The Role of Principals as Instructional Leaders: Implications for Effective Teaching and Learning

by

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this mini-dissertation to my dear mother Margatham Naick and my beloved late father Naram Naick, who taught me that „the happiest people don’t have the best of everything, they just make the best of everything“.  

To them, I will always be thankful.
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My gratitude goes to my dear Swami, the omnipotent Creator and my Friend forever, Bhagawan Sri Sathya Sai Baba, for giving me the courage and the wisdom to complete a task of this nature;

In completing this research, I would like to humbly express my profound thanks and gratitude to:

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- The University of Johannesburg for awarding a bursary towards the completion of this study; and

- The Gauteng Department of Education for allowing me to conduct research in their region.
DECLARATION

I, Lingusvarie Isavanie Moonsammy-Koopasammy the undersigned, hereby declare that THE ROLE OF PRINCIPALS AS INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERS: IMPLICATIONS FOR EFFECTIVE TEACHING AND LEARNING is my own work and that all sources that I have used or quoted have been properly acknowledged and referenced and it contains no plagiarism.

Signature: __________________________

Date: __________________________
ABSTRACT

The ever changing social, political and economic environment of post-apartheid South Africa impacts seriously on the functionality of education in this country. This accelerated rate of change from the external environment places the onus on schools to provide quality education that is relevant to the demands of the changing world. However, South African schools were found seriously wanting. Over the past two decades concerted efforts have been made by the South African government to improve the quality of education. These efforts have not met with much success. Lack of effective leadership and commitment on the part of the principal has been cited as one of the main reasons why South African schools are performing poorly in international tests.

In the previous dispensation, principals in South Africa had followed a model prescribed by the education authorities on how to fulfill their management roles. They could accomplish their task with relative sole authority within the prescribed parameters, without being compelled to seriously involve other stakeholders. However, management and leadership styles in South Africa have undergone major shifts. Decentralising responsibility and authority within the educational system, has created a need for the role of principals to be re-defined. The role of the principal as manager evolved into the role of principal as instructional leader. This proved to be a challenge for many principals. This study explored the role of principals as instructional leaders to facilitate effective teaching and learning in Gauteng East primary schools.

The study was located in an interpretivist paradigm and a qualitative research design was employed. The sample was purposive and consisted of primary school principals in the Gauteng East region. A thorough examination of the duties of the principal as outlined in South African legislation and in current literature was conducted. Several existing models of instructional leadership were briefly discussed and a theoretical framework for the present study was
outlined. Empirically, semi-structured individual interviews were conducted with the six principals. A document analysis was also carried out to verify and inform data collected during the interviews.

Various themes and sub-themes emerged from the qualitative study. The duality of the role of the principal poses a challenge for principals. On the one hand the principal is expected to manage the school in terms of day-to-day functionality, buildings and grounds maintenance, managing of finances, human resources and so on. On the other hand the principal is also expected to be an instructional leader which involves setting clear goals, allocating resources to instruction, managing the curriculum, monitoring teaching and learning and creating a climate conducive to learning. It was found that most principals tended to concentrate on management instead of instructional leadership. Management of the instructional programme, focused on aspects such as curriculum management, lack of active involvement of the principal, lack of extra-curricular activities, supervision and evaluation and monitoring learner progress. Another important duty of the principal was to promote positive school climate. This was supported by sub-themes which pointed to the merits of the principal being a practicing teacher, of effective time management, of providing incentives for teaching and learning, of promoting professional development and maintaining high visibility. The final theme examined the importance of the vision and mission and of having clearly defined and strategic goals.

For schools to be successful, principals need to change from being managers to being instructional leaders.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>DEDICATION</td>
<td>ii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACKNOWLEDGEMENT</td>
<td>iii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DECLARATION</td>
<td>iv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ABSTRACT</td>
<td>v</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TABLE OF CONTENTS</td>
<td>vii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIST OF TABLES</td>
<td>xi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>1. CHAPTER ONE</strong></td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ORIENTATION TO THE STUDY</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE PROBLEM</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3 AIMS OF THE RESEARCH</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.4 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.5 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.6 CONCEPT CLARIFICATION</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.6.1 Instructional Leadership</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.6.2 Leadership and Management</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.6.3 Gauteng Primary Literacy Strategy schools</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.6.4 Curriculum management model</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.7 EXPOSITION OF THE STUDY</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.8 SUMMARY</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2. CHAPTER TWO</strong></td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LITERATURE REVIEW</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.1 INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2 THE DUTIES OF THE PRINCIPAL</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2.1 The South African Schools’ Act of 1996</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Section</td>
<td>Page</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2.2 The Employment of Educators Act of 1998</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2.3 The Education Laws Amendment Act of 2007</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3 INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP AND PUBLIC SCHOOLS</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.4 INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP MODELS</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.4.1 Hallinger &amp; Murphy’s Model (1985)</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.4.2 Murphy’s Model (1990)</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.4.3 Weber’s Model (1996)</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.4.4 Alig-Mielcaric’s Instructional Leadership Model (2003)</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.5 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.5.1 Defining the School’s Mission</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.5.2 Managing the Instructional Programme</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.5.2.1 Coordinating the curriculum</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.5.2.2 Supervises and evaluates instruction</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.5.2.3 Monitoring learner progress</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.5.3 Promoting a Positive School Climate</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.5.3.1 Protects instructional time</td>
<td>39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.5.3.2 Provides incentives for teachers</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.5.3.3 Provides incentives for learning</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.5.3.4 Promotes professional development</td>
<td>42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.5.3.5 Maintains high visibility</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.6 SUMMARY</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. CHAPTER THREE</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1 INTRODUCTION</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2 RESEARCH DESIGN</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2.1 Research paradigm</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2.2 Research methods</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3 SELECTION AND SAMPLING</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4 DATA ANALYSIS</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.5 TRUSTWORTHINESS, RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY</td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4. CHAPTER FOUR
ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF THE EMPIRICAL DATA COLLECTED
4.1 INTRODUCTION
4.2 BACKGROUND OF SELECTED SCHOOLS
4.3 THEMES
4.3.1 The duties of the principal
4.3.1.1 Management functions
4.3.1.2 Instructional leadership role
4.3.2 Balancing administrative and instructional roles
4.3.2.1 Overload of administrative tasks
4.3.2.2 Curriculum changes
4.3.2.3 Day-to-day school management
4.3.3 Manages the instructional programme
4.3.3.1 Managing the curriculum
4.3.3.2 Lack of active involvement by principals
4.3.3.3 Lack of extra-curricular activities
4.3.3.4 Formal supervision vs informal supervision
4.3.3.5 Monitors student progress
4.3.4 Promotes school climate
4.3.4.1 The role of the principal as a teacher
4.3.4.2 Instructional time
4.3.4.3 Incentives for teachers and learners
4.3.4.4 Promotes professional development
4.3.4.6 Maintains high visibility
4.3.5 Vision and Mission of the school
4.4 SUMMARY
5. CHAPTER 5 96
   SUMMARY, FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS 96
5.1 INTRODUCTION 96
5.2 SUMMARY OF THE STUDY 97
5.3 FINDINGS 99
   5.3.1 Findings from the literature survey 99
   5.3.2 Findings from the empirical data 100
5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS 103
5.5 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH 105
5.6 CONCLUSION 105

BIBLIOGRAPHY 107

APPENDICES
Appendix A - Biographical Data Questionnaire
Appendix B - Selected sample: 1 interview transcript
Appendix C - Semi-structured interview schedule
Appendix D - Letter of permission from the Gauteng Department of Education
# LIST OF TABLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.1</td>
<td>Framework of Instructional Management</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.1</td>
<td>Biographical data</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.1</td>
<td>Profile of the schools</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2</td>
<td>Research Themes</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>Theme 1: Duties of the principal</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>Theme 2: Balancing administrative and instructional roles</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>Theme 3: Manages the instructional programme</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.6</td>
<td>Theme 4: Promotes school climate</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>Theme 5: Vision and Mission</td>
<td>93</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER ONE

ORIENTATION TO THE STUDY

1.1 INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO THE PROBLEM

School leadership in South Africa has undergone significant changes in the post-apartheid era. Not least among these are the introduction of School Governing Bodies (SGBs) and School Management Teams (SMTs), and the implementation of an Outcomes-based Curriculum (OBE), which devolved a considerable degree of decision-making to schools and teachers (Hoadley, Christie, Jacklin & Ward, 2008:14). Over the past two decades the South African government has made concerted efforts to improve the quality of education in the country. Although considerable progress has been made in decentralizing responsibility and authority within the educational system, improving educational quality remains a challenge. A matter of growing concern is that most South African schools are not functioning adequately (Bloch, 2009:17; Fleisch, 2008:30). Equally disturbing are the patterns of continuing inequality with former White schools generally achieving the best results in the system, and former African township and „homeland“ schools the worst (Hoadley et al., 2008:2).

International tests, such as the: Monitoring Learning and Achievement (MLA), Grade 4 (1999), Southern and Eastern African Consortium for Monitoring Education Quality (SAQMEC), Grade 6 (2005), Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS), Grade 8 (1999 and 2002) and Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS), Grade 5 (2006) suggest that South African schools are among the worst performers in Mathematics and Literacy (Bloch, 2009:60-68; Fleisch, 2008:4-26). The TIMSS study of 2002 found that South African Grade 8 learners achieved the lowest average scores in both Mathematics and Science (Fleisch, 2008:12). The study included 46 countries, of which six were other African countries. The Southern and Eastern African Consortium for Monitoring Education Quality (SAQMEC, 2000 and 2007) showed that South African learners performed slightly below
standard compared to other African countries in Mathematics and Reading at a grade 6 level (Fleisch, 2008:19). In the PIRLS study of 2006 the reading levels of grades 4 and 5 learners were tested. South Africa had the lowest score despite the fact that the learners had the option of completing the test in any one of the 11 official languages (Bloch, 2009:63; Fleisch, 2008:22).

On the home front, National Systemic Tests conducted by the Department of Education (DoE) in Grade 3 (2002) and Grade 6 (2004) in Numeracy/Mathematics and Literacy only serve to confirm the poor performance of South African learners across the board (Bloch, 2009:60-68; Fleisch, 2008). Bloch (2009:66) states plainly that „our students are just not hacking it when it comes to reading and maths at very basic levels.” Kallaway (2009:10) says that, “The crisis that has been predicted by many experienced professionals ever since the early „90s” is finally reaching such tragic proportions that we have to face the real prospect of a „lost generation” in terms that we never imagined in the past.” The picture doesn’t seem to be getting any better as was indicated by the results of the Annual National Assessment (ANA) which was conducted at the beginning of 2011. Grade 3 learners achieved a pass rate of 35% in Literacy and 26% in Numeracy, while Grade 6 learners achieved a pass rate of 28% in Language and 30% in Mathematics (Joseph, 2011:2).

Someone has to be held accountable for the apparent low levels of literacy and mathematics in South Africa, as indicated in the aforementioned studies. The Education Amendment Act of 2007 (South Africa, 2007) indicates that the principal is accountable to the Head of Department for the academic performance of their school. Thus, in order to improve these results more effective leadership is needed from principals.

Principals are key role players in the developing and maintaining of academic standards in schools (Glanz, 2006:3; Nicholson, Harris-John, Schimmel, 2005:17; Sergiovanni, 1984:6-8). The poor academic standards, as indicated
above, could be, amongst other reasons, indicative of a lack of effective leadership and commitment at school level. A number of researchers concur with the belief that many South African school principals lack the skills to effectively manage and lead their schools (Kallaway, 2009:12; Mestry, 1999:3; Mestry & Singh, 2007:8; Naidu, Joubert, Mestry Mosoge & Ngcobo, 2008:3). The rapid rate at which change has taken place and still is taking place together with the increased volume of paperwork, has placed principals under an enormous amount of pressure. Goslin (2009:10) argues that many principals overlook their responsibilities of instructional leadership because they are not fully aware of their primary task or because they are too busy attending to administrative duties of managing the buildings and its people. Fink and Resnick (2001:1) point out that the principal’s day is so filled with management tasks (scheduling, reporting, handling relations with parents and community, dealing with the multiple crises and special situations that are inevitable in schools) that they spend relatively little time on instructional leadership. Research conducted by Bush and Heystek (2006:68) reveals that South African principals are mainly concerned with financial management, human resource management and policy issues. The management of teaching and learning was ranked only seventh of 10 leadership activities in a survey of more than 500 Gauteng principals. Chisholm et al. (2005) (as cited by Bush, Joubert, Kiggundu & Van Rooyen, 2009:2) agree that principals’ time is largely consumed by administrative activities.

Mestry (1999:4) points out that expectations on the principal have moved from demands of management and control to demands of an educational leader who can foster staff development, parental involvement, community support and student (the words „student” and „learner” will be used interchangeably in this study) growth. Blasé, Blasé & Philips (2010: xxi) concur with Mestry and argue that new responsibilities and activities have been added on to the principal’s role but that old responsibilities and activities have remained. This, they go on to say, has resulted in the role of the principal becoming overloaded, highly complex and composed of a multitude of conflicting demands (Blasé et al., 2010:xxii).
According to Kruger (2003:206), many school principals lack the time for, and an understanding of, their instructional leadership task. Murphy and Hallinger (as cited by MacNeill, Cavanagh & Silcox, 2003:40) noted that a major challenge to the principal was balancing the administrative role with the curriculum/instructional role, hence they queried whether one person could do the job and suggested the need to empower others to exercise leadership.

A dominant belief in educational circles is that principals can, and should, make a difference in student learning and creating conditions for improved instruction (Alig-Mielcarek, 2003:7; Bush, 2007:391; Copeland, 2003:2; Hoadley et al., 2008:2; McKewan, 1998:2; Yu, 2009:715). The primary responsibility of the principal to enhance the school's teaching and learning activities has been broadly identified as the principal's instructional leadership role (Van Deventer & Kruger, 2008:245). In essence, a school principal has general managerial duties as well as instructional leadership duties. A narrow definition of instructional leadership would see these two facets as operating separately. A broader view of instructional leadership would expand this definition to include the principal giving attention to both instructional and non-instructional tasks (MacNeill et al., 2003:4). Bush is of the firm belief that leadership and management should be regarded as equally important if schools are to operate effectively and achieve their objectives (2003:8). He maintains that management should be linked closely to the achievement of certain educational goals. If not, it could lead to „a stress on procedures at the expense of educational purpose and values“ (2003:1-2; 2007:391).

It is very important that principals have a clear idea of their roles and that they balance both their managerial and leadership duties as neglect of either could seriously disadvantage the culture of teaching and learning at their schools (Blasé et al., 2010: xxiv; Bush, 2007: 392; Gupton, 2003:22). In the next section, the statement of the problem is discussed.
1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The problem to be researched is: *What is the role of principals as instructional leaders and how does this contribute to effective teaching and learning?* The research problem can be encapsulated with the following questions:

- What does *instructional leadership* mean?
- What do principals perceive are their core curriculum duties?
- What challenges do they face in balancing their dual roles of manager and instructional leader?
- What recommendations can be given to help principals become more effective instructional leaders?

Having demarcated the research problem it is now necessary to state the aim of this research project.

1.3 AIMS OF THE RESEARCH

In view of the problem formulated above, the general aim of this research is to determine the role of principals as instructional leaders to facilitate effective teaching and learning.

In order to realize the aim of this study, the following objectives are set namely to:

- understand what *instructional leadership* means.
- explore principals’ understandings of their core duties.
- identify the challenges they face in balancing their dual roles of manager and instructional leader.
- make recommendations to help principals become more effective instructional leaders?
Having articulated the problem, the aim and objectives of the research, the research design and methodology that will be used to address the problem and achieve the aim and objectives, will be outlined in the next section.

1.4 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

This investigation is directed at determining the role of principals as instructional leaders to facilitate teaching and learning.

In order to gain an understanding of how principals feel about and experience their roles as instructional leaders, it was decided that it would be best to conduct a qualitative study and to locate it within the interpretivist paradigm. The assumptions underlying this paradigm are that humans construct knowledge out of their subjective engagement with objects in the world. Reality is thus socially constructed and may be interpreted differently by different people (Hatch, 2006: 41-44). The interpretive paradigm emphasizes the importance of understanding (Connole, 1998:14) and since the researcher wishes to explore the principals’ understanding of their role as instructional leaders it would be appropriate to use this paradigm.

A generic qualitative research paradigm will be used to gather research data. This type of data is suitable for this particular study because one of the major distinguishing characteristics of qualitative research is the fact that the researcher attempts to understand people in terms of their own definition of their world. The focus in this study is to explore the perceptions of participants regarding instructional leadership. According to Merriam (1998:11), generic qualitative research studies „simply seek to discover and understand a phenomenon, a process, or the perspective and worldviews of the people involved”. Caelli et al. (2003:4), defines generic qualitative research as „that which is not guided by an explicit or established set of philosophic assumptions in the form of one of the known qualitative methodologies".
Two main methods for collecting data will be used: individual interviews and document analysis. Semi-structured individual interviews would enable the researcher to explore different avenues that may emerge from the participants’ perceptions. Open-ended questions will allow the interviewer to amend questions and to probe surface issues. Questions will focus on the topic at hand and will be phrased in a user friendly manner to allow participants to remain in their everyday experience and to respond in ordinary language. Time will be included at the beginning of each interview to establish a rapport with the participant, as the researcher wishes to conduct interviews that generate meaningful and useful data (Lichtman, 2009:142).

Interviews will be conducted with a sample that is purposive. According to Marshall (1996:523), many qualitative researchers use purposive sampling because they recognize that some participants are „richer” than others, and that they are more likely to provide insight and understanding for the researcher. Principals from six primary schools in the Gauteng East District will be interviewed. The sample would include three primary schools from the 81 schools in Gauteng East District that were classified as Gauteng Primary Literacy Strategy (GPLS) schools by the Gauteng Department of Education (GDE). The Gauteng Department of Education (GDE, Circular 2/2011:2) felt that these schools needed assistance to improve the literacy and mathematics levels of their learners. The other three schools would be taken from those primary schools in the Gauteng East District who were not classified as „Gauteng Primary Literacy Strategy schools”. Principals chosen should have school management experience of at least 10 years, as experience would enable the participants to contribute from a more insightful perspective. Principals from both gender groups will be chosen for comparative purposes. Reassurance will be given to the participants that the aim of the research is not to judge or evaluate their management skills but to determine their perceptions in respect of instructional leadership. Interviews are to be conducted in a mutually agreed location, preferably the office of the participant as a considerable amount of information
can be obtained by observing a participant in his/her physical setting (Lichtman, 2009: 142).

Documents will be analyzed (Mertens, 1998:324) to determine the duties and role functions of the principal. Descriptions of the role of the principal, mission statements of the schools, year plans of the school, staff development plans of the school as well as relevant Gauteng East District memorandums and circulars will be studied to confirm data obtained from the interviews.

Data collection and analysis (Mertens, 1998:350-351) means: the researcher will take notes during the interview as well as transcribe the interviews as soon as possible after the interview has taken place. Analysis will be done during and after data collection. Tesch’s approach (Creswell, 2009:186) will be used to analyze and examine the data to search for themes and patterns that illustrate similarities and differences and uncover the meaning of particular perceptions focusing on the aim of the study.

Reliability in qualitative research refers to the consistency and dependability of the researcher’s findings. Validity in a qualitative perspective questions whether researchers, by using certain methods, are investigating what they claim to be investigating (Henning, van Rensburg & Smit, 2004:147). Seale as cited by Golafshani (2003:601) states that the “trustworthiness of a research report lies at the heart of issues conventionally discussed as validity and reliability”. Lincoln and Guba propose four criteria that they believe should be considered by qualitative researchers in pursuit of a trustworthy study: credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability (Morse et al., 2002:15; Shenton, 2004:64). Lincoln and Guba's measures to ensure trustworthiness will be applied throughout the research process.

Prolonged engagement, triangulation, member checks and peer debriefing will be used to promote confidence that the researcher has accurately recorded the
phenomena under investigation (credibility) (Golafshani, 2003:600). Before the initial interview takes place, the researcher will visit the institution, or make contact with the participant, to establish a relationship of trust between herself and the participant (prolonged engagement). Participants will be given the opportunity to withdraw from participating in the project so as to ensure that data collection sessions involve only those who are genuinely willing to take part (Creswell, 2009:89; McMillan & Schumacher, 2006:334; Mouton, 2001:244; O"Leary, 2004:52). In this study interviews and documents will be used to support themes that emerge from the study. Regular checks will be done with the participants to ensure the accuracy of data collection (member checks) i.e. transcription of interviews and verification of emerging theories and inferences made (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006:324). Peers and colleagues will be given the opportunity to comment on the research project so that it can be refined and strengthened.

Transferability will be addressed through purposive sampling and the provision of rich, thick, detailed descriptions which will allow readers to have a proper understanding of the phenomenon under investigation. This will enable them to compare instances of the phenomenon described in the research report with those that they have seen emerge in their situations (Marshall, 1996:523; McMillan & Schumacher, 2006:319; Shenton, 2004:70). All interviews with the participants will be tape-recorded and word-for-word transcriptions will be documented. When analyzing the data every attempt will be made to use the participants" actual words where possible.

Dependability and confirmability will be obtained through triangulation as well as a detailed report on the processes followed in the study so that a future researcher may repeat the work as well as determine how far the data and the constructs that emerge from it may be accepted ((McMillan & Schumacher, 2006:324).
1.5 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

According to Janse van Rensburg (2001:28), “research ethics refers to the moral dimensions of researching, our decisions – technical and otherwise – about what is right and wrong while engaged in research.” To this effect, this research will be carried out within an ethic of respect for persons, respect for knowledge, respect for democratic values, and respect for the quality of educational research (Creswell, 2009:87-93).

Consent will be obtained from the following bodies to carry out this study: the Ethics Committee of the University of Johannesburg, the Gauteng Department of Education and the principals of the chosen schools. In order to get the participants informed consent and voluntary participation, the purpose and goal of the research will be explained to all the participants. They will be made aware that they may withdraw from the research at any time. To ensure confidentiality, no personal information will be revealed without the participants consent. All information obtained will be kept safe for the duration of the study and will be accessible to participants upon request. All interviews will be conducted after school hours at a time convenient for the participants.

1.6 CONCEPT CLARIFICATION

Having discussed the research methodology it is now essential to clarify concepts that will be used in this study.

1.6.1 Instructional Leadership

Although the term “instructional leadership” is often used, it doesn't seem to be clearly understood (Weber, 1987:8). There are many definitions which are outlined more clearly in Chapter Two.
For the purposes of this study instructional leadership can be seen as an approach to leadership that propagates active participation (direct/indirect) on the part of the principal, to educate all learners to a high level of academic achievement. It includes the following general dimensions of a principals behavior -each of which has a number of functions (Hallinger & Murphy :1985)

Dimension 1: Defining the school's mission which includes framing and communicating the school's goals

Dimension 2: Managing the instructional programme, which includes coordinating the curriculum, supervising and evaluating instruction and monitoring learner progress.

Dimension 3: Promoting school climate by protecting instructional time, providing incentives for learning, promoting professional development and maintaining high visibility.

1.6.2 Leadership and Management

Although the terms „leadership” and „management” are often used interchangeably, they are two very different concepts. According to Clarke (2007:1) management is about efficiency and effectiveness and managers are concerned with operational effectiveness. To ensure operational effectiveness management has to perform four basic tasks, that of: planning, leading, organizing and controlling.

Leadership, on the other hand, is about direction and purpose and leaders are concerned with future -focused change (Clarke, 2007:1). To produce future -focused change, four key strategies are used by leaders i.e. vision, strategy, aligning people, motivating and inspiring (Clarke, 2007:2)

Managers have been characterized as people who do things right, and leaders as people who do the right things, this is just one among many distinctions Bennis (in Van Deventer & Kruger, 2008:141-142) makes between leaders and
managers. He makes the following additional distinctions, "Managers administer, leaders innovate, managers maintain, leaders develop, managers control, leaders inspire, managers have a short term view, leaders have a long term view, managers ask how and when, leaders ask what and why, managers imitate, leaders originate and finally managers accept the status quo, while leaders challenge it."

Prinsloo (in Van Deventer & Kruger, 2008:141-142) asserts that there are a number of assumptions that are generally held about quality leadership in a school. He states that an effective leader: is one who enlists the support of all staff in creating and focusing on a mission that is shared; enables and empowers the staff members to achieve quality teaching and learning; is aware of the fact that if he develops those closest to the process to manage the process it would be cost effective, and takes note of and reaches for small things that can make a significant difference (Van Deventer & Kruger, 2008:141-142)

For the purposes of this study, it is the contention of the researcher that both management skills as well as leadership skills are essential for a principal to be an effective instructional leader. The principal can through everyday management tasks in which he engages, exercise instructional leadership. The leadership and management skills of a principal complement each other in effective instructional leadership (Gupton, 2003:22).

1.6.3 Gauteng Primary Literacy Strategy schools

In 2011, an intervention strategy to improve the literacy levels of learners in 795 targeted primary schools was introduced by the Gauteng Department of Education (GDE, Circular 2/2011:2). This strategy was called the Gauteng Primary Literacy Strategy (GPLS) and the schools selected were referred to as GPLS schools. According to GDE, Circular 2/2011 (5), the core Gauteng Primary Literacy Strategy programme is a tool to help educators improve literacy levels
through addressing reading and writing instruction in a systematic way”. The fact that the Gauteng Department of Education selected to help these schools improve their literacy levels implies that the majority of learners in these schools were underperforming in literacy.

1.6.4 Curriculum Management Model (CMM)

In annexure A (38-43) of a Gauteng Department of Education document titled „Chief Director: Districts Ekudibeng Operations Framework 2011/12“, a guide to assist schools to manage curriculum effectively is given. The district maintains that the effective management of curriculum is directly linked to the performance of the learners and the results of the school. The model caters for management of curriculum at different levels of the system. A summarized version of the model is given in the next chapter.

Since Gauteng East is part of the Ekudibeng Cluster, schools in this district are expected to follow and report, as outlined in the curriculum model.

A discussion on the ethical considerations that will govern this research study will now follow.

1.7 EXPOSITION OF THE STUDY

The research study will be elucidated as follows:

Chapter One is an orientation of the study. It focuses on the introduction, motivation and background to the research problem; statement of the problem; aims of the research; research design and methodology; concept clarification; ethical considerations and an exposition of the research.
Chapter Two reviews current and relevant literature that exists on the topic of instructional leadership. The literature review will provide a rationale for the study planned (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006:7) and a theoretical background, or framework to the problem under investigation (Mouton, 2001:87).

A detailed description of the research design and methodology used for data collection as well as the processes of analyzing data is provided in Chapter Three.

Chapter Four looks at the raw data as well as an interpretation thereof, while

Chapter Five concludes the study. The findings of the research will be summarized, strengths and weaknesses discussed and recommendations made.

1.8 SUMMARY

This chapter constitutes the framework of what the research project entails. The aim of this research was formulated and is directed at determining the role of principals as instructional leaders to facilitate effective teaching and learning. These findings could be used to assist principals in the Gauteng province of South Africa to improve, or to develop, instructional leadership skills which could improve the achievement of learners in their schools. The research methodology was also outlined and key concepts clarified.

The next chapter reviews relevant literature on duties of the principal as outlined in South African legislation, policies and in current literature. It also reviews relevant research and literature on instructional leadership as it pertains to the definition of instructional leadership, and to ascertain the extent to which instructional leadership affects learner achievement. In addition to this it reviews some conceptual models on instructional leadership and discusses the theoretical framework which would govern this study.
CHAPTER TWO
LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The poor academic performance of South African learners both in South Africa as well as internationally, has led to many educationists taking a serious look at the role of the principal of the school (Kallaway, 2009:12; Mestry, 1999:3; Mestry & Singh, 2007:8; Naidu, Joubert, Mestry Mosoge & Ngcobo, 2008:3). Principals are believed to be the key role players in the development and maintaining of academic standards in schools (Glanz, 2006:3; Murphy, 1990; Nicholson, Harris-John & Schimmel, 2005:17; Sergiovanni, 1984: 6-8). The poor academic standards as indicated in the previous chapter could be, amongst other reasons, indicative of a lack of effective leadership and commitment at school level. A number of researchers concur with the belief that many South African school principals lack the skills to effectively manage and lead their schools (Kallaway, 2009:12; Mestry, 1999: 3; Mestry & Singh, 2007:8; Naidu, Joubert, Mestry, Mosoge & Ngcobo, 2008: 3).

In the current climate of school reform, principals are being held more accountable for learner success making school leadership even more critical. The principal is required to become deeply engaged in the school’s instructional programme (Hallinger, 2005). Cotton (as cited by Glanz, 2006:92) states that, “(a) key difference between highly effective and less effective principals is that the former are actively involved in the curricular and instruction of the school”. Blasé et al. (2010:107) confirmed this view when they found that principals of effective schools expressed the belief that they spent more time on instructional leadership than those in less effective schools. Most of the principals studied by Blasé et al. (2010:107) spent between 50% and 55% of their time on instructional leadership.

However, research indicates that many principals tend to neglect their role as instructional leaders. Reasons forwarded by many researchers and educationists are that:

- many principals do not fully understand their roles as instructional leaders (Kruger, 2003:206);
- many principals lack the skills to effectively manage and lead their schools (Kallaway, 2009:12; Mestry & Singh, 2007:8; Naidu et al., 2008:3, Nicholson et al., 2005 :12);
- the escalated rate at which changes take place in the education system pose a serious challenge to many principals;
- increased paperwork has placed many principals under enormous pressure;
- the introduction of new curriculum philosophy as well as frequent changes in curriculum (Curriculum 2005, Revised New Curriculum statements and most recently Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements) with very little training and development afforded to educators and managers (Bush et al., 2009:3,6); and
- principals have difficulty balancing their administrative duties with their instructional duties (Blasé et al., 2010:45; Goslin ; 2009:10; MacNeill et al., 2003:40; Sybouts & Wendel, 1994:2; Fink & Resnick, 2001:1).

In respect of the South African context it is important to realize that schools are seen as one of the most important vehicles by which previously disadvantaged communities can overcome and improve their circumstances and reach out for better lives (Fleisch, 2008:77; Bloch, 2009: 132-134). It is thus imperative that
principals, as leaders of this learning organization, focus more intensely on teaching and learning with a view to improving learner achievement.

The impetus for this study will attempt to determine principals’ perceptions of their core duties and the challenges they face in balancing their diverse and numerous duties. An attempt will be made to determine how this impacts on their roles as instructional leaders and, in turn, on the culture of teaching and learning and learner achievement.

The purpose of a literature review is to provide the reader with an overall framework for where this piece of work fits into the “big picture” of what is known about the topic from previous research (Boote & Beile, 2005:4; Mouton, 2001:87). In addition, it provides a rationale for the planned study (Boote & Beile, 2005:4; McMillan & Schumacher, 2006:75-76). This literature review will provide a thorough examination of the duties of the principal, as outlined in South African legislation and in current literature. It will also explore the definition of the concept of Instructional leadership and review existing research on instructional leadership and its effects on learner achievement. Some existing models of instructional leadership will be discussed and, finally, a theoretical framework for the present study will be outlined.

It will be pertinent to examine the duties of principals in South African public schools at this stage.

### 2.2 THE DUTIES OF THE PRINCIPAL

In a South African context, the principal’s duties are spelt out in different legislation, namely, the *Employment of Educators Act of 1998* (South Africa, 1998), the *South African Schools” Act of 1996* (South Africa, 1996) and more recently, the *Education Law’s Amendment Act of 2007* (South Africa, 2007).
2.2.1 The South African Schools’ Act of 1996

The education system during the apartheid era was structured to propagate and sustain the ideology of apartheid. As a result the leaders of a post-apartheid South Africa realized that to build a new and democratic social order in South Africa, it would be necessary to restructure the state education system (Fiske & Ladd, 2004:59). This, the new government tried to bring about by introducing reform legislation and through policy introduction and changes.

The policy most pertinent to this study is the South African Schools” Act (Act No. 84 of 1996). Section 16(1) and 16(2) of the SASA vested the task of managing local schools in each school’s elected school governing body (SGB), which by design is dominated by parents (South Africa, 1996:16). The strategy was to devolve management of schools to local structures, in other words to schools elected SGBs. This Act placed the principal in a dual role: first as a member of the governing body, and second, as responsible for professional matters. Under the apartheid regime the roles of principals were limited in that they were mainly administrators who had to facilitate the agenda of the state (Naidu et al., 2008:4).

The South African Schools Act (South Africa, 1996) changed this role drastically in that now principals had to take on the responsibility of not only managing their schools, but also of leading their schools. In addition to good governance, principals had to now develop and share the school’s mission and vision and to develop strategies to promote high quality teaching and learning (Naidu et al., 2008:4-5).

2.2.2 The Employment of Educators Act of 1998

According to Section 16 of the Employment of Educators Act, Act 76 of 1998 (EEA) and Personnel Administration Measures (PAM) (par 4.2) the aim of the job of a principal is:
(i) To ensure that the school is managed satisfactorily and in compliance with applicable legislation, regulations and personnel administration measures as prescribed; and

(ii) To ensure that the education of the learners is promoted in a proper manner and in accordance with approved policies.

The core duties and responsibilities of a principal are grouped together under the following broad headings:

**General Administrative** duties include the professional management of a public school; time-tabling; admission and placement of learners; financial management and accountability; keeping a school journal; management and maintenance of the physical structure and equipment; management of a hostel, if one is attached to the school; disseminating and storing departmental circulars and other relevant information to staff members timeously, and handling correspondence received at school.

**Professional management** involves providing instructional leadership within the school; guiding, supervising and mentoring staff members; writing or countersigning reports on staff members; ensuring the equitable distribution of work among staff members; inducting new members of staff; developing all staff members; participating in school/educator appraisal systems with the aim of improving teaching, learning and management and ensuring that all evaluation/forms of assessment conducted in the school are properly and efficiently organized.

In terms of teaching, a principal is required to engage in class teaching as per the workload of the relevant post level, and the needs of the school; to be a class teacher, if required, and to assess and record the attainment of learners taught.
With regards to **extra and co-curricular activities** the principal is expected to participate and serve on relevant committees, if required; to actively promote such activities within the school, and to encourage learners to participate in sports, educational and cultural activities organized by community bodies.

**Interacting with stakeholders** involves serving on the governing body of the school and rendering all necessary assistance carrying out their functions in terms of the SA Schools Act, 1996; and participating in community activities in connection with educational matters and community building.

In terms of **communication** the principal is required to maintain cordial relations with members of the school staff and the school governing body; to liaise with the Circuit/Regional Office, Supplies Section, Personnel Section, Finance Section, and other relevant sections concerning administration, staffing, accounting, purchase of equipment, research and updating of statistics in respect of educators and learners; to liaise with relevant structures regarding school curricula and curriculum development; to meet parents concerning learners’ progress and conduct; to co-operate with universities, colleges and other agencies in relation to learners’ records and performances, as well as INSET and management development programmes; to participate in departmental and professional committees, seminars and courses in order to contribute to and/or update professional views/standards; and to maintain contacts with sports, social, cultural and community organisations.

In terms of instructional leadership, the Employment of Educators Act 1998 (South Africa, 1998) outlined in a little more detail the role of the principal. Guiding, supervising and mentoring staff; teaching; taking a more active role in curriculum development and in extra-curricular activities are all examples of the types of activities an instructional leader would be involved in.
2.2.3 The Education Laws Amendment Act of 2007

The functions and responsibilities of the principal were amended in 2007 (Education Laws Amendment Act, 2007) with the insertion after Section 16 of Section 16A. Here the principal is provided with more specific duties relating to governance and professional matters. According to Section 16A the principal is required to submit an annual report in respect of -

(i) the academic performance of that school in relation to minimum outcomes and standards and procedures for assessment determined by the Minister in terms of Section 6A; and

(ii) the effective use of available resources.

The Act goes on to state that the principal of a public school must draw up an academic plan at the beginning of each year setting out how academic performance at the school will be improved. Once this plan has been approved by the Head of Department, the principal needs to submit a report by 30 June on progress made in implementing the plan.

Section 16A (2) states:

The principal must

(a) In undertaking the professional management of a public school as contemplated in section 16(3), carry out duties which include, but are not limited to-

(i) the implementation of all educational programmes and curriculum activities;

(ii) the management of all educators and support staff;

(iii) the management of the use of learning support material and other equipment;

(iv) the performance of functions delegated to him or her by the Head of Department in terms of this Act;

(v) the safekeeping of all school records; and
(vi) the implementation of policy and legislation;
(b) attend and participate in all meetings of the governing body;
(c) provide the governing body with a report about the professional management relating to the public school;
(d) assist the governing body in handling disciplinary matters pertaining to learners;
(e) assist the Head of Department in handling disciplinary matters pertaining to educators and support staff employed by the Head of Department;
(f) inform the governing body about policy and legislation; and
(g) provide accurate data to the Head of Department when requested to do so.

The Education Laws Amendment Act of 2007 (South Africa, 2007) extends the scope of duties of the principal to include the drawing up of an academic plan to show how the academic performance of learners will be improved. This implies that the Department of Education is concerned with learner achievement. Also, by being a bit more specific about the professional duties of the principal, the Department of Education is acknowledging the important role that the principal plays in learner achievement, and in the instructional matters of the school.

All three pieces of legislation outlined indicate that the duties of principals are wide ranging and the role expectations very complex. Principals tasks range from non-education matters such as maintaining the physical plant, labour relations, financial management, empowering the governing body and routine administrative tasks to the highly professional role of evaluating and supporting educators in their work (Kruger, 2003:206). However, what is missing in the legislation is a detailed description of what is expected of principals in their instructional leadership roles. Without this guidance, it is not surprising then that principals get caught up spending more of their time and energy on day-to-day management tasks, which they are more familiar with (Shah, 1990:11).
By doing this, principals tend to neglect their primary task, and that is to enhance the school's teaching and learning activities by creating conditions in the school in which learners can receive quality education (Kruger, 2003:206). This task has been broadly identified as the principal's instructional leadership role (Van Deventer & Kruger, 2008:245).

Yu (2009:738) strongly asserts that for a school to be effective it must have an effective principal. He describes effective principals as „central agents of change in the system of improving school performance“ (Yu, 2009:738). Many researchers and educationists believe that effective principals display instructional leadership behaviours (Alig-Mielcari, 2003:3; Glanz, 2006:1; Yu, 2009:738). It is important then to take a closer look at the various definitions of instructional leadership, in order to identify some common features that have positive effects on the achievement of learners.

2.3 INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP AND PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Educational researchers define instructional leadership in a variety of ways: Alig-Mielcarek (2003:3) defines it in terms of principal behaviour that leads a school to educate all learners to a level of high achievement. These include behaviour, which defines and communicates shared goals, monitors and provides feedback on the teaching and learning process, and promotes school-wide professional development.

Liu (as cited by Yu, 2009:723) defines instructional leadership as consisting of direct and indirect behaviours that significantly affect teacher instruction and, as a result, student learning. Leithwood et al. (1999:8), as cited by Hopkins (1998:3), define instructional leadership as an approach to leadership that emphasizes „the behaviour of teachers as they engage in activities directly affecting the growth of students“. Hopkins goes on to argue that instructional
leaders are able to „create synergy between a focus on teaching and learning on one hand, and capacity building on the other” (Hopkins, 1998: 5).

Spillane et al. (2003:4) define instructional leadership as an influence relationship that motivates, enables, and supports teachers” efforts to learn and change their instructional practices. Daresh and Playko (as cited in Gupton, 2003:32) define instructional leadership as „… direct or indirect behaviours that significantly affect teacher instruction and, as a result student learning”. Glanz (2006:2) confirms this by saying that „good principals focus on instruction, because they know that doing so, more than anything else they do, directly affects student learning”. According to Sparks (2002:2-3) instructional leaders „keep schools focused on the core learning processes and organizational/structural changes required to produce high levels of learning and performance for all students and staff members”.

As the leader of the school, it becomes incumbent upon the principal to play a crucial role in influencing and improving the academic achievement of the learners (Glanz, 2006:1). The principal is expected to be the „chief learning officer” and, in this regard, some researchers prefer the term „learning leader” rather than „instructional leader” (DuFour, 2002:13).

All the definitions of instructional leadership mentioned thus far emphasize the influence, or effects, that the principal as a leader has on the teaching and learning process, and, ultimately, on learner achievement. The various researchers differ as to whether the influence is directly or indirectly related to learner achievement, but agree unanimously that instructional leadership does influence learner achievement. The question that would inevitably follow then is, “What does the instructional leader have to do to influence learner achievement positively?”
It would, thus, be appropriate discuss some of the conceptual models that have emerged on instructional leadership.

2.4 INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP MODELS

Research on instructional leadership has been carried out mainly by studying the behavior of principals whose schools are perceived to be “effective schools”. Definitions of instructional leadership have been based on the traits, behaviours and processes that “effective principals” are seen to exhibit and follow. Numerous conceptual models have emerged from these studies and definitions (Alig-Mielcaric, 2003; Hallinger & Murphy, 1985; Murphy, 1990; Weber, 1996).

2.4.1 Hallinger & Murphy’s Model (1985)

The most fully tested approach to instructional leadership is that of Hallinger and his colleagues (Hopkins: 1998:3). Hallinger and Murphy examined the instructional leadership behaviours of 10 elementary school principals and conducted a review of the school effectiveness literature. They used a common questionnaire to collect information on instructional leadership principals, schools staff and central administration supervisors.

They supplemented this data by doing an analysis of documents. Using this, a framework of instructional management with three dimensions was developed which they further delineated into 11 specific instructional leadership functions (Hallinger & Murphy, 1985). There is considerable empirical support for this model, particularly as it relates to student outcomes (Hopkins, 1998:3). Hallinger and Murphy (1985) used the 11 job descriptors from the three dimensions of instructional management to create an appraisal instrument of principal instructional management behavior, the Principal Instructional Management Rating Scale (PIMRS). It was later revised and the 11 job descriptors were reduced to 10.
2.4.2 Murphy’s Model (1990)

In a comprehensive review of the literature on instructional leadership, Murphy (1990) noted that principals in effective schools (schools where the quality of teaching and learning were strong) demonstrated instructional leadership both directly and indirectly. Using this review, he built an instructional leadership framework which emphasized four sets of activities with implications for instruction: (a) developing the school mission and goals; (b) co-ordinating, monitoring and evaluating curriculum, instruction and assessment; (c) promoting a climate for learning; and (d) creating a supportive working environment (Murphy, 1990).

2.4.3 Weber’s Model (1996)

Weber’s Model (1996) of instructional leadership incorporates research about shared leadership and empowerment of informal leaders. In this regard Weber (1997:36) avers that effective instructional leadership would depend to a large extent on two important factors, that is, “the flexibility a principal exhibits in sharing leadership duties” and “the clarity with which a principal matches leadership duties with individuals who can perform them collaboratively”.

Weber (1996) identified five essential domains of instructional leadership: defining the school’s mission; managing curriculum and instruction; promoting a positive learning climate; observing and improving instruction, and assessing the instructional programme.

2.4.4. Alig-Mielcaric’s Instructional Leadership Model (2003)

Alig-Mielcaric (2003:47) found three distinct similarities that emerged from a study of the three models discussed (Hallinger & Murphy, 1985; Murphy, 1990; Weber, 1996). All three indicated the importance of instructional leaders defining
and communicating goals, monitoring and providing feedback on the teaching and learning process, and promoting and emphasizing the importance of professional development. Alig-Mielcaric (2003:48) then used these three common dimensions to come up with his own framework of instructional leadership which he tested empirically.

2.5 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP

Although researchers and scholars may differ as to the exact nature of the instructional leadership task most stem from Hallinger and Murphy’s model (1985). This model has therefore been chosen to serve as a framework for the present study.

Hallinger & Murphy’s (1985) conceptualization of instructional management is illustrated in table 2.1 below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Defines the Mission</th>
<th>Manages Instructional programme</th>
<th>Promotes School Climate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Frames the school's goals</td>
<td>Coordinates the curriculum</td>
<td>Protects instructional time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicates the school's goals</td>
<td>Supervises and evaluates instruction</td>
<td>Provides incentives for teachers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Monitors student progress</td>
<td>Provides incentives for learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Promotes professional development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Maintains high visibility</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2.1 Framework of Instructional Management (Hallinger & Murphy, 1985).
2.5.1 Defining the School Mission

The dimension of defining the school mission includes framing and communicating school goals (Hallinger & Murphy: 1985). A very basic yet extremely important task of principals in their instructional role of school leaders, is to provide their schools with direction (Gupton, 2003:36). This they do through the vision and mission of the school. Peter Drucker ((1992 as cited by Gupton, 2003:36) very aptly asserts that, “The foundation of effective leadership is thinking through the organization"s mission, defining it and establishing it clearly and visibly."

The mission of the school usually begins with a clear vision. Visions are dreams of how best to accomplish the mission (Gupton, 2003:51). A vision is an aspiration; it details what we are aspiring to, what we would like to be. It is in the main long-term in nature. It is important for educational leaders to know what they want for their schools and to know where they want to take their schools to. Moloi (2005: 56) cites Martin Luther King as an example of “the power that can be generated by a person who communicates a compelling vision of the future.”

Covey (2004:98) avers that by having a clear understanding of your destination, and the sense of purpose that comes with it, you are better able to deal with even the most difficult daily challenges that you may face. Covey (2006: 65) defines vision as „seeing with the mind”s eye what is possible in people, in projects, in causes and in enterprises”. He states that when the mind joins need with possibility it results in vision (Covey, 2006: 65).

It is important that the leaders are passionate about their visions and that they believe they are achievable. Good principals set high expectations and standards for success (Squires, Huitt & Segars (1984) in Glanz, 2006:7). A vision cannot be developed in a vacuum. To develop their visions, leaders need to know themselves well; they need to know their schools well; they need to
know the community in which their schools operate well; they need to have a good understanding of the staff and learners of that school (Clark, 2007:3; Gupton, 2003:25).

The mission statement encapsulates the fundamental purpose of the school (Zepeda, 2004:89; Gupton, 2003:37). A mission and its statements serve to focus the school on the beliefs and the values of the school community. The mission helps to guide the principal in focusing, developing and co-ordinating the school's improvement process. Richard Elmore (2003), the highly respected expert in school improvement from Harvard University, as cited by Blasé et al. (2010:28) maintains that the key to improving schools and student achievement is having the right focus, and this focus then drives all that is administrative as well as instructional.

McEwan (2003:68) cautions school leaders not to claim sole ownership of the mission statement of the school as it belongs to the school community and, as such, it should incorporate the collective vision of everyone and it be a consensus statement of where the school community wants to get together. “A shared vision produces a much higher level of sustained commitment than is possible when the vision is imposed from above,” says Moloi (2005:56-57).

The leader has to ensure that staff members are involved in the process of drawing up a meaningful vision for the school. The leader needs to inspire them to take ownership of this vision and to share this common goal (Blasé et al., 2010:37). A vision can only inspire and elicit commitment from the group if it is meaningful to them. Blasé et al. (2010:13), in their studies found that high-performing principals tended to include all relevant stakeholders in decision-making. They established relationships based on trust with individuals and teams. They were also willing to share power and responsibility/accountability and encouraged ownership.
In addition to ensuring that the vision and mission are shared with all stakeholders, the leader has to communicate the mission and vision to them and, more importantly, see to it that the vision is put into practice (Clarke, 2007:3). This can be achieved through the use of formal or informal communication such as handbooks, staff meetings, school assemblies, conversations with staff or students, bulletin boards, newsletters, and teacher and parent conferences (Hallinger & Murphy, 1985). By also behaving in ways that are consistent with the vision of the school, the principal can serve as a powerful incentive for members of staff to do the same and thus get the support of all other stakeholders (Moloi, 2005:57).

Zepeda (2004:89) posits that the mission helps the school and its’ leadership to answer the following fundamental questions:

- Who are we as a collective faculty and school?
- What do we want to strive to become?
- Whom do we serve?
- What are the needs of those we serve?
- What are our strengths and weaknesses?
- Where are we headed?
- How will we know when we have arrived?

The goals of the school should emerge from its mission and vision (Naidu et al., 2008:63). They should be clear, specific, concrete and should in serve as the operational blueprints to realize the mission and vision of the school (Gupton, 2003:51, Naidu et al., 2008:63). Effective principals should establish clearly defined academic goals for the school and collaboratively strategize to develop clear and consistent school-wide instructional policies that would, in turn, initiate the process of realizing these goals and objectives (Glanz, 2006:7). The principal can influence student-learning outcomes by setting the school’s goals and by promoting effective instructional practices (Zepeda, 2004:12).
Schlechty (1990) (as cited by Gupton, 2003:146) says, “The results by which school systems must be led are the results that are consistent with the purpose of school, as that purpose is articulated in the school's vision statement and belief structure.” Shared beliefs, values, mission and goals all form the bedrock upon which a learning organization builds and returns frequently for re-examination, renewal and guidance in dealing with the many issues on the educational landscape (Gupton, 2003:146).

2.5.2 Managing the instructional programme

Managing the instructional programme dimension as outlined by Hallinger and Murphy (1985), involves working directly with teachers in areas related to curriculum and instruction. Job functions included in this dimension consist of supervising and evaluating instruction, co-ordinating the curriculum, and monitoring student progress.

2.5.2.1 Coordinating the curriculum

Curricular and extra-curricular activities are the two features of a school's educational programme which has to be catered for. Effective principals involve teachers in curriculum planning and development (Glanz, 2008:8). By doing this, they encourage teachers to take ownership of decisions taken. Being part of the process encourages commitment on the part of the teachers which, in turn, results in learners being engaged in an enriching educational experience.

As an instructional leader, the principal has to create opportunities for and to encourage best practices in curriculum developing, planning and implementation (Glanz, 2006:33). Glanz (2006:33) specifically emphasizes that instructional leaders need not be experts in curriculum but that they need to familiarize themselves with basic concepts pertaining to curriculum development. He goes
on to list a number of ways in which successful instructional leaders facilitate best practices in curriculum management. They are, among others, listed below:

- Model best practice in curriculum as you, the principal, review all instructional resources and materials in various content areas (e.g. reading and mathematics).
- Align teaching with curriculum.
- Encourage teachers and others to review curriculum guidelines and recommend revisions to the instructional programme (Gupton, 2003:49).
- Integrate local, provincial or national standards into curriculum and instruction.
- Review testing and assessment procedures.
- Invite curriculum specialists from within and outside of the school to help facilitate curriculum revisions and development.

In Annexure A (38-43) of a Gauteng Department of Education document titled „Chief Director: Districts Ekudibeng Operations Framework 2011/12“, a guide to assist schools to manage curriculum effectively is given. The district maintains that effective management of curriculum is directly linked to the performance of the learners and the results of the school. The model caters for management of curriculum at different levels of the system. The following is a summarized version of the curriculum management model which is more extensively outlined in Annexure A (38 -43) of the above document:

In the initial stage the school must identify two cycles of curriculum management per term and incorporate it into the school calendar and management plan. Progress reports would be based on content coverage and learner performance (analysis of term results and intervention strategies). For every cycle the following would be done: teachers would evaluate their progress and submit individual reports to their Heads of Department (HODs) for evaluation and development; the HODs must verify the reports of each of the teachers that they
supervise in conjunction with the teacher's file and a sample of learners' workbooks. Each HOD will then submit a report on each teacher to the deputy principal who will then select a teacher to sample. The HOD's file, the teacher's file and samples of learners' workbooks will be used to verify the report of the HOD. The deputy principal will then draw up a report on each HOD and submit it to the principal who will then verify the authenticity of the deputy principal's report by sampling one HOD and a teacher in that HOD's department as well as a sample of learners' books. The principal has to draw up a summary report which is submitted to the District Office. The final stage involves district officials monitoring of the process and consolidating school reports to come up with district intervention strategies.

Effective instructional leaders would also have well-planned and well-rounded extra-curriculum programmes in place for learners. In their capacity as leaders they would be aware that by engaging learners in a meaningful extra-curricular programme would keep them away from undesirable forms of entertainment (Van Deventer & Kruger, 2008:249) and, at the same time, would also enable them to develop more holistically.

2.5.2.2 Supervises and evaluates instruction

Supervising and evaluating instruction comprises activities that provide instructional support to teachers, monitor classroom instruction through informal classroom visits, and aligning classroom practice with school goals (Hallinger & Murphy, 1985).

There is a general consensus that in order to support teachers in their instructional tasks principals should have had adequate teaching experiences and some even feel that principals should engage in some teaching (Enueme & Egwunyenga, 2008:13; Glanz, 2006:xv). Glanz (2006:55) consolidates this view by stating that principals should perceive themselves as „teachers of teachers“. 
They should have „walked-the-walk“ so to speak. This view is based on the notion that in order to support and communicate good teaching practice to teachers it is important that principal should have undergone similar experiences. It is through these experiences that they would be able to gain the knowledge and skills to support their teachers. Added to this, having teaching experience will also assist the principal to gain legitimacy in the eyes of teachers and, more importantly enable the principal to understand the instructional challenges faced by teachers (Glanz, 2006:xv; Enueme & Egwunyenga, 2008:13).

Supervision and evaluation of educators’ performances is a very contentious issue, mainly so because it is subjective and can, to a large extent, be dependent on the person who is doing the evaluating. It would seem that supervision is more effective when it is carried out for support purposes rather than for evaluative purposes. Supervision has been interpreted as a helping function, whereas evaluation has traditionally been viewed as one of judging and rating. Blasé and Blasé (1998) conclude from their study of effective instructional leaders that those principals who are most successful plan carefully for teachers to have adequate feedback, information and assistance for their professional growth and development.

There are a variety of reasons for educators to be evaluated. Loock, Grobler & Mestry (2006:63) list four functions which educator evaluation can fulfill:

- **A formative function** for the development of professional teaching skills;
- **A summative function** for selection and as a basis for grading and promotion;
- **A socio-political function**, such as providing motivation in order to improve effectiveness or to promote certain preferred teaching actions; and
- **An administrative function** for the exercise of authority.
Although different purposes for evaluating teaching personnel may exist, the focus of the instructional leader in performance evaluation would be on promoting growth and development in respect of teachers which, in turn, would improve learner achievement (Gupton, 2003: 109-112; Bush, Joubert, Kiggundu & Van Rooyen, 2009:4)

Classroom observation is mandated for South Africa’s Integrated Quality Management Systems (IQMS) but also occurs in some schools as monitoring a device. The IQMS was developed by the Education Labour Relations Council (ELRC) together with the National Department of Education. At the level of the school, the principal and the School Development Team (SDT), together with the Development Support Group (DSG) have to implement this performance measuring instrument. The manual for IQMS (Section A:3) clearly outlines the purpose of the instrument:

- The purpose of Development Appraisal (DA) is to appraise individual educators in a transparent manner with a view to determining areas of strengths and weaknesses and to draw up programmes for individual development (formative evaluation) (Loock et al, 2006:63).

- The purpose of Performance Measurement (PM) is to evaluate individual educators for salary progression, affirmation of appointments and rewards and incentives (summative evaluation) (Loock et al, 2006:63).

- The purpose of Whole School Evaluation (WSE) is to evaluate the overall effectiveness of a school including the support provided by the district, school management, infrastructure and learning resources – as well as the quality of teaching and learning (system evaluation) (Loock et al, 2006:63).

Implementation of IQMS at South African schools is mandatory, however, there are a number of challenges in implementation. Loock et al. (2006: 64) point out that there was very little input by teachers in the designing of the instrument. To add to this, inadequate training was provided in respect of how it was to be
implemented, and it also requires a lot of paperwork. In many schools it is being implemented just because it has to be, and the potential it has for improving teaching, and thus learning, is being lost because it is not being properly implemented.

Before 1994, the systems of evaluation at schools in South Africa lacked credibility because appraisal was done mainly by inspectors, who were deemed to be collaborators of the apartheid regime (Mestry, 1999:140). Educators opposed the inspectorate system more so, because instead of being developmental and supportive it was more punitive and vindictive and instilled fear into the educators (Naidu et al., 2008:47). This legacy has to a certain extent, influenced many South African teachers' perceptions of the present systems of appraisal. Thus, although the inspectorate system has been dispensed with, many teachers still view teacher evaluation with suspicion.

Loock et al. (2006:85) contend that the essence of educator evaluation "lies in the potential use of the system". It is then up to the principal, as the instructional leader, to ensure that the system is used in such a way that it promotes teacher development.

Blasé et al. (2010:153) claim that the ritualistic nature of the formal evaluation process with its attendant fear, stress and anxiety has interfered with teachers' professional development. The onus then seems to be on instructional leaders to find ways and means to turn the supervision and evaluation process into a positive learning experience and an opportunity for growth. Gupton (2003:109-112) firmly believes, “It is possible for a school’s professional staff working cooperatively to take provincial and district mandated evaluation systems that are less than ideal and turn them into useful, nurturing processes for improving teaching and learning. A school’s professional community can literally transform evaluations from traditionally oriented observation, checklists and ratings that are one way – top-down or bottom-up - to cooperative endeavors wherein teachers
and administrators work as team members to help each other learn, grow and improve their performances."

Providing instructional leadership by focusing on best practices in supervision and professional development is the prime responsibility of the principal. Glanz (2006:89-90) says that a principal can contribute to meaningful supervision and professional development by engaging in the following behaviour:

- In word and deed, place emphasis on improving teaching and promoting learning.
- Involve teachers in planning, implementing and assessing supervision and professional development.
- Utilize experts in supervision and professional development as consultants.
- Provide options or alternatives to traditional practices of supervision and professional development.
- Draw links between supervision and professional development and student achievement.

The last point brings us to the next section which considers the principal’s role in monitoring learner progress.

### 2.5.2.3 Monitoring learner progress

As an instructional leader, the principal can be instrumental in improving learner achievement by guiding and assisting teachers to engage in sound assessment practices (Stiggins & Duke, 2008:286). Observations have shown effective principals to be familiar with different assessment methods and techniques and of having systematic assessment procedures in place (Glanz, 2006:7). Effective principals also collect and review relevant assessment data with the intention of using their findings to improve the school instructional programme as well as to inform their leadership practices (Blasé et al., 2010:24; Glanz, 2006:8).
Collection of relevant data is extremely important in that it informs and gives direction to the school improvement plan (Zepeda, 2004:95). Fitzpatrick (1997) (as cited by Zepeda, 2004:95) points out that data serves two critical purposes that guide the school improvement process:

- Collection and careful analysis of pertinent information is critical in determining the effectiveness of the existing programmes and services in schools.
- Moreover, the types of data collected for the profile can assist schools in planning and sustaining their school improvement initiatives on behalf of student learning.

Instructional leaders need to collect and use a variety of data as well as research to enable them to make informed decisions, and to plan strategies for ongoing improvement and accountability for what’s happening in their schools, as well as how well students are achieving (Gupton, 2003:176). Stiggins & Duke (2008:286) maintain, “School leaders must ensure that their assessment systems provide a wide variety of decision-makers with a variety of different kinds of information in different formats at different times to support or verify student learning depending on the context.”

Data analysis should not be performed at a superficial level. It should be in-depth so that it can inform instructional practices. For example, it is not enough to know that learners in a particular grade are not performing well in a particular learning area. From the analysis it should be clear exactly which aspects of the learning area the learners are not performing well in, and which learners are affected as this will help direct change and maximize improvement efforts focused on teaching and learning (Gupton, 2003:176). According to Gupton (2003:177-178), if data is skillfully collected, stored and analyzed, it can together with this up-to-date research, be used as power tools for change. This will provide information to enable educators to make the most of their time, resources
and improvement initiatives by streamlining strategies to meet, most particularly, the specific needs of their learners.

2.5.3 Promoting a positive school climate

Hoyle, English and Steffy (1994) (as cited by Gupton, 2003:53) aver that, “School climate may be one of the most important ingredients of a successful instructional programme. It is the school's „personality“. Without a climate that creates a harmonious and well-functioning school, a high degree of academic achievement is difficult, if not downright impossible to obtain.”

The words „climate“ and „culture“ are often used interchangeably. In terms of the school organization it basically means „how we do things around here“. The work of building a positive school culture, supportive of student achievement is multifaceted and complex, but it is an essential, fundamental part of instructional leadership (Gupton, 2003:58).

Promoting a positive school learning climate includes several functions: Protecting instructional time, promoting professional development, maintaining high visibility, providing Incentives for teachers and for learning (Hallinger & Murphy, 1985). The job descriptors in this dimension embody the activities necessary to influence the promotion of a positive learning climate through indirect activities.

2.5.3.1 Protects instructional time

Time is one of the most important resources of effective instruction. One often hears teachers complain of „time constraints“ which impede effective instruction. It is, therefore, important that the principal, as instructional leader, makes sure that instructional time is protected and properly managed (Glanz, 2006:17). Blasé et al. (2010:42-43) found that principals who do not develop effective
systems to organize the school often find themselves spending a lot of time on repair and maintenance tasks which then detracts from time that could be spent on supporting teaching and learning in their schools.

Learning time can also be protected if interruptions and disruptions, which compromise teaching and learning, are kept to a minimum (Glanz, 2006:18). Interruptions such as excessive announcements over the intercom, learners sent on errands, drop-in visitors and unplanned assembly talks should be avoided (Glanz, 2006:18). Very often teachers who have difficulty dealing with disciplinary problems in their classes waste teaching time. This can be avoided if the principal collaboratively devises a school wide policy on discipline which is cascaded to teachers and, in turn, informs the teachers’ system of rules and procedures to deal effectively with disciplinary problems in their classes (Glanz, 2006:18).

Research indicates that too much classroom time is spent on non-teaching related activities. This often occurs when teachers have not planned well for their lessons. The principal should ensure that teachers spend as much time as possible in direct-teaching practices in the classroom. Monitoring this and providing supervisory workshops on strategies to increase direct teaching are essential (Glanz, 2006:21).

2.5.3.2 Provides incentives for teachers

According to Blasé et al. (2010:12) effective principals work on the philosophy that „a happy teacher is a better teacher“. They, therefore, do their best to boost the morale of their staff. They successfully create comprehensive and inclusive cultures of appreciation and recognition by encouraging stakeholders to recognize contributions and achievements made by individual, as well as groups of staff members (Blasé et al., 2010:16-17). In addition, frequent written as well as verbal acknowledgements were made. The e-mail, letters of recognition,
certificates of achievement, a „Principal‟s List”, „freebies” and classroom walk-throughs were used to motivate teachers. High performing principals also reported that they began faculty meetings by praising or acknowledging teachers and staff members, and with requests for thoughts and support for those going through difficult or special times (death of a family member, birthdays).

2.5.3.3 Provides incentives for Learning

Fullan (1994) (as cited by Gupton, 2003:86) points out that, „nothing motivates a child more than when learning is valued by the school, the family and community working in partnership”. It can be seen then, how important it is that the principal as instructional leader works together with parents and the community to recognize learner achievement and to provide incentives for learning.

Learners need a place that is physically, emotionally and intellectually inviting. A warm, inviting atmosphere in the school and the classrooms; a clean, safe and well maintained physical structure which is conducive to teaching and learning will go a long way to meeting these needs (Gupton, 2003:127).

„You usually get what you expect from people,‟ is a frequently used quote. By setting high expectations for both learners and teachers, the principal builds their confidence in their ability to achieve and this, in turn, will help them to reach the level of expectation. Gupton (2003:129-130) states that high expectations for student” and teacher” successes are an essential building block in creating a healthy school culture, one focused on teaching and learning.

Reward systems, interventions to assist learners in need of support, involvement of parents and other stakeholders in recognizing efforts of learners will only have positive outcomes. It is important to keep stakeholders informed of what is happening in school and this can be done using different forms of communication. Letters, newsletters, a school newspaper, local newspaper
columns, homework hotlines, back-to-school open houses, and regularly scheduled parent-teacher conferences are some of the channels that can be used. It can also be used to garner support for the school and to promote opportunities for community-based interaction and dialogue about the school and the learners (Gupton, 2003:88-89).

2.5.3.4 Promotes professional development

Recent research supports the contention that to support efforts to improve schools and to kindle commitment to sustaining positive learning environments, principals need continuous professional development (Nicholson et al., 2005:15). Improved professional development serves a dual purpose. On the one hand it gives principals the confidence to take on their leadership roles, and on the other it develops their competence to be successful and motivated through job satisfaction (Nicholson et al., 2005:17). Effective instructional leaders are lifelong learners and models of learning (Blasé et al., 2010:6; DuFour, 2002:13 Fink & Resnick, 2001:4; Gupton, 2003:15).

Blasé et al. (2010:157) found that high-performing principals systematically used a number of methods to enhance professional learning in their schools. Principals were fully aware that they needed to continually update their knowledge and skills so that they could facilitate teaching and learning at their schools. To do this they found themselves consistently engaged in the process of self-reflection and in the act of comparing themselves to the ever changing standards for leaders by the profession. This, together with their attempts to honestly assess themselves with these standards, was one way to stay tuned and sensitive to the areas needed for professional growth as a leader. Gupton (2003:15-16) comments, “The time spent in self-assessment and reflection pays off in rich dividends in the long run by increasing skill level and heightening a sense of enthusiasm and energy essential to the work of good leadership.”
High performing principals, who participated in the Blasé et al. (2010:23) study worked hard to become exemplars of educational leadership, and by doing this they served as role models for teachers. By engaging in professional development activities effective principals demonstrated that learning is a continuous and dynamic process, and that as lifelong learners they were open to new ideas and constantly looking for ways to improve their leadership skills and practices. Such principals served as exemplary models for teachers, parents and learners. Taking this into consideration, it would then be correct to assume that as lifelong learners they would encourage and foster the development of their teachers. Principals” ongoing growth enabled them to maintain their focus and to support and encourage teachers in their work (Blasé et al., 2010:105).

The main aim of schooling is learning on the part of the learner. What they learn, however, depends to a large extent on how well the teacher performs in the classroom. Blasé et al. (2010:132) in their research, confirmed that teachers can make a substantial difference to student achievement. Therefore, many school reform efforts have focused on enhancing the quality of teaching (Nicholson et al., 2005:7). Accordingly Blasé et al.(2010:132), found that high performing principals expected teachers to design classroom instruction that develops specific learner abilities, thereby reliably improving learner achievement. The principal is expected to provide the appropriate leadership which will assist each staff member to make a maximum contribution to the schools” effort to providing quality and up-to-date education (Enueme & Egwunyenga, 2008:13). It was found that effective principals provide support and assistance to teachers experiencing instructional difficulties and provide for meaningful, ongoing, collaboratively developed professional development opportunities (Glanz, 2006:8; Fink & Resnick, 2001:6). Fink and Resnick (2001:6-7) very aptly point out that, “As instructional leaders, principals have to be able to figure out what to do for a teacher, what kind of professional development will be best for that person at that time. But the principal doesn”t have to actually deliver the
professional development – staff development specialists in different subjects can do that. The principal has to lead – by creating a culture of learning and by providing the right kinds of specialized professional development opportunities when they are needed."

By encouraging inquiry, reflection, exploration, experimentation and problem solving, effective principals enabled teachers to build „repertoires" of flexible alternatives rather than collections of rigid teaching procedures and methods (Blasé & Blasé, 2000: 132). In a study carried out by Enueme and Egwunyenga (2008:14-16), the main purpose was to examine the instructional leadership roles played by principals in the Asaba Metropolis, located in the Delta State of Nigeria. Findings implied that principals in the Asaba Metropolis are good instructional leaders who keep in touch with the skills needed for teaching and learning. Moreover, an important conclusion reached by the researchers was that teachers" job performance positively related to the principals" instructional leadership roles (Enueme & Egwunyenga, 2008:16; Blasé and Blasé, 2000:133).

Peer collaboration among teachers builds healthy relationships through communication, caring and trust; helps teachers structure learning experiences, facilitates effective planning and organizing for instruction; fosters sharing of techniques and materials; and improves teachers" classroom management (Blasé & Blasé, 2000:135; Fink & Resnick, 2001:4; Gupton,2003:81). Not surprisingly then, Blasé et al. (2000:135) found that high performing principals also encouraged teachers to routinely help their colleagues improve teaching and learning.

Blasé et al. (2010:118-119), in their study of high performing principals behaviour showed that dialogue and collaboration were not limited to teachers; they also included principals, assistant principals and even parents. In addition, high performing principals indicated they were members of informal groups of school leaders within, and across, country lines who met to „talk school". Fink &
Resnick (2001: 9) in their research paper based on a district in New York, which has a record of successful school improvement, observed that every principal in the district regularly attended monthly day-long principal conferences. These principal conferences are centered on instruction and learning. Over and above these conferences principals are expected to attend a number of specialized institutes that focus on particular instructional programmes or practices. Sometimes these institutes are organized by the district itself or, the principals, fees are paid for by the district if organized by other organizations (Fink & Resnick, 2001:11). All principals are expected to enroll in at least one institute each year.

Principals of effective schools indicated that they also encouraged teachers to engage in a variety of other professional learning opportunities, such as taking courses focused on school improvement, visiting other schools with exemplary programmes that might help them address deficiencies, enrolling in advanced degree programmes that would enhance their instructional and curriculum development skills, participating in retreats designed to address instructional improvement, and various forms of mentoring one another on both a routine and as-needed basis (Blasé et al., 2010:163).

Blasé & Blasé (cited in Glanz, 2006:8) maintain that the three primary elements for successful instructional leadership are:

a) Conducting instructional conferences (pre- or post-observation conferences) in which the principal should exhibit traits such as making suggestions, giving feedback, modeling, using inquiry and soliciting opinions from teachers and learners.

b) Providing staff development. Some aspects that could be included in the staff development programme are emphasizing the study of teaching and learning, support for collaboration, development of mentoring and coaching relationships, use of action research, provision of resources and application of principles of adult learning.
c) Developing teacher reflection. Principals should purposefully engage teachers in articulating feelings, sharing attitudes and thinking deeply about instructional issues.

The Wallace Foundation, in an attempt to increase knowledge about professional development programmes that promote strong instructional leaders, commissioned a study to determine if graduates from exemplary programmes reported leadership practices that are more instructionally focused than graduates from other programmes (LaPointe & Davis, 2006:3). Results indicated that principals who graduated from the eight exemplary programmes were strongly focused on leading teachers and improving instruction in the classroom. They were more likely to regularly use a variety of instructional practices focused on (LaPointe & Davis, 2006:14-15):

- facilitating student learning;
- building a professional learning community among faculty and other staff;
- fostering teacher professional development;
- providing instructional feedback to teachers;
- working with teachers to improve teaching practices and to resolve challenges facing the school; and
- using data to monitor school progress.

An interesting observation made was that principals on these programmes indicated that they were less likely to engage in activities on a regular basis that were related to managing school facilities, maintaining building security, enforcing school rules, and attending district meetings. LaPointe & Davis (2006:15) conclude the paper by stating that, “Keeping the focus of the professional development on teaching and learning appears to produce stronger instructional leaders.”

In terms of promoting professional development, an important goal would be for the principal to encourage best practices in teaching (Glanz, 2006:12-13). To do
this, principals would need to familiarize themselves with innovative teaching theories and practices and to encourage teachers to model them in classrooms. There are a number of ways in which successful instructional leaders could facilitate best practices in teaching. One would be to encourage educators to share teaching ideas and methodology. This could be done by allowing them to visit and observe colleagues in their own school in the classroom situation, and to share ideas amongst themselves. Principals could also visit schools which are known for their good teaching practices and bring back new ideas to share with their own teachers. It would also be a good idea for them to encourage their staff to also visit these schools. Principals could conduct workshops or even meetings with, and for, teachers. Workshop leaders/facilitators from within and outside the school could be invited to conduct sessions on the topics that teachers wish to learn about.

2.5.3.5 Maintains high visibility

In a study done by Blasé et al. (2010:18) many principals indicated that visibility at school-related events and recognition of students’ accomplishments and parents’ supportive roles were important symbolic responsibilities. Effective principals tend to adopt an “open-door” policy, one in which teachers, parents, students and staff are comfortable with approaching the principals in schools, or in their offices without always having to have an appointment or feeling apologetic about the interruption. Many principals felt that this type of policy was a form of visibility and provided opportunities to attend to teachers’ concerns (Blasé et al., 2010:19; Gupton, 2003:78).

Blasé et al. (2010:150-151) found that „walk-throughs” by the principal to provide non-evaluative, constructive feedback to individual teachers were more effective than class visits done for evaluative purposes. Such „walk-throughs” provided principals with valuable information about teaching and learning that they believed could not be obtained in other ways (Gupton, 2003:78). However, Blasé
et al. (2010:151) also found that finding time to conduct these „walk-throughs“ posed a serious challenge even for the most experienced principals.

Another form of visibility would be for the school leader to attend social events outside the school but based in the community. This opens the lines of communication and offers an opportunity for getting acquainted with staff and community outside of the school environment (Gupton, 2003: 78). Deciding to what extent such participation is possible is important, and will depend on the principal’s own set off personal circumstances. It is important, however, that the principal actively participate in the social life of the school community.

In larger schools where direct contact, though preferred, would be a challenge principals could maintain a presence, or a form of visibility via multiple forms of communication (Gupton, 2003:79). Surveys, telephone calls, personal visits, letters and e-mail notes are all appropriate and additional ways to communicate, depending on the purpose and the situation. Being sensitive to the context and the purpose is essential to effective communication.

2.6 SUMMARY

A thorough examination of the duties of the principal as outlined in South African legislation and in current literature was conducted. The definition of the concept of instructional leadership and research done on the topic and its effects on learner achievement was reviewed. Several existing models of instructional leadership were briefly discussed and a theoretical framework for the present study was outlined.

The model of Hallinger and Murphy (1985) was chosen to serve as a framework for this study, as there is considerable empirical support for this model (Hopkins, 1998:3). They outlined three dimensions of instructional leadership which were then divided into 10 specific instructional leadership functions. The three general
dimensions, and their specific leadership functions are: defining the school mission; managing the instructional leadership programme and promoting school climate.

There is strong evidence from the literature that effective schools were led by principals who displayed instructional leadership behaviour, and followed instructional leadership practices such as having well defined goals for their school; being involved in the curriculum and its planning; promoting self and staff development; using their own teaching practices to inform teaching and learning in their own schools; creating a climate in their schools that is conducive to teaching and learning; developing and using evaluation systems that engender teacher development and improvement and motivate teachers and learners to engage enthusiastically in the teaching and learning process.
CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

In the preceding chapter the literature on the principal’s role as instructional leader in the developing and maintaining of academic standards in schools was reviewed. It was found that the principals’ instructional leadership behaviour and practices do play a leading role in influencing learner achievement.

This chapter will focus on the research design and methodology. A plan on how the research was conducted is set out. The process of data collection and data analysis is described. The aim of this investigation is to determine the role of principals as instructional leaders to facilitate effective teaching and learning.

3.2 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.2.1 Research paradigm

To gain a better insight into the participants” realities and experiences of instructional leadership, this study is located within the interpretivist research paradigm. This paradigm is grounded in the belief that knowledge is constructed not only by phenomena that can be observed, but also by “descriptions of people”s intentions, beliefs, values and reasons, meaning making and self-understanding” (Henning, Van Rensburg & Smit, 2004: 20). According to Connole (1998:14), the interpretive perspective places primary emphasis on the process of understanding. From these understandings the researcher can identify patterns of meaning which emerge (Connole, 1998:14). This ties in with the focus of the proposed research, as its purpose is to gain a deep level of understanding of the perceptions of a particular group of principals. More specifically, this research focuses on the understandings of individual principals” perceptions of their professional roles as experienced in their day-to-day working environment, from the context of their unique contexts and backgrounds.
Generic qualitative research was used to gather research data. This type of data is suitable for this particular study because one of the major distinguishing characteristics of qualitative research is that the researcher attempts to understand people in terms of their own definition of their world (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006:315).

In the context of this research, a qualitative approach was employed for a number of reasons. It was decided that the best method to determine the principals’ understanding of their roles as instructional leaders would be to interview them, which requires a qualitative approach. To determine the principals’ understandings of their core duties and to find out what challenges they face in balancing their dual roles of manager and instructional leader requires active involvement with the principals. They are complex aspects that require understanding and interpretation as perceived by the principals in their schools. The exact words of participants would be used to describe their understanding of their instructional leadership role and the challenges they face. Since a qualitative approach is concerned with interpreting and understanding the research problem from the participants’ perspective, this would help the researcher to fulfill the aims of the study. A qualitative approach facilitates insight into the research problem as it allows for purposeful sampling of information-rich participants. This ensures that an in-depth study is conducted and useful information is obtained. A qualitative approach ensures that the researcher is the main research instrument (Creswell, 2009:175). This implies that researchers can collect data themselves and adapt to circumstances to obtain rich information.

3.2.2 Research methods

Qualitative researchers use a combination of strategies to study participants’ perspectives namely: observation, interviews, artifacts, documents and other supplementary techniques (Creswell, 2009: 175; McMillan & Schumacher, 2006:316). The research strategies are flexible and many different combinations
of strategies may be used to obtain valid data (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006:316). Mertens (1998) asserts that researchers using the interpretivist paradigm most often use qualitative methods such as interviews, observations and document reviews. Two main methods for collecting data were used for the purposes of this research project: individual interviews and document analysis.

**Interviews**

Henning et al. (2004:79) very succinctly describe interviews as „communicative events aimed at finding what participants think, know and feel.” This would imply that interviews are conducted with the express aim of finding out what participants think, feel, do and what they have to say about the topic or issue on hand. Henning et al. (2004:52) aptly summarize it as the participants giving the interviewer „their subjective reality in a „formatted” discussion.” In addition to this, interviews also enable the researcher to check and to verify or refute information gained through other research methods such as literature review and observation.

There are three types of interviews used in qualitative research. They are informal conversation interviews, semi-structured interviews with a schedule standardized open-ended interviews (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006:350). In the informal conversation interview, it is precisely that, informal. There is no predetermined set, or sequence, of questions. The questions evolve from the natural flow of the conversation (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006:351). In the semi-structured interview, a schedule is used as a guideline for the interviewer and contains a set of questions relevant to the research. The questions are not asked in a particular sequence, but all relevant topics are covered during the interview (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006:351). Both the informal conversation and interview guide approach are relatively conversational and situational. In the standardized open-ended interview, participants are asked the same questions in
the same order. This type of interview makes it difficult for the interviewer to be flexible (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006:351).

In this research semi-structured interviews with a short interview schedule were used (Appendix C). Questions focused on the topic at hand, and were phrased in a user-friendly manner to allow participants to remain in their everyday environment and to respond in ordinary language. Time was included at the beginning of each interview to establish a rapport with the participant, as the researcher wished to conduct interviews that generated meaningful and useful data (Lichtman, 2009: 142).

Semi-structured interviewers with a schedule are advantageous in that they allow the interviewer to be flexible and to explore different avenues that may emerge from the participants’ perceptions. They don’t constrict the interviewer to a particular set of questions. The interviewer may amend questions to try to get to the underlying meaning of what is being said (Lichtman, 2010:149). The interview guide gives the interviewer, especially novice interviewers, a clear set of guidelines to follow and ensures that all relevant and important data are not forgotten (Lichtman, 2010:141)

Semi-structured interviews can be disadvantageous in that the interviewer’s presence may bias responses (Creswell, 2006:179). The participants may give responses that they think the interviewer wants them to give, or they may feel uneasy if sensitive questions are asked. There is a lack of anonymity because the participant can see the interviewer and this can, to a certain extent influence the participants’ responses.

The preparations and structure of interviews were handled as follows:

Permission was obtained from the Department of Education to conduct research in the Gauteng East District (Appendix D). Permission was also obtained from the interviewees to tape record the sessions. Interviewees were assured of the
anonymity and confidentiality of the interviews. The date of the interviews was negotiated with each of the principals of the six primary schools.

The aims and objectives of the research, as stated in Chapter One guided the structure of the interviews. Reassurance was given to the participants that the aim of the research was not to judge or evaluate their management skills but to determine their perceptions in respect of instructional leadership. The interviews were conducted in a mutually agreed location. According to Lichtman (2009:142) a considerable amount of information can be obtained by observing participants in their physical settings (Lichtman, 2009:142). Five of the interviews were conducted in the participants’ offices. One interview was conducted in the interviewer’s office as the interviewer lived in the same vicinity as the interviewee and it presented a more practical venue as the school is located in another area.

**Documents**

Documents are mainly written texts which relate to some aspect of the social world. Since they are socially constructed texts, the context of their production must be taken into account (Hitchcock and Hughes, 1995: 225). Documents determine two kinds of analysis in attempting to grasp their meaning and significance. The first is to understand the surface or literal meaning; the second is to go beyond the literal reading and to look for deeper meanings in the given text (Hitchcock and Hughes, 1995:225). For the purposes of this study the following documents were examined: legislation and policy pertaining to the role of the principal as well as to curriculum changes; relevant school documents as well as Gauteng East District memorandums and circulars were examined to complement and to inform the interviews. School documents such as the school management plan, teacher development plans, mission and vision statements were used to confirm and validate what was said by the principals” in the interviews.
3.3 SELECTION AND SAMPLING

A sample is a group of individuals who participate in the research. A sample is selected from a population (a larger group in a particular environment). The purpose of the sample is to get participants who can give you a good insight into that which is being examined (Henning et al., 2004:71).

Interviews were conducted with a sample that was purposive. According to Marshall (1996:523), many qualitative researchers use purposive sampling because they recognize that some participants are “richer” than others and they are more likely to provide insight and understanding for the researcher. In other words, these samples are chosen because they are likely to be knowledgeable and informative about the phenomena the researcher is investigating (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006:319). Principals from six primary schools in the Gauteng East District were interviewed. The sample included three primary schools from the population of 81 schools in Gauteng East District that were classified as Gauteng Primary Literacy Strategy schools by the Gauteng Department of Education (GDE). The Gauteng Department of Education (GDE, Circular 2/2011:2) identified these schools as schools that needed assistance to improve the literacy and mathematics levels of their learners. The other three schools were taken from the primary schools in the Gauteng East District who were not classified as “Gauteng Primary Literacy Strategy schools”. All the principals chosen had some form of school management experience of at least 10 years. It was hoped that this would enable the participants to contribute from a more insightful perspective. Principals from both gender groups (3 male and 3 female) were chosen for comparative purposes.

The data from the interviews was collected from six principals as indicated in the table 3.1 on the next page:
Table 3.1  Biographical Data of participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Teaching experience</th>
<th>Experience as principal</th>
<th>Experience as SMT</th>
<th>Highest Qualification</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>24 years</td>
<td>9 years</td>
<td>21 years</td>
<td>Post Graduate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>20 years</td>
<td>3 years</td>
<td>11 years</td>
<td>Post Graduate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>35 years</td>
<td>10 years</td>
<td>20 years</td>
<td>Graduate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>14 years</td>
<td>15 months</td>
<td>10 yrs in District 14 months at province</td>
<td>Post Graduate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>20 years</td>
<td>10 years</td>
<td>10 years</td>
<td>Post Graduate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>22 years</td>
<td>12 years</td>
<td>12 years</td>
<td>Post Graduate</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3.4 DATA ANALYSIS

According to Henning et al. (2004:101), “The true test of a competent qualitative researcher comes in the analysis of the data, a process that requires analytical craftsmanship and the ability to capture understanding of the data in writing.”

Document analysis

Document analysis (Mertens, 1998:324) was used to determine what is expected from the principal. It also allowed the researcher to confirm certain data that was obtained during the interviews. In order to ascertain what the South African Department of Education required from the principal the following legal documents were studied: the South African School's Act, Act 84 of 1996, Employment of Educators Act, Act 76 of 1998 and the Education Law’s Amendment Act of 2007. In addition, a literature review was done to allow the researcher to critically examine previous and recent research and theories on instructional leadership and how this influenced learner achievement. It also gave the researcher an idea of what type of behaviours instructional leaders displayed.
Descriptions of the role of the principal, mission statements of the schools, year plans of the school, staff development plans of the school as well as relevant Gauteng East District memorandums and circulars were studied to corroborate, inform and complement the interviews.

**Analysis of the data from the interviews**

Data analysis is making sense of the data that was collected. The researcher took notes during the interview, as well as transcribed the interviews as soon as possible after the interview had taken place. Analysis was done throughout as well as after the data collection. Data was closely examined to search for themes and patterns that illustrate similarities and differences and to uncover the meaning of particular perceptions focusing on the aim of the study (Creswell, 2009: 198-199; Mertens, 1998:350-351).

For the purposes of this study, Tesch"s (1990) approach to data analysis as cited by Creswell (2009: 186) and Henning et al. (2004: 128) was used: I carefully read and re-read through all the transcripts to get a sense of the whole. One participant"s responses was randomly selected to find underlying meanings and thoughts of that interview. I went through it, asking myself, “What is this about?” Thoughts that came up were written in the margin. The same procedure was followed for each interview transcript. Similar topics were then clustered together and arranged into themes and sub-themes. Themes were reduced by grouping related topics that showed inter-relationships.

Henning et al. (2004:128) emphasize that the analyses should be a true reflection of the participants" views and perceptions.

### 3.5 TRUSTWORTHINESS, RELIABILITY AND VALIDITY

Seale as cited by Golafshani (2003:601) states that the „trustworthiness of a research report lies at the heart of issues conventionally discussed as validity
and reliability”. Lincoln and Guba propose four criteria that they believe should be considered by qualitative researchers in pursuit of a trustworthy study: credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability (Morse et al., 2002:15; Shenton, 2004:64). Lincoln and Guba”s measures to ensure trustworthiness will be applied throughout the research process.

Validity in a qualitative perspective questions whether the researcher, by using certain methods, is investigating what he says he is investigating (Henning et al., 2004:147; McMillan & Schumacher, 2006:324). McMillan and Schumacher (2006:324) maintain that „claims of validity rest on data collection and analysis techniques.” Prolonged engagement, triangulation, member checks and peer debriefing were used to promote confidence that the researcher has accurately recorded the phenomena under investigation (credibility). Before the initial interviews took place the researcher made contact with each participant telephonically to establish a relationship of trust between them (prolonged engagement). The interviewer also knew, and had at times interacted with, some of the participants on a professional level. Participants were given the opportunity to refuse to participate in the project so as to ensure that data collection sessions involved only those who are genuinely willing to take part (Creswell,, 2009:89; McMillan & Schumacher, 2006: 334; Mouton, 2001: 244; O"Leary, 2004:52). In this study, interviews and documents were used to support themes that emerged from the study. Regular checks were done with the participants to ensure the accuracy of data collection (member checks) i.e. transcription of interviews were given to each participant to verify (McMillan & Schumacher, 2006 :324; Shenton, 2004: 68). Peers and colleagues were given the opportunity to comment on the research project so that the project could be refined and strengthened.

Transferability is the term used to judge the extent to which the findings can be applied to other contexts. Purposive sampling and rich, thick descriptions which would allow the reader to have a proper understanding of the phenomenon under
investigation were strategies used to achieve transferability. The researcher tried to provide detailed descriptions and to use as much as possible of the participants’ actual words, to enable the readers to compare instances of the phenomenon described in the research report with those that they have seen emerge in their situations (Shenton, 2004: 70).

Reliability in qualitative research refers to the consistency and dependability of the researcher’s findings. Dependability and confirmability will be obtained through triangulation as well as a detailed report on the processes followed in the study so that a future researcher may repeat the work as well as determine how far the data, and the constructs that emerge from it may be accepted (Shenton, 2004 71-72). The taped interviews, transcriptions of the interviews as well as all documentation collected will be stored and kept safely for verification purposes.

3.6 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Researchers are unconditionally responsible for the integrity of the research process (Mouton, 2001:239; O”Leary, 2004:50). Ethics is the foundation for all research. According to Janse Van Rensburg (2001:28), “Research ethics refers to the moral dimensions of researching, our decisions – technical and otherwise – about what is right and wrong while engaged in research.” To this effect, this research was carried out within an ethic of respect for persons, respect for knowledge, respect for democratic values, and respect for the quality of educational research.

Ethics dictates the importance of obtaining informed consent from the participants as well as ensuring that the participants understand fully what participation in the research project entails (Creswell, 2009:89; McMillan & Schumacher, 2006: 334; Mouton, 2001: 244; O”Leary,2004:52). Consent was obtained from the following bodies to carry out this study: the Ethical Committee of the Faculty of Education of the University of Johannesburg, the Gauteng
Department of Education and the principals of the chosen schools. In order to get the participants informed consent and voluntary participation, the purpose and goal of the research was explained to them. They were made aware that they may withdraw from the research at any time. At the end of each interview, participants were asked to give permission to the interviewer to use the contents of the interview for research purposes and this was recorded.

Another ethical priority is ensuring the confidentiality of the participants (Creswell, 2009:91; McMillan & Schumacher, 2006:334; Mouton, 2001: 243-245; O"Leary,2004: 54). O"Leary (2004: 54) outlines the following conditions for the protection of participants" identities: secure storage of data; restricting access to raw data; obtaining permission for subsequent use of data; publication of research findings in a manner that does not allow for ready identification of subjects; and eventual destruction of raw data. To ensure confidentiality, no personal information has been, or will be, revealed without the participants consent. All information obtained was kept safe during the duration of the study and will be accessible to the participants upon request.

3.7 SUMMARY

This chapter detailed the research design and methodology used to gather and analyze the data. The use of a qualitative and interpretivist paradigm as a research paradigm was justified and the process of data collection through interviews and documents were outlined. A discussion of the type of sampling used as well as of the respondents sampled and their biographical details were given. The techniques of data analysis that were used were clearly explained. Tesch"s approach to data analysis was outlined and ethical considerations and the trustworthiness of the data collection methods were also dealt with.

In the next chapter the analysis of the data and the themes which emerge will be presented.
CHAPTER FOUR

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF THE EMPRIRICAL DATA COLLECTED

4.1 INTRODUCTION

In Chapter Three the research design and methodology that was used in this empirical investigation were discussed. A qualitative interpretive research paradigm was employed to explore the perceptions and experiences of primary school principals of their roles as instructional leaders in the Gauteng East region.

This chapter aims to present an analysis and interpretation of the data collected. Data was collected by using semi-structured interviews from six primary school principals in the Gauteng East District. Some pertinent documents such as the mission and vision statements were examined and analyzed. Themes that emerged will be explored in order to analyze principals’ perceptions and experiences of their roles as instructional leaders in Gauteng East primary schools. The literature review conducted was used as a point of departure in informing the findings. Findings from the document analysis and interviews will be integrated into the discussion.

4.2 BACKGROUND OF SELECTED SCHOOLS

The following observations and information were gleaned from the interviews and documents of the schools sampled. Table 4.1 provides a summarized profile of the schools, thereafter, a brief overview of each school will be given.
### Table 4.1: Profile of the schools

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>School</th>
<th>Quintile Grouping of the school</th>
<th>Socio-Economic Status of Majority of the learners</th>
<th>Language of Instruction</th>
<th>Pre – 1994 Department</th>
<th>No of Learners</th>
<th>No of Management Members</th>
<th>No of GDE Employed Educators</th>
<th>No of SGB employed educators</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Below to average</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>HOA/TED</td>
<td>1023</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Average</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>HOA/TED</td>
<td>695</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Above Average</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>HOA/TED</td>
<td>995</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Average</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>HOA/TED</td>
<td>830</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Below Average</td>
<td>Zulu &amp; English</td>
<td>DET</td>
<td>320</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Average</td>
<td>Zulu &amp; English</td>
<td>DET</td>
<td>1473</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**School A**

School A has an enrolment of 1023 learners, 26 permanently employed Gauteng Department of Education (GDE) educators, six management members (including the principal), five SGB employed teachers and six SGB employed assistant teachers. It is situated in a well-developed suburban area but caters for learners within the area as well as learners from outlying areas and townships. The socio-economic status of the majority of the learners varies from below average to average. There are learners who come from the above average bracket but they comprise a small minority. The language of Learning and Teaching (LOLT) is English. The school is a solid brick structure and the buildings, as well as the gardens, are well-maintained.

The school has a very capable management team. The principal has been there for 10 years and places a lot of trust in his deputy principal who manages the curriculum and teaching and learning at the school. The results of the Annual National Assessment (ANA) that was conducted at the beginning of 2011 indicate that the learners in Grade 3 are performing at acceptable levels in literacy and numeracy with an average percentage of 64% and 67% respectively.
The Grade 6 results indicate an acceptable level (50% average) in literacy but a below average (46%) in numeracy.

School B

School B has an enrolment of 695 learners, five SMT members (including the principal), 17 permanently employed GDE teachers and four SGB employed teachers. It is situated in a well-developed area and the majority of the learners come from an average socio-economic background. Like School A, this school caters for learners within the area as well as from outlying areas and townships. The principal has approximately 11 years" experience as an SMT member, but has been a principal for approximately three years. From the interview, it would seem that the deputy principal is „old-school” and that a major challenge is keeping the educators motivated. The principal has taken over a school that has a history of good academic achievement and she is striving to maintain and improve the standards of the school.

Although the principal was very forthcoming in the interview, she was not as forthcoming with the provision of documents. After numerous requests, she provided the researcher with some of the documentation but was not willing to give the ANA results. However, the fact that the school was not identified as a school that needed support in terms of the Gauteng Primary Literacy Strategy, it can be assumed that the results were at an acceptable level.

School C

School C has a well-developed brick structure which is well maintained. The office and reception area is very welcoming. It has an enrolment of 995 learners, six SMT members (including the principal), 27 permanently employed GDE teachers, three permanently employed SGB teachers and five SGB teachers employed on a part time basis. It is an English school. Learners fall within the
above average socio-economic bracket. Learners that attend the school come from the area as well as from the surrounding and outlying areas and townships.

The principal has served at the school for 35 years and has been principal for 10 years. The school is a well-established one in the Gauteng East area and is known for its high academic and extra-curricular achievements. Although the principal was not willing to supply the researcher with the 2011 ANA results, it can safely be assumed that the school performed at acceptable levels in both literacy and mathematics.

School D

School D is situated in a suburban area; it is well maintained and has a solid structure. It has an enrolment of 830 learners with five SMT members (including the principal, 18 permanently employed GDE teachers and six SGB employed teachers. The reception area has been done up and the décor gives it a very „African“ look which enhances its warm atmosphere. The LOLT of the school was previously Afrikaans but has since changed to English.

Most of the learners come from an average socio-economic background. Learners who attend are from the area as well as from surrounding outlying areas and townships. The ANA results indicate that the Grade 3 as well as the Grade 6 performed poorly in both literacy and numeracy. Average percentages cannot be given as the analysis of the results did not indicate the averages.

The principal has served for at least 10 years as a foundation phase facilitator in the district office and has been principal of the school for only 15 months. She has set her mind on improving the academic standards at the school.
School E

School E is situated in a township and it is a relatively small school. The grounds are well-maintained but the reception area is a bit bare and spartan in appearance. The receptionist was, however, very friendly and welcoming.

The school has an enrolment of 320 learners, three SMT members (including the principal), and 11 permanently employed GDE teachers. The learners all come from low socio-economic groups. The LOLT from grades 1 to 3 is IsiZulu and from grades 4-7 it is English.

The SMT is relatively small. The principal has been in his position for ten years. Results from the ANA 2011 indicate that the school is performing poorly in both numeracy/mathematics and literacy at grade 3 and grade 6 levels. Grade 3 learners had an average of 33% in literacy and 46% in numeracy. Grade 6 learners had an average of 20% in literacy and 25% in mathematics.

School F

School F is a fairly big school that caters for 1 473 learners, has eight SMT members (including the principal) and 37 GDE employed educators. The learners all come from average socio-economic groups. The LOLT from grades 1 to 3 is IsiZulu and from grades 4-7 it is English. School F is situated a short distance from School E, but is in a more well-developed area. The school has a solid structure and at present the SGB is adding a few classrooms to the structure.

The principal has been in this position for approximately 12 years. The SMT have all been for the ACE leadership training and are trying to put what they have learnt into practice. The Grade 3 and Grade 6 ANA results of 2011 indicate that the learners are underperforming in both literacy and numeracy/mathematics. Grade 3 learners had an average of 33% in literacy and
36% in numeracy while the Grade 6 learners had an average of 21% in literacy and 14% in mathematics.

A discussion based on the themes that emerged from the data analysis ensues.

4.3 THEMES

Data was closely examined to search for themes and patterns that illustrate similarities and differences and uncover the meaning of particular perceptions focusing on the aim of the study (Creswell, 2009: 198-199; Mertens, 1998: 350-351). For the purposes of this study Tesch"s (1990) approach to data analysis as cited by Creswell (2009: 186) and Henning et al. (2004: 127-128) was used.

The researcher first listened to the recordings of each interview. Verbatim transcripts were then read and re-read to get a global understanding of the interviews and to familiarize the researcher with the data. Thereafter the researcher randomly picked each verbatim transcript, and started analyzing them one by one, until all had been analyzed and similar topics or ideas had been coded. Similar topics were then grouped together and arranged into themes and sub-themes. Themes were reduced by grouping related topics that show interrelationships. Data material that belonged together were arranged into one place and analyzed.

It is important to note that the classification of the data was not neutral in that it was guided by the research objectives (Henning et al., 2004: 129). Most of the themes that emerged from the interviews coincided with the literature.

The themes and sub-themes that have been identified and which are represented in Table 4.2 will be discussed and supported with relevant quotations from the interviews. The findings will be analyzed and interpreted within the framework of literature control. New literature will be used to support
findings where necessary. Table 4.2 presents the themes and sub-themes that emerged from the data analysis.

**Table 4.2: Research Themes**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Sub-Themes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 1. Duties of the Principal                  | • Management functions  
                                          • Leadership role                                                      |
| 2. Balancing the administrative and          | • Overload of administrative tasks  
                                          • Curriculum changes  
                                          • Day-to-day school management                                           |
| instructional roles                         |                                                                          |
| 3. Manages instructional program            | • Curriculum Management Model  
                                          • Lack of active involvement by principals  
                                          • Lack of extra-curricular activities  
                                          • Formal supervision versus informal supervision  
                                          • Monitoring learner progress                                              |
| 4. Promotes positive school climate         | • The role of the principal as a teacher  
                                          • Time management  
                                          • Incentives for teacher  
                                          • Incentives for learning  
                                          • Promote professional development  
                                          • Maintain high visibility                                                  |
| 5. Vision and Mission of the School         | • Frames and communicates the school’s goals                                |

The themes and sub-themes indicated in table 4.2 will now be discussed in detail.

### 4.3.1 The duties of the principal

Table 4.3 presents the first theme, namely the duties of the principal. The literature review reveals that previously principals were seen mainly as managers in that their primary function was to manage the school and the personnel. However, in recent years, the role of the principal has become more complex and
demanding in that in addition to management functions the principal is now seen as a learning leader whose main focus should be on improving teaching and learning. It is, therefore, not surprising that the two sub-themes that emerged from this theme were that of management functions and leadership role. Each sub-theme will be discussed.

Table 4.3    Theme 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Sub-Themes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Duties of the Principal</td>
<td>• Management functions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Leadership role</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.3.1.1    Management functions

From the data there is evidence that principals consider management functions to be an important part of their job function. However, only one principal stated clearly that he considered his core duties to be that of managing the school, managing finances, administration and maintaining the grounds and buildings. Principal A responded: “….basically management….the financial department ….your administration side….grounds ….and that the place is maintained and kept right. That is the duty of the principal.”

Three of the principals viewed management duties to be part of their core duties as their responses indicate below:
Principal B: “Most important duties I think is – okay, yes, the administrative part.”
Principal D: “For me the most important duty is to make sure the school is functional ….“
Principal F: “ ….the duties of a principal they involve planning for the school day I think to run smoothly and also check whether whatever is put in as our plan is followed and then if things don’t go as per plan you then have to try and assist or intervene depending on how the situation is.”

Literature reveals that the traditional role of the principal involved mainly management duties such as attending to administrative duties, scheduling,
reporting, handling relations with parents, finance management, ground and building maintenance and so on (Bush & Heystek, 2006:68; Fink & Resnick, 2001:1; Goslin, 2009:10).

4.3.1.2 Instructional leadership role

Literature on instructional leadership indicate that most researchers and educationists define instructional leadership in terms of the influence, or effects that the principal has on the teaching and learning process and ultimately on learner achievement. Five of the six principals’ responses indicated that they felt that an important part of their duty as principals was to promote teaching and learning in their schools:

Principal C felt that although there were many responsibilities that a principal had, the most important was ensuring that the learners got a holistic education: “If you are making sure that the children are getting holistic education the other things will fall into place....”

Principal E stated that, “The core business of the school is teaching and learning, definitely. The other aspects are just supporting teaching and learning.”

Principal F: “I would say our time is consumed largely on trying to see to it that the curriculum is delivered and there is improvement in terms of our learner achievement because I think that is the core of our business.”

In the theoretical framework adopted for this study, supervising and evaluating instruction, providing a safe school environment, motivating teachers and getting parental involvement are all tasks characteristic of an instructional leader. The following responses by the interviewees confirm this:

Principal D maintains that her most important duties as a principal are to “make sure that the school is functional, that there is good quality teaching on a daily basis”, that the resources required by both teachers and learners are made
available and to ensure that parents feel "happy and safe that their children are with you as the principal of that specific school."

Principal B: “To motivate them (teachers) all the time, I think that’s the biggest role for me there as a principal. And then to get parents also to continuously support their children.”

Only one principal was of the opinion that curriculum management was the terrain of the deputy principal. Principal A asserts:

“At this school the deputy is in charge of the academic side of the school, to check that, you know, like with curriculum management….The most important thing in my opinion for a principal is you need to ensure that your management team are competent people and that they know that they are responsible for the departments.”

Instructional leadership differs from that of a school manager in that the role of the instructional leader involves setting clear goals, managing the curriculum, monitoring and evaluating teaching and learning. In other words, instructional leadership are those actions that principals take to promote teaching and learning in their schools (Bush, 2007:391; Copeland, 2003:2; Van Deventer & Kruger, 2008:245; Yu, 2009:715).

Under this theme the following documents were analysed: the South African School's Act of 1996 (South Africa, 1996), the Employment of Educators Act of 1998 (South Africa, 1998) and the Education Laws Amendment Act of 2007 (South Africa, 2007). According to the aforementioned documents, it would appear that principals tend to spend more time on management functions as legislation clearly spells out the management functions of principals. The instructional leadership functions are not as clearly detailed in the legislation.

Theme 2 brings us to a discussion of how do principals balance the two roles discussed in theme 1.
4.3.2 Balancing administrative and instructional roles

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Sub-Themes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Balancing the administrative and instructional roles</td>
<td>• Overload of administrative tasks</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Curriculum changes</td>
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<td>• Day-to-day school management</td>
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Research (See Bush & Heystek, 2006:68) indicates that many principals neglect their instructional leadership role and tasks because too many interruptions and a seemingly endless stream of administrative and managerial issues divert their attention (Blasé et al., 2010:45; Goslin, 2009:10; MacNeill et al., 2003:40; Sybouts and Wendell, 1994:2; Fink & Resnick, 2001:1). When asked to narrate the challenges and successes in this regard, it was disturbing to note that some principals had a very limited understanding of the term “instructional duties”, particularly as it relates to leadership. The responses by certain principals revealed that they thought that “instructional duties” referred specifically to their personal roles as teachers.

The principals interviewed all agree that it is difficult to balance their administrative and instructional leadership roles and the following sub-themes emerged in this regard.

4.3.2.1 Overload of administrative tasks

Five of the respondents indicated that too many administrative tasks made it difficult to cope:
Principal D admits:
“It is very difficult. Let me tell you it is not always easy. Administratively everybody demands a massive load of paper work that must be done in a certain way, policy way, and it must be done in a meticulous manner and lucky for me, I’m a very good administrator. I can do that and I like neat things and I’m very
computer skilled as well so that’s not a problem. But from time-to-time you have to leave some of the things on a daily basis. You have to keep a vigilant eye on everything on a daily basis to make sure that you have every document they want and when they want it.”

Principal F: “No, I would say one does cope but you know the paper trail it’s something one would say like it’s seasonal, it’s occasional…you even have to delegate…. But largely the rest of the work it’s done by the members of the SMT, we cope through putting extra hours in order to do whatever is needed….”

Principal A also feels that the amount of paper work and the changing of format of documents does take up a lot time.
He says, “….sometimes we get stuck with paper work and then I don’t get to the classes as often as I would like ….”
“….there’s lots of paper and it keeps on changing and this ***** form and then there’s this format and that format.”

Principal B says, “ The administrative part….which is very demanding from the department itself.”

Principal C feels that the key to balancing her instructional and management duties was to manage her time efficiently; hence, she starts her school day earlier in the mornings and ends it later in the afternoons:
“You have to make sure that the way you manage your time, that the one doesn’t compromise the other. So I start work at half past six in the morning….and that is so that before I go in to do my instructional work I have done quite a bit of the administrative work for the day and then I wrap up in the afternoons. So I think you have to marry the two but I think that the key issue here is time management.”
4.3.2.2 Curriculum changes

Both principals E and B feel that the number of changes in respect of curriculum poses a challenge to balancing the administrative and instructional leadership role of the principal. Principal E complains that;

“…. changes are coming in a radical manner. They are coming up with a lot of programmes at the same time. Like 2010, 2009/2010 they introduced the Foundations for Learning and as we are starting to adjust and be in a position to apply to correct the situation we move to GPLS. Now there’s CAPS….”

Principal B agrees with Principal E and admits that a serious challenge is, “with the current situation, with the changing (changes) in curriculum, with so so-called training that was supposed to take place….”

4.3.2.3 Day-to-day school management

Principals interviewed indicate that certain interruptions during the school day sometimes take them away from their instructional leadership duties.

Principal B tries to balance the two roles by prioritizing and developing „to do” lists but admits that attending to difficult parents, district demands, discipline and day-to-day problems of the school interfere with the completion of tasks:

“…. in most cases it is a difficult parent coming in…. and then it is with district demands. You know, they will phone you and tell you they want something now for now and now being a new principal you don’t want to be defiant ….and then also sometimes discipline of the children.”

She goes on to say that she tries to counter this by allocating set times to see parents, “I’ve made a certain time only where I can see parents or any stakeholders because you know they just pitch up there and say: „Oh, I want to see the principal”…..”
Principal D talks of unexpected emergencies that “pop-up” which take you away from what you planned: “For instance now, five minutes ago, I discovered five leaks in the school, you understand? Water leaks all over the school! My pipes all over the school is(are) giving me problems.”

From the above responses it is clear that many of the respondents do find it challenging to balance their administrative duties with their instructional leadership roles. This finding is consistent with those in the literature review. The following challenges were identified as interfering with the principals’ instructional leadership duties: too much paperwork; the frequent changing of the format of documents by the district office; too many changes in curriculum too quickly; unplanned for day-to-day concerns such as parents demanding to see the principal, burst water pipes, district office requiring information without giving prior notice. Gauteng East District documents such as formats for reporting on curriculum management and formats for submitting assessment statistics were examined. These documents corroborated what the principals said. Some positive suggestions were also forthcoming such as to how to cope with these challenges: namely prioritizing, planning and managing time efficiently and delegation.

Both principals D and F say that it is important to delegate certain duties to other SMT members as well as teachers but, at the same time monitoring is important. Principal D admits “I want to do everything. want to take charge of all. You can’t do it. As a principal you can’t do it. You have to delegate but you have to monitor and that makes balancing slightly better. In the end you remain the responsible officer.”

Theme 3 will now be discussed.
4.3.3 Manages the instructional programme

Table 4.4 Theme 3

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<th>Themes</th>
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<tr>
<td>Manages instructional programme</td>
<td>• Curriculum Management Model</td>
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<td>• Lack of active involvement by principals</td>
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<td>• Lack of extra-curricular activities</td>
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<td>• Formal supervision versus informal supervision</td>
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<td>• Monitoring learner progress</td>
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4.3.3.1 Managing the curriculum

With regard to curriculum management, it was found that the Curriculum Management Model, which the Gauteng East District required their schools to follow when reporting on content coverage has to a certain extent directed principals to focus more directly on managing the academic curriculum. It gives more direction to principals and SMT members in that it provides guidelines as to what to monitor, how to monitor and when to monitor. Setting and evaluating targets in respect of covering curriculum content, identifying areas of weaknesses and suggesting measures for improvement in respect of learner performance, teacher performance and management members’ performance are also catered for in the model. However, the model is still in its “teething” stages hence problems such as an abundance of paperwork and the lack of proper training and cascading of information from district officials to school management teams and teachers are being encountered.

Five of the principals interviewed indicated that they were following the model and, although there is no consensus on its merits, their responses indicate that they are engaging with it:

Principal A confirms, “Yes, we’re following that (Curriculum Management Model). We don’t have a choice. I have written to Adv. Bengston Mali to raise my
concerns about the paper work…. I told the teachers please get back to the HODs and let us create a year plan for every learning area....”

Principal B avers, “....but you know the Curriculum Management Model they want two reports right. So what I do is take files for one and the second one I go for, what you call it, class visits....”

Principal D remarks, “I do class visits. We’ve got the curriculum management model....”

Principal E says, “I also do the new Curriculum Management Model that was introduced by our department, our district. I think that also makes it easy.... ”

Principal F argues that, “.... last year when this (Curriculum Management Model) was introduced it was working, this year they’ve thrown it into confusion....”

According to Glanz (2006:33), instructional leaders need to familiarize themselves with basic concepts pertaining to curriculum development. Hallinger & Murphy (1986) list co-ordinating the curriculum as one of the job functions of an instructional leader. To do this, the leader would have to be kept informed of changes that take place.

4.3.3.2 Lack of active involvement by principals

The principals interviewed delegate curriculum management to their SMTs, however, the three female principals play a very active role in researching and presenting work-shops to their teachers in this regard. The three male principals do what is required of them but rely on the SMT to workshop the teachers and run the process.
Principal B: “Although I do most of the admin and the deputy is supposed to be in charge of the curriculum, right, but I oversee the curriculum…..”

Principal C’s response indicates that she is trying to facilitate best practice in curriculum management by researching and giving workshops to teachers even before district does it:
“….I have done a lot of curriculum work with them. I am busy at the moment with CAPS because we are implementing it next year in the foundation phase.”

Principal D also gets involved with the training and tries her best to provide her teachers with the resources they require. She says:
“….we’ve got processes in place where my deputies and my HODs do training. I do training from time to time myself…. I make sure that all my teachers have got the best handbooks, teachers’ resources. I bought reading series for all grades.”

According to Glanz (2006:33) instructional leaders need not be experts in curriculum but it is necessary that they should have some knowledge of basic concepts that are related to curriculum development. Naidu et al. (2008:190 - 191) indicate that the role of curriculum leader, in different learning areas in schools, is often delegated to members of staff who have the relevant knowledge.

4.3.2.3 Lack of extra-curricular activities

According to Van Deventer (2003:249) effective instructional leaders would also have well-planned and well-rounded extra-curriculum programmes in place for their learners. Schools A, B, C and D seem to have well-rounded extra-curricular programmes in place for the learners. Although school E caters for a sports period and school F for athletics, there is no evidence of much emphasis being put on this aspect of the curriculum. The interview responses were corroborated by the relevant schools’ year plans.
Principal A: “Our soccer team won the league the one year, they won every match and went to the play-offs....” The school’s year plan made provision for internal school athletics, inter-school athletics, soccer and netball events on a regular basis.

The principal of School B is trying to develop a more comprehensive extra-curricular programme but the fact that many of the learners travel makes it difficult to facilitate the sporting codes after school. She indicated that learners took part in Olympiads, eisteddfods, athletics, soccer and netball: However, this could not be supported by her year plan as she did not supply the interviewer with a copy of the year plan. She says: “.... We’ve had quite a few children who had actually excelled in the Olympiad, you know, receiving 80% and above....and then a few of them that have gone to the eisteddfods and have got their A+’s.... one or two children that have gone further for district awards for athletics. When it comes to soccer and netball, we have it internally.”

School C has a well-balanced academic as well as extramural program in place. They offer 12 sporting codes and the school’s year plan bears testimony to this. Besides sporting codes leadership camps are also catered for. The principal says, “The policy tells us that we need to afford all learners opportunities then we must endeavor to do so to the best of our ability.”

School D offer athletics, soccer, netball, chess, rugby, and have a musical planned. This is reflected in the school’s year plan. Principal D, in her responses is very aware of the achievements of the teams and attends matches on a regular basis. She asserts, “I believe that a child must be balanced. Every child must do in one year at least athletics, at least one winter sport and at least one cultural activity plus their academics.”
Principal E does not mention extra-curricular events at all, whilst Principal F mentions an athletics meeting in passing. School E’s year plan indicates that the school has a sports period every Wednesday and School F’s year plan indicates two internal athletics meetings.

4.3.3.4 Formal Supervision versus informal supervision

Principals A and C prefer to do informal supervision because they feel that formal class visits might not be a true reflection of what is happening daily in the classroom. Principal A does informal supervision and leaves the formal supervision to the other SMT members. He says, “...quite often when I have the time, I do unannounced class visits....I stand in the back of the class. I check the books, just three or four books, if it is marked.” He says he does this because he wants to see what the teacher is really doing every day; he wants to avoid “window dressing” of lessons.

Principal C believes that teachers should be evaluated on a continuous basis as learners are. Therefore she does informal supervision:

“Yes, yes, yes. I supervise them. I visit regularly. I pop in....I’m checking homework diaries, I’m looking at work, I am doing corrective teaching. That is what I do every day. So that is how you should be assessed, isn’t it, on what I do every day? That’s how children are assessed.”

Principal C also believes in sharing of information and is open to suggestions:

“....I also ask them. Isn’t it important, it’s a two-way thing? These are my suggestions. What do you suggest? Because you get to know what goes on inside a person’s head, you see. That’s how you get to know each other. And if you get to know each other you can work together.”

Principal B and D do formal supervision. Principal B states, “... I go for class visits....I take the kids books and I monitor....you ensure....that the person....is in line with....the requirements of the policy of the school and.... the district.”
Principal E and F also do formal visits for IQMS purposes but they usually follow the Curriculum Management Model and only sample if they need to.

Principal F: “You see by the time the work gets to my office as a principal you’ll find that the workload has been minimized because mine is just to check what the deputy principal is recommending in terms of whatever findings that were there when they actually verified the learners’ books.” Principal F does carry out informal class visits, especially when invited to do so by teachers.

The literature study reveals that supervision of educators’ performance is more effective when it is carried out for support purposes rather than for evaluative purposes (Gupton, 2003:109-112; Bush et al., 2009:4). Some educationists feel that formal supervision places unnecessary stress, fear and anxiety on the educator and thus impedes the development process.

4.3.3.5 Monitors student progress

Taking into account the low literacy and numeracy rates in South Africa, all the principals interviewed have set aside time or specific programmes to address these problems:

Principal A: “Yes, we have specific periods set aside for foundations for learning where they do the reading. It is alternating with reading and with maths…. So every lesson, be it science, be it technology, part of that is a reading lesson with reading comprehension.”

Principal C: “….the problem starts with language acumen. If the child doesn’t understand it’s going to impact on maths and numeracy. So you have to start with language and that is what I did….It’s been a process….but I can see a distinct change in our children where English is not the home language.”
Schools D, E and F have the Gauteng Province Literacy Strategy (GPLS) that is being implemented to improve literacy levels. In addition to that school E has allocated additional time to reading.

Principal E admits, “Reading and writing is a challenge to some of the learners, like reading, but now strategically they allocate 30 minutes extra during the second term.” Principal F sets aside time at the beginning of the school day for learners to read. He states that, “…our first bell goes off at 07:40 for all those learners and then it is reading for fun from 07:40 unto 08:00.”

Principal B analysis results and sets high standards: “I’ve told them nothing must be below 70%….because…. the main aim is that we want academic excellence at the school itself …. if you set a lower standard…. the standard of education is actually going to go down.

Principal C has a proactive attitude and believes in looking forward: “…. I analyze everything, I have a moderation thing that I look at and when I have a look at the statistics, it’s not a question of you haven’t been performing, it’s a question of how do we improve. What strategies can we put in place to make it better, not you didn’t do your job.”

Principal D: “I put systems in place where I give my teachers a bar to work towards, achievable ones. I give them goals and I say you don’t go on holiday without having a destination. So you plan your route. This is my destination, 60% …. I make sure that all my teachers have got the best handbooks, teachers’ resources. I bought reading series for all the grades.”

Principal E sets target when it comes to content coverage but was not very clear about setting targets for learner achievement.
Although all the principals have set aside extra periods for literacy and mathematics, not all engage in extensive analysis of results and setting of targets. It is clear that principals C, D and E (the female principals are more proactive in this regard).

Effective principals collect and review relevant assessment data with the intention of using their findings to improve the school instructional programme, as well as inform their leadership practices (Blasé et al., 2010:24; Glanz, 2006:8). Gupton (2003:176) maintains that it is important for instructional leaders to collect and use a wide variety of data as well as research to enable them to make informed decisions and plan strategies for improving learner achievement. Literature has revealed that it is also important for instructional leaders to set high standards for learners to work towards.

Under this theme the following documents were examined: a Gauteng Department of Education document titled “Chief Director: Districts Ekudibeng Operations Framework 2011/12”, and samples of each schools CMM reports. These documents indicated that schools were engaging with the model. Also as indicated above, the schools’ year plans, extra and co-curricular programmes, management plans and assessment analysis were used to verify what the principals” said in the interviews.

### 4.3.4 Promotes school climate

#### Table 4.6 Theme 4

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<tr>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Sub-Themes</th>
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<tr>
<td>Promotes positive School climate</td>
<td>- The role of the principal as a teacher</td>
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<td>- Time management</td>
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<td>- Incentives for teachers and learners</td>
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<td>- Promote professional development</td>
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<td>- Maintain high visibility</td>
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4.3.4.1 The role of the principal as a teacher

There is general consensus amongst the principals interviewed that they would be in a better position to support and communicate good teaching practices if they engaged in teaching learners themselves:

Principal A: “…. it is nice to teach from time-to-time just to be hands on, to know what is still happening and discipline and challenges that teachers face.”

Principal A uses his teaching experience to inform practices in school – flash cards. He proudly states, “That (flash cards) I implemented this year because of my own teaching ….“

Principal B teaches for personal satisfaction but also admits that she feels it is necessary to teach so that she does not get stuck in a rut doing administration work, that she fails to keep in touch with what is going on with teaching and learning at her school.

She confidently states, “I'm teaching…. for personal satisfaction (and).... because we’ve got to be in touch with what’s happening on ground level especially with the children….and the teachers….now that I am teaching myself I realize that my expectations must also be realistic from the teachers.”

Principal C also teaches for personal satisfaction but also admits that it helps when managing teachers:

“I think it is important that you keep your feet on the ground so that you experience what that little post level 1 teacher is experiencing and you can relate because you know what I always say, and it’s something my father taught me, don’t expect somebody to do something that you cannot do. That’s a simple philosophy in life, isn’t it?”

“…my educators see me there, going wild, teaching and doing what they do daily and I think it is important because you know what, it creates the sense of
teamwork. I’m not sitting up there doing they don’t know what. I’m with them in the field, you know and I think that is so important.”

Principal D teaches because she does not have enough staff but she says that it has many benefits: “Number one, it gives me excellent insight in what is going on in my classes…. I get the frustrations that my teachers are experiencing with regard to planning, preparation and assessment …. It gives you a good idea of how stressful it is to teach …. It also gives you an idea of how difficult discipline is in classes some-times …. teachers have got much more respect for you if you’re also a teacher because now you talk with them.”

“. . . it’s not recommendable for a principal to teach. It makes your administrative duties in your office sometimes difficult because you take a lot of work home but for staff development, for team spirit, for understanding your teachers, for understanding curriculum, understanding processes that’s going around, new developments, all those things, it’s the best thing for a principal to teach.”

Principal E: “…. it is so imperative that you at least have one class in your school so that you can understand the complaints and behavior and the frustrations that the teachers are experiencing, so that you can be in their own shoes so that when you address some other frustrations you can also be hands on because you have personally experienced it, not from a hearsay point of view….you also understand what are the frustrations and what are the trends, the commitment level of the learners.”

Principal F: “…. So you tend to be always clued (up) in terms of curriculum issues and when there are changes you tend to read them with interest because you are not only managing, but you are also implementing that in the class. So it makes you current, it makes you a very, I think I would say a good resource person because you can cite things that are real, things that you saw, things that you also deal with  . . . .”
Literature on instructional leadership strongly supports the notion that the principal should be a practicing teacher. Effective instructional leaders maintain that being a practicing teacher gives credibility to the principal as learning leader. Educators will respect the word of a person who can identify with what they experience. Also, being a practicing teacher, gives instructional leaders an idea of what is going on in the classroom and this helps them to appreciate some of the challenges that teachers and learners face.

4.3.4.2 Instructional time

Both principals A and D felt that teaching time should not be wasted. Principal A co-teaches with an SGB employed teacher. This teacher does all the administration while the principal teaches. However, if the principal is required elsewhere the SGB teacher takes over his classes. He says: “.... if I am here and the IDSO is here to see me it is not as though there is a class without a teacher.”

Principal A has programmes whereby learners, who have matriculated and have ambitions to become teachers, are apprenticed. Whilst they are being trained, they also assist and step in if teachers are absent by being placed in the absent teachers” classrooms. Hence no teaching time is lost.

Principal D: “I make sure that as little as possible contact time is infringed (on). One day a term we jump in and we have fun, but for the rest of the term we focus on teaching and learning.”

Time is an important resource for effective instruction. Hallinger and Murphy (1985) list protection of instructional time as one of the job functions that instructional leaders display.
4.3.4.3 Incentives for teachers and learners

The responses of Principals A, B and C indicated that they were aware of how important it was to keep staff members motivated:

Principal A gives teachers the opportunity to have a say in what they want to teach:

“…. you know a happy person works much harder so to try to accommodate them as much as we can, we say: where would you like to teach and what extramural would you like to be involved in?”

Principal B finds it a challenge to keep teachers “especially the older teachers” motivated. Despite these challenges, she has persevered and says:

“We have had our own internal teachers” awards with the teachers’ acknowledgements …. we give each one of them, even if it is for catering, or it is for organizing the sports itself, you know, we give them individual accolades for that.”

She adds: “Then we get like sponsorships ….maybe a T-shirt from Cell C or KFC gives you something…. Even the ones that are not performing we keep them motivated by saying okay we acknowledging you for doing this here at a certain time of the year.”

Principal C talks about being sensitive and empathetic towards staff members.

Principal C says: “There must be an element of humanness also in the leader of the institution because initially you are a family…. so you need to try and create an understanding of what you are dealing with because if you don’t have that how do you work with them?”

With regard to motivating learners Principal D goes the extra mile. She informs, “I also reward children with a merit system. We’ve also got academic awards but on a weekly basis we’ve got a merit system where we reward children for making
progress …. Most of the merits (learners who achieved merits) I see on a weekly basis so that they give me the statistics. I check the homework books. Every week I go into six different classes, check the demerits, check whether they’ve written their homework down, whether the parent signed. I scold them if they haven’t ….”

Together with the parents, principal D is trying to build trust and confidence in her learners so that they learn to believe in themselves which in turn will help them to achieve.

“I also launched a project called Project Awesomeness where parents are working towards guaranteed awesomeness. . . One of the children came up with the title and we gave them key things to do at home – parents and it is working.” Examples of key things are: “Encourage your child to express themselves, show enthusiasm for your child’s interests ....”

It is a common notion that a person who is contented with his work and the atmosphere in which he works, then he will give off his best. Murphy and Hallinger (1985) indicate in their conceptual framework that effective instructional leaders acknowledge and reward teachers” and learners” efforts. They (Hallinger & Murphy, 1985:223) say, “Principals can influence the student and teacher attitudes through the creation of a reward structure that reinforces academic achievement and productive effort.”

4.3.4.4 Promotes professional development

The responses of principals B, D and C (the female principals) indicated that they were very enthusiastic about staff development and they were all proactive and involved in the implementation thereof.

In school B the SMT, including the principal conduct workshops. They encourage teachers to attend workshops conducted by the district, the unions
and other professional institutions. Principal B goes to workshops with her teachers and sets the example. She says,

“Now, well today, they went for this NAPTOSA conference.... I went for the Conditions of Service (workshop) .... and then there were others like styles of teaching .... there are different areas you could go far and we tell them to please go for it, so that you know, you can keep abreast of what is happening.”

Principal C: “To me that (staff development) is a passion because if you develop your staff they grow, and if they grow, the learners grow because I believe if you don’t grow you die.”

Principal C: “I always say a ship is as good as its captain. That’s the bottom line but you have to lead by example and you have to show the people that they are working with you, not for you – with you, that you mean what you say and that there must be support. There must be growth, there must be development in any institution and that applies to you as well. Because let me tell you something.... I learn something from these people every day and that enriches your life, you know.”

Principal C also does a lot of research and conducts workshops with her staff herself:

“Oh, I have done quite a number of things, for example, effective classroom discipline (refers to a working document on her desk on discipline) ....I have done a lot of curriculum work with them. I am busy at the moment with CAPS because we are implementing it next year in the foundation phase.” She encourages her teachers to attend district workshops: „we will go to our workshops (held by district) as usual“ and uses IQMS as a development tool: „if you have a look at IQMS, all those things that they refer to make us a holistic person in terms of our teaching and learning”.
Principal C, like principal B subscribes to the notion of being a lifelong learner. She says, “I am busy now with a thing for IQMS and I called the (SMT) and I said well Saturday we are working because now we must engage with this thing . . . because we need to learn from each other how to implement.”

Principal D: “I personally feel that developing teaching and learning is one of the key roles, as well that you, as principal, must focus on because this is what the school is about - teaching and learning, making progress, meeting the mark.”

Principal D: “…. we’ve got processes in place where my deputies and my HOD’s do training. I do training from time to time myself. I get skilled people in to train my teachers. I send my teachers on courses from the various unions as well. I pay for people to come in and develop and train my teachers.” This principal is currently investigating and looking for a way to help Afrikaans-speaking teachers to master the English language as the LOLT of the school has changed from Afrikaans to English.

Principal F’s responses indicate that he does play a somewhat active role in development by attending professional development courses and ensuring that his teachers are informed of current trends and educational issues. He says: “…. as the entire SMT we attended a Mathew Goniwe…. so some of the modules there dealt directly with curriculum development …. So we’ve got a lot of people here where, in terms of curriculum delivery, they’re well off and then others are studying through, I think it’s UJ and Wits. So we encourage dialogue in terms of new trends that come up in terms of your curriculum and delivery…. in our principals’ forum we’ve got a committee that is referred to as curriculum so we also organize information sessions …. we invite people from outside …. invite District officials to come and assist.” He also uses experienced teachers within the school to share their expertise.
Principal A has a particularly innovative programme in place for aspiring teachers, but relies heavily on the SMT to do internal development in their learning area meetings. He says: 

“They (assistant teachers) have two separate contracts (a) we pay them for the work and there’s another one, almost a loan contract where we pay for their studies on the condition that when they are qualified we can appoint them at the school ....So we invest in them .....”

Principal E is quite forthcoming about his own development, which seems quite impressive but relates mainly to administrative and management capabilities rather than as an instructional leader. He talks about his contributions to the school in terms of financial management systems, involvement of the community and securing of sponsors. However, when it comes to the development of his teaching staff, he is vague and it seems as though SMT members do it on a one-to-one basis, as the need arises.

Principal D makes an interesting and very valid point when she highlights that newly-appointed principals receive very little support and she strongly believes that new principals need to be mentored for at least two years. She questions:

“Where is the support for a manager? Those are the things that a person must look at. I’m telling you it’s falling way flat. There must be for eighteen months or two years, there must be somebody that’s monitoring on a weekly basis a newly appointed principal. . . Our biggest problem in our system is poor managers, poor teacher development. . . I’ve written a letter as far as the MEC’s office. I’m not going to tolerate it any more. If we want to realize education, quality education in South Africa, we must stand up and say no to poor quality. That’s it.”

The school is a learning organization and therefore one would assume that learning would be dynamic and affect every role player in the institution. Research shows that effective principals: are lifelong learners and models of learning who engage in professional development opportunities both inside and
outside the organization (Blasé et al., 2010:6; Du Four, 2002:13; Fink & Resnick, 2001:4; Gupton, 2003:81), encourage peer collaboration (Blasé & Blasé, 2010:135; Fink & Resnick, 2001:4; Gupton, 2003:81), make every effort to develop their teachers and encourage them to engage in educational opportunities within and outside the school (Glanz, 2006:8; Fink & Resnick, 2001:4; Gupton, 2003:81).

4.3.4.6 Maintains high visibility

The responses of principals C and D indicate that they feel that being visible can make a significant difference. Principal C posits, “I like to be visible. I like the children to see that I am there. I can coach, not very good, but I can. If I have to I will because I believe you must lead by example.”

Principal D says that she is, “…. very hands on, very visible, walk(s) into classes any minute of any day ….I'm not there to inspect or to check on a person…. I walk in to greet a teacher or I just walk in for the children to see that I am around. ….I've seen it with my own eyes that that boy that's just standing on the soccer field, the minute the principal stands next to the field the whole attitude changes. Now I'm going for that ball. I don't even have to go for the ball but I want the principal to see me and tomorrow in the class they will ask, did you see me Ma'am?”

It is interesting to note that both principals C and D have succeeded in getting much more parental support, involvement and attendance at school events than their colleagues. Principal C says that it might have something to do with her „open-door” policy whilst Principal D attributes it to her massive communication campaign as well as a positive attitude.

Principal C: “If you were here last night – we had a parents evening last night. Ma'am, it was crazy! Last week we had an information evening here and I had
400 parents in my hall – 400! So I’m privileged and I am blessed in that sense that my parents and my community support what we are trying to do because, you, know, if you don’t have the support you’re not going to achieve anything, you see ....”

She has difficulty explaining why she has this support, whilst many of the principals are complaining of a lack of parental support. She says that it might be because of her „open-door” policy:

“No parent must ever feel that they can’t walk into the office. The same applies to a teacher and the same applies to a learner and I’m hoping that maybe it is that – that the norms that we are trying to exude is (are) felt by all.”

Principal D: “Serious problems. Zero parental involvement. When they came here on the night of the 1st December 2009 they said to me when you have a parents” evening you will have 10 or 15  parents. The first parents evening that I had, and I will tell you what I went out with a massive campaign of informing parents, sending letters, notices everywhere around – 455 parents at the parents” evening, okay. My last parents” evening which I had this year, 392 parents. It can be done ….but it depends on you as a manager. It depends on your attitude towards your parents.”

Principals A, E and F all list getting parental support as a serious challenge:
Principal A: “…. they don’t read at home, there is not a culture of reading from the parents. The parents don’t encourage that and they don’t support that ....”

Principal A: “Our soccer team won the league the one year. They won every match and went to the play-offs. To try and get the parents there, I wrote a personal letter, you know…. not one parent showed up.”

Principal E: “…. Parents, they use schools as a dumping zone ....”
Principal F: “... in terms of parents supporting the learners academically you will be asking far too much from those parents because, a lot of them, they are quite illiterate.”

It was found that many principals are of the opinion that it is important for principals to make their presence felt (Blasé et al., 2010:18). This could be done effectively by adopting an “open-door” policy (Blasé et al., 2010:19; Gupton, 2003:78) by informal class visits, by attending community based events and by using multiple ways of communicating (Gupton, 2003:78-79). Murphy (1990:174) maintains, “Principals foster the development of a school learning climate conducive to teaching and learning by establishing positive expectation and standards, by maintaining high visibility, providing incentives for teachers and students and promoting professional development.”

### 4.3.5 Vision and mission of the school

**Table 4.7 Theme 5**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Themes</th>
<th>Sub-Themes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vision and Mission of the School</td>
<td>• Frames and communicates the school’s goals</td>
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</table>

#### 4.3.5.1 Frames and communicates the school’s goals

The respective vision and mission statements of each school were examined to determine their focus. The responses of the principals during the interviews were then examined to ascertain whether the principals were actually working towards achieving the goals documented in their vision and mission statements. Vision statements indicated that their visions were in keeping with the vision of the GDE in that they were striving towards „quality education“ and developing „responsible citizens“ who had „good work ethics“ and „good values“.  

93
The mission statement of School A was broad in that it contained two goals: to promote the culture of learning and training and to provide opportunities for learners to achieve and excel. It was difficult to ascertain whether principal A was in fact putting his mission into practice as the goals were not specific and concrete.

The mission statements of Schools B, C, D, E and F were more specific and concrete. Responses of the respective principals during the interviews indicated that principals B, C, and D reflected that their actions and perceptions were directed to a large extent by their mission statements. The following are some excerpts taken from the mission statements:

School B: *We strive for: educator excellence by conducting in-service training and attending relevant courses; a school that will always prosper and grow to become the best English medium school within the East Rand District.*

School C: *Educators are encouraged to keep abreast with new trends in education.*

School D: *Encourage parental involvement. Motivating learners to constantly think for themselves.*

Principal E"s responses reflected the school's mission statement to a limited extent, whilst Principal F"s reflected it to a lesser extent.

School E: *Learners are exposed to wholistic (holistic) developmental educational activities.*

School F: *Our mission is to be an outstanding teaching and learning institution.*

The mission statement encapsulates the fundamental purpose of the school (Zepeda, 2004:89; Gupton, 2003:37). A mission and its statement/s serve to focus the school on the beliefs and values of the school community. The mission helps to guide the principal in focusing, developing and coordinating the school's improvement process. In addition to ensuring that the vision and mission are
shared with all stakeholders, the leader has to communicate the mission and vision to them and more importantly see to it that the vision is put into practice (Clarke, 2007:3).

4.5 SUMMARY

This chapter has presented themes and sub-themes that emerged from data analysis. Relevant literature was also presented as a control to support research findings.

The following and final will chapter will focus on giving the reader an overview of the research conducted, outlining the findings, giving recommendations and suggesting further topics for research.
CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY, FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

Researchers and educationists (See Alig-Mielcaric, 2003; Blasé et al, 2000; Bush, 2003; Hallinger & Murphy, 1985; Murphy, 1990; Weber, 1996) have, for a very long time, been interested in the difference between effective schools and ineffective schools. The prospect of identifying ways in which to effect school improvement has proved to be very challenging. Research carried out with the aim of improving schools has concentrated to a large extent on identifying variables within effective schools that seem to be working in their favour. One variable which seems to be commonly identified in research efforts on effective schools is that of the leadership abilities of the principal of the school. The key role that principals play in developing and sustaining school improvement is widely acknowledged in educational circles (Alig-Mielcarek, 2003:7; Bush, 2007:391; Copeland, 2003:2; Hoadley et al., 2008:2; McKewan, 1998:2; Yu, 2009:715). Effective principals are seen to be leaders who emphasize and promote the school's teaching and learning activities and this has been broadly identified as the principal's instructional leadership role (Van Deventer & Kruger, 2008:245).

This chapter of the research will outline the most significant aspects of the study. A summary of the study will be provided, followed by a discussion of the important findings from the literature review and the empirical study. Thereafter recommendations will be made and suggestions for future research will be offered.

The following section contains a summary of the research that was conducted to determine the role of principals as instructional leaders to facilitate effective teaching and learning.
5.2 SUMMARY OF THE STUDY

The ever changing social, political and economic environment of post-apartheid South Africa impacts seriously on the functionality of education in this country. This accelerated rate of change from the external environment places the onus on schools to provide quality education that is relevant to the demands of the changing world. However, South African schools were found seriously wanting. Over the past two decades concerted efforts have been made by the South African government to improve the quality of education. These efforts have not met with much success. Lack of effective leadership and commitment on the part of the principal has been cited as one of the main reasons why South African schools are performing poorly in international tests.

In the previous dispensation, principals in South Africa had followed a model prescribed by the education authorities on how to fulfil their management roles. They could accomplish their task with relative sole authority within the prescribed parameters, without being compelled to seriously involve other stakeholders. However, management and leadership styles in South Africa have undergone major shifts. Decentralizing responsibility and authority within the educational system has created a need for the role of principals to be re-defined. The role of the principal as manager evolved into the role of principal as instructional leader. This proved to be a challenge for many principals. This study explored the role of principals as instructional leaders to facilitate effective teaching and learning in Gauteng East primary schools.

The study was located in an interpretivist paradigm and a qualitative research design was employed. The sample was purposive and consisted of primary school principals in the Gauteng East region. A thorough examination of the duties of the principal as outlined in South African legislation and in current literature was conducted. Several existing models of instructional leadership were briefly discussed and a theoretical framework for the present study was
Empirically, semi-structured individual interviews were conducted with the six principals. A document analysis was also carried out to verify and inform data collected during the interviews.

Various themes and sub-themes emerged from the qualitative study. The first theme, duties of the principal, revealed the duality of the role of the principal. On the one hand the principal is expected to manage the school in terms of day to day functionality, buildings and grounds maintenance, managing of finances, human resources and so on. On the other hand the principal is also expected to be an instructional leader which involves setting clear goals, allocating resources to instruction, managing the curriculum, monitoring teaching and learning and creating a climate conducive to learning. The second theme emerged from the first in that it indicated that principals found it difficult to balance the two roles. It was found that most principals tended to concentrate on management at the expense of instructional leadership. The third theme, managing the instructional programme, focused on aspects such as curriculum management, lack of active involvement of the principal, lack of extra-curricular activities, supervision and evaluation and monitoring learner progress. The fourth theme that emerged was promoting a positive school climate. This was supported by sub-themes which pointed to the merits of the principal being a practicing teacher, of effective time management, of providing incentives for teaching and learning, of promoting professional development and maintaining high visibility. The final theme examined the importance of the vision and mission and of having clearly defined and strategic goals.

Taking the above into consideration various recommendations were made. For schools to be effective, the role of the principal has to change from manager to that of instructional leader. It is hoped that this study will make them aware of the importance of instructional leadership in facilitating effective learning in their schools.
This summary conveys some of the salient aspects and procedures that were undertaken during the course of the research. Important findings emerging from the data will now be presented and recommendations developed.

5.3 FINDINGS
5.3.1 Findings from the literature survey

Finding 1

An examination of South African legislation on the job description of principals revealed that the principal is expected to be both manager and instructional leader of the school. The roles are briefly outlined under the various headings of general administration, professional management (instructional leadership duties), teaching and interacting with stakeholders. The job descriptions fall short in that they do not detail what is expected of principals in their role of instructional leaders. The literature reveals that this is one of the reasons why some principals spend more time on management functions than on instructional leadership functions. They would rather do what they are familiar with.

Finding 2

Many researchers argue that most principals neglect their instructional leadership roles because they are too busy attending to the administrative duties of managing the building and its people. The common opinion expressed in the literature was that principals should be concentrating on their instructional leadership role of promoting teaching and learning and thereby learner achievement at their schools.

Finding 3

The literature study reveals that effective principals are lifelong learners and they aim to turn their schools into learning communities by promoting staff
development through ventures such as arranging relevant workshops, encouraging collaboration with peers and professionals within, as well as outside, the school, mentoring, providing professional feedback to teachers and working with teachers to improve teaching practices and to resolve challenges facing the school.

Finding 4

It was found that effective principals collect and review relevant assessment data with a view to using their findings to improve the school instructional programme and to inform their leadership practices. Instructional leaders collect and carefully analyze pertinent information to determine the effectiveness of the existing programmes and services in the school. They then use this information to plan and sustain school improvement initiatives.

Findings from the analysis of documents and interviews will now be discussed.

5.3.2 Findings from the empirical data

Finding 1

Duties of the principal emerged as one of the themes from the qualitative phase of the study. It was found that in the six primary schools in the Gauteng East region, principals were aware that they had both management and instructional leadership duties to perform. Most of them listed promoting teaching and learning as being their main job function. This is in keeping with Hallinger and Murphy’s instructional leadership model (1985) and is encapsulated under the dimensions of managing the instructional programme and promoting school climate.
It is also interesting to note that some of the core duties that were identified were based on their unique situations and on what the community and other stakeholders expected of them. An example of this would be listing motivating teachers as a priority because at that particular school there was a need to motivate the teachers. Another example would be to maintain and improve the high academic standards of the school because that was expected by the community as the school had always been providing good results.

Finding 2

Another theme that was identified was that of balancing their management and instructional leadership duties. It was found that many of the respondents find it difficult to balance their administrative duties and their instructional leadership roles. This finding is consistent with the findings in the literature review. The following challenges were identified as interfering with the principals’ instructional leadership duties: too much paperwork; the frequent changing of the format of documents by the district office, too many changes in curriculum too quickly, unplanned for day-to-day concerns such as parents demanding to see the principal, burst water pipes, district office requiring information without giving prior notice. Some positive suggestions were also forwarded as to how to cope with these challenges: namely prioritizing, planning and managing time efficiently and delegation.

Finding 3

With regard to curriculum management, it was found that the Curriculum Management Model implemented by the Gauteng East District has to a certain extent directed principals to focus more directly on managing the academic curriculum. It gives more direction to SMT members in that it provides guidelines as to what to monitor, how to monitor and when to monitor. Curriculum management is listed as an essential function of instructional leadership and is
covered under the dimension of managing the instructional programme in Hallinger and Murphy's instructional leadership model (1985). Five of the principals interviewed indicated that they were following the Curriculum Management Model and although there is no consensus on its merits their responses indicate that they are engaging with it. However, a matter of concern was that district officials did not give effective training on its implementation and they also kept making changes which led to some confusion.

Finding 4

There is general consensus amongst the principals interviewed that they would be in a better position to support and communicate good teaching practices if they are engaged in teaching the learners. Most of them confirm the research findings that teaching gives principals more insight into what teachers are experiencing and that teachers respect principals more because they are then considered part of the ranks. In addition to this, all the principals indicated that staff development was very important and subscribed to the notion that principals and teachers should be lifelong learners. The above aspects are linked to the dimension of promoting school climate in Hallinger and Murphy's instructional leadership model (1985). An interesting observation made was that the three female principals were more personally and actively involved in the actual process of staff development in that they conducted research and presented workshops themselves.

Finding 5

Collecting, analyzing and using data to make informed decisions and to plan strategies to promote learner achievement is another essential function that is listed under the dimension of managing the instructional programme in Hallinger and Murphy's Framework of Instructional Management (Hallinger and Murphy, 1985). Although the principals interviewed indicate that they set targets for their
learners to achieve, they do not detail how they go about analyzing their results. Looking at the analysis of the ANA 2011 results that were made available by certain schools, it does seem that most of the principals interviewed have very little idea how to actually go about analyzing the results and how to use it to devise strategic plans to improve learner achievement.

The main aim of this research was to determine the role of principals as instructional leaders to facilitate effective teaching and learning. In order to realize this aim a literature survey was undertaken and this served as the foundation on which the empirical research could be based. The findings of this research are now incorporated in the following recommendations.

5.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

Recommendation 1

It is recommended that the job description of principals in current legislation and as outlined in the Employment of Educators Act of 1998 (South Africa, 1998) be reviewed to include a detailed description of what is expected from the principal in terms of instructional leadership. While the management role is clearly outlined, the leadership role is general and vague. Aspects such as providing mentorship, creating a school climate conducive to learning and providing professional development opportunities should be considered for inclusion into the job description.

Recommendation 2

To address the problem that principals are experiencing with regard to balancing their administrative and instructional duties, it is recommended that the Department of Education revise their post provisioning norm and make provision for each school to have two deputy principals. One would head the management
and administration of the school, whilst the other would handle the curriculum side. This would leave the principal with ample time to concentrate on promoting effective teaching and learning in the school.

**Recommendation 3**

With regards to the Curriculum Management Model, initiated by the Gauteng Department of Education, it is recommended that the Gauteng East District ensure that each school under its jurisdiction is clear as to how to implement it. Interactive workshops would be advisable in this regard. Research should then be carried out to determine the merits of the model with a view to improving it. Once the model has been fine-tuned, it could be used in other districts as well.

**Recommendation 4**

It is recommended that the Department of Education create opportunities to ensure that principals become lifelong-learners. They could do this by training principals on leadership styles of which instructional leadership would be one component. It should be mandatory for newly-appointed principals to take the Advanced Certificate in Education (ACE) leadership courses. This course emphasizes the role of principals as instructional leaders. In addition to this principals should be informed of the merits of teaching whilst at the same time leading. Principal forums or discussion groups should be set up, where principals can share ideas and best practice. They can also discuss concerns as they apply to their particular institutions. Dialogue on recent trends and developments can also be explored.

**Recommendation 5**

It is further recommended that principals be given guidance and training on how to conduct research in their own schools with regard to assessment, curriculum
delivery and teaching strategies with the aim on development and improvement. Training on data collection and analysis would be beneficial to all principals. It would enable principals to turn their schools into true learning organizations where learning takes place at every level.

Having discussed the findings of this research study together with some recommendations, it is now necessary to list some topics that can be researched as a result of this study and to make some concluding remarks.

5.5 RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The following areas may be considered for future research into instructional leadership:

- An investigation to determine to what extent deputy principals and heads of department display instructional leadership and what effects this has for developing schools as learning communities.
- A comparative study to examine the role of the education districts in promoting instructional leadership in schools and the effects this has on schools with regard to learner achievement.

5.6 CONCLUSION

The role of the principal as the leader of the school has become complex and multifaceted. The traditional role of principal as manager has been expanded to principal as leader. Which roles do principals give priority to? It has been established that in order to promote their core duty of promoting effective teaching and learning in their schools, principals need to concentrate more on their instructional leadership roles.

This research has shown that the very essence of instructional leadership is to transform the school organisation into an environment where teachers and
learners may reach their full potential. Although it is important for principals to balance their administrative and instructional leadership roles, this study has shown that many principals neglected to do this. The current study has revealed that there should be a paradigm shift where principals who give too much attention to administrative duties should now shift their focus to instructional leadership functions. This study provides principals with several suggestions for improving instructional leadership behaviours and cultivating a climate in which teachers and learners can strive to achieve their full potential. It also emphasizes the need for continued professional development so that the principal can set the example as the ‘lead learner’.
Bibliography


LaPointe, M., & Davis, S. (November 9-12, 2006). *School Leadership Study Developing Successful Principals: Exemplary Programs Produce Strong Instructional Leaders*. A paper presented at the annual convention of the University Council for Educational administration; San Antonio, TZ.


### Appendix A

#### Biographical Data Questionnaire

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Aspect</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Name of School</td>
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<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Number of learners at the school</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Language of Instruction</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Quintile grouping of the School</td>
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<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>How many principals has the school had during the past ten years?</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>No. of Management Members. Please indicate position.</td>
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<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>No. of GDE employed educators</td>
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</tr>
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<td>8</td>
<td>No. of SGB employed educators</td>
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<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Socio-economic status of the majority of learners in your school.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>o Average</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>o Below average</td>
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<td>Gender</td>
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<td>13</td>
<td>Highest Education qualification</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>o Post school diploma/certificate</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>o Teacher’s diploma/certificate plus further educational diploma/certificate</td>
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<td>o Bachelor’s degree</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>o Honours or higher qualification</td>
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<td>Home Language</td>
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<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>Do you speak any other language? If so please indicate.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>No. of years’ experience as principal</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
INTERVIEW 3

INTERVIEWER  Principal C, I would like to start the interview by asking you just to tell me a little bit about yourself.

PRINCIPAL C  In terms of my career?

INTERVIEWER  Yes.

PRINCIPAL C  Okay, I started at the school on the 1st of January 1977 as a little teacher and 35 years later I am still here. So I think if one had to analyze that statement one would say that this is my home and that what I do here is a passion for me. I got married from this school and I had my daughter who came to this school from this school. So all in all I think I am just part of the furniture, you know, really.

INTERVIEWER  So, you say you are deeply entrenched in the history of this school.

PRINCIPAL C  Yes, I am. The school is 51 years old and I have shared 35 of that 51. So, yes, if you ask me where anything is in the school I can tell you because I’ve been around. But it’s my life, it is my second home, and this is my other family. So I see myself as their mom.

INTERVIEWER  Okay.

PRINCIPAL C  That’s how I see myself.

INTERVIEWER  Yes, it’s a long time to be in a school.

PRINCIPAL C  Yes.

INTERVIEWER  Principal C, taking into account your experience now as the level 1 teacher, you must have moved up in management and then especially as deputy principal or principal – I don’t know if you were deputy.
No, I wasn”t. What happened was I was HOD guidance in those days, you know, and I spent 10 years in that field where I did a lot of study in psychometrics and all that kind of thing and then, somehow, the principal decided to retire and the deputy principal decided to relocate and I then was asked to act. So, I moved from head of department right into a principalship which was a shock and a half as you can well imagine.

Okay.

But I think that I had very good guidance and support in all the years that I’ve been here and, of course, I had people who helped me a lot, for example, my governing body.

Yes.

Yes, I had the wealth of experience there who supported me and of course then I had – you know my IDSO was a wonderful person. So, I had the support and I think that just made it a little bit easier to get into it.

Now, taking into account all this experience, what would you say are the most important duties that a principal has to perform?

Well, I think, you know what, there are so many duties that are your responsibility, but from a personal perspective – I mean we have a look at managerial things, we have a look at the instructional things as you”ve actually said academically but I think our most important responsibility are the children because if you are doing that correctly all the other things fall into place. Your administrative, your academic, everything
falls into place. So, if you are making sure that the children are getting holistic education the other things will fall into place. So I would say that it’s a myriad of duties and responsibilities that you have to take upon yourself but the primary thing is the children.

INTERVIEWER The learners.
PRINCIPAL C Yes.
INTERVIEWER Okay, and then, you see in your role now as principal now you must have come across a lot of challenges and many successes, I am sure. What I am interested in is, in terms of these challenges and successes, how do you balance your administrative role and your instructional leadership role?

PRINCIPAL C You know I teach.
INTERVIEWER Yes.
PRINCIPAL C Okay, so already now you can understand that in terms of management and administration that in itself can become a challenge because now you are taking time when you should be in here but you are out there. So, what I did was – time management to me was important so that you can balance it. You have to make sure that the way you manage your time, that the one doesn’t compromise the other one. So I start work at half past six in the morning.

INTERVIEWER Ok.
PRINCIPAL C You see, then I’m at work, and that is so that before I go in to do my instructional work I have done quite a bit of the administrative work for the day and then I wrap up in the afternoons. So I think you have to marry the two but I think that the key issue here is time management because both take a lot of your
time, you see, and if you have a look at the documentation and legalities involved, you have a look at what you’re supposed to do you can see a lot of it is administrative and managerial. But all in all I’m just a teacher at heart, aren’t I?

INTERVIEWER All of us, yes.

PRINCIPAL C Absolutely.

INTERVIEWER And then now when it comes to monitoring and developing your staff what challenges and successes have you experienced there?

PRINCIPAL C To me that is a passion because if you develop your staff they grow, and if they grow, the learners grow because I believe if you don’t grow you die. So, the successes I would say are perhaps, I hope, reflected in what we are trying to achieve here in terms of academic excellence. I would say that the staff development that I have embarked on or attempted to embark on has hopefully enriched my teachers’ lives so that they enrich the learners. The learners go home and reach others and so the community becomes enriched. Challenges, once again time. We are a very busy school, very, very busy.

INTERVIEWER Yes.

PRINCIPAL C So where do you actually get time where you can have your whole staff together and develop them. You see over there I’ve got something that I am busy with (refers to a working document on her table - discipline)

INTERVIEWER Okay.

PRINCIPAL C You see.

INTERVIEWER Yes.
PRINCIPAL C So to me that is very important because if you don"t grow you die. So development is very important.

INTERVIEWER So then can you elaborate a little bit on what staff development you do.

PRINCIPAL C Oh, I"ve done quite a number of things for example, effective classroom discipline. I practice a lot on discipline because I always say to them in terms of discipline whose job is it. You can see I am building school discipline, yes. I have done a lot of curriculum work with them. I am busy at the moment with CAPS because we are implementing it next year in the foundation phase.

INTERVIEWER Yes.

PRINCIPAL C I have already started with my teachers so that we can engage. We will go to our workshops as scheduled but we need to be proactive. So yes, to me curriculum forms the core of what we do. That"s our business but what comes with it. There are little bits and pieces that are fragmented that we need to look at and those need to be integrated and if you have a look at IQMS, all those things that they refer to make us a holistic person in terms of our teaching and learning.

INTERVIEWER So you are carrying out internal development?

PRINCIPAL C Yes.

INTERVIEWER Internal school development.

PRINCIPAL C Yes, and I do it.

INTERVIEWER Okay, and then I know your school does a lot of sporting activities and things like that. Can you tell me a little bit about what you"re involved in?
PRINCIPAL C I don"t coach. Once again time management, when must I do it? But I am there and they tend to think that I"m the cater lady – I"m the catering lady, you know. It"s my five cents. But what I do do, is I try to go to all or most of, if I can, my sporting activities. I like to be visible. I like the children to see that I am there. I can coach, not very good, but I can. if I have to I will because I believe you must lead by example. So you see if I have to teach swimming I will do it. I don"t know how I will, but I will do it. I have coached soccer, I have done mini tennis, I have done athletics, I"ve done cross-country. So, yes, I think in the time that I"ve been at the school I think I have done my time, you know, I"ve gone through the motions.

INTERVIEWER So you"ve done your time. And your school is quite involved – netball, soccer …..

PRINCIPAL C Everything – 12 sporting types, rugby.

INTERVIEWER Is it 12 Sporting types?

PRINCIPAL C Yes.

INTERVIEWER Okay.

PRINCIPAL C Mini tennis, mini netball, mini cricket, cricket, we"ve got swimming, cross-country, hurdles, athletics and so on.

INTERVIEWER I see.

PRINCIPAL C So ja, we are quite busy.

INTERVIEWER Yes that"s a lot of activities to be involved in.

PRINCIPAL C It is, but we have a large school and if we are saying - the policy tells us that we need to afford all learners opportunities then we must endeavour to do so to the best of our ability.
INTERVIEWER: Yes, that is true. And then Principal C, you spoke about you teaching, right.

PRINCIPAL C: Yes.

INTERVIEWER: Are you teaching because you want to teach or …

PRINCIPAL C: Yes, yes, Maths is my passion. It’s my passion and I could never, ever go without teaching my Maths, no. No, I have to do that.

INTERVIEWER: And then like in your capacity as principal would you advise other principals to teach?

PRINCIPAL C: Yes. You know why? I think it is important that you keep your feet on the ground so that you experience what that little post level 1 teacher is experiencing and you can relate because you know what I always say, and it’s something that my father taught me, don’t expect somebody to do something that you cannot do. That’s a simple philosophy in life, isn’t it?

INTERVIEWER: Yes.

PRINCIPAL C: So you see, my educators see me there, going wild, teaching and doing what they do daily and I think it is important because you know what, it creates that sense of team work. I’m not sitting up there doing they don’t know what. I’m with them in the field, you know, and I think that is so important. I don’t know, that’s just an opinion, but that’s why I do it, over and above the fact that I have a passion for what I do.

INTERVIEWER: And then do you supervise your teachers? Go into their classrooms and …

MRS SMITH: Yes, yes, yes. I supervise them, I visit regularly, I pop in. I tell them, you know, look I pop in alright, if you’re busy doing something, just carry on doing it because you know what man, if you think in terms of IQMS, if I
INTERVIEWER: Have a planned lesson, is that what I do every day?
PRINCIPAL C: No.

INTERVIEWER: No.
PRINCIPAL C: So I need to see what you do every day. I’m checking homework diaries, I’m looking at work, I am doing corrective teaching. That is what I do every day. So that is how you should be assessed, isn’t it, on what I do every day. That’s how children are assessed.

INTERVIEWER: Yes.
PRINCIPAL C: On what they do every day. That’s how I should be assessed on what I do every day.

INTERVIEWER: And how do your teachers take to this?
PRINCIPAL C: Touch wood, I’ve never had a problem, ever, have they said go away now don’t come now, whatever. Ever, ever, ever.

INTERVIEWER: And then do they welcome your suggestions?
PRINCIPAL C: Yes – and I also ask them. Isn’t it important, it’s a two-way thing. These are my suggestions. What do you suggest? Because you get to know what goes on inside the person’s head, you see, that’s how you get to know each other. And if you get to know each other you can work together.

INTERVIEWER: You can then work together. And do you involve your teachers a lot, you know, in things like policies and decisions.
PRINCIPAL C: Yes, I do, particularly my SMTs. Particularly. I am busy now with a thing for IQMS and I called them and I said well Saturday we are working because now we must engage with this thing – yes, no, we’re working, that’s fine, because we need to learn from each other how to implement. So, yes, I do but I am also aware
of the load that the post level 1 and 2 teachers carry in terms of what they are doing so one must not overload them either, you see. I think there has to be a balance. I had a teacher do a health policy for me the other day, post level 1, beautiful – beautiful policy but I don’t go specifically and say, Interviewer I want you now, and I know that you are – you’ve got so much work you don’t know what you’re doing and now you must still do additional work over and above what you have to do. So I think one must be a little bit sensitive too, particularly those of us who are getting home at five and six o’clock in the evening because of sport.

INTERVIEWER Because of sporting codes, yes.
PRINCIPAL C So one must sensitize oneself so it’s a question of give and take, you know. If I am here and I see that Interviewer is busy out there and it is five o’clock then I will pitch in. There is nothing wrong with these two hands.

INTERVIEWER Okay. That’s a good attitude and a positive attitude.
PRINCIPAL C Yes, there’s nothing wrong with these two hands. She will help me at some other stage again, you know. That’s how I – I don’t know man, that’s how I see how it should work.

INTERVIEWER And then you know – I know because your school is in Springs, I know your school does very well academically. Do you analyse results and projects?
PRINCIPAL C Yes.
INTERVIEWER Can you tell me a bit about that?
PRINCIPAL C Yes, I think this is where the teachers feel they want to go home when I start with this. I analyze
everything. I have a moderation thing that I look at and when I have a look at the statistics it’s not a question of you haven’t been performing, it’s a question of how do we improve. What strategies can we put in place to make it better, not you didn’t do your job, it is not good enough. These teachers in this school work. So when we have a look, for example, at our annual national assessments and we see that we are not happy – what is it that we can do and where do we begin to strive to improve.

INTERVIEWER Okay.

PRINCIPAL C Because it’s a process, it doesn’t just happen overnight. It’s a process and then we put strategies in place and see where we are in the next term, in the next quarter, in the next half year, in the next year, you see, because it’s a process. It’s something that you’ve got to drive. It’s not going to happen overnight. No, definitely not.

INTERVIEWER Now you see, in terms of this academic development, there’s a lot of focus on it now, especially, you know, with South Africa’s literacy and numeracy results, now in your school especially what formal programmes have you put in place?

PRINCIPAL C Okay, I'll tell you what I did. The very first thing that I started off with when I saw this – I thought about it a lot because I’m a maths person so you see everything will go there. But you see that’s not where the problem starts, the problem starts with language acumen. If the child doesn’t understand it’s going to impact on maths and numeracy. So you have to start with language and that is what I did. I started with
that. I implement it by using simple things like for example a reading laboratory. Very simple thing but extremely effective and already in the two years that we’ve implemented it I can see a change. It's been a process as I've said to you but I can see a distinct change in our children where English is not the home language. You see we have diverse groupings. So how do you accommodate all of them? You need to work it in such a way that they can be working at their own level and pacing themselves in terms of growth and development and you would support. I can already see a distinct difference particularly at the exit points in Gr.3 and Gr.6 in terms of literacy and language.

INTERVIEWER Okay.

PRINCIPAL C So your next focus would be that once you’ve got that sorted out and you can see you’re moving forward you can now start concentrating on numeracy and maths because if the language understanding is not there it impacts on the other one. So that is how I’ve interpreted what I need to do is I have to get the language acumen and the vernacular correct before I can focus on the other one.

INTERVIEWER So have you got like extra periods or ….

PRINCIPAL C We inculcate our reading laboratory into the language. We have a reading period but reading doesn"t help if you don"t understand what you"re reading. So you see the language laboratory is something that you’ve got to do at least once a week – at least.
INTERVIEWER Then just to be clear the language laboratory is the box where you’ve got all the different graded.
(Principal C talks while Interviewer is speaking)
(reading cards?)

PRINCIPAL C Yes, now I have got something similar because I am starting now with the maths.

INTERVIEWER Okay.

PRINCIPAL C So I’ve got something similar that I am trying to work on to see how am I going to implement this in order to try to improve the numeracy in the school because I feel that there is a lot of room for improvement there. There’s always room for improvement, you see, so we need to do a bit – small steps. You can’t do it overnight – slowly. So I have now looked at that and I’ve looked at the SRA there to see what I can do in terms of numeracy and mathematics and corrective teaching because in maths it is so important because context is important, you see. So that’s what I’m trying to do. I don’t know if I’m going to achieve it but I’m trying.

INTERVIEWER Well at least you’ve seen some success already with the English.

PRINCIPAL C Yes, oh definitely – definitely.

INTERVIEWER And then in terms of your stakeholders now how supportive are they?

PRINCIPAL C You know, I’m a very privileged principal, very – because I have a community that supports me. If you were here last night – we had a parents evening last night. Mam, it was crazy! Last week we had an information evening here and I had four hundred parents in my hall - four hundred ! So I’m privileged
and I'm blessed in that sense that my parents and my community support what we are trying to do because, you know, if you don't have the support you're not going to achieve anything, you see. You've got to have them with you and they've got to buy into it because I'm selling a product. So I'm very fortunate in that way I think, you know. More so than a lot of my colleagues – a lot of my colleagues. So yes, I have involvement and I think that helps a lot.

INTERVIEWER Because lots of principals and teachers even have complained about, especially the learners who need support, the parents are not supportive.

PRINCIPAL C Yes.

INTERVIEWER And you say in your school you are getting that support.

PRINCIPAL C Yes, look you're always going to have that. You are never going to get a hundred percent because I'm a mother, if my child is battling do I want to go and hear that – no, I don't want to hear it. So you see what do I do, I stay away. So yes you do get that but generally speaking.

INTERVIEWER So you do get that.

PRINCIPAL C It's never a hundred percent but generally speaking parents are supportive.

INTERVIEWER But what would you say you are doing that's getting that support.

PRINCIPAL C Heaven only knows (laughs). You can't pinpoint it.

PRINCIPAL C I don't know like I've said to you, you know, I just think I've been very lucky but I've always had this view that we are a family at this school so it encompasses all of
us. No parent must ever feel that they can"t walk into the office. The same applies to a teacher and the same applies to a learner and I'm hoping that maybe it is that – that the norms that we are trying to exude is felt by all.

INTERVIEWER Yes.
PRINCIPAL C I hope it is that, I don"t know ma"am, I don"t know what it is.
INTERVIEWER I am sure that must be it.
PRINCIPAL C But as I"ve said I am just very privileged in the sense that I have a governance structure that is one hundred percent behind me and they support me. Then I have my moms and dads, you know. I ask for people to help, they come forward. I don’t have to scrounge around looking for people – no.
INTERVIEWER And then like you know you employ a lot of SGB teachers.
PRINCIPAL C No, not a lot. I"ve got three full times and then I"ve got some who come in and do sport and that kind of thing, ja.
INTERVIEWER And then the number in your classes.
PRINCIPAL C It varies, I mean my one group is well over 40 in the class – 44.
INTERVIEWER Okay.
PRINCIPAL C You see. So it will vary, you know. Over capacity that we are totally, totally, like I think you are, yes.
INTERVIEWER Yes.
PRINCIPAL C You see, because that"s what happens.
INTERVIEWER It"s been very interesting talking to you Principal C. I just wanted to ask you is there anything that, you think, you know, with regards to the role of the
principal that I might not have touched on that you could add on or that you would like to add on.

PRINCIPAL C No, I think, you know, I always say a ship is as good as its captain. That's the bottom line but you have to lead by example and you have to show the people that they are working with you not for you – with you, that you mean what you say and that there must be support, there must be growth, there must be development in any institution and that applies to you as well. Because let me tell you something I learn something from these people every day and that enriches your life, you know.

INTERVIEWER Yes.

PRINCIPAL C So I think in terms of legalities and legislation you know that principals must know that stuff but I also think that there must be an element of humanness also in the leader of any institution because initially you are a family you're together what – eight, seven hours a day, you know, and you're engaging with people from all walks of life so you need to try and create an understanding of what you are dealing with because if you don't have that how do you work with them.

INTERVIEWER Yes.

PRINCIPAL C There must be an element of humanness also in the leader of any institution because initially you are a family you"re together what – eight, seven hours a day, you know, and you"re engaging with people from all walks of life so you need to try and create an understanding of what you are dealing with because if you don"t have that how do you work with them.

INTERVIEWER Yes.

PRINCIPAL C You see. So to me, yes, it's important, you've got to have all these, you know, roles and responsibilities and all that. You"ve got to have that and that must be in place but there must be an element of humanness as well.
INTERVIEWER And you work closely with your SMT.

PRINCIPAL C Yes, very. Very, very closely. We take decisions together, it’s a team effort. Obviously if I say to them this is something that I’m passionate about I must be able to justify what I’m saying because we work together. It’s not a question of it’s my way or the highway, you know. It’s a question of how do we make it better for all of us. All of us – from that man with his blower out there right to the top. You see to me that’s what it’s all about.

INTERVIEWER Thank you so much, Principal C. I’ve learned a lot whilst speaking to you.

PRINCIPAL C No I think you have to teach me now after all this.

INTERVIEWER Just for the record purposes I would like to ask your permission to use what is recorded for my study purposes.

PRINCIPAL C If it is of any use to you. I don’t know if it would be.

INTERVIEWER Yes, it will.

PRINCIPAL C Because I can’t seem to be, you know, I seem to be very unconventional in the way I think but to me what we do here must be a passion.

INTERVIEWER Thank you.
Appendix C

SEMI-STRUCTURED INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

1. Taking into account your experience as a principal of a primary school, what would you say are the most important duties that a principal has to perform?

2. What challenges and successes have you encountered in trying to perform your duties as an instructional leader especially in respect of:
   2.1 balancing your administrative and instructional roles;
   2.2 monitoring and developing teaching and learning at your school;
   2.3 promoting staff development in respect of curriculum issues?

3. There is a belief that principals are key role players in the development and maintaining of academic standards in schools. What formal steps have you taken to improve the academic standards in your school especially in respect of literacy and numeracy/mathematics?

________________________   __________________________
Mrs LI Moonsammy-Koopasammy   Professor R Mestry
Student/Interviewer     Supervisor