introductory Remarks

The unprecedented educational changes that have seen the South African education system evolve from five different National Departments (based on race) to one in the last decade have had a huge impact on the conceptualisation and practical manifestation of school leadership. These changes were due to political changes and it is this “political” challenge of the Copenhagen play that I use to contextualise the study and delimit the literature on the “context of change”.

What “change” means in the context of this study and the impact of these changes on principals' experiences of leadership are addressed in this chapter. In this review of the literature, I also take into account the effect of global changes and its effect on South African systemic issues relating to education, such as political changes, educational policy changes, and the resultant changes in the education system. From the synthesis of the review, I identify key components of change that are relevant to this study. These key components problematise the need for this study and form the first part of the theoretical framing. I continue with the literature review in the next chapter (Chapter 3) but change the focus to the theoretical landscapes of change and of school leadership in order to further develop a coherent theoretical framework for this study.

2. Political Change - Globalisation and Democratic Governance

The catch phrase of the new South Africa was “democracy”. Given the fact that this remains an internationally sanctioned form of governance, it was expected that South Africa would draw from the dominant and publicly touted examples of “democracy” internationally. These examples are countries with capital, agency and dominant voice in the Anglo-phonetic world, namely the current world superpower (USA) and its chief allies (Canada, Britain and Australia). While it is true that these countries represent what could be regarded as “model” democratic governance, they cannot claim a contextual similarity with South Africa. This posed a challenge to the assimilation of “foreign” models in South Africa. However, the influence of global trends provided an answer. The technological advances of the nineties played an important role in making the world a smaller place. Information technology rather than physical distance became the main factor separating people. Advocates for globalisation claimed that globalisation became the mantra of a world suddenly comforted and confounded by the technological revolution (Hargreaves, 2003). The world was quickly characterised as a “knowledge society” (Hargreaves, 2003). Hargreaves asserts that a knowledge society is really a learning society and that this similarity across different contexts provides a justification for international trends to be adopted. Hargreaves and Fullan (1998, p. 43) identified one such international trend that was adopted in South Africa, namely: “education for citizenry for the common good is seen as the main tool for democracy in previously closed societies engaged in transformation to more openness”.

Transformation efforts as a result of a pursuit for democratic governance in South Africa resulted in a new way of leadership thinking. Democracy was extended to issues of school governance and invited the active participation of all stakeholders (Kruger, 2003). However, problems were soon experienced with the anticipated role of parents and, especially the role of African parents who were disenfranchised in the previous political dispensation. Some of the reasons for this include: the challenges of the home context; absence of collegiality between educators and parents; and the relevance of school work to parents (Singh, Mbokadi, & Msila, 2004). The change to democratic school governance was based on the principle of devolution of power and principals had

to come to a new understanding regarding their role. Prew (2007) uses politicised terminology to explain how South African principals had to change namely,

- From “Botha-esque”¹⁸ managers (typified by centralised, hierarchical, militaristic, authoritarian, rule-driven, and secretive)
- To Mandela/Mbeki-esque leaders (typified by inclusive, participatory, distributed leadership, but with strong, leadership approaches with a complementary focus on developing systems of accountability and responsibility) (Prew, 2007, p. 447).

The central question for my study is : How did South African principals make this change as leaders? More specifically, this question concerns strategies used by principals to negotiate the shift in thinking about “democratic school governance. Its core is that, besides the legal requirements of demonstrating compliance with the requirements of democratic school governance, are there any other reasons why principals ought to change? The critical question of this study aims to answer this question, among other questions relating to principals’ experiences of change. Participatory leadership was built into the community model of education in the new South Africa with parents sharing in school governance to a greater extent. However, simply legislating extended governance does not translate into real transformation. Soudien (2007) illustrates how some democratically elected school governing bodies work in their (racial / socio-economic) group’s best interests and continue to exclude “other” learners, and they do this within legal parameters. I use these arguments to point out that while South Africa has adopted the principles of dominant “western” education systems with particular emphasis on education as a tool for democracy, this has not been without drawbacks. These drawbacks must be seen against the background of how they influence principals’ experiences of leadership. I continue to raise questions about these drawbacks throughout the literature review.

3. Educational Change - The New Education System

The formal school system was dramatically overhauled primarily to deliver its political and educational mandates of redressing the inequalities of the past and providing

¹⁸ PW Botha, is a past South African President noted for his determined belief in apartheid policies

improved education to all South Africans. This was achieved with a two-phase schooling system: the General Education and Training (GET) phase (grade 1 - grade 9) of public schooling, and the Further Education and Training (FET) phase (grade 10 - grade 12). Among several major changes in the education system perhaps the change that was felt most acutely by all educators was the introduction of a radically different teaching and learning approach called “Outcomes Based Education” (OBE).

Much of the founding work on OBE was done by an American academic named William Spady. Spady, together with Mzwai Kibi, a South African expert on OBE, played a key role in developing South Africa’s current outcomes based educational reforms (Spady W. , 1998). Despite the fact that OBE had been tried in other parts of the world and had met with varying degrees of success, it was enthusiastically implemented in the South African education system. The Department of Education (1997a; 1997b; 1999) went to great lengths to assure an eager public that the OBE approach implemented in South Africa was a revised one, that it was in the best interests of the country, and that educators were coping well with its implementation. Outcomes-Based Education was touted as being learner-centred, developmental, activity based and achievable. Meyer (2007) summarises the advantages of adopting OBE in South Africa as follows:

- Learners know exactly what is expected of them;
- Extensive consultation with stakeholders has ensured greater commitment;
- International best practices have been implemented in OBE;
- OBE has well defined and objective assessment criteria;
- OBE promotes skills that are relevant to the needs of the country;
- Learners accept responsibility for learning;
- Recognition of prior learning prevents the duplication and repetition of previous learning situations.

Contrary to the above assertions, there were many criticisms of OBE as discussed in the next section.

3.1. Critique of the Changed South African Education System

While the political changes in South Africa were hailed across the globe, the resultant changes in its education system drew sharp criticisms locally and nationally. I present a critique of some of the key aspects of the changed education system as a way of informing this study. I do not make these issues the focus of my study though, but it is important that I point to them because they are integral parts of the “context of change” in which I want to understand leadership.

3.1.1. OBE

Despite the hype and fanfare heralding the changes in the new education system, sceptics nationally and internationally were critical of the new OBE approach on which the new education system was modelled. Some South African academics such as Jansen (1998) argued that the changes were more symbolic and lacked the substance to make them appropriate to the needs and context of the new South Africa. Jansen's (1998) argument was echoed by a strong dissenting voice from the South African Press (Mulholland, 1997). These criticisms were bolstered by arguments that the implementation of OBE alone was not the panacea for poor education. According to Elmore (1992) policymakers and administrators fiddle with organisational structure as a favourite device to communicate to the public in a symbolic way that they are indeed concerned about the education system. Even when claims of similarities between OBE in South Africa and in America were made, the lack of trained educators in South Africa was identified as a major drawback (Coetzer, 2001). Even the “architect” of OBE, Spady (2004, p. 176) recognised that South Africa's potential will be realised through “educators with vision and commitment”. For some critics, the introduction of OBE was viewed as a casualty of the change in politics. Hargreaves (2003, p. 72), for example, asserts that the changes in politics have led to “endless swings of the policy pendulum” in education and that this is not in the best interest of education. Fink (2001) warns that policy makers, because they are more powerful, can insist on new policies that amounts to nothing more than tinkering unless they are prepared to understand the influence of context, micro-politics, school culture, emotions of teaching and learning, and leadership orientations on educational change in schools. According to Meyer (2007), the implementation of OBE in South Africa was problematic because:

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- Learners are unable to adapt to OBE because of the rapid transition from the content-based, educator-led system;
- OBE learning resources have to be re-written. Additionally these resources have to take all official languages into consideration;
- The generation of unit standards is dependent on people with vested interests;
- The scope and variety of OBE assessment methods is time consuming;
- Teachers have to be re-trained (Meyer, 2007).

The confusion of OBE with the new curriculum (called curriculum 2005) led to the Education Minister establishing a “Review Committee on Curriculum 2005”, headed by Professor Chisholm. This comprehensive report adequately deals with the challenges of both OBE and the new curriculum and is easily accessible (Chisholm, et al., 2000).

Therefore I point to it but do not discuss the report here.

A related issue of under-resourced schools also made the implementation of OBE in “township schools ... even more problematic” (Motseke, 2005). This demonstrates the need for a study in “under-resourced schools” in South Africa and I make this one of the main criteria in selecting the schools in the sample of this study.

3.1.2. Globalisation's Economic Agenda

While it was accepted that globalisation had influenced the new education system in South Africa in a significant way, there were substantial and powerful arguments against the adoption of the globalisation principles in the reconstruction of the country's education system. One of the problems with globalisation is that it is often seen in economic terms only. One reason for this might be that “far more than a trillion dollars is now turned over *each day* on global currency markets” (Giddens, 1999, original emphasis). Globalisation is evidently more than that and I take the view that school leadership has to be seen as promoting the educational agenda over the economic agenda. This may not be easy, as “managerialism and neoliberalism cannot be wished away as global patterns influencing educational practice” (Heystek, 2007, p. 503). Hargreaves (2003) shares Giddens' (1999) view and expressly argues about the dangers of blindly following the economic agenda of globalisation, as he states:

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“The paradox of globalization, as I have called it, is that economic globalization and homogenization led many of those who cannot share in its benefits to turn inward to culture, religion, and ethnicity as alternative sources of meaning and identity” (Hargreaves, 2003, p. 45).

The advocates of globalisation often hold up the advances of first world democratic countries like the United States as exemplars to developing Nations. However, the literature reveals that these so-called exemplars are not without criticism. Recent researchers are questioning the “American way of life” and presenting harsh critiques of their education system, and in particular, criticism of their school reform. Slater and Boyd (1999, p. 323) sum it up succinctly when they complain that:

“education reform has been hijacked by utilitarian economic interests, pushing the democratic and humanistic purposes of education almost completely off the policy agenda. While equality of opportunity and social justice continue to be debated, this discourse occurs in a truncated, marginalized way within a social milieu dominated by economic and technocratic values” (Slater & Boyd, 1999, p. 323).

Other critics of the rash acceptance of the globalisation principle raise the question of the effect of the “human consequences” of globalisation. Bauman (1998) makes the case that globalisation has simply reduced humans to consumers and has brought less limitation to physical barriers, but with further stratification of society, and paradoxically further separated the haves and the have-nots (or the tourist and vagabond classification as Bauman terms it). If the criticism of the economic agenda of globalisation on education proves to be true, then this would be contrary to the nation-building agenda of the new South Africa. Most crucially, this will have a negative effect on principals' experiences of their roles. More research has to be done in the context of South Africa's new democracy to interrogate these effects and this becomes an important consideration for this study.

3.1.3. “Western” Education Models

Besides the criticisms of the influence of globalisation on the education system and the adoption of OBE, there are also criticisms of South Africa's seemingly over-reliance on “western models”. While South Africa has recently transformed itself into a democratic country, it is by no stretch of the imagination the same as the Anglo-phonetic world which greatly influenced the reconstruction of the educational system in South Africa. America, Britain, Australia and Canada are first world countries with long established democracies. South Africa, on the contrary, is a new democracy of just over a decade. The effects of apartheid left a legacy of imbalances that seem insurmountable. I touch on three areas of concern namely: poverty, HIV and AIDS, and established culture that make the importation of education systems of the developed world problematic. While South Africa is rich in natural resources especially in mineral resources (Government Communication and Information System, 2005), the majority of its people still remains economically disenfranchised. In 1995, a year after the collapse of the apartheid government, “about twenty eight percent of households and forty eight percent of the population were living below the estimated poverty line” (Government Communication and Information System, 2005, pp. 53-54). Besides the high levels of poverty, of the estimated forty million people in the world with HIV and AIDS over half of them live in sub-Saharan Africa. It is estimated that there will be 18 million AIDS orphans in sub-Saharan Africa in just four years time (Aids in Focus, 2005). These contextual factors make the importation of “western” education models problematic.

Another important difference between the South African context and the “developed” world is one of culture. By culture, I mean “the way things are done”. Samuel (2006, pp. 2-4) argues in his review of a recent American authored book on effective schools that “our historicity frames our perspective ... (and) the majority of students do not necessarily enjoy the cultural capital to succeed in schools”. The education system in the democratic South Africa had shifted radically, at least at the level of official policy, from the traditional, hierarchical, transactional model to a democratic, transparent, collaborative, community model¹⁹. What evidence is there to prove that “western”

¹⁹ Refer to Table one for details of Educational Policy development in Post-Apartheid South Africa

models can be imported successfully to a new democracy like South Africa? What effects, if any, did long-standing ways-of-doing and experiences of school leadership have on the new leadership role of the principal? Does changing legislation translate into internalised changes practised by school principals? These questions are responded to in this study.

3.1.4. “Western” Literature

South Africa adopted “western” democratic models of education, on the premise that several important parallels could be drawn between South Africa and the “western” world. One of these is the thrust of globalisation which has brought about similar school contexts for the practice of leadership. Highlighting this similarity in school contexts is important because the context is constitutive of leadership practice (Spillane, Halverson, & Diamond, 2004). Therefore, it may be possible to use research findings from international (western) schools to inform research in South African schools.

While I do not believe that the application from “western” schools to South African schools is easy, or indeed desirable, I am persuaded that there is some justification to draw from the literature on school leadership in the “western” world within the context of this study. One reason for this is the recency of democracy in South Africa and the radically changed education system. Since South Africa has just over ten years of experience in democratic school management, it is understandable for one to argue that the study of school leadership in South Africa is a rapidly evolving one. This does not mean that there is a paucity of educational research in South Africa. Research abounds, especially in the areas of post-apartheid educational reform (Jansen, 2003). However, contemporary South African research on leadership does not have long-standing, localised models of democratic leadership to rely on. In contrast, the research traditions of the developed Anglo-ponic world provide a rich literature base on school leadership issues, especially in the development of school leadership theories in a democratic context. While I draw from the available literature on leadership theories from the “western” world, I do heed the caution advocated by Harris when he asserts:

“Most of the literature on leadership is derived from North American and European sources and, it has been suggested, reflects an over reliance upon

commercial and business views of leadership. Yet, despite a large research base, the search for a singular theory of leadership has proved to be somewhat futile” (Harris, 2003, pp. 14-15).

Fullan (1997) endorses the above view and states that there is no “silver bullet” in the quest to find theoretical solutions. But perhaps Harris is too pessimistic in stating that:

“The research on leadership has produced a bewildering array of findings and the endless accumulation of empirical data has not resulted in any clear understanding of leadership” (Harris, 2003, p. 15).

While I have provided both justification and caution to draw from the literature on school leadership based on the “western” world for this study, I make the point that South Africa has to rely more on its own empirical research on school leadership. This is supported by Harber and Davies (1997) who caution that the existing research is either too general or deplete of context that they cannot address relevant issues in South Africa after its reform efforts. However, Hoberg (2004) warns that while African indigenous knowledge exists, there is an unwillingness to use it, and this must be addressed. There is a need for in-depth South African research using grounded theory to address local needs (Moloi, 2007). Additionally, Soudien (2006a, p. 16) argues for a greater engagement with the “complexities of the local” in making our own “modernity”.

This section (point 2 to point 3.1.4) concludes the discussion on systemic (structural and political) changes. In the discussion, debates around the introduction of change in relation to “democratic school governance” was addressed. This further raised the notions of “accountability” and “consultation” in democratic school governance. In the next section, I continue with “change” but focus on “policy” changes.

4. Policy Change - Educational Policies

The reconstructed education system in South Africa demonstrated radical changes in education policy. I consider a review of official policy change to be significant to this study as it provides the legal framework for the practice of school leadership. In this way, education policy is an important consideration in exploring experiences of school leadership. However, I point to the fact that policy is not practice (Jansen, 2004, p. 126).

4.1. Historical Overview

Education policy changes had profound implications for principals. Almost overnight, principals were required to change long cultural traditions and to negotiate their own meaning-making within the new education system. In order to do this, many questions had to be answered: Where did these changes come from? Is there a theoretical justification for these changes? Who or what influenced these changes? Were these changes politically biased / educationally sound? To better understand the issues raised by these questions, I interrogate the South African policy positions with regard to the influences that shaped these policies and ultimately on the experiences of school leadership. Bearing in mind that the South African education system underwent a total reconstruction in the last decade, I begin with a historical overview of the “new” South Africa’s education policy development and its implications for school leadership.

South Africa’s long awaited dream of shaking off the shackles of apartheid and becoming a democracy was finally realised in 1994. This profound political change brought with it many fundamental policy changes in all areas of governance. The education portfolio was no exception. The new Government came into power with a mandate of much anticipated and widespread change. One of the priorities of the new government was to publicly demonstrate these changes. Policy positions changed dramatically to reflect the will of the majority of the people. Before coming into power, the African National Congress (ANC) established an Education Desk, with a mandate to inform its educational policy position. Butcher (1999) explains that the Education Desk developed numerous drafts of the ANC’s “Policy Framework for Education and Training” and of the “Implementation Plan for Education and Training” which effectively were the precursors to the Department of Education’s White Paper on Education and Training (Butcher, 1999, p. 7). This first white paper established a general approach to reconstruction and development in the school system. In this approach, clear policy commitments to education were made. While these policy commitments cover the entire terrain of a reconstructed school system, I highlight only

those commitments that impact directly on experiences of school leadership. They include:

- the right to basic education as enshrined in the Bill of Rights;
- providing quality education;
- providing access to quality education;
- redressing the imbalances of the past;
- implementing learner- centred and outcomes based approach to education and training (Butcher, 1999, p. 8).

These policy commitments were extended in the “Education White Paper 2” which dealt specifically with the organisation, governance and funding of schools. White Paper 2 led to the development and legislation of two seminal Acts governing schools, namely: the “National Education Policy Act of 1995” and the “South African Schools Act of 1996”. These two acts still form the main policy framework for schools at present and they provide the legal framework for the practice of school leadership. Because the legal implications of these Acts are deemed to be important, the Education Labour Relations Council (ELRC)²⁰ ensured that printed and bound copies of these acts were sent to every educator in public schools in South Africa during 2003 – 2004.

Globalisation, as I have argued earlier, promoted two main thrusts, namely; the democratic governance models of western leadership exemplars, and the dictates of an economic agenda. As a response to this, South Africa developed two major policy imperatives for education. The first policy imperative was the “democracy-led” agenda of equity and transformation. The second policy imperative was the “economically driven standards based agenda” and its use as indicators of school success. While I understand that policy formulation is a complex process and that the changes in Educational Ministers also influence policy, I attempt to chronologically represent the South African educational policy imperatives in the post-apartheid era relevant to this study in Table 2.

²⁰ Education Labour Relations Council (ELRC). A statutory body tasked with resolving educators' labour related issues

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Time Line	Prior to 1994	1994	1994 – 1999	1999- 2004
Co-ordinated by:	(ANC Education Desk)		Sibusiso Bhengu (Education Minister)	Kader Asmal (Education Minister)
Legislation (policy Formulation)	-Policy framework for Education and Training; -Implementation Plan for Education and Training.	-Constitution (1994) -Bill of Rights -First (1995) & Second (1996) White Papers on Education and Training	- NEPA (1995) ²¹ - SASA (1996) ²²	-DAS (1998) ²³ -WSE (2001) ²⁴ -IQMS (2003) ²⁵
Focus of Legislation	-Broad principles of transformation, reconstruction, redress, access to quality education, provision of quality education, organisation, governance and funding of schools.	-Democracy -The right to Education	-Admission policy: Transforming learner demographics; -Improving access to public schools by addressing barriers such as school fees, etc; -Participative School Governance.	Quality control: -WSE (school efficiency); -DAS (Educator development); -IQMS (Integrated Evaluation).
Characteristics of this "era"		-Democracy, -Uhuru ²⁶	-Freedom, -Equal Opportunity	-Standards, -Quality, Efficiency

Table 2. Educational Policy Development in Post-Apartheid South Africa

The new democratic State is the result of political negotiations and compromises, and this is manifested in the State's policies (Soudien & Sayed, 2004). Therefore, it is not surprising to find many principals who display a rhetorical commitment to change "but a change that preserved the substance of the old" (Soudien & Sayed, 2004, p. 102). What reason/s could there be for this? Samuel (2005) identifies two possible reasons: the State's rushed enthusiasm to demand transformation from educators without adequate recognition of where there were, and the educators' revolutionary stance to dismantle education that did not pay sufficient attention to what this would entail from them.

²¹ National Education Policy Act

²² South African Schools Act

²³ Developmental Appraisal System

²⁴ Whole School Evaluation

²⁵ Integrated Quality Management System

²⁶ A Swahili word meaning freedom, popularised in political speeches

4.2. First Education Policy Imperative - "Equity"

Taking its cue from the new constitution, the South African Schools Act of 1996 addressed one of the main issues relating to "equity", namely: access to schools as determined by the new admission policy for schools. Admission of all learners to public schools was seen as an important first step in desegregating schools. However, the experience of previously disadvantaged learners under apartheid showed that many of them were still marginalised at public schools under a democratic Government (Samuel & Sayed, 2003). Some pockets of resistance by principals and some public schools in South Africa have been shown to stifle the equity agenda through the process of learner admissions (Beckmann & Karvelas, 2006). I take this as my cue to focus this study on the tensions surrounding learner admissions at public schools and exploring what this may mean to principals. Resistance to the desegregation of schools was also prevalent in the United States as the classic "Brown vs. Board of Education" legal challenge showed. However, Willie (2004) uses the theory of complementarity to claim that desegregation of schools harmed no race group and ultimately led to the benefit of all race groups. This claim of the benefits of school desegregation is an important link to this study in South Africa, where desegregation of schools has been politically imposed amid much concern over the benefit of previously disadvantaged race groups at the expense of the previously advantaged race groups. But South Africa's racial past was constructed in more than just Black and White groupings only. Anderson points out that:

"traditionally, scholarship in South Africa has depicted the struggle against Apartheid in black and white terms only. Often missing in such portrayals however, is a critical awareness of the racial-ethnic diversity that characterizes South African society" (Anderson, 2003, p. 29).

While the differences between minority racial groups exist, they seem to be sidelined in the equity debates. In the South African school leadership literature, there is little mention of the racial issues between "Indians, Coloureds and Africans". This contextual gap needs to be explored and I use this as my cue to determine my sample in terms of more than just "Black and White" within the context of interrogating equity issues in our education system.

Equity is a broad term relating to issues of race, and I focus on the desegregation of schools as another thrust of equity in this study. At a simplistic level it is easy to understand the obvious need to desegregate schools in terms of race. In South Africa, the removal of discriminatory legislation had varying effects in public schools. In some schools the majority of learners came from communities other than the local community in close proximity to the school. Some schools still continue to admit learners only from their local communities. It is tempting to assume that these apparently exclusionary mechanisms of restricting admissions are linked to a discriminatory agenda reminiscent of the old South Africa, but Sergiovanni (2000) has a counter-view. He suggests that schools may justify their selectivity (exclusivity) in their choice of admission of learners because these schools are simply satisfying the needs of their own communities. He argues that communities:

“create social structures that unify people and that bind them to a set of shared values and ideas. They are defined by their centers of values, sentiments, and beliefs that provide the needed conditions for creating a sense of ‘we’ from ‘I’ ” (Sergiovanni, 2000, p. 77).

But can principals create a sense of “we” among the different race groups in the new South Africa? To answer this, White, Coloured and Indian principals may first have to interrogate their understanding of the varying levels of “privilege” that they had over “Africans”. I particularly like McIntosh’s (1989, p. 10) way of representing this privilege as “an invisible weightless knapsack of special provisions, maps, passports, codebooks, visas, clothes, tools and blank checks” because it signals a conceptual understanding of privilege in a practical way. If McIntosh (1989) is to be believed, then just being born White, Indian or Coloured means a conferred dominance and unearned entitlement and advantage over Africans. Do principals understand leadership in this context? McIntosh advises that when principals (who are not black) are taught to think of their lives as being morally neutral, normative, average, and also ideal, the danger is that such principals will see their leadership role as work that will allow “them”(blacks) to be more like “us” (not black). This adds another layer to the desegregation debate, that desegregation may be encouraged not to celebrate differences, but to enforce preferred cultural norms.

While much research has been conducted on desegregation of schools, less has been said about how this impacts on principals' experiences of leadership in South Africa. I draw from Ladson-Billings (1994) work to extend on McIntosh's earlier assertions regarding race. She presents an interesting perspective on race issues that must be considered in exploring principals' experiences. Her work is not an attempt to offer solutions to problems in the education of African Americans but to offer an opportunity to make those problems central to the debate about education in general. She makes the point that there is some logic in keeping racially separate schools. This is not as a return to segregation, but as an entity with its own needs. While African Americans are recognised as a distinct racial group, their distinct culture is not recognised. It is presumed that African American children are exactly like White children, but who just need a little extra help. Delpit (1995) tackles the thorny issue of race in schools in a similar way. She takes serious issue with the common response of "I don't see color, I only see children" (Delpit, 1995, p. 177). She questions the message that this statement is sending. Is there something wrong with being black or brown, that it should not be noticed? Delpit suggests that if one does not see colour, then one does not really see children. Delpit takes this further and argues that "children made 'invisible' in this manner become hard pressed to see themselves worthy of notice" (Delpit, 1995, p. 177). This review problematises the influence of equity / desegregation/ race issues on experiences of leadership. The concept of inclusion and exclusion raises issues of self-conscious considerations of the principals' roles and identities (Sayed, 2003). This study attempts to provide a contextual setting to address how equity issues influence principals' experiences of leadership.

4.3. Second Education Policy Imperative - "Standards"

Notions of achievement and school efficiency evolve over time to reflect the changed leadership contexts of schools. The sense of efficiency is often masqueraded as the achievement of certain standards that schools must meet. What are these standards and where do they come from? It seems that economic globalisation influenced the education agenda, especially with regard to policy changes in South Africa. In doing so, the consequences of the globalisation agenda have impacted on what school standards have

come to mean. One major consequence of globalisation is the obsession with “standardisation” and performativity culture (as it relates to the achievements of school effectiveness indicators- most notably, the pass rate). This is especially problematic for a developing context like South Africa. Elmore (2003) warns that: “when we bear down on testing without the reciprocal supply of capacity, we exacerbate the problem that we are trying to fix” (Elmore, 2003, p. 8).

These economic and technocratic values have placed undue emphasis on achievement above all else at the expense of other indicators of excellence. Instead, Berkhout (2007, p. 417) contends that “leadership should be seen as engaging with discursive constructions that shape education practice and that this should contribute toward understanding and rethinking how social justice is constituted in local education contexts”. For Sergiovanni (2001) other indicators of school excellence include:

- school climate;
- collegial values;
- school culture;
- co-operative relationships;
- high standards and expectations;
- teacher efficacy.

Hargreaves agrees with Sergiovanni and sums up the problem of the standards based movement when he says that “achievement has been everything, and democracy has been left to fend for itself” (Hargreaves, 2003, p. 55). It seems that school efficiency may be increasingly equated with standards, and this is simplistically being reduced to the “pass rate”. What are the consequences of this? Hargreaves provides a blunt answer to this question as follows: “the rightful pursuit of higher standards has degenerated into a counterproductive obsession with soulless standardisation” (Hargreaves, 2003, p. 82). Hargreaves’s claim has important implications for a new democracy such as South Africa. While the issue of school evaluation is evolving in South Africa, regulatory acts have been introduced to “develop” educators (e.g. Development Appraisal System - DAS) and schools (e.g. Whole School Evaluation - WSE). The most recent evaluation instrument is Integrated Quality Management Systems (IQMS) which attempts to

integrate all aspects of school functionality²⁷. The evaluation criteria called performance standards of this comprehensive document is summarised and included in the appendix (Appendix 1).

Despite legislation, it seems that the economic or market-led agenda still dictates what the dominant evaluation criteria are. The pass rate remains as the dominantly and publicly touted indicator of school excellence, with league tables of pass rates regularly published in newspapers and publications of the Department of Education. The grade twelve pass rate is the most prominent indicator of school success and it discursively constructs schools as good or bad performers (Berkhout, *Leadership in Education Transformation as Reshaping the Organisational Discourse*, 2007). This did not go unchallenged. Some South African critics were quick to criticise what they called the “Government’s crackdown on good performance” and saw this as being contrary to the “ideals of excellence and merit in Education” (Daily News, 2003, p. 1). Despite these criticisms, the pass rate is still celebrated and will therefore continue to dominate as the main indicator of school success. How will principals understand this? Will they simply resort to “micro-managing” their schools to ensure a high pass rate, or will they resist this limiting premise?

Hargreaves (2003) likens a principals’ micro-management of all affairs of the school simply to ensure high pass rates to a new type of apartheid: that is, one that will work to divide educators and schools. For South Africans, the memory of a divisive agenda has an eerie ring. He cautions that:

“teachers and schools in poorer nations and communities are being subjected to micro-managed interventions in the basic areas of math and literacy” ... and this “creates a system of professional development apartheid” (Hargreaves, 2003, p. 7).

Hargreaves’s argument is strengthened by Fullan (2003b) who also criticises micro-management interventions as a substitute for meaningful intervention. He asserts that:

²⁷ South African Education policy documents can be accessed from www.polity.org/govdocs

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“Most systems have enacted accountability policies in the absence of conceptualizing and investing in policies that would increase the capacity of educators to perform in new ways” (Fullan, 2003b, p. 25).

How is it that the standards based movement gained credibility in South Africa? Elmore (1999) asserts that the standards based movement is supported by a simple logic, namely that schools have to be accountable. This logic could be easily seen in the earlier, smaller and more homogenous school systems. However, (Elmore, 1999) analysis of the thrust for “efficiency” raises an uncomfortable feeling when it is applied to the new South African context. Notions of standards have to change because schools have changed. Some of these changes include:

- schools becoming more multicultural and diverse;
- schools starting to serve a wider range of populations, often those who did not want to be there;
- school governance was extended to include other stakeholders in a more meaningful way (Elmore, 1999).

Elmore (1999) claims that these changes had a negative effect on educators and contributed to the “relatively weak professionalization among teachers” (Elmore, 1999, p. 5). Because of this, an ever increasing hierarchical system was deemed necessary to supervise the “relatively low-skill teacher force” (Elmore, 1999). This was congruent with the profit-making economic principles dominant at the time, namely that of producing efficiencies. However, it soon became obvious that the complexities involved in the learning and teaching process could not easily be generalised nor improved by depending on external evaluation alone.

How will principals respond to the push for standards and the need to be accountable for their school’s pass rate? Will they agree with the Department’s push for standards and see themselves as being accountable for maintaining a high pass rate? Will they disagree with the Department’s push for standards and rely on other indicators of school success? Will they turn increasingly to the Department to legitimise their quest for increasing the pass rate at all costs? Will they turn inwards and look at alternative means of validating

their leadership practices? All these questions are important considerations in this study and will be explored.

In response to the accountability debate, Elmore (2000) argues that the push for standards has resulted in bureaucratic changes that have little to do with improving the quality of education, but more to do with maintaining the level of confidence between the public and schools. Elmore (2000) argues that these bureaucratic changes include:

- extraordinarily large high schools that create anonymous and disengaging environments for learning;
- rigid tracking systems that exclude large numbers of students from serious academic work;
- athletic programs that keep large numbers of students from participation in extracurricular activities;
- grouping practices in elementary school classrooms that provide less stimulation for struggling learners;
- special programs that remove students from regular instruction in the name of remediation;
- instructional aide programs that are sometimes little more than public employment programs for community members;
- site-based governance structures that engage in decision making about everything except the conditions of teaching and learning (Elmore, 2000, p. 6).

Besides the above, Fullan (2003b) suggests that there are other problems relating to the standards based movement and that these may be linked to issues of accountability and risk-taking. Imported models of the standards based movement to be applied in South Africa, have the problem of coherence with the administrators striving to “give the appearance of control” by an ever-increasing range of controlling mechanism (Fullan, 2003b). I argue that what may really be needed is greater risk taking in the hope of greater commitment. In contrast, the insistence of the standards based movement on the pass rate reduces the amount of risk taking. However, Maile (2002) argues that South Africa’s policy shift towards shared governance makes it possible to increase risk taking by sharing the accountability for the pass rate among the stakeholders. This results in

shared, participative governance and in this way, principals are no longer solely responsible for possible failures at improving the pass rate as a result of the risks taken.

Delpit (1995) raises the issue of whether or not the issue of standards are the same for children of colour? While the racial issue is easily seen in terms of physical differences, other perspectives such as “achievement” and “affiliation” are not readily accessible. This may be linked to the psychological /sociologic need of the learners that are not so obvious. She advises that:

“Research suggests that children of color value the social aspects of an environment to a greater extent than do ‘mainstream’ children, and tend to put an emphasis on feelings, acceptance, and emotional closeness. Research has also shown that motivation in African- American children from low socio-economic groups is more influenced by the need for affiliation than for achievement” (Delpit, 1995, p. 140).

This view presents a different perspective on the issue of racial affiliation over academic achievement for children of colour.

Despite the criticisms of school efficiency being hijacked by a standard based movement, the importance of the pass rate gained support. Perhaps one of the reasons for this is that:

“ordinary citizens come to think of a learning standard or a school standard as something similar to the gold standard – a scientific and objective measure of something valuable with which ordinary people had better not tamper” (Sergiovanni, 2001, p. 207).

What implications, if any, do the debates on school efficiency as outlined above influence principals' experiences of their roles? Sergiovanni (2001) argues that the role of the school principal is central to the issue of efficiency in schools. He simplifies this by arguing that the one difference between high and low achieving schools is the impact of the principal. Sergiovanni (2001) concludes that in high achieving schools, principals exert stronger leadership, participate directly and frequently in instructional matters, have higher expectations for success, and are orientated towards academic goals.

However, will principals see it this way? Day (2003, p. 146) warns that the market-led agenda tempts principals “to give priority to their management functions rather than the educational leadership of the whole community”. I share Day’s (2003) argument that over the last two decades the discourses of school effectiveness, efficiency and accountability have served the demands of governments for raising standards of school performance in terms of their economic market-led agendas. This raises an important question about school leadership. How will principals of socially deprived communities, who find themselves at the lower end of the league tables and who have to manage increasing numbers of learners who are unable to cope with a National curriculum, respond to the push for standards? (Day, 2003). I pick up this discussion in Chapter 3 when I review the changed role of principals.

5. Concluding Thoughts: Theoretical Framing (Part 1)

In this chapter I reviewed the first part of the literature on leadership relating to the “context of change in South Africa”. These changes were systemic and related to political changes, educational system changes and policy changes. The literature review demonstrated the need for this study based on this extraordinary political **contextual** setting. From this review, I crystallised the following key components relating to the context of change:

- Democratic School Governance (developed from “Political Change-Globalisation and Democratic Governance”);
- Desegregation (developed from “First Education Imperative – Equity”);
- Pass Rate (developed from the “Second Education Policy –Standards).

These components formed the first part of the theoretical framing of this study.

In the next chapter I continue with the literary story on change but focus on theoretical landscapes of change and of school leadership to develop the second part of the theoretical framing.

CHAPTER 3

LITERATURE REVIEW – CONTINUED

LITERARY STORY (Part 2): THEORETICAL LANDSCAPES

“If you don’t know how things are today you certainly can’t know how they’re going to be tomorrow. I shatter the objective universe around you – and all you can say is that there is an error in the formulation!” (Frayn, 1998, p. 68).

1. Introductory Remarks

In Chapter 2, I explored the “context of change” and operationalised its meaning with regard to systemic changes. In this chapter I continue with the theme of change but focus on theories of change and of leadership. While this chapter is a continuation of the literature review, the reason for the change in focus is to understand the **theoretical** underpinnings of school leadership. In the theories that I review, I highlight “personal” challenges that are created through the “moral” dilemmas that these theories present to principals

Within the theoretical continuum of change theory, I concentrate on three constructs, namely: power, culture, and resistance to change. Then I move to a review of the literature on theories of school leadership. This includes the traditional leadership role of the principal, theories of leadership in general, and theories of school leadership in particular. I also raise the issue of rewards, define what I mean by “rewards” and enter into the debates around the internal/ external classification of rewards. After defining rewards, I interrogate the role of rewards in educational systems. I also extend the theorisation of rewards to include the influences of learning theories. In the last section I bring the theoretical continuum of change into dialogue with the definition of leadership and theories of leadership to develop the second part of the theoretical framing for this study.

2. Theoretical Landscape of Change

2.1. Key Constructs Relating to Change

Theories of change may relate to many constructs, but since the focus of this study is not on “change” itself, I review only those key constructs of change that have the potential to inform my exploration of principals’ experiences of leadership. The three constructs that I have identified in the literature are “power”, “culture” and “resistance”.

2.1.1. Power and Change

I raise the issue of power based on Blase and Blase’s (2002, p. 6) assertion that “power is a fundamental dimension of all human relationships”. I do this to explore the impact of power on the principals’ experiences of school leadership, especially in the way that their roles have radically changed and the implications that this has on existing power relations. While change has many dimensions, one of the things that I focus on here is on school reform. Datnow (2000) shifts the focus of the debate on power away from principals and on to the policy makers. She does this by claiming that “power and politics played into decisions in every arena of reform adoption” carried out by policy makers (Datnow, 2000, p. 367). Power was also vested in the South African policy makers who in the name of change, adopted reform measures that were initially designed and implemented in other locations. This meant that principals come to understand change (school reform) as legislated by “others” over which they have little, and often, no power.

The changing context of South Africa brought about a changing understanding of school leadership and the traditional role of power. I agree with Sarason (1990, p. 5) when he says that: “schools will remain intractable to desired reform as long as we avoid confronting (among other things) their existing power relationships”. For Sarason (1990) simply changing power relations will not bring about desired reform. He suggests that “an integrated response to restructuring is not likely to occur without a basic definition of the roles and responsibilities of just about every party connected with schools”.

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Principals are obviously included here and I would go as far as to suggest that principals are integral to schools, not merely connected to schools. But what does this mean to the principal who has to negotiate change? The complexities of negotiating power and “giving up” traditional power bases is usually fraught with anxiety, resistance and confusion and school reform measures often ignore this. I can therefore understand why Sarason bluntly titled his book on school reform as “The predictable failure of educational reform” (Sarason, 1990).

Power exists in varied and different ways and, as research reveals, the issue of power is dealt with in diverse ways (Sernak, 1998; Busher, Hammersley-Fletcher, & Turner, 2007; Avidan, 1984; Blase, 1991). For example, for Sarason (1990), having power over someone is an invitation to conflict. Blase and Anderson (1995) distinguish between having power over, power with, and power through, others. They agree that schools are indeed “political arenas” and they assert that the issue of “politics” is simply a debate over issues of power (Blase & Anderson, 1995, p. 146). What do these issues of power mean to the principal? They answer this question by placing the notion of power at the centre of their analysis of school culture and terming this “micropolitics” of schools. How is this important to principals? The “micropolitics” of a school is largely a response to the particular type of leadership exercised by the principal. Of value here is Blase and Anderson’s (1995) interrogation of the present field of leadership studies which use (and abuse) the term “empowerment” so that the end result is a competition for power. Blase and Anderson (1995) demystify notions of power and raise interesting questions about the struggles for power. Where is the power? Who has the power? What is the relation between the principal and power? I take a cue from their research which recognises the realities of lived leadership practices and the “messy political realities of school” to understand the context of contested political legislation and the context of an unfamiliar and changed educational landscape in which principals must understand school leadership (Blase & Anderson, 1995, p. 11).

How leaders see their social role also determines how principals understand power (Blase & Anderson, 1995). Leaders that see themselves as activists challenge the power relations that they view as unacceptable, while leaders that see themselves as neutral

public servants simply tinker with selected aspects of power relations because they believe that they are simply supposed to maintain the *status quo*. Since the construction of principals' social roles and identities are linked to issues of power, these are explored in this study because of its influence on principals' experiences of leadership.

This review on power has to include a lesser known dimension namely; that of the abuse of power by principals. This inclusion is also a welcome surprise in the research field as most of the research simply supports the finding that exemplary, transformational principals contribute to educators' growth and development (Bass, 1990; Burns, 2003; Avolio & Bass, 2002; Hacker & Roberts, 2003). This sensitive topic of the abuse of power is handled head-on by Blase and Blase (2002) who found that "in stark contrast, no empirical studies have systematically examined the 'dark side' of school leadership and the resulting harmful consequences" of it (Blase & Blase, 2002, pp. 5-6). This contribution is important as it raises the question of how principals understand their positional power in relation to their experiences of leadership. Taken to another extreme, it questions whether the deliberate abuse of power to pursue other agendas (like deliberately sowing discord in order to "show-up" the political system) can be considered to be part of the leadership landscape.

2.1.2. Culture and Change

School leadership norms dictate that principals are responsible for instilling a *culture* of teaching and learning in their schools (Sergiovanni, 2001). The key question is: what is meant by culture and why is it important in the exploration of principals' experiences of leadership? Culture means different things to different people. In its commonly understood definition, culture means the way things are done around here. Telford (1990) makes an important clarification between symbolism and culture when he states that:

"in many writings associated with leadership theory, culture is seen as synonymous with values, beliefs, shared meanings, symbols, rituals and ceremonies. While acknowledging that the two are closely aligned, the position

taken here is that symbolic aspects do not equal culture” (Sergiovanni, 2001, p. 86).

The more specific question to this study is: “how do principals understand culture, its relation to change, and leadership in schools”? Dufour and Burnette (2002) discuss many ways in which principals can shape what they term “the collegial culture” of schools. One way that principals can shape culture is by relying on the management adage of “what gets monitored gets done”. This implies that the principal can shape culture depending on what gets monitored, and not necessarily what is educationally sound. Fullan (2001) cautions principals about shaping school culture by embracing all that is being monitored. Caution is also directed to principals who shape culture by embracing all new fads. Such schools are called “Christmas tree” schools. Like the ornaments on the tree, these schools are fragile, hang precariously and are unable to survive strong winds. Whether shaping culture by monitoring or embracing new fads, Sergiovanni (2001) concludes that ultimately it is “what gets rewarded gets done”. However, he is quick to point out that this is “leadership by bartering”, which would be better if it was replaced by “leadership by building”. In this way, “what *is* rewarding gets done” (Sergiovanni, 2001, pp. 291, emphasis added). Do principals understand leadership as doing what is rewarded or what is rewarding?

Why would principals want to change school culture? Often the impetus for change comes from legislation. Principals could choose to implement change strategies simply on their need to demonstrate compliance and legitimacy as implementers of policies. In these cases, change is implemented simply by showing external and often superficial compliance. The political dimension of change must not be ignored because it is the degree of alignment between the programmes advocated by the State and the various cultural elements of the school that determine success in creating positive conditions for learning.

Culture as a way of doing things is more easily associated with the “emotional” aspects of principals to provide a rationale for the way that things are done. However, the issue of changing culture is sometimes erroneously equated with the “physical” aspects of school restructuring. As school restructuring is not the aim of this study, I use the

following critiques of school restructuring only as a way of highlighting the difficulties that this brings. Hargreaves (2003) is direct in his criticism of school restructuring as a way of changing culture. For him, principals have to deal with the consequences of “balkanised, egg crate, reform that nailed educators to classroom coffins of deadened professional learning” (Hargreaves, 2003, p. 110). Given the rapid rate of change in education globally, school restructuring has proven to be a complex and evolving phenomenon. In his review of change in the 1990’s, Tyack makes the important point that “restructuring in school governance go every way, with people urging the troops to march in different directions” (Tyack, 1990, p. 171). Using these critiques, I apply it to this study to ask: how do principals’ understand the relation between school restructuring strategies (e.g. politically imposed change) and its effect on dominant school culture (ways of doing)? The answer to this question may point to how leadership is understood in the context of change and culture in this study.

2.1.3. Resistance to Change

This review on the “context of change” will not be complete if the issue of resistance to change is not raised. Much has been written about change and the resulting changes in the research on education. However, less is said about resistance to change. In South Africa perhaps it is easier to romanticise the ideal that there is little or no resistance to the changes because these changes are the result of the democratic will of the majority of its people. But romanticised notions and legislated changes do not automatically result in internalised changes within principals. While political structures may provide devices for change, principals need to overcome resistance to change by having both the capacity and the desire to change (Hargreaves, 1999).

There are many ways in which principals respond to change. They range from slavish compliance to outright rebellion. Outright rebellion in response to change is easy to identify, but compliance and its relationship to resistance is more subtle, and often deceiving. The type of change that compliance brings about is rarely internalised. Legal / technical compliance may give the semblance of change, but does little to really effect change. What determines how principals engage with change? For Sergiovanni (2001, p.

42) “the choices that a principal makes are largely dependent on her or his theory or ‘mindscape’ of practice. Mindscapes influence what we see, believe and do”. When mindscapes influence the principal to resist change, Sergiovanni (2001) calls this the dark side of the principal’s mindscape. Added to this, the principal’s entrenched position of power can make it more difficult to change. This resistance to change may result in lost opportunities for the advancement of educational ideals and is considered in this study on leadership.

Sergiovanni’s earlier definition of “mindscapes” alludes to the role of “internal factors”. Blase and Blase (2002) extend Sergiovanni’s (2001) definition of mindscape by including a multitude of “external factors” that may also contribute to principals’ being resistant to change. I highlight those factors from their list that I deemed applicable to this study in South Africa as follows:

“increasing challenges and pressures, explosion of demands and pressure related to school safety and violence, drugs, diversity, inclusion, site budgeting, ageing educators and unresponsive bureaucracies, as well as new responsibilities linked to school reform including new power arrangements, collaborative planning, evaluation and accountability, confronted with unique challenges associated with the retention of quality educators, inadequate facilities and instructional materials and discouraged, disillusioned educators” (Blase & Blase, 2002, p. 3).

For principals, both internal mindscapes and external pressures can result in feelings of anxiety, loss of control, disempowerment, insecurity, anger and frustration. This in turn may account for principals’ resistance to change.

While this study focuses on principals’ experiences of school leadership, the influence of the educators’ resistance to change on principals’ experiences have to be considered as well. Who are these educators? Evans (1989, p. 10) points out that “the teaching force is now composed of people in middle to late career who have been teaching in their current school for most of their professional lives”. Educators, especially those in mid-career, may be more resistant to change. Do principals’ understand where this resistance comes from? Hargreaves (2003) provides good reasons why these teachers are resistant to change. He asserts that:

“teachers in their later careers are unwilling to commit to profound changes because they have seen waves of change fail in the past, are losing energy as their bodies begin to weaken, have growing commitments elsewhere in their lives that demand increasing attention from them, and feel that the remaining years they have left are best dedicated to their students in their own classrooms, not the school or the system as a whole” (Hargreaves, 2003, p. 120).

The importance of this review on resistance to change is that it raises issues of principals' capacity and desire to change. How principals relate to resistance to change is carefully considered in this study of exploring experiences of leadership.

2.2. Theoretical Landscape of School Leadership

School leadership is a notoriously difficult concept to define. Fullan's (1995) caution is heeded when he says that while descriptions of leadership abound, this literature is misleading at worst and unhelpful at best.

In its simplest definition, leadership means to exert influence. The “Task Force on Developing Research in Educational Leadership” established by AERA (American Educational Research Association) add to the leadership definition by asserting that:

“at the core of most definitions of leadership are two functions: *providing direction and exercising influence*. Leaders mobilize and work with others to achieve shared goals” (Leithwood & Riehl, 2003, p. 2. Original emphasis).

Furthermore, the adage that leadership is not merely a position but rather a function seems to justify the focus on the “practice” of leadership by the AERA Task Force who identified three core practices of school leadership, namely: setting directions, developing people, and developing the organisation.

There is a wide range of different definitions of leadership and they differ because they focus on many different aspects of leadership. The debates on how leadership and

management are related and indeed, if they are related, rage on. South Africa is not spared from this debate as can be seen by the following examples:

- The Mathew Goniwe School for Leadership and Governance which is responsible for the professional benchmarking of principals formal qualifications, differentiates between leadership (dealing with change) and management (dealing with maintenance) (Bush, 2007);
- The National Education Minister, Naledi Pandor makes several calls emphasising the management function of principals that is concerned more with functionality of schools than with vision (Bush, 2007).

These is also a paradox of leadership which states that while leadership is vitally important (for example in the promotion of student learning), empirical research suggests that the net effect of the principal is small (Evers & Katyal, 2007). Nel (2007) sees a distinct difference between leadership and management but sees the necessity of both. I do not review all the debates on leadership definitions here, but acknowledge that each principal's conceptual definition of leadership will influence that principal's experience of leadership.

In this study, the debates on leadership definitions and the complexities of delimiting the context of change have to be addressed. To do this, I synthesise dominant concepts in leadership definitions. In particular, I use the synthesis from the definitions of leadership by Bertrand (1995) and by Kanter (2005) to develop the following conceptual understanding of leadership:

1. **Practice**, action or content: this is about *what* a leader does at school.
2. **Individual** or subject: this is about the *leader (person)* and the leader's character.
3. **Circumstances** or "society": this is about the *context* in which leadership is practiced.

While most leadership studies emphasise the interplay of each of the above aspects, this study seeks to foreground principals as the unit of analysis and then explore principals' experiences of school leadership.

In South African schools, principals are provided with different definitions of leadership. For example, leadership is touted as being “a dynamic process that you as a leader can use to influence people and your organisation to move towards goal setting and goal achievement” (Department of Education KZN, 2004, p. 10). This definition focuses on the “practice” of leadership. Another example is the Minister of Education’s call for true leadership, which he defines as “that special blend of effective management and inspirational vision” (Asmal, 2002). This definition focuses on both the “practice” of leadership and the “personality traits” of the leader (principal). However, Spillane, Hallet and Diamond (2003) consider “personality” to be a part of “human capital” and assert that this must be considered together with other types of capital (cultural, social and economic) to define of leadership.

How do I structure the review of the literature with regard to the theoretical field of leadership theory? In the discussion that follows, I first focus on the “practices” of leadership by looking at the role of principals. This is followed by a detailed review of the field of leadership theory taking into account the relationships between the different foci of “practice, person and context” and the implications that this has for understandings of school leadership.

2.2.1. The Role of the Principal

In the context of rapid change, such as in South Africa, the role of the principal also changed and challenged the long established perceptions and practices of leadership (Botha, 2004). Traditionally, the cultural norm dictated the role of the school principal as that of an administrator. Therefore traditional school leadership (school administration) studies focussed primarily on the principal’s administrative functions. The principal’s main task was to be an “instructional leader”. This role focuses on the “practice” of the principal. Therefore I do not review the role of the principal as it is typically done in school administration studies, but I review it to point to the implications that the inherent norms embedded in this body of knowledge have on principals’ experiences of leadership.

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While the literature on school administration is vast, there seems to be a common set of behaviours (cultural norms) that underpin the principal's role. For example, a popular norm is that principals have to know and articulate their vision for their schools and they have to ensure that the school follows this vision. But this can be problematic if principals accept this norm without question. Fullan and Hargreaves (1996) explain that setting a vision is important, but it becomes problematic when principals talk of "my vision" or "my teachers" and "my school" in a way that suggests an imposed hierarchical ownership of the school and of the educators. When principals claim a singular vision, educators soon learn to suppress their own voices. Fullan and Hargreaves (1996) warn that when educators' visions do not get articulated, then management simply becomes manipulation and collaboration becomes co-option. Furthermore, they conclude that "the authority of principals' views should not be presumed because of whose view they are, but because of their quality and richness" (Fullan & Hargreaves, 1996, p. 90).

As early as 1985, when the traditional role of the principal was being re-defined, Saphier and King (1985) built on earlier established norms of leadership. Their version of twelve cultural norms of school leadership received much support and was particularly important in principals' experiences of school leadership as they provided a comprehensive yet simplistic characterisation of the expected cultural norms of the role of principals. I therefore include them here and list them as follows:

- Collegiality;
- Experimentation;
- High expectations;
- Trust and confidence;
- Tangible support;
- Reaching out to the knowledge base;
- Appreciation and recognition;
- Caring celebration and humour;
- Involvement in decision making;
- Protection of what's important;
- Traditions;
- Honest open communication (Saphier & King, 1985).

How do the above cultural norms of the principal's role relate to experiences of leadership? Norms may be important but they are not technical yardsticks for action. DuFour and DuFour (2003) argue that a "loose-tight leadership" is essential which establishes parameters and priorities for principals to enable schools to work within established boundaries in creative and autonomous ways. Sergiovanni agrees with this but says it differently: schools have to be "managerially loose but culturally tight" (Sergiovanni, 2001, p. 57). Additionally, the problem with cultural norms is that they may not be explicit and they may be determined differently by the daily experiences of the principals. What are some of these experiences? Morris, Crowson, Hurwitz and Porter-Gehrie (1982) make an important point when they say that the principal's day is not conducive to ordered decision making because most of the time, the day is spent on the run. Stoll, Earl and Fink (2002) are more gracious and suggest that not all principals' days are spent "on the run". While they agree that there are significant daily pressures for principals, compounded by a plethora of policy mandates, accountability measures, and public pressures, they argue that principals have different strategies to deal with these pressures. Three of these strategies are identified as follows:

- **Coping Strategy:** Principals respond only to directives from higher sources and limit themselves to managing the schools.
- **Diffusion Strategy:** Principals keep hanging new ideas and innovations on top of old ones in the hope that a few would survive.
- **Goal-Focussed Strategy:** Principals select a few reasonable goals, establish priorities and ignore or manage other pressures.

If these strategies are important to principals, how do principals learn about them? While this issue is currently being addressed in South Africa, at present there are no entry requirements (formal leadership training) for principals as there are in most of the "western" countries (Mestry & Singh, 2007). Teaching excellence is not necessarily a valid indicator of a principal's leadership ability (van der Westhuizen & van Vuuren, 2007). Is there a relationship between the training of principals (or lack thereof) and their experiences of a new leadership role? Mestry and Singh (2007) identified the gap in principals training and developed a competency based training model that allows principals to analyse, reflect and develop their practices. What then is the role of the

principal in the face of the typical complex, often paradoxical situations that principals face? There is some support for principals to use more grounded analysis of their own situations in order to understand their roles as principals and as leaders. Fullan (1995) has good advice for principals in this regard when he says that:

“my message is that you need enough of a working theory of leadership for change combined with mechanisms for personal and collective reflection, so that you inevitably self-correct, thereby deepening the internalization of theory and your capacity to act effectively the next time, and the time after that, and so on” (Fullan, 1995, p. 20).

Analysing Fullan's (1995) advice, I raise the question of the role of principals' personal reflections on their experiences of leadership. Therefore in the next section, I move the discussion to the landscape of leadership theories with the view of exploring its influence on principals' experiences.

2.2.2. Theories of Leadership

In this section I review theories of leadership in general and theories of school leadership in particular. The intention of this study is not to find a single theory of leadership to explain contemporary school leadership practice in South Africa. Rather, it is to explore the field of leadership as posited by various theorists of leadership in order to develop the second²⁸ stage of the theoretical framing of this study so that it can be used to explain theoretical underpinnings of principals' experiences of leadership. Therefore in this section I discuss dominant leadership theories in detail.

While I attempt to review leadership theory thematically, I understand that leadership theories did not develop separately or chronologically, but that they intersect in multiple ways and are “inter-disciplinary” (Culler, 1997). Within the domain of leadership

²⁸ The first level of the theoretical framework was discussed earlier and focussed on the context of change in South Africa

theories, theories often intersect, conflict, collaborate, complement and challenge each other. This is because theories are not facts or “truths” (David, 2005). As such, theories may have inherent tensions and assumptions underlying them. Therefore it is not difficult to apply different theoretical models to the same phenomenon and to make different claims. Nor is it strange to claim that theory often exists in neatly academic and often hypothetical contexts that do not necessarily correspond to the “complex social realities” of leadership contexts (Provost, 1985). Since particular leadership orientations do not work in isolation, it is possible and maybe desirable for principals to depend on a range of theoretical leadership orientations. Principals can have disparate leadership styles such as opinionated, assertive, nurturing, supportive, highly energised, and charismatic. All of these leadership styles may work in the sense that principals can use them to influence school culture so that a transformational effect results. However, I note the criticism that because most of these theories are North American in origin and are drawn mainly from the studies of men, they may not take cross-cultural or gender differences into account.

Some theorists suggest ways in which to connect the array of leadership theories so that leadership theory is not viewed in an isolated and fragmented way. Stoll and Fink (1996) use the concept of “invitational leadership” to connect leadership theories. Invitational leadership is about:

“communicating invitational messages to individuals and groups with whom leaders interact in order to build and act on a shared and evolving vision of enhanced educational experiences for students” (Stoll & Fink, 1996, p. 109).

While invitational leadership is touted as a way of managing disparate leadership orientations, I used a grounded approach to separate six dominant leadership orientations according to the way that leadership orientations are positioned with regard to the three components of leadership discussed earlier, namely the “person, practice and context”. I use this positioning to build an argument for using leadership theory as the second stage of the theoretical framing of this study.

2.2.2.1. Transactional Leadership

General leadership theories have a close alignment with the business sector. The business sector also served as the main source from which school leadership theories were initially derived. In particular, the growth of the business sector in the late 1980's gave rise to dominant school leadership theories. These theories drew their influences from the research on organisational and structural aspects of businesses. This led to "transactional school leadership" in the optimistic quest for school efficiency. Since schools and businesses clearly had different "bottom lines", the transactional leader was soon in conflict with the broader aim of a comprehensive, nation-building education system. Leithwood, Jantzi and Steinbach (1999, p. 28) clarified the initial work of the transactional theorists by reminding us that "one person takes the initiative in making contact with the others for the purpose of exchanging valued things". For the people in the exchange (bargaining process), each understands that they are there based on individual motives and that the bargaining process exists to advance these motives. The participants are not "bound together in any continuing, mutual pursuit of *higher purpose*" (Leithwood, Jantzi, & Steinbach, 1999, p. 28. Emphasis added). In this way, motives or purposes will be met, but not changed. If principals rely only on transactional leadership as a basis on which to understand leadership, then it will focus mainly on how the motives of principals are being advanced. What then does this say about how principals understand leadership?

2.2.2.2. Transformational Leadership

To address the shortcomings of transactional leadership theory, theorists started to develop the field of leadership theory to meet the higher purposes of education. For example, Leithwood, Jantzi, & Steinbach (1999) classified emerging leadership constructs into models of school leadership called "instructional, transformational, moral, participative, managerial and contingent". This multi-faceted leadership orientation was the stimulus for the development of transformational leadership theory. Transformational leadership theory evolved over a ten year period (Gronn, 1996). It was

touted as being a more comprehensive approach to leadership theory and one that could be better applied to school leadership.

There were many reasons why transformational leadership theory gained support for their application in schools. Perhaps the main reason was the significant way in which it differed from transactional leadership. Leithwood, Jantzi, & Steinbach (1999) explain one such difference as follows:

“Transformational leadership entails not only a change in the purposes and resources of those involved in the leader-follower relationship, but an elevation of both- a change for the better” (Leithwood, Jantzi, & Steinbach, 1999, p. 28).

In this way, transformational leadership has strong moral underpinnings as it raises conduct, ethical aspirations, resources and capacities of all the participants. However, this type of leadership orientation is dependent on a “leader” to drive this process. Therefore “management by modelling” became an important component of this theory and turned the focus of this theory firmly on the “*person*”. While CEO’s (Chief Executive Officers) of the business world were groomed along business models to become charismatic leaders, schools had to rely on the natural charisma of the principal. Transformational leadership therefore depended to a large extent on the principal’s inspiration, vision and intellect. The advocates of transformational leadership made a compelling argument that transformational leaders are concerned with vision and with people and not with the nuts and bolts of leadership. Transformational leaders, it was claimed, knew the difference between managing (doing things right) and leading (doing the right thing).

While transformational leadership enjoyed some popularity, its conception of leader-follower relations soon became contested. Gronn (1995, p. 16) made a powerful argument against the role of charisma in “arousing and elevating supposedly higher needs and stimulating personal growth” which is the aim of transformational leadership. Gronn (1995) points out that charisma is not a definitional property exclusive to transformative leaders. He concludes that perhaps the difference between transformative and transactional leaders is nothing more than the distinction between managers and leaders. In the case of school leadership, transformational leadership has to rely on the

charisma of the school principal. If the aim of transformational leadership is dependent on charismatic leaders, what will happen to schools when these great leaders move on? New democratic contexts such as that of South Africa need support, especially in addressing past imbalances in human capacity and agency. Rallis and Highsmith (1986) are convinced that there is no place for the charismatic leader in schools. They speak of the myth of the “great principal”. They see school management and instructional leadership as “two different tasks that cannot be performed well by a single individual” and conclude by saying that:

“We doubt that principals can succeed by trying to be all things to all people; they are more apt to be worn out” (Rallis & Highsmith, 1986, p. 301).

Heifetz and Sinder (1990) concur with the above and also warn about the perils of relying on the charisma of principals. They assert that “leadership is not a position but an activity” (Heifetz & Sinder, 1990, p. 194). A leader should not pull rabbits from a hat; like a charismatic leader does. A leader should instead become “a guide, interpreter, and stimulus of engagement, rather than a source of answers” (Heifetz & Sinder, 1990, p. 194). Fullan (2001, p. 115) strengthens this argument by identifying the main problem of charismatic leaders as the ability to “generate short-term external commitment at best, and at worst, dangerous dependency”. But downplaying the role of charisma in leadership is not without challenges. Part of the problem of broadening conceptions of leadership is that it is not always straightforward, especially if principals are used to making all the decisions, and if educators still expect this of them (Stoll, 1999).

2.2.2.3. Emotional Leadership

While theories of transformational school leadership were gaining ground in the 1990's, paradoxically concerns were also raised about this period being the “decade of neglect of school leadership” (Fullan, 2003b). While it was accepted that psychological studies had broken the dominance of traditional school administrative studies over school leadership studies, it was argued that the dependency on the charisma of the principal as demanded by transformational leadership theory created emotional needs of leaders and followers that needed to be fulfilled. In addition, transformational school leaders were expected to

fulfil the emotional needs of all stakeholders in their schools. This conception gained ground among the growing breed of “new age managers”. Principals had to have what was quickly coined by Salovey and Mayer as “emotional intelligence” and “emotional leadership theory” was posited (Salovey, Brackett, & Mayer, 2004). Theorists that address emotional leadership issues (Goleman, 2002; Goleman, Boyatzis & McKee, 2002; Fineman, 2000; Blackmore, 1996; Hargreaves, 2003; James & Connolly, 2001 and Loader, 1997) provide many guidelines for the use of emotional leadership theory in schools. Loader (1997) provides a thoughtful and detailed theorisation of “emotions” as it is used in emotional leadership theory and there is no need to repeat them here. However I point to it to highlight the focus of emotional leadership theory on the “*person*” (personal emotions).

Emotional leadership is not simply about leaders being nice, rather it is the realisation that a lack of emotional leadership leads to an impairment of social skills and a diminishment of the sum total of the group’s emotional intelligence (Goleman, Boyatzis, & McKee, 2002). Others claim that emotional leadership is a fundamental requirement of school leadership because “schools are emotional arenas because of the special nature of their work” (James & Connolly, 2001, p. 75). However, the positional leader (principal) does not necessarily have to be the emotional leader in schools. Emotional leadership is given by others if the principal does not exhibit this leadership behaviour.

Leithwood, Jantzi and Steinbach (1999) link emotions to cognition. They claim that what leaders do depends on what they think and this depends on values and moods, among other things. This linkage between emotions and cognition is supported by Mitchell and Tucker (1992) who assert that:

“leadership is less a matter of aggressive action than a way of thinking and feeling- about ourselves, about our jobs, and about the nature of the educational process” (Mitchell & Tucker, 1992, p. 31).

When emotions are linked to cognition as outlined above, the implication for understanding leadership is to question how principals’ thinking is connected to their leadership orientations. But thought processes are not neutral or predictable. This poses a

challenge to the researcher as to how to ask the principals about their leadership thinking. Gardner (1995) offers a solution to this challenge when he states that:

“confronted with the phenomenon of leadership, a cognitively oriented scientist is likely to ask such questions as, what are the ideas (or stories) of the leader? How have they developed? How are they communicated, understood and misunderstood? How do they interact with other stories, especially competing counterstories that have already drenched the consciousness of audience members? How do key ideas (or stories) affect the thoughts, feelings, and behaviors of other individuals?” (Gardner, 1995, p. 16).

Emotional theorists posit the importance of emotions in understanding leadership. The importance of two of these emotions, namely hope and passion are highlighted by Hargreaves and Fullan (1998). While they are from the “West” they look at the achievements in the new South Africa as examples of hope. They point out that “a black leader now rose to rule South Africa” and that “it is important to hang on to and pursue our hopes in education and to create the conditions in which hopefulness can bloom” (Hargreaves & Fullan, 1998, p. 60). With hope, comes passion. Put simply “teaching is a passionate vocation” (Hargreaves & Fullan, 1998, p. 51). But hope and passion on their own are not enough. Therefore they caution that “expecting individuals to change without offering any institutional support is politically manipulative and dishonest” (Hargreaves & Fullan, 1998, p. 59). Blackmore (Blackmore, 1996, p. 347) sounds an important caution about the un-critical use of emotional leadership theory. She points out that while the literature on emotional leadership concentrates on emotions, only positive emotions are discussed and therefore we should first “theorise emotion better”. Negative emotions like stress, envy, anger and despair are equally important but neglected in the literature. Hargreaves and Fullan (1998) do address the negative emotion of stress which is relevant in the changing context of South Africa. They point out that the effects of change are the main causes of principals’ stress as follows:

“multiple innovations and endless change make it impossible to feel competent, and ultimately lead to depletion of energy and loss of hope” (Hargreaves & Fullan, 1998, p. 55).

Why is emotional leadership important in this study? The use of emotional leadership theory has many implications for the principal as explained above. Additionally, emotional leadership may be more suited to address some of the challenges brought about by the changing South African educational context. One of the major challenges was teaching in the newly created multi-cultural classrooms. Hargreaves (2001, p. 1062) found that “more and more children belong to cultures that are different from and unfamiliar to those of their teachers”, leading to a socio-cultural distance. How can principals address this situation? Principals may use the tenets of emotional leadership not to assimilate different cultures but to “work together *towards* creating more common ones” (Hargreaves, 2001, p.1068. Original emphasis).

While the literature presents arguments for the adoption of emotional leadership theory by principals, the claims of emotional leadership theorists did not go unchallenged. Critics (Boler, 1999; Fineman, 2000) argued that emotional leadership theory does not address the shortcomings of transformational leadership theory as was claimed. Instead emotional and transformational leadership theory share similar shortcomings in that they are sold on charisma and are embedded in social control. Boler (1999, p. 58) is particularly scathing in her criticism of emotional leadership and the use of emotional intelligence by claiming that it was advanced only because emotions are “profitable to global capitalism”. Furthermore, emotional leadership does not take into account gendered and cultural differences and has particular limitations because it is based on the “white male” dominant view. Fineman (2000) joins in the critique of emotional intelligence but is more compensatory in that he promotes the view that while emotional intelligence has value, it does not have absolute value. Fineman maintains that the intellectual quotient (IQ) of the principal has to be respected in equal measure with that of emotional quotient. Another criticism of emotional leadership theory raises the question of the agenda of emotional intelligence protagonists. If there is no single “recipe” to attaining emotional intelligence, and the role of the trainer is critical to train the “emotionally less intelligent” then the dependence on the trainer becomes a priority. If this is the case, whose agenda is being advanced by the emotional theorists? If principals choose to become emotional leaders, it might be assumed that principals make this choice because they “care”. This may not necessarily be the case as Loader (1997, p.

102) declares that “caring is within a culture...(but) caring can have some patronizing overtones”.

2.2.2.4. Distributed Leadership

Despite their shortcomings, transformational and emotional leadership theorists succeeded in shifting the focus of leadership away from the traditional hierarchies of power in schools. But this is as far as they went. The advent of democracy, especially in schools brought about a new context which needed to be explained by a different type of leadership theory. It came as no surprise that the advancement of theoretical democratic ideals contributed to the empowerment of people in organisations. For schools, this meant that the ever-increasing demands of leadership could no longer be the sole responsibility of the principal. Gronn (1995) began to see that authority and influence were not necessarily being allocated to those occupying formal administrative positions. This philosophy showed greater resonance with democratic contexts and leadership came to be understood as being “stretched over” many people across schools’ social and situational contexts. This collaborative leadership effort was quickly termed “distributed leadership”.

What gave impetus to the acceptance of distributed leadership theory in schools? The complexities of change, especially in South Africa together with changing definitions of leadership made defining the principals’ roles as leaders very difficult. An example of the definition of leadership which makes increasing demands on principals is given by Spillane, Halverson and Diamond (2004) who define school leadership as the identification, acquisition, allocation, coordination, and use of the social, material and cultural resources necessary to establish the conditions for the possibility of teaching and learning. Given this definition, it is easy to understand that the demands made on principals are very wide and difficult to be accomplished by the principal only. Elmore (1999, p. 15) uses this argument to emphasise that “in a knowledge –intensive enterprise like teaching and learning, there is no way to perform complex tasks without widely distributing the responsibility for leadership”. This added to the impetus for the development of distributed leadership theory.

Distributed leadership focuses on how leadership practice is distributed among both positional and informal leaders. Distributed leadership is stretched over people and situations and it is not the same as delegated leadership. Spillane, Halverson and Diamond (2001, p. 27) make a convincing argument that “while individual leaders and their attributes do matter in constituting leadership practice, they are not all that matters”. Other things that matter and that co- constitute the elements of leadership include other school leaders and the school situation (material artefacts, tools, language etc). This implies that experiences of leadership in this study has to include the role of school leaders other than the principal and has to take the varied social/cultural/political South African context into account. Theorists of distributed leadership based their theories on analytical rather than on normative conceptions. This was an important departure from typical writings on leadership which were based on normative conceptions. Normative conceptions mean that a desired view is first articulated and evidence is then produced to support that view. Distributed theorists relied on analytic conceptions as the point of departure and used the *practice* of school leadership as the unit of analysis. Spillane, Halverson and Diamond (2001) consider distributed leadership to be an extension of transformational leadership because it supports transformational leadership in its ability to empower others, but changes the focus to *how* leadership is actually practiced. Distributed leadership is thus about the “how” of school leadership and not the “what” of school leadership.

Spillane, Halverson and Diamond (2004) make the case for distributed leadership theory as follows:

“We argue that understanding the *what* of leadership is essential, but that without a rich understanding of *how* leaders go about their work, and *why* leaders do and think what they do, it is difficult to help other school leaders think about and revise their practice” (p.10).

The above definition highlights the importance of the “thinking” of the principal. This implies that the role of cognition must be explored in principals’ experiences of leadership and confirms that distributed leadership theory focuses on the person (principal) as well as the practice of leadership. Elmore’s (1999) model of distributed leadership also puts the focus on the person (principal) but does not go as far as the transformational theorists for whom the charisma of the principal seemed to be most

important. While Elmore insists that principals model desired values and behaviours, this has to be accompanied by collective responsibility of stakeholders for learning of learners.

The swing towards distributed leadership also influenced business models of leadership. Senge (1996) challenges business models that rely on being driven from the top to effect significant changes in business. Instead he identifies local line leaders, executive leaders and internal networkers or community builders as different types of leaders who are all needed to effect leadership. I point to this business model because it also provides interesting cues for school leadership. In a similar way, the challenge of school leadership to build professional communities and learning organisations cannot be the responsibility of the principal alone. In Senge's words:

“these challenges cannot be met by isolated heroic leaders. They will require a unique mix of different people, in different positions, who lead in different ways”
(Senge, 1996, p. 57).

Advocates of distributed leadership theory emphasise that leadership is not the prerogative of the principal only. Crowther, Kaagan, Ferguson and Hann (2002) extend this leadership prerogative to educators while Levin (2000) extends it even further to a lesser known domain, namely that of student leadership. Extending leadership to different stakeholder components is part of the new educational dispensation in South Africa and distributed leadership is well suited to this. However the question that needs to be asked in this study is “how do principals see their practices in relation to distributed leadership theory and how does this in turn influence their experiences of leadership”.

2.2.2.5. Ethical Leadership

School leadership debates often revolve around the differences between conceptions of management and of leadership. This debate is often simplified as the dilemma of choosing between “doing things right” or “doing the right thing”. This dilemma is articulated in a field of school leadership known as ethical / moral leadership and increasingly there is an awareness of the ethics of school leadership in the literature

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(Campbell, 1997; Sergiovanni, 2000; Starratt, 1991; Strike, Haller, & Soltis, 1998). However this awareness is marred by what Campbell (1997, p. 288) calls “relativist and subjective interpretations of ethical values” that seeks to downplay the importance of ethical issues. The issue of morals immediately raises the pervasive question of “whose values, anyway should define what is right and what is wrong?” (Campbell, 2003, p. 13). Fullan (2003b) acknowledges that this question makes the issue of moral leadership difficult but he is quick to point out that moral purpose is what really underpins the role of public schools in a democracy. This moral purpose simply states that public education exists for the common good as follows:

“As the main institution for fostering cohesion in an increasingly diverse society, publicly funded schools must serve all children, not simply those with the loudest or most powerful advocates” (Fullan, 2003b, p. 3).

This moral purpose and the dilemma of choosing between doing things right and doing the right thing occupy a paradoxical position in leadership. While it is clearly expected that school principals be ethical leaders, “the conceptual complexities of translating theoretical prescriptions into practical action seem at times insurmountable” (Campbell, 1997, p. 287).

Morality and ethics are social constructs that have different meanings and validation for different principals because they are based on particular world views. Critics use this argument to state that while moral theorists may be clearly focused on domains of morality, they are less clear about the way in which moral aims can be achieved. That is, they are focused on the “what” and not on the “how” of ethical leadership. But even if there is no prescription to morality, it does not mean that moral principles cannot be used as foundation principles for leadership. Moral leadership theory is based on this premise. The moral person is one who is able “to express the right emotions at the right time, in the right way, through acquired *emotional skills*” (Boler, 1999, p. 61). That is, morality is seen through skills of industry. Moral leadership pushes principals to address the fundamental ‘why’ questions to build a moral compass on which to base leadership decisions (Fink, 2000).

What do principals do when they are faced with moral dilemmas? Campbell (1997, p. 290) asserts that the majority of principals operate at institutional or societal levels in

which decisions are “based primarily on policy and prevailing norms of behaviour, even when this conflicts with personal ethical reasoning”. This begs the question of how principals understand their leadership role, especially when the leadership practice that is expected from them conflicts with their personal value systems. Can past experiences help principals in this dilemma? The lessons of the past in South Africa are painful reminders of how something can be termed moral in one political setting and completely immoral in another political setting. South Africa’s uncertainty about past experiences is similar to the British perspective in that “many moral certainties of the past have been publicly questioned and rejected” (Campbell, 1997, p. 292). If past experiences are unreliable references points for ethical leadership, what can principals rely on to base their judgements of morality? Sergiovanni (2001) identifies moral authority as one of three sources of authority that the school principal can rely on, with the other two sources being bureaucratic and personal authority.

What does moral authority mean? Fullan (2003a) accedes that there is no clear answer on how to implement the moral imperative but he provides a way of thinking that enables a deeper engagement with the morality question. This way of thinking is to foreground the “why” question and not to get lost in the “how-to” questions. Other theorists like Strike, Haller and Soltis (1998) focus on raising awareness of moral questions in the complexities involved in school leadership issues. For example, moral issues can be raised about school’s admission policies. Do admission policies promote access to all learners as the South African constitution dictates? Given the past imbalances in South Africa based on race, should admission policies be based on affirmative action to accelerate racial transformation in schools? Do principals understand the moral issues inherent in their admission policies?

Moral issues are also raised about principals who focus on achieving high pass rates above all else to demonstrate efficiency. Fullan maintains that:

“schools can get results in test scores in two or three years using intensive, relatively prescriptive strategies, without establishing a basis for going further – indeed perhaps doing the opposite by burning people out. The moral imperative as I have argued goes well beyond achievement scores” (Fullan, 2003a, p. 51).

Fullan (2001, p. 28) concludes that “moral purpose and sustained performance of organizations are mutually dependent”. Campbell (1997) provides some insight on how to develop moral purpose. She asks for “deep and genuine reflection” on the part of principals but she cautions that this is no guarantee that it will “necessarily make a value more morally and ethically desirable” (Campbell, 1997, p. 289). The only guarantee may come from seeing leadership as “constantly refined through thinking, and action, thinking, action, etc” (Fullan, 1995, p. 13).

What implications does ethical leadership theory have for principals' experiences of leadership? While Campbell (1997) is aware of the ineffectiveness of producing generic ethical codes for practice, Starratt (1991) provides an overarching moral framework for the practice of ethical leadership. He simplifies the moral issues of principals by proposing a model which categorises leadership as being “response-able as, to and for” a variety of stakeholders. The aim of this model is not to produce another ethical theory but to “bring ethical themes developed by other theorists into a multidimensional construct” that will help principals to understand leadership. It is for this reason that I privilege discussion of this model over other models (Starratt, 1991, p. 186). While there may not be “the one best way” in any leadership situation, Starratt joins the ethics of “critique, justice and caring” to provide an effective framework to consider ethics in leadership issues. The ethic of critique confronts both the “adversarial, contractual mindset of the unions, as well as the hierarchically structured, impersonality of the administration of the school” (Starratt, 1991, p. 189). The ethic of justice “demands that the claims of the institution serve both the common good and the rights of the individuals in the school” (Starratt, 1991, p. 194). Starratt's later work on ethical leadership (2004) extended his trio of ethical constructs to include three “virtues” of educational leadership namely “responsibility, presence and authenticity” that provide further guidelines for the consideration of ethical leadership. While Starratt's model provides a way for principals to be ethical leaders, does this mean that it can be applied to all principals? Campbell (1997, p. 290) thinks not, because the problem is that principals usually only see their decisions as “strategic, practical, professional or political” and rarely do they see their problems as ethical in nature. Not seeing the ethical dimension does not mean that it does not exist?

2.2.2.6. Sustainable Leadership

While different theories of leadership posit guidelines for the current practice of leadership, they say little about how leadership can be sustained over time. This gap in the literature led to the more recent development of sustainable leadership theory. It is easy to understand that the profound changes in the education system in general and in schools in particular are priorities that need to be sustained in the new democratic South Africa. It is even easier to assume that sustainable leadership is a later priority. Not so, according to Hargreaves and Fink (2003a) who posits that sustainability is the first thing that a principal has to start planning for and not the last thing. He contends that sustainable school leadership has to be considered by the principal at the time of assuming the leadership role and not when bringing it to a close as is more typically the case.

What then is sustainable leadership? Is sustainability the same as maintainability? Hargreaves and Fink (2003a) argue that to equate sustainability with maintainability is to trivialise sustainability. Sustainable leadership theory builds on the foundation built by distributed leadership theory. Sustainable leadership is crucial, since “in a complex, fast-paced world, leadership cannot rest on the shoulders of the few” (Hargreaves & Fink, 2003a, p. 696). There is no place here for a charismatic, invincible leader. In the South African educational context, sustainable leadership is critical because “the emphasis on change has obliterated the importance of continuity” (Hargreaves & Fink, 2003a, p. 699). Sustainable leadership makes the point that “sustainable improvement develops and draws on resources and support at a rate that can match the pace of change (Hargreaves & Fink, 2003a, p. 694). Do policy makers understand this? If so, how will it influence principals' experiences of leadership?

In South Africa and the United States of America, one of the results of change is the emphasis on “high stakes testing”. When high stakes testing is valued over other types of evaluation, this leads to short term gains in test scores at the expense of long-term teaching and learning practices. The high stakes agenda is based on standardisation, which Hargreaves and Fink (2003a) claim is the enemy of sustainability. They

developed their earlier work to refine sustainable leadership. This is an important contribution to the field and warrants a full quotation as follows:

“Sustainable leadership matters, spreads and lasts. It is a shared responsibility, that does not unduly deplete human or financial resources, and that cares for and avoids exerting negative damage on the surrounding educational and community environment. Sustainable leadership has an activist engagement with the forces that affect it, and builds an educational environment of organizational diversity that promotes cross-fertilisation of good ideas and successful practices in communities of shared learning and development” (Hargreaves & Fink, 2003a, p. 8).

Sustainable leadership has important implications in the South African context as it claims to secure success over time while addressing issues of social justice without depleting human and material resources (Hargreaves & Fink, 2003b).

3. Rewarding Leadership Theories

3.1. Interpretive Definitions

What are “rewards”? The dilemma of answering such an “open” question is consistent with the intellectual struggles that I have had throughout this study. These struggles come from delimiting and defining the core of the broad study of leadership in accordance with my topic of principals’ *experiences* of leadership while at the same time maintaining resonance within my chosen interpretive (and not for example, the post modern / critical / other) paradigm throughout the chapters. It is for this reason that I look at reward from the perspective of its potential to understand leadership and not at reward *per se*. Given this interpretivist stance, I fully agree that this is my interpretation of the findings and that it is very possible for another researcher to arrive at perfectly valid alternative sets of conclusions based on a different perspective.

Drawing on the interpretive paradigm, I delve into several related fields in order to theorise reward. It is in this vein that I choose to orientate the theorising of reward based on the definition below. While there are many definitions of reward, I quote the following definition because of its broader definition, its possible applicability to this study and its link to the field of psychology (which I explore later on in this chapter).

Reward is:

- i. something given or *received* in recompense for worthy behavior or in retribution for evil acts.
- ii. money offered or given for some special service, such as the *return* of a lost article or the capture of a criminal.
- iii. a satisfying *return* or result; profit.
- iv. the *return* for performance of a desired behavior; positive reinforcement- from the field of Psychology (Joseph, 2000. Emphasis added).

What the different statements in the above definition highlight are the commonality of “return / recompense”. In this way, I see reward as a “return” to something that has happened in the life of the principal. This is a reference to the biographical influences of principals that their narratives alluded to earlier. Will “rewards” that are linked to the biography of principals be able to explain how principals come to understand school leadership?

3.2. Rewards and Contemporary Educational Systems

3.2.1. Orientation

Rewards can be arbitrarily differentiated into external and internal categories based simply on their commonly used meanings:

- External rewards – rewards that come from the “outside” and does not come from the principal directly. These are usually material in nature;
- Internal rewards – rewards that come from within the principal. These are usually psychological in nature.

3.2.2. External Rewards

3.2.2.1. Validation Rewards

External validation rewards are commonly used as incentives for school principals. External validation rewards often take the form of elaborate award ceremonies for schools and principals who are deemed to be performing excellently. Typically the criteria for these awards are the exit examination of learners because these examinations are administered by a larger Education Departmental structure to many schools in a region (state, county, province) and is seen as the most “objective” criteria with which to compare schools. This validation is strengthened by the publication of school’s pass rates in the form of league tables in the popular media. External validation rewards are also used as a means of motivating principals who are trying to improve their pass rates. An example of this may be poorly performing schools / principals who win awards for having made the most improvements in the pass rate.

3.2.2.2. Financial Rewards

In an effort to address the obvious disadvantages of focussing only on the pass rate of a school as an indicator of school success, more comprehensive evaluation instruments do exist. Success according to these instruments is often linked to a financial reward. In South Africa, an example of this is the recent Integrated Quality Management System (IQMS) for all educators (including principals) that was implemented in 2003. This instrument addresses principals’ performances across twelve different components (called performance standards) as follows:

- Creation of a positive learning environment;
- Knowledge of curriculum and learning programmes;
- Lesson planning preparation and presentation;
- Learner assessment / achievement;
- Professional development in field of work / career and participation in professional bodies;
- Human relations and contribution to school development;
- Extra-curricular and co-curricular participation;
- Administration of resources and records;
- Personnel;

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- Decision making and accountability;
- Leadership, communication and servicing the governing body;
- Strategic planning, financial planning and education management development.

The strength of IQMS lies in the comprehensiveness of the different performance criteria (listed above), the inclusion of peer review mechanisms and in its built-in consideration of contextual factors at individual schools. Achievement of the performance standards leads to financial rewards for principals. However, it is questionable whether principals recognise the validity of the performance criteria or whether the lure of the financial rewards are the main reason for demonstrating compliance with IQMS. If the latter is true, then IQMS will lead to principals simply demonstrating compliance / achievement of the IQMS performance standards for the purpose of an increased external financial reward. This will not necessarily lead to principals developing reflexive, critical, practice-based school leadership.

3.2.2.3. Status Rewards

President George Bush signed the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) of 2001 into United States law on January 8, 2002. The achievement of its benchmarks, especially in adequate yearly progress (AYP) confers on schools the status of high achieving schools. Parents have the right to move their children to these magnet schools. Critics claim that this will further punish those schools who do not meet the NCLB criteria. The “status” awards of NCLB raises accountability standards for educators but it is based on a narrow focus on basic reading and mathematical skills. Demonstrating achievement in these skills can easily be manipulated and currently there are several schools whose test scores are being investigated (McKenzie, 2006). In South Africa, status awards are primarily through the publication of league tables. However, status rewards do little to fundamentally change the quality of teaching. If anything, status rewards may increase the gaps between “magnet” schools and other schools for which I coin

the term “sponge” schools. Sponge schools soak up all learners (typically those who pose a risk to the pass rate) that are left behind by the magnet schools.

3.2.3. Internal Rewards

While I have discussed external rewards such as validation ceremonies and financial rewards, these types of rewards can also be linked to internal rewards. For example, an external validation ceremony may buy “capital” for the school / principal and this capital may bring rewards other than material rewards such as increased status and self-esteem. Internal rewards may include subjective criteria such as emotional fulfilment, validation of one’s belief system and feelings of success.

The thrust of IQMS, together with the need to uniformly “professionalise” principals has seen the Department of Education develop six “Standards” for South African principals (The Teacher, 2007). These standards can be found in the appendix (Appendix 5). Only one of these standards makes a direct reference to accountability to the State with reference to “assuring quality”. As I have demonstrated in this study, quality can quickly become conflated with the “pass rate” especially in accountability driven systems. Therefore, it is important to see that there are five other standards that not linked directly to the pass rate. These standards focus on among other things, managing the school, developing the school, empowering others and working with and for the community. This helps in indicating a clear policy shift away from the constant focus on the pass rate (external rewards) and towards more internal rewards.

3.2.4. Internal Rewards versus External Rewards: The Controversy

The development of school leadership theories started with appropriating business/management leadership theories. External rewards are the cornerstones of business management and this is well illustrated by the following:

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“You don't get what you hope for, ask for, wish for or beg for. You get what you reward”. (Le Boeuf, 1985)

Most business managers argue that by rewarding people (usually with financial rewards), performance will increase and employees will become happier. Other business managers (or workplace psychologists) try to find a balance between external and internal rewards. Adam (2006) like Handy (1993) seeks to extend Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory (2007) and looks at the relationship between internal and external rewards. Adam's equity theory balances the inputs (what I put into the job) and the outputs (what rewards do I get for this). However, in this theory, external rewards are still seen as the key for workplace performance. Similarly, Vroom's expectancy theory on motivation and management (2007) also sees a positive correlation between efforts and performance. However, Vroom makes an important departure in that there has to be a desire to satisfy a need (internal reward) that is strong enough to make the effort worthwhile. Neither internal nor external rewards on their own provide an explanation for effective leadership.

The controversy about external versus internal rewards quickly made its way into other fields, notably that of psychology. Psychologists were opposed to the behaviourist approach of business managers and have engaged them in a raging debate that has spanned over the last two decades. An important counter argument is made by the Self-Determination theory of psychologists, which posits that expected, tangible, extrinsic rewards undermine intrinsic motivation, and further asserts that the most detrimental reward involves giving rewards as a direct function of people's performance (Deci, Koestner, & Ryan, 1999). I consider both competing views of reward, namely

- external rewards lead to internal rewards;
- external rewards undermine internal rewards;

and use it initially to help develop an explanatory model of leadership. The details of the model are explained later on in this chapter.

3.3. Learning about Rewards: Learning Theories

Are rewards learnt? If principals' leadership understandings are linked to rewards, then understanding how rewards are learnt becomes important. Not all rewards are the same and therefore the learning process is different for different types of rewards. Schultz (2007) draws a difference between basic rewards and higher order rewards (behavioural processes constituting leadership) and argues that the human brain deals with higher order **leadership** rewards differently. While basic rewards are polysensory with the brain extracting the reward information from the sense organs without engaging in specialised reward receptors, higher order rewards (like leadership) are connected to cognitive processes with the brain having clearly differentiated structures to process them. Schultz (Schultz, 2007) graphically demonstrates this very well and it is not necessary to reproduce the diagram here. The implication that I draw from Schultz is that the rewards of leadership are defined by clear cognitive processes and by the behavioural reactions that these induce. This means that rewards linked to leadership behaviour can be actively learnt by specialised areas of the brain. To understand how active learning about leadership rewards occurs, I look at what learning theories have to offer.

Learning theories suggest different ways in which principals may learn about rewards associated with leadership. Theorists like Mergel (1998) and Conner (2007) believe that the basics of learning theories are rooted in three (or four) main schools of thought, namely behaviourism, cognitivism and constructivism as follows:

- Behaviourism is linked directly to external rewards. When the stimulus is equated to external rewards, classical conditioning can result and reward for leadership action will be learnt as a behavioural act. Put simply "rewards induce changes in observable behavior" (Schultz, 2007). This type of learning about reward will be entrenched if the reward is re-enforced (Lewis, 2006). If principals see external reward as valuable, then these external rewards can be used to reinforce that behaviour which is associated with the reward. An example of this is (financial) reward for maintaining a high pass rate;

- Cognitivism relies on an internal schema or internal knowledge structure that will determine learning and determine how rewards are learnt. It relies on experiential and discovery learning about rewards;
- Constructivism relies on individualistic construction of reality. This knowledge is actively constructed from past experiences of rewards and learning about rewards to construct a personal interpretation of the world (Mergel, 1998);
- Educational psychologists also add Humanism as another learning theory, which posits that learning about rewards occurs primarily through reflection on personal experience and that learning occurs as a result of intrinsic motivation (Conner, 2007).

What implications do these learning theories have for how principals understand the rewards of leadership? External rewards may help in changing / modifying behaviour but this is hardly leadership behaviour. Personal experience may lead to internal knowledge and an individualistic construction of reality. However, it is primarily through **reflection** of personal experiences and its corresponding **association** with reward structures that determines how principals learn to understand leadership.

4. Theoretical Framing (Parts 1 &2)

At the end of Chapter 2, I discussed the first part of theoretical framing of this study which focussed on the context of change in South Africa. In this chapter, I discussed the second part of the theoretical framing which focussed on leadership theories. However, the components of the theoretical framing must be considered as an integrated whole. For this reason, I integrate the following:

- **Context of change** in South Africa (**policy** imperatives regarding “standards”, desegregation, and democracy) at a more **contextual** level (Chapter 2);
- **Leadership**: meta- analysis at a more **theoretical** level, based on the “practice, person, context” categorisation (Chapter 3).

This integration, together with the implications that this has for principals, is summarised in the Table 3, presented over the next two pages. This layer of the theoretical framing provides useful reference points for understanding school leadership.

5. Concluding Thoughts

Since Chapters 2 and 3 should read as an integrated unit, I present an overview (in Figure 1) of both these chapters to graphically illustrate their connectedness with each other and with Chapter 1. The theoretical framing flowing from this forms the parameters within which to develop the lens to guide the methodology and to develop an analytic framework (Chapter 4) that will answer the critical question.

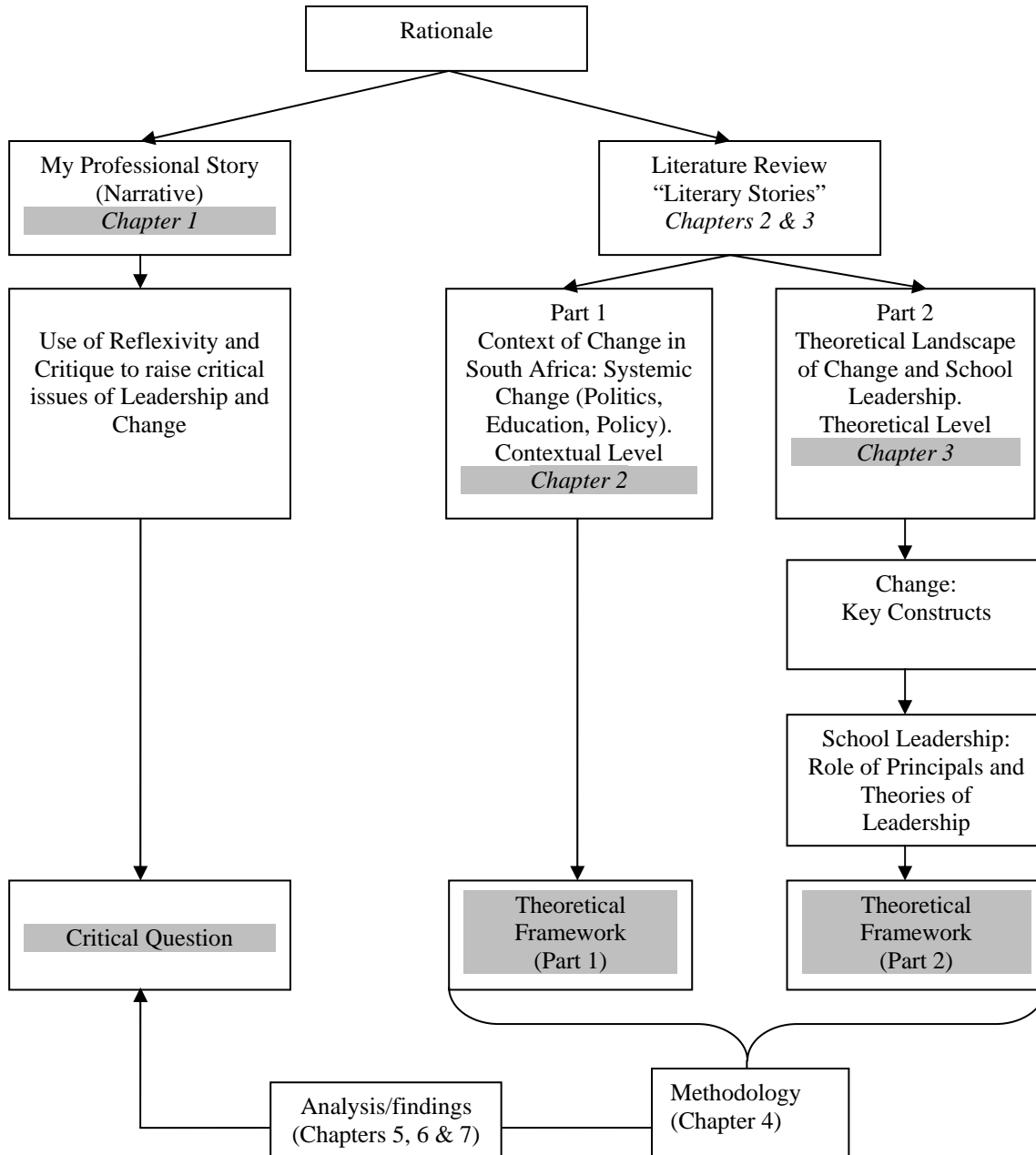


Figure 1. Development and Integration of Theoretical Framework

CHAPTER 4

METHODOLOGY

“The great challenge facing the storyteller and the historian alike is to get inside people’s heads, to stand where they stood and see the world as they saw it, to make some informed estimate of their motives and intentions – and this is precisely where recorded and recordable history cannot reach. Even when all the external evidence has been mastered, the only way into the protagonists’ heads is through the imagination” (Frayn, 1998, p. 97).

6. Introductory Remarks

In this chapter I discuss the research methodology for this study. The aim of the critical question is to explore principals’ experiences of school leadership in the context of change. I use this “exploratory” aim to locate this qualitative study firmly in the interpretive paradigm of social science research. Using this paradigm, I use the following theoretical constructs to guide the methodological approach in this study. These constructs indicate that:

- The purpose of the interpretive paradigm is to understand the world;
- Reality is constructed;
- Multiple viewpoints and many truths exist;
- Discourse is dialogic (Lather, 2001).

These constructs signal an open-ended approach to research that is suited to the “exploratory” aim of this study, namely the exploration of principals’ experiences of leadership. Similar to Lather’s (1992) approach in feminism which explores multiple, competing realities, I adopt an exploratory approach in this study and understand that this can lead to different but legitimate possibilities.

The above constructs also suggest that I can understand the reality of school leadership as experienced by principals through dialogue with them. To turn this dialogue into data, I chose a narrative approach and I have chosen school principals as the unit of analysis in this study. Phendla (2004) demonstrated effectively how particular life experiences affect individuals in their professional lives and this forms the basis of exploring principals' experiences through their stories. Since life experiences are embedded in memory (Soudien, 2006b), the principals' constructions of reality via their memory can be used to explore *experiences* of leadership. This is different from typical leadership studies in which leadership *practices* are investigated (often within the positivistic paradigm). Such studies are also often linked to large scale school effectiveness and efficiency studies. In this study, I make a case for the use of narrative methodologies to explore experiences of leadership by highlighting the "personal" challenges of school principals.

This chapter is divided into two main sections. In the first section of this chapter, I theorise the use of narrative methodology as data production and data analysis strategies. This also forms the last part of the literature review (which started in Chapter 2). In the second part of this chapter, I discuss how the theorising of the methodology was implemented in this study (practice).

2. Narrative Methodology: Theorising the Research Methodology

(Literary Story – Part 3)

2.1. Introduction: Limits and Potentialities of Narrative Methodologies

In this section I first discuss narrative methodologies as the methodological choice for this study by critiquing the contestations surrounding the use of narrative methodologies. Then I analyse the limits and potentialities of narrative methodologies to theorise the methodology used in this study. Finally, I show how this theoretical orientation of the methodology provides cues for data production and data analysis strategies.

2.2. What are Narratives?

“Narratives” and “story” are terms that are often used interchangeably. One reason for this is that narratives are not just simple descriptions and they often take on the form of stories. This usually happens in social science research because:

“stories make meaning. They operate at the level of semantics in addition to vocabulary and syntax... and that...stories are interpretive devices which give meaning to the present in terms of location in an ordered syntagmatic sequence” (Bruner, 2002, pp. 267-269).

But “story” and “narrative” are not synonymous and I take the view that there can be a mixture of both “story” and “narrative, following Bruner’s (2002, p. 269) lead in identifying “story” as being one of three key components of “narrative” with the other components being “discourse and telling”. “Story” is an abstract sequence of events, “discourse” is the relationship between the text and its context, and “telling” is the action or the communicative process. Put together, narratives can be defined as follows:

“structurally it is a sequence of temporally related events, more than a list, it has a beginning, a middle and end. A narrative adds up to “something” (Bell, 1999, p. 350).

Therefore, narratives are contextualised analysis and using this definition, I apply it to this study to guide the data production and analysis strategies.

2.3. Why Narratives?

Langellier’s (Langellier, 2001) lucid explanation suggests that the use of narrative, especially personal narrative, started to gain ground in social research after World War 2. It emerged from at least four contemporary movements namely, the narrative turn in human sciences, the memoir boom in literature and pop culture, the identity movements spanning American culture and transnational

emancipation efforts, and the burgeoning American therapeutic culture. I justify the use of narratives within the interpretive paradigm of this study using Feldman's (2001, p. 133) assertion that "the way of thinking that narrative cognition invites is interpretive". This is further supported by Kerby's (2001, p. 131) claim that narrative "is not a simple description but rather an interpretation. It is an important way in which our lives are understood". Bell's (1999) earlier definition of narratives adding up to something is open to interpretation. The unknown "something" that she associated with narratives signals that it is something that needs to be explored. This is in keeping with the aim and research paradigm (interpretive) of my critical question, namely to *explore* principals' experiences. Therefore, I have chosen to use narratives of principals to see what this "something" means with regard to their experiences of school leadership. By doing this, I position my study to address the gap that exists in the research base on principals and leadership. Morris, Crowson, Hurwitz, Porter-Gehrie, (1982, p. 68) provide a good reason why this gap exists; they reason that "although the literature on the school principal is voluminous, it tends to be prescriptive and hortatory rather than descriptive and empirical". This has resulted in research studies that are excessively preoccupied with questions of administrator / educator interaction, instructional leadership and school change. To address the gap in the qualitative research base on principals and leadership, I rely on the use of narrative methodologies in this study.

I emphasise again that the aim of this study focuses on principals' experiences and not practices of school leadership. However, I recognise that "experiences" are linked to action (practice) in a variety of ways. Kennedy (1984) links knowledge to practice effectively when she says that knowledge is the prerequisite for action. It is also information for informing thought and for enhancing professional judgment. Kane (2001, p. 265) supports Kennedy in that "identifying and understanding emotional structures embedded in spoken narratives may help us understand action". Tyler (quoted in Sergiovanni 2001) questions the type of understanding that Kane alludes to. Tyler asserts that by paying close attention to theory and research, principals heed the success stories

emerging from practice but have a conceptual rather than an instrumental view of such knowledge. This is also supported by Sergiovanni's (2001) who points out that "successful principals resist accepting a direct link between research and practice. They recognize instead that the purpose of research is to increase one's understanding and not to prescribe practices" (Sergiovanni, 2001, p. 154). Given the contestations regarding the link between "theory" and "practice", I aim to use narratives to explore how principals come to understand this link.

2.4. Narrative and Identity

The research on narrative methodology as an analytic strategy highlights issues of "identity" as an important consideration. I therefore include it in this section. Langellier (2001) also makes the case for identity in his three foci of the use of narrative methodology as follows:

- An initial focus on structural analysis and its semantic definitions;
- A second focus centred on textualisation (the linguistic and narrative strategies through which texts achieve coherence and structure to make meaning);
- A third focus on the functions of narrative. This asks how cognition and memory narrativise experience and *construct identity*, creating a sense of one's self in time. (Langellier, 2001, p. 700. Emphasis added).

Bell (1999) makes the final case for the link between narrative analysis and identity by claiming that narrative analysis:

"shows how structure, content, and interpretation are interwoven. It thereby provides a systematic way of understanding how people make events in their lives meaningful as well as how they engage in the ongoing construction of their *identities*" (Bell, 1999, p. 348. Emphasis added).

While it is not my intention to interrogate the concept of identity formation, I point to one of its key aspects, namely that of race as it cannot be ignored in the

racially transforming South African context. Okolie (2003) takes the issue of Bell's identity construction further by linking it firmly to race. He posits that in Africans, "identity formation and struggles are connected to rewards and punishments" and that recognition must be given to the changing nature of identity (Okolie, 2003, p. 5). While identity formation and its link to race is not the focus of this study, I take the view that it is an important consideration to be explored in the narrative of the principals.

2.5. Narrative Methodology and Validity Concerns

Because the term "story" is often used in non-academic writing, it may suggest that it does not meet the requirements of academic rigour when it is used in narrative methodologies. Ladson-Billings (1994) combination of "story" with "academia" offers a creative way of claiming validity. Her use of narratives

"offers a mixture of scholarship and story – of qualitative research and lived reality...Increasingly, in fields such as law, education, ethnic studies and feminist studies, story has gained credence as an appropriate methodology for transmitting the richness and complexity of cultural and social phenomena" (Ladson-Billings, 1994, p. x).

Narrative methodology answers to its own criteria of "trustworthiness". Mishler (1990) argues that the focus of the researcher's "adherence to formal rules or standardized procedures" so common in traditional qualitative studies must be changed to the researcher's tacit experiences of actual, situated practices in a particular field of enquiry. If the rules are changed, then standardised procedures of claiming validity may not be applicable to the field of narrative analysis. Instead "validity claims are tested through the ongoing discourse among researchers and in this sense, scientific knowledge is socially constructed" (Mishler, 1990, p. 415).

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This vague sense of socially constructed validity needs refinement. Mishler (2004) recognises that different researchers may tell different stories about what they claim are the same events in people's lives but he also recognises that the research participants are the historians of their own lives. As such, they tell and retell their stories in variant ways and thereby continually revise their identities. People story their lives differently depending on the occasion, audience, and the reason for telling. This revision and variation of identity can thus claim its own legitimacy and validity. Mishler (2004) posits this as an alternate to the traditional theories of identity development which rely on the notion that there is one primary or unifying identity that is represented in a singular storyline. I take this view of variations of identity to explore the possibility of "different stories" of principals in their narratives.

What implications do different stories have for validity? Maxwell (1992) sees no problem regarding validity in this regard since validity is always relative because understanding is relative. Maxwell emphasises that:

“validity is not an inherent property of a particular method, but pertains to the data, accounts, or conclusions reached by using that method in a particular context for a particular purpose” (Maxwell, 1992, p. 284).

Therefore, the need to identify the “particular purpose” is critical for it to answer to its own terms of validity. In this study, the purpose is to understand “lives-as-told” rather than “lives-as-lived” or “lives-as-experienced” (Bruner, 1986). That is, the purpose is to understand what is expressed, not necessarily what actually happens. Validity claims for this study still have to be rigorously interrogated, but it can be done using socially constructed scientific knowledge coming from the traditions of narrative analysis itself. Using this understanding, I claim legitimacy for the use of narrative analysis as a valid analytic tool to answer the critical question of this study.

2.6. Narrative Methodology as Data Production Strategy

It may seem strange to link the use of narrative methodology as data production strategy in social sciences to that of other fields like medicine (Charon, 2000) and social movement (Kane, 2001). However, narrative methodologies were used extensively and effectively in these fields and they provide very clear examples of the use of narrative methodologies as data production strategies which can be adapted to the educational field. For example, Luttrell's (2003) work in the medical field demonstrates how narrative methodology can be used to identify emotions, cultural patterns and their "continuities of meanings, social divisions / cultural conflicts and corresponding inner personal conflicts that individuals seek to resolve". Kane's (2001) work in the social movement field supports Luttrell's assertions and further explains that the use of narrative methodology is beneficial in that it "may provide a deeper understanding of the processes of meaning, identity, and ideological construction" (Luttrell, 2003, pp. 265-266). Applying these concepts, I justify the use of narrative methodologies as demonstrated in other academic fields, in my study as a data production strategy.

2.6.1. Narrative and Telling: Co-construction of Narratives

Henry (2003, pp. 231-240) asserts that while "participant accounts, like researcher accounts, are also contextually and historically specific, mediated versions of experience ... final texts are always mediated accounts, with the researcher's own interpretation woven into the words". I recognise this importance of both participants and researchers mediated experiences but I focus more on the notion of how these experiences lead to a co-construction of narratives. To explain why this is important, I restate one of Lather's (2001) theoretical constructs namely that "discourse is dialogic". This supports the notion that narratives are co-constructed and Williams (2001, p. 191) strengthens this by claiming that "narratives are necessarily co-authored". Bell has the final say in this by claiming that,

“narratives are not just the stories of tellers... They are jointly produced by tellers and listeners who are ‘social actors’ whose ‘social and cultural matrices’ are marked by gender, age, race, class and professional status” (Bell, 1999, p. 351).

I take Bell’s cue to declare my “listener” status as both principal and researcher and note its implication in the co-construction of the narratives. I recognise that I am integrating scholarly tools with my personal experiences and in this way diminishing the primacy of objectivity (Ladson-Billings, 1994). My personal experiences come from the process of “reflexivity”, through which one comes to know the self within the research process itself (Denzin & Lincoln, 2003, p. 283).

Does my positioning as a principal make me an “insider” researcher? Being a principal does not automatically confer on me an “insider” status when researching other principals. It may be argued that this may even be a case of “outsider” especially in the present environment of competitiveness that seems to characterise schools. Therefore, I agree with the classification of “insider researcher” only to the extent to which “insider” points to “privileged knowledge” and to the advantages that this brings. This is similar to the experience of Fink (Fink, 2000) who makes a compelling argument based on the value of the school principal as an insider researcher in schools. He contends that:

“educators with an extensive management background can, therefore, contribute insights into the complex interconnections and interrelationships among the various levels of schools and systems that others may not see or understand” (Fink, 2000, p. 165).

Harper (2000) goes further by linking insider researchers to having the benefits of cultural awareness as follows:

“Things taken for granted by a cultural insider (which rules are followed, which norms guide behavior that is not regulated by rules, and what areas

of social life lie primarily outside the perusal or rules) are not obvious to cultural outsiders” (Harper, 2000, p. 721).

In the co-construction, the participant does the “telling”. This telling is dependent on the data production strategy which includes data collection instruments. To produce the data in the “telling”, interviews have to be resonant with the narrative methodology chosen for this study. Lincoln and Guba (1985) provide good reasons why semi-structured interviews may be best suited for this study. Some of these reasons are that:

- interviews should be opportunities for principals to construct and deconstruct their own narratives by responding to open-ended questions or groups of questions that provide the stimulus for the telling;
- the same /similar questions in the interviews may be asked more than once;
- interviews must be set up to minimise the “voice” of the researcher while acknowledging that the principal’s narrative is co-constructed with the researcher (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Another reason for using semi-structured interviews is that the temporal ordering is not necessarily privileged either by the researcher or by the principal. This implies that principals must be allowed to dictate questions and choose to answer questions in order of their preference. Bulow and Hyden’s (2003, p. 72) warn against the researcher tending to “impose research-based temporal order” as there is a risk that this will dominate at the expense of other temporal orders.

2.6.2. Narrative and Discourse: From Interviews to Text

Interviews are typically recorded and transcribed. Interviews capture words. These words represent the raw data as texts. Discourse refers to the relationship between the text produced and its context. I take the view that analysis begins at this stage and I defer this discussion to the data analysis section. To conclude this section, I present an overview (in Figure 2) of the use of narrative methodology as a data *production* strategy in this study.

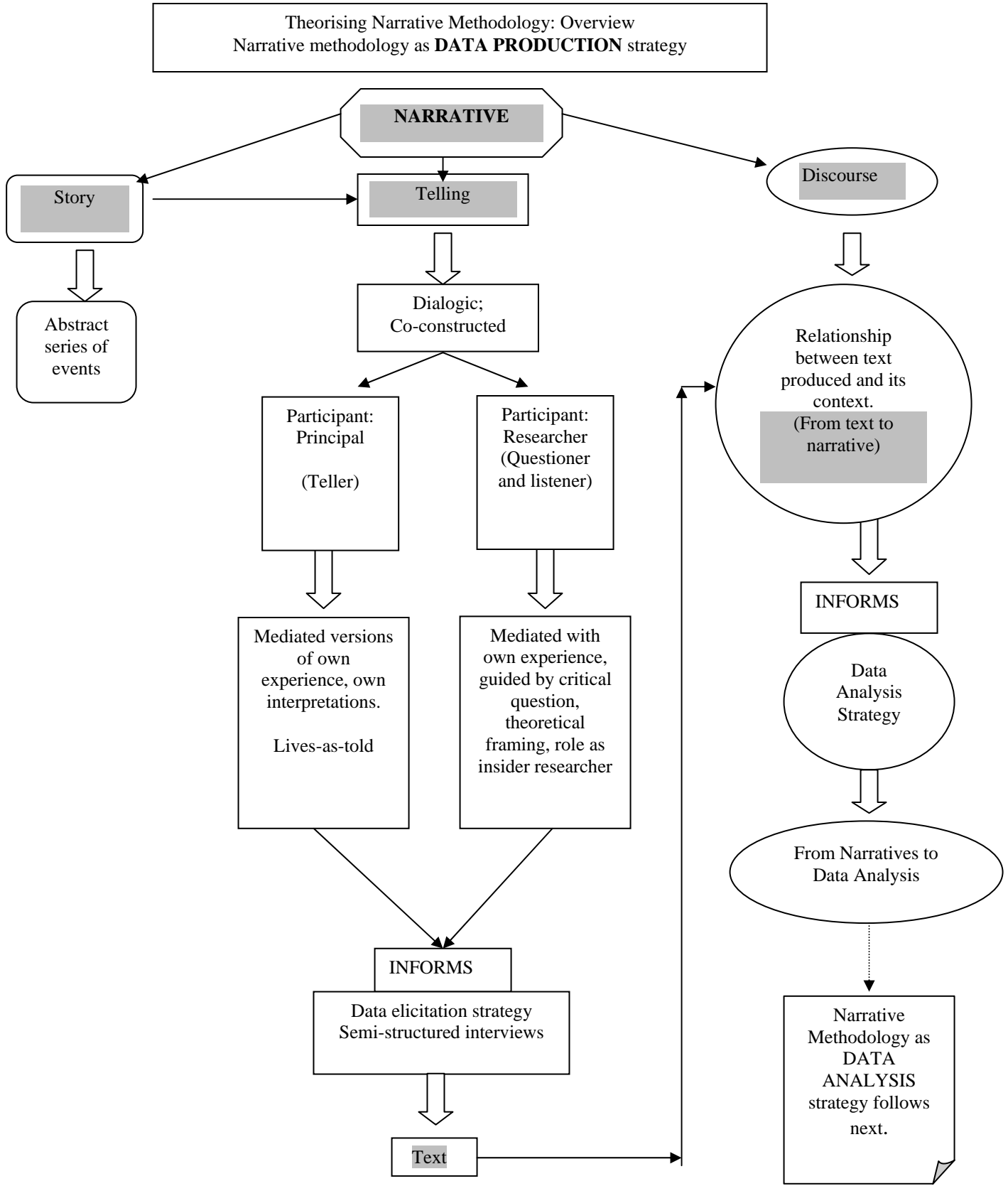


Figure 2. Narrative Methodology as Data Production Strategy

2.7. Narrative Methodology as Data Analysis Strategy: Narrative Analysis or Analysis of Narratives?

In this section, I theorise the use of narrative methodology as a data *analysis* strategy. Polkinghorne (1995) makes a good differentiation between narrative analysis and analysis of narrative. Put simply *narrative analysis* is used as the first level of analysis to turn the raw data into a narrative (commonly called a story but not to be confused with the definition of the “story” as an abstract series of events). After this, the narrative is analysed at the second level and I call this the *analysis of narrative*.

But what exactly is narrative analysis? Reissman (2003) definition is comprehensive enough to warrant a full quotation as follows:

“Narrative analysis in the human sciences refers to a family of approaches to diverse kinds of texts, which have in common a storied form. As nations and governments construct preferred narratives about history, so do social movements, organizations, scientists, other professionals, ethnic/racial groups, and individuals in stories of experience. What makes such diverse texts ‘narrative’ is sequence and consequence: events are selected, organized, connected, and evaluated as meaningful for a particular audience. Storytellers interpret the world and experience in it; they often create moral tales of how the world should be. Narratives represent storied ways of knowing and communicating” (Reissman, 2003, p. 705).

The stories that are produced are bound in time. Polkinghorne (1988) stresses that our stories are not complete and that we constantly revise the plots as new events are added to our lives. How does narrative analysis produce a story? There is a large array of analytic tools that can be used in narrative analysis. I do not wish to go into the fields of linguistic or discourse analysis but I do want to point to the work of Gee (1991) and Labov (1982) as important considerations in the selection of analytic tools of narrative analysis. Gee’s (1991) linguistic analysis in particular, provides a comprehensive system with which to code the data as the first level of data analysis.

Drawing from this system, I highlight the following guidelines, which can be used effectively in this study:

- texts are divided into strophes, stanzas, and lines
- each numbered line is made up of one or more idea units
- emphasis on words are capitalised
- main line parts of the plot are underlined

Labov (1982) adds to Gee's system and introduces the notions of "coda", "plot", "genre" and "speech acts". Together, they explain the meaning of each of these terms given and how they can be used in detail. Therefore, I do not repeat them here but wish to point to their main contribution to this study which is the concept of "idea units". This theorising of idea units provides a justification for its use as the first level of analysis in my study to produce descriptive understandings of leadership as "mindscapes". (Gough, 1994) theorises how to turn these mindscapes into factionalised stories which retain their authenticity as being representative of the participants' stories. The factionalised stories can then be analysed at the second level of analysis called the analysis of narrative. Polkinghorne (1995) reasons that this "analysis of narratives" involves using paradigmatic reasoning to trace common themes across stories, characters or settings and in this way produce analytical / conceptual understandings of leadership in this study. The details of the analytic frame used are discussed in detail later on in this chapter.

To conclude this section, I present an overview in Figure 3 of the use of narrative methodology as a data *analysis* strategy in this study.

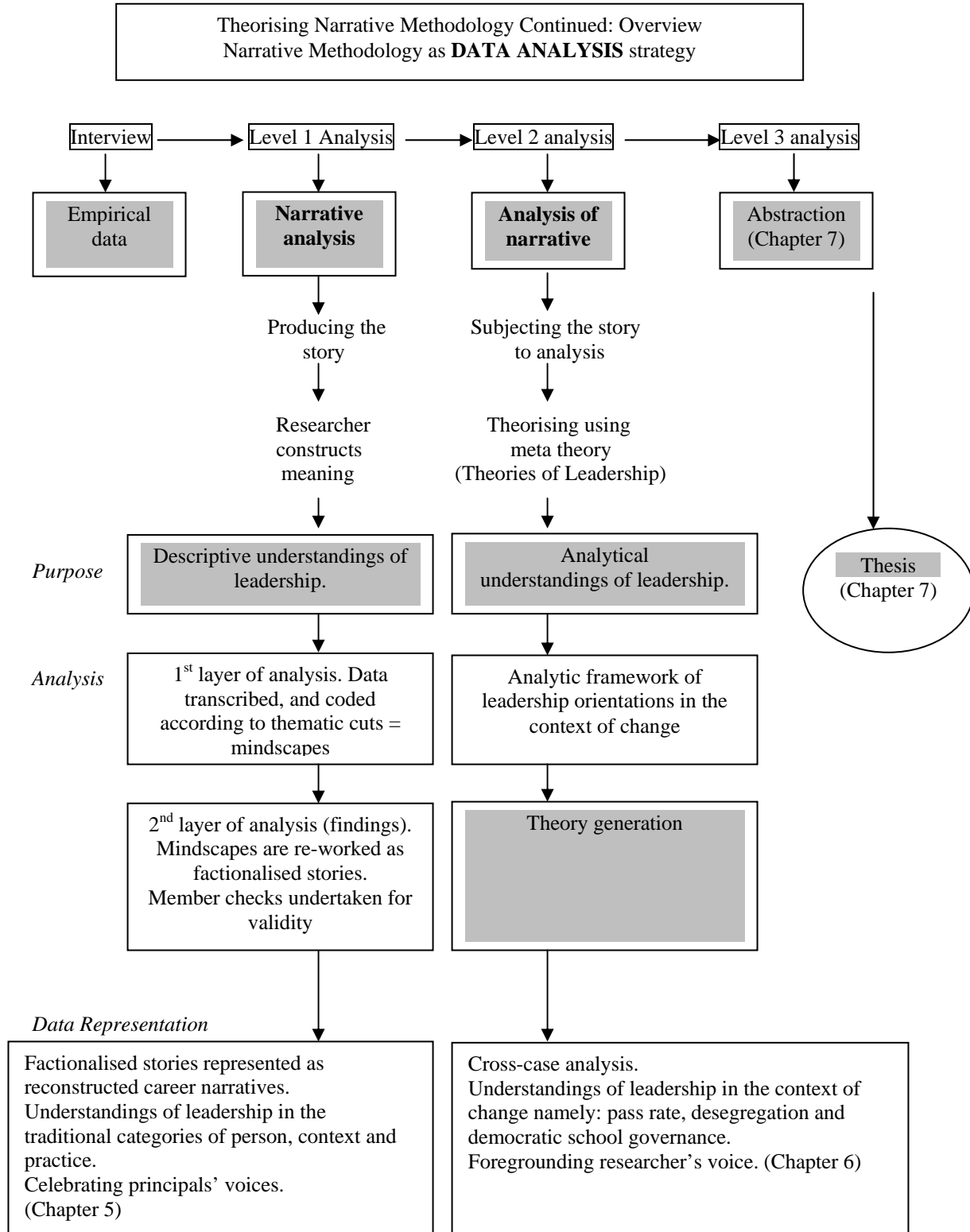


Figure 3. Narrative Methodology as Data Analysis Strategy

3. Narrative Methodology: From Theory to Practice

“... the whole possibility of saying or thinking anything about the world, even the most apparently objective, abstract aspects of it studied by the natural sciences, depends upon human observation, and is subject to the limitations which the human mind imposes, this uncertainty in our thinking is also fundamental to the nature of the world” (Frayn, 1998, p. 99)

In this section, I move the discussion from theorising about the choice of narrative methodology in this study to how it was implemented.

3.1. Selection of Sample.

In this study I explore principals' experiences of school leadership in the context of change. How did I choose the principals in the sample? This was linked closely to my rationale for this study. My experiences as a school principal highlighted many challenges to my understandings of leadership. Were my experiences unique? What about other principals' experiences? My school's physical location fell into a particular circuit (geographically demarcated area defined by the Department of Education for administrative purposes) which had seven, public, secondary schools. All the schools in this circuit are “managed” by the same administrative manager (SEM – Senior Education Manager) from the Department of Education. I was familiar with these schools and they shared many similarities. All of these schools had high pass rates (although not consistently) and the SEM's were very proud of the high pass rate at these schools. These schools were all either ex-HOD or ex-HOR schools. This meant that most of the learners and educators were Indian or Coloured but the increased demand for admissions from African learners was slowly changing the learner demographics. The principals of these schools were either Indian or Coloured with one recently appointed African principal. The appointment status of the principals were varied and ranged from experienced to temporary (acting) principals. While the schools shared these similarities, did this mean that all the principals in this circuit also shared a common understanding

of leadership in this circuit? Was the information based on my familiarity necessarily true? These schools were also different in terms of the racial classification of learners, educators and principals. Another important difference was the history of the school which determined where the school was geographically located and for which specific racial group the school was initially intended for. Would these and other differences influence the way leadership was understood by the principals? To answer the questions raised here, I relied on purposeful sampling. The sample included all principals of public schools (a total of 7, including myself) within an administratively demarcated area (under the supervision of the same Senior Educational Manager). This was an important consideration as these principals' experiences of leadership, and in particular, their experiences relating to the pass rate were linked to the leadership role of the Senior Manager. This was especially evident in the validation of Senior Managers of schools that obtained high pass rates in the annual "Awards" ceremony hosted by the kwa-Zulu-Natal Provincial Department of Education. As the critical question was already ambitious and framed broadly, extending the sample size would have introduced yet another variable (namely the influence of different Senior Educational Managers). This could have extended the thesis to a point of becoming unmanageable. A decision was taken to rely on narrative methodologies so that I could explore "deeper" into a smaller sample rather than "wider" into an extended sample. An initial survey of the schools (completed by the principals) confirmed the suitability of the schools to be included in the sample. The survey instrument is attached as Appendix 3.1.

Another important criterion that I considered was the issue of access to the principals and into the schools. My own experiences had shown me that the challenges of managing a public secondary school in this circuit was very demanding and time consuming. I wondered how I would find the time needed to conduct this research and to engage deeply with the participant principals. Choosing schools in closer proximity would help in terms of easier access to schools. I wondered whether participant principals will be willing to give up their time to participate in this study. I also wondered whether the principals will be happy to discuss sensitive matters about their schools knowing that I was also positioned as a principal in "competition" with them to some extent. I informally broached the subject of the possibility of conducted research in

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the schools in the circuit with the principals at one of our regular “Principals Forum” meeting. After informing principals of the nature of the research that I had in mind, all six principals agreed to participate in the study. I believe that my “insider” position as a principal in a same circuit gave me an advantage in gaining access to these schools. I also believe that both my “insider-as-principal” and “outsider-as-researcher” positionings give me a unique vantage point with which to “research” the schools in my “circuit” in a way that will add to the research base on school leadership. The characteristics of the schools in the chosen sample are represented in Table 4.

Grade Twelve Pass Rate	Race of Learners	Race of Staff	Ex-Department of Education	Appointment Status of Principal	Name of School *	Name of Principal* (Race)
Recent improvement of Grade 12 pass rates from below 50 percent	Recent majority of African learners	Majority Indian	Ex-HOD	Acting principal	Excel Secondary	Mrs. G. Thembani (African)
		Majority Indian	Ex-HOD	Appointed principal	Boss Secondary	Mr.R. Naidoo (Indian)
Sustained high Grade 12 pass rates	Recent majority of African learners	Majority Coloured	Ex-HOR	Acting principal	Meadow-field Secondary	Mrs. T. Renton (Coloured)
		Majority Indian	Ex-HOD	Acting principal	New Era College	Mr. S. Mann (Indian)
Sustained high Grade 12 pass rates	No change to the racial classification of the majority of learners	Majority Indian	Ex-HOD	Appointed principal	Orbital Secondary	Mr. B. Syed (Indian)
		Majority Coloured	Ex-HOR	Appointed principal	Capell High	Mr. P. Ingle (Indian)

* Names of schools and principals have been changed

Table 4. School Sample- Distinguishing Characteristics

3.2. School Profiles: Official School Stories

While I had some familiarity with the general background of each school, I could not be sure about the specific statistics at each school. As part of the data production strategy, I had requested a copy of the school's Education Management and Information System (EMIS) documents. These documents represent the statistical analysis of a variety of factors (e.g. human resources, learner statistics, school infrastructure, etc) and principals are required to fill in these forms from the Department at the beginning of every academic year. These statistics are very important as they form the basis on which the amount of funding and the number of educators at a specific school is determined by the Department. The EMIS documents contained a wealth of statistical data and I first had to develop a "organising framework" to select the information that is relevant to this study. Using this framework, I developed a detailed school profile of each school and I term them official school stories. These school profiles are important to understand the context of the school and provide rich descriptions of individual school statistics. This constitutes the first level of data collection and becomes the "narrated analysis of the school". I have incorporated some of this information in the analysis section of this study.

However, since they form an important component of the "context" in which principals come to understand leadership, I feel it is important to attach these profiles as appendices at the end. The organising framework together with the school profiles appear in the following order in the appendix:

Appendix 2: School Profiles		
2.1.	Organising Framework	
2.2.	Individual schools	Principal
2.2.1.	New Era College	Mr S Mann
2.2.2.	Excel Secondary	Mrs G Thembani
2.2.3.	Orbital Secondary	Mr B Syed
2.2.4.	Meadowfield Secondary	Mrs T Renton
2.2.5.	Boss Secondary	Mr R Naidoo
2.2.6.	Capell High	Mr P Ingle

3.3. Gaining Access

Since all the principals in my “circuit” made up the sample in my study, I enlisted the help of two principals from another school circuit to discuss the research design. Since the type of narrative methodology that I was using relied heavily on individuals’ constructions of reality, I found it unnecessary to run a complete “pilot” case up to the analysis level. The principals whose help I enlisted gave me an opportunity to refine the types of issues that I wanted to raise in the interviews. In two separate sets of discussions, many questions were raised about the interview questions. The main concern raised was whether I would be “investigating” the school / principal. They felt that principals were already under enough pressure to have to go through additional scrutiny. This concern was put to rest when the intention of the study was made clear to them. The aim of this revolves around explorations of experiences of school leadership and not around judgements of principals. Principals will also be given transcripts of the interviews to review and make changes if needed. Proof of permission by the Department of Education (KZN) ²⁹ to conduct this research was also provided although none of the principals asked for it. There were four requests made by the principals and I have respected these during the data collection process of this study. These requests were as follows:

- i. The date/s for the interviews should be negotiated well in advance. Principals felt pressurised in meeting the daily demands of their jobs and needed to plan time for the interviews;
- ii. The time for the interviews should be towards the end of the school day. This will give principals time to deal with the daily issues arising at schools. This will also mean that principals will be at school during most of the school day and that the time for the interviews, if needed could easily be extended after school hours;
- iii. The normal functioning of the school must not be disrupted;
- iii. A copy of the findings of the data must be made available to each principal.

²⁹ KwaZulu-Natal. The province in South Africa where this study took place

3.4. Ethical Considerations

I wanted to promise principals that I would protect their “anonymity” if they so desired but I was aware that it may be possible to identify the principals in this study based on my declaration of being a school principal and using purposeful sample of a particular circuit in this study. This was brought to the attention of all the principals. To my surprise, no principal objected to being identified and three of the six principals suggested that I use their real identities in this study. For the sake of uniformity, each principal was invited to choose an alternate name for themselves and for their schools and I have used these alternate names in this study.

I am also of the belief that research has to be of mutual benefit to the researcher and to the research participants. Researchers have an ethical obligation not to leave the research site without enriching it in some way. I knew that each public school was required to display the National Coat of Arms in their schools and I had noticed that no school in the sample had displayed it. I presented a framed copy of the Coat of Arms, individualised with the school's name, to each of the principals. This was not an incentive for the principals' participation but a very small token of my deep appreciation to the principals for the enormous trust that they placed in me and for the absolute privilege that they conferred on me by willingly agreeing to construct their personal narratives with me. I also offered each of the participating principals, access to the literature on school management and leadership that I would be using. Finally, I promised to make available the findings of this study to each participating principal.

3.5. Data Production Strategy

The techniques of data production (and analysis) had to be coherent with the interpretive paradigm as theorised earlier in this chapter. This paradigm dictated that I do not look for “the” truth but instead look for principals' experiences of school leadership. It was not my intention to interrogate whether the principal was telling the truth, but it was my intention to see whether the data could be triangulated and offer an explanation for

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whether it is triangulated or not. Using this approach, it was not necessary to interview other stakeholders about the principals' responses. The principal was the unit of analysis. Guided by narrative methodologies, I chose semi-structured interviews with the principals as the main data collection instrument with which to construct narratives. The design process of the data production instruments took place at different stages. The first stage of this design is represented in Table 5.

Data collection Instruments	Data source: Who will produce the data?	What data will be produced?
Two sets of semi-structured interviews with each of the six principals in the sample	The "telling" is co-produced by the principals and researcher (myself). Principals present mediated versions of their own experiences while I mediate my interaction based on the critical question, theoretical framing and my dual positioning as researcher and peer principal.	What principals say about... - the influences in their lives, especially in the field of education? - their philosophy of education? - their practice and experiences of school leadership, especially in the thrust of "equity" and "efficiency" issues?
"official school documents - EMIS, EC111 (internal pass rate)	Produced for the Department of Education. Based on a formal legislated relationship of hierarchical power. Data is mainly statistical, is verified by the Department and used to determine State resources to schools. This is secondary data.	Data used to contextualise the school. Provides the "official" story of the school.
Questionnaire.	Principal answer questionnaires on their own.	What principals predict their practice will be in several hypothetical scenarios of school leadership issues? What is the rationale provided for the predicted action / practice?

Table 5. Stage 1 of the Design Process of the Data Production Instruments

This was followed by stage 2 of the design process. This stage involved the refinement of the type of questions to be asked during the interviews. Table 6 represents this refinement.

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Broad Framing of Interview Schedule (questions)		
What are the questions based on and what are the purposes of such questions?		
Data elicitation : Categories of questions		What is the purpose of this data (each cluster of questions)?
1. Bio-details, History.	Personal history of the principal	To explore the influences and background of the individual principal ?
2. Views of desirable education systems.	Thoughts / ideology / beliefs/ views of a desirable education system including issues of educational policies and the role of the principal.	To explore what principals think school leadership should be?
3. Views on leadership practice	Views / claims /experiences of leadership practice: (transformational challenges, decision making processes, leadership style, role in governing bodies and in learner leadership issues)	To understand school leadership practices as articulated by the principals.
4. Views on the context of change, namely policy imperatives relating to desegregation and standards.	Views / claims on : Admissions, learner diversity, inclusion and exclusion of learners in curricular and extra-curricular issues.	To understand the effects of the context of change and the implications that this has for leadership practice .
5. Specific principals / schools.	Effect of personal issues and unique characteristics of schools on leadership practice	To understand the context of the individual principal and the individual school .

Table 6. Stage 2 of the Design Process of the Data Production Instruments

From my sampling choice and the differences expressed in the individual school profiles, it was clear that different questions had to be included to address the specific context of each principal / school. In stage 3, these questions were considered in the instrument design of the interview schedule as represented in Table 7.

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Questions Regarding the Specific Context of each School				
Context based on three criteria: Differences in pass rate, desegregation status of schools and the appointment status of principals.				
Criteria		Questions on ...	Principal	School
Pass rate: History of high achievement	Recently desegregated	Reason for desegregation, Role of pass rate and reason for high pass rate	T Renton S Mann	Meadow-field Secondary, New Era College
	Retained previous race classification	Reason for non-desegregation, Role of pass rate and reason for high pass rate	B Syed P Ingle	Orbital Secondary , Capell High
Pass rate: Recently improved pass rates	Recently desegregated	Reason for desegregation, Role of pass rate and reason for dramatic improvements, Significance of award	G Thembani R Naidoo	Excel Secondary, Boss Secondary
Appointment status of principal	Acting and "new" principals	Does the appointment status or experience of the principal make a difference to the experiences of leadership?	G Thembani S Mann T Renton	Excel Secondary, New Era College, Meadow-field Secondary
	Experienced principals		R Naidoo B Syed P Ingle	Boss Secondary, Orbital Secondary, Capell High

Table 7. Stage 3 of the Design Process of the Data Production Instruments

The interview schedules were based on broad conceptions of leadership and were intended to cover a wide spectrum of issues relating to leadership. The anticipated time to cover all these elements in an interview was between six to eight hours. This was too long for a single interview. I therefore opted to have two semi-structured interviews with each of the principals with the option of continuing at another time if needed. The first interview was based on a philosophical approach exploring the theoretical orientation of the principal to leadership in general, while the second interview was based on the espoused practices of leadership at each school. Both sets of interviews were “loose-tight” (DuFour & DuFour, 2003) in that they were clear and specific about the issues under discussion, yet they were loose enough to allow the principals to dictate temporal order, to backtrack, to repeat and to ask questions of their own. The actual interview schedules of both interviews are attached as:

Appendix 3.2. Interview schedule 1

Appendix 3.3. Interview schedule 2

Additional Data Collection Instruments

The EMIS documents represented comprehensive statistical analysis of individual schools. These statistics were used to profile the school and to verify the information given by the principals. During the interviews, the principals' responses were based on the context of each principal's own schools. Would the responses of the principals be different if the school context was hypothetically changed? Do principals' experiences of leadership depend on the context? I designed and used a questionnaire to be able to answer these questions. This questionnaire is attached as Appendix 3.4. The aim of the questionnaire was to extend the understandings of school leadership of the principals in contexts other than that of their own schools. Table 8 represents the design outline of the questionnaire.

Five hypothetical school contexts were described with each one raising a specific issue of school leadership. Principals were asked to predict what their practices will be in each case and to provide an explanation for their responses.		
Case No.	What leadership issues are raised?	What implication does the principal's response to this issue have for understanding leadership?
Case 1	Practice of admission of African learners into a school whose pass rate is already dropping	Relation between pass rate and admission of "African" learners
Case 2	Personal convictions of principals regarding policies that are in conflict with the legal requirements of policy implementation.	Relation between policy formulation and implementation
Case 3	Challenges, if any, of temporary acting positions of principals as compared to permanently appointed principals	Relation between the professional experience of a principal over time and the experiences of leadership
Case 4	Personal convictions that conflict with new expectations of leadership	Relation between personal values of the principal and experiences on leadership
Case 5	Democratic decision making by previously autocratic principals	Relation between the mindset of the principal and legislation relating to democratic principles

Table 8. Questionnaire Design

When designing the data collection instruments, I was aware that my data collection strategy, at first glance may seem to be limited. But these instruments were designed to produce rich and finely detailed data representing stories revolving around the complex nature of leadership. My professional connection (as a principal) with these stories

added another layer of complexity to the data collection process. With this in mind, I was aware from the beginning that my study will focus more on the data analytical strategies. My concern about perceptions of the data set being limited turned out to be unfounded. The detailed analysis of the data from the interviews alone adequately answered the critical question. The EMIS documents provided some valuable data in foregrounding the school which was incorporated in the analysis. However, the extensive, additional data from the questionnaires that I had collected were not needed and I decided not to include this in the analysis.

3.6. Data Analysis Strategy

After the interviews were conducted, the recordings were meticulously transcribed to record every utterance and speech act of the principals. This was extremely time consuming and exhausting but it was in keeping with Weiss's (1994) "preservationist approach" that I had initially adopted. This detailed transcription procedure was also guided by my academic stint in the United States of America which focussed on using comprehensive linguistic narrative analysis. After several, intensive attempts at linguistic analysis, I had a comprehensive analysis of each principal. This type of analysis depended on identifying themes through "keywords" identified in the spoken language. For example, in the case of Syed, two keywords were "orbit" and "progressive". By carefully coding Syed's transcription of the data, I was able to develop a themed response (progressive orbit) to Syed's leadership understanding. An example of this analysis (together with the relevant coding) is attached as Appendix 4. While this analysis was exciting and presented many possibilities for generating a thesis, I realised that this type of analysis was not what I really wanted to do. I therefore modified this approach and used narrative analysis as theorised earlier in this chapter. Because the narrative methodology framework allowed the research participants to impose their own temporal order and sequencing, the empirical interview data was richly detailed, interwoven with repetitions and focussed on the unique circumstances of each principal. The data represented different types of responses from principals, like recall of factual events, statistics, thoughts, views, opinions, beliefs, experiences, identification of

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feelings/emotions and rationale for their actions. These responses, nuances, tone, emphasis, etc were useful indicators in helping to understand what was in the transcripts. I looked for more than “what” was said by looking at “how” and “why” it was said. The purpose of narrative analysis was to produce a “story” from the transcripts. I did this in several stages. In the first stage, I reviewed the transcriptions of all the interviews with the principals. Tables 9 and 10 detail the review of specific groupings of questions of the interview schedule and its *implications* for deeper analysis.

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE 1			
Order of questions asked	No:	Categories of questions: Questions based on	Review of data after interviews: Implications for analysis?
1. Background of the principal.	1.1	Bio details of principal	Story of the principal: Biographical influences
	1.2	Teaching career, influences, history	Story of the principal: Biographical influences
2. Desirable education systems (ideal) (Thoughts, beliefs, ideas based on experience and understanding etc)	2.1	Desirable education systems. Purpose of education, Desirable schools, desirable role of principal.	Experiences of leadership. While questions were philosophical, answers were based on experience at own schools. Relation between philosophy and practice of leadership
	2.2	Present experience of principal's role, especially in decision making.	Experience of leadership. Link to point 7
	2.3	Definition of a good principal: attributes, leadership style and influences.	Understanding of leadership. Link influences to point 1.2
3. Education Policy	3.1	Education Policy: - formulation - implementation - South African Schools Act: admission policy - School evaluation policy (IQMS) ³⁰ - FET ³¹ policy	Role of policy in leadership
4. Transformation challenges	4.1	Transformation challenges in general and in individual schools. Role of principals	Identification of emotions and determination of personal levels of preparation for leadership in the context of change
5. Specific school analysis	5.1	Leadership challenges at individual schools	Identification of priorities compared to what takes up most of the time of principals
	5.2	Grade 12 pass rate: Indicators of school success, improvement of pass rate	Experience of pass rate as an indicator of school success

Table 9. Interview Schedule 1: Implications for Analysis

³⁰ Integrated Quality Management System (IQMS): instrument used to evaluate educators

³¹ Further Education and Training (FET) Act refers to the new classification system of schools with grades 10 -12

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE 2			
Order of questions asked	No:	Categories of questions: Questions based on	Review of data after interviews: Implications for analysis?
6. Personal factors	6.1	Attributes, aim, feelings, commitment level	Emotional leadership. Link to 4.1. Emphasises focus on the "principal". Relation between emotions and rationale for leadership practices
7. Leadership practice: Decision making processes	7.1	Leadership style Different types of decision making Role of principal Leadership versus management	Correlation with leadership theory, focussing on the context of leadership
8. Admissions	8.1	Policy Process at individual schools	Relation to race /desegregation issues. Correlation with EMIS ³² statistics
9. Curriculum issues.	9.1	Grade 10 : subject selection Grade 11 : condonations Grade 12 : number of exemptions at grade 12 level	Relation to pass rate. Correlation with EMIS statistics
10. Extra-curricular activities	10.1	Participation by race	Relation to race and desegregation issues
11. Learner diversity	11.1	Diversity: challenges	Relation to race and desegregation issues
12. Learner leadership	12.1	Learner leadership: status and Challenges	Principals' experiences of leadership in relation to stakeholders
13. Governing Body issues	13.1	School Governing Body: roles and responsibilities	Principals' experiences of leadership in relation to stakeholders

Table 10. Interview Schedule 2: Implications for Analysis

After the review of the interview schedules and of the transcriptions of the interviews, the data was re-organised interviews as indicated in the tables above. This was the first stage of the analysis. In the second stage, the transcriptions were again reviewed to identify *themes* in the data. The data was re-organised again using themes as the organising principle. For reference purposes, I coded themes alphabetically. As explained earlier in this chapter, I used Gee's construct of "idea units" to code the different "ideas" that were grouped under each theme. I coded the idea units (A1, A2,

³² Education management information system (EMIS) which provides detailed statistic information of the school

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B1, B2, D4, etc) to refer to specific parts of the data during the analysis. As the themes came from the data and represented a broad landscape of what was on the minds of the principal, I called this version of the data “mindscapes” while acknowledging Sergiovanni’s (2001) use of this term, *albeit* differently . The themes in the mindscapes and their respective coding (A to I) are represented in Table 11.

Data as MINDSCAPES	
Coding	THEMATIC CUTS
A	Biographical influences: Background of the principals, Why teaching was chosen as a career? What influences principals understanding of leadership?
B	Philosophy / Ideology of education: Desirable education systems, role of principal in desirable education system, views on school evaluation, comparison of desirable education systems to present system
C	Leadership: Definitions of good school principals, role models, personal attributes, aims, feelings
D	Leadership practice: Present role of principal, leadership style, decision making, leadership and management, school governance, student leaders
E	Educational policy and leadership
F	Transformation challenges at schools and leadership
G	Specific circumstances of each principal / school
H	Leadership experiences in the context of admissions and desegregation Issues
I	School efficiency: Grade twelve pass rate, standards and school success

Table 11. Mindscapes of Principals

The data as represented as mindscapes provided a necessary and comprehensive thematic description of leadership. However, my aim is to explore principals’ experiences of leadership and the analysis of the mindscapes has to be extended beyond this thematic analysis. This represents the third stage of the analysis. I did this by imposing another thematic analytic framework based on the definition of leadership on the complex mindscape of each principal. This framework was derived from the literature review chapter in which I demonstrated that leadership is typically composed of three main components, namely the person, context and practice. These three components are inter-related and dependent on each other. To impose this analytic

definition on the mindscapes meant reconstructing the mindscapes to develop stories representing principals' experiences of leadership using the typical definition of leadership. I called these stories "reconstructed career narratives". In the process, I relied on the analysis represented in the first stage (review of interview schedules) and the second stage (data as mindscapes) to interrogate the empirical interview data yet again to develop sub-components of leadership in the reconstructed career narratives. Table 12 represents these sub-components of leadership.

Data as Reconstructed Career Narratives	
Components of leadership based on typical definitions of leadership	Sub-components of Leadership
Leadership: The Person	Becoming a teacher
	Definition of a good school principal
	Role models
	Personal attributes
	Aim / vision
	Emotions
Leadership: The Context: Macro (Department /Policy) and micro (school site)	Contextual factors
	Education Policy (formulation and implementation)
	Transformational challenges
	Principal's appointment status
	Leadership over time
Leadership: The Practice	Desirable education systems
	Leadership style
	Leadership and management
	Decision making
	Student leaders
	Grade ten course selection
	Equity and desegregation issues: Learner admissions
	Efficiency and standards issues: Grade twelve pass rate

Table 12. Data as Reconstructed Career Narratives

Since the focus of the study was on the principal, the reconstructed career narratives had to represent the data as the "principal's stories". Informed by Fairclough's (1989) framework, I celebrated the voice of the principals by writing the stories in the first person. To be "true" to the principals' voices, I represented their stories in their words as far as possible. I used Gough's (1994) concept of factionalised stories to develop a single story for each of the principals from the different interviews put together (This is

represented in Chapter 5). I presented the stories (reconstructed career narratives) in a similar format while being aware of the uniqueness of each story. Not all stories fitted neatly into my format and it was not my intention to make them do so. The original transcripts captured every utterance, pause and even common sounds made during the responses (e.g. uhhh, er, um etc). Since I had abandoned the idea of using linguistic narrative analysis, the transcripts had to be “cleaned” to represent the data as a story. I attempted to keep as true to the data as possible, making limited editing choices. These choices were made only where it was necessary for the “spoken” word to be presented as it was intended. I retained the conversational tone of the stories. The conversational style may not necessarily be the best grammatical style for academic writing but this is deliberate to reflect the uniqueness of each principal’s narrative.

I gave these stories back to the principals for “member checking”. Since it was two years since the interviews were conducted, most of the principals indicated that aspects of their experiences of leadership may have changed, but that the stories as written were accurate of their experiences at the time of the interviews. Two principals requested grammatical changes to their stories because they preferred a written (rather than a spoken) “style” of their stories. Three of the principals had no problem with the way their stories were written up. One principal did not respond to the request to review the stories. After many attempts, this principal’s response was that he had been very busy and that he felt confident that I would represent his story accurately. All the stories of the principals are presented as reconstructed career narratives in Chapter 5. These stories are “narrative analyses” and represent principals’ descriptive understandings of leadership.

Descriptive understandings of leadership had to be analysed further, especially in relation to the context of change as required by the critical question. Therefore in Chapter 6, I changed the focus of the analysis to the *context of change* in the experiences of leadership. The context of change in this study revolved around three issues namely, the pass rate, desegregation and democratic school governance. In this way, I moved from narrative analysis to analysis of narrative. I also moved from individual stories to

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cross-case analysis and foregrounded my voice as the researcher. There were two levels of analysis at this point namely;

- Level 1: Understandings of leadership in relation to theoretical framework (theories and context of change)
- Level 2: Influence of biographic factors on understandings of leadership

Finally, the implications of these “analysis of narratives” for hypothesising principals’ understandings of leadership in the context of change had to be considered.

In this study, the multi-level analytic strategy depended on the integration of the analytic framework with the theoretical and conceptual frameworks. Table 13 summarises the components of these frameworks.

Framework	No. of levels	Components
Theoretical framework	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Context of change: Pass rate, desegregation, democratic school governance • Theories of leadership
Conceptual Framework	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Definition of leadership: 3 components of “Person, Practice and Context”
Analytical framework Narrative Methodologies	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First as theory to develop analytic tools • Second as practice to mesh together theory, data and analysis
Narrative analysis: Purpose: to produce descriptive understandings of leadership of individual principals	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review of interview schedules • Thematic cuts to represent data as mindscapes • Descriptive analysis to represent data as reconstructed career narratives (case studies)
Analysis of narratives: Purpose: to produce theoretical understandings of leadership of all the principals	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understandings of leadership in relation to the theoretical framework • Influence of biographic influences on principals’ experiences of leadership leading to the main findings of the study (cross-case analysis)
Implications of new theorisation	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How can Principals’ experiences of leadership be theorised? • How will the new theorisation relate to existing leadership theories? Are there gaps / silences, correlations, contestations etc? (Theoretical level) • What implications will the new theorisation have on Principals’ understandings of leadership at a methodological and contextual level?

Table 13. Integrated Frameworks of this Study

In this study, the analytical, conceptual and theoretical frameworks are multi-layered and integrated (refer to Table 13- page 104). While there are other (more dominant) ways of analysing the data within a narrative framework, the analytic framework used in this study is also coherent within the narrative framework. Due to the broad framing of the critical question, the study had to be delimited in some way to develop a suitable analytical framework. **Before** data collection, delimitation of the study was done by: synthesising the broad definition of leadership into its components of person, practice and context (refer to Table 6); and limiting the context of change to issues of the pass rate, desegregation and democratic school governance. Additionally, the inclusion of selected criteria of questions (refer to Table 7) was due to my familiarity with the specifics of each school (as an insider researcher). **During** data collection, the narrative approach allowed for open-ended questions and the opportunity for principals to lead the discussion and ask questions. This resulted in thirteen different categories of questions (refer to Table 10). Not all principals answered all questions. This was part of the narrative methodology where the interview schedule was used only as a guide and not as a checklist. **After** data collection, narrative methodologies were used to develop thematic cuts. These were based on selected categories (from the interviews) to develop mindscapes (refer to Table 11). Analytically, these mindscapes were intended to “talk back” to the critical question. However the broad critical question had two foci namely: the definition of leadership; and the context of change. Therefore, in order to be coherent, the mindscapes had to “talk back” to both foci. Firstly, the mindscapes were re-integrated with the pre-determined components of leadership (person, practice, context –refer to Table 12) to develop reconstructed career narratives (in Chapter 5). Secondly, the mindscapes were used in cross-case analyses to explore deeper understandings of leadership on relation to the context of change (pass rate, desegregation and democratic school governance). In the cross case studies, the findings are accompanied by the use of flowcharts. Flowcharts are not commonly used in narrative methodologies but flowcharts are used in this study with the sole intention of enhancing the narrative explanation by acting as visual aid. It is also not intended to detract from the narrative orientation of the study.

3.7. Methodological Coherence of the Study

In this study, I used a literary play “Copenhagen” as a creative representational and analytical vehicle to link all the components of this study coherently. The use of epigraphs at the beginning of each chapter also connected the thesis in the narrative fashion. I justified the use of this play because of the declared interpretative orientation of this study and the methodological choice of narrative inquiry. The use of cross case studies culminated in flowcharts and the use of scientific constructs to develop an explanatory model may seem to be inconsistent with the narrative approach of this study. However this is not the case because the flowcharts simply serve as visual aids, while the use of scientific constructs is not reductionist but intended to support the narrative conclusions. I explain issues of methodological coherence in greater detail in each of the chapters.

A related issue of methodological coherence is the theorisation of “rewards”. I raised the issue of rewards explicitly in the Prologue, Chapter 3, Chapter 7 and finally in the Epilogue. In the other chapters (with the exception of Chapters 2 and 4), the issue of rewards are embedded in the narratives (data, method and analysis). In this way, the theorisation of rewards was methodologically coherent. A graphical synthesis of methodological coherence is included in Chapter 7 (Figure 25).

3.8. Limitations of the Study

After I had conducted the interviews, I left the country for almost two years to take up a Fulbright scholarship and a United Nations Fellowship. During this time, I had transcribed the interviews and developed each of the stories. I only returned the stories to the principals on my return for comment. The time lapse meant that there was no immediate interaction between the principals and their stories that I had written up. While all the principals agreed that the stories accurately reflected their thinking at the time of the interviews, they felt that their understandings may have changed. Had the

stories been given to them earlier, I believe that the principals would have had a deeper engagement with it and may possibly have influenced the outcome of the analysis.

4. Concluding Thoughts

“How difficult it is to see even what’s in front of one’s eye. All we possess is the present, and the present endlessly dissolves in to the past” (Frayn, 1998, p. 86).

In this chapter I explored the suitability of the use of narrative methodologies. In the first part, I theorised the use of narrative methodologies and explained how narrative methodologies could be used coherently as both data production and data analysis strategies. In the second part, I detailed the application of narrative methodology in this study. I culminated the discussion with an explanation of how the different frameworks (theoretical, conceptual and analytic frameworks) were integrated in this study. In the next chapter, I use the data analysis framework to represent the data as reconstructed career narratives.

CHAPTER 5

NARRATIVE ANALYSIS

PRINCIPALS' STORIES: RECONSTRUCTED CAREER NARRATIVES

“I’m sorry, but you want to make everything seem heroically abstract and logical. And when you tell the story, yes, it all falls into place, it all has a beginning and an end. But I was there, and when I remember what it was like I’m there still, and I look around me and what I see isn’t a story”
(Frayn, 1998, p. 73).

7. Introductory Remarks

In this chapter, I use narrative methodologies to represent principals’ stories as reconstructed career narratives. The data production methodology was detailed in Chapter 4. The stories are *reconstructed* from several interviews and from participants checking of the stories. The stories revolve around the principals’ *careers* and they are *narrated* by the principals. Using a grounded approach, I developed an organising framework, representing nine key constructs to present the data as a narrative for each principal. This is represented in Table 14.

These are the stories of the principals. Through their experiences of “political” and “moral” challenges, principals highlight their “personal” challenges in each story. The way in which the stories are written is deliberate with more attention given to being true to the transcripts rather than to issues of language and grammar. This descriptive representation is also the first level of analysis of the data.

Key Constructs as Organising Framework	
A	Background: Why was teaching chosen as a career? What influences are dominant for the principal?
B	Philosophy / ideology of Education: What are desirable Education systems? What is the role of the principal? How do principals view school evaluation? What is wrong with the present Education system?
C	Good school principals: How is a good school principal defined? Who are the principals' role models? What are the personal attributes, aim, and emotions of the principal?
D	Leadership: What is the present role of the principal? What leadership style is being ascribed to? How is decision making enacted? What is the difference between leadership and management? How are student leaders viewed?
E	Policy: what is the relation between policy formulation and implementation?
F	Transformation: What are the challenges of transformation? What takes up most of the principal's time?
G	Principal/ school specifics: What are the issues that are specific to this principal /school?
H	Learner admissions: How are learners admitted into school? What relation is there between learner admissions and the State's desegregation agenda?
I	Standards: How do principals view the Grade 12 pass rate at their school and at other schools

Table 14. Organising Framework of Principals' Career Narratives

In each of the narratives, I use a short biography to introduce the principal. Within this biography, I pay attention to the gender, experience as principal, age and racial classification of the principal. These categories, together with the commonalities between the stories, form important reference points for these individual cases and for the possibility of cross-case analysis later on. I also refer to each principal as they are commonly addressed in schools (e.g. Mr. A. Msomi). After I introduce the principals, I give voice to the principals by telling their stories in their words.

In the principals' stories, I am aware of the commonalities and the similarities between them. This is especially apparent due to the organising framework that I adopted to reconstruct the stories. It is these similarities that I rely on to note patterns and to develop cross- case analysis. Therefore I have chosen to represent only three of the principals' stories (Mr Syed, Mrs Renton and Mrs Them bani) in this chapter. These

three stories represent a range of experiences that will be sufficient to orientate the reader to the broad framing of the data. These stories are represented with the intention of “staying true to the data”. This is an important consideration as the analytic framework relies heavily on the “spoken word”. It is this version of the stories that principals had read and agreed to be used in this study. Additionally, these stories serve as important reference points in the absence of the voluminous, coded, raw data sets. In the co-production nature of this thesis, the representation of these stories is reflective of the deep respect for the participants’ voices to be heard. It is also for this reason that I include the stories of the remaining three principals (Mr Mann, Mr Naidoo and Mr Ingle) in the sample in the appendix.

1. Reconstructed Career Narratives

2.1. Mr. B. Syed: Orbiting Progressively, and Facilitating Academic Excellence

Introduction

He is the principal of Orbital Secondary school. This school is an ex-HOD school with one thousand and fifty two learners and thirty seven teachers. (A detailed description of the school statistics can be found in the appendix). Mr Syed is a forty nine year old, Indian man. He started his teaching career over twenty six years ago. He has been at this school for over ten years. His story (in his own words) follows next.

Leadership: The leader

Becoming a teacher: I had no idea of my future occupation

When I was at university, I had no idea of my future occupation. My dad died and being the eldest one, I had to look at the future. So I took the direction of teaching and even at the stage of my first appointment as a teacher I was looking to move out.

Personal attributes: My personal passion is academic excellence

I listen to people and I *weigh* the consequences before I make decisions. Important decisions are not made on the spur of the moment. I firmly believe in consulting, even if it's with a level one teacher if that teacher has the expertise. When I came to this school things were in a mess academically. It was underachieving, the teachers were running the school rather than the management and the SGB was in a mess. Slowly we have worked together on all these aspects and we're still on the road to recovery. But my passion would be firstly, academic excellence. We have put certain instruments in place to achieve that and we've been recording eighty plus percent matric pass rate in recent times. We have also managed to place some of our pupils in the top twenty³³ in the province. But while I'm mentioning that, I disagree with using matric results to judge the competency of a school. Having said that, the *plant* is one of my passions. I want to get resources into the school, to make the plant more compatible for learning, to bring in more facilities for pupils and to give the school an image. I like challenges, it's exciting. When I was at the training college³⁴, you just delivered your lecture and it was all over. There were no stresses and strains but the dynamism was not there. If I look at my life now, I'm a councillor in terms of a child's problems, I'm a marriage councillor because parents will come in and you have to sort their problems, I'm a social worker because you have to look at the economic issues in the community, and I have to be there for the teachers. Their problems are personal or educational and then you have the entire school problems from the plumbing right up to the curriculum. So it's a very dynamic environment.

³³ Placement in the top twenty positions in the grade 12 examination is publicised in the media and is considered to be a very prestigious achievement

³⁴ Educator training institution

Leadership: The context.

Education policy: The principal is bound by National policy even though he may disagree with the policy

When you have National policy you are bound by the legal aspects because the school is a State institution that has to function within National policy. At a school level, the principal is bound by National policy even though he may disagree with the policy. From a legal point of view if the principal is not implementing policy then he has a problem. So to safeguard himself from any legal issues, he has to implement policy. But he can state that he is not in direct agreement with it. What we have to realise is that national policy is not just sucked out. It is through debates, green papers, white papers and community participation. And if a principal takes issue with that, then possibly he has a dissenting voice and he has some other agenda. When the debate is on, he can make inputs through various organisations. But if a policy is put into place and a principal now wants to move out of that policy, it's a problem. It's a problem because the principal is a problem. A case in point is the racial issue. There are many schools that are orbiting on their own away from the national policy because of their own particular viewpoints on race. And they get away with it because it works through the constituent bases. If that constituency holds the same view that the principal holds, then the principal can operate with immunity because his constituency allows him to do so. Certain schools are twisting national policy so as not to take in learners from certain race groups. They will say that "you must live in this area for you to attend this school". But we are living in a country where one of the freedoms that we have is the freedom of choice. By restricting admissions in this way, they are restricting one of our freedoms but there is an underlying agenda to this. Things are being used to propel a particular agenda. Admissions are supposed to be on a first come first served. We have freedom of choice so parents should be able to take their children to any school of their choice.

Transformational challenges: The biggest challenge in terms of the bureaucracy is political interference

Transformation is a priority in this country, especially in terms of education. This will also bring about a stable middle class and for that transformation has to be on the fast

lane. The speed of transformation depends on the people in the education bureaucracy. The biggest challenge in terms of the bureaucracy is political interference. If a certain party is in power then positions are given to people who are loyal to the party irrespective of whether they are suitable for that position. So now, there is a whole bureaucracy that is subservient to this political party. In some provinces there is gross mismanagement because of this. So the relationship between bureaucracy and the educator on the ground is strained, if not non-existent. We find that that the educator on the ground is more highly qualified than the supervisor and the supervisor has nothing to offer. This leads to tremendous frustration. So what happens is that these institutions simply nucleate themselves away from the education structure in sheer frustration. In those provinces that are progressive, they are streets ahead because they have personnel chosen on merit. But when you have myopic and prejudiced appointments with people looking after their own political ends only then transformation and delivery is slow. I would say that we're replacing one regime by another. What we are saying is that education should be neutral. The best people should be appointed people on merit irrespective of political affiliation, ethnicity and all these diversities to run the affairs of education.

There are many transformational challenges facing school. The main one is admission. Two is resources and coupled with resources are finances. Three is curriculum, four is staffing, five is discipline among the learners and six is discipline among educators. We still have remnants of the old era. I for one am a remnant, schooled in the old era with my *psyche* still belonging there. But I'm working hard to eliminate the psychological mess that we were brought up in. Humanly it's not possible, so what happens is that some of our decisions are clouded. That is why it is important to have this participatory decision making process where interaction can balance clouded judgements. The admission policy is problematic because you have the state providing a general admission policy for all schools but your context is very different. The state is largely to blame here because it forces schools to increase admissions to maintain the staff establishment. Some schools actually buss in learners in order to keep the number of teachers at the school. You have to start looking at children coming in from other areas, so if there's an enrolment drop, it won't be a problem in terms of the teacher

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establishment. In this school, the demand for admission from the local residents decreased because the residents are affluent to middle class and they started to send their children to private schools. We also had to trim the curriculum because we had a reduction in teachers. When you trim the curriculum then you are not serving the community because you are not offering pupils the choices that they need. In this way, admissions feed negatively into a school's life. So what we need to do is to promote the school in the community and show that a public school is a viable one.

The discipline of learners is a major problem. The greatest struggle of this century is parenting. Parents have lost the discipline at home. In many cases, both parents have to work in order to survive. Children are left unsupervised, the media is a negative influence and you have children experimenting with unsavoury things. All the social evils come in and the parents have no time for the children due to the demands of their work and the child becomes the last focus. What really happens is that the pressure of the upbringing of the child is now passed onto the school, so the teacher now has to become a parent figure. But this is very difficult for the teacher because of large classes, under resourced schools, frustration and so on. And that's one of the reasons for poor delivery and why educators are unhappy with low morale and no more passion. But despite all these hindrances you will still find these educators trying to give off their best.

Becoming a principal: My background gave me an impetus with the educators

The way that I became a principal raises three issues. Firstly coming from the advisory meant that you're coming from the department. So there is a kind of respect for you immediately. And when your educators look at you they know that basically you have certain authority. Secondly since I was a lecturer at training college, I lectured to teachers in mathematics. So the science and maths team in this school were already with me because of that kind of background. Thirdly and this is *very important*, is that I was a unionist, having held some senior positions in the union. So that gave me an impetus with the majority of the teachers. At that stage the union was leading the struggle against

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the old system and here you had a person coming into a leadership position who is also a unionist. This led to a thawing in the relations because you understand the situations and you don't make decisions that are in conflict. You weigh decisions and you make independent decisions that are in the best interest of your site, even if it's a decision that hasn't come down from the Department because at the end of the day you want your site to function. So I think all those aspects lend towards this kind of thawing but I think more so it is the cultivation of relationships between individuals that are important. And when I became principal a lot of people began upward mobility which they had never seen before and that represented a lot of progress for them and they saw my leadership as progressive.

Leadership over time: I develop relationships with individuals

In the early years, your workforce doesn't know you so they begin to test you. I personally have a style where I develop relationships with individuals. I know each of the staff individually and I have this kind of interaction with them. For example if there is bereavement in one person's family, I take an interest in that staff member. And of course if any staff member creates a problem in the running of the school, I also address that staff member directly. I create an open door policy where any educator can walk in, see me and ask for my assistance at any time. My approach is not very formal. I address my educators by their first names and some, including the level one teachers who know me quite well, do likewise. But of course there has to be that kind of respect for each other.

Leadership: The practice

Desirable education systems: Teachers keep the system afloat when the Department cannot due to lack of resources

There is no such thing as an ideal school because the relationship between human beings is always dynamic. Education is always dynamic because the goalposts are always being

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shifted in terms of the economy. Once you change the political leadership in the country, they bring about a new economic policy and then education suffers a change. We've seen the move away from the old system which fed the apartheid ideology into one in which we have more meaningful participation and input into the economic system through the outcomes based system. This system can work provided that we have the resources, especially trained human resources. But South Africa lies between a developed and an underdeveloped country with the result that progress has suffered because we have a huge sector that was hugely disadvantaged. So we have a major backlog in terms of redress. To bring in an educational system which requires huge resources has made it difficult for the state to cope. The education system is creaking at the foundations at the moment. It's just the commitment of teachers that are holding the education system up. Basically the bureaucracy is failing. The education Department is failing and they are just going through the motions. What is happening at the moment is that sites or schools are moving on their own. If there are issues there they try to resolve it among themselves or their colleagues. The Department is increasingly playing a lesser role in the operations of the institutions. So at grassroots level, the fundamental cog in the educational system is the educator who is keeping the educational system afloat whereas bureaucracy is simply floating away.

The role of the principal: The principal is a facilitator

Essentially I see the role of the principal as facilitator whose role function should be that of a public relations officer between the community and the institution. He is simply a CEO of the institution. His job is not to get bogged down with the nitty, gritty issues of the institution because we have deputy principals who can take charge of operations. Of course if there are any issues to be resolved, the principal take arbitrate in those issues. Generally his job is to be the link person between the state, the community and the institution.

Leadership role: He is moving in his own orbit that is progressive, successful and serves the learner

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A site is orbiting on its own. A principal ensures the success of the operations. The institution has a vision and a mission and the principal together with the governing body put the institution on a course that is progressive. He relies on the education authorities to provide assistance but in terms of service delivery, he is on his own. For example, let's take the issue of the PPN. He manages the curriculum within that PPN but if he wants to be forward looking and expand his curriculum then he has to generate funds to bring in extra teachers who would drive that expanded curriculum so that it places the school in a progressive path. So while the State reduces the capacity of the principal to move on that progressive path by influencing the PPN, he has his own vision together with the other stakeholders in that institution because the principal is an innovator. He is moving in his own orbit that is progressive, successful and that serves the learner.

Decision making: We believe in a participative democracy and of course the principal will have the final say because he is the professional in charge

If you give the principal all consuming powers and if he does not have the mindset to lead the institution in a particular direction then he can be a real tyrant. So you need some kind of checks and balances and this is where the stakeholders come in. We believe in a participative democracy where all people engaged in that activity should become decision makers in some way or other. In this way, when a principal makes a decision it is based on opinions from the floor and it is not something that he has just thought off in his office. In essence, if you become part of the decision making then you become part of the solution. Of course the principal will have the final say because he is the professional in charge. He can weigh whether a particular decision is the right one and if he doesn't agree he can send it back for review before implementation. When you take a decision, you need someone to execute that decision. If the people executing the decisions are not in favour of that decision then we are going to have major problems and conflict situations. So before implementation, there should be a resolution where the principal can debate the issue with the stakeholders. If the decision is a progressive one, then the other stakeholders will see that. If there are areas of concern, that can be debated. If the principal articulates a view that is not a progressive one, then the

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principal also has to make changes. So everyone feeds into the decision making process and it's a group decision. Everyone is a partner and if it succeeds or fails that partnership has to answer for it. Of course the principal is the leader in this decision making process. He can provide the options because he is the professional, the expert. So largely the direction will be the one that he wants. He will be putting the options forward and the other stakeholders will simply be putting the trimmings in. Schools where you have this kind of process taking place are more successful than schools where you have principals as a be all and an end all of authority. If you empower the stakeholders, the principal simply takes executive decisions while they take care of the operations.

Any decision that is advantageous to the learner, that's the decision that the leader of a school has to take irrespective if it's unpopular with the staff. Because the staff views the decision that the principal takes from the point of view of how much *work* they have to put in. They don't look at it from the point of view that the learners will benefit. The management has to look at it from the perspective of the learners. And of course you have representation from the staff and the unions present, so whatever decision is taken is a representative decision. Therefore a conflict situation cannot arise. But having said that a principal has to take a decision irrespective whether its popular or not otherwise there is no such thing as leadership but provided that that particular decision favours the learner and also the smooth running of the school. The workforce will abide by that decision because they can see the logic in it.

Leadership style: Empowerment is the cornerstone

I believe in a participative leadership style where empowerment is the cornerstone. Because I firmly believe that at the end of the day each person in management must become an independent person, an empowered person, where the principal doesn't have to be present for that person to make and activate a process on his own. You're training your personnel for upward mobility. Consultation is also very important. Every decision you make, if you make it in committee, you find there are more inputs, shared responsibility and you find that *everyone* is part of the solution rather than being part of

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the problem. The participative approach is a very progressive approach in today's management procedures and approaches.

Leadership and management: With the advent of democracy, people began to look at leadership from a different perspective

In the past leadership positions on the *micro* levels were influenced by the macro political system in the country which was bureaucratic, authoritative and highly oppressive. So schools became a microcosm of society and the leadership styles in schools also imitated the bureaucratic leadership style of the country. With the advent of democracy, people began to look at leadership from a different perspective. The workforce had begun rebelling against the authoritative leadership style of principals because they were now given the freedom to express themselves and they had the instruments to do so. So *those* principals that didn't change or did not have a mindset which was more progressive were *forced* to change. Because they realised that the workforce is the most important component in school. The majority of teachers have now embraced a more progressive attitude, there's little conflict because they know their job descriptions, they don't take umbrage with the management for their job descriptions, and because they are represented in the decision making, they go forward.

Student leaders: The RCL is the official system and prefects are for operational purpose

The prefect system is no longer an official system. We have an RCL at school and for operational purposes we also have a prefect system. The RCL is democratically elected by the pupils and we are fortunate that the leadership of the RCL are not the most popular students but instead are the most intelligent kids. The classes actually chose the intelligent pupils over the popular ones. I suppose they admire the intelligent ones. So it's good and we are not losing out. *Pupils* are now engaging the democratic process with more wisdom. The prefects are chosen by the teachers. There are criteria and a

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weighting is done. A vote goes through for the executive of the prefects and they are elected. But if there is an official function where the student body has to be represented, we send out the RCL, because that's the new system.

Learner admissions: Admissions should be on a first come first served basis

I believe that admissions should be on a first come first served basis irrespective of where the learners live. But I have sent applications for admissions to the feeder schools in the area. We have promoted the school in and around the area. But of course once admissions are opened, even if you come from Timbuktu and if you are number one, you will get a place in the school. The only criteria that we would use to deny a child admission is if a child has a criminal record and if the criteria of academic progression are not met.

Despite our open admission policy, our learner profile has remained as being majority Indian. One reason for this is geographical situation. We are in the *heart* of an Indian residential area. But we have a major hospital nearby and most of its workers are black. What is happening now is that they are sending their children to my school. We are also getting learners from a nearby primary school which has a large percentage of black learners. What prevents black learners from gaining admission at this school is that they come late and there are fewer places left. Our admissions start early, in June actually.

Pass rate: So everything feeds into this pass rate that we have - that's number one

Evaluation is an important instrument. Without evaluation, human beings will generally become laid back and productivity will then suffer. I'm using terminologies which are usually used in economics. I'm sure that there are some purists amongst the educational fraternity that would balk at the idea of me using the term 'productivity' but it's very important that we use this word because at the end of the day the learner has to benefit. And if we are not productive in a classroom situation, if we are not giving off our best, if we don't have the learners' future at heart, then we have a problem and we might as well

do another job. Evaluation is an instrument that provides that kind of impetus to this objective. You have the usual criteria to use in evaluations, but I simply believe this; if a teacher is delivering in a classroom, he is a productive teacher. That's essentially the criteria. Because that is what the institution is there for. We can speak of the holistic aspects of education but the *core* is the curriculum. Who then are the implementers of the curriculum? It is the educators. So I will say that an evaluation instrument is absolutely necessary because we are schooled into being evaluated. We work towards this. Very rarely will you find that a person is operating at an optimal level if there is no supervision and no evaluation. These instruments make a worker operate at the optimal level and that is the objective of evaluation. If we bring the evaluation instrument in, a lot of the problems regarding educators will be solved. The evaluation instrument will insist that you are in school every day to serve seven and a half hours and that you deliver in the classroom. We will be looking at the learners' portfolios and the educator's portfolios in terms of preparation. Without the evaluation instrument there is no way to find out if a teacher has completed the syllabus or if he has given a test. I have personally seen marks in a mark book where no test was given. Only an evaluation instrument will enable us to remedy that kind of situation and enable the teacher to maintain a true record of his performance. Of course, evaluation should be done with a particular philosophy. If you want to police the educators then it will be a failure. Then you rather not have evaluations, because you'll have tremendous resistance from the teachers because the implementers of these evaluation instruments would become dictators like the ones we had in the past. This is a foreign way of thinking because the whole national philosophy is totally different now. It is one of development, of assisting, and one that is not judgmental.

My school has a very high grade twelve pass rate because we have a good set of educators. They are always providing the motivation. Secondly the learners are coming through a system which is forcing them to work hard as far as their education is concerned. For example, I've introduced CASS³⁵ testing programme twice a week. So the child is engaged in a test all the time, so basically the teachers are teaching to a test. I

³⁵ Continuous Assessment – this is intended to continuously evaluate learners' achievement throughout the academic year

found it necessary to do so because my statistics showed that my academic level was dropping. I had to institute some kind of measures which would enforce the culture of teaching and learning at the school. Previously when teachers were given the option of doing the assessment on their own, they would do it at their own leisure or without much thought just to provide a mark. Now the testing programme is sent home, every parent has it on their fridge and they refer to it all the time. They tell their kids that "today you're writing a test, you can't take leave and you can't be absent". So it has encouraged children to be more aware of the academic programme. Because you are being assessed all the time, when the examination comes, you are in the groove of assessment, so you're working all the time. Your parents are getting the marks, we have these open days for parents and they come in from the junior standards right through the whole school.

The testing programme is standardised on Tuesday and Thursday mornings. The whole school is silent and it's run under strict examination conditions. The papers are set as an exam paper. So everything feeds into this pass rate that we have. That's number one. Number two, of course is the quality of the pupils. It's a contextual issue. Some schools have a large number of learners from the disadvantaged sector and it is a very difficult task for the teacher to bring them up to scale. When they don't do so well, that doesn't mean that the school is underperforming. It's simply the learner that's the problem. But once they go through the system from the beginning and provided that they have come from a primary school with that kind of ethos then you can see that they will finish off at the end successfully. We also had so called disadvantaged learners but because of the no nonsense approach, whether its discipline or academics, they have knuckled down to work. Although the performance is not on par as we would like it to be but they are making the minimum requirements. And last year we were pleasantly surprised that one of our learners from the so called disadvantaged sect did extremely well. Trying to improve the matric pass rate starts at grade eight. The approach and productivity of the learner has to change at the grade eight level. If that kind of philosophy is directed towards the learner and if it is implemented by the learner, you would find automatic success is at the grade twelve level because he is imbued with that kind of approach and with the correct course choices. It's difficult for schools to provide all the course choices that learners may require and learners have to simply choose what's available and not what they want to do, so it impacts negatively on the pass rate.

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The grade twelve pass rate is the only instrument that the state can use in judging a school at the moment, because it's an external standardised examination³⁶. So the state uses that instrument to see whether an institution is performing successfully or not. But if you have a school that is well run, well organised with everything in place and with educators performing and then you have children who in terms of their own abilities are below par, are you going to say that that school has a problem? So we have a definite problem with that kind of approach where you judge a school according to grade twelve results. Likewise if you have children coming from the affluent sector who have all the resources like tuition programmes and they are doing well, their results are fantastic even if their teachers are not performing in school, are you going to say that that school is a top school? So we have definite problems with that but then I must add that schools are generally judged by the pass rate because this is the only way the state can judge them because of the objective issue of the assessment.

In our school, we do condone³⁷ children at grade eleven but we are looking at minimising these because we feel that grade eleven is a very important year. Basically it's the first year of matric and if the child cannot pass now, then how will he pass matric which is two years work. In the matric year, what has happened is that over the years the Department clerks have always referred to us as a higher grade school because most of the children choose their courses on the higher grade. We have spoken at length to the children about that because we found that there were *bright* children who didn't get exemption³⁸ because of their choice of subjects on the higher grade³⁹. Recently we are seeing a trend where children are choosing at least two subjects on the standard grade and still getting exemptions. So while we see an increased number of standard grade subjects, this year I noticed that ninety four percent are sitting for an exemption.

Our matric results are also dependent on the internal examinations. Right now I wouldn't say that the internal exam has been to my satisfaction because there is much room for improvement. We have put into operation this year the official testing programme from

³⁶ Administered and controlled by the Provincial / National Education Department

³⁷ Learners who do not meet promotion requirements may be condoned to progress to the next grade

³⁸ Exemption refers to the type of grade twelve examination result that exempts learners from writing University entrance examinations. There are specific requirements to qualify for this "exemption"

³⁹ Learners may choose to write subjects in the examination at the "higher" or "standard" grade levels

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management. So there is now an atmosphere of a work ethic. Everything is *directed* towards those days. Now parents expect the testing time table so we release a lot of important details quite early. Parents now know that the school has a direction and they have to work towards that direction. Their concern is there and we have these meetings with the parents. This is unofficial supervision taking place so you find that the educator too has to be on par with his work. He has to produce, not only because the management is supervising but the parent is also there. We have had quite a few of these meetings.

I think that there are many things that a school should be judged on. There is more to school than just academics. There are sports, culture and so forth. But having said that we have been handicapped recently in some aspects because of the drop in the staff ratio. But we still had certain visions and I did bring in sport which is of crucial importance. I noticed that the child was only being supervised in terms of academics, so there was a lot of frustration in the children. What is a child going to do who is not academically inclined? That child needs some kind of arena to display his talents. I brought in a PE teacher and now we have development taking place in the sports field. Some of our learners are now representing the zone in soccer and one got picked up by the local professional side. Then we have swimming where one of them has participated in international competitions. That has given a new dimension to the learners. A child who had lots of energy and didn't know where to place that energy would have been a misfit in the school. That child is now given the opportunity to develop it. There is a tremendous change in the mindset of students. I can't remember when the last incident of vandalism took place. The tough disciplinary implementation at school has also helped. With the management and staff grudgingly working together, we are moving towards a progressive approach, we are moving forward. There are always hiccups along the way but we move forward. That's the most important thing and I think that the bottom line is: we move forward together.

2.2. Mrs T. Renton: Leading from the Front

Introduction

She is the principal of Meadowfield Secondary school. This school is an ex-HOR school with one thousand and thirty five learners and thirty six teachers. (A detailed description of the school statistics can be found in the appendix). Mrs Renton is a forty seven year old, Coloured woman who started her teaching career at Meadowfield Secondary school. She has been at this school for over twenty six years. Her story (in her own words) follows next.

Leadership: The leader

Becoming a teacher: Coloured women could only do either teaching or nursing

In the early seventies, Coloured women could do one of two jobs - teaching or nursing. If you wanted to do nursing you had to go to Cape Town. You could do teaching in Durban so I went to Teacher Training College. My dad was also a teacher and it was the easiest thing to do. After marriage and with two little babies I tried studying at Unisa⁴⁰ but I just couldn't manage it with all my commitments. Later I went to UDW to complete my studies. I was first appointed as a teacher in 1977. I was a level one teacher for most of my career. I was Head of Department for about six years, deputy principal for five years, acting principal for one year and appointed as principal recently at this school.

⁴⁰ University of South Africa. The majority of courses are offered through correspondence providing distance tertiary education

Personal attributes: It is my experience at the same school that gives me an advantage

The fact that I have been here a long time and haven't come in from the outside is a big plus for me. It is my experience at the *same* school that gives me an advantage.

I'll tell you about my personal aim for this school. A teacher jokingly said the other day that our school is a model C⁴¹ school. That's far from it in most regards but it's a fact that we abide by a lot of the old norms and requirements. For example, we spend the required number of hours at school. What I'm hoping to do is to get the educators to agree on a contract as far as things like extra curricular programmes are concerned. One educator laughed at the idea and that bothered me. They perform in the classroom but as far as any sporting or cultural activity they don't want anything to do with it. They say that they are tired and that their morale is absolutely low and I'm trying to figure a way of getting them back on track.

I have thought of leaving the profession a long time ago. Actually it was about eight years ago. I have never been a comfortable "follower". I am not a subordinate person which is not a good thing but that's the way I am. I cannot abide half the instructions that I'm compelled to obey. I can't take it but I do it because I think I am disciplined. Even today and especially because my own children are no longer really dependent on me, I could resign. I would still be the person I am because I just feel that I don't have the personality to be a blind follower. Some of the things our Provincial minister of education says just astound me. The other day I couldn't sleep thinking about this. The problem is the real *lack* of help that we experience especially regarding material things that we need from the Department. This makes me feel very vulnerable and insecure as a principal. They've left *all* the bad things for us to solve and I can't solve everything. I sometimes feel overwhelmed.

⁴¹ Previously part of the better resourced ex-White schools

Role model principal: My father was a great influence in my life

My dad was an educator and he was a really good educator. He was a principal and he eventually became a SEM which was an “inspector” in those years. He was in the service for forty three years and I thought that he was very good at his job. Actually the older I become the more I see what he was about. He was a great influence in my life. I was daddy’s girl. I also had wonderful teachers. My own teachers were great teachers and role models. I actually chose teaching as a profession because I had these good influences in my life and because I always liked being among children.

Leadership: The context

Education policy: Principals, not Department administrators, know what is going on in schools

I have always felt that we as principals know the most about the state of education, because we are *on* the ground. But then we are also expected to be agents of the Department. I don’t know if “agents” is the correct word. It is a very invidious position to be in because the *minute* you become a principal you’re regarded as a sell out. The Department expects you to be their tool. They don’t see you as an individual doing a job. You are seen as actually offending your SEM if you don’t agree with Department of Education’s officials. And it’s the same problem with your staff. If you implement what the Department wants, your staff sees you as a sell out and a weakling. We know what is going on in schools. The Department administrators really don’t know what is happening down on the ground.

If I am forced by a superior to take some action or other and they do not really know or appreciate what is happening on the ground, then I would actually resist it rather than keep quiet. If I cannot, then I would seek advice from people like the principals’ forum. That is the purpose of this forum. If a group of twenty or thirty principals motivate why

we should or shouldn't accept something, we will be heard as a group. The people with the quietest voices are the principals. Most principals implement policy even though they don't agree with it. Is it their personality to follow, no matter what? Some even do it because they are looking for promotion or to be in favour. Those that resist or will not implement policy are actually victimised. You are victimised in ways that you will not believe. I know that from personal experience and I had to seek legal advice and engage a lawyer to sort out my problems.

I have never understood how people like the Minister of education⁴² get to pass some of these laws and bills. I don't know where he gets his information from because *I* don't ever recall educators being invited to a forum. They may have had one in Cape Town or Pretoria but *I* don't know about it. We are not informed, we cannot attend and there isn't time to make submissions. I've never seen an invitation even in the newspaper or on television to submit suggestions. So the people making policies might not have seen the inside of a classroom. Some of the bills they are passing are just ridiculous. First World and developed countries may have them and we adopt them. That's far fetched. Things like OBE which is a bloated monster that is not working. It's one of the biggest mistakes that they've made. The downsizing of staff and therefore increasing class numbers is another big mistake. The new disciplinary system of educators and learners also created *big problems*. It's not worth our while to even go via a disciplinary hearing because at the end of the day the principal loses. It's almost impossible to expel a learner because the law is on his side all the time.

There has to be freedom to interpret educational policies depending on the circumstances at your school. For example if you had the funds and resources with which to implement OBE correctly, then there should not be too much of an issue implementing OBE. In *my* type of school although our school fees are so low, they are still not paid. OBE is an expensive business. I know that the Department likes to tell us how it's not expensive but it is because of the resources that you need. You also need smaller classes and therefore you need to employ more teachers who have to be paid by the governing body. Principals can get into trouble if they are not implementing OBE correctly. But at *my*

⁴² Minister of Education – Kader Asmal at the time

school, the way we do it is the only way that we can implement it. So I'm actually prepared to take what comes with it whether it is a reprimand or a bad report. There are certain things we are doing the only way we know how.

I've been in a bit of trouble over the last year for taking my own decisions. I can think of three such instances where I've had to use my initiative and water down what the Department expects of us because we can't do anything better than that. In two of those cases I have what I call *written* warnings. But I simply continued to do it not out of stubbornness but because I had no other option. Both cases concerned learner admissions. I received a letter from the Department reprimanding our school for turning away children from homes⁴³. We could not believe it as this is something that we have never done. I got my lawyers to write to the Department and I never heard from them again. The third case concerned the implementation of OBE. We are still trying as far as possible to implement OBE according to the standard set by the Department.

Transformation challenges: The main transformational challenge is probably a cultural one

In my school the main transformational challenge is probably a cultural one. My learners are about seventy percent African and thirty percent Coloured *but* we only have one African staff member. That's not deliberate. It's just the way it has fallen. We battle hard every year to get our educators to understand the culture of the learners and at the same time we try to get the learners to meet the educators half way by understanding our "Western" culture and our way of doing things. It's very difficult but it is getting easier. We were also not sufficiently prepared for the challenges of transformation. I can't think of a single principal who was even trained or prepared for these kinds of problems. When we first started taking in African pupils, those pupils came straight out of a Zulu medium school. They couldn't speak English which is *our* medium of instruction, so we had massive problems. It's easing off now, because more children are coming through English medium schools.

⁴³ Social Welfare institutions or "homes"

The changes in some respects were too fast. For example OBE which was just thrown in with no thought even given to it. So instead of addressing other issues such as the merging of different cultures they flung this virus in. They've actually put the cart before the horse in many regards.

My big challenge is learner discipline. Some learners are downright criminals. You *hardly* get co-operation from the parents of these learners. You don't get any help from your SEM or the Department. We cannot have dagga and drugs on the premises because if the police come in and discover drugs, ultimately it is the principal who is chastised. It can take six months to eighteen months to expel a child, so what's the point. Issues with teachers also present challenges. I'm actually grateful that we basically have a good staff. We had one or two educators who try to pull away but the majority actually try to do the right thing.

There are two things that take up most of my time; the discipline of learners and the endless form-filling required by the department. That's what I do everyday. I know that I *must* do that every single day.

Learner demographics: My community has been colonised

This school was initially built for the Coloured community in 1979 /1980. The majority of our learners are now African. It definitely has to be so. I could be sued for saying this but my community has been colonised. Lots of the people in my community are racists. They won't have their children schooling with Africans. When African children started to come here, lots of Coloured parents said disparaging things about them. Some complained that the standards would drop and wanted to remove their children to ex-model C schools. Most of them could not afford private schools so they opted for ex-model C schools. Some thought that going to an ex- model C school was a status symbol and quickly moved there. This created more space for African children.

Principal's appointment status: As an acting principal, I've always felt that I could retract

The only difference that I felt between the time that I was acting principal and now that I am the appointed principal is a psychological one. As an acting principal I've always felt that I could retract or just step back if I wanted to. But once you're appointed it's a different thing because you are psychologically programmed to feel one hundred percent accountable for everything. There is this feeling that you've got to deliver, solve problems and that you are answerable. I'm actually far more confident now because I have to stand by whatever decision I make. You definitely think things through far more carefully. You are more conscious of legalities, acts and laws because you really can't plead ignorance all the time. *In fact* many times you simply have to do things that go against the grain of what you believe but it's what the Department requires you to do and you are compelled to do so by law.

There were some changes in the way people responded to me when I was appointed as the principal. Not the eighty percent who've always been my strength but the twenty percent who always object to everything. They have been objecting irrespective of who the principals were. There are personality issues there. I don't know who they were hoping the post would go to. Maybe to somebody who would be more amenable to their continuous absenteeism? Those people did congratulate me but I know they feel differently.

Leadership: The practice

Desirable education system: In many ways we are worse off in the school system now

In many ways I think that we are worse off in the school system than we were before 1994 especially as far as staffing, size of classes and funding is concerned. If the

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government could just alleviate those burdens we could have more teachers and therefore smaller classes. If we could somehow get more funds, many problems could be alleviated. The community that I'm servicing now is mainly from the informal settlements. These kids are poor. In my area there is a high rate of unemployment. So this impacts on the running of a school. When the financial position improves, everything else will fall into place.

I haven't actually thought of what an ideal school will look like but when I think of the school that my own children attended, I would call that a good school. It was a small school with about three hundred and fifty pupils. It was private, so obviously it was ideal. They had a huge staff and decent class sizes of about twenty two pupils. And of course because it was private the funding wasn't an issue. You were in touch with their class teacher and subject teachers all the time. They had time for you. These are the things that we need to have.

I think the biggest obstacle in our system now is the red tape and bureaucracy that exists. I am constantly filling in forms, submitting these forms to the Department and I constantly getting told that the forms have been lost. That admin side of it is monstrous. The bureaucracy is so huge. For example there are eight stages between this office and finally back to this office in terms of processing the paperwork for salaries, appointments and in fact for anything at all. It takes months for people to respond, that is if they are not losing the forms. Things have to change. Ulundi⁴⁴ is too far in more ways than distance and there are too many people in between that you have to deal with to get anywhere. I must also say that some SEM's and admin staff do try and that they are reliable. But if your stuff gets into the wrong hands then you are really in trouble. If you don't have contacts there, you can forget it. The Head Office needs to be closer with smaller, definitely much smaller districts or regions or units. They have to be closer to be of service to us especially where things like salaries are concerned. We are not functioning well with one Head Office.

⁴⁴ Administrative capital of the province of KwaZulu-Natal

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I haven't really given too much thought to the role of the principal in an ideal situation because I have just been managing to stay afloat. All these problems at school have really killed my time over the last year as acting principal. For me, my scene is simply viewing it as managing my school and that is it. In an ideal situation, I would be *minus* all those irritations. *That's* what causes the problems. The fact that you always have to defer to someone else; either the district office, SEM's or the unions is problematic. There is nothing that we can do that is autonomous. In an ideal situation, I would just need to lead. A principal should have the authority to run the school. The buck should stop with the principal and it is not happening. Things like one's admission policy are questioned and any deviation is questioned. The list is endless. If I take out the management plan and go from page to page, I could show you where the problems are all the time.

The principal should be a manager in the true sense of the word. I think we manage far less in some portfolios and far more in others. At the moment we are so involved with the smooth running of the school, timetabling, exams and what have you. This is not actually about the curriculum. We also have issues with unions. At every turn you have to think twice before instituting anything and I can safely say that they have too much power. Sometimes there isn't a thing you can do about *urgent* matters because you have to get through all these people *before* doing anything. And nine out of ten times you are somehow stopped at some point. You are so caught up with the legality issues and all sorts of highly frustrating things that you don't really get much done in a term. You are still left with threads dangling because of issues like that.

Role models: Because he led from the front, we respected him

The second principal that I worked under was my best principal. He did very little negotiating and discussing. He was a wise person and he did it actually for the good of the school. He had good judgment and because he led from the front, we respected him. This is the point. He actually took a lot of flack for his staff. He'd defend his staff with his life against the Department or parents or whatever. He was that kind of principal and

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basically the whole staff respected him. If he had a problem with me, he would call me in, close the door, talk about it and nobody will ever hear about it. He was also prepared to do what level one teachers were doing. If a matric teacher couldn't be in school, even if it was for two weeks then he was prepared to go into the class and help out. Those were the things we respected him for.

But I had other types of principals too. The next principal that I had was extremely lazy even as an educator, Head of Department and deputy principal. As a principal, he read the newspaper until eleven in the morning. You just could not get into his office before then. Crises would go on you couldn't get into the office. Practically everyday he would leave school early and would not be around for all the crises. Everybody else had to deal with it. He was just an escapist. This principal operated in the old system, before 1994. But even with the new system, I've had contact with principals who do not do their jobs well. I think it is because of the way the race issue determines promotions. I just relate it to that. I have also been with principals who felt that in order to advance themselves, they needed to curry favour and do favours for people higher up. They did this to the extent that it caused a lot of damage at schools, but they didn't care. It was to further their own careers and ambitions because they wouldn't get far any other way. To make themselves indispensable to people higher up, they trample on people, on their good name, on their efforts, on their jobs and they just do it to get to where they are going. That is dirty.

Leadership style: The present democracy can work both ways

The present democracy can work both ways depending on the staff you are working with. As for consultation, with a few educators it actually works. You can work wonderfully with them using that system because they also feel empowered and they feel that they are contributing which they are. Therefore their input is necessary. But unfortunately you get a little cluster of shirkers and they see the fact that you consult as a sign of weakness. They need you to be authoritarian. But you cannot be authoritarian because you need co-operation. And then there's passive resistance where they just

withhold their services and cooperation and we are stuck because you absolutely need the whole staff to cooperate for it to work.

It's strange to have to describe my own leadership style. I really don't think that I'm a very good leader in the conventional sense. I'm quite unorthodox in many respects. For instance, I think that I'm very assertive. I've watched other staff members never show a bit of irritation and that's something I haven't learnt to do. I often show anger or irritation and I don't think it's a good thing but I lead from the front. I'm prepared to do whatever I require the teachers to do and slog right through. It's a very bad thing. I don't mind doing the work but when the job is not done, not because of someone's inability to do it but because of their lack of will to do it and it comes back half done and half baked - that really irritates me. So I tend to show my irritation which is not an ideal thing to do but that's how I operate. It's bad because it can actually show the staff that you're vulnerable or where your weak points are. Not that that bothers me too much because personally I think I actually show less emotion for most things. At the end of the day I actually think about where I could have avoided showing anger and irritation.

I actually hardly ever encounter resistance with my style of leadership. I think it is on account of people knowing when they are very wrong. They also know me. I taught half of them. So they know me as a teacher when they were young teenagers and they know just how I am. They know that a lot of my actions are well intentioned. I never hold a grudge and I always say what I mean.

As a principal you need to know that you are going to get a lot of flack about everything. You are never going to be completely popular with your staff because you can't please everybody all of the time. I think you need to have the strength and you need to convince yourself daily that you are doing it for the betterment of the whole school. You have to develop a thick skin to be able to function and cope with the sour faces and disapproving looks among other things. You need to have a strong character for it.

Leadership and management: For a principal, leadership is just really being the captain of the ship

I do think that leadership and management are different. They can be the same, it just depends. For a principal, leadership is just really being the captain of the ship, and steering it to the best of your ability. There are so many factors to consider such as the Department of education and their rules, parents, teachers, educators and learners. If you can juggle each one of them and try to keep all of them happy to a certain degree then you are leading fairly well. You can never please them all of the time. And definitely I think one needs to lead by example. When I think about management, I think mainly about managing time, smooth running of the school, meeting deadlines, controlling the process of teaching and learning, policies, etc.

Decision making: My management team usually see my point of view

I do not have an educator representative in my management team. I consult with *my* management team. Fortunately consultation actually strengthens everything because I have a good management team. They usually see my point of view, even if it's not a popular decision one has to make. But they understand it, they see why it has to be made and they will back me if they see it's for the good of the school. When decisions are unpopular it usually has to do with the opinion of teachers. For example starting and ending times, teaching loads, relief teaching for teachers that are absent, length of the breaks and all of that.

I don't get any resistance from the governing body. Actually we have a splendid governing body. Some people think that they are quite inactive and ineffective in most regards but what I like about our governing body is that they take their cue from the school because they know that we are on the ground. We know what is happening on a daily basis and they leave almost everything to us to decide. They do ask us about the

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pros and cons of some decisions but the whole relationship is based on honesty because they have trust in me. Of course there are teacher reps there too, so I can't very well lie about anything. But I think that the governing body is really quite amazing. They give us no trouble at all. It's the big decisions they make when we have to spend a large amounts of money, make structural changes to the school and the like. They absolutely leave the rest to us to run the school.

This is the first year that we let children leave school early after having written the June exam paper. We usually only reserve this for the final exam but this time the teachers complained that they needed time to mark. They were actually tired of marking during the holidays so that the reports would be ready in the first week of the new term. A whole week of their holidays is taken up marking. I considered that and I also didn't want children absconding from school. I would much rather that they leave school in a decent manner with their parents knowing about it. I think we have a better relationship this way.

Grade ten course selection: We implement sub-minimums in certain choices

Our grade ten course selections start the year before. We decide on the courses that we can offer and that often depends on the staff that we have. Everyone that we admit from the outside needs to fall in place with our courses. The grade nine learners make their choices. But obviously we can only have forty or so per class. So we implement a sub-minimum of fifty percent on the standard grade in mathematics for those that want to do the commerce course. To get into the physics stream, we have a seventy percent maths cut off requirement. Of course parents have fought with us all the way. They've even been to the Department to complain. We've stopped fighting it but their child suffers in the end, because we know what we are talking about. Of course at the end of the day we are proved right. The children actually *suffer* in those classes and at the end of grade ten or somewhere in grade eleven, the parents then ask for a course change which we do because the child has suffered and the fault is often the parents.

Student leaders: We decided with the RCL's consent to have prefects as well

The student leadership is represented by the RCL and the prefects. We were only supposed to have the RCL as the legal, official representative group of the learners. But the little grade eights actually said to me that they can't control the bigger kids and that they are being bullied. So we decided with the RCL's consent to have prefects as well. They won't have official status as such. They won't represent the school in any way but they will help with discipline and order. Because the grade twelve learners have been here longer, everybody will listen to them rather than the grade 8 and 9 RCL members.

Learner admissions: A language test should be used as a criterion for admissions

I think that a language test should be used as a criterion for admissions. Another criterion needs to be that you have to have gone through an English medium primary school if you want to go through an English medium secondary school. Because therein lies the problem. How can children learn works like Hamlet and Macbeth⁴⁵ and even begin to understand the depth of that type of literature if their English is not good. You have to cover those set works in the languages. The Department should increase the PPN, to give us extra staff to provide some English acceleration to these learners. Most of our new admissions come from the townships⁴⁶. In the past most of our learners had come from the surrounding area.

For our admissions, we pre-plan our date the year before and include it in a management plan. Whenever we write to parents about anything at all, we remember to include that date of admission. Towards the end of the year, we send HOD's and other teachers out to primary schools in the area to promote our school. I feel badly about that because half of what we say we'd like to offer, we don't end up offering. But it's not deliberate on

⁴⁵ Shakespearian plays usually studied in schools

⁴⁶ Peri-urban areas usually inhabited by poor African communities

our part; it's just manpower and financial resources. We have an admissions policy in place which we need to revise because things have changed as far as school fees and refugee admissions are concerned.

We actually admit learners in all grades except grade twelve. We want to change that because we have found that all the children that we admitted from grade nine to grade eleven are problem children from other schools. They've been forcibly given the option of expulsion or transfer and they end up coming to us. But *those* pupils are our worst nightmare. So from next year we want to admit learners only in grade eight. Even if we end up with fewer classes, that's fine. We have quite a few refugees⁴⁷ at our school. We have in excess of twenty five, from grade nine up to grade eleven. At the moment, they are doing Afrikaans as a second language and they are battling. Those refugees who have come up from grade seven are not as badly off as those who have newly arrived in the country. Refugees are admitted throughout the grades and for the first time this year we admitted two refugees in grade eleven. They are doing Afrikaans⁴⁸ for the first time and they are extremely stressed out.

Most learners who seek admission here are admitted. I must say what we are guilty of and this could get me into prison. We actually do require a deposit⁴⁹ and I know it's against the law *but* anyone managing the school knows that you require some sort of deposit. That's our biggest reason for refusal. We say "come back when you have some form of deposit" and ultimately the parents come back. But some don't and I know that we need to change that. There have been cases where parents have complained to the district office. What I've tried to do is still *push* my point, that my school governing body wants that two hundred and fifty rand deposit. I push this as far as I can take it, in fact right into February and ultimately when that parent comes in with a letter from a social worker or an affidavit of unemployment from a police station, and then I accept the child without a deposit. But I put those things in place because we have bills to pay. There is also an age cut off. One can't have an eighteen year old in grade eight or grade nine and I have refused admission on those grounds.

⁴⁷ Refugees from central African countries. These learners have no knowledge of Afrikaans

⁴⁸ Afrikaans was a compulsory language at all schools, imposed by the apartheid Government

⁴⁹ Deposit as part payment of the annual school fee

Pass rate: The department's admission policy does not match the use of pass rates to evaluate schools

I can only speak of evaluation in terms of the matric pass rate. That's the only yardstick I know that the Department uses to measure your so called success. Of course I don't agree with it. Absolutely not because the admission policy does not match. If we could choose whom to admit then the Department can hold us responsible for the end result which is one's matric pass rate. But because its *carte blanche* with admissions, you really can't turn anybody away. Then the Department must accept what they get at matric level if everything else has gone smoothly. Actually each school should be evaluated on its own merits. For example they need to get into each school and check what the staffing is like, what components are there, whether staff is even teaching, whether teaching and learning is taking place, and factors like absenteeism of educators. If certain groups of educators are more absent than others, obviously you're having problems and that would impact on the outcome eventually. People need to say that this school had the problem of educator absenteeism and obviously it's going to affect your pass rate. The Department needs to check whether there is a problem with your learner population, where they come from, what results they are coming to your school with, how old they are when they seek admission, what your infrastructure is like, and a whole lot of other factors. There are so many factors that need to be looked at first.

We have had a high pass rate for a number of years and this is due to our matric teachers. There is a special commitment needed to teach grade twelve. These teachers are dedicated in the classroom and are seldom absent. We also have extremists who give more than the level of commitment required. My staff work very, very hard. I also intimidate my matrices with tone and threats and things like that but actually it's a staff effort. We have a lot of learners whose parents are not very interested. We make facilities available where these learners can study after school and on Saturdays.

I do feel pressured to maintain the pass rate. Not so many years ago this school had a hundred percent pass every year. That happened because all the learners could speak English. Now with the advent of Zulu and Xhosa speaking children, we felt that we

needed to maintain the pass rate but we knew that we had more handicaps and challenges. Of course we didn't maintain the pass rate. We dropped to 60 something percent but we decided that we wouldn't go lower than that. It takes a lot out of our teachers and it takes a lot out of me. I don't do this for the department. They judge you only on your grade twelve pass rate. They have huge ceremonies where accolades and awards are given which I find so distasteful. I don't support the idea. I don't attend because I just find it farcical. I find it window dressing, superficial and false. I know I sound harsh but that's how I am. I know what we go through here. We are not an affluent school. While I'm not trying to take anything away from affluent schools, we do not have the same means in every respect. So *why* I am compared with them, I just don't know? If I get an eighty percent pass rate, that is *excellent* for me, it's like a hundred percent. I don't want to be measured against anybody.

For schools that want to improve their pass rate, I would say that you just have to keep urging the children to keep working. As much as they may irritate you with their absenteeism and not pulling their weight, you have to try and win them over, by being warm and nice even though you don't want to be. You need a set of educators who are dedicated. If they are not then there is nothing you can do because their feelings and negative attitude rubs off onto the learners. So it's actually *out* of the principal's hand to a large extent. Another factor is to ensure that learners who do not deserve it are not passed by the SEM's. This must start from grade eight. Educators and the principal know best who should pass. But the Department interferes with this and then we are judged by the number of kids who pass grade twelve. It is so false. Even if you have five failures in grade twelve, it is a bad statistic. We know the history of the child and that child has slipped through time and again because of SEM condones them. I suppose the statistics have to look good to the higher ups, so the SEM's will pass people by giving them fifty marks or more. That has happened here. I suppose if you're considered to be provocative like I am it just compounds our problem.

I am quite strict with the grade elevens. I actually put things in place where I said to teachers that whoever is going through to matric must go through completely, fairly and under their own steam. Because that is how we are going to be viewed. Condonations at

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grade eleven are one of our biggest fights. We've had many different SEMS in the last couple of years. I would say it depends on the SEM. I was very pleased with the last SEM because she said that we as a staff would know best who needed to be condoned. So I did not quarrel last year.

There has definitely been a change in the number of exemptions that our school is writing for. They have become fewer and fewer. Generally I think it is that our pupils are doing worse. That's the problem. The other major challenge is one of language. If you are not an English first language speaker, you have big challenges. Other problems may be the lack of resources that our kids have. Many of our children come from informal settlements with no running water or electricity. To study at night is a big challenge. Many study by candle light.

2.3. Mrs G. Thembani: Working with God and Waiting

Introduction

She is the acting principal of Excel Secondary school. This school is an ex-HOD school situated in an area which was recently developed for the surrounding African community. This school has eight hundred and eighty one learners and thirty two teachers. (A detailed description of the school statistics can be found in the appendix). Mrs Thembani is a forty one year old, African woman. She has been at this school since its opening five years ago. Her story (in her own words) follows next.

Leadership: The leader.

Becoming a principal

The opening of this school was a big thing. It was part of a presidential initiative. It was organised by the councillor of this area together with the community. Jacob Zuma, the

Deputy President was here to open the school. It was a *big* party. This school is part of a whole community centre that is built around the school.

I am *not* the permanent principal here. I am the acting principal. I was the only Head of Department here after the principal and the deputies left because of the problems at this school. I have been appointed by the State, although I haven't received a letter of appointment as yet. Yesterday the SEM⁵⁰ was here and I told him that I have not received an appointment letter. He promised me that I will receive it. I don't know if I will get it. There are a lot of problems here.

Grounding belief: I'm not working alone. I'm working with God

I won't say if it's a good or bad thing that I went straight from HOD to principal but at the end of the day, I say that I believe strongly in God. I've been put here by God for a certain purpose. Maybe it is to stabilise the school so that a new principal can come in. Therefore I strongly believe that my position here is not a mistake. I've been put by God for a certain purpose, because I never thought I would manage but I have managed. I'm managing. I don't think it's because of my strong character or whatever but I think it's because I'm not working alone. I'm working with God.

I don't think that I am trying to make everyone believe what I believe. My connection to God is not influencing me in every single thing. But there is one thing that I am trying to do now which has not been done before. That is to invite some priests to come here and talk to the children. I did this when we opened this term and when we closed last term. I think the beginning of wisdom is the fear of the Lord. I *did* consult with the learners association beforehand to tell them that I will be doing that and to find out from them if they are going to be happy with it. They said that they were very happy. There was also a CSM which is the Christian Students' Movement. It was not as strong as it is now. I managed to get one of the local priests to come here on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays and the numbers are getting bigger and bigger. So if we can just put Christianity

⁵⁰ Senior Education Manager

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into these kids, make them aware that there is a God whom they need to fear, maybe their morale will change. It has been helping a little. But what makes me happy is that sometimes I do go to their meetings and the numbers are increasing from about twenty five to about sixty now. The more they know that they need to fear the Lord, maybe the more they will change from what they are.

Personal attributes: I've got a very good relationship with teachers

My interaction with the staff is good. I think it's because I'm friendly with all the teachers both Indians and Blacks and both males and females. I respect them and they respect me and it has always been like that. I've got a very good relationship with teachers.

Leadership: The context

Education policy: The government is moving in the correct direction

I'm not very much familiar with the policies. Actually I've been given a booklet to read which I haven't done as yet. But I feel that the Government is moving in the correct direction so far. I don't know why but it is just that I feel it is in the correct direction.

But as much as I said that the Department is moving in the right direction, there are some policies which are not right. I'm not happy about some of the policies. The reason why I say that is because the Department sometimes make policies which are not right for South African students. For example, I find it very difficult to understand that I must keep a pregnant child here at school. I don't know how they made this pregnancy policy⁵¹. Maybe I am not happy because we are coming from the old school of thought but what makes me happy is that even the students themselves come and complain about

⁵¹ The Department's pregnancy policy dictates that no pregnant learner may be refused access to school and to education

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this. They complain that these people are spoiling our name, our uniform and spoiling this and that. They want to know why these girls are kept here. I've told them it is because of the policies from the Department and there's nothing that we can do about it. We don't send the girls home, we just ask for the letters from the doctors and we do the right thing, as we are supposed to do.

Transformational challenges: The main challenge for the principal here is the discipline

The main challenge for the principal here is the discipline. The discipline is not right. The learners and teachers are not well disciplined. But I don't think it will be a problem if a strong principal can come in. I just told myself that maybe I must take one thing at a time.

For example, the bell will ring and it will take ten to fifteen minutes to get to class. I said to myself that I am going to let this be my main priority to work on. I told myself that if I can talk to the teachers about this then talking to the learners should be easy. If the teachers are in class and the learners come late, then the teacher needs to discipline that learner. So it was clear that I only had to talk to the teachers, not to the kids. So we talked a lot about this. It's a *real* problem and the teachers were the ones who were coming up with suggestions that maybe we need to do this and that. At the end of the day, they said that I must trust them; they are going to work on this thing. So whenever the bell rings and I go to the staffroom, they tell me to just trust them. It's a joke but you can see that it's improving.

Life under threat: I don't know if I'll stand in the same place when the second letter comes

As much as I don't have that fear right now there is one thing that I need to mention. When we closed last term I also received a letter through the post threatening to kill me. It was just like the one that was received by the last principal. When I opened it, I

thought “Oh, they think the last principal is still here” as it was addressed to the principal. I could see that it was in the same handwriting as the last threatening letter. But when I opened it, the first sentence was addressed to me; to my name. It said “Mrs Thembani⁵² - you dog. Why are you still there, we’ve been instructed to hijack you and kill you” But I just told myself that I am not going to be intimidated by this letter. The last principal said the same thing that he is not going to be intimidated by this letter. But when the second letter came, he feared for his life. So I don’t know about myself. Whenever I receive the post, I get so worried. But so far I haven’t received the second letter but I’m waiting for it. I don’t know if I’ll stand in the same place when the second letter comes. And I pray a lot that it mustn’t come at all but if it comes then I must be strong. The way that I have handled it is not to let it worry me when I am doing my work. I just tell myself that I’m not going to be fearful. I reported the letter to the police station, to the Department officials, to the SEM as well as to the councillor. In fact, the first person that I told was the councillor. They all told me the same story - “don’t worry about this letter”. But at the end of the day, it’s my life not theirs. So as much as I’m not worried now, I know that if I receive the second letter there will be some fear within me at that time. Although the letter to the last principal and to me was similar, there were some differences. The last principal was a Coloured man and the letter made reference to his race. In my case the tone of the letter was a bit different. It also said that “we are the pupils of *Umkumbane*. We don’t have a place to live and we need to change that school into flats”. They ended by saying “*viva Umkumbane*⁵³ *viva*⁵⁴”. This issue was not mentioned in the letter to the last principal. I fail to think who could have written these letters. Where could these letters have come from? Even at the police station when they asked if I suspected anyone, I said that I fail to think of anyone. I did say that a strong, black male principal is needed here but even if he is here, the letters will come. But that person will say “go to hell, I’m not going to take this seriously” and carry on. Even though I have received the threatening letter, I am not more security conscious than before. If I am here late the only thing that I do is to lock my door. When I work here until four my car is the only one left there when I am leaving. But there is a guard who is

⁵² Not her real name

⁵³ The preferred African name for the area in which the school is located

⁵⁴ *Viva* is a local term indicating support, typically in political settings. (equivalent to the “long live” slogan)

employed by us and the primary school to look after the cars. When I am leaving, I find the guard there. I tell him I'm that I'm going now and that he can go. One thing that I would *love* you to know is that I have also received this death threat letter but I am still here. Before the two heads of Department returned to school, they went to the SEM and they were reluctant to come back here. One thing that the SEM told them is that Mrs. Thembani also received the same letter and she's still there. She's a female so how can you two males be afraid when she is there. Another thing to remember is that it was like everyone was mentioned in the letter because it said that I must close the school. This means that the other teachers were also affected but they are here. So now, at the end of the day it's all of us in this thing together. Maybe that makes us stronger and it makes us to be one.

Principal's appointment status: Being in an acting principal position is very different to being the appointed principal

There are still a lot of Indian staff members left but all our learners are Africans. The last principal was Indian and he received a death threat. On that letter, the names of the two Indian heads of Department were also mentioned. So when the principal left, the Heads of Department also left. I was the only head of Department left and so I was asked to act as principal and I have been doing that for the last three months. After all the problems, the two heads of Department have just returned to school. Because of the support that I have from the staff, I *am* comfortable about taking on the principal's post but I still believe that this school needs a very strong person which I don't think I am. But life is going on because of the support I have from the staff. They are fully supportive. If they are unhappy - maybe it's only ten percent of the staff.

I think that being in an acting principal position is very different to being the appointed principal. As I am saying this I am thinking of my old school. The principal was old and he eventually retired. We didn't have a DP⁵⁵ at the school. About a year before the principal retired, he nominated one of the level one teachers to be the acting principal.

⁵⁵ Deputy principal

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We felt that the teacher didn't have the qualities to be an acting principal, but because the principal was so strong, this lady managed while the principal was here. And when he left, we thought that she was not going to manage anymore but because the school had that *strong* principal for so long, things were all set up and just continued going smoothly. So if I was in another school my role would be different even if I was only the acting principal. I took over as acting principal for about three months now. At this moment I'm not sure whether I will apply or not if this post is advertised. Maybe if that situation arises at the end of the year, I'll be able to answer it.

Leadership: The practice

Desirable education system: The principal's word must be final but he must be a good democratic person to run the school

It's difficult to talk about what the role of the principal should be. I am very new to this position. It may have been much better if I was a deputy principal first but I'm coming straight from being a Head of Department to being the principal. When I started teaching in 1991, the principal of my first school was very good. That school was running very smoothly. As much as he was running the school together with the management, his word was final. I think that's what principals should be like. But if this is going to be the case, then the principal must be a good democratic person to run the school. He will not be like our last principal who only did things to favour. His downfall was brought about by him doing things for his wife who was a teacher here and fighting for her. He would say that he was doing it for the good of the school but it was really for the good of his wife. He worked very hard to uplift the standard of his wife. She was a level one teacher and she wanted to be a head of Department at level two. The principal wanted his wife to be the PRO and so many of the problems here emanated from that. He even became unpopular with *all* the teachers, not only the black teachers but the Indians as well. Because everybody could see that whatever he was doing, he was only doing it to promote his wife. If there was a function at school being organised by his wife, he would go all out for that function but if it was organised by other people, he will always

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complain that people are organising these things at the wrong time of the year. He would complain that these teachers don't see that they are disturbing the learners and all those things. I don't really know what has happened to the principal's wife. She didn't get the post here at but there were rumours that she got it at another school. But there was a dispute lodged against her promotion so I just don't know what has happened. So as much as I say that the principal's word should be final, it must be that kind of principal who has the interest of the learners at heart. This is difficult because I don't know how we can tell that this one is like that and this one is not like that.

Leadership style: I work hand in hand with the community

I work hand in hand with the community. If I may be frank with you, sometimes the governing body do things which maybe other principals won't allow. I do it because they have the love of the school and sometimes because of their ignorance they don't know how far they should go. I just let them do those things. I don't fight with them, because I don't want to be unpopular with them because I know that the support that I have with the community and with the governing body is strong. For example when the school opened this term the governing body were here but we had a long staff briefing with all the teachers in the morning so the school started a bit late. The governing body came and asked why the school has not started. I could say the teachers were not happy about this but they kept quiet. They didn't say a word about it. We were maybe only fifteen to twenty minutes behind time and the governing body were harassing us. They kept saying "go to classes, go to classes, why are you here?" I said that we were having a staff briefing. But the governing body said that while I was having that briefing I should have asked some other teachers to go and address the learners and let the learners go to class. They said "now you've started on the wrong note. The very first day you are starting at the wrong note". I said that I'm sorry, I didn't think of it that way.

Good school principal: The best person for this job is a black, strong male principal

Why I say that this school needs a strong principal is that as much as I've managed for the past two to three months, I don't think that I have the qualities to be a principal of this school. There are so many problems in this school which I don't think I can manage. I don't think that I'm the right person, so I think that you need somebody stronger than me. The best person for this job is a black, strong, male. Mainly it is because of the pupils in the school. Sometimes we have to call in the governing body. Fortunately they are very supportive, especially the chairperson of the governing body. He is a male and we have to call him when we have problems with the learners. It is because of the support that we have of the governing body that we manage. That's why I say that a *male*, in particular a *strong* male will be the right person for this school. A male has a stronger voice than mine. Let me use the example of the chairperson of the governing body. When he's confronted with a problem from a learner, he tells them that "I'm a parent. I'm a member of the governing body and I need your respect". And if a child doesn't respect him, he *tells* them that "very soon I'm not going to be a member of the governing body and I'm going to fight with you. So stop doing what you are doing right now". That's the kind of person we need. Sometimes we even call him to address the learners. But ever since I started, I must say that there haven't been major problems. It's not because there's something that I am doing differently from the other principals, it's just that I have been lucky. Ever since I took over, we haven't had any major problems. I used to worry before. Actually, I think it was the fear of the unknown and the fear of the problems that I've seen other principals in the past encountering in this school. I'm maybe the fifth principal in this school since the school opened five years ago. That tells you something and I've been here since the opening.

If I get a difficult situation with a learner, I will refer him to the chairman of the governing body. If I fail, I may call for the councillor⁵⁶. What we have realised is that the learners are so much afraid of the councillor. I must say the councillor is a very strong person in this community, so they are afraid of her. If we are talking of the governing body, they think of the councillor as well. The councillor is like a co-opted member of the governing body. Our councillor is a leader. She *is* very strong. I don't

⁵⁶ The councillor is a publicly elected, politically mandated representative of the people in the local governance structures

know what else I can say about her but that she is strong. She is feared here in this community and she has got so much interest in this school, *so much* interest. I really don't know why she has so much interest in this school. Maybe it is because this is *her* area. But the other school opposite us is also in her area and I've got a feeling that she has got so much more interest in this school. Maybe one reason is that she has her office here. Her office is just there in the community hall, so it's easy for her to come here whenever she wants to. I don't know why she is feared but I think it's because of her strategies or whatever. But she's feared and she's respected. Maybe I need to add that she is also respected. I'm not sure about this one but I feel that she was an *Umkonto we Sizwe*⁵⁷ member. So maybe because of all those things she is feared. I know that she likes me a lot as a person and as a teacher. When I told her "I don't think I'm going to be right to take this position" She said "Don't worry. We are with you one hundred percent. So whenever you've got a problem, don't be afraid to run to my office or to phone me or whatever". She was happy like that.

Decision making: I work with the SMT and I consult with the teachers and the RCL

When I take decisions at school, I work mainly with the SMT⁵⁸. But when I go to staff, I don't tell them that this is the decision that I've taken with the SMT. I tell them that we are putting it here in front of you, and if you feel that it is not right then tell us your reasons. And so far we haven't had many disagreements with the teachers. If there is a disagreement I will reconsider the decision but I would not do it without the SMT.

We also consult with the learners. Recently we were visited by the RCL because they were not happy about some of the things that were happening in this school. When they came, they said that they won't tell me what the problems were but they would like to meet the Department officials. I convinced them that I cannot do that. I can't just phone the Department officials and tell them that the RCL wants to see them in connection with something. I told them that I *need* to know what their problems are and try and

⁵⁷ The banned armed wing of the African National Congress during the apartheid era

⁵⁸ School management team

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solve their problem. If I fail then I can try to contact the Department officials. What had happened before was that when the last principal left, the Department officials had come to address the staff and they met the RCL as well. I was not at that meeting but the SEM told the RCL that if they have any problem they must consult the Department officials. I think that was the mistake especially since that SEM is no longer here. We've now got a new SEM who wants people to go via the right channels. Later on the RCL did open up to me and told me their problem and we did manage to solve it.

Grade ten course selection: It depends on which ones the learners choose

In grade ten, when our learners have to choose their subjects, we make signs to help them. Mostly our learners are getting more interested in commerce, so we've got a number of classes in commerce now but we've also got different kinds. We've got business economics, mercantile law, accounting so it depends on which ones the learners choose. We've also got science, which is the physics class. Towards the end of the year, we give the subject choices to the learners for them to take home and choose together with their parents, because that's what the Department wants. Sometimes you find that some parents encourage their children to do science and we know this student is not a science student. But we try and convince them not to do science. If possible we invite the parent to come and we help them to choose.

Learner admissions: They all live in the community

All our admissions come from this area. They all live in the community. They know that the school is for them. We tell them to register early but they still only come in at the beginning of the year and we take them. The primary school is also in the same school grounds, so most of our learners come from this primary school.

Pass rate: I don't sleep at night thinking of ways to improve the pass rate

This school won the award for the most improved school last year. So there is a lot of pressure to get the same pass rate. I was with the SEM just yesterday. He came here solely to talk about that. He said that I must be aware that if the results go down, I'm the one who is to be blamed and if they go up I'm the one who is going to be commended. So he said that I needed to be aware of that and he wanted to know what we are doing to make our results go up. I told him that during the June holidays, there were some teachers who were coming here to teach, especially that teacher who was on sick leave for about two months. Those children were left unattended for almost two months in grade twelve. He was teaching two subjects in grade twelve. The instability that was in the school and the unceremonious leaving of two teachers caused a lot of problems. Before we got an appointed physics teacher here, there were a lot of problems with this post. A teacher will come in, stay for a few days and then disappear. But we *did* manage to get one teacher to take our students during the June holidays. We also got the maths and biology teachers to come in the June holidays because they felt that they were a bit behind. Our maths teacher is a very dedicated teacher but our maths results are very poor. So this year she has been having morning classes. She has also got one extra period every day from Monday to Thursday for the grade twelve classes to try to improve the results. The pressure is also coming from the community. They *tell* me that they expect the results not to go down, but to go up. They tell me that I need to maintain this seventy three percent pass rate or improve it. Nothing less will do. By telling me about the results all the time, I don't sleep at night thinking of ways to improve. Maybe if they don't tell me about the results I will just sleep at night. Maybe I will say that it's not fair. As it is we've tried to twin with another school. We phoned the other high school in the area to have their physics and accounting teachers come to us but we got no help. So it makes me wonder what else I can do to improve. But at the end of the day I won't blame myself if the results are not right. They can blame me but I won't blame myself. Because I would have known that during my few months that I've been principal, I've done everything that I could possible do.

3. Concluding Thoughts

These three exemplary reconstructed career narratives represent both the data and the first level of descriptive analysis. For a complete range of the descriptive analysis of principals' experiences of leadership, the reconstructed career narratives of the remaining three principals are found in the appendix. In accordance with the narrative methodology that I employed in this study, this chapter represents the "narrative analysis". In the next chapter (Chapter 6), I employ analytic strategies (as explained in Chapter 4) to give greater meaning to what these narratives mean. I call this the "analysis of narratives".

CHAPTER 6

ANALYSIS OF NARRATIVE

“... measurement is not an impersonal event that occurs with impartial universality. It's a human act, carried out from a specific point of view in time and space, from the one particular viewpoint of a possible observer. Then, here in Copenhagen... we discover that there is no precisely determinable objective universe. That the universe exists only as a series of approximations. Only within the limits determined by our relationship with it. Only through the understanding lodged inside the human head” (Frayn, 1998, pp. 71-71).

8. Introductory Remarks

In the previous chapter (Chapter 5) I focussed on the first part of the critical question by presenting principals' “reconstructed career narratives” as experiences of leadership. In this chapter I continue to focus on principals' experiences and highlight the “personal” challenges of principals. However, I present a different layer of analysis based on:

- changing the focus to the “context of change” (conceptualised earlier as “pass rate, desegregation and democratic school governance” issues);
- presenting cross case analysis by meshing together theory and data;
- moving from narrative analysis to analysis of narratives.

While it is evident that the three components of the “context of change” are not isolated, I separate them in the analysis in order to present cross-case analysis that highlight each of these components in relation to experiences of leadership. In order to present cross case analysis that are coherent with the narrative approach of this study, I borrowed Gough's (1994) idea of “factionalised” stories to recreate a single “story” from different

interviews, celebrating the voice of the principal, and written in the traditional leadership genre of “person, practice and context”.

Throughout the analysis I am aware that my focus is not on the context of change in itself, but on principals' experiences of leadership within this context. The analytic framework (as discussed in Table 13, Chapter 4) that I use was gleaned from the literature review. In my initial attempts at analysis I identified different sets of similarities between the principals in the cross case analysis. Therefore, I chose to represent the principals in groupings called “congruents” in the analysis that follows. I use the term “congruents” to group principals who share different sets of similarities. I explain these similarities later in the analysis. It has to be noted that the repeated use of flowcharts accompanying the analysis of narrative simply serve as visual aids to graphically capture the essence of the analysis. The use of these flowcharts is not to be confused with reductionist analysis.

While I appreciate that there is a range of interpretations within the multiplicity and “pluro-vocality” of the principals' voices, I make my voice explicit in this section (Riessman, 2004). I coin the term “rhythmic kinetics” to describe the authorial stance that I adopt with the data. This is due to the constant movement (kinetic) that I make in shifting between my dual position as researcher (outsider) and principal (insider) and to my struggle to find a resonance (rhythm) within this movement. While I foreground my voice throughout this section of the analysis, I make a concerted effort to justify my analysis with direct quotations /voices (by referencing each quotation from the coded transcripts as explained in Chapter 4. E.g. E3, B6, etc) from the narratives of the principals themselves. Here I use the second level of the analytic framework to analyse the data with respect to principals' biographies to look for clues that might explain particular understandings of leadership. Why do I choose to look more closely at biographies? Tichy (2001, p. 27) explains it well: “Leadership is autobiographical. If I don't know your story, I don't know a thing about you as a leader”.

2. Pass Rate

2.1. Orientation

I use the term “pass rate” in this study to refer specifically to the pass rate of the final exit examination (grade twelve) of the schools in the study. The grade twelve examinations are “external” examinations (managed by the Provincial Government but with the National Government starting to take greater control)⁵⁹. Because of this, the Grade twelve pass rate of a school is considered by many to be an “objective” criterion of school effectiveness. This view is strengthened by the annual publication of the pass rates of schools as league tables in the local newspapers. This is followed by the Department’s lavish “Awards Ceremony” which celebrates and validates principals and schools with high pass rates. The pass rate is not my focus, but principals’ experiences of school leadership in the context of the pass rate are my focus.

2.2. About Validation and Experience

I borrow the term “validation” from the field of psychology and use it as an organising category in this analysis. In this sense, validation is seen a system of reward (Joseph, P, 2000). In this analysis, I initially categorise the schools’ pass rate using both internal and external sources of validation. I use “internal validation sources” to refer to principals’ internalised frames of reference, while “external validation sources” refer to the Department’s response to schools with regard to the pass rates, which I classify as follows:

- I use the term “**successful schools**” to denote schools that have consistently maintained a high pass rate (over eighty percent) in grade twelve. While I am aware of the problems of simplistically equating the pass rate with school effectiveness (TOPS - Teacher Opportunities Programmes, 1992), I use the term only because the pass rate is currently the only publicised indicator of school

⁵⁹ The National Education Department is increasingly insisting on all learners writing common Grade twelve examinations in the different subject areas

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effectiveness in the popular media. Two of the schools in the sample, namely that of Syed and Ingle fall in this category.

- I use the term “**at-risk schools**” to denote schools that have had a high pass rate and are now experiencing a drop in the pass rate. Renton’s school and Mann’s school are two such schools.
- I use the term “**awarded schools**” to denote schools that have shown the most improvement in their pass rates compared to all the schools in their circuit (administratively demarcated geographical area). These schools have received “awards” for being the most improved schools. Naidoo and Thembani have received such awards.

Together with the validation concepts outlined above, I consider the “experience” of the principals as part of the analytical strategy. I use the broad term “experience” to refer to the experiences of principals with regard to the pass rate over time. The principals in this study range from “experienced” (over ten years experience as principal), “new” (in the first year of being a principal / acting principal) and “recent / caretaker” (six years experience as principal / principal in a temporary capacity).

Using the above validation concepts and “experience” of principals, I determine different sets of congruents to guide my analysis of principals’ experiences of leadership in the context of the pass rate. This is represented in the Table 15.

Set of congruents	Validation (Schools) and Experience (Principal)		Name of Principal
1 st set of congruents	Successful Schools and Experienced Principals		
	High Pass Rate	Over ten years experience	Syed
	High Pass Rate	Over ten years experience	Ingle
2 nd set of congruents	At-risk Schools and New Principals		
	Dropping Pass Rate	One year experience	Renton
	Dropping Pass Rate	One year experience (Acting)	Mann
3 rd set of congruents	Awarded Schools and Recent /Caretaker Principals		
	Received award for most improved Pass Rate	Six years experience	Naidoo
	Received award for most improved Pass Rate	Four months experience	Thembani

Table 15. Congruents: Pass Rate as Validation and Experience of Principals

2.2.1. Successful Schools and Experienced Principals

The schools of Syed and Mann have maintained a consistently high pass rate through the transition from the old education system to the new one. These principals have been lauded for the consistently high pass rate of their schools. While this may serve as obvious external validation, how do principals come to understand leadership in this context? What role does the pass rate play in experiences of school leadership? What are their experiences and feelings regarding the pass rate?

The pass rate was very different in the schools where Syed and Ingle were first appointed as principals. When Syed became the principal at this school, it “was in a mess...the school was underachieving” (C2) while Ingle’s school was a “high profile school... with an ethos of achievement ... and a strong tradition of maths and science” (I3). Syed had to put “certain instruments in place” (C2) and under his leadership, the school started to achieve a high pass rate to the extent that “some of our learners were placed in the top twenty⁶⁰” position of all the learners in the province (C2). Syed sees himself as the person responsible for this *transformation* of the school and he has maintained this achievement of a high pass rate for over ten years. In contrast, Ingle started his teaching career at the same school at which he later became principal. Ingle’s school was a high profile school, especially in the eighties and in the nineties. The main reason for this was that the school was part of a teacher training institution for the Coloured community. With the support of this teacher training institution, the school prided itself as setting educational standards especially in the fields of mathematics and science. When Ingle started here as an educator, he assimilated the ethos of academic achievement of the school and saw the “good educators at the school” as his role models (C1). This influenced his understanding of leadership when he became a principal. Even new educators come to know at the outset that there are very high levels of expectations that Ingle expects from them. Ingle makes sure that educators “have to toe the line and deliver the same kind of results” (I3). While transformation has brought about many challenges, Ingle states that “we tend to give it secondary importance because the

⁶⁰ The top twenty positions in the Grade 12 examinations is a very prestigious placement and the learners receive awards, publicity, and bursaries to study at tertiary institutions

primary issue is to see that there is delivery of the curriculum” (I5). Ingle sees his role as being responsible chiefly for the *maintenance* of the high pass rate.

The purpose of both Syed’s transformation agenda and Ingle’s maintenance agenda is to achieve a high pass rate. Therefore, *instructional leadership* is a prominent feature in the leadership orientation of these principals. An important difference exists in the way Syed and Ingle use instructional leadership to maintain high pass rates. Syed focuses on testing and is forthright in his declaration that “I’ve introduced CASS⁶¹ testing programme which is twice a week, so you’ll find that the child is engaged in a test all the time. Basically the teachers are teaching to a test and I found that necessary to do because my statistics showed that my academic level was dropping” (I2)... The entire school is involved in the official testing programme and with assessment... so everything is directed towards those days” (I9)... and everything feeds into this pass rate that we have” (I3). Syed takes ownership of the focus on “testing” at his school. Testing and evaluation has transformed his pass rate and he intends to keep it that way.

Ingle, unlike Syed, focuses on “teaching” in the classroom as the way to maintain the school’s high pass rate. Ingle sees the need to “really focus on classroom issues, the didactic issues, the pedagogic issues” (B3). Furthermore, “a good school principal should firstly be a good educator... If your experience is not grounded in the classroom, then you can’t relate to your educators” (C1). Ingle explains that his focus on quality teaching is because “the primary issue is to see that there is delivery of the curriculum” (I5).

Syed and Ingle’s primary focus is on the pass rate. This is aligned with a business model of leadership with the pass rate traded as the “profit”. Both see themselves as CEO’s⁶² but define their roles differently. Syed balances the role of a CEO between a hierarchical positionality and a facilitative function. For Syed, a “CEO is not to get bogged down into the nitty-gritty issues relating to the institution because we have deputy principals

⁶¹ Continuous Assessment (CASS) is the Department’s ongoing testing and evaluation programme for learners in an academic year

⁶² Chief Executive Officer (CEO) is a term taken from the Business Management field and refers to the Head of the organisation who usually has an executive function

who can take charge of operations... his role is that of a facilitator... a link person between state, community and the institution” (B1). Ingle focuses mainly on the executive role of the CEO. For Ingle, a CEO “is an executive... who should have total executive authority to go with that responsibility. The CEO assumes total responsibility” (B4).

Both Syed and Ingle use the business model of leadership but with one important difference to traditional business models. They do not see themselves as “charismatic” leaders. Syed tries “not to be dictatorial and prescriptive” in his approach and flattens the hierarchical structure by “trying to make everyone a part of the solution” (D5, D4). Ingle says that “my leadership style is not one where you are always in the front... I don’t like to project myself as a charismatic leader. If I can get something done quietly with the personality of the person being in the background, then I am quite happy to do that” (D6).

Experiences of School Leadership: Principal’s Biographies

Despite the similarities of the principals within this first set of congruents, there are clear differences in the way that leadership is understood and practiced. What accounts for these differences? I use the second level of the analytic framework focussing on biographical influences to find out. Syed and Ingle have a consistently high pass rate at their schools for over ten years. Their reputation of being “successful” principals is enhanced externally by the annual publication of league tables of the grade twelve pass rates in the local press and by Departmental Award ceremonies. In addition, both principals have internalised the pass rate as being the most important indicator of school success. What drives these principals to maintain high pass rates? Can Syed’s claim that his passion of academic excellence and Ingle’s claim that it is the “responsibility of maintaining ... the high profile status of the school” as reasons for striving for high pass rates be taken at face value? (Ingle, B2). Where do these claims come from and what accounts for their differences?

Both Syed and Ingle went to university. During that time of apartheid, there was only one university and only one teacher training institution for Indians. As there was a

higher entrance requirement to enter university, university graduates like Syed and Ingle were commonly assumed to have had a “superior” education. In addition, both of them specialised in mathematics and science and this was also perceived to be “superior”. Coming from this background, both principals made rapid progress in their teaching careers and both subsequently developed strong affiliations to teacher training institutions. This affiliation is important because of the role played by these institutions. These institutions trained the majority of Indian / Coloured educators and the teaching staff (called lecturers) at these institutions were considered to be educational experts in their fields. Syed had been promoted to the Indian teacher training college and Syed himself trained many of the present educators at his school. Syed had then been promoted to a position of education specialist (subject advisor) in the Department, which further enhanced his reputation. Syed explains that “coming from the advisory means that you are coming from the Department. So there is a kind of respect for you immediately... and when your educators look at you, they know that you have certain authority. The science and maths team are already with me because I had lectured to most of them at training college” (G2).

Ingle’s involvement with teacher training institution was different from that of Syed. Ingle (an Indian) was “headhunted” by a (Coloured) school which was physically located on the same premises as that of the Coloured teacher training institution. This institution placed great value on academic excellence and saw the school as an extension of itself. Ingle’s science background was valued highly by the school, which took the unprecedented step of appointing him (an Indian) as principal in a Coloured school in the apartheid era. When the teacher training institution was phased out in the nineties, the focus turned on the school. This school had a history of tremendous academic successes, very high pass rates and a reputation of being an excellent school with excellent educators. The school’s ethos of academic excellence was aligned with Ingle’s own quest for academic excellence. These experiences continue to influence the high value that Ingle places on maintaining the high pass rate at his school. To illustrate an overview of my analysis of this first set of congruents, I present this as a schematic diagram represented by Figure 4.

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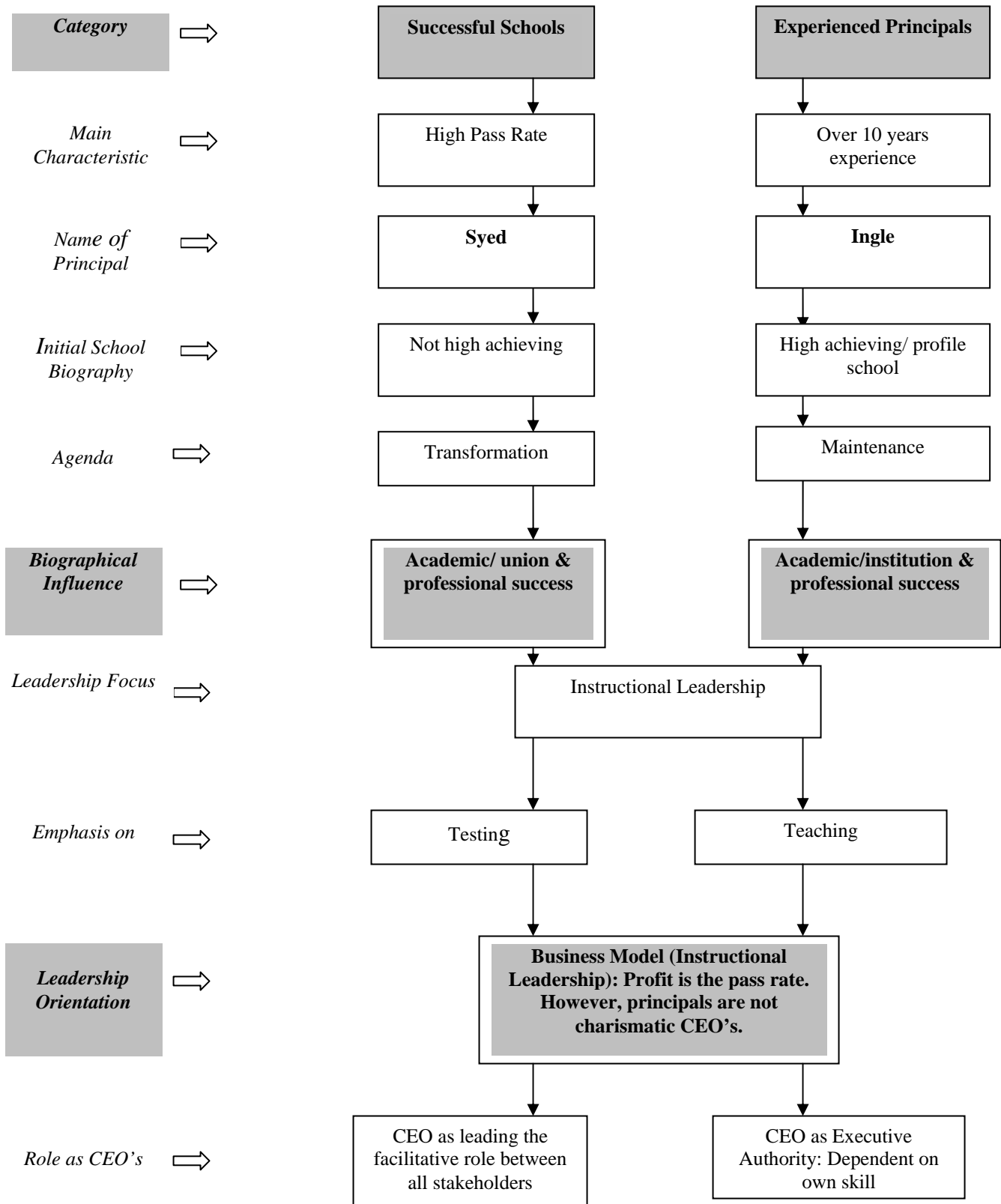


Figure 4. Principals' Experiences of School Leadership in Successful Schools

2.2.2. At-Risk Schools and “New” Principals

In the second set of congruents, the schools enjoyed a high pass rate in the old education system but face a dropping pass rate in the new system. These schools are now perceived to be “at-risk” schools. However, while the pass rate is dropping, it still remains above eighty percent. Two of the schools in the sample fall into this category and the principals of these schools are relatively inexperienced. Renton is in her first year of being permanently appointed as a principal but she has been in an acting capacity as principal in the same school for almost a year prior to her permanent appointment. Mann is in his first year at a school where he has taken up the position of acting principal. Given the recency of their appointments, it is expected that they do not blame themselves as the reason for the dropping pass rate. Both principals engage the issue of the dropping pass rate with vigour and identify systemic incongruencies within the Department of Education as the main reasons for the drop in the pass rate at their schools. In particular, the incongruency between policy formulation and policy implementation is singled out as a matter of concern. However, Renton and Mann differ in the way that they understand their leadership roles in relation to the Department’s policies.

Renton is concerned about the drop in the pass rate at her school but she sees this as a result of circumstances beyond her control. She started her career as an educator at this school, which had a very high pass rate in the past. Her appointment as principal coincided with many new educational policy directives aimed at addressing past imbalances. Renton firmly believes that these new policies are responsible for the drop in her school’s pass rate. In particular “the pass rate is dropping because the Department’s admission policy is problematic” (B8). This policy is designed to allow easier access into schools and to ensure admission to any learner provided that the school has place⁶³. Renton does not associate the issue of admissions overtly with race. Instead, she problematises the admission issue as having to accept children who are not first language English speakers. This she feels is the main reason for the drop in the pass

⁶³“Place” commonly refers to the physical space that the school has for learners and this is an indication that the school can accommodate the admission of learners. The opposite of this is when schools are said to be “full”

rate. At her school, Renton previously “had a hundred percent pass rate... and that came from having all your learners being English speakers” (I2). Renton argues that “if we could choose whom we admit, then they (the Department) can hold us responsible for the grade twelve pass rate ... but “because it is *carte blanche* with admissions and you really cannot turn anybody away, then they (the Department) must accept what they are getting at grade twelve” (B8).

Renton’s school is at-risk because the pass rate is dropping. Because of this, Renton perceives her leadership to be under stricter scrutiny from the Department. She agrees that there is a need to maintain a high pass rate but accepts that it will not be at the same levels of the previous years due to the “handicaps” that she now faces. These handicaps make her feel “under siege” and she often talks about “my school”, “my circumstances”, and the “unique situation at my school”. Under these circumstances, Renton believes that whatever the pass rate is, it is the best that the school can do. She also sees the role of her superior officer (SEM)⁶⁴ as problematic in that the SEM’s promote many learners in the lower grades who do not meet the promotion requirements. SEM’s do this to please their superior officers and to demonstrate that the schools under their control are faring well. These learners then reach grade twelve and cannot pass the external exam and the pass rate drops.

It is not surprising then that Renton sees no need for schools to be compared, especially with regard to the pass rate. In contrast to successful principals who see the value of the Department’s awards ceremonies based on pass rates, Renton is forthright in her contempt for such ceremonies. Renton complains that “they have huge ceremonies, where awards are given. I don’t attend because I find it farcical, window dressing, superficial and false...I know what we are going through here, we don’t have the same means and I won’t be compared to them because my situation is completely different” (I3).

Like Renton, Mann also questions the role of the Department’s polices and their effect on the pass rate. However, Mann has a different take on the issue. While he is a firm

⁶⁴ Senior Education Manager (SEM) refers to the immediate accounting officer of the school principal

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believer in implementing Department policies “to a T”, he questions why the Department allows some (privileged) schools to implement policies selectively (C1). An example is when some “affluent” schools openly charge “admission fees” when this is clearly in contravention of the Department’s admission policy. Mann feels strongly that the Department is complicit in this contravention due to their silence. Mann reasons that the main reason for these schools “getting away” is that they use their high pass rates as legitimacy for their selective implementation of national educational policy. Mann feels that this is a big problem because it means that some schools succeed “at the expense of other schools” (Hargreaves & Fink, 2003a). In this way, the bigger picture of the community as a whole is not benefiting. The “bigger picture” is a critical and recurring theme in Mann’s narrative. For Mann “a principal has to see himself as part of the bigger education process and not focus just on his role at his school...Most principals have tunnel vision and are concerned only with what is happening at their schools. They will not make any contribution to the benefit of other schools or to the broader issues of education. I loath those principals because they don’t see the bigger picture. A principal has got to see his school as part of a bigger picture and that picture includes the community as well” (C3).

Unlike Renton, Mann initially embraced the “open” admission policy of the Department. Mann facilitated the indiscriminate admission of learners from elsewhere into all grades. This was guided by a “social justice” agenda and was aligned with the open admission policy of the Department. However, this agenda resulted in a drop in the pass rate and this in turn conflicted with Mann’s high academic ideals. In the following year, Mann saw the need to restrict admissions so that new admissions were mainly at the entry level of grade eight so that they could then “come through a system that was not artificial” (I1). There was also “streamlining of higher and standard grades ... the introduction of subjects like Business Economics for the not very academically orientated learners and the introduction of isiZulu as a subject in the curriculum” (I1). Mann sees his role as that of an instructional leader and he implemented “intense revision programmes, every term” in order to improve the pass rate (I2). He believes that the single most important factor to improve the pass rate is quality educators. His definition of quality educators are those that “are experienced and who have marked grade twelve papers. They are able

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to share and give more quality to the learners... All you need is a nice classy educator who can show the beauty of the subject and how easy it is" (I2). Mann considers the pass rate to be important but with one condition. It "is not a bad yardstick provided that you don't make odious comparisons" (B3). Comparing all schools on the basis of their pass rates is considered unfair. One reason for this is that due to ineffective policy implementation, some schools carry a greater social responsibility than others and this compromises the pass rate. For example, learners experiencing personal crises due to their social circumstances are typically placed in temporary "social welfare homes" and the majority of these learners are then placed in schools that charge low school fees. However Mann also presents a counter view of the importance of the pass rate by asserting that while "educators are very dedicated and very result conscious ... we mustn't make too much of grade twelve results. Sometimes you may just have a bad crop and everything goes haywire" (I1). This counter view is important to Mann as he struggles to reconcile his social justice agenda with his efforts to improve the pass rate.

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While Renton and Mann "turn inwards", they differ in the ways in which they seek out alternate forms of validation. What accounts for these differences? Renton's role model is her father who was a hard working principal in the old education system. He consistently produced excellent pass rates at his schools. He was rewarded by a quick series of promotion and reached the position of a senior education specialist in the old system. Success in those days depended on the ability of a principal to implement Department policies unquestioningly. These policies were deemed to be effective because they had consistently resulted in high pass rates in the old system. This concept of managing a school made a lasting impression on Renton. However, the new education system brought about many changes especially in its policies. Renton had implemented these new policies but she feels that this has brought about a drop in the pass rate. This created tensions for Renton in the way that she traditionally viewed her leadership role. Renton now looks inwards to find answers. From her experiences, Renton has come to believe that principals "know the most about education" and by implication know the

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most about what is happening in their schools (E1). Therefore, Renton implements policies according to how she understands them. In the crisis-mindset that Renton finds herself in, she sees her role as a “manager in the true sense of the word” (B4). By this, she means that “my scene is simply managing my school and that’s it” (B5). She will not “be an agent of the Department because the Department expects you to be their tool” (E1). She would prefer to resist implementing policies if she does not agree with them. This has had serious repercussions for her. Renton laments that “in my experience, you are victimised ... if you don’t follow policy. I know that from personal experience. You are victimised in ways that you will not believe...I had to seek legal advice and employ a lawyer to sort out my problems” (E4). However, Renton takes comfort (alternate validation) in the fact that she and her educators work very hard and this allows her to feel comfortable with the declining pass rate.

Mann’s romanticised childhood continues to exert a strong influence in his understanding of leadership. The concept of belonging to a community is very important to Mann. He grew up in a “beautiful farm” and he has very positive and affirming memories of his childhood. But when he witnessed the destruction of this “romantic place” by the apartheid policies, it awakened a strong sense of social justice within him. He saw his childhood area being used as a “dumping ground” for people who were forcibly removed elsewhere from their homes during the apartheid system. Mann experienced his beloved “peaceful, farming community (being) turned into a concrete jungle and it was an absolute turmoil. I experienced all that... and that kind of influenced my thinking” (A3). These experiences politicised him at an early age. This political interest influenced him to study history. His deep love and interest in history resulted in him specialising in history when he became an educator. He enjoyed considerable success as an educator and was soon seconded to the Indian teacher training institution. At this institution, the focus on academic excellence was of primary importance. This focus was aligned with Mann’s own quest for academic achievement. Mann completed a Masters degree in History (specialising in Indian history) and became totally committed to the promotion of the subject. He is “still involved in History in a big way, in terms of the Department, setting grade twelve papers, involved in the History Provincial society, involved in various sub-committees and in teacher training” (A3).

Due to this influence, Mann considers the pass rate to be important and allows him to restrict admission of “at-risk” learners. This creates a tension between his social justice agenda and his view of the importance of the pass rate. Mann looks to his participation in the wider professional association for validation. To illustrate an overview of my analysis of this second set of congruents, I present this as a schematic diagram represented by Figure 5.

2.2.3. Awarded Schools and Recent / Caretaker Principals

The pass rate at these schools has not always been high. Recently, the pass rate has improved dramatically to the extent that the schools received the award for the “most improved school” from the Department at its annual “Awards celebration” for grade twelve results. Naidoo’s school and Thembanani’s school are two such “awarded” schools.

Naidoo is a “recent” principal with five years of experience at his school as a principal. For two of the five years he was in an acting position as principal at the same school. When he arrived at the school, the pass rate was twenty eight percent. Within three years he had increased the pass rate to ninety two percent. In his first year, Naidoo questioned the educators about the low pass rate. He had come from a school in a rural area with very few resources and he would not accept the lack of resources as the reason for the low pass rate. Because this was his first year, Naidoo “couldn’t ask too much of the educators” (I1). But he recognised that greater sacrifice from the educators and greater involvement from the parents was urgently needed.

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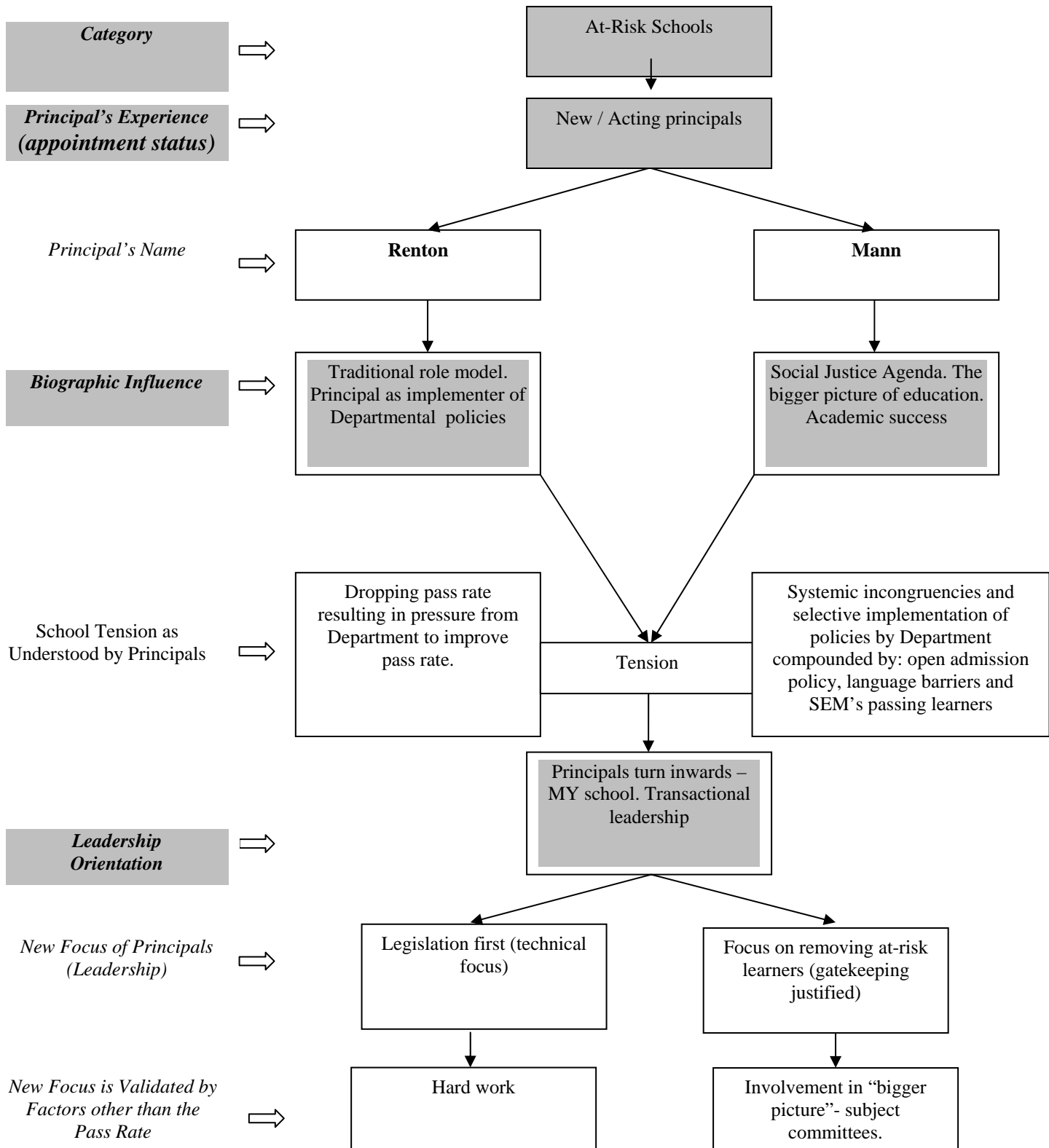


Figure 5. Principals' Experiences of School Leadership in At-Risk Schools

Naidoo was deliberate in his strategy to improve the pass rate. He used a “people-centred” approach and appealed to the educators to improve the pass rate. He realised that he first “had to win over the educators” (I2). If he could gain the trust of his educators, then it will be easy to improve the pass rate. This was the beginning of his charismatic style of leadership at the school. He appealed to the educators to try and improve the pass rate not only because “how much it means to me, but how much it means to all of us if we can get involved with our children... because we know that the parents are uneducated and we have to do the work of the parents as well” (I2). His approach succeeded in improving the pass rate to such an extent that his school won the most improved school award. Naidoo is a transformational leader and he sees the pass rate as a benefit to the learners. Naidoo says that “it is not so much for personal glory but the fact that my children have benefited from that” (I2). He argues that the validation of his leadership role by the Department is not his motivating factor. He is driven to maintain the high pass rate not to please the Department but to please himself. He claims that this “is what I want... it’s something that I as an individual want. It will give me some intrinsic pleasure to actually see my school high up there” (I4).

Winning the award for most improved school brought new confidence to Naidoo. Instead of trying to maintain the high pass rate at all costs, Naidoo starts to question the role of the pass rate as the main indicator of school success. Although Naidoo concedes that “I guess the Department has made us concentrate on the results we produce in grade twelve” he will not put the pass rate above all other considerations (C6). For example, learners are not forced to do “less academically demanding subjects” in order to ensure that they pass and thereby protect the school’s pass rate. To do that is “totally, totally wrong” because “you may be robbing a child of their dreams” (I9).

Naidoo is sceptical about using the pass rate as an indicator of school success. He thinks that “too much emphasis is placed on the pass rate” (B5). What irks him is the silence of the Department about the many openly –flouted gatekeeping strategies that principals use to prejudice many learners in their quest to maintain a high pass rate. Naidoo identifies some of these strategies as follows:

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- Exclusion of learners (either by denying them admission into their schools or by asking them to leave their schools) who are not able to match the high academic standard of the school
- High failure rate in grade eleven (due to more stringent pass requirements) to ensure a high pass rate in grade twelve
- Discouraging learners to do subjects on the higher grade
- Denying learners the opportunity to choose “more academically demanding” subjects such as Physical Science and Mathematics

Naidoo claims that by focussing on the pass rate, the main objective of education is lost. Naidoo asserts that “when too much emphasis is placed on the number of children passing at the end of the year, then we tend to lose sight of the objective of having children at school which is to develop children all round and to make them good citizens. More emphasis should be placed on sport as it is done in countries of the East... and this will ensure the all round development of the child” (B5). Additionally, Naidoo sees the disparity in financial resources at schools as a contributing factor to the difference in the pass rates in schools.

Them bani’s school is also an “awarded” school like Naidoo’s school. Them bani is the acting principal at her school. This school is plagued with crises and has had a rapid turnover of principals. It had five principals in the five years of its existence. Four of these principals were in temporary “acting” positions. The first principal was Indian and he was the only permanently appointed principal at this school. He left when he received death threats. These threats made specific reference to his race. The second principal was Coloured and in the year that he was there, the school received the award for being the most improved school. He also received a death threat similar to the one received by the first principal and decided to leave. Two other principals served for short periods and left of their own accord. Them bani was the only member of management (Head of Department) left at her school and she was asked by the Department to assume the role of the principal. She is well aware that her position is a temporary one. She sees her role as that of a caretaker principal until “a strong, Black, male principal is appointed” (G5).

Them bani was not the principal when the school received the award the previous year for being the most improved school. She is vague about her feelings about the pass rate as an indicator of school success. Initially she claims that she feels “under no pressure to maintain the high pass rate” (I3). This comes from her belief that she has “done everything that I could possibly do...and at the end of the day, if it is not right, I won’t blame myself. They can blame me but I won’t blame myself” (I4). Despite doing all that she can do, there are many circumstances beyond her control that impact negatively on the pass rate. Them bani lists some of these circumstances as:

- One senior educator was on sick leave for two months. He was traumatised and felt unsafe at the school because his name was mentioned in the written death threats received by the principal. There was no replacement educator in his place, and his grade twelve classes were not taught.
- There was no permanent science educator at the school. Two science teachers came and left within a few weeks of each other. Them bani tried to “twin” with a neighbouring school in order to share their human resources (specifically their science educator). These attempts were unsuccessful.

Despite the odds being against her, Them bani remains optimistic because she is “working with God” (C1). However despite her protestations, she identifies two sources of pressure to maintain the high pass rate. The first comes from the Department in the form of the SEM. He “was here yesterday...solely to talk about that (the pass rate). He said that I must be aware that if the results go down then I am the one who is to be blamed” (I2). The second comes from the community which “tell me that they expect the results to go up. They want me to maintain the pass rate or improve it. They want nothing less...this is not fair and by telling me that I don’t sleep at night” (I4). Them bani understands that these are the two sources of pressure that she has to negotiate with regard to the pass rate. She therefore relies heavily on these sources of pressure (Department and community) and gives them (rather than her) ownership of the school and its pass rate. If the high pass rate is maintained under her leadership, the “SEM will probably be very happy and so will the community” (I4). Them bani allows the parents on the governing body to “to do things which other principals won’t allow. I allow it because they have the love of the school but sometimes because of their ignorance, they

don't know how far they should go... I don't want to fight with them because I don't want to be unpopular with them" (D1).

Experiences of School Leadership: Principal's Biographies

While Naidoo and Them bani are at "awarded" schools, what accounts for the different ways in which they come to understand leadership in the context of the pass rate? Naidoo has had a long association of over twenty-five years with his father-in-law who served as his role model. His father-in-law was a school principal and is now retired. Naidoo is full of praise for his father-in-law and holds him in very high esteem. Naidoo speaks to his father-in-law often and still seeks his advice on educational matters. Naidoo's father in law is "very respected in the educational field ... he is a strong leader with a well rounded personality who is able to win the love and respect of the staff as well" (C1). Naidoo feels compelled to follow his charismatic father-in-law's example. Naidoo sees the role of personality as being the single most important factor in the principal's leadership role. This personality must be such that "one must be able to win the trust of the educators" (C1).

Other influences in Naidoo's biography point to his childhood. He comes from a large family with ten siblings. There are many school principals in Naidoo's family and he knew "from an early age that he wanted to become an educator" (A1). His love for reading "and the love to acquire knowledge" also influenced his decision to become an educator. His affiliation to the community is also very strong. He specialised in history and in physical education. He sees physical education as an important part of the all-round development that is needed for his learners.

Them bani's role model is a former principal under whom she worked. This principal was a male and he was a "strong principal with a no-nonsense approach" (B1). People could not take advantage of him and "his word was final and the school was running very smoothly" (B1). His authority was not challenged. However, Them bani points to an important condition that must be fulfilled in order for this type of leadership to be

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successful. The principal must have the best interests of the school at heart. The principal “must be a good democratic person to run the school” (B1). In this type of leadership, the apparent contradiction of autocracy and democracy is nullified when the stakeholders believe that the principal is working in the best interest of the whole school and not for the benefit of a few individuals.

The strongest influence in Thembani’s life is her belief in God. She believes that whatever happens is due to a Divine plan. Her position at the school is not by accident. She has been “put by here by God for a certain purpose... and God is with me” (C1). For Thembani “the beginning of wisdom is the fear of the Lord... I have invited priests to come and talk to the learners because when they become aware of the Lord, they will know that they need to fear the Lord and that’s how they will change” (C2). To illustrate an overview of my analysis of this third set of congruents, I present this as a schematic diagram represented by Figure 6.

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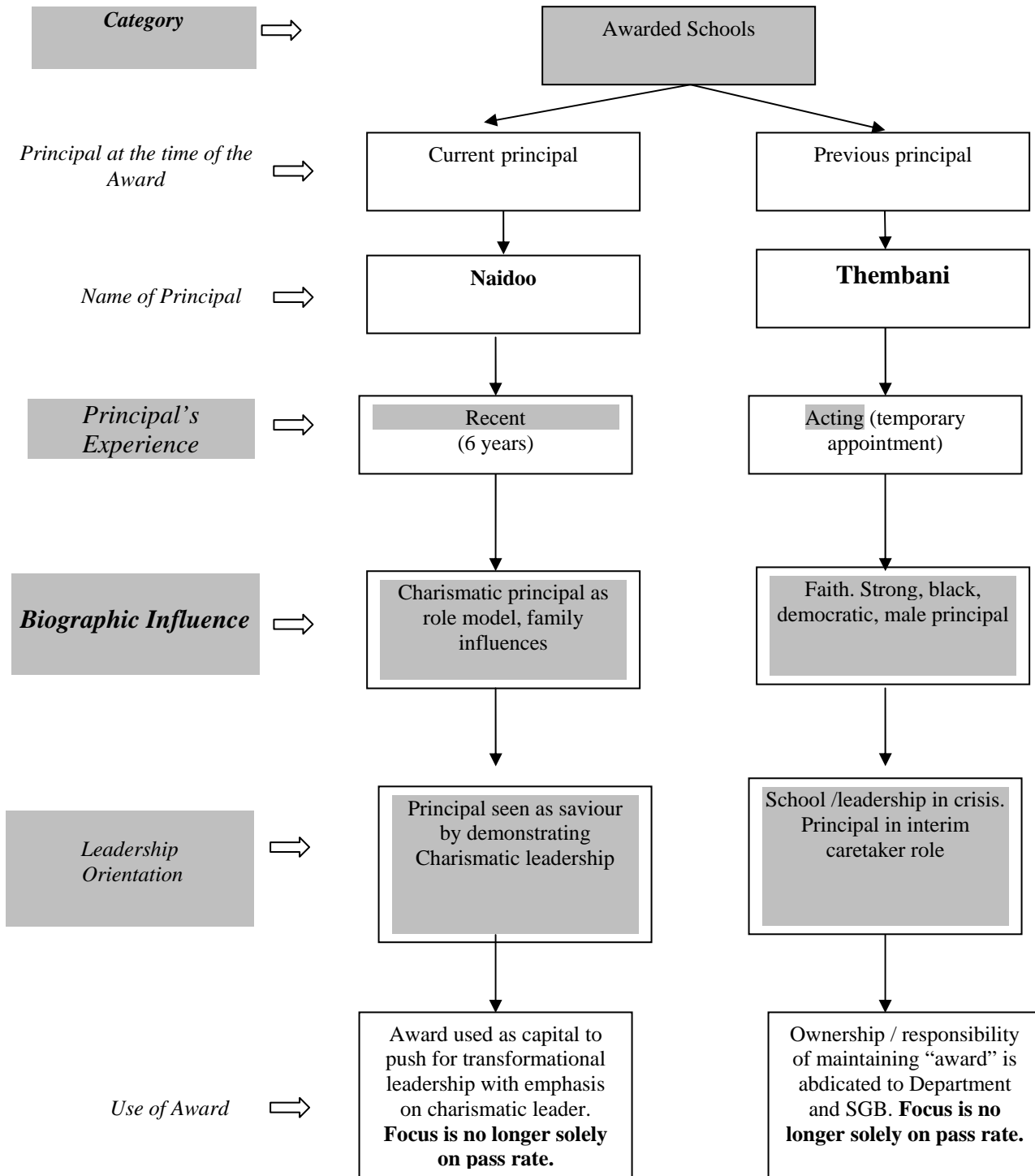


Figure 6. Principals' Experiences of School Leadership in Awarded Schools

2.3. Experiences of Leadership in the Context of the Pass Rate

Figures 4, 5 and 6 illustrated the specific leadership experiences of each set of congruent principals. Collectively, the key concepts of these experiences can be represented as follows (Figure 7):

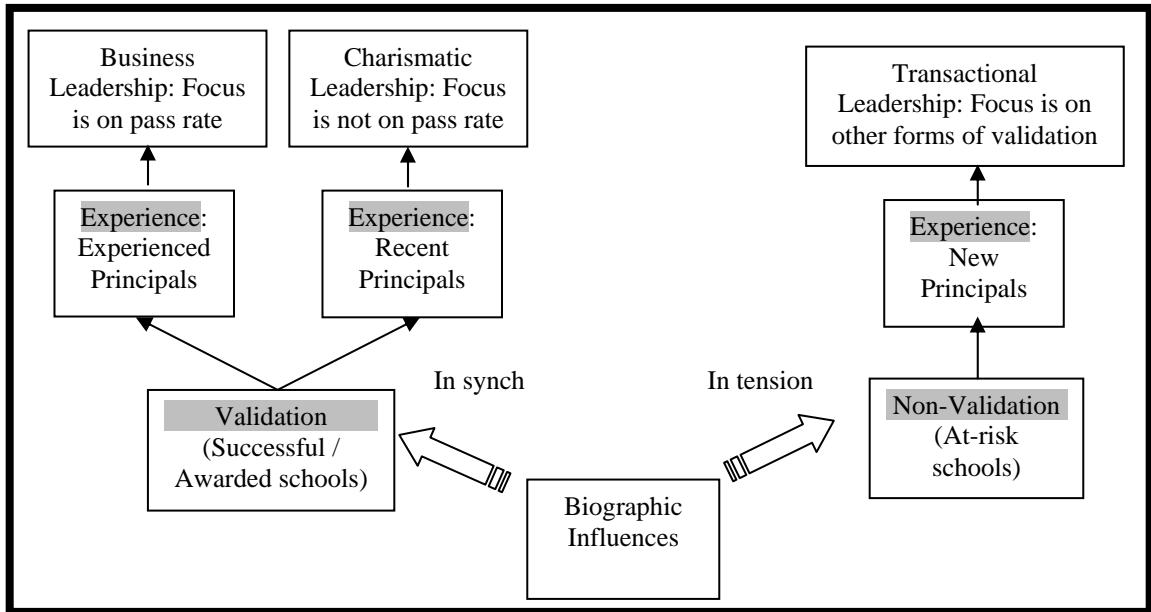


Figure 7. Validation and Experience: Experiences of Leadership in the Context of the Pass Rate.

When biographic influences are “in synch” with validation (due to high pass rates) then:

- principals of successful schools continue to focus on instructional leadership;
- while principals of awarded schools have the liberty of focussing on charismatic leadership (as they are now effectively “flying below the radar”).

When biographic influences are “in tension” with the lack of validation (due to a drop in pass rates) then:

- principals of these at-risk schools focus on transactional leadership with a view to increase the pass rate at any cost while seeking validation from other aspects of their leadership.

Additionally, the following key aspects of principals' experiences of leadership in the context of the pass rate can be added to the above summary as follows:

At a theoretical level, principals understand that initially, it is strategic to sustain a high pass rate. To do this, transactional (instructional) leadership is an acceptable leadership orientation. Once a high pass rate has been achieved, principals then use a combination (hybridised version) of other leadership orientations and maintaining a high pass rate at any cost is no longer the focus for principals.

- The pass rate serves as an external validation. When the pass rate is threatened, principals look for alternate types of validation (e.g. turning inwards, focussing on internal validation, etc).
- Principals' biographies act as important points of reference for understanding leadership, especially in the context of change where traditional leadership values are being challenged.

3. Desegregation

3.1. Orientation

The apartheid system in South Africa was based primarily on issues of race. Consequently schools were completely separate for the different race groups. With the advent of democracy in 1994, legislation decreed all public schools as deracialised and desegregated entities. However, the influence of apartheid posed many challenges to desegregation of schools. Under the grand plan of apartheid, African residential areas were designed to be in closer proximity to ex-HOD (Indian) and ex-HOR (Coloured) area than to ex-HOA (White) areas. Due to this physical proximity and the perception that ex-HOD and ex-HOR schools were "better" schools, many African learners sought admission into these schools. Did this influence principals' experiences of leadership? In this section of the analysis, I focus not only on the phenomenon of desegregation of schools but also on how the principals at these schools came to understand this

phenomenon. Their biographies are important and I look at these through the lens of History and Geography.

3.2. About History and Geography

All six schools in the sample are either ex-HOD (Indian) or ex-HOR (Coloured) schools. All of these schools had a high pass rate in the old education system. For this part of the analysis, I have categorised the schools as congruents based on their previous racial classifications. This is a reference to their “history”. The schools (institutional) history is also linked to the history of the principals (individuals). All the principals in this study experienced the changes from a completely segregated schooling system to a system with legislated desegregation. In the new system, there is a tremendous demand from African learners for admission into the ex-HOD and ex-HOR schools. All six schools in this study are in relatively close proximity to each other. This is a reference to their “geography”. I do not limit “geography” to the physical boundaries of the school location only. I also explore the influences of the socio-economic status and racial classification of the surrounding population on the “geography” of the school. More importantly, I focus on how both “history and geography” influences principals’ experiences of leadership. Table 16 represents the schools in this study based on the above considerations.

3.2.1. Indian History: Expanded Geography

In the first set of congruents, the issue of desegregation is analysed in the schools of Mann and Naidoo. Their common “history” is that they are ex-HOD schools designed exclusively for Indian learners in the apartheid system. Currently both schools still have almost exclusively Indian educators staff and Indian principals while the majority of the learner population has changed from Indian to African. Geographically both schools are physically situated in an area that was previously classified as an Indian area. The surrounding community is considered to have a middle to low socio economic status. The collapse of the apartheid policies of segregated residential areas influenced the school’s “geography” in a significant way. Many of the more affluent Indians used their financial capital to move into more affluent areas, notably White areas. Some of them chose not to move from their homes, but to move their children to schools in more affluent areas. Many members of the African community similarly started to move into the Indian and Coloured areas that surround the schools in this study. The area outside Naidoo’s school in particular shows a drastic change with an exodus of Indians. Part of the reason for this is that the area was developed with low-cost housing mainly for Africans who had a claim over this land because they were forcibly removed from it during the apartheid era. In addition, both schools are in close proximity to large informal settlements, which are populated by Africans almost exclusively. This has resulted in an increased demand for admission by African learners.

How do these ex-HOD (Indian) school principals come to understand desegregation of their schools? Mann firmly believes that principals must follow National policies without question. The National admission policy made it possible for any learner to seek admission at any public school of their choice provided that the school could accommodate them. This policy was intended specifically to promote desegregation of schools. Mann explains that there are good reasons to follow national educational policies. He believes that “public schools must follow the national admission policy in every respect as set out by the government ... because all provincial boundaries are taken into account ... and all dynamics are factored into it and by not following it, you are perpetuating apartheid” (H1).

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This open admission policy is closely aligned with Mann's social justice agenda. He is adamant that "we need to transform, I am so keen on seeing quick transformation; it is unbelievable" (F1). Therefore, when Mann assumed the principalship, he wasted no time in promoting easy access of all learners (irrespective of race) into the school. African learners were admitted into the school in larger numbers than before and into all grades including the senior grades. With hindsight, Mann suggests that this was the reason for the drop in the pass rate and for the increase in the discipline issues. He also feels that "our educators are not trained to deal with so many problem cases" (H8). His inability to improve the pass rate is a major concern for Mann as he firmly believes that "schools are evaluated by the kind of grade twelve results that they produce" (B3).

After the first year, Mann starts to interrogate whether his quest for indiscriminate learner admission and desegregation of schools best serves his own social justice agenda. He acknowledges that a public school is for the public in general terms and for the community in specific terms. However, Mann struggles to define who the school community is. On the one hand, his recurrent theme of "the bigger picture" is not working. On the other hand he is painfully aware that discrimination based on race must not be on his agenda. His politicised childhood alerted him to the horrors of apartheid. Initially Mann was happy to admit all learners from "anywhere and everywhere" into his school (H4). Most of these learners were:

- African learners;
- from the informal settlements;
- from seriously disadvantaged backgrounds;
- second language English speakers who had come from schools that were not in the City of Durban⁶⁵. The standard of education of these learners was perceived to be inferior.

Mann embraced all learners and saw them as part of his community. The geographical boundaries of his community did not stop at his school gate but instead encompassed all areas from where the learners came. After a year Mann came to realise that he has "rushed

⁶⁵ This refers to a smaller demarcated area within the urban area of Durban. This area had more affluent schools and mainly first language English learners

into a situation” (H3). He now knows “that quick transformation is not going to happen” (F1). What he had created was an “artificial system which is always dangerous” (I1). He argues that “you always have to adapt to change ...but not in a massive way that has an impact on learning” (H4). Mann starts to define the school community differently. A community then becomes those that have attended primary schools in the same area as his school. This geographical positioning defines the “the immediate community” and he “looks for this community first” (H5). Learners who come from outside this community face a screening process and if successful are admitted only at the entry level of grade eight. Additionally, learners will be admitted where there is a need to “make up numbers ... and will be subject to a strict screening process” (H7).

Mann does not see the selective admission of learners as a contradiction of his social justice agenda. He explains that this is part of a bigger picture and that his school is only one of many schools in the system. All schools in the system should be considered as worthy and must be supported to deliver quality results. He believes that the mass movement of African people from rural areas into urban areas and especially into the informal settlements is an “artificial system...that shouldn't really exist” (H5). Schools must serve members of a particular community so that they will remain and contribute to the upliftment of that community. Therefore Mann contends that the bigger picture of education is being lost and that the Government should rather be focussing on “quick progress... and incentives to train and keep people especially in the rural areas” so that they can benefit those communities (H5). He feels that it is a “myth that we are better than them” (H5).

Mann makes a conciliatory gesture regarding admissions by saying that he will happily accept learners who are not from his school community but only to the extent to which other schools will do the same. That is they must also “share the burden equally... otherwise we will become a dumping ground for everyone” (H7). In this way, the responsibility for social justice will be shared among the schools.

Naidoo is the second principal in the first set of congruent ex-HOD schools. He agrees with Mann that while the South African School's Act has a very clear policy on admissions, it is the selective screening and admission procedures by mainly more affluent schools that prevent desegregation of schools. Like Mann, Naidoo believes that the more affluent schools discriminate against learners based on race and socio-economic status. Naidoo also raises the issues of admission tests that are designed to test the language proficiency of second language English learners and high school fees that prevent poorer African learner from attending affluent schools. These types of discrimination lead to migration of poor African learners to "poor" schools which changed the "geography" of the poor schools. Poorer schools end up having to cope with even less money. This is especially problematic because the Department does not give extra funding to these schools because they are situated in the same geographical area as affluent schools and receive the same funding based on their location. Naidoo understands that it is immoral to discriminate against learners, especially in his admission policy. This is aligned with his vision of him being a "people's person" where he considers all learners, irrespective of their race and class to be a part of his extended family". Naidoo understands the economic challenges that his community faces. He feels that it is up to him and his leadership role to assist this community and not to chase them away. He understands that "both parents are working and in many cases learners are left unattended at home for long periods of time" (B2). The parents cannot help the learners with homework and therefore the school has to do this job as well.

While eagerly accepting African learners into his former Indian school, Naidoo is not naive about the challenges that this brings to his leadership role. There is a "mixing of different cultures and one has to very careful that no race group feels left out" (F1). But Naidoo is optimistic and does not see desegregation of schools as a problem in itself. He talks freely about "our" community with reference to the parents of his learners irrespective of their place of residence (geography). However, his leadership orientation positions him differently. His charismatic style of leadership firmly places the focus on himself. This is evident in his assertion that "knowing *our* community, they need a lot of assistance and it is something that *I* can give to them" (C5- emphasis added). Naidoo is

keen to extend his assistance to have adult classes and community activities at his school. In this way, “*my vision will be achieved*” (C6- emphasis added).

3.2.2. Indian History: Local Geography

The second set of congruents consists of the ex-HOD schools of Syed and Thembani. While they share a history of being Indian schools in the past, they are different from the first set of congruents (ex-HOD schools) in that the learner demographics are different. Through the country’s political transformation, Syed’s school has retained its majority of Indian learners while Thembani’s school now has only African learners. Thembani’s school is also the only ex-HOD school in the sample that currently has an African principal.

Syed’s school is in very close proximity to Mann’s school. However, the location (geography) of Mann’s school is more visible than Syed’s school. Syed is upfront in identifying “our geographical position ... we are in the heart of a residential area surrounded by Indians” as the main reason why his school’s learner population has not become desegregated (H3). His school is not well signposted, is not conspicuous from the main access roads and is not directly on the public transport (bus, taxi) route. While the learner population has remained Indian, not all the learners from the surrounding community come to this school. The more affluent members of the community moved their children to ex-model C schools and this created vacancies, which were quickly filled mainly by the Indians from Mann’s school. Thus, the majority of learners at Syed’s school remained Indian even though a significant number of the more affluent Indian learners had left. Syed sees no problem in the movement of Indian learners from other schools into his school. This is because “one of the freedoms that we now have is the freedom of choice... and admissions are on a first come first serve basis... so parents can take their children to any school of their choice” (E3). He is also selective in promoting his school to the nearby schools, which have significant numbers of Indian learners. This is coupled by an early admission cut off date that only these schools know of and this contributes to the Indian learner population being in the majority.

Syed subtly identifies the link between the Department's policies on admission and on the number of educators allocated to a school as the reason for the admission of the African learners at his school. When there is drop in the number of learners, the school is forced to admit learners from elsewhere in order to maintain the number of educators at the school. Syed maintains that the need to keep his educators is not simply to secure jobs for them but rather it is to retain all of his educators so that a full and varied curriculum can be implemented using the expertise of all these educators. If the number of educators decreases, then "the curriculum has to be trimmed and this does not make public schools viable in the eyes of the community" (F5). Desegregation then is understood as being a "trade-off" in order to increase the human resources (number of educators) at the school.

Syed also links the lack of parental support to the admission issue at his school. The push for open admissions at public schools has meant that his school has had to take in learners, albeit it mainly Indian learners from lower socio-economic backgrounds. This has brought about its own set of challenges. These include having larger numbers of learners in the classes and greater numbers of parents who are unable to pay school fees. This has resulted in the school being under resourced and he describes this situation "as being a powder keg" (F6). Other challenges include most of the parents either working with little time for their children or parents exhibiting many of society's ills (gambling and substance abuse). For Syed "the greatest struggle of this century is parenting... and the pressure of the upbringing of the child is now passed onto the school" (F6). This has resulted in poor delivery of the curriculum, frustrated educators, and a threat to the schools consistent high pass rate.

However Syed also proposes a counter argument. He is adamant that schools should promote desegregation in schools to promote transformation in the country. He points out an incident when a learner came to him after being refused admission into a public school simply because he did not reside in the residential area (geography) of that school. Syed is horrified by this and sees this as "propelling a particular agenda because admissions are supposed to be on a first come first serve basis" (E3). He is aware of many African learners not being admitted into his own school and the reason he gives

for this is that they are late in their applications for admission. When applications are received timeously at his school, the only criteria that he uses to exclude learners are “criminal activity and the criteria of academics” (H2). This selectiveness is justified in that educators have enough to deal with in terms of the curriculum without the added burden of dealing with an increase in discipline problems.

Them bani is the second principal in this (second) set of congruents. Them bani’s school is located in an area (geography) that was historically celebrated as having a mixed racial community living in harmony prior to their separation forced by the apartheid policies. By the end of the apartheid era, this politically contested area had become neglected but still had a significant number of Indians living there. Subsequently, this area was identified for development under a special Presidential initiative. With much publicity, a community centre incorporating a hall, library, and a school was opened by Jacob Zuma -the then Deputy President of South Africa (SAGI, 1999). The area around the community centre was specifically fast-tracked for development with low cost RDP⁶⁶ housing. These houses came to be occupied exclusively by Africans who were displaced in the apartheid system and who had a claim to land ownership in the area. The majority of Indians living in the area started to move to other areas.

The history of Them bani’s school is very different from the other schools in the sample. This school was initially an HOD (Indian) school. The first principal was Indian and all the educators were Indian. Within five years of its opening, the Indian principal had left after he received anonymous death threats, a subsequent Coloured principal who was sent there in an acting position also left after he received death threats, and after a succession of temporary short-term principals, Them bani became the fifth principal. Them bani had also received death threats. Anonymously written death threats to the principal are a recurring theme in Them bani’s school. Presumably, the death threats made to the Indian and the Coloured principals were based on racial tensions as the death threats made specific reference to the race of the principals. Them bani is African and the death threats made to her made no reference to her race. Instead, the reason

⁶⁶ The State subsidised Reconstruction and Development Programme responsible in part, for fast-tracking poverty alleviation

given in the threats was based on the need for more “housing”. The school was needed to accommodate the homeless and this need was greater than the need to have a school. Them bani sees no issue of desegregation at her school. Her school is surrounded by a dense population of Africans living in low cost housing and in informal settlements. All the learners at her school are African and “come from this surrounding community” (H1). The Indian learners had left the school when their parents had left the area. The Indians still living in close proximity to the school have opted to go to Naidoo’s (Indian) school, which is closest to Them bani’s school.

The crisis at Them bani’s school is the main reason why the school is not being able to attract learners of different races or from different areas. While other ex-HOD schools demonstrated various means of resisting the admission of African learners, they are eagerly embraced at this school. The new identity of the school as an African school is celebrated by the African community who see this as an extension of their victory in reclaiming the land in this area. This has strong political overtones. The local community leader also holds the position of “ward councillor” on the formal structures of provincial government. It is rumoured that during the time of apartheid, she served on the banned ANC’s armed wing - *Umkhonto we Sizwe* and she is held in awe. Her offices are now incorporated into the community centre that is adjacent to the school. The councillor plays a vital role in the school. She is a co-opted member of the governing body and she maintains a high visibility at the school. If the chairperson of the governing body cannot solve a problem, then the councillor is called in. This strategy works especially with the learners because they are “so afraid of the councillor. She is a very strong person in the community. She is feared here ... but I also need to add that she is respected here as well” (G11). Them bani however has no idea why the councillor has so much interest in her school. The only reason she offers is that it is one of geography – that is the close proximity of the councillor’s office to the school.

3.2.3. Coloured History: Local and Expanding Geography

In the third set of congruents, the two ex-HOR schools of Renton and Ingle are analysed. Both schools are in close proximity to each other. They catered exclusively for the Coloured community in the old system and had a high pass rate in the past. Historically however, Ingle's school has always enjoyed a higher profile and reputation due to its close association with the Coloured teacher training institution. The open admission policy of the new government influenced the way schools determined the "geography" of its learner population. The more affluent learners at both schools went to ex-model C schools. The resulting vacancies at Ingle's high profile school were quickly filled by Coloureds from Renton's school. This led to a serious drop in the number of learners at Renton's school. Renton's school was forced to admit many African learners. Many of these were from informal settlements. As more African learners entered Renton's school even more Coloured learners left. Currently Ingle's school has retained its majority learner population while Renton's school is quickly gaining African learners as its majority.

Renton and Ingle both share the belief that schools must serve their communities first. From their history, this community is understood to be the Coloured community. Renton is Coloured and started her career as an educator at the same school at which she is now the principal. Ingle on the other hand is an Indian who sees himself as a legitimate part (insider) of the Coloured community. The Coloured community validated him when they "headhunted" him while he was still at university. This validation is an important consideration because he started teaching in this Coloured school during the apartheid period. His skill as a mathematics and science specialist was scarce in the Coloured community at that time and Ingle was valued at his school. His early experiences with the learners were very rewarding and after a short period of five years, Ingle was promoted at the same school. He has been at the school for over twenty-five years and he considers himself as knowing the Coloured community very well. He has taught several of them and jokes that by now he must have become an honorary Coloured.

The majority of learners at Ingle and Renton's schools are different in terms of their racial classification but similar in terms of their socio-economic status. Both principals identify the low socio-economic backgrounds of the learners as being a problem. The "new" learner communities that Ingle and Renton serve are treated differently by the two principals. Ingle uses his own experience of an Indian being successfully assimilated into a Coloured school to campaign for a more desegregated school. Renton struggles with the open admission policy of the Department and sees the racist attitude of the Coloured community as further hampering the desegregation process at her school. Renton feels let down by her (Coloured) community who she labels as "my colonised community who are racists. They won't have their children schooling with Africans... because they feel that the standard will drop. Many parents have said disparaging things about Africans" (G1).

Ingle wants to "see racial breakdown not only with the learners but with the staff as well. Minorities such as disabled persons, refugees and learners from the lower socio-economic backgrounds must all be integrated in the school system" (B3). This is in keeping with our country's "wonderful constitution which is probably the best in the world" (B3). Renton however sees the policies of the government as being problematic not so much in themselves but in the way "that they have put the cart before the horse". There is no support, especially financial support from the Department to drive the desegregation process at schools. The new (African) community arriving at the school are not English speakers. The Indian and Coloured learners of neighbouring secondary schools that do seek admission at Renton's school are usually "problem" learners. These are learners who have consistently presented with discipline problems and who have been asked to voluntarily remove themselves from their present schools in order to avoid serious disciplinary action. To remain in the geographical area, these learners seek admission at schools like Renton's where the pass rate is lower and where they perceive it will be easier to gain admission because they are first language English speakers / non-Africans. But Renton will have none of that. She is the only principal in the sample that professes not to worry about declining learner numbers and its effect on the job security of educators. Because there is insufficient support from the Department, Renton is not bent on maintaining high numbers of learners at her school. She sees her role as a

“manager” of her school and she wants to make sure that she is able to cater for the needs of the learners at her school without compounding the existing problems by increasing admissions.

The push for desegregation has had different outcomes in both schools. In Ingle’s school “they have been fortunate with no racial problems” (C1). The issue of English as a medium of instruction for African learners is not seen as a problem. The high academic rigour demanded by the school is accepted by both the learners and their parents because “they have come here looking for better opportunities... and looking to improve their skills in English” (F2). In Renton’s school, the admission of African learners has resulted in a cultural clash with the “educators struggling to understand the culture of the learners and the learners trying to understand our Western culture... our way of doing things... our medium of instruction” (F1).

Learner admissions are handled in a similar way in the two ex-HOR schools. Ingle claims that the race issue is not a consideration during the admission process at his school. But he “canvasses the feeder schools” in particular those with the majority of Coloured learners. One thing that Ingle admits to is “to enrol learners from the (Coloured) community first”. The first school day is reserved exclusively for members of the local (Coloured) community to admit their children. He does this only “because we are under enormous pressure from the local parents to do so” (H1). Thereafter admissions for all learners are done on a first-come-first-serve basis. Renton also pushes the Coloured community to enrol their children at her school. She constantly reminds parents of the learners at her school about the date for learner enrolment. This date is towards the end of the current year for enrolments for the following year. This in-house push is intended to elicit new enrolments mainly from the existing learner population, which was historically Coloured. Like Ingle, Renton also promotes the school to the local primary schools, especially those with significant numbers of Coloureds.

However, with the movement of many Coloured learners into Ingle’s school, Renton has had to admit learners from elsewhere. These were mainly African learners. Renton feels

powerless to stop the rapid desegregation of her school. She understands desegregation as problematic because:

- the local Coloured community view the admission of African learners as a threat to the pass rate (standards);
- of the cultural differences between African learners and the school's Western way of doing things;
- second language English speakers are being taught in the medium of English;
- there is no language test or a minimum requirement in English language proficiency to be considered for admission;
- African learners have not come through an English medium primary school. The Department does not provide extra funds for additional educators to assist such learners;
- learners (irrespective of race) from surrounding schools seeking admission at this school are usually "problem" cases with respect to discipline;
- many do not have the financial deposit of almost a third of the school fee that the school demands on admission (although this is illegal).

3.3. Experiences of Leadership in the Context of Desegregation

Moving In: Moving Out.

Figure 8 illustrates principals' experiences of how and why schools are becoming desegregated by some learners moving out and others moving in.

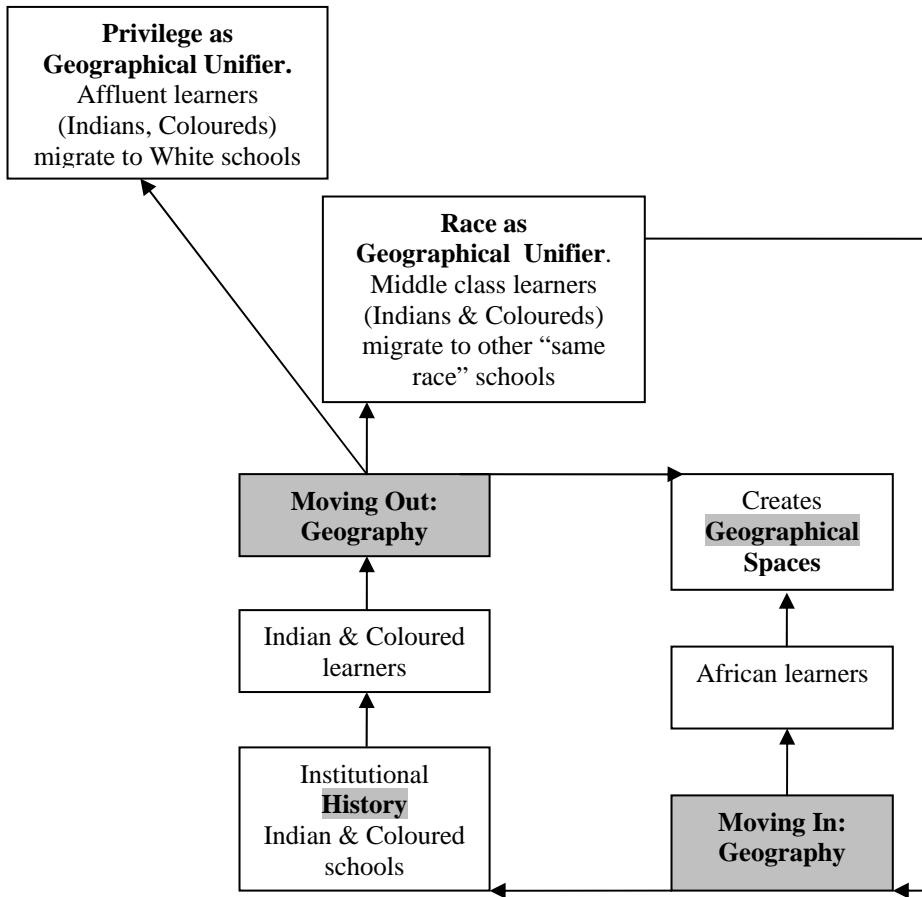


Figure 8. Principals' Understandings of Learner Migration Patterns

Moving Out

Principals (Indians, Coloureds, and Africans) understand the reasons for Indian and Coloured learners moving out of their schools as the following:

Privilege as Geographical Unifier (Indian and Coloured learners moving into White schools) because...

- White schools are perceived to be better schools;
- White schools have a reputation of producing high pass rates;
- White schools offer better co-curricular activities and resources;
- learners have moved into White areas and these schools are in closer proximity;

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- White schools do not have many African learners;
- learners at White schools (irrespective of race) are in a similar higher socio-economic standing.

Race as Geographical Unifier (Indian and Coloured learners moving into other same race schools), because learners want to

- be in schools with a higher status based on its reputation (higher pass rate);
- maintain strong racial/cultural affiliations;
- escape from being with the majority African learners.

Principals (Indians, Coloureds, and Africans) feel powerless to stop the “moving out” of learners and further believe that learners have the right to seek “better” schools.

Moving In

Principals (Indians, Coloureds, and Africans) understand the reasons for African learners moving into Indian and Coloured schools as the following:

- These schools are perceived to be better schools (higher status based on race/class and pass rate);
- New housing developments have arisen for Africans in closer proximity to these schools.

While **principals (Indians, Coloureds, and Africans)** claim that they advocate an open admission policy for all learners, they see their leadership function primarily as protecting the pass rate of their school. They do this as follows:

- Selective gatekeeping at admissions to exclude African learners who are a threat to the pass rate. However, the same level of gatekeeping is not extended to Indian and Coloured learners.

Principals (Indians, Coloureds, and Africans) admit African learners for the following reasons:

- **Transformation** agenda - Principals believe in the transformation of schools;
- **Strategic** agenda - Principals admit learners who are either not a threat to the pass rate or who can help to demonstrate that the school is pursuing a transformation agenda;
- **Practical** agenda - Admissions are done with a view of increasing the total number of learners. This in turn results in better funding and allocation of more educators to the school by the Department of Education.
- These findings are represented in Figure 9.

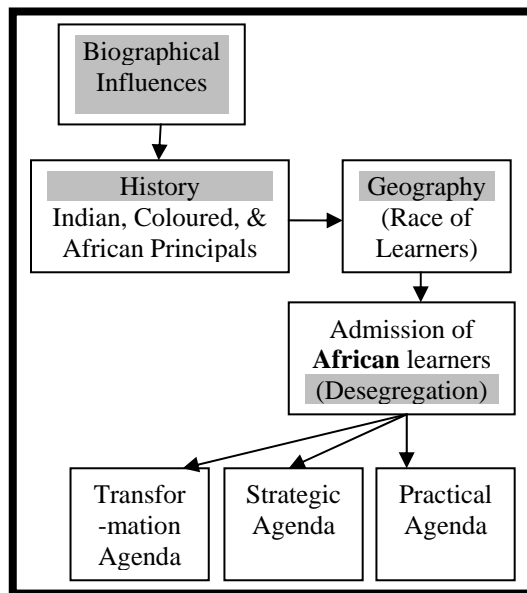


Figure 9. History and Geography: Experiences of Leadership in the Context of Desegregation

The moving in and out of learners illustrates specific patterns of deracialising and of interlocking schools. This presents challenges to a case study approach of understanding leadership in particular schools. In the cross-case approach adopted for this analysis, the principals' "histories" influence the "geographies" of learners. However, this influence is still dominated by the seduction of the pass rate.

4. Democratic School Governance

4.1. Orientation

Democracy is understood in different ways by the principals. In the analysis that follows, I present the varied understandings of democracy with specific reference to how principals understand leadership in the context of democratic school governance. I take the definition of “democratic” to mean “pertaining or characterised by the principle of political or social equality for all (Dictionary, 2006). For this part of the analysis, I use a grounded approach to select organisational categories from the literature review and from the data. These categories are designed to address three related concepts of democratic school governance namely:

- Democracy and accountability (to whom?);
- Democracy and consultation (with whom?);
- Democracy and agenda (for what purpose?).

Due to the grounded approach described above, I could not pre-determine sets of congruents as I had done for the previous analysis on the contexts of the “pass rate” and “desegregation”. Therefore in this section of the analysis, I foreground the context of “democratic school governance” and then analyse the congruent relationships (if any) between the principals’ experiences of leadership in this study.

4.2. About Democracy and Accountability

The school system is a sociological construct based on a system of hierarchies that includes different stakeholders. Do principals understand leadership as being accountable to these stakeholders? If so, how does this influence principals’ experiences of leadership? For the purpose of this analysis, I structure the relationship of the principal to the different stakeholders as follows:

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- **Accountability above:**
The principal is accountable to the hierarchies outside the school. This is mainly the SEM of the school but also includes other officials of the State's hierarchy entrusted with the responsibility of public schooling;
- **Accountability below:**
The principal is accountable to the hierarchies within the school. The principal holds the highest position in this hierarchy with the SMT, educators and learners below;
- **Accountability across:**
The principal is accountable to other schools, to the parent community (SGB) and to the self (himself /herself).

4.2.1. Accountability Above

All principals professed their support for the philosophy of democracy on which the new system of government is based. They all believe that the country is on the “right track with a wonderful constitution, probably the best in the world” (Ingle, B3). They also understand the educational hierarchy of the State with the State (National Government) at the top rung, followed by the Provincial and Local structures and finally by the SEM as the immediate accounting officer of the principal. All the principals are very clear about this hierarchy and see themselves foremost as being accountable to the State (via the SEM). I call this “accountability above”. Principals believe that this accountability to the State is legitimate because the State is on the right track. While they all agree that transformation has to be a gradual process, they differ in their support of the State's democratic principles when it is applicable to their own schools. Syed is at one end of this range of support by embracing democratic governance in schools. He sees no problem in this because the school is a “microcosm of society” and therefore schools should reflect the democratic philosophy of the State (D8). Renton is at the other end of this range of support because she feels that the translation of the State's democratic agenda into schools is problematic. The State has “put the cart before the horse” (G3) and there has been no support from the State for under-resourced schools such as hers.

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She cites the lack of financial support and her incompatibility with learner discipline policies as two major concerns. The other principal's (Mann, Naidoo and Ingle) only discontent with the democratic agenda in schools is the pace of transformation. Based on this range of principals' support for the State's democratic agenda, I present the following analysis based on three sets of congruents.

In the first set of congruents, Syed and Mann are most vocal about their support for the State's democratic agenda. Both principals believe that educational policies of the State (Department) must be implemented without question. They view their roles in the schools as being "accountable to the State". The State has engaged in a democratic process and the resultant policies are seen as valid, legitimate and worthy. When principals choose not to implement these policies or to implement these differently, then such principals are seen to have "a different agenda" (Syed, E1) and are even accused of "perpetuating apartheid" (Mann, E2). However there is one main difference between Syed and Mann. Syed chooses to focus his accountability more locally to his "own constituency" (E2) while Mann focuses his accountability more broadly on "the bigger picture" (C2) of national education. Syed identifies the school's "own constituency" as the parent community (SGB) and he is aware of the power of this constituency. He cautions that some principals use the authority of this constituency to subvert the democratic agenda in their schools. For example, the selective admission policies at some schools are encouraged by the parents and they effectively silence the protestations of the Department that this is contrary to the legislation. Syed's constituency validates him as an instructional leader due to his long and successful experience at his school. Syed himself uses this to shift his understanding of being accountable to State as administrator to being responsible for maintaining the high pass rate as an instructional leader. Mann is temporarily at a "new" school and he sees his accountability to the State on a broader level that is not limited just to the school that he currently is in. Mann is accountable to the State as an administrator but he is also responsible to the State as a patriotic citizen. By this I mean that Mann sees it as his civic duty to help develop all learners into patriotic citizens in all schools. He takes this responsibility very seriously. For Mann, democracy is not "*laissez faire*... and doing whatever you like... Democracy is a disciplined effort and it has to be added with responsibility" (D1).

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In the second set of congruents, Ingle and Naidoo also believe that they are accountable to the State. However they foreground a legal perspective in this accountability. Both principals understand their roles as implementers of State policies. They see themselves foremost as being accountable to the State as administrators. Policies must be implemented without question or they will face legal consequences. Once State policies are gazetted, it becomes law and must be obeyed. Principals will “be charged with misconduct if they do not implement State policies” (Naidoo, E2). While principals can voice their concerns at forums such as principals associations, they have to implement state policies without question. The need to comply with the legal requirements is complemented with the principal’s belief that “the State has the right intention” (Ingle, F1). Therefore, by implementing State policies, it “will ensure that the inequalities of the past are not perpetuated” (Ingle, E2). Additionally Naidoo includes accountability to the parent community (SGB) as his frame of accountability because he will not do anything contrary to the governing body (D5). Ingle feels that “he is held accountable for everything” but that this responsibility is unfair (B4). He accepts being accountable to the State for the pass rate to some extent but cannot accept responsibility for circumstances outside his control such as the disadvantaged socio-economic backgrounds of his learners.

In the third set of congruents, Renton and Thembani also agree with all the other principals that they are accountable to the State but they are different in the way that they view their leadership in their schools. Both principals identify their schools as being in crisis and their leadership as managing to survive. They cannot see the idealised notions of the State’s democratic agenda being translated into their schools. This shifts the focus of them being accountable to the State to being responsible for survival in their particular schools. Thembani’s life has been threatened and she just concentrates on doing her best without blaming herself for what eventually happens. Her accountability is to herself (survival). Her role is that of a facilitator especially between the SEM (as part of the State) and the parent community (SGB). Renton feels that her new position of principal comes with the expectation that she is “one hundred percent accountable, that she has to deliver and solve problems and that she is answerable” (G2). But “the only

yardstick that the Department uses to measure your success is the grade twelve pass rate” and Renton sees this as a great contradiction to the democratic agenda of the State. She identifies three reasons why the State should not hold her accountable. These are:

- The State’s admission policy is problematic
- The SEM challenges the principal’s judgement on the number of learners that should pass each grade
- The union interferes in the affairs of the school

For these reasons, Renton prefers her school to be considered separately because of its unique circumstances. She believes that she as principal should have executive authority. In the past, when Renton used the “uniqueness” of her school to take decisions that were at odds with the Department, she was sanctioned with two separate written “warnings” regarding admission and curriculum issues. She also advocates greater activism on the part of principals to question the accountability of the principal to the State and accuses them “of having the quietest voices (E2).

4.2.2. Accountability Below

Accountability to the educators and learners is what I call “accountability below”. While accountability to the State (accountability above) is a dominant feature of the principals’ narratives, accountability to the educators and learners is not well articulated. Syed and Ingle see their accountability to the educators mainly in terms of the curriculum. That is, they see their role as instructional leaders. Principals should “firstly be good educators” (Ingle, C1) and “delivery of the curriculum is the core” (Syed, B3). Of the six principals in the study, not surprisingly Syed and Ingle have consistently maintained a high pass rate at their schools for over ten years.

Accountability to the learners is seen mainly as ensuring the delivery of the curriculum. It does not include developing democratic leadership among the learners. None of the principals have implemented democratic leadership of the learners as intended by Department policy. While all schools have legitimate RCL’s which were elected by the

learners themselves, none of them are effective. Instead of developing the potential of the RCL, all principals except Thembani have concentrated on keeping the old system of prefects in a dual system of learner leadership in their schools. The prefect system is determined by the educators of the school. The existence of the prefect system is justified “for operational purposes” (Syed, D9). This apparent contradiction and legitimacy of the prefect body is managed differently in each school. In Syed’s school, the learners have appropriated his focus on academic excellence to ensure that the “brightest learners are elected onto the RCL” (Syed, D10). These “bright” learners are also elected as prefects by the educators. This is similar to Ingle’s school. Renton claims that the prefect system at her school is in direct response to the younger members of the RCL asking for it because they feel inadequate to provide leadership to the more senior learners. Mann wants to see greater involvement of the RCL and is working towards empowering the RCL. By doing this, he hopes to negate the need for the current prefect system that he has. The RCL at Thembani’s school is the only leadership structure for learners. They play an important role in the school and were consulted widely by the Department during the crises that the school experienced.

4.2.3. Accountability Across

A public school is only one component of a huge and complex education system. Schools are not independent entities and they influence other schools either consciously or unknowingly. The parents, via their elected representatives on the SGB are partners in the democratic governance of the school. In this way, they share some of the responsibility of running the school with the principal. Principals are also unique individuals with complexity of thought who may have other frames of accountability other than that to the State. I therefore consider “accountability across” to include three components namely, accountability to other schools, to the parent body and to themselves. Because “accountability across” is not the dominant feature in the principals’ narratives, I provide a brief analysis of this category.

While each principal focuses firmly on his /her own school, Mann is the only principal to voice serious concerns of the effect of one school benefiting at the expense of another. This is accountability to other schools. In general, this typically happens when “better” (with intellectual and financial capital) learners flock to schools that are perceived as “superior”. This leaves other schools with all the “weaker” learners and further perpetuates the notion of these schools as “inferior”. To some extent, Renton alludes to using this phenomenon to justify her school’s pass rate and reason why it should not be compared with other schools. Syed has no problem with learners coming to his school from the surrounding schools because these learners have the freedom of choice to attend schools of their preference.

Accountability to the parents is not a priority for most principals. However, Naidoo and Them bani consider this accountability to be important. For Naidoo accountability to parents is in line with his vision of being a community leader. Them bani has experienced the situation where the parents were running the school. She therefore considers accountability to them as important. Accountability to the self is not obvious in the principals’ narratives. Where schools are seen to be in “crisis”, then this accountability to the self is most noticeable. Them bani and Renton reflect on the situations at their schools and conclude that in the end, it was the best that they could have done.

4.2.4. Accountability and Leadership Experiences

In the preceding analysis based on accountability, I have shown that accountability to the State was very important to principals. This is represented in Figure 10.

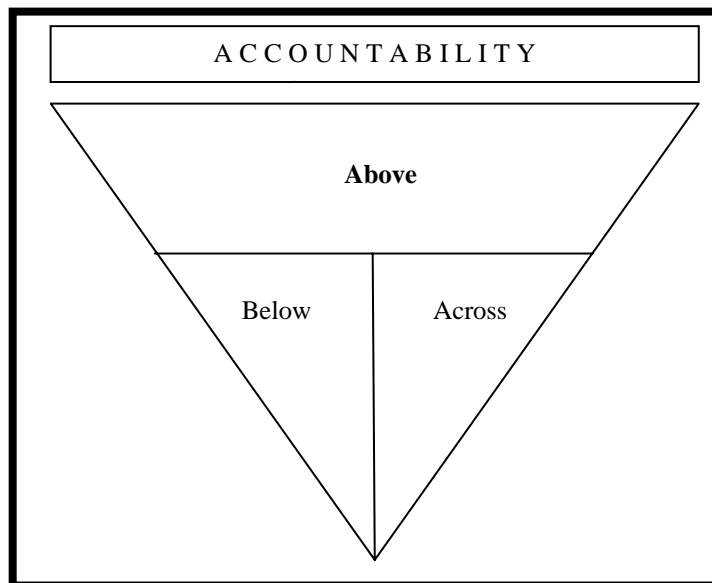


Figure 10. Principals' Hierarchical Accountability Relationships

Accountability above (i.e. to the State) is dominant over accountability below (i.e. to the educators and learners) and across (i.e. to other schools, parents and to themselves). How does this relationship relate to the existing theories of leadership? Most of the principals see their leadership role as being that of CEO's. This is a term often associated with business models of leadership. However, there are several important differences in the way that principals define their roles as CEO's. Syed and Mann see their leadership role as a CEO based on a hierarchical positional structure while fully believing in democratic participative management at the same time. They see no conflict in this because they use their positions not in an autocratic way but in order to pursue a democratic agenda. They see the benefit of their hierarchical positions as a mechanism to delineate levels of responsibilities among the staff rather than to impose their will on others. In this way, Syed as a CEO wants to take care of executive decisions only because the deputy principals are there to "take care of operations" (B1). Mann as a CEO wants to extend his responsibility beyond the school. He sees his role as being the link person between the State and community. Syed's leadership role is closely aligned with the tenets of transformational leadership. He seeks the transformation of all stakeholders through his leadership. His delineation of responsibilities is resonant with that of distributed leadership, which aims to empower others. Mann also demonstrates

transformational leadership but links this to sustainable leadership. He raises questions about ethical leadership when principals are focussed on the schools at the expense of other schools. In this way, “the bigger picture” of education is always in his focus. His passion for his work is suggestive of his emotional leadership orientation.

Ingle, like Syed and Mann also sees his role as that of a CEO but in a completely different way. Ingle feels that he is held accountable for everything and this determines his view of what a CEO in a school should be. Ingle wants to have the kind of “executive” powers that CEO’s have in the business world. He is cautious not to confuse “executive powers” with all consuming powers and he recognises the need for “checks and balances” (B4). However, he still feels that the power of the principal is not enough for the executive position that he holds and for the level of accountability that he is held to. He uses his high pass rate as “cultural capital” to justify his leadership orientation. In this way, he is an instructional leader and he does not advance the ideals of transformational and distributed leadership. Naidoo does not see himself as a CEO but he does see himself as a charismatic leader, which is a requirement of transformational leadership. He uses his personality as capital. However, the enormous emphasis that he places on personality and charisma of the principal entrenches a sub-ordinate follower status among his staff.

When schools are in crises, accountability to the State is seen differently by the principals. Thembani realises that the problems at her school are beyond her. She turns to the two major stakeholders who she feels can assist her, namely the Department and the community (SGB). She does what each of them wants and couples accountability to the State with accountability to parents (SGB). The parents play a very important role in this school. There is also a close link between the State and the community in the form of the “councillor”. The councillor is a politically elected community representative within the State’s legislative structures and she is also a member of the school’s governing body. However, Thembani realises that ultimately she is accountable to herself. She relies on her faith and decides to simply do the best that she can do. She is not going to blame herself if things go wrong. Renton is similar to Thembani in that she also sees her school as being in crisis. Renton however, diminishes her accountability to

the State to the extent to which it will have no legal repercussions for her. This is due to her assertion that she is held responsible for everything at the school. Renton, like Thembani, turns the focus on accountability onto herself. However, for Renton, it is her own capital of knowing what is best at her school that determines her leadership actions.

Accountability influences the leadership orientation of principals. However, as can be seen in the above discussion, there is no single leadership theory that can explain principals' understandings of leadership. Instead, principals use a hybrid model of leadership theories to address the anomalies that exist in the over-whelming need to be accountable and the need to exercise leadership.

4.3. Democracy and Consultation

Do principals consult? Who do principals consult with? What are principals' views on consultation? Syed and Mann have no problem with "negotiating and consulting" (Mann, D1). They strongly believe in participatory democratic governance and they see consultation as an invitation to others to become part of a team. This empowerment is seen as "the cornerstone of good management" (Syed, D3). Ingle and Renton see their history as ex-HOR (Coloured) schools as being different to the ex-HOD (Indian) schools. In ex-HOR schools, they were more insulated with a much smaller rate of turnover of new staff members. Union activity was not a prominent feature at these schools. These schools also had high pass rates. The culture of achievement was internalised by the educators. The principals of these schools (Renton and Ingle) still rely on their capital as instructional leaders who have demonstrated that they can achieve high pass rates. Therefore, they do not place much emphasis on consultation, especially with the educator unions. Ingle is critical of the need for consultation. He bemoans the fact that we are "always called upon to consult... to consult widely and even to compromise" and are then held accountable for things as a manager without being given the kind of executive power that is needed (D11). Renton is the "captain of her ship" and sees consultation as having limited benefits because you cannot please all the people all of the time (D12).

Who do the principals consult with in their experiences of democratic school governance? Of all the stakeholders, the principals place consultation with the educators as most important. Educators are seen as the people who know best what is happening in the classroom and therefore their input is very valued. The principal usually consults the SMT first but no final decision is taken before consensus with the level one educators is reached. Syed goes beyond just consulting with his educators. He strives to develop relationships with his staff that are not very formal but mutually respectful at the same time. This he believes leads to greater consultation. Renton and Ingle also consult with their educators because they value the work ethic and “professional judgement of the educators” (Ingle, D4). Naidoo sees consultation with educators as being so useful that it may influence him to change his views if necessary.

Parents (and the SGB) are consulted but not to the same extent that educators are. Parents are usually consulted only when the approval of the SGB is needed for major financial decisions as required by legislation. This type of consultation usually takes the form of parents’ rubber- stamping the decision of the principal and is used to give the impression that regular consultation with the parents occurs. Renton provides a good example of this. She sees her governing body as “splendid... they take their cue from us... they give us no trouble at all” (D8). Principals also claim that parents are often “consulted” during frequent parent meetings that are held throughout the year. However, the purpose of these meetings is limited to academic and discipline issues pertaining to the specific children of each parent. These consultative meetings are rarely to discuss school governance issues. Parent consultation is strongest and most valued in Thembani’s school. Here the parents see themselves as rightful partners in school governance with the principal. Consultation with the learners is not a high priority for most principals. Even Thembani’s assertion that she consults with the RCL can be challenged. In reality, she was forced to consult with the RCL after they insisted on “going over her head” and seeking direct consultation with the SEM. Consultation with unions are welcomed by some (Syed and Mann) but not by others (Renton, Ingle and Naidoo). Consultation with the SEM seems to be mainly at the level of seeking clarity on school administrative issues.

Consultation with the different stakeholders is understood as a hierarchical relationship, with consultation with the SMT being most important. This is represented in Figure 11.

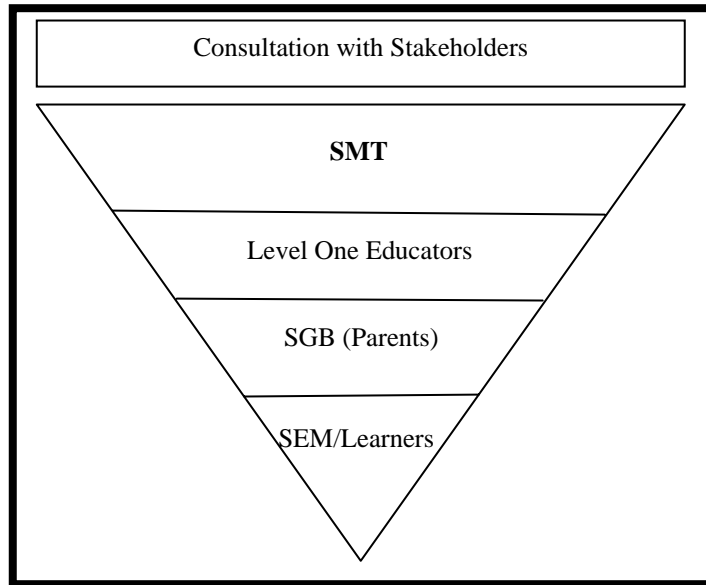


Figure 11. Hierarchical Stakeholder Consultation Relationship

While principals consult with stakeholders mainly to protect the pass rate, some principals actively encourage consultation while others regard consultation as a problem. This is represented in Figure 12.

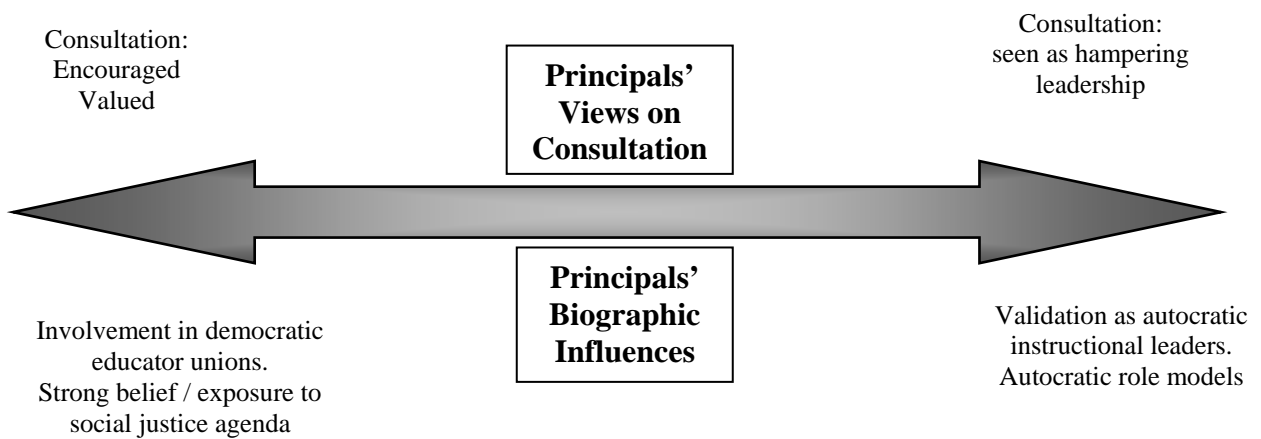


Figure 12. Continuum: Consultation and Biography

Based on the above representation, principals' biographic influences are important considerations in determining how principals view consultation with stakeholders?

4.4. Democracy and Agenda

In this section of the analysis, I look at experiences of leadership in the context of democracy. This enables me to question how democracy is understood by principals. I present this analysis based on three distinct types of democratic school governance which I have termed "successful", "symbolic" and "strategic" school governance.

4.4.1. Successful Democratic School Governance

Syed and Mann are keen to adopt democratic principles in school governance. Stakeholders are seen as partners. School governance is strengthened when stakeholders feel that they are part of the democratic process. They are all part of a team with all members working together. Once stakeholders are part of the process, then they are part of the solution. With this approach, the educators are being trained and this leads to their empowerment. These principals use democracy as a means of genuine transformation. That is, they have a *transformational* agenda. In Syed's school this has resulted in tangible benefits for his educators as some of them experienced "upward mobility" (career promotions). Syed's belief in participatory governance is so strong, that he will not take a decision if he is the only stakeholder supporting that decision. All decisions have to be mandated by the SMT before they are implemented. If these decisions are unpopular with the staff, then the process is reviewed with the SMT with the staff representative being present. Syed feels that this representation of the educators on the SMT is sufficient for educators to see that decisions are based on sound logic. Mann however will implement an autocratic decision if he deems this as being beneficial to the school. An example of this is when Mann "took a chance and rode my luck" when he changed the structure of the school day to accommodate a sports programme more efficiently (D4). Mann did this without asking anyone. He "simply told" his

management and educator about his decision and received no criticism for it because he believes that they all saw the benefit in it.

4.4.2. Symbolic Democratic School Governance

Ingle and Naidoo have a strong desire to employ democratic principles in school governance. They want their educators to become empowered and they want to see transformation starting at the grassroots level. However, Ingle and Naidoo are prevented from driving the democratic agenda for different reasons. Ingle cannot escape the pressure of being held accountable for everything at his school. This is at odds with his desire for a democratic agenda and instead he uses the guise of democratic governance as a means of maintaining his executive authority. I call this a *maintenance* agenda. Ingle admits to going through the motions of democratic governance “to give an impression of transparency” and these decisions “are taken purely for the sake of consensus and not necessarily for the best interest of the school ... when you are expected to take total responsibility for what transpires in school then you need to have the necessary authority to do that without being hampered by too many stakeholders” (B4). If there is a contentious issue, the principal must take the decision that he strongly believes in because in the end, he is the person who is held accountable. Naidoo’s maintenance agenda is due to his need to be a charismatic leader. This does not allow him to fully drive a democratic agenda. Naidoo concentrates on first winning the trust of his educators and then ensures that educators toe the line because “they know that I have certain rules which I expect to be followed” (D2). Both Ingle and Naidoo are not averse to implementing autocratic decisions if they deem it to be in the best interest of the school. An example of this is when both Ingle and Naidoo had taken a similar decision autocratically to ensure that the school’s examination dates at the end of each term continued to the last day of each term so as not to waste any teaching time. Both principals felt that this was not a decision to be made democratically as the educators would not have agreed because it entailed more work on their part. Ingle and Naidoo are clear that they will not support educators at the expense of the child (Ingle, D10).

4.4.3. Strategic Democratic School Governance

Renton and Them bani struggle with suppressing their maintenance agenda in their experience of democratic school governance because of the crises at their respective schools. Renton is happy to push the transformational agenda selectively with the few educators with whom it actually works (D1). These educators feel empowered and their inputs are necessary. But for the most part, her desire to be “authoritarian” has to be suppressed “because you need the cooperation of the entire staff”...otherwise they withhold support openly or by passive resistance (D1). She feels lucky in that she has “a good SMT” who usually sees her point of view (D3). Them bani believes that “the principal’s word should be final” (B1). However, the only autocratic decision that she ever took was to invite Christian priests to talk to the learners. The on-going leadership crisis at her school forces her to abdicate her transformational agenda. Instead, she allows democratic notions based on the will of the Department and of the community to dominate in the belief that this will indemnify and protect her. She allows the governing body to “do things which other principals will not allow” (D1) because she is acutely aware of the power that the governing body (and in particular, the councillor) has in her school. She allows the Department to dictate administrative procedures because this will absolve her from taking responsibility for the declining pass rate. She also avoids conflict with her staff (G1) in the belief that it is in her best interest to avoid conflict at all cost.

4.5. Experiences of Leadership in the Context of Democratic School Governance

Democratic school governance means different things to the different principals. The principals’ biographies provide an explanation for these differences as represented in Table 17.

School Leadership: Principals' Experiences of Change and Reward

Type of Democratic School Governance	Name of Principal	Similarities in Leadership Orientations	Differences in Leadership Orientations	Principals' Biographic Influences
Successful	Syed	Transformational Agenda: Democracy is for the betterment of all	Every decision has to be taken in committee	Involvement in democratic union structures
	Mann		Will take an autocratic decision if it is for the benefit of the school	Exposure to social justice issues, a deep involvement in professional associations, and a temporary appointment as acting principal
Symbolic	Ingle	Maintenance Agenda: Giving the appearance of a democratic agenda (by symbolic measures) but trying to maintain an autocratic agenda	Driven by the feeling of being accountable for everything. Will take executive decisions on his own.	Validated as successful principal in a school with a history of high pass rates
	Naidoo		Driven by the need to be a charismatic leader. Will take executive decisions on his own.	Role model is a charismatic and successful ex-principal
Strategic	Renton	Transformational / Maintenance Agenda. The school is in crisis and the agenda is dependent on different circumstances	Practices democratic governance with selected educators and autocratic governance with others	Role model is a principal who was successful as an unquestioning implementer of state policies. School is in crisis
	Them bani		Has abdicated leadership to the will of the stakeholders	Life has been threatened. State and parents (SGB) are the major stakeholders who determine what happens at school

Table 17. Democratic School Governance and the Influence of Biography

While principals' biographies influence the way in which leadership is understood, the push for accountability is the dominant factor in democratic school governance. This results in a hierarchical relationship between the key constructs of democratic school governance, namely "accountability, consultation and agenda" as represented in Figure 13.

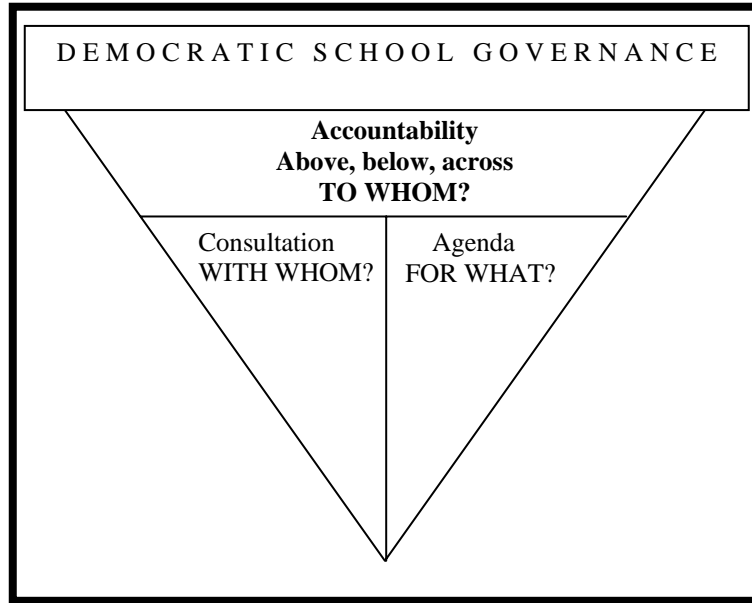


Figure 13. Accountability, Consultation and Agenda:
Principals' Experiences of Leadership in the Context of Democratic School Governance

Synthesis of Findings

Principals understand the three constructs of school leadership in the context of change exist in a hierarchical relationship, with the “pass rate” being dominant over “desegregation” and “democratic school governance”. This relationship is represented in Figure 14.

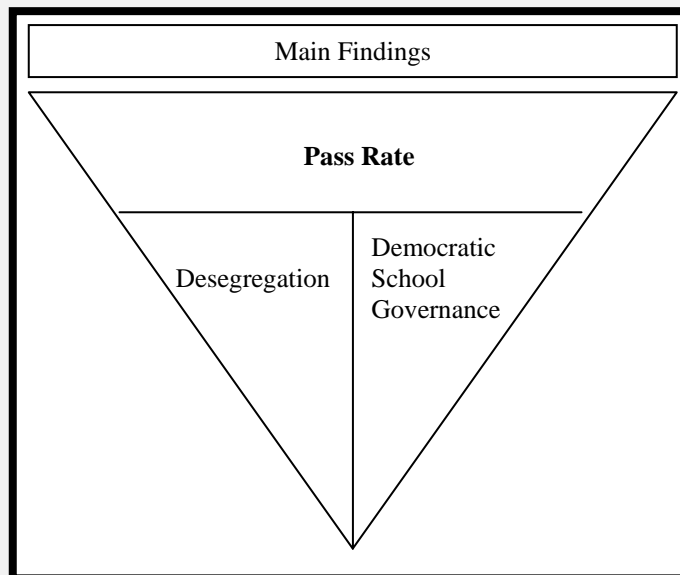


Figure 14. Main Finding: Hierarchical Constructs of School Leadership

Drawing from the detailed findings represented in the analysis in this chapter, other key findings of this study are summarised as the following:

i. Principals' experiences of leadership in the context of the **“pass rate”**:

Principals' biographies (validation of the pass rate and professional experience) influence the way in which the pass rate is understood as part of principals' experiences of leadership.

Validation of the pass rate (Successful/Awarded schools) is correlated with **“experienced”** principals. This either *entrenches* the motivation to sustain the high pass rates at all costs or alternatively buys “capital” for principals, which *allows* them to seek other types of validation.

Non-validation of the pass rate (At-risk schools) creates a tension with **“in-experienced”** principals. This *forces* principals to seek other types of **validation**.

ii. Principals' experiences of leadership in the context of **“desegregation”**:

Principals' biographies (racial **history**) influence the way **geography** (migration) of learners is understood and facilitated at schools. This results in inter-locking patterns of desegregation.

Indian and Coloured principals admit same-race learners into their schools in a bid to maintain *“local geography”*.

When they admit African learners into their schools in a bid to develop *“expanding geography”*, this is done for a variety of reasons (Transformational, Strategic or Practical agendas).

iii. Principals' experiences of leadership in the context of **“democratic school governance”**:

Principals' biographies influence the way the relationship between the constructs of “democratic school governance” is understood. The constructs exist in a hierarchical relationship with **“accountability”** being more important than **“consultation”** and **“agenda”**.

Additionally: **Accountability above** (to the State) is more important than **accountability below** and **accountability across**; **Consultation** with the School Management Team is more important than with any other stakeholder. The agenda (purpose) of democratic school governance is understood as Biographical influences determine whether principals understand the **agenda** of democratic school governance in school leadership as being “**successful, symbolic or strategic**”.

To represent the main findings of this study graphically, all the findings as represented in Figures 7,9,10,11,13,and 14 were synthesised to produce the main findings as represented in Figure 15.

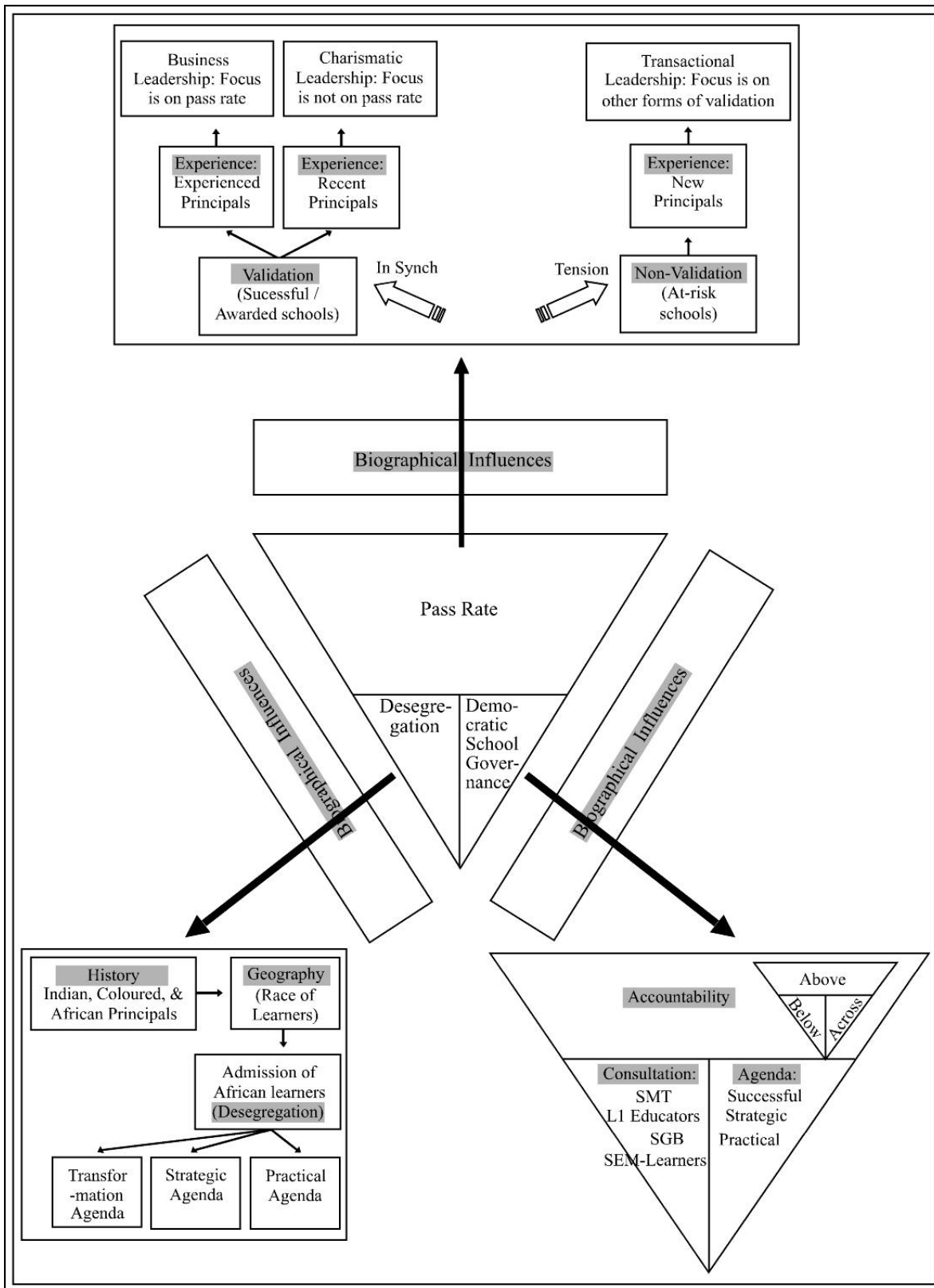


Figure 15. Principals' Experiences of Leadership in the context of Change

5. Concluding Thoughts

The synthesis of the findings represented the “main/key” findings of this study. These findings attempted to answer the critical question and address the issues of “what are principals’ experiences of leadership?” and “how do principals’ understand leadership?” However, these findings (constructs) remain as innovative ways of representing the data and form only the building blocks of an explanatory model to address the issue of “**WHY** principals’ come to have particular understandings of leadership?”

The findings attempt to answer the critical question namely; What are principals’ experiences of school leadership in the context of change? These findings are clearly specific to the purposeful sample chosen and addresses the “how” and “what” of principals’ experiences of school leadership. This sample does not address experiences of “White” principals or principals of private schools. Therefore there are limits to the generalisability of the findings. However, the analysis of the findings is complex, multi-dimensional and addresses various issues relating to both the context of change in South Africa and the experiences of leadership. These issues include South African National imperatives of Education policy, public schools, school effectiveness, and transformation of schools. The findings, although based on a localised sample, relates to National issues. These findings are then used to theoretically extrapolate and develop a thesis that is more generic and to address a possibly “why” of school leadership generically.

Why do principals do what they do? The concept of “rewards” was reviewed in the literature (Chapter Three) as a possible reason for “why” principals do what they do. However, these reasons are incomplete and do not address the complexity of the findings of this study. In the light of the findings, can the concept of rewards be theorised differently to provide another perspective with which to understand leadership? I explore this possibility in Chapter 7.

CHAPTER 7

SYNTHESIS AND THESIS

“The play is not so much about the science itself, however, as it is about how scientific ideas can help us to understand the manifold possibilities the future holds, and how history consists of a constant transformation from this indeterminate future, through the present to a single past” (Johnson, 1998).

Rewarding Leadership

Is leadership rewarded (externally)?

Is leadership rewarding (internally)?

Is leadership both rewarded and rewarding?

Is leadership neither rewarded nor rewarding?

9. Introductory Remarks

In this chapter, I start with my findings from Chapter 6 and explain how existing theories of leadership cannot sufficiently explain my findings. I therefore make a case for the theorising of “rewards” as a construct with which to understand school leadership. The theorisation of rewards was alluded to in the Prologue and reviewed in the literature (Chapter 3). However, the findings of this study lead me to propose an explanatory model to explain the role of rewards in understanding leadership in a new way. I take my cue from the remaining challenge of the Copenhagen play (namely; scientific challenges) and use the idea of science (and not scientific methodology) to develop this model. I then apply this model to contemporary leadership settings and evaluate the use of this model against the current thrust of globalisation. Finally, I re-visit the existing field of leadership theory in relation to my explanatory model of rewards and suggest how a “reward” theory of understanding school leadership may be developed. I conclude with a review of how this study has contributed to broadening the field of school leadership by pushing back contextual, methodological and theoretical boundaries.

2. Synthesis

2.1. Positioning the Theorisation

In my review of the literature on educational leadership (Chapter 3), I drew attention to a range of leadership theorists and attempted to analyse their relevance to this study. Many of the theories of leadership focussed on the “how” of leadership (e.g. Distributed leadership theory focuses on how leadership can be stretched over several people while sustainable leadership theory focuses on how to sustain leadership over time) but few, if any, explained the “why” of leadership. This is understandable as the purpose of leadership theories serve an important utilitarian function of positing how school leadership can be exercised and used to improve schools and schooling. In this study, I wanted to explore principals’ experiences of leadership with the aim of theorising *why* a principal does what a principal does. In order to theorise my findings, I go back to the “findings” of principals’ experiences of leadership that were represented in Chapter 6. I do not wish to repeat all the findings but I present a differently summarised version of the findings in order to set up the discussions that follow.

Review of the main findings of this study:

- i. The pass rate is the most important consideration for school principals and

this is validated both externally and internally.

External validation comes from:

- the Bureaucratic system through award ceremonies, validation and pressure from the Department of Education to maintain high pass rates backed by a legal framework to ensure compliance of school principals;
- the media by the publication of the pass rate as league tables;
- the community who believe that the pass rate is a critical indicator of school success;
- political and economic influences of the globalisation agenda.

Internal validation comes from the belief that the pass rate is an effective indicator of school success.

In effect: *What gets rewarded gets done.*

School Leadership: Principals' Experiences of Change and Reward

- ii. Issues of the pass rate, desegregation and democratic school governance are understood in relation to each other. This means that the dominance of the pass rate has been at the expense of the other two variables.
- iii. The biographical influences of principals were key articulating agents for understanding how principals experienced each of the three variables (pass rate, desegregation, democratic school governance) and their relation to each other.
- iv. However, all principals espoused a belief in the transformational agenda of education in South Africa and this created a conflict with the need to privilege the pass rate over the other variables.
- v. There are several “anomalies” in the findings, where principals choose to effect “leadership practices” that privilege desegregation and democratic school governance variables at the expense of the pass rate.

What explains these conflicts and anomalies? Why is there a difference between the persona (what the principal claims/appears to be) and the personal (what the principal does) positions? What makes a principal choose a particular leadership action over others? What accounts for the inconsistencies of principals' leadership actions under similar conditions over time? *Why* do principals have particular understandings of leadership that are clearly different from others within the same context? How do I answer these questions? I have already demonstrated the inadequacies of the existing theories on leadership in explaining the findings of this study. In particular, the reliance on the conceptualisation of leadership based on three foci namely, the person (leader/ principal), the context (the school) and the practice (principals' leadership actions). In Chapter 6, I demonstrated how “biographical influences” of principals greatly influenced the ways in which leadership was understood and exercised. However, while these detailed explanations were sufficient to explain the six case studies, I wish to develop these explanations further

into abstractions that will answer the tensions and anomalies of the findings and into new **theoretical constructs** with which to understand leadership.

What exactly are biographical influences? For the purpose of this study, I do not labour on technical definitions but instead highlight the use of the term “biographical influences” to include related concepts such as beliefs, experiential influences and lived experiences. Principals experience all these biographical influences in particular ways. Positive experiences lead to **rewards** and negative experiences lead to punishment. The concept of “reward” is not addressed specifically by the existing theories on understanding **school** leadership and I take this silence as my cue to theorise “reward” as a construct with which to understand leadership.

2.2. Theorising Reward: Educational Frameworks and Rewards

Typically, public schools are mandated and managed by the State and they are driven by the political agenda of the ruling party in democratic countries. The State also governs schools with a complex array of legislation that seek to align the functioning of school with the intended political aim of the country. The State and its politico-legal parameters can be considered as the large “macro” framework governing schools in general and school leadership in particular. However, the principal also draws on other influences in order to develop understandings of leadership. These influences can be considered to be the “meso” framework governing leadership and they come from two main sources. The first source is “professional” association. This includes the training and expectations of different stakeholders of education (e.g. educator training institutions, educator professional associations, educator unions, school governing bodies etc). The second source is the socio-cultural *milieu* of the principal. This includes the influence of cultural, traditional and spiritual norms of a value system to which the principal subscribes (Hoppe, 2005). Finally, the principal also has an internalised frame of reference with which to develop particular understandings of leadership. This can be considered to be the “micro” framework governing leadership.

School Leadership: Principals' Experiences of Change and Reward

I use the above macro-meso-micro categorisation of educational frameworks to link it to the prior discussion on external / internal rewards and present the relation between them in Table 18. This relationship makes a case for the theorising of rewards as a construct with which to understand leadership.

Educational Frameworks	Related Issues	External Rewards	Internal Rewards
Political (Macro)	Political agenda and Educational vision of the State. E.g. Social justice agenda of Education in South Africa	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Political correctness • Opportunism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Self-fulfilment • Belief in and alignment with the State's political agenda • Patriotism
Legal / bureaucratic / technical (Macro)	Specific laws governing schools, job descriptions and accountability measures of principals. E.g. South African Schools Act, No Child Left Behind Act of the United States of America.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safety from prosecution • financial reward • validation by employer, community and peers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Entrenchment of belief that principal is competent as implementer of legal requirements of the state
Professional (Meso)	Expectations from stakeholders involved in the professional duty of educators. E.g. Educator training institutions, educator unions, School governing bodies, representative council of learners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Validation by stakeholders • Financial rewards • Strategic reward to please particular stakeholders 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intellectual growth • Academic/ professional success
Socio-Cultural (Meso)	Influence of social and cultural factors. E.g. Cultural customs, spiritual beliefs, family influences, role models, peers, indigenous knowledge systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Safety in following established norms / standards of behaviour. • Validation by community • Appearance of non-resistance and collegiality 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of socially compatible identity • Development of belief system
Individual (Micro)	Personality and belief systems E.g. Emotional and intellectual intelligence, power, ego, charisma, ability of critical thought.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social and material 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal validation and feelings of worth

Table 18: School Leadership: Educational Frameworks and Rewards

The hierarchical consideration of “macro-meso-micro” educational frameworks represented in the above table is a typical one in education. This suggests that the political framework is the most important one. This can easily be seen when the political climate is influenced by the current globalisation agenda and its associated performativity culture of leadership. This macro political framework will consequently influence accountability as being the single most important consideration of school leadership. Another example of the political framework being the most important one can be found in the transformational agenda of South Africa. Transformation becomes the key to school legislation (such as the South African Schools Act) and this becomes the most important educational framework for school leadership. These frameworks imply that the political frameworks determine the legal frameworks, which in turn determine the professional, socio-cultural and finally the individual. I therefore present the educational frameworks in a pyramid diagram (Figure 16) to better represent their hierarchical relationships.

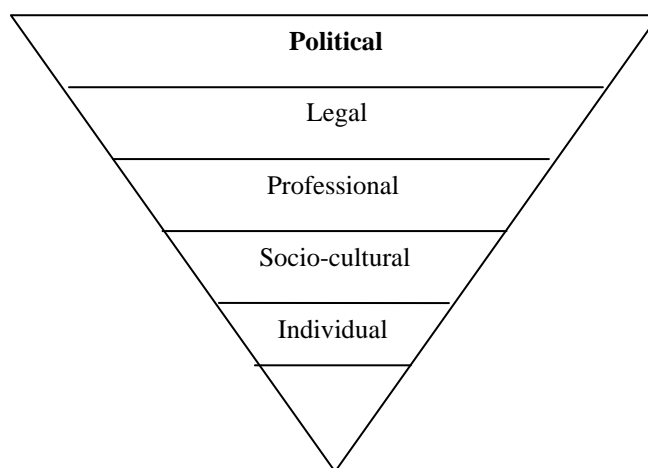


Figure 16. Hierarchical Relationship of Educational Frameworks

However, it is clear that this hierarchical arrangement cannot be valid for all leadership orientations and for all contexts. For example, while globalisation may be a critical component in the consideration of school leadership, it may be negated by the principal's strong anti-globalisation beliefs. Another example is a principal whose socio-cultural beliefs entrench a racial / religious superiority over others and this becomes the most important consideration in school leadership. This means that

theorists of school leadership cannot simply assume that the hierarchical arrangement of educational frameworks is always valid. It is for this reason that I contest the view that rewards are hierarchical and instead suggest that there is a *complex system of inter-connected rewards*. To develop this argument further, I propose the following considerations to theorise rewards more rigorously as a theoretical construct to understand school leadership:

Rewards: New Considerations

While it is tempting to reduce the elements of reward into an external / internal categorisation, this would be simplistic and not representative of the greater complexities of the way educational frameworks interact with each other. For this reason, I take the following three considerations into account:

- i. A review of the macro-meso-micro categorisation of the educational frameworks governing rewards of school leadership.
- ii. An emphasis on the rewards that educational frameworks bring to the principal (as opposed to the educational frameworks as entities in themselves).
- iii. The relationship between the different types of leadership rewards.

First Consideration

Earlier on, I represented the educational frameworks separately as five different components and their “macro-meso-micro” classification. I now look at the “situatedness” of each component and at the influence of the learning theories (that I discussed earlier) to further refine the framework classification. The political and bureaucratic / legal frameworks are outside the immediate control of the principal and are the result of the broader “system”. These are situated “outside” and I therefore collapse both these frameworks into one, namely “systemic (imposed) framework”. The professional and socio-cultural frameworks are common to certain groups of leaders and this serves to differentiate between other groups of leaders

with different value systems. These frameworks are not imposed but are negotiated by each individual within certain norms. These frameworks serve as important points of reference for the leader and I collapse these frameworks into one, namely “referential (negotiated) frameworks”. I acknowledge the use of the term “referents” as reference points or examples as first used by Adams (2006). The remaining educational framework is that of the individual and personal construction of reality. I rename this as the “personal (internalised) framework”.

Second Consideration

In theorising about leadership, I am focussing on rewards. The classification of the educational frameworks that I have chosen is essential as a starting point. However, it is “rewards” that I am theorising about and not the educational frameworks in themselves. Therefore, I focus on the rewards that are indicative of each of the educational frameworks (and not on the frameworks in themselves) and I demonstrate this by renaming the frameworks as indicated below:

- Systemic (imposed) **Rewards**
- Referential (negotiated) **Rewards**
- Personal (internalised) **Rewards**

Third Consideration

The findings of this study contest the hierarchical relationship of rewards and suggest that rewards are inter-connected and operate as a complex system with no distinct hierarchical relationship. The findings identified three types of rewards. But just how are rewards connected? To explain this, I explore new possibilities of theorising about different types of rewards and the relationships between them.

3. Thesis: Theorising Reward

3.1. Copenhagen: Science and Knot Science

To continue with the development of this thesis, two main issues need to be addressed. The first issue deals with the link between the findings of the study and the concept of “rewards”. This was addressed in the preceding section. The second issue is a methodological one dealing with the appropriateness and coherence of the use of the Copenhagen play within a narrative framework. In the prologue, I alluded to the scientific, moral and political challenges raised by the Copenhagen play. From these three challenges, the moral and political challenges were effectively used to explore leadership experiences within the narrative framework. In this section, I use the remaining challenge of the Copenhagen play namely, scientific challenges to ask “can scientific ideas help to theorise rewards relating to understandings of leadership? The use of scientific ideas may seem contrary to the narrative approach. This is countered by the declared interpretative paradigmatic orientation together with the “rhythmic kinetics” strategy adopted throughout this study, and the reliance not so much on the science itself but rather on how scientific ideas can generate ideas to help us better understand the world. For these reasons, I chose to focus on only one scientific concept (Trefoil knot) as a means of developing my theorisation of rewards in understanding school leadership.

3.2. Knot : The Chosen Trefoil

A Trefoil knot is defined as the simplest kind of non-trivial, prime knot, i.e. it cannot be transformed into another type of knot without cutting it and re-knotting it. The word Trefoil comes from:

- *Tre* – relating to the number *three* and
- *Foil* – relating to the word *leaf*

Consequently, a Trefoil knot resembles a 3-leaf clover plant (Megamath, 2007) with the broken lines representing the under-placement (of ropes). This is represented in Figure 20.

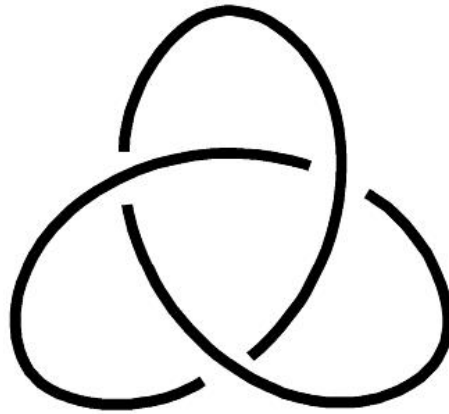


Figure 17. Trefoil Knot (Shadow diagram)

I chose the mathematical construct of a Trefoil knot to develop an explanatory model because it consists of three, inter-connected, 3-dimensional spaces. This structure has potential to be applied to the three inter-connected variables of both Copenhagen (the play) and of rewards (as a theoretical construct in this thesis). I attempt to explain the application to the play first and then to use this to develop the Trefoil knot into an explanatory model with which to theorise rewards.

3.3. The Copenhagen Play and the Trefoil Knot

Copenhagen is really about posing a moral conundrum. More specifically, Copenhagen is essentially about three things: Science (including Mathematics and Language), Politics (and History) and Morality [adapted from (Johnson, 1998)].

When the principles of the Trefoil knot are applied to the three inter-connected variables (foci / challenges) of the Copenhagen play, it would be represented as follows:

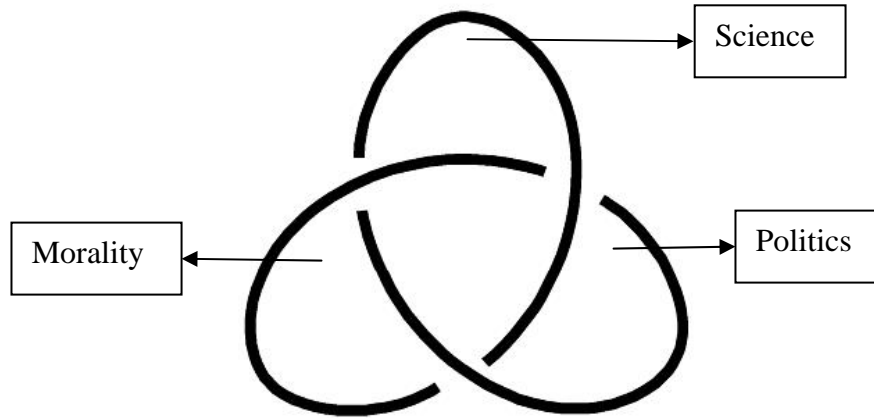


Figure 18. Trefoil Knot and the Copenhagen Play Variables

However, while the Copenhagen play focuses on science, politics and morality, critics are quick to point out that the play is about much more than that. Copenhagen on the one hand is about science and the theatre (arts) and both of these are concerned about questions of ambiguity and *uncertainty*. Simultaneously, Copenhagen on the other hand is about the depth and *complexity* of moral issues. This juxtaposition is well suited to raise an awareness of the complex nature of seemingly simple phenomena as represented by the Trefoil knot. This quest for gaining a deeper understanding brings us back to Frayn's opening statement⁶⁷ namely, that Copenhagen's main aim is to ask questions about what we do and why we do it. Now that Copenhagen's simple plot lines have been shown to mask much more complicated issues, how will this relate to the use of the Trefoil knot as an explanatory model to theorise rewards in leadership?

⁶⁷ Michael Frayn is the author of the Copenhagen play. His comment is cited in the prologue of this study

3.4. Relational Reward Leadership Model: Simplicity Masking Complexity: Towards Understanding School Leadership

I use the properties of the Trefoil knot to explain how the Trefoil knot operates as a mathematical construct and then I propose that these mathematical operations can effectively be used to explain leadership using the theoretical construct of rewards.

3.4.1. Three Dimensional Rewards

The apparent simplicity of the Trefoil knot hides a complicated structure. No amount of manipulation (twisting, re-twisting, flipping, pulling, turning etc) will make two different Trefoil knots exactly the same. This is because the knots in themselves are not the only consideration in the manipulation but it is the 3-dimensional space that remains after the knots have been removed that has to be considered as well.

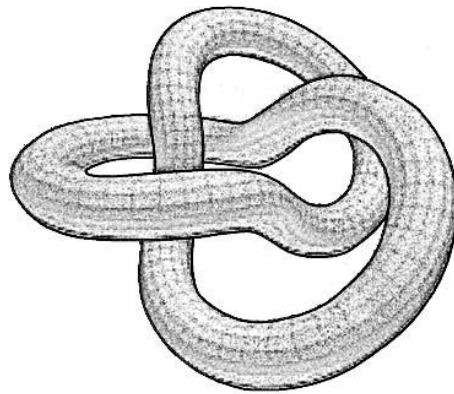


Figure 19. 3-D Representation of the Trefoil Knot

This 3-dimensional structure addresses the gaps of the Borromean ring model (discussed earlier) and provides a way of looking at the inter-connectedness of rewards based on their 3-dimensional perspective. In this way, rewards can be seen as complex, inter-connected and interactive in a variety of ways. This also

explains why physical manipulation of rewards (by the use of external rewards) cannot succeed in effectively changing the internal reward structure of effective school leadership.

3.4.2. Inter-Connected Rewards

The Trefoil knot is truly knotted. This means that the structure of a Trefoil knot not only demarcates three distinct 3-dimensional spaces but it also provides for each space to interact with each other (under / over crossings) along self-contact points and lines of contacts (Pieranski & Przybyl, 2001) which determine the characteristic shape of the Trefoil knot.

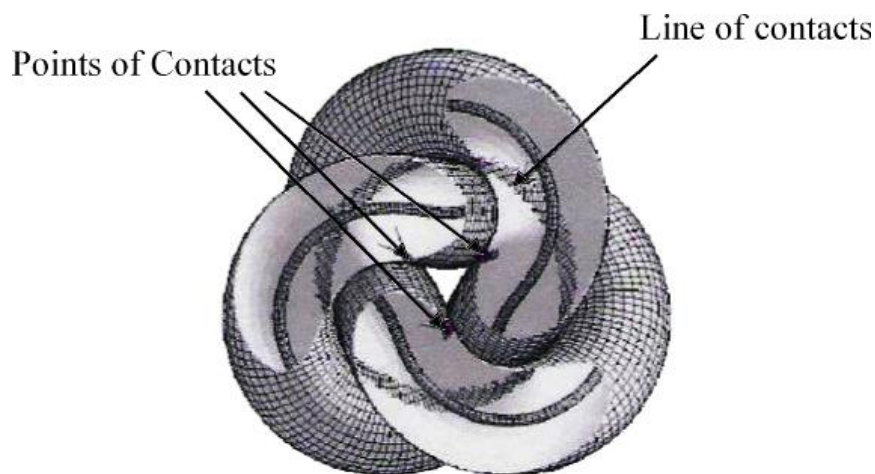


Figure 20. Trefoil Knot - Self Contact Points and Lines of Contact

The self-contact lines run twice around a knot resulting in each of the circular cross-sections of the rope staying in touch with another two such sections (Pieranski & Przybyl, 2001, p. 8). When this is applied to rewards, the three types of rewards (Systemic, Referential and Personal) will “touch” each other and influence each other because of their contact points in a closed system. When all three types of reward (systemic, referential and personal) are of equal value, then the system is in equilibrium and is stable. This is a reference to the stability

of the system with regard to the different rewards and is not necessarily a reference to the desirability or the ethics of the system.

3.4.3. Dominant Rewards

When any contact point or contact line loses its connectedness to the other components of the Trefoil knot (e.g. when the Trefoil knot is loosened), the resulting changes in the shape (and size) of the components are relational. By this, I mean that one component can increase only at the expense of the other components. This is represented in Figure 24.

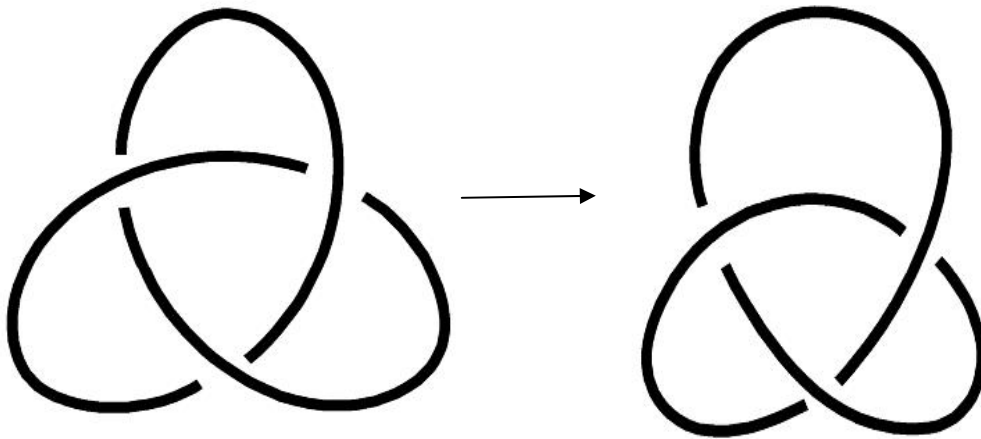


Figure 21. Trefoil Knot - One Variable Increases at the Expense of the Others

When applied to rewards, this means that one type of reward will increase at the expense of the other. An example of this is when personal rewards increase, systemic and referential rewards decrease simultaneously. If systemic rewards increase, then this will reduce the referential and personal rewards. The same principle will apply if referential rewards increase. I illustrate this by the following examples:

- When the pass rate becomes the most important indicator of school success and their superiors financially reward principals for this, then this external systemic reward becomes so great that resistance to this from referential and personal reward structures becomes diminished.
- When the political systemic reward during the apartheid period in South Africa was overwhelmingly great, it diminished the social justice beliefs of the personal and referential rewards. Conversely, this model also explains the activist nature of individuals in the apartheid period who found greater reward from the personal and social rewards and therefore contested the greater systemic rewards.

3.4.4. Paired Rewards

In the Trefoil knot, when one 3-dimensional space passes close to another space, the boundaries of these spaces (represented by ropes) overlap and influence each other (Baranska, Pieranski, Przybyl, & Rawdon, 2004). The overlapping is represented in Figure 25.

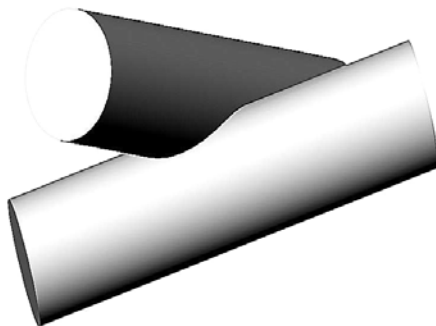


Figure 22. Knots – Overlapping of Ropes in a Knot

When the spaces overlap, a connection between the spaces is determined and this allows the spaces to pair with each other and thus exert a combined influence on the third space. This explains how two different reward variables can act in pairs

and collectively increase at the expense of the other variable as represented in Figure 26.

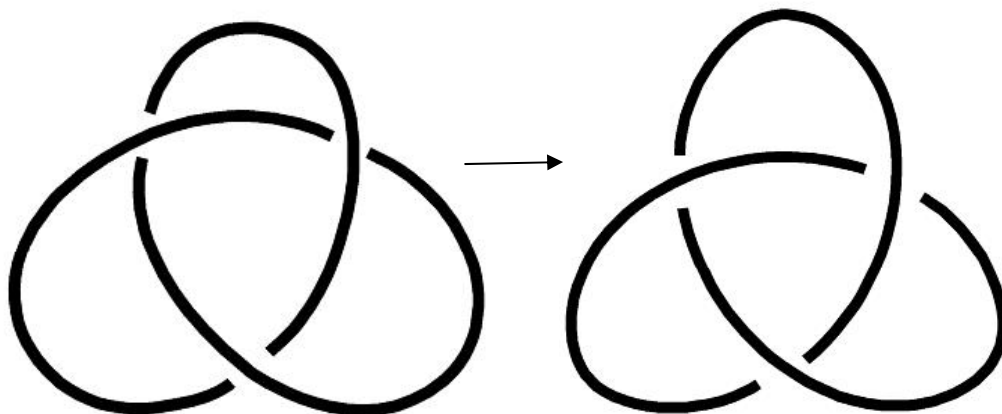


Figure 23. Trefoil Knot -Variables Acting in Pairs

The paired group will have a greater combined reward and diminish the value of the third type of reward. For example, if the personal rewards and the referential rewards are aligned, then this reward will be greater than the systemic reward.

3.4.5. Manipulative Rewards

“Rewards under Strain - Something has to give”

The Trefoil knot can be tightened in one of two ways:

When the Trefoil knot is tightened with the use of the SONO⁶⁸ algorithm, “the set of the self-contact points becomes rebuilt during the tightening process and its topology becomes different” (Pieranski & Przybyl, 2001). This puts the Trefoil knot under strain and threatens the inter-connected relation between the components. When the Trefoil knot is tightened at any one point using increased pressure, the Trefoil knot becomes severely constricted so that the surface at that point develops defects (as represented in Figure 27) and the interaction between

⁶⁸ SONO = Shrink-On-No-Overlaps. (referenced in P Pieranski, Pro Dialog 5, 111(1996)

the spaces cannot be accurately determined (Baranska, Pieranski, Przybyl, & Rawdon, 2004).

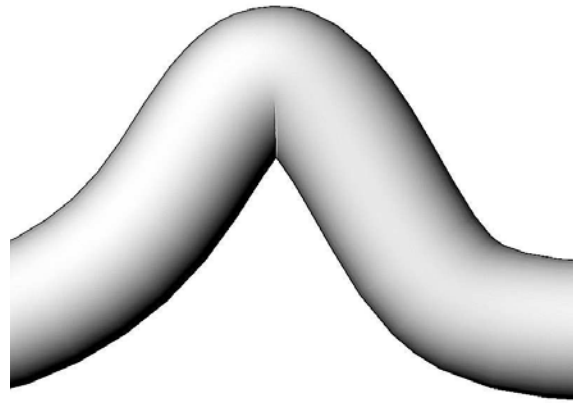


Figure 24. Surface Tension Deformities of Knots under Strain

What tightening the Trefoil knot means for rewards is that undue pressure on any one type of reward can result in “deformities” so that the system of rewards can be manipulated. The Trefoil knot can still (although differently) when it is manipulated by external or internal forces. The external forces refer to broad influences like political imperatives that seek to deform the reward relationship structure. The internal forces refer to the choices that a leader (principal) makes when leadership practice is in conflict with leadership beliefs. This conflict results in the principal making choices that effectively change the reward relationship structure. One type of reward no longer has the expected influence on the other types of rewards. This can best be illustrated by the following examples of apparent anomalies in school leadership practice:

- A principal concentrates on ensuring a high pass rate at his/her school at the expense of what s/he really believes in and at the expense of his/her spiritual/cultural beliefs for the sake of gaining systemic (political) reward. However, once this systemic reward is gained, s/he can choose to shut off the effect of the now increased systemic reward (which would otherwise diminish the other types of reward). This deformity of the reward relationship structure is done strategically so that the principal can go back to increasing personal rewards (e.g.

School Leadership: Principals' Experiences of Change and Reward

being a charismatic leader and doing as s/he pleases) and increasing referential rewards (e.g. the influence of role models as charismatic leaders).

- A principal who is focussed on gate keeping during admissions of learners to ensure a high pass rate suddenly allows an at-risk learner (e.g. a learner from a social welfare institution who has a disrupted school record) into school. At this point, a personal reward (e.g. of social responsibility) or a referential reward (e.g. of a deep spiritual conviction to do good to all mankind) is strong enough to enable the principal to deform the reward relationship structure to prevent the systemic reward (of ensuring a high pass rate due to gatekeeping) from dominating all other rewards.
- This model offers an explanation for the differences between “persona theory” (what I say I am) and “personal theory” (what I really believe in). It also explains the inconsistencies in leadership (when the principal takes different decisions regarding the same leadership issue at different times).
- Under extreme pressure, the manipulation of the Trefoil knot will render the Trefoil knot unworkable. This will transform the Trefoil knot into a Gordian knot⁶⁹.

⁶⁹ The Gordian knot is a legend associated with Alexander the Great. It is often used as a metaphor to represent the difficult, the intractable and often the insolvable problem (Gordian Solutions, 1998). The only way to solve a Gordian problem (knot), is to follow Alexandra’s example of boldly cutting it or pulling it out of its pole (Wikipedia, 2007b)

3.4.6. Concluding Thoughts

“The Copenhagen Interpretation works. However we got there, by whatever combination of high principles and low calculation, of most painfully hard thought and most painfully childish tears, it works. It goes on working (Frayn, 1998, p. 74).

The Relational Reward Leadership Model attempts to understand leadership from the perspective of rewards. These rewards offer an explanation as to **WHY** leaders do what they do. This forms the basis of a proposed Relational Reward Leadership **Theory**, which would explore leadership as a result of a complex system of inter-connected rewards that are negotiated through dominant educational frameworks and which yields imposed systemic rewards, negotiated referential rewards and internalised personal rewards.

4. Talking Back

4.1. Orientation

The value of a good thesis is its ability to open up new ways of knowing. While the thesis has been posited in this study, I explore the value of this thesis as opening up new ways of knowing. To do this, I use the thesis to “talk back” to the critical question and to the existing body of knowledge around understanding leadership. I consider the thesis in relation to the contextual, methodological and theoretical boundaries that I have crossed and report on the current and future implications that this has.

4.2. Crossing Boundaries

What is the relation between the thesis that I am advocating and the critical question of this study, namely “what are principals’ experiences of school leadership in the context of change?” Does the thesis answer the critical question? Does it push back the

boundaries of existing knowledge in relation to the critical question? Does the thesis produce new knowledge? If so, what is the nature of this new type of knowledge?

4.2.1. Contextually Crossing Boundaries

How are rewards seen in a drastically changed and changing context such as in South Africa? As new legislation challenges issues of identity, the old, safe, familiar and known reward systems have to be re-negotiated. South Africa is in its second decade of transformation. Much has been said about the political and legal changes that have been formulated. Less has been said about how successful these implementations have been. This provides an opportune time to re-visit leadership in schools and explore the extent to which experiences of leadership have changed in South Africa. How do principals come to understand leadership in South Africa after a decade of system-wide sweeping legislative changes? At the same time, the impact of globalisation is being felt throughout the world and South Africa is no exception. Do the influences of globalisation also influence principals' understanding of school leadership?

The separatist agenda of the Apartheid regime in South Africa can still be felt in the largely racially residential areas that still exist today. While access to schools is legislatively guaranteed to all learners, the physical positioning and high school costs at ex "White" schools serve as financial excluders to the majority of the learners (of other race groups). Since "African" schools (and residential areas) are closer to "Indian" schools (and residential areas), most "Indian" schools now have a majority of African learners and a majority of Indian educators. This is also true of "Coloured" schools. While transformation is typically spoken about in terms of Whites and Africans, this study pushes these boundaries by looking at the race issue among the "non-Whites" i.e. between Indians, Africans and Coloureds.

In this thesis, I am also a South African researcher, with an ex-Indian label and a practicing school principal of an ex-HOD school with predominantly African learners and predominantly Indian educators. Collectively, this positioning together with the

racial profile of the participant principals (Indian, Coloured and African), the decade long experience of democratic change in South Africa and the transformational agenda between Indians, Coloureds and Africans provides a unique context in which to explore experiences of school leadership. In this way, the thesis adds to the theoretical landscape of school leadership.

4.2.2. Methodologically Crossing Boundaries

Leadership studies are typically driven by Business Management models. Most seek to provide models of how to improve leadership. They are often driven positivistically in an attempt to demonstrate how leadership can be “improved”. In this study, I worked from an interpretivist paradigm and methodologically I departed from the dominant leadership terrain in the following important ways:

- the principal (as opposed to the practice of leadership) was foregrounded as the unit of analysis
- principals' experiences of leadership were explored (as opposed to the practices of leadership).
- qualitative methods, specifically narrative analyses (and borrowing from life history research) were used for data production and analysis. A thorough theoretical grounding for the use of narratives in this study was provided. Semi-structured interviews with opportunities for participants to interact by asking questions, reflecting and changing their stories if they so desired, became the main data collection instruments in this study. In this way, greater voice was given to the principals and their stories were written in their own words as far as possible.
- The tensions that arose from using narrative methodology strategies to develop this non-narrative thesis, together with the use of a literary play as anchorage points throughout the thesis, and complicated by the emergence of the “reward” construct were addressed and theorised. A summary of the methodological coherence of this study is represented in Figure 25.

- My dual positioning as researcher and as peer principal of the participant principals was acknowledged and actively used as part of the data collection, production and analyses. This ambivalent force has influenced the thesis powerfully.

The Power of an Ambivalent Force

When the researcher is also a peer principal, this produces an ambivalent force, which blurs the typical researcher / researched relationship and allows for a different type of dialogue produced in the narratives. This raises an important methodological question namely, “does it make a difference who the researcher is?” Typically, most school leadership studies are done from the outside i.e. by academics who are not school principals. I make the point that the data produced in this thesis has been influenced by the ambivalent force that comes from the researcher also being a peer principal. This constant blurring of boundaries between insider / outsider research has produced this interpretative thesis. I contend that the thesis produced in this study would have been different if it was not for the ambivalent force. That is not to say that a different thesis would be invalid or that the participant principals narratives are dishonest, it simply infers that the “who the researcher is” will play itself out depending on ‘who’ is asking the question. “Who the researcher is” brings a particular lens that produces, shapes and analyses the data. If this is true, then drawing from this thesis of rewards, I propose the classification of “who the researcher is” as follows:

Systems Researcher: These are researchers from the Education “system”.

E.g. Department of Education officials, policy makers

Referential Researcher: These are researchers from the allied educational

fields. E.g. academics

Personal Researcher: These are researchers from practice. E.g. school principals and educators

While these distinctions are made, a researcher can co-exist in any combination of the three types of researches and different types of research may still be valid.

4.2.3. Theoretically Crossing Boundaries

Working within an interpretative paradigm, I moved from using qualitatively aligned narrative methodologies (to produce and analyse data) to borrowing from more-positivistically aligned scientific fields (Knot theory: to draw abstractions and develop an explanatory model). This movement was facilitated by the creative use of a satirical play called *Copenhagen*. This movement also allowed me to move away from the traditional leadership focus on the “person, practice and context” and to look at different ways in which to conceptualise and theorise leadership. Consequently, I theorised reward as a construct with which to explore principals’ experiences of school leadership and to address the gaps in the existing theories of leadership. While “reward and punishment” are commonly used constructs in business leadership studies, I contested the role of such external rewards even though the present accountability culture of globalisation is seemingly fixated on them. I argued for a move beyond the artificial internal /external reward systems to an interrogation of the different types of rewards in leadership. I categorised these rewards into three main types and used the metaphor of a Trefoil knot to build as an explanatory model with which to theorise about leadership rewards.

4.3. Implications of Crossing Boundaries

By demonstrating that the theorisation of reward crossed contextual, methodological and theoretical boundaries, the question of “so what?” is raised. What are the implications of these crossings? I discuss these implications as follows:

- current implications (under the headings of Theory, Practice and Policy);
- future implications (Future Research).

4.3.1. Current Implications: Leadership Theory

How does the Relational Reward Leadership Model talk back to the existing theories of leadership? This model does not seek to negate the dominant theories on leadership but rather seeks to address the gaps and silences in this domain by foregrounding the principal as the leader and by looking at the biographical influences that determine particular rewards of leadership. Therefore, a re-visitation of the field of existing leadership theory is necessary.

4.3.2. Rewards and the Field of Leadership Theory: A Re-visitation

My first interrogation of leadership theory with specific reference to school leadership was done in Chapter 3 where I developed a theoretical framework for this study of understanding leadership. In this chapter, I use my thesis on leadership to re-visit the existing field of leadership theory. While there are several leadership theories, I have adapted the information from several sources (NGCSU, 2004; Clark, 2005; van Wagner, 2007) and explored its relation to the concept of rewards. This is represented in Table 19.

Table 19 illustrates that leadership theories have:

- little focus on systemic rewards on its own (with the exception of Transactional leadership);
- little focus on referential rewards on its own (with the exception of Value-Centred leadership);
- some focus on personal rewards on its own (e.g. Great Man, Trait, Contingency, and Charismatic leadership);
- most of their focus on the relationships between the different rewards and in particular between personal and referential rewards.

The positioning of dominant leadership theories with regard to “rewards” (as represented in Table 19) is represented graphically in the diagram below (Figure 28). The numbers represent the number of dominant leadership theories in each category.

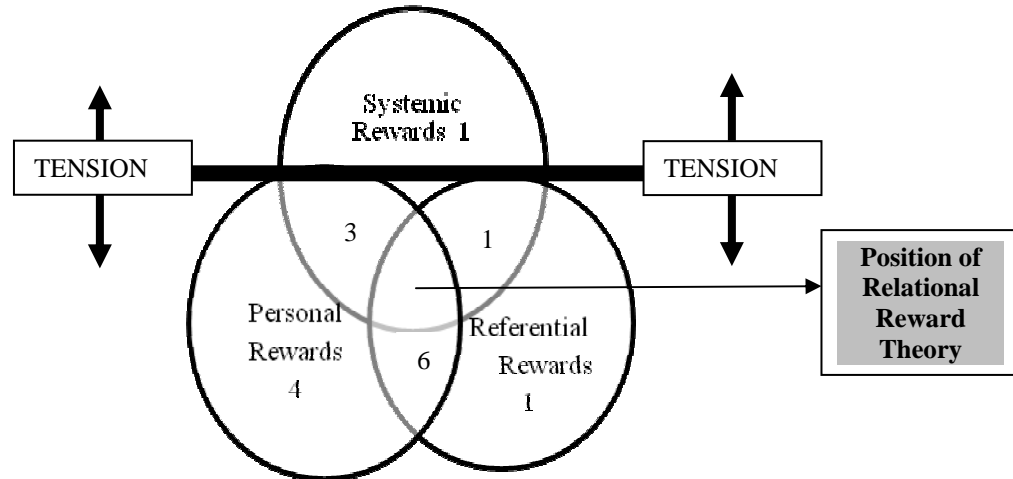


Figure 26. Position of Dominant Leadership Theories in Relation to Rewards

Figure 28 demonstrates that the majority of leadership theories revolve around referential and personal rewards. This is understandable because they are based on interpretive psychological framings. However, schools are conceptualised differently. Schools are defined as social and political constructs. This together with the influence of global trends (e.g. globalisation) ensures that schools are entrenched as systemic structures. This creates a tension between the systemic and accountability driven leadership theories and the interpretively driven leadership theories. A way of negotiating this tension may be a greater understanding of where the reward of each leadership theory (irrespective of its origin) is positioned so that the relationship between them can be better understood. This is what the Relational Reward leadership model is intended to do. This model positions itself in the centre of all rewards (Personal, Referential and Systemic) and looks at the inter-connectedness of the rewards as a way of understanding leadership.

4.3.3. Current Implications: Leadership Practice

While the Relational Reward Leadership model was developed primarily to explain *experiences* of school leadership, it is linked to the *practice* of leadership and has the following implications:

i. Implications for Ethical School Leadership

This model demonstrates that different types of rewards have to be aligned with each other to be stable. Stability in itself does not guarantee an ethical approach to leadership. For example, in a politically repressive systemic context, the school leader's political view may be aligned with the State's agenda and also with the leader's socio-cultural value-systems. This will render such a repressive climate stable but not ethical. For ethical leadership, the leader has to look not only at the alignment of the different rewards but also more deeply at the relationship between the rewards.

i. Implications for Sustainable Leadership

For leadership to be sustained over time, systemic, personal and referential rewards must be aligned to ensure stability of the system. Stability is not intended to keep things "the same" but rather to provide opportunities to develop other leaders so that the system is stable even with a change in leadership.

ii. Implications for Emotional Leadership

When personal rewards are fulfilled and when referential rewards suggest the need for personal growth, this can encourage the leader to develop greater emotional intelligence and thus be able to execute emotional leadership.

iii. Implications for Social Justice

If a social justice agenda is implemented via a systemic reward, it will not be effective unless the leader's personal reward for this implementation is addressed and this is further supported by the referential rewards of the socio-cultural community.

iv. Implications for Principals' Leadership Development

To develop leadership in school principals, each of the three types of rewards have to be interrogated in order to understand their influence on leadership.

- **Systemic** rewards

What rewards are presented by the bureaucracy? What are these rewards based on? Are these rewards aligned with personal and referential rewards? How does legislation influence systemic rewards?

- **Referential** rewards

Who and what are the cultural / social reference points for the individual. What are the cultural leadership beliefs of the individual and what rewards do these bring? How strong are these beliefs and consequently, how strong are these rewards? To what extent do referential rewards influence the individual?

- **Personal** Rewards

What are the lived experiences of the individual? What value systems are present? To what extent is there a need to comply with authority and a need to be an independent thinker? To what extent does the individual value critical thought?

In order to answer the above questions, the biography of the principal becomes an important consideration. The biographical influences serve as important articulating points for developing leadership.

v. Implications for Evaluation of Principals

The rewards model pushes for a more integrated look at the rewards emanating from educational frameworks governing leadership and this implies that evaluation instruments have to take this into account. This means that not only systemic rewards must be evaluated, but also individual contexts must be taken into account. Accountability has to be conceived as being more than just achieving systemic rewards. Accountability must be seen in ethical and

sustainable terms by being driven by personal and referential rewards that are aligned with systemic rewards.

4.3.4. Current Implications: Leadership Policy: Globalisation and the Seduction of the Pass Rate

In Chapter 2, I made a detailed connection between globalisation (and the resulting performativity culture and accountability thrust) and educational leadership. Not surprisingly, this study has shown that the pass rate is the most important consideration for school principals. Applying the Relational Reward Leadership Model, means that external systemic reward (from the Department of Education) is so great that it effectively reduces referential and personal rewards. While external rewards are touted as being necessary for motivating principals, the very action of external rewards ultimately reduces the intrinsic motivation of principals. Kohn (1999) demonstrates clearly how external “rewards can have counter-productive effects”. Reasons for these include:

- Encouraging leaders to take few risks and to be less creative;
- Leaders see themselves as being controlled by the reward;
- Extrinsic rewards can erode intrinsic interest;
- The more complex the activity, the more it is hurt by extrinsic rewards;
- Not all rewards have the same effect (Kohn, 1992).

This is not to say that there is no place for rewards in leadership in a performance based accountability paradigm. What matters is how the reward is experienced. Kohn's contention is important because he draws a distinction between “this reward is for what you were supposed to do” and “this reward is for the value of your work”. In the thrust of globalisation, there are calls for greater intrinsic rewards (which are not an obvious feature of the globalisation agenda) as effective motivators (Rasch, 2004) and for calls for a more balanced approach to both intrinsic and extrinsic rewards (Murphy, 2003).

Globalisation's performativity culture is not confined to educational leaders only. Some principals give their learners money as a reward for attaining good grades (Kelly, 2005). While it may be debated whether this is really a reward or a bribe, what is clear is that

the push for accountability is so great that principals will do whatever it takes to demonstrate that their learners can achieve good grades even if it is at the expense of learners' personal growth and learning. If this is true, then what does this say about leadership and its rewards?

4.3.5. Future Implications: Future Research

This thesis is the result of a deliberate, interpretative paradigmatic orientation adopted in this study. This was deliberate because the aim of the critical question was to explore experiences of leadership. While this interpretative alignment and my involvement as an Indian male principal produced a Relational Reward Leadership Model, this is not necessarily the only or best paradigmatic orientation to explain understandings of school leadership. Will the Relational Reward Leadership Model still be valid under a different paradigmatic orientation or will the adoption of different paradigms produce knowledge differently. Future research could embrace other paradigms such as feminism and post-modernism to offer possibly different theses on understandings of school leadership.

5. An Impossible Knot (The Anti-Thesis)

“It was a fascinating paradox... and you’ve never been able to understand the suggestiveness of paradox and contradiction. That’s your problem. You live and breathe paradox and contradiction, but you can no more see the beauty of them than the fish can see the beauty of the water” (Frayn, 1998, pp. 65-66).

The Relational Reward Leadership Model theorises that leadership is based on a complex system of rewards. I further assume that there are three distinct categories of rewards and that all these rewards are positive and ethical. All these assumptions can be contested. Is it necessarily true that all leadership actions are based on a system of

rewards as defined in this study? Can there be more categories of rewards? Are all rewards positive? Can one be “punished by rewards” (Kohn, Punished by rewards (1999) Houghton Mifflin Co, 1999). Answers to these questions depend largely on the way in which rewards are conceptualised and defined. A principal demonstrating a typically altruistic action may claim that there is no reward in that but an alternate view may be that altruism really is an internalised reward. Rewards do not necessarily have to be of a material nature nor is there clear evidence of the importance of externally validated rewards. The flip side of altruism, namely selfishness can also be analysed in this manner. An example of this is a principal who allows a stakeholder (parent/educator/learner) to act in an inappropriate way because the principal is indebted to this stakeholder for a personal reason. Where will this type of reward fit in the Relational Reward Leadership Model?

The Relational Reward Leadership Model was used as an explanatory model to theorise what rewards are, where they come from, and how they interact with each other. While this model presents one way of theorising the complex inter-connectedness of leadership rewards, it does not and cannot explain all of the complexities and the anomalies of leadership. It does not explain the net effect of the interaction of all types of rewards, especially when the leader exercises free choice to pursue unethical “rewards”. Principals can manipulate the reward relationship structure to suit negative / unethical agendas. For example, a principal can admit some children of colour into school to demonstrate legal requirements and feigned alignment with systemic rewards, while at the same time pursuing a rigorous class discrimination against other children of colour to satisfy an unethical “reward” of class superiority.

The three 3-Dimensional spaces of the Trefoil knot and its inter-actions were used to explain reward. However, the centre of the Trefoil knot was not explained. This centre space can be regarded as a Penrose / Reutersvard / Tribar triangle⁷⁰ because this type of triangle fits perfectly in the centre of the Trefoil knot (the occluding corners of the

⁷⁰ In the 1930's the artist M C Escher started drawing “impossible objects”. In 1934, Reutersvard drew the first version of this triangle. In 1956, the mathematician Penrose and his son referenced Escher but independently drew this triangle. I use the term “Penrose” as my preferred term for this triangle

triangle match the occlusions of the Trefoil knot). The Penrose triangle can therefore be seen as an integral part of the Trefoil knot. However, the Penrose Triangle is a **paradox of perspectives** and is an “impossible object” which cannot exist. If a line is traced around the Penrose triangle, a 3-loop Möbius⁷¹ strip results with three beams of square cross-sections meeting in pairs at right angles at the vertices of the triangle. The perception of how a Trefoil knot can be transformed into an impossible object is represented in Figure 29.

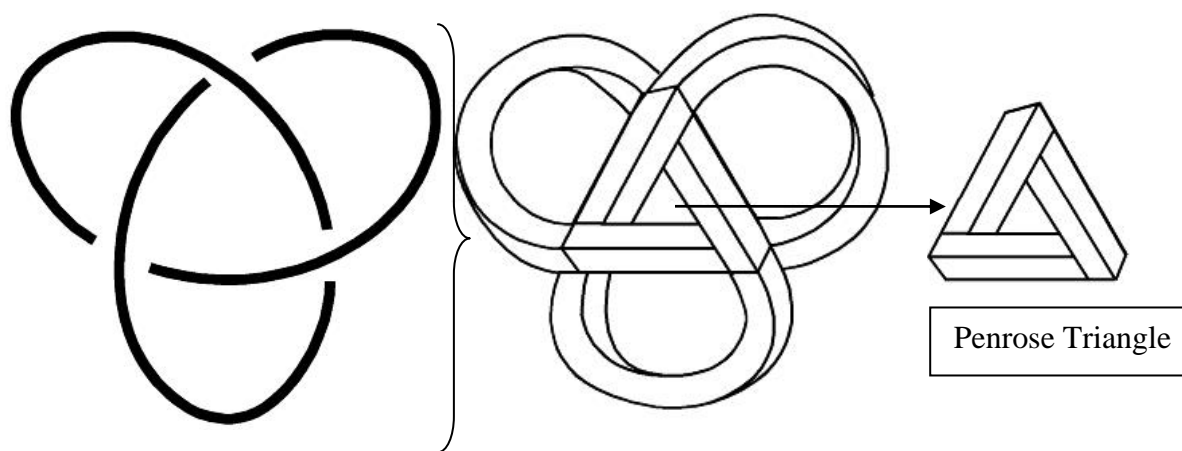


Figure 27. Trefoil Knot with an “impossible” Penrose Triangle

If the Penrose Triangle is an integral part of the Trefoil knot and if the Penrose triangle is an impossible object that cannot really exist, can this thesis based on the structure of the Trefoil knot really exist?

It depends on just how possible the impossible is...

⁷¹ Has one side and one edge. Möbius strip named after the astronomer and mathematician August Ferdinand Möbius (1790-1868). He came up with his 'strip' in September 1858. Independently, German mathematician Johann Benedict Listing (1808-1882) devised the same object in July 1858 (Summons, 2007)

EPILOGUE

If the September 1941 conversation between physicists Bohr and Heisenberg had gone differently, would Hitler have gotten the bomb?

“If... if... if... The line of Ifs’ is a long one” says Michael Frayn, “it remains just possible, though” (Frayn, 1998, p. 129).

Frayn (the author of the Copenhagen play) raises the issue of “if” and the different possibilities that “if” could bring. Similarly, in this epilogue, I reflect on the process of developing this thesis on school leadership and the different possibilities that “if” could bring. So many influences have shaped this thesis. *If* these influences had been different, would the thesis production have been the same?

A thesis production is an amalgamation of many challenges. In the prologue I highlighted the challenges of the Copenhagen play as being **personal, scientific (academic), political and moral challenges**. Serendipitously, these challenges also feature in my reflections on this thesis development. In the thesis, I made the point that personal biography influences the way in which principals come to understand and negotiate rewards as part of their understandings of school leadership. I use the same point to claim that my **personal** biography is an integral part in the development of this thesis. It may explain why I chose this topic, why I chose an interpretive paradigm in this study, and why I looked at the scientific and literary world for inspiration. As an undergraduate student, I studied science at university. As an educator, I taught science for many years. It came as no surprise that I looked to the **scientific** world (Knot theory) to offer explanations for understandings of leadership. I also have an interest in the “Arts” and found value in using the Copenhagen play as a creative vehicle with which to weave through this study. If my biographical influences were different, would these choices have been the same?

The **political** challenges came from being appointed as a school principal in the new South Africa. I wonder if I would have chosen this topic of leadership if I was not a school principal. While transformation was valued, at the school level it presented many challenges. At the same time, my involvement with academic studies was challenging me to engage with deeper theoretical issues of school leadership. The issue of social justice raised **moral** dilemmas. In an increasingly production driven socio-economic environment, the push for “standards” at schools resulted in fierce protection of their

pass rates by excluding learners who were a risk to the pass rate. My school was no different. Paradoxically, winning the award for being the “most improved school” served as a catalyst for me to start contesting notions of “school effectiveness”.

My dual positioning as principal and as researcher presented complex and constant **academic** struggles throughout this study. How would I separate my school leadership role from my academic role? Is this separation of roles desirable or even possible? Formulating the critical question was the biggest challenge. I had intimate contextual knowledge of the field and my own reasons to understand leadership. Having this knowledge, it was very difficult to suppress this agenda and to allow the formulation of the critical question to be expanded as a research question and to be developed by a proven need for this study. My sampling choices had to be in keeping with the demands of the critical question and not for answering my personal questions. There were so many issues of leadership that I was interested in. How would I define leadership and how would I choose the components of the wide field of leadership for study? I struggled throughout with differentiating between my voice and that of other principals. The detailed transcriptions, the coding and the analytic framework helped me to ensure that the participants' voices (data) dictated the study. One way of giving voice to the participants was to write their stories (narratives) in their own words. I kept my voice for the analysis but made sure that it made proper references to the data.

Like Heisenberg relationship to Bohr, my relationship as a student to my mentors produced **personal** and **academic** challenges. During my study, I was awarded a Fulbright scholarship to study in the United States for an academic year. This allowed me the opportunity to work closely with Andy Hargreaves whose work I admired. My feelings of awe were mixed with my feelings of being overwhelmed at the vast literature base that was readily available to me. I read profusely, often not just for the “research” but to answer my own questions of school leadership. I took a semester class on “the principalship” so that it could help me to understand leadership at a theoretical and a personal level. I took a semester course in “leadership” with Hargreaves and this profoundly influenced my thinking about leadership. I also took a semester course in “narratives” with Catherine Reissman and this influenced me to adopt narrative methodologies in this study. However, something was amiss. The smooth application of

American literature to South Africa's context was hugely problematic. I had underestimated the importance of the localised context and the contribution to research that this context could offer. I was deeply appreciative of my American experience but I was equally appreciative of the research opportunities that my South African context offered. On my return, I realised that I needed to carefully carve out this study using its broadly defined research question, its reliance on "western" literature, its choice of narrative methodology, and its applicability to the South African context. I sought the assistance of a new supervisor- Michael Samuel. Like Heisenberg first meeting with Bohr, I (as a student) first met Samuel at a lecture given by him. Inspired by his lecture, I met him after the lecture. This would later translate to me being invited by Samuel to work with him on a project, just as Heisenberg was invited to work with Bohr. Now as a doctoral student, Samuel was my supervisor. However, in this collaboration, my own development as a researcher and my capacity to produce new knowledge had to take centre-stage.

Advocates of the Copenhagen play (like Johnson, 1998) insist that one of the aims of the play is about understanding "a single past". This thesis has moved beyond understanding a single past. It has uncovered "multiple pasts" due to the roles that biographic influences play in understanding leadership. The interaction of different biographic influences with a complex system of rewards leads to an understanding of many, varied "pasts", with each "past" claiming equal and valid legitimacy.

If each "past" can claim legitimacy, then imagine the possibilities of the future ...

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Appendix 1

Performance Standards for Principals - IQMS

	PERFORMANCE STANDARD	EXPECTATIONS
1	Creation of a positive learning environment.	The educator creates a positive learning environment that enables the learners to participate actively and to achieve success in the learning process.
2	Knowledge of curriculum and learning programmes.	The educator possesses appropriate content knowledge which is demonstrated in the creation of meaningful learning experiences.
3	Lesson planning preparation and presentation.	The educator demonstrates competence in planning preparation, presentation and management of learning programmes.
4	Learner assessment/achievement.	The educator demonstrates competence in monitoring and assessing learner progress and achievement.
5	Professional development in field of work/career and participation in professional bodies.	The educator engages in professional development activities which is demonstrated in his willingness to acquire new knowledge and additional skills.
6	Human relations and contribution to school development.	The educator engages in appropriate interpersonal relationships with learners, parents and staff and contributes to the development of the school.
7	Extra-curricular and co-curricular participation.	The educator participates in extra-curricular and co-curricular activities in such a way that it supplements the learning process and leads to the holistic development of the learners.
8	Administration of resources and records.	The educator administers resources and records in an effective and efficient manner to enable the smooth functioning of the institution.
9	Personnel	Manages and develops personnel in such a way that the vision and mission of the institution are accomplished.
10	Decision making and accountability	The educator establishes procedures that enable democratic decision-making and accountability with the institution.
11	Leadership, communication and servicing the governing body.	The educator demonstrates/has well-developed leadership qualities.
12	Strategic, planning, financial planning and EMD.	The educator displays competence in planning and education management development.

Appendix 2

“Official Stories”

Profiles of the schools in the sample of this study

- Introduction The statistical information contained in the annual Education Management Information System (EMIS) documents is used to develop the school profiles of the schools in this study. I have also included the school profile of my own school as a way of demonstrating the close relationship between my school and the schools in the sample.
- 2.1. The EMIS documents contain a wide array of information and I developed the following framework to choose the information that was relevant to this study. The question numbers in the first column refers to the numbers as they appear in the school’s Emis documents. This organising framework is represented in Table X.
- 2.2. I used the information, gleaned by using the above framework, to develop the profile of each school. These profiles are important because they detail the context of each school. It is in this unique context that each principal has to understand leadership.

The profiles of the six schools follow after Table X in the following order:

2.2.	School	Principal
2.2.1.	New Era College	Mr S Mann
2.2.2.	Excel Secondary	Mrs G Thembani
2.2.3.	Orbital Secondary	Mr B Syed
2.2.4.	Meadowfield Secondary	Mrs T Renton
2.2.5.	Boss Secondary	Mr R Naidoo
2.2.6.	Capell High	Mr P Ingle
2.2.7.	Amazon Secondary	Researcher

Appendix 2.1.

Question No.	Questions relating to:
1.	General Statistics
1.24	No. of classes per grade
1.25.3	No. of full time educators: State and SGB paid
15	Physical infrastructure
15.4-6	Fencing
15.11	General construction
15.12	General condition
15.16	No. of toilets
15.24	Sports facilities
6	Administration
6.2	Computer systems
2	Learner information per grade
2.3.1	Learner information per grade: race and gender
2.6.1a,b	Home language per grade
2.1	Admissions from other provinces
2.13	Exclusions: No. dropped out, not promoted
2.16.1	Mortality of learners
2.17	No. of orphans
2.18	Learners receiving social grants
8	Learner performance
8.1	Percentage reaching expected outcomes
8.3	Percentage with major learning difficulties
8.4	General behaviour of learners
3.7	School Management Teams (SMT)
3..8	Frequency of meetings
3.9	Effectiveness of the SMT
3.1	Relation between SGB and SMT
5	Management
5.8	Sexual harrasment cases
5.1	Role of learner groups
4	Policy
4.1	How is policy formulated
4.9	Admission policy and SASA regulations
4.13	Need for staff development
3	School Governing Body (SGB)
3.2	Elected status
3.3	Frequency of meetings
13	Finance
13.1	Section 21 schools
13.3.	School fee exemptions
13.4	School fees
13.5	Previous years income
13.6	Previous years expenditure
12	Resources
12.1	Identification of urgent needs
12.12	Support needed
14	Provincial support
14.2	Support needed
14.3	Rate the support from Province

Organising Framework for Developing School Profiles from Emis Documents

Appendix 2.2

Appendix 2.2.1. New Era College

School Profile – from Emis Documents 2003

General comments (Physical infrastructure, staff establishment, learner enrolment):

This is a large, public, co-educational secondary school with a total learner enrolment of 887 learners. The school was built and managed for the most part by the previous House of Delegates. This school offers grades from grade seven to grade twelve. The number of units (classes) for each grade is indicated below:

Grade	7	8	9	10	11	12
No of classes	1	5	3	5	4	3

There are twenty-nine full time educators, of which twenty-seven are paid by the state and two are paid by the School Governing Body.

The physical infrastructure is in satisfactory condition while the boundary wall is in a “bad” condition. The boundary wall is made up of concrete/ cement and is 1,8 m high. The school building is made up of bricks with asbestos roofing. There are six toilets for learners. There are sports facilities at the school to cater mainly for soccer, netball and volleyball. The school administrative system (record keeping and filing) is not yet computerised.

Learner information:

The number of learners enrolled at this school per grade and gender is as follows:

	Grade7	Grade 8	Grade 9	Grade 10	Grade 11	Grade 12	total
Male	21	91	73	101	71	50	407
Female	27	130	59	106	90	68	480
Total	48	221	132	207	161	118	887

The number of learners according to race, gender and grade is as follows:

Gra De	African/black		coloured		Indian/Asian		White		other		total	
	male	female	Male	female	Male	female	Male	female	male	female	male	female
7	11	13	2	2	8	12	0	0	0	0	21	27
8	53	98	9	6	29	26	0	0	0	0	91	130
9	46	38	4	2	23	18	0	0	0	0	73	59
10	66	57	1	5	34	44	0	0	0	0	101	106
11	29	39	5	5	37	46	0	0	0	0	71	90
12	15	22	2	1	33	44	0	1	0	0	50	68
	220	267	23	22	164	190	0	0	0	0	407	480

Home language: Learners have 6 different home languages.

English is the home language for most learners (458 learners) followed by isiZulu (394 learners). isiXhosa is the home language for 23 learners while SeSotho, SiSwati and Afrikaans are the home languages for the remaining learners.

Learners:

Of the current learners, all of them were registered in schools in the province of KwaZulu-Natal the previous year with the exception of three learners who came from the Democratic Republic of Congo.

The details of the number of learners who did not successfully complete the academic year the previous year are as follows:

	No dropped out	No not promoted	No repeating a grade in the current year
Grade 7		1	1
8		20	14
9		12	7
10		45	25
11	1	32	20
Total			

The numbers of learners whose parents are deceased are as follows:

65 have only mothers, 91 have fathers only while 15 have no parents. 14 learners receive a social grant.

Learner performance:

Approximately 83 % of the learners are reaching the expected outcomes for their age. The percentage of learners regarded as having major learning difficulties is not indicated. The general behaviour of the learners is rated as “improving”.

School Management Team (SMT):

the SMT meets once a month. The effectiveness of the SMT is assessed as “The SMT meets and ensures good governance in the school. There is a satisfactory level of involvement of role players”. The relationship between the SGB and the SMT is assessed as both “ There is a slight confusion about the roles of the governance and management structures in the school that can be rectified by training” and “ the SGB has a sound understanding of its role in policy development and of the SMT’s role in the internal management of the school”. The Principal, Deputy principal and the Heads of Department observe educator and learner performance in the classroom. Policy formulation is done as follows: “draft policy documents are drawn up by a sub-committee and then a consultative process is conducted before they are adopted by the SGB” and “the school uses a participatory process of policy formulation where all the role players are involved in the conceptualisation, development, and final ratification of the documents There is a need for staff training in the following areas: “diversity training” and “conflict resolution training”.

School Governing Body (SGB):

“The school has a duly elected, properly constituted SGB executive”. The SGB meets once a quarter.

Finance:

The school in terms of the Norms and Standards Policy is classified as a Section 21 school. The school fee for the current year is R600. 17 full exemptions and 42 partial exemptions were granted. The total income for the year was R 335 095 while the total expenditure was R142 786.

Resources:

The school has an urgent need for “finance, staff, accommodation, learning materials and equipment”.

Provincial support (this means support from the Provincial Education Department):

The school does not “need assistance in order to use its resources efficiently”. The area in which provincial support is urgently needed is: educator stress. The other areas are “training of new principal, communication and relationships between staff members” and ‘educator commitment. In terms of rating the support from the provincial education, the general rating was “limited support” in almost all areas.

Appendix 2.2.2. Excel Secondary

School Profile – from Emis Documents 2003

General comments (Physical infrastructure, staff establishment, learner enrolment):

This is a large, public, co-educational secondary school with a total learner enrolment of 881. The school was built and managed for the most part by the previous House of Delegates. This school offers grades from grade eight to grade twelve. The number of units (classes) for each grade is indicated below:

Grade	8	9	10	11	12
No of classes	4	4	5	4	2

There are thirty-two state paid educators. The number of educators paid by the School Governing Body is not indicated.

The boundary fence is “good” condition. It is 1.8 meters high and made of barbed wire. The school building is made up of bricks with thatch roofing. There are twenty-eight toilets. There are sports facilities at the school to cater for soccer, athletics, netball, cricket, rugby, tennis, volleyball softball hockey and watersports. The school administrative system (record keeping and filing) is partially computerised.

Learner information:

The number of learners enrolled at this school per grade and gender is as follows:

	Grade 8	Grade 9	Grade 10	Grade 11	Grade 12	Total
male	83	74	117	94	46	414
female	98	83	129	110	47	467
total	181	157	246	204	93	881

The number of learners according to race, gender and grade is as follows:

	African/black		Coloured		Indian/Asian		White		Other		total	
	male	Fe male	male	Fe male	male	Fe male	mal e	Fe male	male	Fe male	male	Fe male
Grade8	83	98					0	0	0	0	83	98
9	72	83	2				0	0	0	0	74	83
10	117	129					0	0	0	0	117	129
11	94	110					0	0	0	0	94	110
12	46	47					0	0	0	0	46	47
	412	467	2				0	0	0	0	414	467

Home language: Learners have 9 different home languages. IsiZulu is the home language for the majority of learners (807). A few learners have other home languages, namely Afrikaans, English, isiXhosa, SiSwati, IsiNdebele, SeSotho, SePedi and sign language.

The details of the number of learners who did not successfully complete the academic year the previous year are as follows:

	No dropped out- no stats given	No not promoted	No repeating a grade in the current year
Grade 8	5	7	
9	14	8	6
10	17	76	33
11	9	91	60
Total			

The numbers of learners whose parents are deceased are as follows:
97 have only mothers, 155 have fathers only while 56 have no parents. 34 learners are receiving a social grant.

Learner performance:

Approximately 78 % of the learners are reaching the expected outcomes for their age. The behaviour of learners is rated as “improving”.

School Management Team (SMT):

The SMT meets once a week. The effectiveness of the SMT is assessed as “The SMT meets and ensures good management in the school. There is a satisfactory level of involvement of role players”. The relationship between the SMT and the SGB cannot be assessed as the information is not correctly filled. The principal, deputy principal and Head of Department observe educator and learner performance in the classroom. Policy formulation cannot be indicated as the information is not correctly filled in. The school has a policy on admissions that conform to the South African Schools Act. There is a need for staff training in the following areas: “diversity training” and “conflict resolution training”

School Governing Body (SGB):

“The school has a duly elected, properly constituted SGB executive”. The SGB meets “once a quarter”.

Finance:

The school in terms of the Norms and Standards Policy is classified as a Section 21 school. The school fee for the current year is R350. The number of full exemptions and partial exemptions were not filled in. The total income for the year was R300 636 while the total expenditure was not determined.

Resources:

The school has an urgent need for “finance”, “staff” and “learning materials and equipment”.

Provincial support (this means support from the Provincial Education Department):

The school needs “assistance in order to use its resources efficiently”. Provincial support is needed in all the areas indicated but no priorities were identified. In terms of rating the support from the Provincial education department, the general support received was rated as “good”.

Appendix 2.2.3. Orbital Secondary

School Profile – from Emis Documents 2003

General comments (Physical infrastructure, staff establishment, learner enrolment):
 This is a large, public, co-educational secondary school with a total learner enrolment of 1052. The school was built and managed for the most part by the previous House of Delegates. This school offers grades from grade eight to grade twelve. The number of units (classes) for each grade is indicated below:

Grade	8	9	10	11	12
No of classes	6	5	6	5	3

There are thirty-seven full time educators, of which thirty-three are paid by the state and four are paid by the School Governing Body.

The boundary fence is in good condition. It is 1.8 meters high and made of concrete/cement. The school building is made up of face bricks with asbestos roofing. There are thirty toilets for learners. There are sports facilities at the school to cater for soccer, athletics and netball. The school administrative system (record keeping and filing) is not yet computerised.

Learner information:

The number of learners enrolled at this school per grade and gender is as follows:

	Grade 8	Grade 9	Grade 10	Grade 11	Grade 12	Total
Male	171	111	145	105	54	586
Female	107	88	105	111	55	466
Total	278	199	250	216	109	1052

The number of learners according to race, gender and grade is as follows:

	African/Black		Coloured		Indian/Asian		White		Other		total	
	male	Female	male	Female	male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	male	female
Grade8	39	25	5	5	127	77	0	0	0	0	171	107
9	26	25	5	5	79	58	0	0	1	0	111	88
10	34	13	3	3	108	89	0	0	0	0	145	105
11	3	7	1	2	101	102	0	0	0	0	105	111
12	2	1			52	54	0	0	0	0	54	55
	104	71	14	15	467	380	0	0	1	0	586	466

Home language:

Learners have 5 different home languages. For all the males (586), English is the only home language. For the females, the main home language is English (486), while Afrikaans, isiXhosa, SiSwati and isiZulu are the home languages of very few learners. Of the current learners, all of them were registered in schools in the province of KwaZulu-Natal the previous year with the exception of five learners who came from the Eastern Cape, two who came from Gauteng and one who came from Congo.

The details of the number of learners who did not successfully complete the academic year the previous year are as follows:

	No dropped out	No not promoted	No repeating a grade in the current year
Grade 8	7	12	6
9	12	30	18
10	6	41	10
11	3	16	0
Total	28	102	42

The numbers of learners whose parents are deceased are as follows:

31 have only mothers, 77 have fathers only while 21 have no parents. 15 learners are receiving a social grant.

Learner performance: Approximately 82 % of the learners are reaching the expected outcomes for their age. 2% of the learners are regarded as having major learning difficulties. The behaviour of learners is rated as “improving”.

School Management Team (SMT): The SMT meets once a fortnight. The effectiveness of the SMT is assessed as “The SMT functions well. There is a high level of participation. There have been significant achievements by this structure”. The relationship between the SMT and the SGB is assessed as “The SGB has a sound understanding of its role in policy development and of the SMT’s role in the internal management of the school. The principal, deputy principal and Head of Department observe educator and learner performance in the classroom. Policy formulation is done as follows: “the school uses a participatory process of policy formulation where all role-players are involved in the conceptualisation, development and final ratification of the documents”. The school has a policy on admissions that conform to the South African Schools Act. There is a need for staff training in the following areas: “diversity training” and “conflict resolution training”

School Governing Body (SGB): “the school has a duly elected, properly constituted SGB executive”. The SGB meets once a month.

Finance: The school in terms of the Norms and Standards Policy is classified as a Section 21 school. The school fee for the current year is R600. 285 full exemptions and 450 partial exemptions were granted. The total income for the year was R435 310 while the total expenditure was R434 130.

Resources: There is an urgent need for “finance, learning materials and equipment”.

Provincial support (this means support from the Provincial Education Department): The school does not “need assistance in order to use its resources efficiently”. The areas in which provincial support is urgently needed are: leadership and management training, SGB training, RCL support, parent and community involvement, educator stress, methodology and classroom management training and educator development: specialist subject training. In terms of rating the support from the provincial education department, there was no support for physical infrastructure and library and media services.

Appendix 2.2.4. Meadowfield Secondary

School Profile – from Emis Documents 2003

General comments (Physical infrastructure, staff establishment, learner enrolment):
 This is a large, public, co-educational secondary school with a total learner enrolment of 1035. The school was built and managed for the most part by the previous House of Representatives. This school offers grades from grade eight to grade twelve. The number of units (classes) for each grade is indicated below:

Grade	8	9	10	11	12
No of classes	6	6	5	5	4

There are thirty-six full time educators, of which thirty-one are paid by the state and five are paid by the School Governing Body.

The information regarding the physical infrastructure was not filled in by the principal. From my notes from field visits, I noticed that the boundary fence is “good” condition. It is 1.8 meters high and made of concrete /cement. The school building is made up of bricks with asbestos roofing. The number of toilets are not indicated. There are sports facilities at the school to cater for soccer, athletics, netball, cricket, rugby, volleyball and hockey. The school administrative system (record keeping and filing) is not yet computerised.

Learner information:

The number of learners enrolled at this school per grade and gender is as follows:

	Grade 8	Grade 9	Grade 10	Grade 11	Grade 12	Total
male	128	111	96	85	56	476
female	147	122	123	94	73	559
total	275	233	219	179	129	1035

The number of learners according to race, gender and grade is as follows:

	African/ Black		Coloured		Indian/ Asian		White		Other		total	
	male	Fe male	male	Fe male	male	Fe male	male	Fe male	male	Fe male	male	Fe male
Grade8	110	136	18	11		2	0	0	0	0	128	147
9	81	98	29	21	1		0	1	0	0	111	122
10	66	95	26	27	6	1	0	0	0	0	96	123
11	53	77	29	15	2	2	0	0	0	0	85	94
12	34	46	18	27	1		0	0	0	0	56	73
	344	452	120	101	10	5	0	1	0	0	476	559

Home language:

Learners have 6 different home languages. IsiZulu is the main home language for the majority of learners (697) with English a home language for 246 learners. A few learners have other home languages, namely Afrikaans, isiXhosa, SiSwati and SeSotho.

Of the current learners, all of them were registered in schools in the province of KwaZulu-Natal the previous year with the exception of eleven learners who came from the Eastern Cape, one who came from Gauteng, one who came from Congo and one from Rwanda.

The details of the number of learners who did not successfully complete the academic year the previous year are as follows:

	No dropped out- no stats given	No not promoted	No repeating a grade in the current year
Grade 8		36	24
9		27	21
10		33	9
11		32	17
Total		128	71

The numbers of learners whose parents are deceased are as follows:

68 have only mothers, 143 have fathers only while 56 have no parents. 36 learners are receiving a social grant.

Learner performance:

Approximately 83 % of the learners are reaching the expected outcomes for their age. (The % of learners regarded as having major learning difficulties.- blank) The behaviour of learners is rated as “improving”.

School Management Team (SMT):

The SMT meets once a fortnight. The effectiveness of the SMT is assessed as “The SMT meets and ensures good management in the school. There is a satisfactory level of involvement of role players”. The relationship between the SMT and the SGB is assessed as “the SGB does not understand the role that it should play” and that “there is a slight confusion about the roles of the governance and management structures in the school that can be rectified by training”. The principal, deputy principal and Head of Department observe educator and learner performance in the classroom. Policy formulation is done as follows: “the school uses a participatory process of policy formulation where all role-players are involved in the conceptualisation, development and final ratification of the documents”. The school has a policy on admissions that conforms to the South African Schools Act. There is a need for staff training in the following areas: “diversity training” and “conflict resolution training”

School Governing Body (SGB):

“The school has a duly elected, properly constituted SGB executive”. The SGB meets “once a quarter”.

Finance:

The school in terms of the Norms and Standards Policy is classified as a Section 21 school. The school fee for the current year is R600. 37 full exemptions and 52 partial exemptions were granted. The total income for the year was R517 252 while the total expenditure was R541 663.

Resources:

The school has an urgent need for “finance”, “staff” and “learning materials and equipment”.

Provincial support (this means support from the Provincial Education Department):

The school does not “need assistance in order to use its resources efficiently”. The areas in which provincial support is urgently needed are: communication and relationships between staff members, educator commitment, and educator stress. In terms of rating the support from the provincial education department, there was no support for physical infrastructure, library and media services. The general support received was rated as either “good “or limited support.

Appendix 2.2.5. Boss Secondary

School Profile – from Emis Documents 2003

General comments. (Physical infrastructure, staff establishment, learner enrolment):
This is a large, public, co-educational secondary school with a total learner enrolment of 981 learners. The school was built and managed for the most part by the previous House of Delegates. This school offers grades from grade seven to grade twelve. The number of units (classes) for each grade is indicated below:

Grade	8	9	10	11	12
No of classes	4	3	5	3	2

There are thirty-two full time educators paid by the state and six are paid by the State. The boundary fence is in “bad” condition. It is 1.5 meters high and it is made of mesh wire. The school building is made up of bricks with tile roofing. There are ten toilets for learners. There are sports facilities at the school to cater for netball and volleyball. The school administrative system (record keeping and filing) is not yet computerised.

Learner information:

The number of learners enrolled at this school per grade and gender is as follows:

	Grade 8	Grade 9	Grade 10	Grade 11	Grade 12	Total
male	98	85	111	63	19	459
female	109	68	128	80	60	522
total	207	153	239	143	79	981

The number of learners according to race, gender and grade is as follows:

	African/black		coloured		Indian/Asian		White		Other		total	
	male	female	male	female	male	female	Male	female	male	female	male	female
Grade7	46	54			37	23					83	77
Grade8	49	74	8	3	41	32	0	0	0	0	98	109
9	57	46	3	1	25	21	0	0	0	0	85	68
10	60	78	3	3	48	47	0	0	0	0	111	128
11	19	28	1	1	43	51	0	0	0	0	63	80
12	6	16	1	1	12	43	0	0	0	0	19	60
	237	296	16	9	206	217	0	0	0	0	459	522

Home language: Learners have 7 different home languages. English is the home language for most learners (468 learners), closely followed by isiZulu (485 learners). A few learners have different home language which includes isiXhosa, Siswati, SeSotho and TshiVenda.

Learners:

Of the current learners, all of them were registered in schools in the province of KwaZulu-Natal the previous year.

The details of the number of learners who did not successfully complete the academic year the previous year are as follows:

	No dropped out	No not promoted	No repeating a grade in the current year
Grade 7		18	35
8		70	70
9	1	28	29
10		98	98
11		42	33
Total			

The numbers of learners whose parents are deceased are as follows:

39 have only mothers, 91 have fathers only while 16 have no parents. 30 learners receive a social grant.

Learner performance:

Approximately 83 % of the learners are reaching the expected outcomes for their age. The number of learners regarded as having major learning difficulties are not given. The general behaviour of the learners is rated as “improving”.

School Management Team (SMT):

the SMT meets once a month. The effectiveness of the SMT is assessed as” The SMT meets and ensures good management on the school. There is a satisfactory level of involvement of role players”. The relationship between the SGB and the SMT is assessed as both “ there is general confusion about the roles of the governance and management structures in the school and this confusion has led to tension and conflict” and “ There is a slight confusion about the roles of the governance and management structures in the school that can be rectified by training”. The principal, deputy principal and the head of Department observe educator and learner performance in the classroom. Policy formulation is done as both: “the school develops a policy by adapting an example that was provided by the Department or another school and then having it adopted by the SGB” and “the school uses a participatory process of policy formulation where all role-players are involved in the conceptualisation, development and final ratification of the documents”. The school has a policy on admissions that conform to the South African Schools Act. There is a need for staff training in the following areas: “diversity training” and “conflict resolution training”

School Governing Body (SGB):

“The school has a duly elected, properly constituted SGB executive”. The SGB meets once a month.

Finance:

The school in terms of the Norms and Standards Policy is classified as a Section 21 school. The school fee for the current year is R600. 28 full exemptions and 357 partial exemptions were granted. The total income for the year was R367 687 while the total expenditure was R244 389.

Resources:

The school has an urgent need for “finance, staff, learning materials and equipment”.

Provincial support (this means support from the Provincial Education Department):

The school “needs provincial assistance in order to use its resources efficiently”. No urgent priorities of areas that needed support were identified. However, the areas in which provincial support is needed include, SGB training, RCL support, Parent and community involvement, communication and relationships between staff members, educator commitment, educator stress, methodology and classroom management training, educator development: specialist subject training, management and development of equity programme, learner progression. In terms of rating the support from the provincial education department: there was excellent support for communication and support from District, and for Personnel matters. There was a “good” rating for all the other areas of support received from the Province.

Appendix 2.2.6. Capell High

School Profile – from Emis Documents 2003

General comments (Physical infrastructure, staff establishment, learner enrolment):

This is a large, public, co-educational secondary school with a total learner enrolment of 1198. The school was built and managed for the most part by the previous House of Representatives. This school offers grades from grade eight to grade twelve. The number of units (classes) for each grade is indicated below:

Grade	8	9	10	11	12
No of classes	6	6	7	6	4

There are thirty-seven full time educators, of which thirty-two are paid by the state and five are paid by the School Governing Body.

The boundary fence is in “bad” condition. It is 1.8 meters high and made of wire mesh. The school building is made up of cement block/slab bricks with asbestos roofing. There are twenty seven toilets for learners. There are sports facilities at the school to cater for soccer only. The school administrative system (record keeping and filing) is not yet computerised.

Learner information:

The number of learners enrolled at this school per grade and gender is as follows:

	Grade 8	Grade 9	Grade 10	Grade 11	Grade 12	total
male	111	158	136	100	68	573
female	134	101	172	119	99	625
total	245	259	308	219	167	1198

The number of learners according to race, gender and grade is as follows:

	African/black		coloured		Indian/Asian		White		other		total	
	male	female	Male	female	male	female	Male	female	male	female	male	female
Grade8	44	75	66	55	1	2	0	2	0	0	111	134
9	65	39	93	62			0	0	0	0	158	101
10	64	93	66	78	6	1	0	0	0	0	136	172
11	36	52	62	63	2	2	0	1	0	1	100	119
12	23	37	44	62	1		0	0	0	0	68	99
	232	296	331	320	10	5	0	3	0	1	573	625

Home language. Learners have 6 different home languages. English is the main home language for the majority of learners (674 learners) with isiZulu a home language for 473 learners. A few learners have other home languages, namely Afrikaans, isiXhosa, SiSwati and SeSotho.

Of the current learners, all of them were registered in schools in the province of KwaZulu-Natal the previous year with the exception of five learners who came from the Eastern Cape, two who came from Gauteng and one who came from Congo.

The details of the number of learners who did not successfully complete the academic year the previous year are as follows:

	No dropped out	No not promoted	No repeating a grade in the current year
Grade 8	7	12	6
9	12	30	18
10	6	41	10
11	3	16	0
Total	28	102	42

The numbers of learners whose parents are deceased are as follows: 56 have only mothers, 110 have fathers only while 9 have no parents. 15 learners are receiving a social grant.

Learner performance: Approximately 93 % of the learners are reaching the expected outcomes for their age. 5% of the learners are regarded as having major learning difficulties. The behaviour of learners is rated as “well behaved”.

School Management Team (SMT): The SMT meets once a term. The effectiveness of the SMT is assessed as “The SMT meets and ensures good management in the school. There is a satisfactory level of involvement of role players” The relationship between the SMT and the SGB is assessed as “ There is a slight confusion about the roles of the governance and management structures in the school that can be rectified by training”. The principal, deputy principal and Head of Department observe educator and learner performance in the classroom. Policy formulation is done as follows: “the school develops a policy by adapting an example that was provided by the Department or another school and then having it adopted by the SGB”. The school has a policy on admissions that conform to the South African Schools Act. There is a need for staff training in the following areas: “diversity training” and “conflict resolution training”

School Governing Body (SGB): “The school has a duly elected, properly constituted SGB executive”. The SGB meets “once a quarter”.

Finance: The school in terms of the Norms and Standards Policy is classified as a Section 21 school. The school fee for the current year is R800. 80 full exemptions and 300 partial exemptions were granted. The total income for the year was R1 216 200 while the total expenditure was R753 459.

Resources: The school has an urgent need for “finance, and learning materials and equipment”.

Provincial support (this means support from the Provincial Education Dept): The school does not “need assistance in order to use its resources efficiently”. The areas in which provincial support is urgently needed are: leadership and management training, SGB training and educator development: specialist subject training. In terms of rating the support from the provincial education department, the general support received was rated as “good”.

Appendix 2.2.7. Amazon Secondary

School Profile – from Emis Documents 2003

General comments (Physical infrastructure, staff establishment, learner enrolment):

This is a large, public, co-educational secondary school with a total learner enrolment of 1006 learners. The school is twenty years old and was built and managed for the most part by the previous House of Delegates. This school offers grades from grade eight to grade twelve. There are twenty-six ordinary classrooms. The number of units (classes) for each grade is indicated below:

Grade	8	9	10	11	12
No of classes	6	5	7	5	3

There are thirty four full time educators, of which twenty eight are paid by the state and six are paid by the School Governing Body.

The physical infrastructure is in good shape, with the boundary fenced off with steel fencing that is over 2.1 meters high. The school building is made up of bricks with tile roofing. There are twelve toilets for learners. There are sports facilities at the school to cater for mainly for soccer, athletics and volleyball. The school administrative system (record keeping and filing) is not yet computerised.

Learner information:

The number of learners enrolled at this school is 1006

	Grade 8	Grade 9	Grade 10	Grade 11	Grade 12	Total
male	149	123	152	75	46	545
female	124	84	123	95	35	461
total	273	207	275	170	81	1006

The number of learners according to race, gender and grade is as follows:

	African/black		coloured		Indian/Asian		White		Other		total	
	male	female	male	female	male	female	male	Female	Male	female	male	female
Grade8	102	93	7	7	37	15	0	0	3	1	149	124
9	109	72	2	4	11	7	1	0	0	1	123	84
10	116	99	7	1	28	23	1	0	0	0	152	123
11	57	69	3	3	15	23	0	0	0	0	75	95
12	23	21	3	1	19	14	0	0	0	0	45	36
	407	354	22	16	110	82	2	0	3	2	545	461

Home language: Learners have 4 different home languages.

English is the home language for most learners (529 learners) followed by isiZulu (465 learners). Afrikaans is the home language for 10 learners while SeSotho is the home language for 2 learners.

Learners:

Of the current learners, all of them were registered in schools in the province of KwaZulu-Natal the previous year with the exception of one learner who came from the Eastern Cape.

The details of the number of learners who did not successfully complete the academic year the previous year are as follows:

	No dropped out	No not promoted	No repeating a grade in the current year
Grade 8	14	5	3
9	17	21	15
10	50	46	30
11	35	59	29
Total	116	131	77

The numbers of learners whose parents are deceased are as follows: 53 have only mothers, 157 have fathers only while 22 have no parents. 14 learners receive a social grant.

Learner performance:

Approximately 92 % of the learners are reaching the expected outcomes for their age. 10 % of learners are regarded as having major learning difficulties. The general behaviour of the learners is rated as “improving”.

School Management Teams (SMT):

the SMT meets once a week. “The SMT meets, but the structure does not function well and very little gets done”. The relationship between the SGB and the SMT is assessed as “ There is a slight confusion about the roles of the governance and management structures in the school that can be rectified by training”. Only the head of Department and the learning area heads observe educator and learner performance in the classroom. Policy formulation is done as follows: “the principal or a group of educators draws up the policy documents and they are then accepted by the SGB”the school has a policy on admissions that conform to the South African Schools Act. There is a need for staff training in the following areas: “ diversity training” and “ conflict resolution training”

School Governing Body (SGB):

“The school has a duly elected, properly constituted SGB executive”. The SGB meets once a term.

Finance:

The school in terms of the Norms and Standards Policy is classified as a Section 21 school. The school fee for the current year is R550. 60 full exemptions and 110 partial exemptions were granted. The total income for the year was R 391 145 while the total expenditure was R226 571.

Resources:

The school has an urgent need for “finance, staff, learning materials and equipment”.

Provincial support (this means support from the Prov Education Dept.):

The school does not “need assistance in order to use its resources efficiently”. The areas in which provincial support is urgently needed are: parent and community involvement, educator commitment, and educator stress. In terms of rating the support from the provincial education department, communication with the immediate supervisors of the school (district level) was rated as very high, while procurement matters and library and media services were rated as receiving no support.

Appendix 3: Data Collection Instruments

Appendix 3.1.

SURVEY

Purpose: The purpose of this survey is to obtain information relating mainly to your school's statistics. As per our telephonic discussion, this information will be used to build a profile of your school.

Name of School Emis No:

Date:

1. How many learners are there in terms of race, per grade?

Grade	White	African	Indian	Coloured	Other
8					
9					
10					
11					
12					

2. How many learners are there in terms of gender per grade?

Grade	Male	Female
8		
9		
10		
11		
12		

3. What subjects are currently offered in Grade 10?

.....

Are there optional/ seventh subjects offered in Grade 12? Yes/no

If yes, please list them below.

.....

4. What is the school's pass rate for the previous year (2002) in grades 8 to 11?

Grade	Pass rate
8	
9	
10	
11	
12	

Appendix 3.2

Semi-Structured Interview with School Principals

Introduction: Getting to Know You and Setting the Tone

Introduction:

- Thank you for agreeing to participate in this research on school leadership.
- This is the first of two interviews.

Confidentiality Pledge

- Pseudonyms (as determined by you) will be used instead of your real name and that of your school.
- All information will be treated as confidential and will be viewed only by me and the University research team.

Consent

- The interview will be tape-recorded to ensure greater degree of accuracy in the transcription process. These transcripts will be given to you for your approval before I use them.

Interview 1.

Purpose: The Purpose of this interview is to:

- explore the Principal's biography
- explore the Principal's conceptual understandings of desirable educational systems and preferred leadership orientations
- identify circumstances that are unique to each school for the practice of school leadership.

Section A

School:.....

Place of Interview: Date:

Time commenced Time terminated.....

Name of Principal:

Preferred name during interview:.....

Gender:.....

Date of Birth: (optional).....

Address: (optional).....

.....
After hours contact number: (optional):

Home: Cell:.....

A. Personal History – Teaching career

1. Why did you become a teacher?

Probe questions: - What/ who influenced you to take up teaching as a career?

2. Where / what did you study after school?

3. Tell me about your teaching career from the time you started teaching to where you are now.

Probe questions: - When did you start teaching?

- What were your main teaching subjects?

- What promotion positions did you hold? At which institutions and for how long?

- Comment on the current procedure that uses interviews as the main instrument for determining educator promotions.

B. Conceptual Understandings of Leadership:

Life view/ beliefs/ ideology: Desirable education systems, schools and principal's role.

1. What are your personal beliefs about the purpose of education in society?

2. If you had to develop an ideal education system to suit the purpose of education, what would it look like?

Probe questions:

- What would an ideal school look like? What do you think the principal's role should be in that school?

- What changes, if any would you like to see in the current education system?

3. The new system encourages a participatory, consultative approach with all the stakeholders in the decision making processes at schools. Has this impacted on the way that principals see their leadership role?

4. How would you define a “good” school principal in the current system?

Probe questions:

- How would you compare the concepts of leadership and management?

- Who or what has influenced your ideas of school leadership?

- Role Models: Are there principals that you admire/dislike (you do not need to mention names)? Why?

- What personal attributes are needed by principals?

- Which leadership style is most appropriate for a school principal?

- Can a good school principal in the old system be a good principal in the new system?

C: Transformation: Educational Policies and Personal beliefs

1. What do you think about the way Government determines current Educational policies
Probe questions:
 - Comment on the process of consultation?
 - Are there specific policies that you want to comment on?
 - Have you made inputs on any educational policies? If so, how / when/ why?
 - How do you think educational policy should be determined?

2. What do you think the principal's role is (or should be) in implementing policy?
Probe questions:
 - Can there be different interpretations and differences in the way principals implement educational policies? If so, how does the Department respond to these interpretations?
 - What should principals do if they disagree with national policy?
 - Can principals take decisions that help them to run their schools more effectively but which is against the national policies? If yes, give examples.
 - If there is a contentious National policy issue, how would you go about implementing it in your school?

3. What challenges has the country's transformational brought to schools – both generally to all schools and specifically to your school?
Probe questions:
 - How do principals react to these challenges?
 - Do you feel prepared to handle these challenges? If so, what has prepared you to face these challenges?
 - What makes you happy / unhappy about transformation?
 - Comment on the pace of transformation in schools?

4. Let's talk about the South African Schools Act. This act has radically changed the previous admission policy.
Probe questions:
 - What effect has this Act had on your current admission policy?
 - What do you think the admission policy of public schools should be?
 - Has this Act helped / hindered principals in the running of their schools?
Explain.

5. Schools and Evaluation by the State.
How are schools evaluated at present?
Probe questions:
 - What are criteria are used at present?
 - What are your views about the grade twelve pass rate being used to evaluate schools?
 - What criteria would you like to see being used to evaluate schools?
 - What is your response to Whole school evaluation (WSE)?
 - What do you think of Developmental Appraisal system (DAS)?

6. What is your view of the Further Education and Training (FET) act?
Probe question: Will this impact on the leadership style of principals? If so, in what way?

D. Specific school context: Questions regarding your school

1. Do you think that your school is different from the other schools in this circuit? If so, how?
2. What challenges for leadership does your school present?
3. What issues at school take up most of your time?
4. Your school has a very high Grade 12 pass rate? Why do you think that this is so?
5. The Department and the media place great emphasis on the Grade 12 pass rates. How do you (and your school) respond to this?
6. What advice can you offer to other schools that are trying to improve their pass rates?

End of Interview 1

Appendix 3.3

Semi-Structured Interview with School Principals

Introduction: Setting the tone

5. Thank you for agreeing to participate in this research on school leadership.
6. This is the second interview.

Confidentiality Pledge

- Pseudonyms (as determined by you) will be used instead of your real name and that of your school.
- All information will be treated as confidential and will be viewed only by me and the University research team.

Consent

- The interview will be tape-recorded to ensure greater degree of accuracy in the transcription process. These transcripts will be given to you for your approval before I use them.

Interview 2.

Purpose

- The purpose of this interview is to explore Principals' understandings of their practices of school leadership issues.

Section A

School:

Place of Interview:

Date:

Time commenced

Time terminated.....

Name of Principal:

Preferred name during interview:.....

Notes:

.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....
.....

Section A

A. Management: Leadership style and decision-making

1. How would you describe your leadership style?

Probe questions:

- Why have you adopted this particular style?
- How do the different stakeholders respond to this style?
- How would you compare leadership with management?

2. How are decisions made at your school?

Probe questions:

- Are there different types of decisions that a principal has to make?
- What is the role of your management team, your staff, and your governing body in decision making?
- Would you take a decision if it did not receive support from all the stakeholders? If yes, give examples.
- To what extent will you feel comfortable in taking decisions that do not have the support of the Department but which has the support of your teachers (SMT) and parents (SGB)?
- Are all stakeholders equally important in the decision making process at your school?
- Are there any national policy issues which are “interpreted differently” at your school? Explain.

B. Personal Values and Experiences

1. What personal attributes of yours would you say have been most /least helpful to you in the execution of your duties?
2. Do you have a personal aim/ vision for this school?
Probe question: – What still needs to be done at this school?
3. What makes you most happy /unhappy about your job?
4. Have you ever thought of leaving the profession? Why?
Probe question: In these times of low teacher morale, are you passionate about your job? Why?

C: Admissions

1. Where do most of your new admissions come from?
2. Are new learners admitted into all grades? Why?

3. Describe the admission process at your school?
 Probe questions:
 - How are vacancies made public? Do you advertise? Where, how?
 - What are the admission requirements for learners?
4. How do you deal with verifying reports, place of residence and ability to pay school fees?
5. Are there learners with special needs (LSEN) at your school?
6. What are the main reasons why learners are not admitted to your school?

D: Curricular activities

1. How do learners choose their subjects in grade 10?
2. Are there certain subjects that you advise learners not to do? If so, why?
 Probe question – are there limited numbers of learners taking maths and science courses?
3. Are any condonations at the end of grade 11? Explain?
4. Has there been a change in recent years in the number of exemptions in grade 12 that learners enter for? If so, why?

E: Extra-curricular activities

1. Are there activities that are preferred by particular groups of learners?
 Probe question: Which activities and which groups?
2. What concerns you most about learner diversity at this school?

F: Learner Leadership

1. What system of student leadership exists at your school?
 Probe question – Do you both the “official” RCL system and the “unofficial” prefect system?
2. What challenges do you see for these leaders at this school?

G: Role of Stakeholders

1. Do some parent groups participate more actively than others?
 Probe question: –How representative is the SGB of the learner demographics?
2. If you could, what would you change about the SGB?

Section B- Questions pertaining to Specific Schools

Schools with a **history of high achievement** (Grade 12 pass rate)
Retained previously classified racial learner majorities:
Orbital Secondary, Capell High.

1. How have you managed to maintain a high pass rate over the last ten years through the transition to democracy in schools?
(Probe question - Do you think that schools should be judged on their grade 12 pass rate? Repeat question; ask only if not answered before.
 2. Have there been any advantages of maintaining a continuously high pass rate?
 3. As a principal, to what do you attribute your success?
 4. How is it that the racial majority learner population has not changed at your school?
-

Schools with high achievement, but where the **pass rate is starting to drop.**
With growing **majority of African learners:**
Meadowfield Secondary, New Era College

1. How has the pass rate at this school changed over the last ten years?
 2. What do you attributes these changes to?
 3. Does the changing pass rate have any implications for you as the principal?
(Probe question - Do you think that schools should be judged on their grade 12 pass rate? Repeat question; ask only if not answered before.
 4. Why has your majority learner profile become African?
-

Schools that have **recently improved** their Grade 12 pass rates.
With growing **majority of African learners:**

Excel Secondary, Boss Secondary

1. What were the causes for the low pass rate in the past?
2. Was there any pressure on you to improve the pass rate? If yes, from who? Do you think this was justified?
3. Do you think that schools should be judged on their grade 12 pass rates?
4. Did receiving the award for the most improved school have any impact on the school? On you? Explain?
5. How did you improve the pass rate?

Positionality of the Principal:

**Acting (Temporary) Principals
Excel Secondary, New Era College, Meadowfield Secondary.**

1. Do you think that there is a difference in the role of an acting principal and that of a permanently appointed principal?
Probe questions:
 - Are the challenges the same?
 - Are acting principals accorded the same respect and authority as permanently appointed principals?
 - Would you do anything differently as an acting principal and as a permanently appointed principal?

**Permanently appointed (Experienced) Principals
Boss Secondary, Orbital Secondary, Capell High**

1. Over time, is it becoming easier or more difficult for you to function as a principal?
Explain.

End of Interview 2

Appendix 4

Mr Syed – Alternate Narrative Analysis

Orbiting / move/moving/movement / progressive path

I. 10. The er bottom line is, we move forward together

code	Part of the Principal's narrative	Line No
Context of change and its effect on schools		
B2	-we've seen now a <u>movement</u> away from the old system which fed the apartheid ideology...	1
		2
	-Departments are failing they just holding positions at the moment and going through the <u>motions</u>	3
		4
	-that is the institutions are basically <u>moving</u> on its own	5
F3	- if the political party is a <u>progressive</u> one and then of course the province is on a winning <u>path</u>	6
		7
E1	- there are many schools that are <u>orbiting</u> on their own because of their own particular viewpoint on race, away from the national policy.	8
		9
		10
F1	-institutions on their own are simply <u>nucleating</u> themselves away from the education structure that is there to govern –in sheer frustration.	11
		12
		13
Leadership role of the principal		
D3	-if the decision is one that is <u>progressive</u>	14
D1	- they put the institution on a <u>course</u> which is <u>progressive</u> it places that school now in the <u>progressive path</u>	15
		16
	- he is <u>moving</u> in his own <u>orbit</u> but an <u>orbit</u> that will be <u>progressive</u>	17
		18
D4	- participative approach is er a very <u>progressive</u> approach in er today's management procedures	19
		20
D6	- the smooth <u>running</u> of the school	21
View of the educators		
G3	-And when I came to that school there were, a lot of people began upward <u>mobility</u> , which they had never seen before, right, so that, I think, represented a lot of progress for them and they saw the leadership as <u>progressive</u> .	22
		23
		24
		25
View of the learners		
D10	- now we are seeing a trend <u>moving</u> away from that and people are now, pupils are now engaging the democratic process with more wisdom.	26
		27
		28
Vision of the school		
I10	-We <u>moving</u> towards a er a, towards a <u>progressive</u> approach, we <u>moving</u> forward. And there are always hiccups along the way but we <u>move</u> forward. That's the most important thing and I think er- the er bottom line is, we <u>move</u> forward together	29
		30
		31
		32

The narrative of this principal showed the use of terms that portrayed the principal and his school as orbiting in a progressive path to success. The imagery of motion can be seen clearly in the terms that are underlined in the above table. There is reference to the broad imagery of motion by the specific use of the terms “movement” (line 1), “motions” (line 4) and “moving” (lines 5, 17). This is further supported by the terms “path” (lines 7, 16), “orbit” (line 17), “orbiting” (line 8), “nucleating” (line 11), “course” (line 15), “running” (line 21) and “mobility” (line 23). While the imagery of motion is used effectively, it is not used on its own. This imagery is linked with progress. Examples of this are “progressive path” (lines 6-7, 16), “progressive course” (line 15), and “progressive orbit” (lines 17-18).

This principal sees the change of political ideology and its effect on schools as a movement. While he uses the imagery of motion to signal changes, he uses the imagery differently when he talks about the bureaucracy and when he talks about himself. He sees the Department of Education as simply going through the motions of change and not supporting schools. This has resulted in schools moving away from the Department of Education and also having to rely on themselves. (lines 1-5).

However in some provinces, the role of provincial politics in education has been progressive and these schools are succeeding with the assistance of the Department of Education. (lines 6-7). There are other reasons why schools have “moved” away from the Department of Education. Principals and their schools have their own agendas in moving away from national educational policies. Alternately, the inadequacy of the Department of Education to support schools has led to such frustration in schools that they have had to “move” away. This moving away is termed “nucleating” (line 11) which suggests that the principal sees these schools as not just moving away but moving away to form a more independent “nucleus”. This also suggests that these “nuclear” schools derive justification for their practices, which may be contrary to national policy, on the frustration that is caused by the inadequacy of the Department of Education.

The leadership role of the principal is also incorporated in the imagery of motion. He is “moving” (line 17). The school is on a “course” (line 15) and on a “path” (line 16). This movement is always “progressive”. For the principal, leadership is defined by the principals approach to leadership challenges and by the decisions taken by the principal. These are seen as being “progressive” (lines 14, 17-18). In keeping with the imagery of motion, all this progressive movement is ultimately for the smooth “running” (line 21) of the school.

The idea of progressive movement is extended to educators. Educators began “upward mobility” (line 22) and therefore they saw the leadership as “progressive” (line 25). The learners are also viewed with the idea that moving equals success. Learners are “moving” (line 26) away from instinctive choices and are now using more “wisdom” (line 28) in their engagement with the democratic processes.

In the imagery of motion, this principal does not see himself as moving on his own. When talking about his vision for the school, while he clearly positions himself in his response (“I think” line 31), he consistently refers collectively to the school as “we” (lines 29, 30-31). The imagery of movement is effectively applied to the whole school and for this principal, his understanding of school leadership is dependent on the view that “the bottom line is, we move together” (line 32).

Appendix 5

The South African Standards for Principalship

Department of Education

These six interdependent areas together constitute the generic role of the principal in any South African school context. They are:

1. Leading and managing the learning in the school
2. Shaping the direction and development of the school
3. Assuring quality and securing accountability
4. Developing and empowering self and others
5. Managing the school as an organisation
6. Working with and for the community

Source: The Teacher. V11, No.6, 2007

Appendix 6

Reconstructed Career Narratives – Extension of Chapter 5

2.4. Mr. S. Mann : Keeping the Romantic Dream Alive

Introduction

Mr Mann is the acting principal of New Era College. This school is an ex-HOD school with eight hundred and eighty seven learners and twenty nine teachers. (A detailed description of the school statistics can be found in the appendix). Mr Mann is a fifty year old, Indian man who was recently sent to this school by the Department to act as principal. Mr Mann started teaching over twenty nine years ago. He was a few months into his job when he was interviewed for this study. His story (in his own words) follows next.

Leadership: The leader

Becoming a teacher: Following my dream

It was my childhood dream to become a teacher. Ever since I could remember I used to play this game of teacher and principal with imaginary pupils. For me becoming a teacher was a natural thing. There was talk of teaching not being a very attractive or noble profession in terms of salary and pupil discipline. But eventually my dream got hold of me and I decided on teaching. I have no regrets.

I was born and brought up in Chatsworth¹. I studied at UDW². My first appointment was in the country side. I returned to the Durban and after about eight or nine years I got promoted. After just six months I was seconded to Springfield Training College where I spent six and a half very eventful years. I worked with student teachers and correspondence materials and I wrote a lot of materials for teachers in training development. It was a *fantastic* experience. Then my post ceased and I resumed my head of Department post at a high school. After five years I was promoted as a deputy principal to another school. In 2002 the principal of this school took ill and I was asked by the inspectorate to report here as acting principal.

History is my best subject. I love it. I'm still teaching history and I'm involved in history in a very big way in terms of the Department, having set senior certificate papers, I've been in involved in various sub-committees, History Provincial Societies³ and numerous workshops. My great love is History. Shortly I'll be doing my doctorate and I'll be focusing on Indian history from 1893 to about 1994. My master's study was on the history of *Chatsworth*. I decided to do that because I was born in the old Chatsworth, on the farm where I spent my entire childhood. It was a pretty romantic place for me. With the coming of the Group Areas Act⁴, Cato Manor was reserved for Whites by displacing the Indian community. The *City Council*⁵ decided that Chatsworth *should* be the place for the displaced Indians and overnight the peaceful, farming community of Chatsworth was turned into a concrete jungle. It was in

¹ A suburb in Durban built specifically for the Indian community in the apartheid era

² University of Durban-Westville

³ Professional education associations that co-ordinate teaching in specific subjects

⁴ This Act was designed to ensure that residential areas were specifically segregated for different races

⁵ Administrative local governance structure

absolute turmoil. I experienced *all* that and it kind of influenced my thinking. My connection to Chatsworth is very close.

A good school principal: Be a role model. The old fashioned thing still works

A good principal should be a role model. The old fashioned thing still works. A good principal is *always* punctual, his attendance is absolutely regular and he is beyond reproach. A principal should be respected. He follows regulations to a T. He should be flexible and allow for differing ideas. He is not dogmatic. He is not happy with the situation and he is always looking for any opportunity to make things better.

I'll tell you the truth. In all my twenty-seven years of teaching, I've *yet* to meet a principal that I've admired. Either they were *absolutely* dogmatic and sometimes downright wicked or they were ill disciplined. But I've heard of one guy that everybody talks about. He was not in my time. He was involved in teacher organisations and he was very well respected. He was an outstanding principal. He was as a role model. He was always prepared to listen and educators always found him comfortable to be with. He was always looking to make the school a better place and he made a *tremendous* contribution outside school life. Now that's the kind of guy I like. But there's always the possibility that when you make a tremendous contribution outside, your school may be in a terrible state. So there's got to be balance between that. Charity begins *here* at home. At the same time you have to share your inputs with outsiders because your school is part of a bigger picture. In *my* own experience I have been absolutely disappointed. I've yet to see a principal with this kind of approach. When principals sit in this position, they suddenly think that they are in a position of privilege which they want to utilize to the fullest while forgetting their sense of responsibility. They come to school at any time and they leave at any time. Or they pass a rule or regulation as they please. Each principal thinks of their privileges but very seldom do they of their role as part of the bigger education process. This tunnel vision of the principal will not work. The school is linked to the community as well and many principals seem very uncomfortable with governing bodies. You've got to *build* bridges. Unfortunately this job is tough, there's no two ways about it: it is a multifaceted thing. You've got to be a sportsman, a social worker, an academic, a disciplinarian, an administrator and you have to put *all* that together. You've got to have that kind of flexibility of mind and take in *all* that and still come up smiling.

I've proved a lot of people wrong in my life. Like when I came to this school. I was told that I am looking for trouble because it's chaotic here. But I like a challenge. The looseness of discipline really worried me but by *sheer* old fashioned methods of walking around, of asking, of cajoling and bullying, I've got somewhere. When I started my teaching career the older teachers *always* tend to put you off. They will say that this won't work or that you're wasting your time or that you won't get any joy. But I've got *tremendous* joy out of my teaching. I proved a lot of people wrong because I've always put in the extra and produced literally hundreds of distinctions from children coming from not the upper class areas. If someone tells me something will not work, I will always try and it generally works.

Actually there are no role models for me. But there are so many things inside me like my own reading and events around me like the political process that shape the way I do things. You shouldn't really think of a role model to inspire you but you can learn from *different* people and different things, like art and Nelson Mandela. You even learn from bad people like Adolf Hitler and Stalin.

Personal attributes: I must put hundred percent on every issue

There is a local newspaper in which we featured. The head prefect had written there that the principal is vibrant and dynamic with lots of plans and a vision. I like that because in a sense that's the way I would like everybody to be. *That's* what you need today, especially in South Africa.

I have never really thought of leaving the profession but I always think about retirement. My big worry is what I am going to do at home when I retire.

I don't know what keeps me passionate. It's my inherent quality I suppose. In my whole life I've felt that I must put hundred percent on *every* issue and I'm driven by that desire.

I worry not about myself but about the society at large. I keep questioning how I can be of service to other human beings. I enjoy life doing all these things.

Leadership: The context

Acting principal position: The title means absolutely nothing to me

Sometimes it is difficult when you are in the acting position as a principal because people don't take you seriously. But I just don't care. I just look at the job and I see the *big* issue of education in South Africa. And I want to be a part of the solution of that particular problem. So if I'm allowed to be a part of the solution for only six months or one year, it doesn't really matter to me. I think the educators in this school realise that I'm driven to a bigger cause rather than just looking at myself. I'm going to enjoy the experience and make my contribution to education *as a leader*. So when I leave here, I must ask myself several questions such as: Did I make a difference to this school? Are the educators more empowered? Are the kids better behaved? Do we have a more diverse curriculum? And so on. These are the yardsticks that I will measure myself by and forget about the fact that I was acting. The title means absolutely nothing to me.

Education policy: My big problem is that transformation is not from grassroots level

The way government determines policy is a problem. It's only through advertisements and media coverage that we get to know who the Government has chosen to put into committee. In my opinion, a lot of these individuals come from universities and some of these universities have old, archaic, bureaucratic ideas. Old principals are also on the committees. I guess that the government is trying to create a balance by bringing in people from all these different sources. I'm not sure whether these people are the right people. I feel that the *best* and most appropriate path is to go to grassroots. From the grassroots you can create institutions that will work because they will feed into the bigger picture. My big problem is that transformation is not from grassroots level. Instead it is top down. A lot of mistakes wouldn't have been made if it had gone through the grassroots process.

Unfortunately the process of policy making has been wrong. But once policy has been dictated from the national level, no matter how bad that policy is, that's policy. Principals *must* institute policy without contradicting it because that's the only way we can ensure some degree of parity and equality. This is important because lots of principals have been going contrary to policy and they are still perpetuating the inequalities of the past. While the principal is a very important person, he must be able to implement educational policies. That is one of the reasons that he is actually put there. I don't think that he is in the position to say

whether policy is right or wrong. I have very firm views but even *I* can't say that the government is wrong because that is the process and I have to follow it to the letter without question. But after implementation, principals have to observe the results of that policy, collect and feed into a data system that must be able to take in all this and then churn it and re-churn it. That's the process of evolution. But that does not always happen. While there has been some degree of consultation we don't know where it goes eventually. That's a big problem. When I get all this information, I don't know *where* to feed it. Who is going to listen? Is there a kind of information centre where all this material can go in and inform government when making policy? I'm not too sure.

Transformation challenges: I think we have done a remarkable job regarding transformation

The state has the right intention. I am very happy about that but I'm not sure whether they went about it the right way. I am *so keen* on seeing quick transformation but I realise that it is not going to happen overnight. It has to be a gradual process and I think that's the point we have missed just to appease our electorate. Now the expectations are there with people *demanding* for things. It's got to be a gradual process because we've also built up a lot of expertise. Unfortunately while this expertise is mainly in the more affluent communities we can't just throw that expertise away. We must forget about the colour of that person and look at the expertise. Expertise is a particular skill that goes beyond racial barriers. When it comes to skill development there is no such thing as race. You should take the best skilled personnel that you have if they are prepared to come on board and use those skills to build others. Right now too many artificial changes are taking place. We are chasing our skills away. They are our big investment. They worked for the apartheid state, now they must work for a *post* apartheid society.

Leadership challenges: The main leadership challenge is discipline

The main leadership challenge is discipline. I found a whole lot of indiscipline when I walked into the school on my first day. I was *shocked* to see the *number* of children out of the classroom. They didn't seem to find the classroom situation meaningful. You need to get them to realise their sense of responsibility. You've got to do a lot of cajoling and a lot of motivation. But you also have to ask that when you get them in a classroom, are they going to get their monies worth? So the educators also had to be trained in the sense that they must be able to meet the challenges of a new type⁶ of children who are not so endowed with privileges. For most of them, learning was a far fetched thing. You've got to look at the different ability levels of the children and pitch your lessons on that basis. I don't know if we've succeeded. Children are in the classrooms but I don't know whether they are staying there because of the educators' discipline or because of the creative nature of what the educator is doing. Many of our educators of the old era find it difficult to see this new kind of children. So how we get our educators to look at the new scenario and equip with from a teaching point of view to cope with that new scenario is the new leadership challenge.

At the present moment pupil discipline seems to take up most of my time. I am trying to create responsible students who would *not* need to be told to go in the classroom. The teachers must also feel that it's their responsibility to get in and do the work. I have a positive

⁶ Children of other races or children from disadvantaged education backgrounds

frame of mind, knowing that I can't solve all the problems. But I can get them motivated to get there, be responsible, be punctual, deliver the goods, meet deadlines, etc. Another problem here is that a lot of the management people have been lost in recent times. My theme for this term is to uplift management because they were not performing. I need them to say that they leaders of their teams. My job is to create good managers, so that they can run their departments effectively. Right *now*, I'm coercing them, persuading them and getting them to function. That's the goal - to get *all* my kids to know why they are in the classroom, to get the educators to know their responsibilities and to get *managers* who are able to fulfil their roles as managers.

Leadership: The practice

Desirable education system: South Africa is in a dilemma

In a first world country like the United States of America the education system will evolve in a straight line. Technology, wealth and a whole lot of other resources play a part. Accessibility of information becomes easier then obviously the society becomes bigger and better and education will proceed alongside it. But I must admit that even the United States of America and Britain are still fighting to create an ideal education system.

South Africa is in a dilemma. It is in a state of transition unlike any other country because a minority ruled for such a *long* period of time and created such tremendous imbalances in *every* sphere including education. We have a serious problem because we can't follow the straight line route. On one hand, we got to transform society and at the same time we also have to keep abreast technologically with the rest of the world. The introduction of the OBE system is really that. It's a progression of the society but unfortunately that cannot work in South Africa right *now* because of the *tremendous* void caused by apartheid. The big problem in education right now is trying to fill the void and trying to create new systems at the same time. This is a very, very volatile combination. Just levelling the playing fields alone for every aspect of social life is a problem in itself and now because we have created a very *ambitious* education system, it does not gel. But even in first world countries where everything is equal in terms of resources and advanced technologies OBE has failed.

Looking ahead, maybe OBE *is* the right system because it's a skill based system but for that to really work everything has to be equal. I say let's get back to the basics in education. The basics *have* to be introduced and kept in place. I would like for us to go back to our schools and look at all the inequalities in terms of structure, physical layout, numbers of pupils and number of educators. We need to look at *all* these things and level them first. We also need to give ourselves a trial period and develop a ten year plan. If that is done then we have created a good, solid platform without our children suffering. After that we can take it to another tier.

I think we are a *little* bit impatient at school. My grade eight educators have been absolutely devastated by the quality of learners that they are getting. They say that to a large extent it is linked to OBE. I've got a programme going where I linked with other grade seven teachers in the area to form a support group. But your traditional approach has also *got* to be side by side and *everybody* needs to recognize that, especially our higher authorities.

The big problem in education is that *too much* of it is a top down approach. Very rarely have I seen a kind of indaba⁷ that is held with the level one educators. They are in the *best* position because they are on the ground. They can tell you what the problems exist on a daily basis and with their input we can design systems. Every system that has been designed from the top has failed simply because the guys at the top *think* they know it all. But you cannot know it unless you are on the ground. Teacher representatives should be elected by the teaching population for an indaba. They must come from *various* areas and their inputs must be taken. *That* should be the raw material from which the future education system is designed. I think that *everything* has been too rushed. A lot of people have been cashing in on the gravy train, making a lot of money, getting positions of power and enjoying that. But are they really concerned about what's happening at the bottom?

An ideal school should have a very good balance in curricula and extra curricular activities. At the moment there is a *lot* of stress on curricular activities only. The *number one* priority is to drop your class size to a more manageable number of about twenty five to thirty. Secondly discipline is a *major*, major problem and no one seems to appreciate it. We'd like to see a *major* thrust to get a kind of support system that we can get our discipline improved. Thirdly, there must be a fair spread of resources so that all schools have similar technologies.

The role function of a principal should change. At present I find myself going outside looking whether children are in the classrooms. This is not the real function of the principal. He is the PRO⁸ of the school and he sells the school to the community. He is the CEO⁹. A principal should be spending his time building bridges with the community and linking with the business and sporting communities. But right now the principal doesn't play the role of a CEO because he is so involved in the *mundane* activities of the school that he cannot take the school to a higher level simply because he does not have the time. School administration in terms of examinations and discipline should be outside the ambit of the principal's role.

Leadership and management: There's no such thing as delegating duty without delegating duty to yourself as well

A leader is a role model. Whatever you tell your team, you've got to be a part of that team. There's no such thing as delegating duty without delegating duty to yourself as well. The staff needs to know that you are working *with* them. Today a principal is not a CEO in the sense that he can sit in his office and start delegating. That's not on. We've got to be hands on; we've got to know our students, our physical environment, the classrooms and the kinds of problems in the classroom created by the educator. So you've got to live with them. A leader is a person who can say share in their problems, and be a part of the programme. So you are not on top pushing down on their throats, but you integrate with them and face the problems together. Now that kind of management is absolutely important. While I feel part of the team here, I expect the other people to come on board too. I'm still very *far* from that. Those are my idealistic things. If I can get *all* these things on board, I'll be the happiest person alive, really.

Decision making: Democracy added with responsibility is the best system

⁷ Local term to denote a meeting

⁸ Public Relations Officer

⁹ Chief Executive Officer

Democracy added with responsibility is the *best* system. A progressive and flexible principal will not find the democratic and consultative process a problem at all. I have no problem with negotiation and consultation. In fact I believe that things should derive from the bottom. This is the best way of knowing what's happening in the classroom. So whatever they have to say I will listen and it's a very good thing. You have to weigh the situation and then your management team will weigh *that* and it's a continuous process. In the apartheid era, bureaucracy was at its peak. Principals were dictatorial and that didn't empower educators. Therefore when it collapsed, *everybody* was at the principals' throats. Democracy is responsibility. It is a very *disciplined* effort. Democracy added with responsibility is the *best* system.

If I had to make a decision on my own, it will be guided by my own vision. But in good faith, I need to know what is really happening in the classroom to make that decision. So my educators actually fill me in and they become a very important part of the decision making process. But when you have three or four differing viewpoints, you have to make the decision that you want. That will not always happen and it can lead to a lot of conflict.

If I had to describe my leadership style, the *cliché* is "democratic". When I came to this school, I knew about the circumstances of the school. I was told that one of the problems was that the last principal was very bureaucratic in his approach. He got no co-operation. There was *definitely* a breakdown in communication. So when I came, I obviously realised what the staff were looking for. They were looking for direction, leadership and they also wanted to be empowered and so that was my intention. But it's a difficult situation. I have lots of ideas about how a school should run. I have lots of idealistic views really because I'm always an adventurer. But I realised that first of all I had to repair the damage. The damage was a lack of respect for the senior management by the staff. I had to build that. I found that discipline of the school had also suffered tremendously. Because there was no respect for the principal it filtered down to the children. The school was in turmoil. Lack of respect, distrust and apathy was the order of the day. So I had to create respect, open channels of communication, become more transparent and begin to consult widely. I am still not the principal that I wanted to be because I am still doing a lot of damage control. I like to run a completely open, transparent system where people can come in and find out about things. They now have access to documents because I found that my management structure was pathetic in the sense that they did not even know what their job function was. They still saw the position of HOD as being only a privileged one, not realising that it had a management component as well. About twenty percent of these issues have been resolved but I have a *long* way to go. This is actually a mammoth task.

I have taken unpopular decisions quite a few times. The reason was the lack of objectivity on the part of the educators. Sometimes it was because the message relayed to them was distorted. When I told the staff about this, they told me not to worry too much about it. In the staffroom they just like to blow hot air and vent their frustration and that's all it is. But I also told them that if they see something genuinely wrong then they should discuss it in a *constructive* manner.

The one decision that I made on my own was when I took a chance. I wanted a sports programme in the lunch break but the break was only twenty minutes long. Some attempts had been made to have sports but it caused problems like the children not returning to class. So I tried having a Wednesday sports programme by making the break into *thirty* minutes with school closing ten minutes later. That's a decision I took on my own. I didn't ask

anybody. I met my management and told them and then I went down to the staff and told them too. There was no comeback on that, so we operated it.

I know there are many other decisions that are problematic. One example is teacher allocation. There's always the perception that when you do allocations¹⁰ you favour somebody. When I heard about rumours regarding allocations, I decided to go straight to the staff and asked if anyone could tell me where the favouritism is. We analysed the allocations in a fair and just manner. Not everybody accepted it but I explained to them how we got it and that it was not a question of favouritism. It is normal human nature that educators are also conscious of their ego. They get hurt very quickly, so it means consulting them on a regular basis and having an open discussion about it. While I talk very freely and objectively with *every* educator the perception still remains that there is favouritism. But I made it very, very clear that everybody is treated absolutely equally. No person's word will become policy in my office. It will be *my* feeling that will influence me.

Grade ten course selection: Ninety percent of the children are doing what they're really wanted

Firstly we've got to know what we can offer in terms of the expertise that we have available. This determines the subjects that we can offer. In the first instance, we allow the children to make three choices¹¹. By and large we try and give them their first choice. So ninety percent of the children are doing what they're really wanted. But because of other factors like the class numbers not being economical, it's not always possible to give them their first choice. We don't tell them not to do mathematics or physical science. But we advise them based on their performance level and aptitude.

Student leaders: There's a lot of more respect for the RCL than the prefects

We have a RCL¹² and a prefect system. This is an area that I am very grey about. I'm not satisfied with the way it is. The RCL is duly elected but somehow I don't see them functioning according to the constitution that they have. They are not exercising the power that they have. They are not meeting as much as they should be. Somebody needs to work with the Rill and I think that we can bring the RCL on board. The prefects are functional for one month or so and then they are totally absent. So that's an area that we need to look at as well. There's a lot of more respect for the RCL than the prefects because the prefects are seen as part of the school hierarchy.

Learner admissions: Public schools must become accessible to all

The Government's admission policy to schools is not being followed to the letter. It's ridiculous that one public school *can* charge school fund of five hundred rands and another can go up to six thousand rands. Why is the Government allowing that? It means that Government is actually perpetuating disparity. Public schools must become accessible to all. What you also find is that there are some schools where the racial composition is ninety five percent Indian and five percent Blacks while in other schools in the same area the racial composition is ninety five percent Black. There's something wrong there. It means that somebody is not following policy to the letter.

¹⁰ The academic workload of educators (the number of teaching classes and subjects to be taught per educator)

¹¹ Choices relating to the subject sets offered at the school

¹² Representative Council of Learners. They are democratically elected by the learners

There are two reasons why our learner population has become mainly African. We had a fairly large middle class Indian population initially but a large number of seriously disadvantaged blacks started moving into the surrounding areas. As they entered this school, it caused major cultural differences between the disadvantaged African learners and the middle class Indian population. A lot of Indian learners then flocked to Orbital Secondary school which is close by and has mainly Indian learners. It could have even been for religious reasons. *Lots* of our Muslim students went to Orbital secondary because there is a mosque next door. I have absolutely no problem with *any* number of black pupils, or disadvantaged people coming in, but from an educational point of view, you've got to understand that a teacher is a human being. There's only a certain extent to which he can solve issues. If he has six classes of disadvantaged pupils, he just cannot cope. Therefore I feel that schools should have a cross section of different types of learners to give the educator diverse experiences. The racist thing is also there. More importantly, we have body limitations. Our educators get absolutely tired. They can't cope anymore, they get stressed and traumatized. They get so tired putting in *so* much effort and seeing that it is not connecting. Everybody needs to share in the type of problems we have. We need *bigger* support from the Department in terms of material and human resources. Guidance counsellors are an absolute must in our schools. We need special attention

A public school is basically a state school and therefore in every respect the school should be guided by the policies created by the province, because it takes all the provincial boundaries into consideration. To allow *individual* school to change this admission policy is to perpetuate apartheid. If you're a private school, it's fine. But if you are a public school, you are funded by the public and the state is paying for *so* many things in the school, then these schools should follow provincial admission policy. This does not happen and it is a big problem. The government must make a point of enforcing it in every school to create parity. We have gone through transformation with a tremendous amount of suffering in some schools while other schools have suffered nothing. The richer communities are still able to manipulate the system and get even better. Now they are charging even *more* for school fees and that vicious cycle continues.

From last year we are following a policy where we admit learners *strictly* from grade eight and not the other grades. Very rarely will we take in a learner in grade eleven or twelve unless there are special circumstances that demand it. That's very important for us, because we can't follow a proper education line if we take them at any level. But by and large a school should serve the *community*. We try to serve the immediate, local community first. Once we have further places available then we open it up to everybody.

The process of admissions at this school is common to most other schools in the sense that you need to cater for your immediate environment. We do advertise in the local newspaper and in our pamphlets. Proximity is what we look for but on the other hand we are mindful of our PPN¹³ and our staff requirements. So if you are just going to rely on the local community, you're not going to have sufficient numbers of learners to keep all of your teachers. So you worry about that. Therefore we also let people from the outside in but not indiscriminately like in the past. Now they have to go through an interview process and we take the best. We do this because we don't want to short change ourselves and it is something that every school

¹³ Post-Provisioning norm. This refers to the number of State paid educators allocated to a school and it is dependent on the number of learners at the school

is doing. Otherwise you will become a dumping ground for everybody. Unfortunately now it has become a rat race where some schools are hawking and picking the best.

We are thinking of taking in learners at grade ten next year because we've only got *three* grade nines this year. By the time they get to matric, we will have a serious problem because we have too few learners. But the new learners who we are thinking of taking in will have to go through a *strict* process of interviews. I do feel that that is not too moral but that is to protect us from what is happening everywhere.

Pass rates: The pass rate can be used more creatively

There's a *huge* hue and cry at the end of the year when matric results are released. To a *large* extent schools are evaluated by the kind of matric¹⁴ results they are producing and there's *so much* of media coverage given to that. That is a good yardstick in the sense that the quality of your matrics will give you an idea what's going on. So it's *not* a bad thing, provided you don't make odious comparisons. The pass rate can be used more creatively. The government has done that in recent times. They have implemented a lot of intervention programmes¹⁵. It is a positive thing when intervention means that you're going right to the problem and trying to solve it. Going there they have realised some of the problems in schools like unqualified educators, very poor facilities, lack of experience of administrative personnel, lack of infrastructure and no linkages with the community. The intervention programmes should not only be used to improve the quality of the matric results because this does not necessarily mean that you have solved all the other problems. Intervention programmes should not be for artificial improvements by using drill techniques as an example. The evaluation programme should also look at how many cricketers, soccer and rugby players, musicians and artists we are producing because every community has got them. I don't think the education system has got to that yet. We are at the very, *very* initial stages.

If you want to improve, your *heart* must be in it. You must be a believer. You must want the society to transform. We need *patriotic*, powerful South Africans who *really* feel for the community at large. We need magnanimous people. We need to find out who they are and use them as our leading lights. You cannot just take a *CV* and look at how impressive it is and select people on that basis. You must look at their track record in terms of working with the community and working with education. Then you will get people with heart and feeling.

Previously the pupils from the disadvantaged communities found it difficult to cope. Many of them were taken in at grade ten, eleven and even twelve because we didn't discriminate¹⁶. These learners would have failed anywhere. Now we take pupils from the disadvantaged communities right from grade seven so that they can cope when they reach grade twelve. They would have gone through a process and benefited from the expertise of our educators. Our educators are very dedicated and are very *result* conscious. But we mustn't make too much of matric results. Sometimes you may just have a bad crop and everything goes haywire.

The grading system at grade twelve has improved. There's more streamlining of higher grade and standard grade requirements and this has avoided the lemming-like rush for learners to do

¹⁴ Grade twelve

¹⁵ State sponsored evaluation and support for under-achieving schools

¹⁶ Admissions are typically only at grade 8 level

all subjects on the higher grade. We have also allowed for subjects like Business Economics that are more suitable to the not very academically orientated learners. We are even offering isiZulu as a seventh subject. This has played an *important* role in learners doing well because many would have failed Afrikaans and need isiZulu to pass.

The learners were so ill disciplined and this contributed to the teachers' morale being at the *lowest* ebb. Having to declare teachers in excess because of the increase in the teacher pupil ratio was another major contributing factor to this. We lost a lot of educators and because of the low morale; their contributions to the school had fallen to a certain extent. But now things have settled and the morale has improved considerably.

My advice to schools that are trying to improve their matric pass rates is as follows. You need intense revision programmes, there's no doubt about it. Educators need that support to deliver in the classroom.

I have also found that many schools unfortunately do not have qualified educators. For those schools we need to arrange term by term revision programmes where you take the *best* educators of schools and put them together in these revision programmes for the benefit of all the learners. These experienced educators would have marked matric papers and will be able to share that exposure with others so that the children will benefit. I think that's a very short term result but eventually we should get quality educators in all schools. Things like newspaper supplements for matrics don't work because kids just don't read that stuff. They have an aversion for reading. The best motivator is the interaction with a nice, classy educator who can show the beauty of the subject and how easy it is. Simply what needs to be done is exposure to quality educators.

We do condone learners in grade eleven if they meet the requirements. We follow the basic rules laid down by the Department but in some cases they are not condoned on the basis of their behaviour.

At one stage, we were exemption crazy and that is wrong in the sense that you don't cater for all ability levels. I don't understand this thing about being exemption crazy. A lot of children will take courses *far* above their ability levels because of this desire to show that they have an exemption. But they actually fail the exams and this is *far* more disastrous. Now there are a large number of learners writing subjects on the standard grade. They are functioning within their ability levels and they will be okay.

2.1. Mr. R. Naidoo: Personality is the Key

Introduction

He is the principal of Boss Secondary school. This school is an ex-HOD school with nine hundred and eighty one learners and thirty two teachers. (A detailed description of the school statistics can be found in the appendix). Mr Naidoo is a forty five year old, Indian man. He started his teaching career at a primary school twenty three years ago. He has been at this school for five years. His story (in his own words) follows next.

Leadership: The leader

Becoming a teacher: I always knew that I will become a teacher

I come from a very large family. There are ten of us; six sisters and four brothers. From a very early age I wanted to become a teacher. I *loved* reading. This love that I have to acquire knowledge is because I believe that knowledge can improve a person. This actually made me decide to go into a career that involved teaching and working with children. There were also lots of role models from my family and my schooling. The dedicated teachers that I had in my early days of school actually motivated me to become a teacher. When I completed my matric in 1976 I wanted to become a history teacher and a physical education teacher. I loved history because of my love for reading. I read *thousands* of books in my youth. And I was also interested in sport. So I opted to choose both physical education and history as my special subjects in college¹⁷.

My first appointment was in 1980 to a primary school. After four years my subject advisor¹⁸ actually wanted me to teach in a high school. There was a high school being built in my home town and they needed a high school teacher. So he took me there. After having taught physical education for about ten years I had a setback with my health and became classroom bound. In 1997 I was promoted to a primary school as principal. I spent exactly one year there and I was promoted to deputy principal of this high school. But when I came here, the principal was seconded to the Department. So I acted as principal from the very first week that I came here. The appointed principal then took up a post elsewhere and at the end of 1999 I was promoted as principal of this school.

Personal attributes: The trust element is very, very important

I believe that one must be honest with one's staff. If there is a problem, you must address that problem immediately. There is only right and there is wrong. If you feel that certain things are wrong, you need to address the issue. I believe that I am not afraid to confront a challenge. I'm hardworking, I'm committed, I'm *very* dedicated to my job, to my pupils and to the community. I believe that teachers must *feel* that they can confide in you, that you are somebody that they can trust. Once you get the trust of your teachers then you will not have a problem administering the school. The trust element is very, *very* important. The principal also has to manage conflict in school. We are working with thirty to forty different personalities who are bound to have different opinions, so we must be able to accept different

¹⁷ Educator Training institution

¹⁸ The Department's academic accounting officer responsible for co-ordinating the instruction of specific subjects taught in schools

individuals and different ideas. We must be able to change *our* attitude as well if there is a need to do so. Sometimes we feel that we are *principals* and what we *say* goes but I don't think it works like that. I think that we must be able to listen to people, management members, educators, pupils as well and we must also be able to initiate change when it is necessary.

The challenges that we are confronted with especially in my school keeps me passionate. My school is situated in a *very* poor area, the children come from broken homes, lots of them from informal settlements and the majority of them need a little bit extra attention. And it's something I can actually give to them. I haven't thought of leaving the profession.

Personal vision: Our children must have an all round development

My vision for my school is for me to actually see that our children have an all round development because what we tend to do is to concentrate only on the matric results. I guess the Department has *made* us actually concentrate on the matric results but my vision is to try and get an academic improvement right from grade eight so when they reach grade eleven we know that half of our battle is won and grade twelve will really be revision for the learners. I try and give the children opportunities to showcase their talents because some of them may not be academically inclined but they may have different skills. They may be good dancers or good sportsmen so that is part of my vision too. This will also make a difference within the community itself because you're changing the behaviour of the children of that community. I would also like to assist the community with classes for adults and things like that.

Leadership: The context

Education policy: I don't have a problem with new systems but a lot of organisation is needed

There should be more involvement at grassroots level when government determines national educational policies. When OBE was first introduced, decisions were taken without consultation especially with the people on the ground - the level one educators. The Department could have also got the unions to support them. And *meetings* between the union and Department should have taken place. They should have actually devoted a lot of time looking at the pros and cons of the new system, before just taking a decision to implement it because apparently it was successful in other countries. With a system like OBE, new books have to be printed. This involves a lot of money and the Department at that stage did not have sufficient money to get this off the ground, so a lot of initial planning should have taken place. I don't have a problem with new systems. New systems will always come and old systems will die off but a lot of organisation is involved.

When a policy is gazetted¹⁹, we are instructed to implement the system, so we cannot say that we do not want to implement the system, but we can also air our views and express our dissatisfaction at not being consulted and just being forced to implement a system at principals' forum²⁰ meetings. Consultation is very important. But it's obvious that if a principal does not abide by national policy, then he will be charged for misconduct.

¹⁹ When policies are published in Gazettes (official State legislative documents), such policies have been enacted into law

²⁰ Non-statutory body of groups of principals, based on geographical positioning

It would be a problem if a principal is *allowed* to make decisions that are different from national policy in order to run the school. We have thousands of principals in South Africa and if there are no guidelines to follow, then schools are going to be in a chaotic state. There are principals that are efficient and that may have ideas that may benefit a school but on the other hand, if principals are *not* guided we may also have many principals who may want to do things for personal gain.

Transformation challenges: Principals have to be very, very sensitive to the needs of the different cultures in our schools

Principals face a number of challenges because for the first time, our schools are now open to all race groups. We have the mixing of different cultures and one has to be very careful that no racial group feels upstaged or ignored because this *has* led to a lot of problems at schools. So principals have to be *very, very* sensitive to the *needs* of the different cultures in our schools.

In the past, the Department was responsible for providing everything in a school including maintenance and furniture. We just wrote a letter and they brought it in. But now a lot of that responsibility lies with the *principal*. He has to manage the funds that are available at his school. In my school most of the parents are unemployed and we have to be *very* careful in the way we manage our funds, because *nothing* is provided by the department. This is now the responsibility of the principal and the governing body. So the principal's role is a *very, very* difficult one. Unionisation also makes it difficult. Unions get involved with the affairs of the educators. They do have a vital function to perform but sometimes principals have a confrontational relationship with the unions.

During the course of the day, we get a lot of parents coming to school. We send for them if there is a problem with pupils so we can address the issue with the parent. That takes up *most* of my time. Parents come in at different times. I can't blame them because many of them are working parents and they come whenever they can get some time off.

We also encourage parents to come in when we have school functions on Saturdays and for those that cannot come on a Saturday, we ask them to come in during the school day. So I would say handling parents and pupils that have broken school rules takes most of my time.

So there are lots of changes but it hasn't made the life of the principal any easier. But these are things that we have to accept and it is a challenge for us as leaders. We will just have to manage our schools as best as we can.

Leadership over time: The lack of finances have made our jobs more difficult

After schools have been asked to financially support themselves, things have been a bit difficult. Our children come from informal settlements; many of them can't afford the school fees and the criteria that the Department uses for funding is totally, totally wrong. Schools are funded according to the building, fencing, lights²¹ and roads that lead to the school but the most important criterion is supposed to be the income of the parents. That is not taken into account, so the little money that they use to fund our school, is not sufficient, and that makes it very difficult for me. A *lot* has to be done by the principal and it *is* a little difficult. But we are used to this, it has been happening for the last few years. I don't know what the future

²¹ Electrical connectivity

holds for us, we've heard news that forty percent of the pupils are now going to be funded by the state, so hopefully things will get a little easier for us in the future.

Leadership: The practice

Desirable education system: We should follow a model that places a lot of emphasis on the all round development of the child

I would make a lot of changes to the present education system. Personally I feel that our school hours are a bit short. School hours should be extended by another two hours so that we do not only concentrate on the *academic* part of life. I personally feel that we should follow the model of countries like China or Japan where they also place a lot of emphasis on the actual all round development of the child. They are not only concentrating on the three R's²², but they're also concentrating on *sport*, on physical wellbeing, health and state of mind. This will keep our children from activities that are undesirable. Last week for example, when I was leaving school I saw a number of our matric pupils, girls as well *sitting* on the pavement doing absolutely *nothing*. These pupils could actually be doing some constructive work like revising for their June exams that's starting in a week's time instead of doing nothing. We can't run away from the fact that many parents, especially mothers are now working and children are left unattended at home. This problem can be sorted out if pupils are kept maybe up to four pm in a structured environment like a school. Even if they don't do any structured learning, they could be spending some time in the library doing research, or they could be engaged in sport or just maybe just read which ninety percent of our children don't do. I would also ensure that our educators work a longer day because they have sufficient holidays so even if they have to work until four pm I think it will be beneficial to the children.

What makes me unhappy to a certain extent is the commitment from the newer educators. They don't seem to have the commitment that educators used to have when *we* started teaching over twenty years ago. We have to really try and motivate the new educators to try and give off extra time maybe on weekends or holidays to help our children. The morale of the teachers is not as high as it used to be. I don't know whether it's because of the salaries or the large numbers of learners that they have in the classes.

Principal's role: To benefit society at large

The principal will have to motivate his teachers. He will also have to spend longer hours at work. He must be able to make the sacrifice as well as the teachers. We have to have short term, medium term and long term goals. We need to know exactly what we want to achieve. By getting our children to work long hours, the idea is to make them more productive. When they come out of school, they must be able to work long hours as well. Obviously if they work long hours, they will benefit financially as well and hopefully we will have a society that will be more productive in the long run. To benefit society at large, it will mean sacrifice on behalf of the teachers as well. But if I'm able to motivate the teachers and can give them reasons *why* I feel that this will benefit everyone then I will be able to win them over.

Role model principal: Your personality is the key

²² Reading, writing and arithmetic

In my family there are a number of school principals. A good example is my father-in-law. Not because he is my father-in-law but because I have been acquainted with him for the last twenty five years and he is very respected in the educational field. I've had a *number* of informal discussions with him over the years and there are lots of factors that make a good principal. But the most important factor that I would actually place a lot of emphasis on is that one must win the *trust* of the teachers. They must be able to trust you. If they can trust you and if they know that you are a fair person, then half the battle is won.

There are many aspects of one's personality that can make staff give more than one hundred percent. My father-in-law used to note down the birthday of *every* member of his staff and in the morning he used to call them and present them with a birthday card. That may be a small thing but it meant *so* much to the people that worked under him. Bringing in humour in the workplace is also important. I know that whenever my father-in-law used to have a staff meeting he used to bring in some humorous incident so that the meeting was not boring. One must be able to take *decisions* that may not go down very well with the staff. But a *leader* has to take these decisions at times. I've found my father-in-law to be able to take decisions and stand by his decisions. One is actually held in high esteem when one has that courage to stand by one's decision. I've found my father-in-law to be a *very*, very strong man. A strong leader, a lovely person with a *well-rounded* personality who was able to win the love and respect of the staff.

Besides leadership, obviously your personality is very, *very* important. A principal who is accommodating, who is prepared to learn, who reads a lot, who is *au fair* with the way education is actually carried out in schools, who shows interest and *love* to learn and to improve is a principals who is able to give back to educators and to children *far* more than somebody who just comes in and has no love for the job but is merely there because of the status and financial rewards. I admire a principal who is able to interact with his staff, so his personality comes in. A good leader should have a personality where he can actually empathise with his staff. He must show the staff that he can work with them.

You need to set an example to the teachers. You can't come late to school. As a leader, one must be prepared to make *sacrifices*. And when our educators are making sacrifices like coming during the holidays to work, we need to reward them. Reward is very important. Principals should not harbour any malice, we're all human beings and we all have our weaknesses. If a teacher has done something wrong, call the teacher to the office, tell the teacher very honestly, very sincerely how you feel and try and win the teacher over and let the teacher see the error that he or she has made, in a very *nice* manner, not as a bully. We are now here to actually build educators. We are supposed to assess the weaknesses of educators but we are not to tell them that they are weak teachers. As a principal one should *know* one's educators after a while and you work with them in a nice manner, try to assist and empower them so that they can improve. This is where the personality of the principal comes in. Personality and leadership are *very*, very important qualities, but they work hand in hand. You can't separate them or divorce them because one can only be an effective and efficient principal if one can also bring introspection. We need to look at ourselves. I do that from time to time. I think of my actions and where I might have gone wrong. I wonder what I can do to *please* my teachers so that they know that I appreciate what they are doing. If we are prepared to reprimand ourselves when we have done something wrong and be big enough to call people in and apologise to them if we have hurt their feelings, then we are on the right lines.

I feel that we all have our own leadership style. Some people may feel that I'm a little bit too casual or maybe that I give my teachers too much of allowances. I'm not finicky if they come a few minutes late and things like that. But I always tell people "listen this is how I am, that's my personality". And I tell people "don't carry things here". If I have a problem with one of my teachers, I do not feel afraid to call that person in and ask them "What is going on? What is worrying you? Are you not happy about something I have said? Please let's talk about it". That is why I can walk in here happily. I actually look forward to coming to school. This is my sixth year at this school and I haven't stayed away one day in the six years. My teachers are happy, they greet each other. If they have a difference with me, teachers must feel free to say whatever in the staffroom. They are all level one teachers there and principals must be able to accept this kind of gossip too. These things you mustn't take personally.

Personality is very, *very* important. A principal may be weak in other areas but if you can empathise with teachers, if you can win them over, if you can make them feel "Aah – this man here, he is a straight man, I can trust him". Then half your battle is won. You don't have to do any work.

Decision making: Democracy works up to a certain extent

Democracy works up to a certain extent but the majority of teachers would like things to be as easy as possible. So it's obvious that if you look at issues where we need a democratic decision to take place, many educators will opt for the easy way out. For example, if we ask them if there is a need to send a report card at the end of the term, many teachers will say *no* because its *more* work for them. So there are certain decisions that a principal will have to make on his own. It may not be democratic but you got to look at the best interest of your children and your school. To a large extent transparency is very important. Important decisions need to be discussed at management first. If there's a formal decision to be taken I meet with management first, we discuss it but no final decision is taken there. We opt to take it to staff and put it together as one. We try to get consensus from the staff. *But* there will be times when a principal will have to take decisions on his own. Like the decision I took to send a report card to parents for *every* term. We owe it to the parents. Whenever I take a decision, I have the South African Schools Act and the Constitution of the country at the back of my mind I will *not* do something that is contrary to that. I also consider the governing body. For example, I can't just decide that I am going to close school today without informing the parents. Parents need to be make arrangements for the child's transport or somebody to receive them at home, and for the keys to be available. So I give it a lot of thought before I take important decisions.

Leadership style: I must be able to win them over

I believe that I need to win the confidence of my team, my educators as well as management members and the only way that I can achieve that is by them believing that I am somebody that they can trust. Honesty is a very, *very* important aspect of a leader. I believe that as a leader I must be able to motivate my learners, my teachers, my management members and my level one educators. I also need to work hard, be punctual, be at work daily and I must be able to win them over, you know, that's basically it. As a leader I have to look at ways in which I can get my teachers to work at the optimum.

There is a difference between a manager and a leader. Leadership involves more the personality of the person who is heading the school. Teachers look upon the leader as

somebody that they would admire for certain qualities. For example, a person who takes important decisions, who is prepared to make sacrifices for whatever he believes in, who can get people to follow him or her simply because of the qualities one has. That is a *leader*. But a *manager* is somebody who has the authority to maybe impose his will on others, who has a school to manage which he does with the assistance of others but it's not so much his leadership qualities that are involved, it's the fact that as a principal he has a certain amount of authority which he *wields*. A leader can motivate his teachers to actually give more than is expected of them but when you are working under a manager you most probably would want to do your job and leave.

Learner admissions: I am a bit disappointed that school fees are being used to discriminate against children

The South African Schools Act is very clear about admissions. We cannot turn children away from school. *I am* a bit disappointed because there are many privileged schools such as the ex model C schools that make it impossible for the poorer children to enter their schools because of the huge amount of fees that they charge. That is one way of discriminating against children. And no matter how we look at it, I feel that the South African Schools Act should have most probably prescribed that they have a ceiling for school fees especially for government schools. That will make it a little bit more realistic for parents to afford that money and get a place for their child in a school of their choice. But when schools charge ten or twelve thousand rands a year, it's obvious that they only cater for the wealthy parent. And generally the wealthy parent is able to provide their children with a lot of material, educational toys, take them on trips and so on. Generally these children are a little brighter than the children that come from a poorer environment.

The schools act stipulates that no child, and *I totally* agree with that, should be turned away from school simply because a parent cannot pay the school fees, but at the same time, the Department should use the plight of the parents as the main criteria for funding schools

Most of our admissions come from our surrounding environment which is very poor. They come in at all grades. We have taken in pupils in grade eleven provided that they fit in with what we have to offer them but we don't take pupils in grade twelve. I won't say that there's a large demand for admissions but we have had to turn away pupils because of the shortage of furniture.

Pass rate: It is unfair to concentrate on the pass rate only

I think that *too much* of emphasis is actually placed on how many percent pass a school achieves. The Department is aware that many principals tend to have a high failure rate in grade eleven in order to get good results in grade twelve. These principals keep the children back. They also discourage children from doing subjects on the higher grade so they have a higher pass rate on the standard grade level. The number of children passing at the end of the year is important but when too much of emphasis is placed on that, and then we tend to *lose* sight of the main objectives of having children at school. That is to develop the children all round, to make them into good citizens with the right tools, to get into professions and things like that. It is unfair to only concentrate on the pass rate because *we* know that there *many* schools that are privileged. They can afford to give their grade twelve learners so many other things like extra tuition, specialist educators coming during the holidays and things like that. Those schools *will* have a hundred percent pass rates. But if you look at the schools that are in the informal settlements and in very poor areas, the only thing they can afford is to

motivate the teachers to give extra tuition in the holidays, on Saturdays or after school so that more pupils can pass at the end of the year.

When I came here in 1998 the matric pass rate was twenty eight percent. Unfortunately there was not much I could do, because a few weeks after I had come in the pupils had written their trial exams and they didn't come back to school. In that year the pass rate was thirty one percent. But I was not happy with that pass rate and being new, teachers were not prepared to accept blame for the poor pass rate as well. I asked my educators "I have a band of very highly qualified teachers in this school, we have a lovely school, classrooms with most of the facilities then how can we be producing results of this standard?" So the answer was that our children come from very poor backgrounds and the parents don't show enough interest. Well, I made it *very clear* with my teachers that I don't accept that excuse. From where I had come, I saw schools without classrooms, children being taught outside, children sitting on the floor with no water and no lights. Water had to be fetched from a stream which was maybe a few kilometres away. There were no toilets and teachers and children had to go into the bush. So I knew where I was coming from. I told them that this is totally unacceptable and I *won't* have it. So I tried to bring in some changes and we had classes after school and during holidays. Our pass rate improved to forty three percent. But I was not happy with that because I knew that with a little bit more sacrifice on the part of the teachers and with more parental involvement, our pass rate can definitely improve. But as it was only my first year here, I couldn't ask too much of the teachers as well. I was still acting principal at the time and I had to do a lot of homework myself, because I was coming to a high school after a number of years at a primary school. There was a lot of work and introspection that I had to *do*. I realised that I had to win over my teachers. I had to try and get through to them and explain to them how much it means to *me*; and how much it will mean to *all* of us if we can get involved with our children. Because we know that they come from informal settlements and that many of the parents are uneducated, we have to do the work of a parent and the work of the teacher as well. During the course of my first year I was thinking of other ways of improving our results. Obviously we looked at whether children are taking grades that they can perform well in, but you cannot force children to change their grades because the parent decides that. I decided on getting teachers involved in holidays, having more frequent parent meetings and working with the children after school. I placed a lot of emphasis on these things. The extra programmes were structured. The teachers had to participate at it was within school time. We followed up on the pupil's progress very, *very* closely, even with the absenteeism. Matriculants²³ had to actually come and see me after they were absent and give *me* an answer why they were absent. By putting all this into place we achieved a pass rate of ninety two percent. I had asked about the award for the most improved school but at that time they had only started that award the following year. That's fine. As long as I know that we tried. It's not so much for personal glory as long as my children have benefited. After that year our pass rate has been over eighty percent but I have told my teachers that I am still not happy with that because we can achieve more than that. To a certain extent I still feel under pressure to maintain a high pass rate. It's what I want. It's something that I, as an individual want. It will give me some intrinsic pleasure to see my school high up there. It's something I'm actually putting pressure on myself. If it drops by a few percent that's fine, I can handle it. As long as it does not go below fifty percent, I'm not *too* worried. But it's there, at the back of my mind. I think any principal wants to achieve good results, and as much as we may try to deny it, it's there at the back of our minds.

²³ Grade twelve learners

I don't think it is right for us educators to decide on what subjects a child should do. The South African Schools Act states very clearly that the parent has the right to choose the subjects and we adhere to that ruling. Ultimately if the parents have made their own choice, it's not on our conscience that we forced the child to do that particular subject. Of course, this may be one of the reasons why we won't have a hundred percent pass rate. My result last year in maths was under twenty percent pass but my conscience is clear.

We don't have a lot of condonations in grade eleven. We look at the children's performance at the end of the year and where a child needs a few marks, *we* make the changes before the SEM comes. But where there is a *huge* discrepancy, where a child needs about twenty or thirty marks to pass, then we leave that to the SEM to do.

We also do not discourage children from doing higher grade subjects and writing for exemptions. This year we have at least forty percent of our children writing for exemption. It's not that we are not worried about our pass rate but our educators do not discourage children because even if they do fail on the higher grade they'll pass on the standard grade, so it's not going to affect our pass rate. The pass rate is *very* important but we are not going to insist that children do subjects on the standard grade so that we have a higher pass rate. I told my teachers that it's *totally*, totally wrong. I don't think that is morally right. Children have certain dreams and those dreams may require a certain subject on the higher grade. If they were forced to do a subject on the standard grade they may not end up doing what they wanted to do. Then they hold the school, the principal and the educators responsible for their dreams not materialising.

2.2. Mr P. Ingle: Hard work and Good Teaching Delivers the Curriculum

Introduction

He is the principal of Capell High school. This school is an ex-HOR school with one thousand, one hundred and ninety eight learners and thirty seven teachers. (A detailed description of the school statistics can be found in the appendix). Mr Ingle is a forty seven year old, Indian man who started his teaching career at Capell High School. He has been at this school for over twenty five years. His story (in his own words) follows next.

Leadership: The Leader

Becoming a teacher: I came into teaching by accident

I never really thought of teaching as a career. I came into it quite by accident. When I was at university, I had studied for a B.Sc degree²⁴. At the time I thought I would probably get into some scientific or laboratory related career. But things turned out differently, very differently. I think it was a question of timing. After having completed the degree, my friend suggested that I try teaching. He was a teacher at Capell High and they needed a science teacher urgently. I asked “why do you want me to come and teach at this school?” I had no teaching qualifications or experience. But Capell High was part of the Teacher Training Institute for Coloureds and they prided themselves as having the best teachers. So they were very happy to have a science graduate to fill in. They interviewed me. They needed a teacher because they had introduced the science *course* and they didn’t have a teacher to teach it. Of course, coming out of university with a BSC degree, I had covered the teaching content. So I got the job the next day. My intention was to leave at some stage and pursue further academic studies.

But things started to change for me when I started teaching. After having taught for six months, I was really hooked. I also realized that there was no way that I could finish the syllabus in six months as I had intended, so I stayed. I really enjoyed it, and I stayed because of that. I then did an HDE²⁵ and started to get more involved in the school and especially with the pupils. There was a particularly bright group of children when I started. They were chosen from the best pupils. The interaction with them was very good and I took them up to matric. Each one of them has really excelled and basically it was because they’ve had the physical science and the maths background at school. Looking back on it I have no regrets at all. And when the principal offered me the HOD science post at the time, I applied and I got promoted after about four or five years.

A good school principal: He should firstly be a good school teacher

I think a good school principal should firstly be a good teacher, *very* much so. If your experience is not grounded in the classroom then you can’t relate to the concerns of educators and you can’t relate to problems that may be experienced in the school set up.

Secondly I think he or she should understand that particular community *very*, very well. He should understand the background of the community, socio economic set up, cultural set up,

²⁴ Bachelor of Science undergraduate degree

²⁵ Higher Diploma in Education (post graduate)

religious background of all the learners, and he needs to know people in the community as well. One of the advantages that I have here is that I know many, many people because of my number of years here. I know them because I have taught them or their parents. That gives the principal a bit of an edge. If a principal comes in as an outsider they could end up with problems. The perception may be that he's an outsider and that he doesn't understand *us*. If a person has worked in that community for a long time, the community understands where this person is coming from, what values he holds and that those values are respected in the school as well. Thirdly, arising out of the second one is that, a good principal has to have a vision for that community and a vision for that school. In my case, the vision is growth and upliftment of the community because of the circumstances of this particular community. If you're grounded in that, you realise that these people need education to start with. It's no good talking about matric pass rates which will obviously enhance the status of the school in the press but it's to *get* everyone some sort of stability by education. In this way, our focus is not very much on the high flyer. We feel that those pupils will manage on their own. We have to lift the bottom up. In a sense, we are paying for that because your pupils are no longer in the public eye and you're not drawing to your school anymore the type of pupils that are going to be in the top ten or the top hundred in the country. So the perception is that other schools are better and the better pupils in the community tend to move there. Fourthly, a principal has to develop the standards of the learner. The matric examinations can be used as a yardstick. While this obviously needs some attention but at the same time, you've got to develop excellence. You have to focus on the whole child, but at the moment what we are doing is bringing them up to a certain level and then excellence has to follow from that. Fifthly, another very important aspect of the vision of the principal is to develop staff. But given the circumstances, one of the things that we take as a given in schools is that you are working with professional people and that they deliver according to the demands of the profession regardless of the circumstances they find themselves in. This is not so. The principal should play a role in developing teachers. For example, making teachers aware of how things function in the broader education department. But I wonder to what extent that is really practical in a school set up where there are so many more pressing issues, especially if your educators are not delivering in the classroom.

Early influences: Student political beliefs

One thing that has driven me when it came to community development was my history at university. Not that I was much of a student activist but I really believed that change was necessary. Much was said about the need for change and transformation. As a student those were things that I had very strong opinions on and now is the time to let those strong views translate into some action. It is all well and good saying that we're a free country now but what are we doing to make it work?

Personal attributes: I work very hard

I do a lot of the work and I work very hard. School occupies a major portion of my time both in and out of school. Perhaps I'm over considerate to a fault when it comes to management and educators. But I always place myself in their shoes and ask if it is practical or realistic to have certain expectations of educators and even management, given the conditions under which they are functioning. Their workload in school itself is sufficient to keep them busy for a whole day. Because the management members are teaching for just one or two periods *less* than the educators, it doesn't give them the opportunity or time to do other non- classroom work.

The other quality that I have is flexibility. When you have trust for a person you give them the lee-way. You allow them to work on their own and if they are incorrect or if they stray a bit, you try and bring them back in line without being personal about it. I don't think that I'm very demanding. The educators know that there are certain criteria and certain standards that I expect from the school. As long as they're meeting that, there's really no reason for me to keep checking, probing and being a nuisance. I think that sometimes the job description of a principal calls for you to over-scrutinise the work of your educators. This puts their professionalism under some sort of threat and erodes their professionalism by principals being over zealous.

I wouldn't say that I have consciously tried to instil the ethos at school. I suppose it's in my nature. Whoever I am talking to, I give them the necessary respect. This includes the educators because that person is a colleague. I respect their professional judgment even when other people may consider them to have strayed a bit. The fact that I offer them that professional courtesy, I think helps a lot.

Leaving: I have had some thoughts about moving out of the school environment

Until the point that I became a principal for a few years it never occurred to me to find employment outside of education. But now because of the way education seems to be going, I have had some thoughts about moving out of the school environment into other aspects of the Department like administration or examinations. I perceive that there your time is not cut out to the point where everything including your home life is eroded by the work that we as principals do.

Leadership: The context

Education policy: As important as these policy issues are, we tend to give it secondary importance because the primary issue is the delivery of the curriculum

Government is driven by the need for transformation given the sad history of this country. Their ambitions are probably nobly motivated but in trying to accelerate transformation, they've actually thrown out what I would consider to be founding values in education. I say this because we are seeing the results of seven years of primary school education and we find that the things that we would have taken for granted before like literacy and numeracy are no longer evident in the pupils. While the Governments motivation is probably right, the way in which transformation is effected, is actually impacting negatively on what's happening in the classroom and in the education system in general.

What is also happening is that there isn't proper consultation. Consultation shouldn't be for the sake of consultation; that is we will consult with you to a point and then we will take our own decisions. When implementing changes as drastic as this, it has to be done a little bit at a time. Then you see how it works and not be afraid to go back and say this didn't work, let's try something new, and let's talk to the teachers. I think the basic problem seems to be that those people that develop curriculum somehow are remote from what is happening in the classroom.

As much as the call is for quality education, we are forgetting the background of the majority of the people in this country. We use previously advantaged schools as a yardstick, we use

that as a standard and we apply it across the board to learners whose backgrounds are *entirely* different from your high achievers. Your high achievers would come from stable middle class backgrounds, having double income families, well educated parents with a strong ethos of learning in the home, books, computers and being socio-economically well placed. Those are factors that automatically lead to stability. But you use that as a yardstick and you bring in children from entirely different backgrounds like a townships or rural areas where English is not the first language and you expect those children to perform as well as your previously advantaged child. That is unrealistic. You can't expect the majority to suddenly aspire and *perform* at the same standard.

The Department comes up with a large number of policies that they have obviously been working on for quite some time with the expectation that implementation will take place automatically in schools. What they don't realise is that when schools draw up their own policies in line with Departmental policy, they have to consult widely and it is *very* time consuming. For it to be effective one obviously has to workshop very carefully with parents, educators *as well* as learners. So given that the academic programme itself is very demanding, the expectations on educators are also very high. Because of the bigger numbers in the class and having a high teaching load, there is a lot of pressure on educators. Therefore policy issues become secondary priorities. Already educators and principals are going on curriculum workshops throughout the year. So as important as these policy issues are, we tend to give it secondary importance because the primary issue is the delivery of the curriculum

Once policy has been made, a principal is required to implement it. But one has to look at the policy and look at the practicality of it. Certain policies like related to public exams, we implement them without question. If policies are related to other issues then we implement it in a way that is feasible in our school set up. Perhaps we will implement it fully at a stage when we can make it work fully in our school. They've been cases where we have disagreed with Department policies. I won't say that we *challenged* them but we gave feedback as to how the policy is not working and try to get the policy makers to say that these are the flaws in the system with the view to getting them to review that policy.

For example, I gave feedback on the policy of examination dates. In my school, we found that attendance drops whenever school examinations finish early. This is a problem because for the remaining number of days in the term you have children not at school. No revision takes place, teachers are quite happy to use that time to mark and not get on with completing syllabus and it leads to discipline problems in the school. Now our policy is that we write examinations until the last day. I didn't ask the staff about their opinions on the matter. Because when we've tried other options it was up to them to make it work. But teachers had quietly encouraged pupils not to be at school. These are the same teachers that will complain later on that there is not enough time to complete the syllabus. In the end I said to my management that we've tried all the options and this is the option that I'm telling you to implement. In this particular example there's also an important aspect of managing a school. We have to ensure safety and order in school. Order in the sense that when examinations are over, you don't want children to be walking around because once that order breaks, you have allowed that opportunity. You have created that gap for order to disintegrate and it will continue so that by the year end what you've spent a lot of time building up has been undone. But the other aspect is the broader issue of safety and security. For example, recently there was the case when teenagers were *supposed* to be at school but they went to a club on the last day of school at a time when they were supposed to be in school. That incident led to the

death of a number of children. And the minister's²⁶ comment in the media showed that he was not really concerned about the children that died as much as directing the blame to schools. The question that he asked was "what were the children doing out of school?"

I don't have a problem implementing decisions or policies that to some extent are at variance with Department policy. Because at the end, *you* are at the site, you know what it practical, and what's going to work for the school. I suppose if it's a decision that's going to have legal repercussions then of course; you know you have to conform. But to a large extent I'd say we use our judgment because we are at the coal face of what is happening. You take a decision based on what's good for the school.

Transformation challenges. The first obvious transformational challenge is the lack of finance

The first obvious transformational challenge is the lack of finance. This has placed enormous pressure on schools. If you look at just the basics like writing materials, ink, notes, these are very costly. Without money, the school can't function. Linked to funding is the issue of staffing. With the cutbacks, the number of learners in a classroom is bigger now. Classroom control and the quality of delivery suffer. On average the increase in the number of learners per class is at least thirty to forty percent for the level one educator and their workload has increased by that amount. And what this has done is, is that it has shifted the emphasis away from the classroom and onto the educator. Now you're trying to keep an educator because you want to strike a balance between delivery in the classroom and not pressurizing the educator too much at the same time. Because the more you pressurise the educator, the educator snaps and you have nobody to teach his classes. And you're back to square one. You have now created a discipline problem, children fall back with their work and when a new educator comes in, he is under more pressure, and it becomes a vicious cycle. We've got to be very careful of keeping a very *delicate* balance so that the learner doesn't suffer, and *increasingly* we've got to look at the educator now.

The race issue is not a major issue in this school. We are not experiencing a racial problem because of the kind of pupils that we have and the backgrounds of their parents. Parents and their children understand that they've come here looking for better opportunities - to learn a new language that is a second language to them. We haven't had the race problem because as far as possible we haven't restricted numbers. It's obvious to anyone coming to the school that the school is transforming. We haven't racially selected classes so some pupils feel that the subjects that require better academic ability are taken up by one race group only. You can see that there is *change* throughout. I also think that we are fortunate.

Leadership over time: The work has become more difficult

I think it is definitely becoming more difficult to function as a principal now. The expectations of the Department in terms of delivery are so much greater than the kind of systems that they are putting into place. This forces the school not to focus on academic issues but to focus on administrative and management issues. The work has become more difficult. When the Department sets up guidelines for policies, the schools are not given good direction. Policies are just documents given to you and you have to interpret it. It is very time

²⁶ Minister of Education- Kader Asmal at the time

consuming more so because you have to consult very widely. The level of expectation required from a principal is incongruous with the kind of support that we receive.

Leadership: The practice.

Desirable education systems: We've lost the fundamentals

If you want to develop a good educational system, just develop good teachers. I don't think there was much that was bad in the old education system. Referring to the science aspect, even with the poor resources that we had, the pupils really excelled. So we need to keep the old syllabus because there was nothing wrong with the content. Perhaps what we need is more laboratory equipment and some technical expertise. What I found was that teachers who trained at college had a very different kind of training from those who trained at university. University graduates were very much a hands-on people and therefore practical work was never an issue for them unlike those from college. If you want to develop the "sciences" I would say that you just need good science teachers more than anything else. If you can develop good science teachers, that will take care of everything else.

If you look at the changes that are taking place now, we've lost the fundamentals. Children are lacking in numeracy skills and literary skills. This definitely impacts on learners. You can't address an issue in high school that has not been addressed properly in primary school. Personally I'd say encourage children to read.

If I had to change things in the present context I would tackle the value systems of teachers. Getting back values and morality in peoples' lives is important because these issues are really clouding good teaching. Now you may have the best resources and the best teachers in schools but the value systems are lacking. Looking at my experience, I came from a school system which had tremendous backlogs in funding, but there was good teaching that motivated us and gave us the drive to keep going. That made us what we are. This is what teacher training lacks now. When I started teaching most of the teachers were college graduates. They had the rudiments of good teaching and classroom discipline. All the basics were there; explaining the work to learners properly, classroom control, record keeping and lesson preparation. The advantage of these teachers was that the college staff spent a lot of time in schools for practice teaching and they certainly did a good job of it. What they lacked may have been specialised subjects like physical science and biology. My professional training was on a part time basis because I was teaching at the same time. A lot of the values that I learned came from the old seasoned teachers some of whom may have had only a standard eight²⁷ qualification. But the discipline was there and they were able to get children eating out of their hands. I really learnt a lot from those educators. Now young teachers have no mentors.

I think that it's now more about modifying the existing education system rather than making radical changes. If I question what hasn't really worked in the old system, I'd say maybe the approach of the teachers. It now needs to be a little more encompassing, making children comfortable and teaching them self confidence. I don't know whether you can actually teach that, it's just the personality of the educator that comes through. Some children are able to talk to some teachers very easily without a problem, whilst still maintaining that respect and that professional distance. Other teachers, despite their experience just don't know how to handle a child.

²⁷ Equivalent to the present grade ten level

I think the problems also come from the present educational system because our focus is on the wrong thing. It is result oriented by measuring marks. Maybe we need to move away from that a little because what I find is that we are focussing on results. In the end, it means we are training a child to perform well but to a large extent without the child comprehending basic concepts. The present system allows coaching to take the place of educating. When they leave, they are on their own. They don't know how to cope. That's a flaw in our system because you get them to deliver the results and when they go to tertiary institutions they don't know what to do on their own.

Leadership role: I see my role as a principal not in isolation but in a community where my function is to develop that community

What has happened in schools *now* is that principals are not leaders. The system doesn't allow them to be leaders. What you end up doing to a large extent is managing problems that come about as a result of insufficient funds and discipline issues. To a large extent, the daily routine is very much *ad hoc*. You plan to do certain things for the day but issues that arise in the classroom and in the education department, outside of your actual sphere of operation, are the issues that you end up handling. I see my role as a principal in a community and developing that community. The school has a role in developing the community therefore I'd say that's my primary function. If we're able to develop the child then that community is going to thrive. If I look at my particular community, socio-economically they are deprived. What I see my role as a principal in that regard is trying to get teachers to get the child to see the need to stay in school and to get an education. But I also firmly believe that the kids must enjoy school. School is a place where they make new friends, but they must be able to look back at school and say, I really enjoyed being here. As a principal you want to get your learners to become mature, be responsible and to adopt a value system. My aim is for the kids to adopt and practice a value system irrespective of its religious background. If you have that stability you can become a successful person regardless of where you come from.

I also see myself as a principal of a school in transformation. What I'd like to see is the racial proportions of the school changed, not only with the learners but with the staff as well. We need to help minorities whether it's a disabled person or refugee or from a lower socio-economic background and try to integrate all of that into the school system.

We have a wonderful Constitution, probably the best in the world. For me, I'd like to see the values that are enshrined in the constitution on a micro level at school. But I know it's not easy due to financial constraints.

A principal must also develop the adult community not only the parents of the learners. If needed, offer them adult literacy classes, adult basic education, entrepreneurship or something that will help people to believe in themselves and in so doing uplift the community as well.

Because the infrastructure is so lacking, a lot of our energies are diverted trying to get that infrastructure in place. As a result we're not *really* focusing on classroom issues; the didactic issues, the pedagogic issues. I'm lucky that my educators know what their job is. I leave a lot of it to their professional instincts. But the vision is to try and get most of the younger teachers to embrace some of the older values that we had, which is to become part of the children's lives and be very much involved in their lives. Many children come from dysfunctional families and the only opportunity that they have of finding a logical, stable,

adult person is in the school. That is what I try to develop; a relationship of trust and a safe environment in the school for the learners.

Raising funds is another issue for principals. There is an expectation of the school to supplement the schools income. I have a problem with that. Teachers are overworked because of their difficult workloads and the principal doesn't have the time. At a time when I personally believe that educators should be resting, their energies are being diverted to raise funds which have not really brought in much.

I would like to develop governing bodies because that's lacking in our schools. We don't have enough parental support. Somehow parents feel that if they leave the children at a good school, the school will see to everything. And the bottom line is, you can do lots of things but funding is the major criterion.

Decision making: Principals should be made executive officers

The present system expects principals to consult with large numbers of stakeholders. But principals should be made executive officers. Having been appointed into a position like the principalship where there are systems with checks and balances, the principal is expected to take full responsibility yet he is not given the total executive authority that goes with that responsibility. So very often you end up implementing decisions that are taken purely for the sake of consensus *but* the outcome of that decision does not necessarily benefit the school. We're go through some of these procedures and processes and this gives an impression of transparency and consultation but at the same time when you expect the principal to take *total* responsibility for what transpires in school, then you need to give the principal the necessary authority to do that without being hampered by too many stakeholders.

A principal should be able to take a decision, however unpopular that decision may be because he is the person who is accountable. Otherwise how are you going to account for a decision, especially when something goes wrong and you were not part of the thinking behind it?

Depending on the type of decision, there are obviously times when one has to consult the governing body. For example, decisions regarding staffing and major financial decisions. There are occasions when we need to consult your management. I'm not the kind of person that takes a decision based on "This is my way", this is how I want it to be done and therefore that's the only decision that's acceptable. But at the same time if I have strong views on certain issues, I bring this into the discussion so that the person whose views I'm canvassing is to some extent influenced by what my position is. Given the kind of people that I work with, I respect their abilities and as much as we principals are accountable for decisions, I'm quite happy to take a decision that a certain Head of Department is happy with. Even if I have *little* reservation about it, I give him the benefit of the doubt, realising that one *can* work through it if a problem comes up a later stage.

Examination dates is one example of an unpopular decision that I have taken. When I decided to have exams written right up to the last day of term, I didn't ask for any opinions on the issue. I just said to them, look we're writing exams right up to the last day and these are my reasons. One has to be careful in trying to support teachers that one doesn't do it at the cost of the school and the learners. Early exam dates affects the learning programme. It impacts on the matrics. Also because you've got teachers that are pressured to complete marking and

there are problems of unreasonable deadlines, the teaching is affected. In the end, if one child has to die because of the decision that you took to have early exams, and fingers get pointed at the school, you can't rationalise something like "Oh. I sent the children off early, because it was inconvenient to the teachers".

Previously we had tried other models of finishing early and saw that they didn't work. But I told the teachers that the timetable is scheduled in such a way that they will get *some* marking early enough to finish before the end of term. Also they could use one or two days in the new term to review the examinations. And because we've automated the reporting process by computers, it has taken that pressure off them. When it comes to examinations, all the educator is required to do is mark, give us the marks on a disc, the computer does the rest and all the educator has to do is sign.

Leadership and management: At school the ground rules are different

I think that the concepts of leadership and management are overemphasized. There are differences between managers and leaders but these are more appropriate to the private sector. At school the ground rules are different. When you are called to account for things as a principal, there are always parameters that hold you back. You don't have the leeway to make that almost executive kind of decision. You are always called upon to consult, to consult widely, even to compromise when such a compromise is not in the interest of the organisation. Particularly I'm thinking of union issues in this regard. Regarding learner issues, as much as you are accountable for it, it's the conditions under which you work that are the constraints. For example the pass rate, I'd say that to some extent you're accountable for it, but there are factors over which you have no control such as the location of the school and the socio- economic background of your learners.

Role models: I wouldn't say any person in particular has influenced my ideas

I wouldn't say any person in particular has influenced my ideas. But what I discovered very early on in my career was that everybody in the staffroom always complained about things but never bothered to find out what the underlying causes were. Maybe it was the relevant regulations or salary scales. Everyone was asking somebody that was as ignorant as they were and I thought that I will take the initiative to find out and share that information.

The other thing was that everybody sort of moved in the same complacent way. You go to class, you teach, but no one really took charge of their lives in the classroom. One particular day a Head of Department came into my class while I was teaching. He started talking to a pupil in *my* class who had been disruptive in some other class. At the end of the lesson, I said to myself that I should find out what is going on because I'm the class teacher and that I should take responsibility for that child. It's the little things that were important when you take charge of your classroom, like getting the desks fixed, fixing the window panes, putting a lock where it was due, fixing the overhead projectors. Other teachers didn't do this. And suddenly you get thrust into a position where everyone was coming to you for help. My confidence in the classroom grew and my relationship with the teachers developed because of that. We always had very, very friendly teachers. The professional jealousy, envy, backbiting was not at this school and I think that is one of the reasons why my school is a relatively stable school. We've been able to avoid this strong hierarchy where level one teachers are afraid to talk to a HOD. We haven't been contaminated by what is happening in other

schools. It's also because we haven't had much movement of teachers from other schools into this school. The majority of teachers at any given time knew the ethos of the school.

Leadership style: I don't like to project myself as a charismatic leader

I sometimes wonder whether principals are being described as being in positions of leadership and I also question myself as to what type of leader I am. My leadership style is not one where you are always in the front, hammering people but rather a sort of style where you want to try and get people to work. You want to work with them cooperatively without being too loud about it. It is to get work done as quietly as possible, without making a fuss. I don't like to project myself as a charismatic leader. If I can get something done quietly with the personality of the person being in the back ground, I am quite happy. From the kind of reputation I have in the area I'd say that people respect the school and perhaps the leader of the school as well because we function very quietly, but effectively.

Grade ten course selection: We focus on three particular areas

When they are in grade nine, we get the grade nine controllers²⁸ to talk to the pupils about the subject packages that are on offer. We focus on three particular areas maths, physical science and accounting, where we set certain criteria. We put the grade nine maths marks and physical science component of the general science marks in order of merit. If they have a reasonable chance of passing the subject, we allow them to do it. Other than that we ask the parent to come in and advise them against choosing a combination of subjects that we can see will be problematic later on. If the parents insist on these subjects, in the end we have no option but to allow them. What happens is, as we expected, we find that they are not coping. We call the parents in again and point out the difficulties and tell them it's still not too late to make a change. What they do is that they drop the maths and then pick up the business economics as an alternative.

Student leaders: The executive of the prefect body are perceived to be the leaders at the school

Student leadership in schools is very hard to define because legally the RCL has that function. But the sad part is that if they are left on their own to function they tend not to be very active in school affairs, so it is necessary for teachers to try and keep them going. We try to encourage them, particularly by organizing extra curricular activities so that the whole school body can get involved. But the people that are perceived to be leaders at the school are the executive of the *prefect* body. The prefect nominations are done by staff, interviews are done by a committee of teachers and it is just given to me for perusal. Unless I have an objection it goes through. The RCL chairperson and the head prefect are both Coloureds but their deputies are Black.

Learner admissions: We are committed to transformation

We basically canvass the feeder schools²⁹ for admissions. We go to them in the third term and inform them that we are doing registrations. We tell them a bit about the school. About sixty percent of our kids are from the Coloured racial group and the other forty percent is

²⁸ This is typically a management member who controls the administration of a particular grade

²⁹ Primary schools in close proximity to the Secondary schools. Previously, these schools were categorised along racial lines

black. We don't follow the school zone *per se* because personally I believe that if learners are within our school system and they come in through the primary schools in our area then we have to accept them. Our policy in that is driven by the fact that we are committed to transformation. We won't use race, socio-economic background or geographical situation to exclude learners. The only thing that we do and we do it *only* because we're under enormous pressure from local parents³⁰ is to enrol their children into grade eight first. They are given the opportunity of registering their children at this school on the first day. We also admit learners in other grades, even in grade eleven as long as there's place in the school. But we are a bit reluctant to take a child into matric. I'd say subconsciously that this decision is because we are not too sure about the academic character of the child. Let's be honest about it because taking a child in matric could compromise the results of the school. And it is unfair to the teachers who have worked really hard to get their pupils ready for matric to take on a new child that doesn't fit the curriculum. Although we have taken in a child in matric but I must admit that it was obviously a child that we felt could fit into our academic programme.

Pass rate: There was an ethos of achievement at this school

We do motivate for condonations at grade eleven where the learner has met all the previous requirements but perhaps just didn't have the ability for that particular year. Most, not all of such condonations have worked.

There is a decline in the number of pupils writing for exemptions and we put that down to motivation problems. Because to some extent we find that the learner may have the capacity to sit for an exemption but just doesn't apply himself. And as a result of their own poor performance, they eventually opt for a non-exemption combination of subjects. Probably there are historical reasons for this school to have maintained a high pass rate even through transformation. Capell High always had a strong tradition of maths and science, it was a high profile school in the days of the House of Representatives³¹ and it was part of a teacher training college up to about 1978. What this did for the pupils was that it brought them into daily contact with young adults. These college students tended to have a higher level of maturity and I suppose this probably started the ethos of achievement with the learners and the school. The other side of it was that a lot of learners left school and went into trades in grade ten. The learners that remained at school were obviously the higher achievers. This gave the school a sort of foundation for good academic results.

Having established the ethos, when other teachers came in even during transformation, they knew that there was a high level of expectation in service delivery from them. Going through the eighties and nineties, we had quite a number of successes in maths and science and this gave the school a bit of a high profile. New teachers in particular knew that they had to toe the line and deliver the same kind of results. When transformation brought a drop in educators, it was the same people that more or less stayed and they knew the expectation. For some reason or the other we tended not to have the kind of problems that other schools experienced in terms of teacher politics and unions. The staff themselves have been very insulated in terms of mixing with other ex-Department³² schools. I must say that the educators actually work very hard and I think that is one of the things that have contributed to the success of the school.

³⁰ Local Coloured parents

³¹ The Coloured component of the South African Tricameral Government which was established prior to democracy

³² These Departments were separated along racial lines in the apartheid era

Appendix 7