



# Exploring Strategies to Strengthen Continuing Professional Development of Teachers in Rural South Africa

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## Abstract

Professional development of teachers is a cornerstone of the provision of quality of teaching and learning in a country's education system, affirmed by the literature, with programmes central to proposals for improving the quality of teaching and transforming education. Competencies of teachers in South Africa have not improved as envisaged, according to studies conducted, with many professional development programmes not yet implemented or not taking into account teachers' perspectives. In addressing this challenge, the aim of this article is to determine components of a strategy that could be employed to implement professional development programmes, drawing on a project conducted in two rural secondary schools in the Free State province. Data were generated from school community participants and district-based officials using a Participatory Action Research approach. Findings revealed six distinct components of a strategy, namely establishment of a team comprising all stakeholders; the creation of a common vision for all based on a thorough Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) analysis; prioritizing items; drawing up of a strategic plan; monitoring procedures to determine progress made; and suggesting possible ways of improving on weaknesses.

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## Résumé

Comme indiqué dans la littérature des sciences de l'éducation, le développement professionnel des enseignants est la pierre angulaire de l'offre d'un enseignement/apprentissage de qualité dans le système éducatif de chaque pays, avec notamment des programmes adaptés aux propositions visant à améliorer la qualité de l'enseignement et à réformer l'éducation. Selon certaines études, les compétences des enseignants en Afrique du Sud ne se sont pas améliorées comme escompté, étant donné que de nombreux programmes de développement professionnel ne sont pas encore mis en œuvre ou ne tiennent pas compte des points de vue des enseignants. En vue de relever ce défi, le présent article se fixe comme objectif de déterminer les composantes d'une stratégie qui pourrait être utilisée pour mettre en œuvre des programmes de développement professionnel, en s'appuyant sur un projet mené dans deux écoles secondaires rurales de la province de Free State. Les données ont été générées par les participants de la communauté scolaire et des fonctionnaires basés dans les districts, en utilisant une approche participative de recherche-action. Les résultats ont révélé six éléments distincts d'une stratégie, à savoir la mise en place d'une équipe comprenant toutes les parties prenantes; la création d'une vision commune pour tous basée sur une analyse approfondie des forces, faiblesses, opportunités et menaces (SWOT); la priorisation des items; l'élaboration d'un plan stratégique; les procédures de suivi pour déterminer les progrès réalisés; et la suggestion des moyens d'améliorer les faiblesses.

## Introductory Background

This article aims to determine components of a strategy that could be employed to effectively implement programmes for professional development, a cornerstone of educational reform and pedagogical improvement practices of teachers. Murtaza (2010: 217) defines professional development (PD) as the sum of all continuing activities, formal and informal, carried out by individuals or systems to promote staff growth and renewal. The PD of teachers is a continuous process, described by Barnes and Verwey (2008: 10) in terms of continuing professional development (CPD) programmes for teachers that follow pre-service education and the induction phase.

A number of initiatives have been introduced by the Department of Basic Education (DBE) to improve the competencies of teachers in classes in South Africa. One aspect which has influenced the failure of the CPD programmes for teachers has been the non-involvement of practitioners when programmes are designed. Ono and Ferreira (2010) confirm that teachers have been excluded in the design of programmes and policies for PD that are expert-based with the knowledge and experiences of teachers not being considered. Teachers become absorbers of knowledge transmitted to them in a top-down approach presented in a rigid way, without room for context or for teachers to construct

knowledge based on their experiences. It thus becomes difficult for them to translate and contextualize the CPD programme into the classroom, particularly in rural schools with their own characteristics. Designed from a uniform perspective (Myende 2014: 4), Ono and Ferreira (2010), Papastamatis et al. (2009: 84) and Villegas-Reimers (2003: 24) argue that any education reform or improvement that fails to consult teachers in their CPD programmes has not been successful. The balance between experts' knowledge and teachers' experiences has to be forged. Sacrificing either is detrimental to any form of teacher development (Villegas-Reimers 2003: 24).

For schools in rural areas a number of initiatives have been put in place by the DBE to attract teachers. For example, the Fundza Bursary Scheme, by which prospective teachers are given a bursary for a number of years to complete a full teaching qualification, upon receipt of which they are expected to make available their services to a provincial education department for the same number of years (Bennel 2004). The recipients are placed in different areas, including in rural areas, where there is a shortage of teachers. However, the same teachers who are placed in rural areas are often attracted by opportunities in urban areas, leaving behind teachers who in most cases are not specialists in their subjects (Nelson Mandela Foundation 2005) but who regard themselves as 'caretakers', often spending longer than anticipated in the post.

A further challenge for teachers in rural areas is the lack of teaching and learning aids (McKinney 2005), particularly for those who teach Natural and Physical Sciences as these require experiments to enhance understanding; but an absence of teaching and learning aids impairs the competencies of teachers (Kanyane 2008: 88). The challenge becomes how and where to access appropriate professional development programmes that will enable them to improve in their teaching. Many researchers have noted that while professional development had been provided it was not always relevant to the realities of the classrooms of teachers in rural areas (Ball and Cohen 1999; Ono and Ferreira 2010; Villegas-Reimers 2003), most of which were previously disadvantaged communities, presenting yet more challenges, such as transportation to and from the in-service training centres and lack of relief educators (Stack et al. 2011: 3).

Bantwini (2009: 173) challenges the cascading model of presenting CPD programmes for teachers as it regards them as passive recipients of the designed programmes and consumers of knowledge produced elsewhere. The national DBE trains the provincial DBE officials, who in turn will train in the districts, then cluster teachers and train them. The assumption in this CPD programme's approach is that teachers can change their behaviour and learn to replicate it in their classrooms (Shangase 2013: 28–29), but this does not always work.

Understanding of the process is pivotal because in formal education access to the learner's mind begins with the teacher (Mahlomaholo 2012: 4). An exclusively top-down approach will not always work.

Another challenge to the implementation of the CPD programmes has been a lack of leadership to ensure that they are relevant at school level. Biputh and McKenna (2010: 289) found that teachers had observed a lack of opportunities for improvement on the basis of Integrated Quality Management System (IQMS) professional development needs. Administrators were rarely prepared to offer useful advice or provide an opportunity for learning. The study further revealed that the leadership did not create a space in which discussions on a one-to-one basis would take place. Teachers did not have a chance to sit down with their Development Support Groups (DSGs) or Staff Development Team (SDTs) and no time was created for working on the issues raised in their personal growth plans (PGPs). Teachers submitted all of their documentation and went through the rule book scrupulously, but with no follow up. Principals were able to settle scores with teachers rather than attending to the teachers' professional development (Kutame 2010: 97). Besides school principals, districts are also mandated to look at the immediate PD needs of teachers. According to the IQMS policy document 'The district/local office has the overall responsibility of advocating, training and proper implementation of the IQMS [and] the district/local office has a responsibility with regard to the development and arrangement of professional development programmes in accordance with identified needs of educators and its own improvement plan' (DoE 2003: 5).

However, an earlier study by Tsotetsi and Mahlomaholo (2013: 95) showed a lack of support from the district office, and that when teachers sent their requests they expected assistance. If schools themselves requested assistance from the district offices the response was often negative and rude (Nelson Mandela Foundation 2005: 129). Hlongwane (2009: 166) found lack of support from the district office, not only in terms of infrastructural requirements but also in content and pedagogical practices, corroborating the Nelson Mandela Foundation findings. School Management Governance Developers (SMGDs) and learning facilitators (LFs) normally come thrice a year per school; but their attendance is normally not to support or back up teachers but rather for administration and the policing of schools (Nelson Mandela Foundation 2005: 129).

### **Critical Emancipatory Research as the Theoretical Framework**

For our paper we opted for the use of Critical Emancipatory Research (CER), a transformative lens which originated from the Frankfurt school in response to unsatisfactory conditions it wished to change (Jessop 2012: 1–2), and which

allowed researchers to hear the voices of the oppressed groups and interpret them. We used CER to see how CPD could be better implemented. Using CER as a transformative lens we neutralized the power we possessed as researchers, thus becoming co-learners occupying the same status as the participants and partners in knowledge generation. Meanwhile, CER gives power to the participants in enabling them to tell and write their stories, validating and respecting their knowledge rather than considering it as 'weak knowledge' (Netshandama and Mahlomaholo 2010: 114). Co-learning and co-creation of knowledge become key experiences when CER guides the process (Nkoane 2012: 98), providing at least two ways in which a problem can be identified. Firstly, the passive, marginalized group identifies the problem; secondly, the researcher can identify the problem then approach the participants for the co-creation of a solution. In both cases, CER advocates co-creation of a solution.

### **Research Methodology**

The methodology chosen for the paper was Participatory Action Research (PAR), based on ways of knowing that go beyond orthodox empirical and rational Western epistemology (Reason 2006: 195). We opted for PAR as it would operationalize CER, the theoretical framework guiding the initiative; knowledge is not extracted or 'mined' from the rural community to be used by scholars to advance their agendas and or make their fortunes (Ehrhart 2012; Kemmis 2006: 461). In essence, PAR puts CER into practice. PAR generates local useful information and records it in an accessible form. Both the professionals and the erstwhile informants, the partners, occupy the same status (Kemmis 2006: 471), becoming co-learners. PAR offers the possibility for all parties to learn through practice, with the process an end in itself (Joyner 2002). The latter stance of PAR is similar to that of CER towards the researcher and partners in research.

PAR generates knowledge enriched by the diverse perspectives of participants (Kemmis 2006: 461), creating space for participants' educational empowerment to change their lives. Consequently, the knowledge created is understood and owned by the people from whom it is derived (Ehrhart 2012; Kemmis 2006: 463). Compared to conventional methodologies, participants are more open to give richer and more reliable information because they view PAR's approach as committed to improving their lives (Kemmis 2006: 469), with trust between the researcher and participants. PAR's approach is not about extracting knowledge to be exported for processing, sale and consumption in other First World countries (Ehrhart 2012); rather it is about changing people's lives. In conventional research, the researchers are considered to be inert, observers of their subjects, whereas in PAR they are part of the process,

engaged agents who learn about their environment initially through practical experience rather than detached contemplation (Gibbon 2010). On the other hand, participants become the agents rather than the objects of research, determining and meeting their own needs (Ehrhart 2012).

Eberson, Eloff and Ferreira (2007: 131) and Eruera (2010: 3 of 9) found that the problem can be identified by either the community or the researcher, and if identified by the former it can pass to the latter for his or her expertise in assisting in solving it. The reverse is also true, as in our project, when we identified a problem regarding the professional development of teachers and went to the principals of the two schools with a possible solution. Both were interested in being involved and we agreed to have a follow-up meeting at Kgotso Secondary School (a pseudonym), in which both deputy principals would also be available.

The meeting between the principals, deputy principals and us took place in July 2011, and we agreed to have a team to lead the process and continue to seek the involvement of other partners. We agreed that the deputy principals would speak with the School Governing Body (SGB) and teacher unions, while the principals would lead meetings with teachers, SMGDs, LFs and IQMS coordinators. The other suggestion was to have delegates or representatives from these partners if their involvement was successful. In our capacity as researchers, entering the community to conduct research and gain confidence in the participants was not an easy task (Eruera 2010: 2; Strydom 2002: 427). It was to our advantage that we had several years of experience as teachers, and it was only a few years since we had resigned as practitioners. Our previous interactions made it easier for us to gain confidence and cooperation. Secondly, the principal at Kgotso Secondary School was a Master's student at the University in the same year in which we conducted the research. The same was true of the Nala Secondary School (a pseudonym) SMGD, making it easy for us to gain access to and trust in the two schools.

Data were generated and recorded, including the discussions on the voice recorder, and transcribed verbatim. They were then reviewed through intensive reading of the transcripts to identify the main themes, and code them. Some of the information from teachers was also relevant to the introductory part of the paper while other information was not. We presented relevant data as findings and used critical discourse analysis to analyse the data. In the process we were able to draw a concluding summary.

## **The Components and Aspects of a Strategy Used in Response to Challenges**

In the introductory section, challenges to the implementation of programmes and policies were highlighted. In this section the focus is on how they were attended to. The strategy used consisted of six components as follows.

### ***Team Formed as Part of the Strategy***

Both principals had an interest in our initiative and requested that we set another meeting, which their deputies would also attend, in July 2011. In the meeting of six people, one of the deputy principals said: 'We need to form a team to lead the process', which showed how problems were being tackled in the community. A team is normally dedicated to the task of finding ways of solving problems while reporting back to its constituencies. This is a representative democratic process in which a larger group is represented by certain individuals. Also implied is that it would not be a good idea for only six of us to tackle the challenge. It was on the basis of the above suggestion that a discussion was held on the composition of the team, agreed as including SGBs, district-based officials, teachers, and teacher unions. The deputy principals were allocated the duty of informing and finding representatives from the SGBs and teacher unions while principals were to inform and find representatives from their teachers, SMGDs, LFs and the IQMS coordinators. Having informed the various partners an agreement was reached that a delegate from each of the groups be elected to represent that particular group in the team driving the professional development of teachers. For all the democratically elected delegates the meeting was then scheduled for 29 July 2011.

The first meeting of the team was dedicated to driving the implementation of the CPD programmes, with two SMT members from each of the schools, two teachers from each of the schools, two parents from each of the SGBs of the two schools, two LFs, two SMGDs, four teacher union members and two IQMS coordinators from the district. It was therefore agreed that those representatives from various structures would form the team driving the CPD programme's implementation. In total there were twenty-two members representing both schools. The purpose of including as many of the partners as possible was to democratize the committee and have multiple perspectives (Jessop 2012: 2), as advocated by CER.

The venues would alternate, but to accommodate the district-based officials it was agreed that meetings would be held at the same time and venue. It was on the basis of the composition of the team that an agreement was reached to hold the two secondary schools' meetings at the same time, convenient in that the distance between the two was only about five kilometres. The functions

of the team dedicated to drive the implementation of the CPD programmes were to look at the identified needs of the school and ways to address them.

The literature (Moloi 2010: 158; Monyatsi 2006: 152; RSA and DoE 2003: 2; Steyn 2011: 225) supports the establishment of a committee to drive staff development programmes. Particularly distinct about the team was that parents, district-based officials and union members were included in driving the process at school level.

### ***Establishing a Common Vision***

As indicated in the preceding section, the first meeting of the team was in July 2011. Having agreed with the two deputy principals two weeks before, one of the IQMS coordinators was requested to take the team through the process of the IQMS whilst the other IQMS coordinator was tasked with taking the team through the 'Integrated Strategic Planning Framework for Teacher Education and Development in South Africa, 2011–2025', commonly called 'the Plan'. The emphasis of the IQMS coordinator was on identification of the professional developmental needs of schools serving as the point of departure; however, he warned that schools needed to realize that the DBE might, in addition to the schools' needs, have its own. He advocated and trained attendees on the process and procedures of the IQMS, finally taking the team through the structures for the IQMS implementation process.

The next IQMS coordinator took the dedicated team through implementation of the CPD programmes, the primary goal of which was to improve the quality of teacher education and development, and so improve the quality of teachers and teaching (RSA, DBE and DHET 2011: 1). She guided them on outcomes and outputs of the Plan, and the enabling factors for its implementation (RSA, DBE and DHET 2011), a lengthy process being followed by the facilitator dividing the team into five groups to brainstorm and arrive at a vision that would be guiding them throughout. A further agreement was that the suggested vision would be returned to the other partners for endorsement. Having discussed and written their visions on the charts, a process of consolidating the visions into a single one followed. Group members returned to their groups and tried to form one vision from the five groups. As the groups returned the final adopted vision was 'continuous, quality CPD programmes for quality teachers'. This was then returned to teachers, the SGB, teacher unions at the respective schools and all partners involved. With the different suggestions from partners an agreement was made that the team driving the CPD programme would consolidate the various suggestions. From these, one single vision that would guide the two schools was concluded. While the two schools would be sharing the CPD programme's vision it was also agreed that

each would maintain its autonomy as a school. The final vision then read as 'Continuous, quality CPD programmes for quality schools'.

Unlike in other situations, where a less consultative process takes place in formulating the CPD programmes' visions, the above, although a lengthy process, was more democratic and therefore bound a number of partners in education to ensure that the vision was received by teachers. Steyn (2011: 222) supports the idea of having a common idea as an initiative that binds together efforts in order to achieve a common goal. On the other hand, Ramatlapana (2009: 157) showed that without a common vision an organisation will achieve less.

### ***Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) Analysis***

For the purpose of the SWOT analysis, the two schools had to be separated; each looked at its own strength, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. Kgotso Secondary School had the following *strengths* in terms of the implementation of the CPD programmes: the principal knew that the planning, organizing, leading and control were his most vital roles and responsibilities as the person with the Master's degree. CPD programmes were held in which teachers would discuss learners with problems. The discussion culminated in a programme called 'adopt-a-learner', in which learners with problems would identify teachers they thought would assist them with their problems and share them with those teachers. Meetings between teachers and learners were held from Mondays to Wednesdays, and on Thursdays teachers would converge and discuss their successes and challenges. That was confirmed by the following teacher's words: 'During our meetings we sit down and advise one another.' The programme acted as a strong point in this school as teachers could advise one another and share ways of dealing with children's matters.

On the other hand, Nala Secondary School had the following *strengths* in terms of the implementation of the CPD programmes: the management continuously held workshops in which it was motivating staff members as a way of boosting their morale so they worked harder. Workshops were held in which departments had to set plans for the upcoming year or term and motivate staff members to set high standards of achievements in their classes. Both schools had strengths of caring for learners and motivating staff.

In terms of *opportunities* in the implementation of the CPD programmes, Kgotso Secondary School had the following: their good relationship with the University and the presence of a willing NGO to assist SMTs, Mathematics, Physical Sciences and Accounting teachers and learners. In addition to Kgotso Secondary School's *opportunities*, Nala Secondary School had the following in terms of the implementation of the CPD programmes: the supportive SMGD

who would be with the school and hold development programmes at least once per annum, and the presence of an NGO which was willing to support the SMT, Mathematics, Physical Science and Accounting teachers and learners. Both schools had the same NGO willing to assist teachers and learners in the three aforementioned content subjects.

Kgotso Secondary School had the following *weaknesses* in terms of the implementation of the CPD programmes: a lack of parental support in the CPD programmes; no pre-evaluation sessions were held before getting to classes as required by the IQMS policy document; there were no team-building workshops to keep the staff members and the SMT working together; a lack of workshops in which labour matters could be discussed; a lack of workshops in which teachers with disciplinary matters with learners could be enlightened; a lack of development programmes in which teachers might share good practices; a lack of programmes to develop SMTs to do their work; a lack of induction of novice teachers; a lack of time to discuss subject related matters; and a lack of a uniform way of ensuring that teachers who had attended workshops could be given support.

On the other hand, Nala Secondary School had the following *weaknesses*: lack of curriculum management control by the SMT, including a lack of follow-up, lack of team building programmes, which resulted in unhealthy working relations, lack of motivation programmes that would act against negative attitudes amongst staff members, and unequal treatment among staff members by the SMT. A lack of team-building programmes and development programmes to arm SMTs appeared to be common in both schools.

The first *threat* in Kgotso Secondary School was the absence of development programmes linked to the identified weaknesses during the IQMS cycles. The non-attendance of teachers identified made them write similar developmental needs on an annual basis. The second *threat* was the teaching of a subject in which the teacher did not specialize at tertiary level. Thirdly, SMT members without managerial skills and teachers possessing the Primary Teachers' Diploma but teaching grade 12s were seen as another challenge. Lastly, SDT, DSGs and SMTs were not playing their developmental support roles. In contrast to Kgotso Secondary School, Nala Secondary School had the following *threats* in terms of the implementation of the CPD programmes: they were offered during vacation times and after school creating a challenge for those teachers who were using common transport as they had to leave before the end of the session.

Having outlined the SWOT analysis in both schools, the next session presents the priorities from the list of challenges identified in it.

### ***Determining Priorities***

As indicated in the SWOT analysis of the two schools, a number of challenges emerged. Since not everything could be achieved in one calendar year it became necessary for the team to discuss the matter with other partners and shortlist a number of priorities. Having done so, once more the team had to consult the teachers, SMTs and SGBs for their endorsement of the prioritized needs. Determining priorities to be attended to is supported by Moloi (2010: 158) and Monyatsi (2006: 152).

The team, with the endorsement of other partners, prioritized the following five items: training of principals and their SMTs; support given to teachers and the SMTs; teacher collaboration; a coordinated plan; and an increase in the pedagogical content knowledge of teachers.

### ***Strategic Plan***

The aim of the Strategic Plan was to attend to the priorities mentioned above. In the following paragraphs attention is paid to how each of the priorities was attended to.

### ***Training of Principals and their SMTs***

In terms of training principals and SMT members, the following activities emerged: creating an atmosphere conducive for conducting CPD programmes, continuous provisioning of professional development to teachers, role of leaders, monitoring of teachers' work, and motivation of the community to participate in school activities.

The team tasked with the driving of the CPD programmes, in terms of the *training of principals* and SMTs firstly utilized the expertise of the two SMGDs. The first SMGD emphasized the role of the principal in *creating an atmosphere conducive to CPD programmes*. The presentation was held in September 2011. The SMGD said: 'School principals should not only give permission for CPD programmes to take place. Teachers' professional development should be his/her front burner.'

The SMGD was emphasizing the leading role the principal needed to play to ensure that teachers received professional development. The point was not only about giving permission, but in addition the principal's leading role remained a standing item to motivate teachers. At school level and in most institutions it is the leader in the institutions who gives permission for activities to take place. In addition, the leader's attitude towards the activity taking place serves either to motivate or demotivate people to attend the activity. Based on the SMGD's comment she asked that the principals prioritize professional development of teachers.

The second SMGD in the training of principals and SMTs stressed the *importance of continuous provision of professional development to teachers*. The SMGD remarked as follows: 'It is most important that novice teachers are given direction in terms of the school culture. Experienced teachers also need re-skilling. Professional development serves exactly that purpose.' From utterances by the SMGD, it was pivotal that professional development be offered to maintain or improve the school culture. The SMGD concluded by encouraging SMTs to ensure that staff training and mentoring programmes were developed and evaluated as required by the IQMS policy document (DoE 2003: 43).

The third activity on the training of SMTs was given to the principal of Nala Secondary School and the Head of Department (HoD) of Kgotso Secondary School for preparation and presentation in the third training session. The session was held in October 2011. In their presentation during the third training session, SMTs were divided into groups and had to present on the roles they thought leaders needed to play in professional development programmes. The roles that emerged from the different groups included, firstly, the ability to control the work of teachers. The second aspect that emerged was use of systems in running the school. This aspect matched delegation of duties to different structures and teachers. The basis of the allocation of duties should be on their abilities. The third aspect that emerged was planning and the last two were about translating objectives into plans and motivating staff members.

The above activity served to enable SMTs to realize that they had the ability to solve their own challenges. They needed space and time to do what they were led by the presenters to do. The fourth activity, namely the monitoring of the work of teachers, was given to the deputy principal of Kgotso Secondary School and the HoD of Nala Secondary School. The session was held in February 2012, divided into the observation of teachers in practice as well as controlling the tests. The SMTs were also divided into groups and suggested ways in which the two aspects could be attended to. In their presentation one of the SMTs responded: 'Why is the IQMS only requiring one observation of a teacher in a class. Is it fair to judge the teacher on the basis of one lesson?'

Different groups had one thing in common, i.e., it was not sufficient to have one class observation and on its basis conclude whether the teacher was good or bad. As a way forward, an HoD from Nala Secondary School suggested that each term should have a class visit. The suggestion was accepted as one of the SMTs said 'at least based on four class observations per annum, we are in a better way to decide'. To avoid discovering towards the end of the term that work had not been properly carried out an agreement was reached that weekly monitoring of written work be administered. The information from

HoDs would be forwarded to the deputy principal for sending to the principal. SMTs were therefore expected to conduct workshops about the decision and to legitimize it.

The above decision taken by the SMTs as a way of monitoring presentations in classes was a starting point for using their power. Instead of handing themselves to the IQMS document they suggested a strategy that they thought would work better for the development of teachers in their schools. The last item was given to the deputy principal of Nala Secondary School and the principal of Kgotso Secondary School, but they asked how schools could motivate the community to participate in school activities. Emerging from the groups was the issue of time, as communities needed to be given enough time before the meeting. The last two aspects that emerged as important were the representation of community members in the professional development programmes, as well as giving them a hearing.

### Support Given to Teachers and the School at Large

The second prioritized item was the *support* given to teachers and the school at large. Firstly, the team made use of the NGO to train teachers, SMTs and SGBs about team-building. The focus was more on what makes a team succeed. The NGO appeared as a complementary role player in the implementation of CPD programmes, taking the two schools to a hotel away from the schools in which they were situated. Expenses incurred were paid for by the NGO.

The second workshop on the support from the DBE and NGOs was held in consultation with the local university and South African Police Service (SAPS). Firstly, the university's representative was to give theoretical reasons for the abolition of corporal punishment. In addition, he supplied teachers with alternative ways of dealing with disruptive ill-disciplined learners. Secondly, a parent who was also a member of the SAPS provided teachers with legal ways of detecting and dealing with children who used marijuana, cocaine or alcohol. Out of this workshop, teachers were to select a group of learners who would serve to discourage illicit behaviour and the usage of drugs by learners. The conclusion followed a suggestion by one of the teachers: 'To avoid the escalation of drug abuse let us use the youth to discourage others from the usage of drugs.'

The above shows the school community's concern about drug abuse, and as a solution to escalating ill-discipline amongst the youth in both schools. A solution generated within the school community stands a chance of sustainability as it originated from the participants and was not imposed upon them. Another advantage that led to a better understanding of the scenario was the presence of the police representative. It was a privilege for the school to have

members of their SGBs with specialist expertise. The decision addressed unequal power relations in discussions as the entire team accepted the teacher's suggestion which therefore came to be owned by the team, and not necessarily by that individual teacher who suggested it.

### Teacher Collaboration

The third prioritized item was about *teacher collaboration*. Firstly, the collaboration amongst teachers was led by the NGO and the DBE. Teachers had to indicate topics which they were interested in discussing. Besides the presence of the LFs and the facilitators from the NGO, the greatest proportion of the time spent on teacher collaboration was utilized by teachers, where facilitators divided teachers into groups to solve problems.

The second form of teacher collaboration took place when teachers were expected to form clusters, in the absence of facilitators but with teachers of the same subjects determining their agenda. The sessions served also to build leadership as they alternated roles. Ownership and determining their needs were the greatest achievement of the process. The last benefit was for the teachers to share their experiences and approaches in tackling some of their challenges.

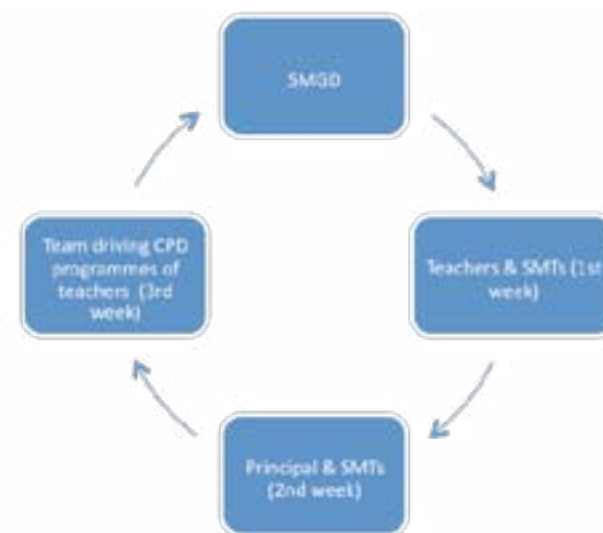
The last form of teacher collaboration was when teachers were revising question papers with their grade 11 and 12 learners. Grade 11 learners from the two schools were separated from the grade 12s, and on the first Friday grade 11s were accommodated at Kgotso Secondary School and grade 12s at Nala Secondary School. For the subsequent Fridays venues were alternated with learners being given question papers to be discussed in groups. Teachers were moving around, 'finding' the successes achieved and challenges encountered by learners. The sessions took four consecutive Fridays, and during the first two the learners tackled paper one in Mathematics, Physical Sciences and Accounting. On the last two Fridays, they dealt with the second papers.

### Designing a Coordinated Plan

The next priority area was the *coordinated plan*. In terms of the implementation plan the first week was earmarked for teachers to engage with their HoDs, so they could have inputs from teachers during the management meeting. That also informed the school-based top structure (principal and deputies) on how each HoD ran his or her department as well as future plans. The second week was then earmarked for the SMT to discuss managerial matters, thus showing that the management of the school had a stance and opportunities to table matters to the SMGD. The SMT planned school-based CPD programmes based on the inputs from teachers. The proposed plan was forwarded and discussed in the third week, when the team driving CPD programmes would be meeting.

The third week was earmarked for the team driving the CPD programmes in which teachers and school partners were then engaged. This gave the team time to reflect on the successes and challenges met. Items were categorized as to whether they related to managerial or purely academic matters. What brought success to the plan was the coordination of the activities with the implementation plan as well as the involvement of broader school community links, giving it democratic, ownership and legitimate status.

Figure 1: A Coordinated Plan



### Improving Teachers' Content Knowledge and Pedagogical Practices

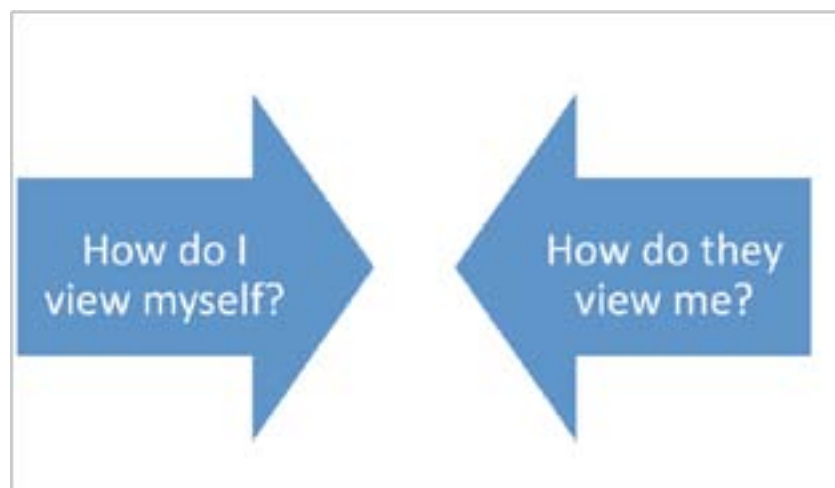
The last priority focused on *improving teachers' pedagogical content knowledge and practices*. In order for teachers to implement the agreed upon designed programmes, HoDs and LFs need to support them in what they are doing in class. For novice teachers, consistent support is necessary. In this way teachers can match the theory learnt at tertiary institutions and the practical application of what they need to do when confronted with classroom realities. Based on this study, at least one classroom visit per term would be appropriate. The focus for HoDs and LFs should be on content knowledge and how to present the lesson. Bantwini (2009: 176) affirms that consistent support from the LFs is crucial, sending the message that teachers are being cared for. After



workshops, teachers still need follow-up to ensure that they are able to put into practice what has been learnt.

During the first week of the month teachers meet with their HoD, to set the tone for the month ahead as well as to look at how teachers progressed the previous month and the programmes offered by the NGOs and the LFs. Challenges met with the actual implementation of the theory are also discussed and possible solutions and interesting breakthroughs shared. At the beginning of the second week of the month subject teachers meet with the aim of sharing their progress. Observations of a lesson in practice are made at this stage and the teacher has to conduct a self-evaluation exercise (How I view myself?). The next step is for the peer and/or senior to evaluate the teacher (How do they view me?) (see Figure 2 and Appendices A and B). This stage serves two purposes. Firstly, the appraisee has a chance of being evaluated by the peer. Secondly, the observer of the lesson has an opportunity to learn new approaches and techniques of presenting lessons. Scores are compared, and a post-evaluation discussion and then evaluation session are held. Joint lesson plans and setting of test papers are also carried out at this stage. Lessons plans are prepared for two to four weeks so as to create time for other activities. Tests are set for each month.

**Figure 2:** How I View Myself?



The third week gives teachers a chance to design their own programmes, which includes reflection of how the teacher performed during the course of the month as well as a plan and contribution. On the fourth week of the month the HoD meets teachers, the purpose being to reflect on how teachers achieved or did not achieve the month's plans as well contributing to the meeting with the LF in the upcoming month.

The designed workshop should provide a platform for teachers to contribute while the LFs, based on their expertise, may try to summarize teachers' presentations in such a way that they have a focal point. Teachers have to leave the workshop knowing what to do, unlike leaving after their presentations without a concluding remark from the LF which leaves them with a variety of perspectives, such as 'I am doing what I think is right.'

### **Monitoring**

As the two schools were working together, monitoring had to take place firstly in the individual schools. SDTs were given a task of drawing up class observation for each school per term, whilst the DSGs had to ensure that teachers adhered to it. The programme was circulated to DSGs and teachers had to check if there were no clashes. For the monitoring of work by teachers, HoDs continued controlling, and once a term teachers of each subject met in the presence of the LFs and facilitators from the NGO to moderate the work already given to learners. The aim was to check the quality and quantity, as well as to copy good practices from other teachers. In order to monitor and consolidate the work in terms of teacher professional development the team was dedicated to driving the CPD programmes in meetings every third week of the month.

### **Concluding Summary**

Our findings showed that the strategy to implement a CPD programme has to consist of various partners involved in the programme. In establishing the team driving the initiative, a democratic process must be followed. Democratizing the process promotes ownership of it while the inclusion of various partners promotes multiple perspectives. Our second finding demonstrated that in order for the team to work collaboratively towards a common goal, training about policy and programmes' implementation is of paramount importance. The activity paves the way for a common vision. A consultative process has to be followed to have a common vision. The SWOT analysis appeared to be the third component in the implementation of the CPD programmes as parents and district-based officials should be amongst the participants, serving to flatten the power hierarchy that exists as teachers, parents and district officials meet.

Schools must be separated to enable each of them to reflect on how it manages and runs its CPD programmes; whilst employing PAR as a methodology creates a discursive space in which participants can discuss matters with the hierarchy structure flattened (Chilisa 2012: 250; Dentith, Measor and O'Malley 2012; Eruera 2010: 1 of 9; Jordan 2003: 190; Sanginga et al. 2010: 698). In the team, parents, teachers and district-based officials should have the same status.

Determining priorities emerged as the fourth component in the implementation process of the CPD programmes, which shortlisted the priorities. The Strategic Plan emerged as the fifth component in the implementation process, and should indicate who does what, activities involved, resources needed, the timeframes as well as the performance indicators (Figure 3). The Strategic Plan keeps the team focused as it relates to the vision created and ensures that some other items related to the vision are not overlooked. In drafting and drawing the Action Plan reference should be made to the common vision. By referring to the vision, any step that does not enable the team to reach its vision should necessarily not be included. In coordinating the Strategic Plan, one or more facilitators should be elected. In this paper, the team elected the deputy principals to lead the drafting and the implementation of The Plan. Within the team, a sub-committee should be developed which will draft the Strategic Plan. The five (or any number on which the team could agree) priority areas need to guide the sub-committee. With the assistance and guidance of the team the sub-committee may be in a position to identify and locate potential facilitators to specific roles in the Strategic Plan.

As indicated above, the Strategic Plan needs to indicate the person(s) who will be responsible for executing certain activities. The purpose is to avoid a situation whereby in the meeting an agreement is reached, but in the next meeting the task/activity has not been carried out. That alone gives the person(s) responsible for executing a certain activity time to prepare and to consult. Indicating the activity to be carried out on a certain day enables the presenters and the attendees to prepare themselves for that particular activity. This also makes it easy for the attendees to participate during the contact session. The time factor is a vital aspect in the plan as it keeps members alert. They need to know when a task has to be completed, as well as the duration of the activity or presentation, and which resources are needed beforehand.

From the sub-committee, the Strategic Plan has to be circulated among team members, who will then either endorse or effect amendments. From the team, the Strategic Plan has to be returned to the teachers and SGB members who are not part of the team. The aim of consulting is to promote participative management and to show respect for their views. The process is lengthy but it creates an open space for debate in a non-threatening environment, as

advocated by CER. As the aim is to empower participants and value their contributions the consultative process promotes ownership of the professional development process.

The first step in the process would be to train principals and the SMT members based on the crucial role they play in the provision of school-based professional development. Presenters in this category should include the SMGD and the SMT members, with the former responsible for giving support to the schools' SMTs and support to the staff in terms of providing professional development programmes. The inclusion of the SMTs in providing programmes for other SMTs is to give them the confidence and the autonomy in providing the programmes in the absence of the SMGDs. The inclusion of SMTs in implementing the professional development programmes will also serve to sustain the programme.

The second step in the Strategic Plan would be to seek support from the DBE, the NGOs and the local university. This creates a bond to sustain support given to teachers, principals and schools. The NGO can first provide support in monetary terms, when there is a need. Secondly, it can employ staff to provide additional support to schools. The local university, in partnership with the DBE, can provide service in terms of classroom management or subject-specific needs. The extent of support given to schools will depend on their needs. The DBE has a crucial role to play in the provision of professional development; however teachers need not depend solely on the programmes of the DBE.

The next step would be about teacher collaboration, to enable teachers to learn from one another and try out new ideas. Sharing stories of success in classroom practice and enhancing teachers' beliefs in their power to make a difference in the learners' learning process are amongst the advantages of teacher collaborations. Teacher collaboration, firstly, could be under the leadership of the LFs or NGO facilitators; the advantage of this approach being that it gives weight to collaboration based on subject expertise. The second form of collaboration occurs when teachers meet and draw up their own agenda, the aim being to encourage the independence of teachers in running and owning their development and growth.

The last form of teacher collaboration takes place when teachers from more than one school plan activities or revise question papers with learners. The distinct feature about this is that learners in groups answer questions and thereafter a discussion of the answers takes place in which teachers of the same subject are present. In this way, it is not only the learners who are learning, but also teachers, from their counterparts on how to attend to specific questions.

The next item on the Strategic Plan is to have a coordinated plan, as the coordination of activities serves to inform members well in advance of the

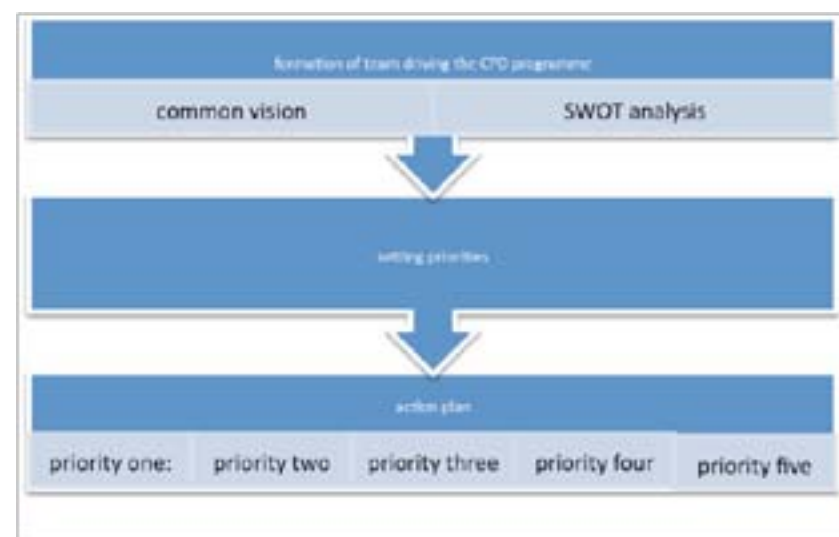
activities to take place as planned. To keep all departments in line they need to have a one-hour meeting every first week of the month, in which to share good practices and plan ahead. The HoD also gains input from teachers to be tabled during the second week of the month, when the SMT meets for an hour. The third week is earmarked for the team dedicated to the implementation of the CPD policies to meet. As it does so it has input from teachers, through their HoDs, and as it plans ahead it is also important that the team reflect on its activities. Furthermore, one of the major tasks of the team (Nagy and Fawcett n.d.: 3 of 5) is to make sure that members report on the activities assigned to them.

The fifth item, also a cornerstone in the Strategic Plan, is to ensure that there is improvement in the teachers' pedagogical content knowledge and practices. This is achieved firstly through one-hour contacts between the HoD and teachers during the first and fourth weeks of the month. The aim is to reflect and plan ahead. The second step in improving the practices of teachers is through mentoring. Novice teachers are to be allocated mentors to guide them through the career. Any item that needs attention should be included in the teacher's PGP for attention. The third aspect is about classroom observation. Findings revealed that one classroom observation per term is not a fair judgement on the teachers' strengths and weaknesses. The findings show that four observations per annum are more appropriate to give an overall picture of the teacher. Through support and mentoring after the first term's observation a good teacher can be turned into an excellent one.

**Figure 3:** Template of the Strategic Plan

ACTIVITY	WHO IS RESPONSIBLE	DATE	RESOURCES NEEDED	PERFORMANCE INDICATOR

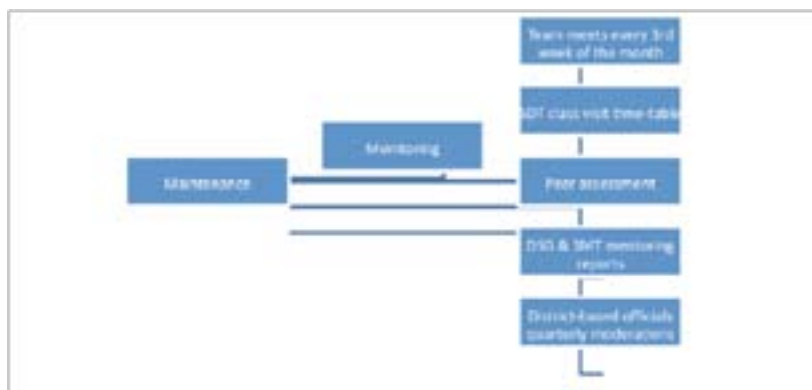
**Figure 4:** Strategic Plan for the CPD Implementation Policy



The sixth component is about monitoring which involves the provision of continuing support to sustain and maintain the new practices (Moloi 2010: 165). The process is carried out through regular and irregular series of observations in time to show the extent of compliance with a formulated standard of practice or degree of deviation from the anticipated norm. In this strategy there are four complementary forms, in which monitoring is carried out.

Firstly, during the third week of every month the team dedicated to the implementation of the CPD policies should meet. The initial meetings should be to identify the professional development needs of teachers, the next to focus on planning to address the identified needs. As soon as the planning process begins the team should focus on reports on the progress made by individuals allocated certain tasks to fulfil. The process is not linear, but amendments are made if the need arises.

Secondly, quarterly class visits should be conducted by the DSGs (Figure 5). The SDT has to be allocated a duty of drawing up the timetable for class visits. HoDs are to ensure that it is followed and any deviation is to be reported to the SDT. On a monthly basis the mentor and mentee should provide a report to the DSG and the SMT.

**Figure 5:** Sustainability of the CPD Programme for Teachers

Thirdly, twice a month, HoDs should meet teachers for a one-hour session (Figure 6). Sessions should be held during the first and the fourth weeks of the month, the aim of the sessions being to share good practices and challenges encountered. In addition, the meetings can give the HoDs an overview of the departments they are running so as to report during the management meetings on the second week of the month. Lastly, the HoDs should also use these sessions to monitor the progress of teachers. As the management meets during the second week for one hour, the subject teachers should also meet in the absence of the HoDs. Subject heads should lead in this process to monitor and share successes and challenges in their specific subjects.

**Figure 6:** Monitoring and Sustaining the CPD Programme

Lastly, the clustering of schools by the LFs should also form part of the monitoring process. The sessions should take place once per term. Firstly, in this session teachers from different schools share their experiences, and where there are challenges try to address them. The second form that this monitoring session takes should be when the LF moderates the work of teachers. In this form, teachers moderate each other's work while the LF oversees the entire process. The process is transparent as teachers moderate each other's work in an open manner. The process is in line with the principles of openness, democracy and transparency as advocated by CER (Jordan 2003: 190). The LFs furthermore use the workshop evaluation form (tool) (Appendix C) to receive inputs from teachers. The teachers' comments include how the session was conducted, and suggested topics for future contact sessions. Questions on the form are designed in such a way that they are open-ended.

In terms of monitoring, this paper has contributed to the body of knowledge, firstly as a coordinated, systematic way of monitoring the professional development of teachers. The process is transparent and developmental. Secondly, members of the team to which all this reporting system converges have parents. They have first-hand information from their children and can easily compare the agreements of the team and what transpires in the classroom. Based on the vested interest parents have in education because of their children, they are more likely to influence the committee to do what is best for them. The approach is empowering (Mertens 2010: 30), as advocated by CER, the theoretical framework couching this paper.

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**APPENDIX B: SCHOOL-BASED PEER EVALUATION FORM**

The teacher(s) who observed  
 TERM: .....

NAME: observer(s) + presenter	DATE	LESSON OBSERVATION			ACTIVITIES AND ASSESSMENT(S) GIVEN TO LEARNERS	COMMENTS
		Introduction	Presentation	Conclusion		
		What I liked about my colleague's lesson				
		What I disliked about my colleague's lesson				
		Suggested improvements on presenting the lesson in future				

Recommendation about my peer's/subordinate's presentation: .....

**Post observation:** after presentation: we discussed/did not discuss our findings:  
 Comments: .....

**APPENDIX C: WORKSHOP/PRESENTATION EVALUATION TOOL**

FACILITATOR'S ROLE IN THE CPD PROGRAMME:  
 .....

AUDIENCE ROLE IN THE CPD PROGRAMME:  
 .....

WAS THE PRESENTATION TEACHER-CENTRED OR LEARNER-CENTRED? ANY RECOMMENDATION(S):  
 .....

WHAT I LIKED MOSTLY ABOUT THE PRESENTED PROGRAMME:  
 .....

WHAT I DISLIKED ABOUT THE PRESENTED CPD PROGRAMME:  
 .....

OVERALL IMPRESSION ABOUT THE CPD PROGRAMME:  
 .....

SUGGESTED TOPICS/ITEMS TO BE DISCUSSED IN THE NEXT CONTACT SESSIONS:  
 .....

