

UNIVERSITY OF THE  
FREE STATE  
UNIVERSITEIT VAN DIE  
VRYSTAAT  
YUNIVESITHI YA  
FREISTATA



**A FRAMEWORK TO IMPROVE CURRICULUM LEADERSHIP IN PRIMARY  
SCHOOLS**

**By**

**MOTSAMAI ISHAMEL SHALE**

**Student number: 1997732589**

**Thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of requirements for the degree**

**Philosophiae Doctor in Education**

**In the**

**School of Higher Education Studies**

**Faculty of Education**

**University of the Free State**

**Bloemfontein**

**2023**

**Supervisor:**

**Doctor M.D Tshelane**



---

## DECLARATION OF OWN WORK

I, MOTSAMAI ISHAMEL SHALE declare that *A framework to improve curriculum leadership in primary schools*, submitted for Doctorate degree, is my own independent work and that I have not submitted it for any other qualification at any other institution of higher learning. All sources quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references. Any omission or discrepancy shall be attended to once highlighted, after publication has ensued.



M.I. SHALE

29 January 2023

Date

### **DEDICATION** This thesis is dedicated to...

My parents, 'Mathabiso Shale and Sello Shale, who encouraged me to love education.

My children, Tshoanelo and Mmarona, 'Mamphoentle (daughter in law) and Vincent (son in law).

My grandchildren, Warona, Tiholo, Mphoentle, Thando and Tiholohelo (Diamond).

My siblings, Matsheliso, Dimakatso, Tlalane, Mathabo, Oupa le Oupanyana.

My nephews and nieces, Memme, Nyalleng, Kefuwe, Nono, Dinono, Iris, Mango, Lerato, Rorisang, Reanetse, Lenka, Kabelo, Thuso, Ausisi le Masawi

They all gave me a reason to soldier on and encouraged me that I should take courage on this study to challenge them and emphasise on the positive at all times in life,

---

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My sincere appreciation and special thanks to Dr. Molaodi Tshelane. This thesis would not have been complete without his proficient consistency and patience. My gratitude for his motivation, unwavering support and guidance throughout this study.

My colleagues, Principals of schools in Botshabelo and Motheo District as well as all SAPA members in the Province of Free State and in the Country who have been a source of strength in many ways, I appreciate the trust you showed in allowing me to be in the SAPA leadership for many years which has culminated in me to want to know more about leadership.

My Chinese friends and colleagues for always encouraging me to work to finish and not to always be a cry-baby complaining about too much work.

The Principals, SGBs, Deputy Principals, Departmental heads and parents who participated in this study for their active and positive participation and active involvement.

I would be failing in my acknowledgements if I can't mention my IT specialist Mr Monaheng Mokhitli who assisted me all the way in technical matters throughout this work.

I Appreciate Free State Department of Education for granting me permission to conduct this study in schools.

The University of Free State for funding my studies for the first two years through their Post –Graduate Studies funding.

My Grandson Warona (Wawa), who always understood that sometimes I had to be away from him on study business for accepting that I had to have space at times.

---

*Sivukile Patrons* for always putting positive pressure on me by always wanting to know when we are celebrating.

God Almighty Heavenly Father for allowing me to know that His only Son is the way, the truth, and the light. He provided me with all I needed to complete this study.

### **ABSTRACT**

#### **A framework to improve curriculum leadership in primary schools**

Research attests that there is correlation between leadership and learner achievement. Principals, deputies, head of departments and subject heads play an important role in designing high quality, critical, community-oriented and collective curriculum leadership in schools. Since the dawn of democracy, the South African education system has experienced many changes in their curriculum. This has led to a serious confusion in terms of leadership, which has resulted in ineffective curriculum leadership in schools. The aim of this study was to design a framework to improve curriculum leadership with the purpose of improving learner achievement. The study used a qualitative approach and a diverse group of curriculum leaders were involved, using critical participatory action research as participants, and the researcher used two primary schools for research. A focus group technique to facilitate participants' observation was used to stimulate sustained interaction. The research question is: how can a framework to improve curriculum leadership in primary schools be designed? Providing ongoing curriculum leadership in schools today is a multifaceted process. The study used Africana Critical Theory (ACT) as its theoretical framework. African leadership models contend that there is a great interest in educational leadership today, because of the widespread belief that the quality of leadership makes a significant difference to school and learner achievement. It is a critical common place that leadership in schools is confronted by moral and ethical dilemmas, thus ACT as the 21<sup>st</sup> century outgrowth of efforts to deconstruct and reconstruct, the dialectics of domination and liberation of Africana life worlds, as well as lived experiences. Data were collected using free attitude interviews

---

and analysed using critical discourse analysis. The study drew heavily on critical leadership studies as a conceptual framework that was used throughout the study. Critical leadership studies, as a conceptual framework proposed by the study - respond to the failure of mainstream leadership studies to address important questions of power, control and inequalities (cf. 1.3, 1.7, 2.2, 2.2.8.3, 2.7.1. 2.7.2, 2.7.3, 5.1, 6.2.2.3 & Figure 7.1). The discussion of the findings resulting from the intervention was done with the use of critical discourse analysis.

**Keywords:** Africana Critical Theory, Critical leadership studies, Conceptual Framework, Critical Participatory Action Research, Curriculum leadership, Intervention strategies, Learner achievement, School Improvement Plan, School Self Evaluation, Teaching.

## LIST OF ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

---

AC	Action Research
ACT	Africana Critical Theory
BF	Basic Functionality
CLS	Critical Leadership Studies
CPAR	Critical participatory Action Research
FAI	Free Attitude Interview
GR	Governance and Relations
LMC	Leadership Management and Communication
PAR	Participatory Action Research
PC	Parents and Community
QTL	Quality of Teaching and Learning
SI	School Infrastructure
SIP	School Improvement Plan
SSE	School Self Evaluation
SSSD	Secure School Safety and discipline
SWOT	Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER 1: ORIENTATION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY.....	1
1.1 INTRODUCTION .....	1
1.2 RESEARCH PROBLEM AND VALIDATION OF THE PROBLEM STATEMENT...3	

1.3 LITERATURE REVIEW AND/OR THEORETICAL (OR CONCEPTUAL) FRAMEWORK FOR THE STUDY.....	4
1.4 RESEARCH QUESTION .....	5
1.5 RESEARCH AIMS AND OBJECTIVES .....	5
1.5.1 Aim .....	5
1.5.2 Objectives .....	5
1.6 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY .....	5
1.7 DATA COLLECTION.....	7
1.8 DERMACATION AND SELECTION OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS .....	8
1.9 DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION.....	9
1.10 VALUE OF THE PROPOSED RESEARCH.....	9
1.11 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS.....	9
1.12 LAYOUT OF CHAPTERS.....	10
CHAPTER 2: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK.....	11
2.1 INTRODUCTION.....	11
2.2 AFRICANA CRITICAL THEORY AS A THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK .....	11
2.2.1 Historical origin of African Critical Theory.....	15
2.2.2 Grand narratives .....	18
2.2.3 Grand narratives of W.E.B. Du Bois .....	18
2.2.4 Grand narratives of Anna Julia Cooper .....	21
2.2.5 Grand narratives of Amilcar Cabral .....	22
2.2.6 Grand narratives of Frantz Fanon .....	24
2.2.7 Grand narratives of bell hooks .....	25
2.2.8 Reflections of ACT .....	27
2.2.8.1 Double consciousness: W.E.B. Du Bois .....	27
2.2.8.2 Assumptions of the theory .....	28
2.2.8.3 Limitations of the theory .....	33
2.2.8.4 Advantages of the theory .....	35
2.2.8.5 Principles of the theory .....	36
2.2.9 Knowing African Critical Theory.....	36
2.2.10 Psychoanalytic principle.....	37

2.2.11 Marxist principle.....	38
2.2.12 Historic and cultural principles.....	39
2.2.13 Reader response principle.....	40
2.2.14 Formats of the theory.....	41
2.2.14.1 Social transformation.....	41
2.2.14.2 Transformational leadership .....	42
2.2.14.3 Economic transformation.....	43
2.2.14.4 Deconstruction and reconstruction .....	44
2.2.14.5 Observation of human rights.....	45
2.3 ACT EPISTEMOLOGY AND ONTOLOGY.....	46
2.4 INTERPRETIVISM .....	47
2.5 AFRICANA CRITICAL THEORY AXIOLOGY .....	48
2.5.1 Reasons for using the theory .....	49
2.5.2 To identify literature relevant for the study .....	49
2.5.3 To decolonise the minds of African people .....	49
2.5.4 To restore confidence and self-esteem .....	51
2.5.5 How does low self-esteem develop and the dangers of low self-esteem .....	56
2.6 STEPS TO BE FOLLOWED WHE USING AFRICANA CRITICAL THEORY.....	58
2.7 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK .....	59
2.7.1 To Africana critical theory .....	59
2.7.2 Critical leadership .....	61
2.7.3 Curriculum theory .....	62
2.8 SUMMARY OF THE CHAPTER .....	63
CHAPTER 3: LITERATURE REVIEW.....	65
3.1 INTRODUCTION.....	65
3.2 DISCUSSIONS AND DEFINITION OF CONCEPTS.....	68
3.2.1 Curriculum framework .....	68
3.2.2 Curriculum leadership .....	69
3.2.3 Dynamic Instructional leadership .....	72
3.2.4 A primary school .....	75
3.2.5 Enhancing.....	73

3.2.6 The principal .....	73
3.3 THE PRINCIPAL’S ROLE IN CURRICULUM LEADERSHIP .....	74
3.3.1 Principals and their role as instructional leaders .....	74
3.3.2 Principal as a reason for poor academic performance .....	76
3.3.3 Incapability to implement the prescribed curriculum adequately .....	77
3.4 CONSTRAINTS AND ENABLERS IMPACTING ON CURRICULUM LEADERSHIP IN DIFFERENT COUNTRIES.....	78
3.4.1 Constraints and opportunities to curriculum leadership .....	78
3.4.1.1 The impact of demographics, policies and technologies in the USA .....	79
3.4.1.2 Frequent changes in educational policy also influence curriculum and instruction.....	80
3.4.1.3 The impact of demographics, policies and technologies in Ethiopia .....	86
3.4.1.4 The impact of demographics, policies and technologies in Zimbabwe .....	88
3.4.1.5 The impact of demographics, policies and technologies in South Africa.....	91
3.5 OVERCROWDED CLASSROOMS AND PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT.....	96
3.5.1 Overcrowded classes in schools in different countries .....	96
3.5.2 Solutions to overcrowded classes in different countries .....	99
3.5.3 Parental involvement in children’s education in different countries .....	91
3.5.4 Curriculum leadership: why it matters .....	102
3.6 THE UNIQUE NATURE OF CURRICULUM LEADERSHIP .....	103
3.6.1 Curriculum leadership is non-authoritarian in nature .....	103
3.6.2 Curriculum leadership is defined more by the concept than the position.....	103
3.6.3 Curriculum leader competency is in process, not content.....	10
3.6.4 For the curriculum leader, tasks and relationships are inseparable .....	105
3.6.5 The curriculum leader must have a strong ego and confidence in their importance to the success of the school curriculum .....	105
3.6.6 The curriculum leader must learn two languages: the language of education and the language of the public .....	105
3.6.7 The curriculum leader must be knowledgeable and skilled in data analysis....	106
3.7 DYNAMICS OF CURRICULUM LEADERSHIP.....	106
3.7.1 Understanding dynamic leadership .....	109
3.7.2 Principles of leadership .....	110

3.7.3 Curriculum leadership theories .....	112
3.7.3.1 School leadership theories .....	113
3.7.3.2 Contingent leadership theory .....	113
3.7.3.3 Distributed leadership theory .....	113
3.7.3.4 Social justice leadership theory .....	114
3.7.3.5 Instructional leadership .....	114
3.7.3.6 Situational leadership theory .....	115
3.8 CHAPTER SUMMARY .....	116
CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY.....	118
4.1 INTRODUCTION .....	118
4.2 CRITICAL PARTICIPATRY ACTION RESEARCH (CPAR) .....	119
4.2.1 Origins of action research and its influence on this study.....	120
4.2.2 Objectives of CPAR.....	124
4.2.3 Formats of CPAR.....	125
4.2.4 Critical participatory action research as a discipline .....	126
4.2.4.1 Way of making change.....	126
4.2.5 Ontology of CPAR.....	133
4.2.6 Epistemology of CPAR.....	134
4.2.7 The role of the researcher in CPAR.....	135
4.2.8 Relationships with co-researchers in CPAR.....	136
4.2.9 Rhetoric in PAR.....	138
4.2.10 Selection of participants as a first cycle.....	138
4.3 PARTICIPANTS IN THE STUDY.....	139
4.3.1 The principals.....	139
4.3.2 Deputy principals.....	140
4.3.3 Departmental heads .....	140
4.3.4 School governing body members and Botshabelo education committee member.....	141
4.3.5 Researcher's background .....	141
4.4 CO-RESEARCHERS' INVOLVEMENT IN THE IMPROVEMENT OF CURRICULUM LEADERSHIP IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS.....	142

4.4.1 Brainstorming session.....	142
4.4.2 Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) analysis .....	143
4.4.2.1 Strengths were highlighted.....	143
4.4.2.2 Weaknesses were recognised.....	143
4.4.2.3 Opportunities were identified.....	144
4.4.2.4 Threats to be addressed.....	145
4.4.2.5 Setting priorities.....	145
4.4.3 Organised planning session for strategic intervention.....	146
4.4.4 First dimension: interventions that lead to improved learner performance.....	152
4.4.4.1 Intervention Strategy No. 1: Basic functionality for curriculum to thrive in a conducive environment.....	152
4.4.4.2 Intervention Strategy No. 2: Leadership, management and communication in a school .....	152
4.4.4.3 Intervention Strategy No. 3: Quality of teaching and learning and teacher development for teachers to be aware of continuous changes in education .....	153
4.4.4.4 Intervention strategy No. 4: Curriculum provisioning and resources in order to be compliant with CAPS.....	154
4.4.4.5 Intervention strategy No. 5: Learner achievement .....	154
4.4.5 Second dimension: intervention that lead to improved school environment....	154
4.4.5.1 Intervention strategy No.6: Governance and relations in order to give the direction to schools.....	155
4.4.5.2 Intervention strategy No.7: School safety, security and discipline.....	155
4.4.5.3 Intervention strategy No.8: School infrastructure .....	156
4.4.5.4 Intervention strategy No. 9: Parents and community .....	156
4.5 MONITORING THE PROGRAMME.....	156
4.6 DATA GENERATION PROCEDURES.....	157
4.6.1 Instrumentation .....	158
4.7 DATA ANALYSIS .....	158
4.8 CHAPTER SUMMARY .....	159
CHAPTER 5 : ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF GENERATED DATA FOR A FRAMEWORK TO IMPROVE CURRICULUM LEADERSHIP IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS.....	160

5.1 INTRODUCTION .....	160
5.2 BACKGROUND INFORMATION TO THE INTERVENTION PROCESS OF DESIGNING A FRAMEWORK TO IMPROVE CURRICULUM LEADERSHIP .....	161
5.2.1 Lack of knowledge on the importance of vision and mission statement.....	162
5.2.2 Curriculum leadership team’s commitment to the achievement of educational goals .....	164
5.2.3 Prioritisation of curriculum leadership to improve learners’ achievements.....	167
5.2.4 Absence of strategic planning for curriculum leadership with regards to teaching and learning.....	168
5.2.5 Lack of community involvement in curriculum leadership .....	168
5.3 INTERVENTIONS TO IMPROVE LEARNER PERFORMANCE .....	170
5.3.1 Basic functionality.....	172
5.3.2 Quality of teaching, learning and educator development.....	173
5.3.3 Learner achievement.....	174
5.3.4 Leadership, management and communication.....	176
5.3.5 Curriculum provision and resource.....	178
5.4 INTERVENTION TO IMPROVE SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT .....	182
5.4.1 Governance and relationship.....	182
5.4.2 School Safety, Security and Discipline (SSSD).....	183
5.4.3 School Infrastructure (SI).....	186
5.4.4 Discursive practice analysis perspective.....	188
5.4.5 Parents and Community (PC).....	188
5.4.6 Reflections on the intervention in the improvement of both learner achievement and the school environment.....	190
5.5 CHAPTER SUMMARY .....	191
CHAPTER 6: SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR A FRAMEWORK TO IMPROVE CURRICULUM LEADERSHIP IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS.....	193
6.1 INTRODUCTION .....	193
6.2 THE RESEARCH FINDINGS .....	194
6.2.1 Identify and justify the need for improved curriculum leadership: interventions	

to improve academic achievement .....	194
6.2.1.1 Understanding the importance of vision and mission.....	194
6.2.1.2 Lack of commitment by curriculum leadership team to the achievements of educational goals .....	195
6.2.1.3 Competing priorities on curriculum leadership to improve learners' performance.....	195
6.2.1.4 Absence of strategy in curriculum leadership.....	196
6.2.1.5 Lack of community involvement in curriculum leadership .....	197
6.2.2 Identify the key components of designing a framework for curriculum leadership: interventions to improve learner performance .....	197
6.2.2.1 Basic functionality.....	198
6.2.2.2 Quality of teaching, learning and educator development resulting from teacher development .....	199
6.2.2.3 Learner achievement as a sign of performance outcomes.....	199
6.2.2.4 Leadership, management and communication to improve learner achievement .....	199
6.2.2.5 Curriculum provision and resources for performance enhancement.....	200
6.2.3 Identify conditions conducive to successful implementation of a framework: improved school environment conducive to learning .....	201
6.2.3.1 Enhancing governance and relationship .....	201
6.2.3.2 Secure, safe and discipline in school .....	202
6.2.3.3 School infrastructure .....	202
6.2.3.4 Parents, community and stakeholders to influence curriculum outcome.....	204
6.2.4 Anticipation of possible threats that may hinder the implementation of a framework.....	205
6.2.4.1 Lack of ability to influence teachers on content and method of teaching .....	205
6.2.4.2 Inadequate resources management.....	208
6.2.4.3 Inability to deal with overcrowded classrooms.....	208
6.2.4.4 Dealing with diversity in primary schools .....	209
6.2.4.5 Leaders focusing more on administration than classroom teaching .....	210
6.2.4.6 Absence of strategic leadership in curriculum leadership .....	211
6.2.5 Formulating a strategic plan to embrace curriculum leadership framework....	212

6.2.6 Leading curriculum in times of crises .....	212
6.3 RECOMMENDATIONS.....	213
6.3.1 Recommendations for wider curriculum leadership participation in primary schools.....	214
6.3.2 Recommendations for improving guidelines on curriculum leadership .....	214
6.3.3 Further reading recommendations .....	214
CHAPTER 7 : PRESENTATION OF THE FRAMEWORK TO IMPROVE CURRICULUM LEADERSHIP TO IMPROVE LEARNER ACHIEVEMENT .....	216
7.1 INTRODUCTION .....	216
7.2. OVERVIEW OF THE CORRELATION BETWEEN ACT AND THE FRAMEWORK .....	217
7.2.1 Conditions conducive to the successful implementation of curriculum leadership in primary schools through ACT.....	219
7.2.2 Themes for potential future scientific research to improve curriculum leadership.....	220
7.2.3 Limitations of the Study.....	220
7.2.4 Interventions that lead to improved learner performance. ....	222
7.3 SUMMARY OF RESEARCH .....	223
7.4 CONCLUSION .....	224
REFERENCES .....	225
APPENDICES.....	242
APPENDIX A: ETHICAL CLEARANCE .....	242
APPENDIX B: LETTER TO PRINCIPAL .....	243
APPENDIX C: LETTER TO DEPUTY PRINCIPAL .....	245
APPENDIX D: LETTER TO DEPARTMENTAL HEAD .....	246
APPENDIX E: LETTER FROM LANGUAGE EDITOR.....	247
APPENDIX F: TURN IT IN REPORT .....	249

**LIST OF TABLES**

---

Table 4.1: Rating scale.....	148
------------------------------	-----

Table 5.1: Evaluation scale .....	171
Table 7.1: Dimensions identified as essential resources for critical curriculum leadership.....	222

### **LIST OF FIGURES**

---

Figure 1.1: Involvement of stakeholders in curriculum leadership .....	6
Figure 2.1: The global #Black Lives Matter movement.....	52
Figure 2.2: Self-Esteem Building Resources.....	54
Figure 2.3: Marikana Massacre.....	57
Figure 3.1: Parental Involvement in the education of their child .....	99
Figure 4.1: The Action research spiral .....	128
Figure 4.2: Overview of CPAR approach .....	133
Figure 4.3: Strategic overview of SSE and SIPs .....	146
Figure 7.1: Framework for school leadership .....	216

# CHAPTER 1: ORIENTATION AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

---

## 1.1 INTRODUCTION

In support of the policy mandate promulgated by South Africa's Department of Basic Education's Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement (DBE, 2017: 8), as pillared on the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (1996), this study strives to attest that there is a correlation between curriculum leadership and learner achievement (Glatthorn, Boschee, Whitehead & Boschee, 2018:75). Curriculum leadership has to do with roles assigned to incumbents of authoritative positions at schools, such as principals and their deputies, heads of departments, subject heads and teachers, so that they can accomplish the concrete expression of the general aims of a school (Cheung & Yuen, 2017:1020). Leadership is also a process of social influence, which maximises the efforts of others towards the achievement of a goal (Ferkins, Skinner & Swanson, 2018:77). Similarly, Ferkins et al. (2018: 83) explain that learner achievement is the ultimate goal of any teacher, and it indicates success in achieving the concrete expression envisaged by a school. Furthermore, learner achievement is a prerequisite for curriculum leaders if they are to be successful. Unfortunately, it has become a struggle for curriculum leaders to operate optimally within the current legislative framework, which was promulgated to eradicate the colonial and apartheid education (Milondzo & Magongoa, 2018:60).

Globally, curriculum leadership in primary schools affords teachers both specific opportunities and unique challenges. Different countries structure curriculum leadership in unique ways, which often leads to nationally specific understandings, or misunderstandings (Evans, 2018:7). Challenges faced by curriculum leaders in primary schools are numerous, however, some challenges have been so perennially prominent that they have attracted the attention of researchers. Among these challenges are the inability to implement the prescribed curriculum adequately, teachers' lack of curriculum knowledge, inadequate resources, overcrowded classrooms, difficulties in developing

accommodative curriculum policy (Anderson, Young, Blanch & Smith, 2018:11; HarjuLuukkainen & McElvany, 2018:88), and leaders who focus on administration rather than classroom teaching (Bush & Glover, 2016:211). Inadequate performance by learners in primary schools is symptomatic of, among other reasons, a lack of effective curriculum leadership (Karisa, Erick & Mathuva, 2017:10; Spaul, 2013:437).

Despite the negative tone engendered by the challenges listed above, there have been attempts to avail solutions in countries all over the world. Teacher participation during the formulation and review of curriculum is necessary for successful curriculum implementation (Mwaseba et al., 2018:12). Primary school curriculum support programmes are established with the purpose of mediating the curriculum for teachers through in-service seminars, and designating days intended specifically for schools to focus on planning and providing skills, related to content and methodologies of each curriculum area. Mhlongo and Alexander (2021) have confirmed the powerful and influential stakeholder funding and school leadership mentorship role played by public-private partnerships and corporate investments have assisted to counter inadequate resources at primary schools, such as infrastructure and facilities, which have been upgraded, and information and communications technology and textbooks, which have been provided. Other roles played by companies, include furnishing libraries with books (Jamali & Karam, 2018. 61) and erecting temporary structures, such as mobile classrooms, which have become a mainstay in schools in the United States of America, as they are often an affordable alternative to construction of new classrooms. In Tanzania, an added contribution of public-private partnerships and corporate investments, is reduced class sizes, as well as agro-economics projects for unemployed parents within the school yard, to manage learner enrolment (Mwaseba et al., 2018:17). Accordingly, in other countries as well, the issue of school-based curriculum policies that accommodate underrepresented cultures and ethnic backgrounds in curriculum materials, educator preparation and diversified teacher education, are some of the challenges given focus by scholars (Nederhand & Klijn, 2018:291).

Despite the availability of solutions that seem practicable, researchers tend to neglect identifying and urgently addressing threats to the successful implementation of their

recommendations. Conditions posing threats by making curriculum implementation more complex to execute, include, amongst others, instances when research recommendations regarding the enhancement of in-service training approaches are not cascaded to schools (Nieveen & Plomp, 2018:259). Steyn (2018:188) suggests that internal control measures need to be put in place to increase accountability, transparency, integrated monitoring systems, as well as learning resources in schools. Regarding content knowledge, some teachers possess qualifications that are not relevant to the subjects allocated, thus, they struggle to impart the content knowledge and skills learners need. Despite prevailing threats, school-based curriculum leaders remain entrusted, by both society and their district-based counterparts, to work as a collective to improve learners' performance (Dündar & Akçayır, 2017:441). Consequently, studies show that the most effective school leaders that manage schools in challenging contexts, distribute leadership widely and recognise the importance of connecting the school to the wider community.

In spite of measures taken to improve learner performance in primary schools, the challenge of learners whose performance is below their expected age level, remains. Certainly, globally, there is a huge body of research products displaying best practices, which is indicative of a balance between magnified challenges, recommended solutions and realistic measures, and, specifically, measures to mitigate threats against the concerned research project's success. My focus, as the research aim of this study, was to develop a framework rich in learning, and relearning experiences from observed best practices to improve curriculum leadership in primary schools in the Botshabelo area of the Province of the Free State of South Africa, so that the proposed framework impacts positively on learner achievement, by stimulating curriculum leaders to confront and contribute towards the resolution of the problem.

## **1.2 RESEARCH PROBLEM AND VALIDATION OF THE PROBLEM STATEMENT**

The study was guided by the following problem, namely, "ineffective curriculum leadership in primary schools lead to academic underperformance". The research problem was accommodated at two primary schools, namely Hohle Primary School and Katamelo

Primary School, in Botshabelo township, South Africa – with agreement by the participants that indeed their separate institutional contexts are relevant to the research problem. Trustworthiness from purposive sampling assisted in the validation of the research problem as a real, relevant and long-standing dilemma (Adler, 2022: 598). Inputs from both the schools reported a common presence of ineffective school management incidents. A list of these incidents was recorded by the researcher during the enquiry phase of the research in order to validate the research problem statement.

### **1.3 LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK FOR THE STUDY**

The study adopted Africana Critical Theory (ACT) as its theoretical framework, to help it focus on critiquing and transforming society and eliminating human misery (Tillotson, 2016:46). The study adopted critical leadership studies - as a conceptual framework designed to respond to the failure of mainstream leadership studies to address important questions of power, control and inequalities (cf. 2.7). ACT is a 21<sup>st</sup> century outgrowth of efforts to deconstruct and reconstruct, and dialectics of domination and liberation of African life worlds and lived experiences (Rabaka, 2010:5). Its proponents, namely, Du Bois, James, Fanon and Cabral, lived in a scholarly universe and centred African people in all enquiry in African existence (Tillotson, 2016:47).

ACT assisted me to justify the need for curriculum leadership by stakeholders in primary schools; curriculum leadership must provide a solid foundation to eliminate underperformance. Currently, curriculum leadership seems to be unsuccessful in helping primary schools to improve learners' performance adequately in national and international benchmark tests. ACT assisted me to construct a framework to improve curriculum leadership that will augment the quality of teaching and learning, and improves currently inadequate curriculum leadership practices at primary schools (Seobi & Wood, 2016:1). The discussion of the findings resulting from the intervention was done with the use of critical discourse analysis.

## **1.4 RESEARCH QUESTION**

Only one primary question was focused upon, and informed subsequent research objectives. The primary research question is: *How can a framework to improve curriculum leadership in primary schools be designed?*

## **1.5 RESEARCH AIMS AND OBJECTIVES**

### **1.5.1 Aim**

To design a framework that will improve curriculum leadership in primary schools towards improved learned performance. The intention to demonstrate the correlation between critical leadership and ACT (cf. 7.2).

### **1.5.2 Objectives**

- To identify and justify the need for an improved curriculum leadership framework;
- To identify the key components of designing a framework for curriculum leadership;
- To anticipate possible threats that may hinder the implementation of the framework;
- To identify conditions conducive to the successful implementation of the framework; and
- To monitor the best practices of the improved curriculum leadership toward improved learners' performance (cf. 6.2.2).

## **1.6 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY**

The study used a qualitative approach and Participatory Action Research (PAR), as advanced by McTaggart, Nixon and Kemmis (2017:22). A diverse group of curriculum leaders were involved in the PAR as participants, and I used a focus group technique to facilitate participants' observation criteria to stimulate sustained interaction.

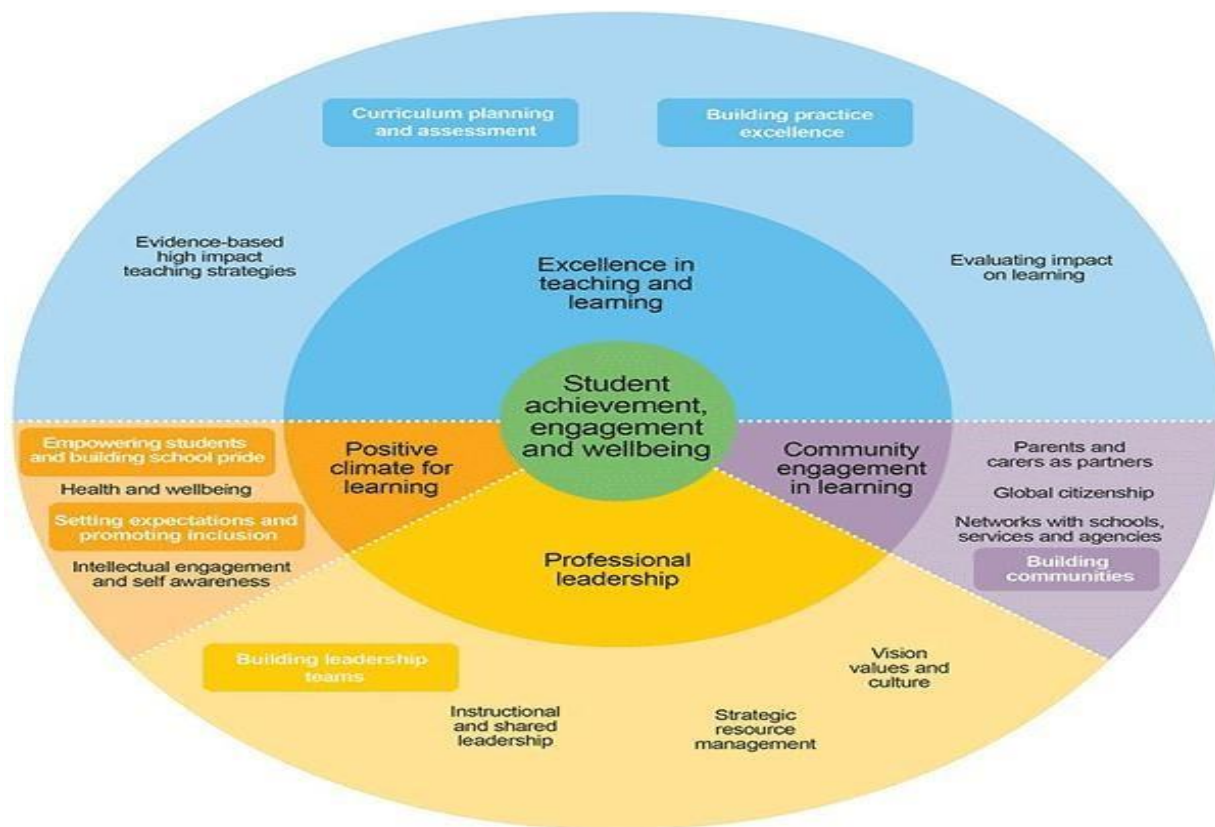
### **1.6.1. Focus Group Meetings Logistics: Planned versus Actual**

With a total of 12 meetings scheduled, and 3 postponed due to low attendance and ultimately the planned total of 12 achieved after 15 venue visitations Critical Participatory Action Research (CPAR), is an innovation of the known PAR tenets, to inform the

participants of the sessions undertaken by the group that action research is a practice-changing practice (Mann & Sahuguet, 2018:5). Of equal importance, was the careful consideration of ideal traits of a focus group intended to address the research problem.

### 1.6.2. Focus Group Traits: Contributors to Resolution of the Research Problem

After a careful and intensive deliberation of what qualifies as relevant traits determining an empirically valid group represented by the broad stakeholder make-up, the thesis invited a graphic-rich narrative approach. When a parent is viewed as possessing suitable characteristics essential to mould and monitor policy progress, what do we look for as qualifying traits. The voting-in process and its culture of the SGB, in our schools of Botshabelo – possesses a rich future research repository as to how trusted stakeholders contribute constantly and directly towards the resolution of diverse research problems. **Figure 1.1** below is an attempt to recognise the value of relevant stakeholder selection and participation traits.



**Figure 1.1: Involvement of stakeholders in curriculum leadership**

Source: Parkay, Anctil and Hass (2014)

Hence, CPAR recognises that action research itself is a social practice (Mann & Sahuguet, 2018:7). In line with PAR, communicative action and space will be created by participants, who will clarify their concerns, inform changes in their practices and create communicative power and solidarity. CPAR arises when people share concerns and work together to make their individual and collective practices less irrational, unsustainable, and unjust (Sandwick, Fine, Greene, Stoudt, Torre & Patel, 2018: 478). CPAR differs from other research traditions, as it supports participants changing “what is happening here” in a disciplined and prudent way (Sandwick et al., 2018:480).

## **1.7 DATA COLLECTION**

The Free Attitude Interview (FAI) technique was used to enable participants to interact freely; this technique is non-directive in nature and opens up space for participants (Mann & Sahuguet, 2018:480). A SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats) analysis was conducted to identify how curriculum leadership in a primary schools can be improved in order to enhance learner performance. An audiotape recorder served as an additional digital device for data collection, and was used to capture audio data, which were transcribed into text. A laptop is considered a data collection device by the researcher. Free Attitude Interview (FAI) was used. It is data management technique involving people sharing concerns and working together to make their practices, as both individuals and as a collective, less irrational, unjust and unsustainable (McMillan & Schumacher, 2014:6). An interview, as described by Seobi (2012:89), is a data collection technique that involves asking participants questions in order to elicit their honest opinions and views. In order to evaluate qualitative research approaches, participant selection must be congruent with the conceptual framework (cf. Figure 7.1). Participants should be likely to generate rich, dense, focused information on the research question, to enable the researcher to provide a convincing account of the phenomenon (Curtis, Gesler, Smith & Washburn, 2000:178, Walsh & Downe, 2006:34).

## 1.8 DEMARCATION AND SELECTION OF RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

The geographic location of the study is a predominantly peri-urban township called Botshabelo – demarcated as part of the Mangaung Metropolitan Municipality, in the Free State province of the Republic of South Africa. Mangaung has the city of Bloemfontein as the central economic hub where most Botshabelo citizens commit a 90 kilometres return trip for work or essential services not available in Botshabelo. What the study openly declares as operational areas outside its research focus are parents, teachers, and the SGB members belonging to either pre-school or secondary educational institutions, which the study will not engage or invite to address the research problem. Only 2 primary schools formed the focus group for this study. The demarcated timeline of the study was planned as minimum 24 months (2018 – 2019), which became extended due to the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions, and related ‘new normal’ disruptions (Morake-Toolo, 2023). One of the most gruesome dehumanising disruptions to ordinary social interactions was the psychosocial effect of deliberate avoidance of personal contact, exacerbated by the high fatality rates which were prevalent globally. As a result, study realised completion of its fieldwork phase in the last quarter of the year 2022.

Trustworthiness from purposive sampling was confirmed to validate both the research problem and subsequent responses from all focus group sessions, thus used to select participants who serve a specific purpose, either as appointed or employed officials (Adler, 2022:598 and Benoot, 2016:2). For this research project, different categories of participants were invited to participate, namely, school-based participants, community-based participants, and members of the school governing body (SGB). The breakdown of research participants was in the following format:

- 2 principals (1 from each of the 2 primary schools)
- 2 deputy principals (1 from each of the 2 primary schools)
- 2 departmental heads (1 from each of the 2 primary schools)
- 2 subject heads (1 from each of the 2 primary schools)
- 6 SGB members (3 from each of the 2 Figure schools)
- 6 QLTC (3 quality learning and teaching campaign members per school)
- 1 BEC member

A quorum was agreed at 50% or half of the total 20 members above. The complex aspect of the attendance management system applied here was that, at least half of attendees have to be from each of the 2 primary schools to qualify as a 50% minimum attendance protocol mentioned above. To follow, is a discussion of data analysis and interpretation.

## **1.9 DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION**

Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) was used to analyse the generated data. This data is necessary to explain, describe and interpret the research findings. According to Van Dijk (1993:252), CDA deals mainly with discourse dimensions of power abuse and the injustice and inequality and thus CDA is used to study and analyse written and spoken texts to reveal the discursive sources of power, dominance, inequality and bias (cf. 7.2.1, & Table 7.1). Data collection and analysis also include a participatory sequence of events in which preliminary findings are used with caution to empower co-researchers.

## **1.10 VALUE OF THE PROPOSED RESEARCH**

The importance of this research was first, to add value to the existing body of knowledge in curriculum leadership. Its focus was to improve curriculum leadership in a primary school, with stakeholders participating as curriculum leaders. The framework used laid the foundation for stimulating an atmosphere for, secondly, empowerment of curriculum leadership, as relevant stakeholders in primary schools, through solidifying steps to achieve the shared research aim and objectives, namely, to enhance learners' performance.

## **1.11 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

I applied for ethical clearance for this study from the University of the Free State and, once it was granted by the Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Education, and permission was granted by Free State Department of Education, all measures were taken to satisfy the generally accepted ethical requirements for research within the discipline of

education, thus, pace of interaction: No participant was coerced into attending any session if they experienced personal or professional situations that prevented them from attending (McKenney & Reeves, 2018:17). Upholding the code of confidentiality: Every participant, as well as direct beneficiaries were protected, as was the information they disclosed during the FAIs (Henning, 2005:232).

## **1.12 LAYOUT OF CHAPTERS**

The layout of chapters flowed as below, with each chapter starting with a brief orientation.

Chapter 1: Orientation and background – The chapter was intended to strengthen the identified problem as a researchable area.

Chapter 2: Theoretical Framework – Africana Critical Theory was chosen to guide the exploration of the research problem and discussion of relevant literature related to critical leadership studies.

Chapter 3: Literature review – The literature review magnified and interrogated global trends relating to the research problem.

Chapter 4: Research methodology and design – The chapter assisted in shaping the processes geared to validate a scientific response to the research question.

Chapter 5: Analysis and interpretation of generated data – The universe of responses generated by the four categories of participants against the backdrop of magnified literature was cross-referenced to shape the concluding response.

Chapter 6: Findings and recommendations – The framework that the study intends to develop was described via recommended tools.

Chapter 7: Presentation of the framework – Reflections on how the findings, recommendations informed the proposed strategy.

## **CHAPTER 2: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

---

### **2.1 INTRODUCTION**

The aim of this study was to design a framework to improve curriculum leadership in primary schools, while this chapter intended to apply Africana Critical Theory (ACT) as a theoretical framework to understand curriculum leadership in primary schools as a critical component that can help to improve learner performance in primary schools. Africana critical theory is a revolutionary theory and a beacon symbolising the birth of a theoretical revolution in Africana Studies. The theory's basic aim and objectives affirm its radical character and critical qualities (Rabaka, 2007:18, cf. 2.2.8, 2.2.9, 2.2.10, 2.2.11, 2.2.12, 2.2.13 & 2.2.14). The chapter first details ACT by explaining its historical origin and the generations, which are the exponents of this theory. The chapter further situates its argument on the formats, the principles, the objectives, ontology and epistemology, reasons for using the theory, the steps to be followed when using the theory and the critiques of ACT. ACT as a theoretical framework underpinning this study, was used to achieve the aim and objectives of this study; to apprise the discourses throughout this study. To gain a broader perspective of ACT, several academic articles, journals, books and encyclopaedia were viewed. This was concluded by applying the conceptual framework to be used in Africana Critical Theory.

### **2.2 AFRICANA CRITICAL THEORY AS A THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

Critical theorists view culture as the expression of human consciousness, shaped by daily living (Rose, 1990:8). They recognise that humans are the architects of their own destinies, and as a result the theory urges the development of a critical consciousness. It also urges the transformation that enables every individual to create new truths for both themselves and society. Africana critical theorists envisions the process of critique that is self-conscious, leading participants to develop a discourse of social transformation and emancipation. In this vein, Africana critical theory raises our consciousness beyond the walls of the classroom and the boundaries of the school to broader social and cultural

concerns. These broad social and cultural concerns connect well to education in general, and for curriculum leadership in particular. Issues of a struggle for power, critical consciousness, class consciousness, political consciousness and hegemony were important to Africana critical theorists and remain paramount to critical theorists today. Africana critical theorists agree that inequality, social class division, poor teacher working conditions, as well as poor learner learning conditions, are still rampant in education, hence teachers need to create an environment conducive to teaching, which would be exciting (bell hooks, 1994:15). Cultural capital and hegemony were believed to provide the social context for general education and they argue for a curriculum that provides the conditions in schools, necessary to effect transformation and conscientisation (Schmidt, 2002:268; Freire, 1970:343).

Africana critical theory provides a context of understanding within which the Africana people can assess their being in order to achieve enhanced clarity with regard to concrete historical possibilities and whether it is in their best interest (Rabaka, 2009:1). It therefore encompasses a vast body of knowledge of people differently misplaced in specific political, social and historical contexts characterised by injustice (Outlaw, 2017:245). The birth of black studies was with implicit purpose of decolonising the minds of people, especially black people (bell hooks, 1994:4). In contrast, the black radical tradition of reconstruction and ideology of emancipation was because of the current crises which are both old and new, known and unknown, visible and invisible that had to grapple with issues of racism, capitalism, colonialism, heterosexism, religious intolerance, ecological devastation and animal extinction (Rabaka, 2010:98).

Frank (2013:137) argues that double consciousness, a concept which was popularised by W.E.B. Du Bois, is a social philosophy, which refers to an inward source of “two-ness”, putatively experienced by African-Americans, because of their racialised oppression and devaluation in a white dominated society. Double consciousness is a term coined by W.E.B. Du Bois in his description of an individual whose identity is divided into facets (Asante, 1993:127). He (Du Bois) introduced the term into social and political thought, famously in his ground-breaking book: ‘The souls of Black Folk’ (1903:732). The recent writers have traced its source to the development of clinical psychology in the nineteenth

century to trends in idealist philosophies of self – to the transcendentalism of Ralph Waldo.

Emerson and G.W.F Hegel's Phenomenology of spirit. Belfour (1998:346), when reviewing Du Bois, after the Egyptians and Indians, the Greek and Roman, the Teuton and Mongolian, the Negro is sort of a seventh son, born with a veil, and gifted with second sight in the American world, a world, which yields him no true self-consciousness, but only lets him see himself through the eyes of others, of measuring one's soul by the tape of the world that looks on in amused contempt and pity. One forever feels his twoness, an American, a Negro, two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings, warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder (Du Bois, 1989 in Qobo & Dube, 2015:2). Kirkland (2013:148) states that double consciousness may work for the souls as a literacy text, but it does not help make a consisted theory of black political leadership plausible, suggesting that no actual black political leader is immune from double consciousness.

Group dialogue, participatory action and empowerment are all ingredients of ACT on the basis of critical consciousness development. People develop critical consciousness when they come together to develop and apply critical thinking skills to have discussions about their communities, how community conditions impact them, and how they can join in taking action to improve their lives and the lives of their communities (Diemer et al., 2017:461). Critical consciousness is a key ingredient for positive behaviour change community-wise. For Mullaly (2002:232), community-wise has two components: anti oppressive thinking and anti-oppressive action. Anti-oppressive thinking means developing a deeper understanding of structural and internalised oppression, while anti oppressive action means collaborative efforts to overcome and dismantle structural and internalised oppression. These are actions that were done by African critical thinkers and authors. Therefore, it is necessary to develop a critical awareness of systems of privilege and oppression, because without this awareness, one cannot take action. Critical thinking and the anti-oppressive thinking of critical consciousness work together, because oppression involves controlling information, and requires uniformed thought. Without the ability to think critically, one cannot develop anti-oppressive thinking (Perkins &

Zimmerman, 1995:569). As part of the process of developing critical consciousness, people are expected to identify and join community organisations that address issues that “speak to them”.

The other important aspects in ACT are the two concepts: class consciousness and false consciousness, which were introduced by Karl Marx and were further developed by other social theorists who came after him (Crossman, 2014:16). Crossman argued that class consciousness refers to the awareness of a social or economic class of the position and interest within the economic order and social system. While on the other hand, false consciousness in contrast, is a perception of one’s relationships to social and economic system as an individual in nature, and a failure to see oneself as a part of a class with particular interests relative to the economic order and social system (Crossman, 2014:16). For Karl Marx, workers were living in a false consciousness before they developed class consciousness. In essence, a false consciousness is individualistic rather than collective in nature and produces a view of oneself as an individual in competition with others of one’s rank, rather than as part of a group with unified experiences, struggles and interest (Cole, 2017:267). To have a class consciousness is to understand the social and economic characteristics of the class of which one is a member, and an understanding of the collective interest of their class within the given socio-economic and political orders (Pittman & Summer, 2016:178).

Within Marx’s theory, the capitalist system was rooted in class conflict - specifically, the economic exploitation of the proletariat (the workers) by the bourgeoisies (those owned and controlled production). Marx reasoned that this system only functioned so long as the workers did not recognise their unity as a class of labourers, their shared economic and political interest, and the power inherent in their numbers (Cole, 2017:268). Crossman (2017:268) argued that an example of how cultural hegemony works to produce false consciousness, that is true both historically and today, is the belief that upward mobility is possible for all people, regardless of the circumstances of their birth, as long as they choose to dedicate themselves to education, training and hard work.

Ticktin (2010:78) argued that humankind hides reality from itself, by making a distinction between consciousness, which reflects reality and one which does not, termed ideology, seen therefore as false consciousness. However, it takes a class form in that the dominant ideology is that of the ruling class, which does not want to understand the real relationship in society, as opposed to manipulating them in for own interest (Sauviat, 2015:6). The act of impacting or acquiring general knowledge and of developing the powers of reasoning and judgement for the workers, invokes a sense of political consciousness, which is the act or process of impacting or acquiring knowledge or skills, as for a profession (Uckibben, 2006:6).

Sholcri (2017:2) argued that a community without power is chaotic. Chaos is not merely the absence of power, but the absence of political power and political right; merely the absence of order. In most cases, the chaotic situations lead to the emergence of the dictators and tyrants. Power can therefore be the cause of the subordinate experience, humiliation and threat. On the one hand, it identifies the people as one entity, for instance, a nation, society, political community and a state, under its umbrella, and can threaten the identity of some groups. It gives security to the political community or an institution and develops one, yet those who hold power, or seek to do so, can be at odds with one another or the people whom they govern, and pose a threat to their own existence and others.

Hearn (2014:175) indicated that without the recognition of the concept of power, namely; “power over” as authority, “power to” as right and “power of” as capacity, it is hard to criticise the concept of power and to understand its rich, modern and complex definition. The integrated concept of power and right and the concept of political consciousness, make the maintenance and effectiveness of power possible.

### **2.2.1 Historical origin of African Critical Theory**

Africana Critical Theory is a black existential philosophical discourse that is critical of any form of domination of the black people in the world, it instead affirms their empowerment (Bassey, 2007:1). ACT’s core argument is that it strives to share similar concerns and

themes with European existentialism, such as existence, consciousness, trepidation, meaninglessness, hopelessness, fear, despair, servility and abasement and there are distinctions between them. Garza further explained that “European existentialism is predicated on the uniqueness of the individual, as well as on the universalist conception of humans and their obligation to self, whereas ACT is predicated on the liberation of all black people in the world from oppression” (2014:23). Rabaka (2010:5) is of the view that, ACT as a twenty-first century outgrowth of efforts, is aimed at accenting the dialects of deconstruction and reconstruction, and the dialectics of domination and liberation in classical and contemporary, continental and diasporan African life worlds and lived experiences.

Critical theory was formulated and founded by the Frankfurt School of social research in Germany, with main focus being to transform society, not only the transformation of ideas, but social transformation and therefore reduction and elimination of human misery (Kellner, 1989:48). Outlaw Jr. (2005:27) argued that the framework of critical social theory provides a context to people of African descent on understanding the environment within which they can assess their situation and achieve enhanced clarity regarding which of their concrete possibilities are to their best interest (Reed, 1975:217-218). ACT emphasises that Black Studies, African American Studies and African Studies existed with the express purpose of decolonising the minds of people, especially black people. What distinguishes ACT from other theories is its emphasis on continental and diasporan African contributions to critical theory (Rabaka, 2006:732). Although much knowledge can be produced by writing historical and social scientific studies, no amount of information could get very far in the absence of minds to see or understand it.

Therefore, ACT utilises the thought and text of Africana intellectuals, and activists’ ancestors as critical theoretical paradigms and points of departure, because so much of their thought is not simply problem-posing, but also solution-providing (Tillotson, 2016:45). Where the specific life struggles of persons of African descent (or black people) are concerned - human life struggles - it should be said with no hyperbole and highly resounding work, which European critical theorists have woefully neglected in their classical and contemporary critical theoretical discourse. It requires Africans to see

themselves through the lens of their native land, history and culture (Rabaka, 2007:30; Asante, 1991:170), who are astute in choosing the theoretical framework for ACT, because it gives clear messages to the reader concerning the idea that their work is rooted in the struggle of African people. A variant of three valued logic-insight and controversies “paper presented” (South Africa, January 20-24, 2014), the early period of African philosophy is an era of the movement called ‘culture excavation, aimed at retrieving and reconstructing African identity. The schools that emerge in this period were ethno philosophy and ideological schools. The three main factors that led to Africans to want to begin a search for their identity was the feeling that they have lost it or were deprived of it by slavery, colonialism and racialism (Chimakonam, 2014:20).

Africana critical theory is much more than neo-black radicalism, it is a twenty-first century outgrowth of efforts aimed at accentuating the dialects of deconstruction and reconstruction, and dialectics of domination and liberation in classical and contemporary continental and diasporan African life worlds and lived experiences. The major preoccupation of ACT has been to synthesise both classical and contemporary black radical theory with a black revolutionary praxis (Rabaka, 2014:5). Consequently, African Studies provides ACT with its philosophical foundation and primary point of departure, as it (African Studies), decidedly moves beyond monodisciplinary approaches to Africans’ phenomena (Christian, 2006; 2002).

Africana Studies is the academic discipline that most inspired Africana critical theory’s “unique” method, especially when compared to other forms of critical theory that emerged from traditional disciplines – because Africana Studies is a trans disciplinary discipline – that is a discipline that transgresses, transverses and transcends the academic boundaries and intellectual borders, the colour lines and racial chasms, and jingoism and gender injustice of traditional single phenomenon-focused disciplines, owing to the fact that at its best it poses problems and seeks solutions on behalf of African and other struggling people, employing the theoretic innovations of both the social sciences, humanities, as well as political breakthroughs of grassroots’ radical and revolutionary social movements. Therefore, Rabaka (2014:5) argued that the first generation of

Africana critical theory, beginning with W.E.B. Du Bois's radical and later revolutionary theory and praxis and then CLR James, to *negritude* – pride and intellectualisation of Blackness, to Frantz Fanon and finally concluding with Amilcar Cabral. The study chronicled and critiqued, revisited and revised the black radical transition with an eye towards the ways in which classical black radicalism informs, or should inform contemporary efforts to create a new anti-racist, anti-sexist, anti-capitalist, anti-colonialist and critical theory of contemporary society, what he (Rabaka) termed 'Africana critical theory' (Rabaka, 2014:6).

### **2.2.2 Grand narratives**

Various scholars, such as W.E.B. Du Bois, Anna Julia Cooper, Amilcar Cabral, Frantz Fanon and Gloria Jean Watkins (bell hooks), played a role important in the conception and popularisation of Africana critical theory. In this section, I present in succession the grand narratives of the aforementioned ACT exponents, how they contributed to ACT through their different roles during their time, and, how their work impacted and continue to impact on the lives of the oppressed masses worldwide. Unfortunately, instead of playing a counter- or "against" role – they celebrate ideas, incidents and events coming from historically marginalised sections of the global community – of which Black Africans are just a section amongst others. ACT is not anti-white, as there are historical incidents and events which affected populations of Eurocentric origins in an oppressive way.

ACT recognises that in Asia, the Americas, there still exists a history (narratives) as a sad past and requiring a re-writing of indigenous peoples who know their good past stories, to cognitively and dialectically (critically) confront oppressive systemic policies and norms they faced and still face. That is, ACT discourages the systemised cognitive hegemony of 'othering'. It is more existential and humanist and not totalitarian or leaning towards fascist tendencies by hiding behind scientifically untested and socially populist complaints against colonialism. ACT does not rely on mass rhetoric of uniting the oppressed groups against the identifiable 'oppressors'. Instead of embarking on the psychological journey

of 'othering', ACT encourages narratives of the historically oppressed's 'good stories, without shying away narrating ideas, incidents and events from their past sad stories.

### **2.2.3 Grand narratives of W.E.B. Du Bois**

William Edward Burghardt Du Bois was an African-American man, who was born in the United States in 1868 and died on African soil in Accra, Ghana in 1963 at the age of 95. He died as a citizen of Ghana. W.E.B. Du Bois was a sociologist, politician, nationalist, leader, author, editor, educator, historian and an activist, whose critical engagement and thoughts on tradition of the first decade of the twentieth century haunted the intellectual and political heirs and opponents, and continue to do so even in the contemporary world (Bogues, 2015:9). He played an important role in the reconstruction of American democracy where among other things he became the "black protest leader in the United States", and co-established an association that advocated for the rights of the coloured people (Rudwick, 2019: Online). He dedicated his work to African Americans and non-Europeans who suffered all forms of oppression: capitalism, colonialism, classism, and gender inequality and sought to liberate them through social transformation (Rabaka, 2009:40; Robinson, 2000:186).

Du Bois' name, along with those of Charles Lenox Remond, C. L. R. James, Frantz Fanon, Amilcar Cabral and Frederick Douglass, belongs on that very short list of men who openly advocated gender equality and spoke out against female domination and discrimination (King, 1970:20-24 In Rabaka, 2009:39). The aforementioned African writers have never been given credit for their intellectual independence and originality. Rabaka (2009:38), has firmly emphasised these grand narrators, in that they liberation activists, harbouring harrowingly different intellectual and ideological agendas.

W.E.B. Du Bois valued education as another way of liberation, where the oppressed would gain more understanding of their circumstances and be able to critique their suffering – especially the entrenched self-image inferiority perception affecting their self-esteem and self-confidence. That was through his doctoral dissertation that Du Bois questioned the oppressive stances of the slave trade and his study was able to get

through to the oppressed since its publication (Rudwick, 2019: Online). He was also a historian who valued history and the culture of the black people and believed that until the black people practice their cultures, colonialism was far from being eradicated from both the African lands and minds, and he therefore, advocated agitation and protest in this regard (Rudwick, 2019). For Du Bois, accepting discrimination for the sake of gaining respect from the white people was more dehumanising and so he did not affiliate to such thought, but founded the Niagara movement, which was meant to fight against racial discrimination. He then brought in the double consciousness concept in which he simply desires the black people to hold on and nourish their black cultures, while on the other hand there are also the nationalist within the white American society, and that they have to live their lives freely with equal rights to that of the mainstream society (Harpalani, 2015:232). For scholars such as Pinar, double consciousness is a concept conceived in response to white supremacy and racialisation (2017:52).

He became the foremost pioneer and advocate of Pan-Africanism; the movement meant to inform Africans of their contextualised struggles against colonialism. Pan-Africanism is referred to as “the belief that all people of African descent had common interests and should work together in the struggle for their freedom” (Rudwick, 2019:5). In his advocacy for Pan-Africanism, Du Bois raised awareness that every human had an important contribution to both national and international civilisation, whether white or black and all humans should not be divided by race (Rabaka, 2009:40).

Du Bois's oeuvre took departure from the Marxist theory, the theory which was meant to critique the oppressive economic issues experienced globally by the working class and sought for complete social transformation, which would address the human suffering, which was not rooted in any class nor race (Rabaka, 2009:42). His advocacy for social transformation was meant to combat all forms of oppression, and to be able to drive oppression out of the African lands and lives, the two most disruptive systems (colonialism and capitalism), Du Bois came up with the anti-colonial struggle theory and praxis as a way to get rid of the aforementioned systems (Du Bois, 1971 In Rabaka, 2009:50).

On leaving the editorship job, Du Bois he dedicated his time as a teacher. He had a passion to emancipate other Africans living on the African continent (Rudwick, 2019:5), hence he migrated to Ghana with the same mission of contributing to the liberation of the Africans. Even before he could become a citizen of an African country, Du Bois had dedicated his life to the freedom of Africans and African Americans. When he was still serving the African Americans, Du Bois coordinated efforts to elevate African affairs, and continued to face resistance. However, he did not withdraw from his intentions, but rather left the United States and drifted to Ghana in order for his liberation movement to be fulfilled (Rudwick, 2019:6 and Rabaka, 2009:38)).

He valued women as part of the mainstream society and that their contributions in the struggle for humanity should be acknowledged and that they therefore should be treated as equals with men. He fought for the rights of women as he advocated for gender equality more than anyone in his time (Rabaka, 2009:52). As diasporan and of African descent, African are the heirs to the theory that Du Bois has left, the theory that helps to embrace African histories and culture and to form anti-oppressive struggles so as to address the needs of the contemporary world.

#### **2.2.4 Grand narratives of Anna Julia Cooper**

Anna Julia Cooper was born in Southern United States in 1858 and she died in 1964 at the age of 105. She was a scholar, author, educator and black feminist and was active in the civil rights movement (Wallach, 2011:19). Having been born under slavery, Anna Julia Cooper became a female activist who contributed to eradicate issues of slavery and racial inequality. She went as far as researching about the issues of slavery and had written her doctoral dissertation on slavery. She was among the first four African American women to obtain a doctorate. It was in 1925 when she received a doctorate, at age 67. Anna Julia Cooper also became one of the first United States' black feminists, who mostly advocated for women's rights, and contributed in the fight for social and political transformation, so much that she was referred to as the mother of black feminism (Robinson, 2000:186).

She was a member of the black women's movement dedicating her life to addressing the needs of the African Americans, especially so as to empower them in education. She even went as far as fostering and adopting children and educated them with her own teaching salary, because she regarded education as the best weapon for true liberation; more so, the education of black women as they were marginalised as opposed to the males (Wallach, 2011:12). As an author, most of Cooper's oeuvre questioned equality challenges, posed by white southern society on African American people. Due to her valued view regarding education, Anna Julia Cooper was an excellent student, who through her hard work at school, became an educator at the tender age of 10 years while she was still a student at Saint Augustine's Normal School and Collegiate (Wallach: Online). She was a school curriculum leader, serving as a principal and contributed remarkably to the school's reputation. Under her leadership, most of the students at her school performed so well that they were able to get through and be enrolled in the then elite higher educational institutions.

Although Anna Julia Cooper's contract as the principal and educator was terminated by the then Columbia board of education, at some point in her continued teaching career, Cooper's love for education as the means of liberation, conquered against all odds. She continued her teaching career at Lincoln University for four years and was reinstated at her former school where she continued as the curriculum leader.

### **2.2.5 Grand narratives of Amilcar Cabral**

Amilcar Lopes da Costa Cabral was a Cape Verde and Guinea-Bissau national. He was born at the then Portuguese Guinea on September 1924 and died in Guinea on January 1973 aged 48 (Rabaka, 2009:228). He was a revolutionary and political activist and organiser, nationalist, diplomat, an agricultural engineer, theorist, and an intellectual who critiqued the effects of Portuguese colonialism on both countries. He contributed largely on ACT discourse, fighting for social transformation, oppression and liberation of the black people (Taiwo, 1999:6). He became one of Africa's most prime anticolonial leaders, having to critique racism, capitalism and colonialism (Rabaka, 2009:227). As a political

organiser, founder of a political party and leader, Cabral helped lead Guinea-Bissau to political independence (Peterson, 2019: Online). The political education he obtained from his father while growing up, helped him to understand the culture and scuffles of the two countries: Cape Verde and Guinea-Bissau, whereas from his mother, he learned humanity values, such as “sense of self-determination, discipline, purpose and personal ethics” (Rabaka, 2009:140, 228).

Amilcar Cabral, like many other African children living in colonised countries, experienced poverty and hunger conditions, which at times became so bad that the people could go for days without food (Chabal, 2003:1). However, the poverty-stricken background did not stop him from getting a good education. He started school at Cape Verde and was later enrolled at the University at Lisbon where he studied agriculture. Even before he could complete his secondary education, Amilcar Cabral wrote around issues of colonialism and to expose Eurocentrism as the main deprivation of peoples’ ethnic, racial and cultural politics (Batalha, 2004:272; Chabal, 2003:31). While he was still at the University, Amilcar Cabral participated in various activities, such as helping to found an association of African students, took part-time tutoring jobs so as to supplement the incentives he received from the Portuguese colonial government in order to survive. He lived to advocate for human dignity and to end Portuguese colonialism (Rabaka, 2009:230). He valued education as the means to empower colonialisied people out of their suffering. When he earned a scholarship from the Portuguese Government, Amilcar Cabral decided to study agriculture so that he could eradicate poverty from his hunger-stricken country. Although his university education was funded by the Portuguese Government, he did not stop to raise his voice against the injustice his country people experienced, without the fear of either losing his scholarship or being assassinated by the Portuguese Government Police (Dhada, 1993:141).

The difficult situations he encountered from his childhood influenced Cabral into an anticolonial activist and to act towards ending Portuguese colonialism, not only in his country, but in other African countries as well. He also contributed in the decolonisation of Angola where he co-founded a liberation movement with his fellow student colleague, Agostinho Neto (Peterson, 2019:34). After obtaining an agricultural qualification, Cabral

was so hard hit by racism, as he was denied the agricultural job he qualified for, on the basis that he was black (Chabal, 2003:39), but he got more determined to fight colonialism out of Cape Verde and Guinea-Bissau (Rabaka, 2009:231). However, he got a job in his country and was able to interact with people from Cape Verde and Guinea-Bissau, which enabled him to continue his political ambitions, though he was banished from his homeland as a result of his activism.

By the time he was expelled from his country, Amilcar Cabral's decolonisation theory had already found its position into Cape Verdeans, Guinea-Bissauans and other African countries' lives. He lived to help the masses of the people, who had experienced any form of colonial oppression, to stand up for their rights and fight colonialism, not only in their countries, but in their lives as well.

### **2.2.6 Grand narratives of Frantz Fanon**

Frantz Omar Fanon was born on July 1925 and died at a young age of 36 on December 1961. He was a Martinique national, colonised by France. Frantz Fanon was a revolutionary activist, writer, philosopher and psychiatrist. Fanon, like many proponents of ACT, who were affected by the effects of colonialism on the rights of the people, was troubled by colonialism and played an important role to end colonialism in African countries (Macey, 2001:1 in Rabaka, 2009:166). He was concerned about the oppressive effects of colonialism, such as gender inequality, racism and classism (Gendzier, 1973 in Rabaka 2009:166).

He became a member of the Free French Army in World War II (Peterson, 2019: Online). While he was serving in the French Army unit, Fanon started to experience the negative effects of colonialism on the lives of the colonised and this experience led Fanon to be eager to understand how colonialism affects people mentally. Therefore, he decided to quit the army and studied psychiatry and became a psychiatrist. As a psychiatrist, Fanon learned that colonialism had negative effects on both the coloniser and the colonised, and that it affects people psychologically and physically (Rabaka, 2009:166).

He practiced his psychiatric work in Algeria, which was a colony of France. He was wearied by the continued suffering of the colonised people in Algeria and needed to do more than his psychiatric practice requirements, and as a result he resigned from the medicine practice and engaged in the nationalist movement so as to lead Algeria to independence (Rabaka, 2009:167). He represented Algeria in various African and international conferences where he stood to raise awareness that colonialism is violent in nature as it denies the colonised their freedom, hence he advocated the decolonisation of African states, whether peaceful or violent (Macey, 2000 In Rabaka, 2009:167).

Fanon believed that in order for Africa to be decolonised, they needed to form allies with one another for that longed-for liberation. He dedicated his life for the pan-Africanism movement; the liberation struggle for the colonised people to combat exploitive and oppressive forms of colonisation, such as sexism and racism, hence he was a firm critique of Eurocentrism (Fanon, 2009:168). For Fanon, unity as Africans was the most important form of humanity, and not to refer to other fellow Africans according to regions, colour, culture, language, religion or otherwise (Kiros, 2004:217).

Frantz Fanon popularised the black consciousness concept, which basically advocated the return of Africans and diasporan Africans in any part of the world and called them to practice their culture, history and politics. Frantz Fanon contributed in ACT towards the spirit of unity, decolonisation, return to Africana roots, social transformation of Africana worlds, and to consistently critique Eurocentrism in a way to address in the best interest of diasporan and continental Africans, depending on the context of the country and masses concerned.

### **2.2.7 Grand narratives of bell hooks**

Gloria Jean Watkins, who is also known by her pseudonym name 'bell hooks', was born in the United States in 1952. She is an American author, scholar, educator and feminist; and started writing at 19 years old (Augustyn, 2019:34). bell hooks is a feminist, as she advocated mostly for women's rights. In her writings, bell hooks critiqued the oppressive effects of racism and sexism. She played an important role in the civil rights movement

and feminist movement from the suffrage of the 1970s. Even for her name (her great grandmother's name), she preferred to be better known as a symbol of appreciating and acknowledging the existence of female legacies (Augustyn, 2019: 5).

As an author, bell hooks' corpus covered issues of feminism; the discipline she also taught about under the umbrella of women's studies at the university during the 1980s. bell hooks experienced marginalisation of the African-American women, as she was born under the segregated community of the South (Augustyn, 2019:74), hence, she founded a group to support black women. Regardless of the conditions she was born under, bell hooks refused her life to be determined by her background as she worked hard academically, until she obtained a doctorate qualification. She dedicated her life and her writings to challenge oppressive issues posed on various aspects of life, education and black women. For bell hooks, education was regarded as the true liberation of the African American women, through celebrating the spirit of black sisterhood in her writings, at the support groups and civil rights movement. Among other things that bell hooks did to empower women, was to openly and continuously advocate for equality of all mankind and fighting for women's existence to be acknowledged and appreciated.

bell hooks was troubled by racial domination on social and education levels and therefore advocated for curriculum transformation. She brought awareness on issues, such as self-factualisation for human well-being (bell hooks, 1994:15). She advocated for curriculum transformation following a critical analysis of the kind of education that was received by black girls from working-class backgrounds, whereby their future was determined by only three careers: marriage, working as maids and becoming school teachers (bell hooks, 1994:2). bell hooks believed that as the means to end the violation of black children's rights to become by duress, what they never wanted to become, they needed to go to school and get educated on the basis that education when given at its most powerful, could liberate people (bell hooks, 1994:3-4). For bell hooks, schools could be one of the important elements to free black children from racist domination.

She contributed in ACT, in the aspect of social and curriculum transformation, decolonisation of school systems, acknowledgement and appreciation of human rights, gender equality and most importantly to educate a black child, not just teach them to obey authority, but to teach them to be critically conscious of their circumstances. bell hooks brought awareness to teachers that teaching is a community engagement and it is about giving service back to the community.

### **2.2.8 Reflections of ACT**

In ACT, the need for curriculum leadership creates two possible scenarios; either there is a position designated for the role, or the role is assumed by administrators or teachers for a portion of their administrative duties. Regardless of which situation is present, the principles of curriculum leadership described, apply (Bradley, Meyers, Curtis & Kissinger, 2017:11). The Cape Verdean and Guinea Bissauan revolutionary, Cabral, bequeathed to us his reflections on such issues as the nature and course of social transformation, human nature, history, violence, oppression and liberation (Rabaka, 2010:227). Cabral also provided us with a series of contributions to critical theory, which seeks to simultaneously critique racist capitalist and racial colonialist societies (Rabaka, 2014:19), as well as schools included as colonised settings. Servant leadership is not new among black leaders and had been put into practice by distinguished black leaders, such as Dr Martin Luther King Jr. and Marcus Garvey. In one of his speeches, Dr King captures the servant leadership by making reference to a biblical text in which Jesus said “greatest among you, shall be your servant”. Marcus Garvey on the other hand, practiced servant leadership by placing the needs of blacks as a collective group, before his personal needs (Conyers, 2016:167).

#### **2.2.8.1 *Double consciousness: W.E.B. Du Bois***

In his 1903 publication of the “The souls of Black Folk”, Du Bois describes double consciousness as the individual sensation of feeling: as though your identity is divided into several parts, making it difficult or impossible to have one unified identity (Pittman, 2016:12). Du Bois writes that the individual feels their two-ness as American, a Negro,

two souls, two thoughts, two unreconciled strivings, two warring ideals in one dark body, whose dogged strength alone keeps it from being torn asunder (Rabaka, 2016:19).

### **2.2.8.2 Assumptions of the theory**

Africana critical theory, as an outgrowth of critical theory from its inception, has distinguished itself from Eurocentric and Marxist class conflict and focused critical theory by its emphasis against race and racism, gender, sexism, patriarchy, colonialism, capitalism and the promotion of radical revolutionary democratic socialism, oppression, domination, feminism and inequality. The intention here is to address the need for curriculum leadership reconstruction in an African context in the light of the continent's colonial past and the clarion call for African Renaissance on the African continent. Leaders can occupy formal management roles (e.g. principal, deputy principal), or not.

Thus, leadership can be exercised by teachers, parents or even students (Hallinger, 2018:364). In other words, leadership is earned, and it is earned by consistently demonstrating competency, compassion, justice, and wholeness. The qualities or values prove the genuine sense of care for people, and an awareness of ultimate accountability. The above quotations remind us of a servant leader, that is, someone who serves others, and allows growth from grassroots people to develop. In this area, success is measured by outcomes. Some of the powerful leaders, like King Chaka, spent time communicating with villagers/community members, managing conflict, training armies, developing young leaders and protecting the weak within a community/village. Lala shares some of the good ingredients of an effective leader; especially when he analyses a president of a country as an effective leader (1999:16).

Our heritage is important, as we develop new concepts of African leadership. In Africa, leadership became a function to be shared by all villagers or community members, rather than a leadership invested in one person. There were occasions where this norm was invested in one person. There were occasions where this norm was broken, because of dictatorship. African people were dependent on each other, building on the gift of various members, to challenge, to struggle, to share, and to achieve. The leader then became a

life-giving person to the whole group. Powers (1979:68) suggested a wonderful way of leading a group. The whole group that is “a life-giving leadership will naturally encourage movement through the various stages; the influence of the leader will generally be greater at the beginning and gradually decrease as the group begins to mature.” The whole aim of an effective or life-giving leader is to uplift the villagers/community in such a way that they progress. This would help people to express their own gifts within the village/community. As leaders share their gift of leadership, in return the people will honour them. As they continue to share in African religious ceremonies, which is an essential part of the way of life of each person, the villagers/ community would join in celebration. Their influence on leadership covers all of life, from before the birth (if a person is a king) to long after he or she has died. If a leader were effective or good, he or she would be remembered, especially when other leaders are following wrong values. The community will continue teaching their children through conversation, proverbs and myths, as well as through practice. Hence, leaders like King Moshoeshoe, King Chaka, President Nyerere, President Mzee, Jomo Kenyatta, to name a few, are remembered by African communities or villagers in the continent (Masango, 2003:313). Colonialism arrived under the banner of Christianity, and affected African people and their leaders, because missionaries introduced western concepts of life. At first it was in a limited way, but later on it affected them in a more profound way. Leadership shifted from kings and spiritual diviners to teachers, nurses and ministers of religion. The effects of colonialism forced our traditional leaders to choose collaboration with colonial leaders, and they lost their powers among the villagers/community. Change came as a result of leadership being shaped by missionary education (Selepe, 2016: 3-4). Africans were then evaluated according to western concepts or standards. In other words, to be civil you had to use western concepts of leadership styles. African leaders who used traditional methods of leadership were viewed by some westerners as barbaric. Njoroge (1994:17) analyses this journey by saying that:

*“This experience provoked me to look back at the history of my people. If the missionaries came to save and ‘civilise’ my people, why then all the extreme*

*suffering? The colonial history was hidden from us in the classroom, and church teaching and sermons, although we experienced its evils in our daily lives.”*

The evils she speaks about are those of divide and rule, and using African leadership to do their work. Among Christian leaders, some rose to prophetic ministry. They challenged western concepts in such a way that the followers critically evaluated these concepts of leadership. For example, Archbishop D M Tutu (Reamonn, 1994:21) reminded the African community by saying the following: “African Leadership in a community should focus on promoting love, truth, freedom, peace, reconciliation, justice, and right relations in the world”. In other words, leadership of those who were chosen to serve, must focus on restoring relationships in the Kingdom of God, that is, in giving life among villagers/community, which is the central message of the gospel. Powers (1979:69) on the other hand, reminds us that: “Leadership responsibility includes calling for reflection and evaluation whenever appropriate.”

Engaging communities is not about creating a revolution in the nature of teaching and learning (Laurence, 2010:190). It is not a ‘handover’ of the responsibilities of teaching and learning to the communities (Burkill & Eaton, 2011:162). When schools engage communities, they unlock the richness of the community’s potential. Further, it expands the pupils’ horizons and evolves (Katele & Cherif, 1994:60) and uses the best of both worlds (Barnhardt, 2006:2). With communities engaged, what is learnt in the classroom, derives its meaning from the community. When communities have a visible presence in the classroom, the pupils will more likely see a meaningful connection between their studies and their eventual success in the community (Howley & Maynard, 2003:37). Thus, the role of the community is to support the schools materially and financially, but more specifically, collaborate with the teachers to produce new knowledge and ideas (Bull, 2011:4) and further cement existing partnerships.

The top-down approach (Burkill & Eaton, 2011:3), currently reflected in the Zimbabwean primary classrooms, is drawn from the classical Western tradition of rigid categories of knowledge represented by the major disciplines (Barnhardt, 2006:6). The Zimbabwean primary school teacher teaches 11 subjects, using the teacher-led approach. The primary

school curriculum, thus, is content-heavy, making it easy for teachers to teach knowledge in a methodical way without consideration of the wider aspects that impact on learning (Johnston, Chater & Bell, 2010:4). The questions raised, include: 'to what extent can the Zimbabwean primary school teacher be an expert in all the eleven subjects?'; 'How effective and rewarding have the pupils' experiences at school been? The success of any attempt to involve the communities in curriculum implementation heavily depends on the attitudes and perceptions of both the teachers and the community members (Swift Morgan, 2006:359).

The diversity of situational and professional conditions prevailing between the teachers and the communities have created high levels of suspicion and a lack of respect for each other. This leads to dysfunction and a failure to pursue avenues of interest (Barnhardt, 2006:26) by both parties. To engage communities in productive educational interaction, teachers think, is to 'sell their profession' to 'non-believers'. They would rather survive alone in the classroom 'wilderness' (Barnhardt, 2006:29; Hargreaves, 1996:71).

Community participation in the 'sacred area' of curriculum implementation, a minefield, is heavily contested, as Swift-Morgan's (2006:354) research in Ethiopia indicated: "there is no viable role for communities in the classroom", said one teacher. Because parents are not educated, voiced another group of teachers, they have nothing to contribute to the teaching and learning process. Community involvement in the classroom would provide no advantage. Teachers believe that engaging the community members in curriculum implementation, who may use any language in the classroom which is not English, may create what Rose (2000:52) calls 'instructional dead time'. This is where there is little or no learning. With this belief, the teachers 'close' their classrooms (Preedy, 1993:211). Yet, communities are fully aware of their potential. The challenge they face is knowing how the information they possess is relevant to teaching and learning (Training and Research Support Centre [TARSC], 2006:38).

Communities are usually omitted from curriculum leadership (Holcomb, 2009:73) because, according to Swift-Morgan (2006:355) the educated cannot be assisted and evaluated by the uneducated. They do not have the technical capacity, yet there are very

few classroom problems that can be solved without the involvement of communities. It is this history of mistrust that makes it difficult to generate authentic participation in education in general and in curriculum leadership in particular from most communities (Holcomb, 2009:75, 150). Swift-Morgan's (2006:359) research shows that the teachers' attitudes have a significant influence on the communities' perception of whether participation is possible or worthwhile. The process of community engagement in curriculum leadership is heavily dependent upon good communication. Communication influences and is influenced by the nature of the community-teacher relationship (Davis et al., 2002:35). Communication entails making essential impressions about each member/group in the community as being understood, trusted, helpful or useful in a number of ways. Literature (Bull, 2011:29; Burkhill & Eaton 2011:75; Davis et al., 2002:242; Munt, 2002:21) has shown that the communities are always ready to be engaged in curriculum leadership issues. It can be achieved as long as they are respected, are shown care and consideration, and if the teachers are also free to disclose and discuss intimate aspects of their classroom lives (Davis et al., 2002:35). This may seem novel, especially to teachers, but this potentially supportive relationship can help the teachers get information, advice, possible strategies and the necessary resources. It becomes a vehicle by which curriculum implementation can be delivered more effectively.

The creation of the sixth region of the AU offers tremendous possibilities for the future of African people throughout the world. The hopes of the African people on the continent of Africa and in its large and desperate diaspora, hinge on the ability of pan African agencies to mobilise all of their resources. These resources will include the Black African church in the African diaspora. Partnership arrangements between the churches on the continent and in the diaspora have the capacity to be transformative and empowering. This mobilisation has to reach the villages, slums, cities, refugee camps, farming communities, street children and AIDS sufferers. Governments - local, national, regional and continental, have to be committed to the pan African ideal as propounded by the AU. The public, private, and labour sectors will all have to engage in this monumental task of seeing Africa rise. The pan African movement has to engage in the issues of empowering the people of Africa (Muchie, Osha & Matlou, 2012:349).

Africana critical theory is a critical conceptual framework that seeks an ongoing synthesis of the most emancipatory elements of a wide-range of social theory in the interests of continental and diaspora Africans, amongst other struggling people (cf. Figure 7.1). This means that Africana critical theory often identifies and isolates the social implications of various theories, some of which were not created to have any concrete connections with the social world (and certainly not the African world), but currently do as a consequence of the ways they have been appropriated (re)articulated and in terms of Africana critical theory, decolonised and Africanised (Rabaka, 2009:22).

### **2.2.8.3 *Limitations of the theory***

Igwe, states “that wherever he tries to apply logic and critical thinking as well as scientific temper, he was often being accused of not thinking like an African. He says that he is always told that he thinks like a white man or that he has a white mentality. He says that Africans have a tendency of thinking that scientific outlook or critical thinking is for westerners alone or that critical thinking, as he puts it, can only be exercised by people from a particular race or region,” Leo refuses to accept that. “Critical thinking can be done by all human beings. All Africans are human beings. Therefore, all Africans can think critically,” says Leo Igwe. Critical evaluation of this issue should compel Africans to rise up to the challenge, because lack thereof is the root of most problems that plaque the continent. “Africans should strive and make critical enquiry part of African culture, identity and civilisation.” (Igwe, 2014:25).

Africana critical theory navigates many theoretic spaces that extend well beyond the established intellectual boundaries of Africana Studies. ACT is characterised by an epistemic openness to theories and methodologies, usually understood to be incompatible with one another. Besides providing it with a simultaneously creative and critical tension, Africana critical theory’s antithetical conceptual contraction, that is, its utilisation of concepts perceived to be contradictory to, and in conflict and competing with one another, also gives it its theoretic rebelliousness and untameable academic quality (Rabaka, 2007:14)

There is still an argument that in the African context, not enough has been done to redress this travesty of disseminating knowledge in ways that have no relevance for the original knowledge holders. Smith (1999:197) called for prioritising "accountability to and outcomes for Maori". Louis (2007:131) warned, "if research does not benefit the community by extending the quality of life for those in the community, it should not be done". This is a call that still needs to be realised in research in Southern Africa. Louis (2007:135) went on to accuse researchers with good reason: "researchers rarely think about sharing their archival research with the indigenous community". The question arises: How does the knowledge generated in IK research contribute to the decolonisation of indigenous communities? To whom should IK research be accountable? Put more simply: Who benefits from the research? A call for ACT and the Africanisation of knowledge is a call for acknowledgement to redress the damage done by the ideologies, such as apartheid, and general colonialist domination and suppression of the Africans (Msila & Gumbo, 2016:14).

Secularism has not succeeded in defining the political landscape in Africa. In fact, the secularisation of Africa has been marked by contrasts and contradictions, false starts and setbacks, misconceptions and misrepresentations, dilemmas and ambiguities, due to the complex interplay of religion and politics in the region. The process of separating religion and state has been under siege, due to the powerful influence of Christian churches including support from the Vatican and American evangelical groups - and Islamic organizations funded and backed by Saudi Arabia, Iran and other Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) countries. The major challenge is that the notion of secularisation is largely misrepresented by politicians in Africa, who are bent on sustaining the image of a "religious continent" to further their own interests.

Rooted in the European Renaissance and the Enlightenment, secularism guarantees the state's neutrality and impartiality on religious matters and provides institutional protection against the establishment of theocracy and religious dictatorship. Constitutionally, separating religious and state authorities guarantees the equality of individuals of different faiths and of none are before the law and protects the human rights of all, including the rights of religious minorities. Africa is religiously and culturally plural. Hence, it is

imperative that governments be secular - that is, unbiased for or against any religion. But this is often not how it turns out. Many African states are constitutionally secular in principle, but in practice there is a lot of melding of religious and political spaces. Religious groups pressure governments to make their dogmas and doctrines, state policies.

As Nigerian columnist, Abimbola Adedokun observed: "Religion in Nigeria, by the way, is about politics and politics is about contesting spaces. When sects push for space for their religion to thrive, it is not necessarily about social equality".

#### **2.2.8.4 *Advantages of the theory***

The culture of Africa is varied and manifold, consisting of a mixture of tribes that each have their own unique characteristics. It is a product of the diverse populations that today inhabit the continent of Africa and the African diaspora. African culture is expressed in its arts and crafts, folklore and religion, clothing, cuisine, music and languages. Africa is so full of culture, with it not only changing from one country to another, but within a single country, many cultures can be discovered. Even though African cultures are widely diverse, it is also, when closely studied, seen to have many similarities. For example, the morals they uphold, their love and respect for their culture, as well as the strong respect they hold for the aged and the important, the likes of the kings and chiefs. Africa has influenced and been influenced by other countries. This can be portrayed in the willingness to adapt to the ever-changing modern world, rather than staying rooted to their static culture. The Westernised few, persuaded by European culture and Christianity, first denied African traditional culture, but with the increase of African nationalism, a cultural recovery occurred. The governments of most African nations encourage national dance and music groups, museums, and to a lower degree, artists and writers. African critical theorists are aware that for the oppressed, individual consciousness is inextricably linked to the collective. Nelson Mandela (2008:624) wrote in his autobiography: "but then I slowly saw that not only was I not free, but my brothers and sisters were not free. I saw that it was not only my freedom that was curtailed, but the freedom of everyone who looked like me".

Apart from group consciousness, ACT theorists are also replete with issues of helplessness, oppression and persistent calls for empowerment, because as a result of the commonality of their experience. As its primary purpose, Africana critical theory relates radical thought to revolutionary practice, which is to say that, its focus philosophical, social and political - is always the search for ethical alternatives and viable moral solutions to the most pressing problems of our present age. ACT is not about allegiance to intellectual ancestors and/or ancient schools of thought, but about using all (without regard to race, gender, class, sexual orientation and/or religious affiliation) accumulated radical thought and revolutionary practices in the interest of liberation and social transformation (Rabaka, 2007:12).

Africana critical theory is a revolutionary theory and a beacon symbolising the birth of a theoretical revolution in African Studies. It promotes social activism and political practice, geared towards the development of an ethical and egalitarian society by pointing to, what needs to be transformed, what strategies and tactics might be most useful in the transformative efforts, and which agents and agencies could potentially carry out the social transformation (Macey, 2000 In Rabaka, 2009:167; Rabaka, 2007:18 & 2006:130).

#### **2.2.8.5 *Principles of the theory***

This section presents the principles of Africana critical theory and looked at as Psychoanalytic Principle, Marxist Principle, Historic and Culture Principle, to name a few.

#### **2.2.9 Knowing African Critical Theory**

Questions may arise why we should bother to learn about critical theories; whether it is really worth the trouble (Tyson, 2015:27). These questions and others like them, probably are the questions most frequently asked by students of critical theory, regardless of their age or educational status, and such questions reveal the two-fold nature of our reluctance to study theory, firstly, for fear of failure and, secondly, for fear of losing the intimate, exciting, magical connection with literature that is our reason for reading it in the first place

(Tyson, 2015:18). Many theorists have explored sexism and many theorists have explored racism, and many more of the theorists have critiqued capitalism. What we find when we turn to African tradition of critical theory is undoubtedly and unexpectedly a wide range of theoretical weapons, which challenge and seek to provide solutions to several of the major social and political problems of nineteenth and twentieth century (Rabaka, 2010:290).

### **2.2.10 Psychoanalytic principle**

We need to take time to understand some of the key concepts about human experience offered by psychoanalysis. We can be able to see how the concepts operate in our daily lives in profound, rather than superficial ways. Psychoanalysis can help us better understand human behaviour, and as a result can help us understand literary texts, which are about human behaviour (Davis, 1989:242-250). Classical psychoanalysis as is referred to today, is based on the psychoanalytic principles of Sigmund Freud, and the ideas of Freud evolved over a long period of time. Many of his ideas also changed as he developed them (Joel, 1998). Much of Freud's thinking was speculative and he hoped that others would even continue to correct certain of his ideas over time (Gay, 1989:87).

In accordance with Maud (1994:97), each human being has a psychological history that begins in childhood experiences in the family and each with a pattern of adolescent and adult behaviour that are the direct result of that early experience. Because the goal of psychoanalysis is to help us resolve our psychological problems, often called disorders, the focus is on patterns of behaviour that are distracting in some way (Jan, 2000:68). The concept central to all psychoanalytic thinking, is the existence of unconscious. The notion that human beings are motivated, even driven, by desires, fears, needs and conflicts of which they are unaware, that is unconscious, was one Sigmund Freud's most radical insights, and still governs classical psychoanalysis today (Maud, 1994:97). The painful experiences, as well as emotions, guilty desires, fears, wounds, unresolved conflicts we do not want to know about, as we are afraid, might overwhelm us (Davis & Walter, 1989:296). The unconscious come into being when we are young, through the repression

and by the expunging from consciousness of unhappy psychological events. However, repressing our experience does not eliminate our painful experiences and emotions. Rather it gives them force by being the causes of our current experience. We unconsciously play out the behaviour in one way or the other, as dictated to by our repressions, without admitting it to ourselves (Davis & Walter, 1989:296).

### **2.2.11 Marxist principle**

The fundamental premise of Marxism would argue that keeping economic power is the motive behind all social and political activities, including philosophy, education, government and religion. Day (2001:81-84), asserted that the economics is the base on which the superstructure of social, political, and ideological realities is built. Economic power therefore, always includes social and political power as well, which is what Marxists today refer to social economic class structure. Economic conditions, according to Marxist terminology, referred to as material circumstance and material conditions that generate the social/political/and ideological atmosphere, is called historical situation (Alexander & Gazworke, 2017:179). For the Marxist critic, neither human events nor human productions can be understood without understanding the specific material/historical circumstance in which those events and productions occur. That is, all human events and productions have specific material or historical causes. Therefore, the principle of Marxist analysis of human events and productions focuses on relationships among social economic classes, both within a society and among societies and it explains all human activities in terms of the distribution and dynamics of economic power. Capitalism, humanism, environmental, astrology, Marxism and communism are ideologies and thus a belief system. The study affirms that all belief systems are the products of cultural conditioning.

### 2.2.12 Historic and cultural principles

The new historical and cultural principles are the dynamic web of discourses within the culture of producing events and the culture of interpreting events (Wilcox, 2015: Online).

New historical criticism believes “all events are shaped by and shape culture in which they emerge” or are mutually constitutive (Tyson, 2015:284). In broad terms, we speak of the dynamic interplay of history and the interpretation of historical events and literature, as it relates to power and ideology, specifically the circulation or social exchange of the various discourses within a culture. According to Tyson (2015:290) the key concept of new historical principles can be summarised as follows:

- “Historical is a matter of interpretation and not factual”.
- “Historical is neither linear nor progressive”.
- “Power is never confined to a single person or a single level of society. Rather power circulates in a culture through exchange of material goods, exchanges of human beings, and most importantly exchanges of ideas through the various discourses a culture produce.
- “There is no monolithic (single, unified, universal) spirit of an age, and there is no adequate totalising explanation of history”.
- “Personal identity like historical events, texts and artefacts is shaped by and shape the culture in which it emerges our individual identity consists of the narratives we tell ourselves about ourselves”.
- “Historical analysis is unavoidably subjective”.

The cultural principle shares so much of the beliefs of the new historical principle that it is often difficult to distinguish the two critical literary theories from one another. For Tyson (2015:295), both are interdisciplinary and anti-disciplinary in that,

*“Both argue that human experience, which is the stuff of human history and culture, cannot be adequately understood by means of academic disciplines that carve it up into such artificially separated categories as sociology, psychology, literature and so forth.”*

The culture principle focuses more on politics in general and supports the oppressed and marginalised people, events and historical “moments” by drawing on varied political theories, such as Marxist, feminism, postcolonial, and criticism; those are the primary differences between the two principles. The cultural critic believes “culture is a process, not product, it is a lived experience, not a fixed definition.” More precisely, a culture is a collection of interactive cultures, each of which is growing and changing, each of which is constituted at any given moment in time by the intersections of gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, socioeconomic class, occupation and similar factors that contribute to the experience of its members (Tyson, 2015:296). Below, the study discusses reader response principle to literacy texts.

### **2.2.13 Reader response principle**

The reader response principle is a broad, exciting, evolving domination of literacy studies that can help learners to learn about their own reading processes and how they relate to specific elements in the texts they read, their life experience, and intellectual community of which they are members (Burk, 2014:68). The reader response theory did not receive much attention until the 1970s. It maintains that what a text is cannot be separated from what it does (Harding, 2014). Reader response theorists share two beliefs: - ‘that the role of the reader cannot be omitted from our understanding of literacy and – that readers do not passively consume the meaning presented to them by an objective literacy text, rather they actively make meaning they find in literature” (Burka, 2014:68-69). Instead of ignoring the reader, or considering the response messy and subjective, reader response theorists put readers squarely in the centre of discussion of textual means by focusing on readers’ acts of interpretation (McGregor & White, 2015:189). To summarise the reader response theory, we can say that this theory emerged in the 1930s with the primary focus on reading. It is text-based and not author-based. The leading proponents of the reader response theory are Stanley Fish, Wayne Booth and Louise Rosenblatt. The theoretical assumptions are that literature is performing art and each reading is a performance. Literacy texts possess no fixed meaning, but is meaning created by the interaction of the

text and reader. The reader is not passive but active and the role of the reader cannot be ignored, but acknowledges the importance of text and reader relationship. The reader is the 3<sup>rd</sup> party and reality exists in the reader's mind. Work is fully created when readers assimilate it, text has not one inherent meaning, but depends on individual interpretation. Kinds of meaning in a text are – Determinate and Indeterminate. Basically, Determinate is the facts in the text, while Indeterminate are gaps in the text, which are filled by the reader. There are two kinds of readers in this theory; implied reader, who finds out the determinate meaning of the text, and actual reader who fills the gap in the text and find out the indeterminate meaning of the text.

## **2.2.14 Formats of the theory**

### ***2.2.14.1 Social transformation***

Social transformation is the term frequently used to describe societal changes and generally indicates a critical stance towards older notions of the idea of development (Genoy, 2000:99). The approach admits that current forces of change are also creating a crisis for the old industrial nations, though it does not consider the Western model as the one that should be imitated by all other nations. In general, the concept of societal transformation, refers to the change of society's systemic characteristics. This incorporates the change of existing parameters of a societal system, including technological, economic, political and cultural restructuring.

Social transformation influences productive infrastructure, which can bring about new technological changes and new patterns of participation in the international division of labour. As a new structure of economic organization is developed, the implication is that change in ownership right, investment production, distribution and supply are realised. The distribution and use of political power take qualitative different forms. As a result, there will be changes in the structure and performance of state institutions and other bodies of decision making and control.

A society's value-normative system can change, often in a way that allows the emergence and stabilisation of pluralist institutions (Duff, 2008:2). Societies, both in developed and less-developed regions, are affected by social transformation in the context of globalisation of economic and cultural relations, and the emergence of various forms of global governance. Social differentiation is led by globalisation at both international and national levels. Social exclusion and polarisation between rich and poor are problems affecting most countries and their relations.

Social transformation therefore, is a study that refers to the different ways in which globalising forces impact upon local communities and national societies with diverse historical experiences, economic and social patterns, political and cultures. The requirement is for social transformation analysis of the macro social force of local traditions, experience and identities.

The response to social transformation may not entail adaptation to globalisation, but rather resistance. This may involve mobilisation of traditional, cultural and social resources that can also take new forms of globalisation from below through transformational civil society organisations.

#### ***2.2.14.2 Transformational leadership***

The type of leadership in organisations determine the quality of personal transformation, which to a large extent impacts on stakeholders (Van Oord, 2013:419). The importance of transformational leadership is viewed as a critical and collaboration process in which school-based action research and situational knowledge creation contributes significantly to organisational decision making. A protocol for deliberative decision making is presented to elucidate how the dynamics may be implemented.

The five-step process entails:

1. The evaluation of the current practice.
2. Deliberation on how to improve.
3. The drafting of a development plan.

4. Dialogue with all stakeholders.
5. The decision making.

Dantley (2010:13) posits that an amalgamation of critical theory and African American prophetic spirituality can enhance the discourse of transformational educational leadership. Ryan (2016:87) argues that the new theoretical theory can function to not only deconstruct asymmetrical relations of power that dominate the educational system, but can also be instrumental in prescribing acts of reflective resistance purposed to bring about a radical reconstruction of schools.

### **2.2.14.3 Economic transformation**

The National Conference of the African National Congress (ANC) in 2012 at Mangaung, indicated that South Africans are entering the second phase of the transition from apartheid to a National Democratic society (Marais et al., 2014:217). According to the ANC, this phase would be characterised by “decisive action to effect economic transformation and democratic consolidation, critical both to improve the quality of life of South Africans and to promote nation building and social cohesion.”

In order to advance economic transformation, the ANC resolved at Mangaung, as follows:

- To promote growth and development and eradicate the triple scourge of unemployment, poverty and inequality.
- To increase state-led infrastructure investment aimed at massively improving social economic infrastructures, with an emphasis on the use of local content and local companies.
- To give effect to the National Development Plan (NDP) and the New Growth Path and the Industrial Policy Action Plan with the aim of stimulation growth, employment and the re-industrialisation of the South African economy.
- To transform the mining sector with the aim of widening the benefits of South Africa’s abundance of minerals, including the creation of safe and decent work on

the mines, as well as benefits for near-mine local communities, as well as give rights to mineral beneficiation.

- To promote youth employment, small business and cooperatives.
- To build a developmental state with the technical and political capacity to lead development and transform the economy.
- To maintain a supportive macroeconomic policy framework, oriented towards reconstruction, growth and development and informed by imperatives of sustainability and long-run macroeconomic stability.

(ANC Discussion Document, 2017)

Economic transformation refers to moving labour from low to higher productive activities, which include between sectors to higher value activities e.g. from agriculture to manufacturing (Cull et al., 2013:470).

Developing countries, and regional and global institutions have increasingly focused on economic transformation towards greater productivity since, and higher value activities since 2013. The strategy of the African Development Bank (AFDB) for 2013-2022, reflects the aspirations of the entire African Continent. It is firmly rooted in a deep understanding and experience of how far Africa has come in the last decade (and where it wishes to go in the next (AFDN Annual Report, 2016).

Bruhn and McKenzie argue that Africa has embarked on a process of economic transformation, which has been a solid and sustained growth over a decade, but it has been uneven and without a sufficiently firm foundation and it is not, by any estimation, complete.

#### ***2.2.14.4 Deconstruction and reconstruction***

The historical documentation of processes and intellectual developments that started from 1980's, laid the ground for an integration of deconstructive elements in the thought of African Scholars (Usuji, 2021:12). From scholars like Achille Mbembe, who garnered support, for post colonialism, post structuralism, and postmodernism in African Studies, a high degree of opposition, if not outright hostility, is still experienced (Mbembe,

2019:239). Deconstructionism has and always was perceived to depart from the pressing ethic-political concerns and humanistic imperatives of the African intellectual agenda (Senekal & Lenz, 2020:145)

#### ***2.2.14.5 Observation of human rights***

Poverty, persecution, homelessness, discrimination, oppression, war, pain and suffering are all the hallmarks of everyday life, fully democratised societies. ACT observes the basic rights and freedoms of all human beings as expressed in 1948 United Nations' Universal Declaration of Human Rights, such as all humans are born free and equal in dignity and rights, no one shall be subjected to torture, all persons are equal before the law, everyone has the right to freedom of movement, etc. (Krog, 2016:125). Healing, in combination with restorative justice, works to restore dignity. It refuses to engage in negative labelling, including applying harmful labels to disempowered youth. This is the core challenge; that is, to confront the colonising cage that traps both indigenous and non-indigenous people in, genocide, fraud, theft, institutional racism and abuse.

By definition, those who propose the revolutionary idea, do not have the same material force as does the status quo – financially or in any other way; their winning edge – our winning edge – is conviction. Conviction is a force multiplier. It creates greater power than any amount of money or institutional authority. Today, it is the conviction that short-term economic gain for corporate interests should not be the bottom line when creating political, social and economic policies in a country. The axis of social change today is more vertical than horizontal: do not dumb down the message in order to attract more people, but rather go deeper and deeper into the message as it is in order to attract the natural resonance of those who agree in their hearts. Remember that democracy is more than a political system; it is an evolutionary step forward for the human race. It is not just our right, but also our responsibility, to protect our democracy when it is threatened and expand it where its scope is limited.

Every generation is a steward of our democracy, and just as governmental officials, who swear to defend and protect the Constitution. ACT strives to become recognised as a

theory whose philosophical foundation invites the four pillars of a strong theory – namely, recognition and application of epistemology, ontology, philology (interpretivism) and axiology. The sections below, will clarify.

### **2.3 THE EPISTEMOLOGY AND ONTOLOGY OF ACT**

Epistemology and Ontology are two similar, but completely different philosophical aspects. Both are philosophical in nature where they ask people to think beyond what they know. Hence, they are often confused, however, in actuality each is concerned with a different field of study (Hamid, Kumar, Ahluwalia and Ray: 2023).

Key Difference: Epistemology is a sub field or a branch of philosophy. It tries to figure out what constitutes as knowledge. Ontology, on the other hand, is actually a subset of metaphysics, which is in turn a branch of philosophy. Ontology deals specifically with the philosophical study of the nature of being, becoming, existence or reality.

Epistemology is a sub field or a branch of philosophy. The term is derived from the Ancient Greek word 'episteme', which means 'knowledge'. It is then combined with - suffix -logy, meaning 'a logical discourse' or 'study of'. Hence, it can be inferred that epistemology deals primarily with the theory of knowledge.

The purpose of Epistemology is to try to figure out what constitutes as knowledge. Does just knowing something constitute as knowledge? Does one have to study it or thoroughly understand it to constitute knowledge? There is no correct or wrong answer to these questions. For every example that proves these assumptions to be correct, there are a ton more that disprove it. So, it begs to ask the question, what exactly is knowledge? Sadly, there is not correct answer to that question either, which is why it is philosophy.

Epistemology often includes a debate between empiricism and rationalism. Empiricism claims that knowledge can only be gained through experience. However, rationalism claims that knowledge can be acquired through reason alone. Epistemology tries to find out which one is correct, or is the truth a combination of the two.

Ontology, on the other hand, is actually a subset of metaphysics, which is in turn a branch of philosophy. Metaphysics seeks primarily to answer the question, what is reality? Its areas of investigation primarily include existence, objects and their properties, space and time, cause and effect, and possibility.

Ontology deals specifically with the philosophical study of the nature of being, becoming, existence or reality. Basically, it deals with how things come into being and what kinds of things exist. In fact, the term 'ontology' comes from the Greek 'onto', meaning 'being' or 'that which is' with the suffix -logy, meaning 'a logical discourse.' Hence, ontology is literally the study of being.

In order to differentiate between them further, it can be said that ontology deals with what is true, whereas epistemology deals with figuring out that truth. It can also be said that ontology is about the nature of reality and epistemology is about the relationship between the person and that reality, i.e. how people gain knowledge or how they get to know something, as well as the different methods of gaining knowledge.

## **2.4 INTERPRETIVISM**

The position of interpretivism in relation to ontology and epistemology, is that interpretivists believe the reality is multiple and relative (Hudson and Ozanne, 1988:45 & Hamid et al., 2023). Lincoln and Guba (1985:87) & de Dieu & Nzanana (2023: 21-30) concur that these multiple realities also depend on other systems for meanings, which make it even more difficult to interpret in terms of fixed realities (Neuman, 2000). The knowledge acquired in this discipline is socially constructed rather than objectively determined (Carson et al., 2001:5) and perceived (Berger & Luckman, 1967 in Hudson & Ozanne, 1988; Hirschman, 1985:56).

Interpretivists avoid rigid structural frameworks, such as in positivist research and adopt more personal and flexible research structures (Carson et al., 2001:34), which are receptive to capturing meanings in human interaction (Black, 2006) and make sense of what is perceived as reality (Carson et al., 2001:81). They believe the researcher and his

informants are interdependent and mutually interactive (Hudson & Ozanne, 198: 66). The interpretivist researcher enters the field with some sort of prior insight of the research context, but assumes that this is insufficient in developing a fixed research design due to the complex, multiple and unpredictable nature of what is perceived as reality (Hudson & Ozanne, 1988:35). The researcher remains open to new knowledge throughout the study and lets it develop with the help of informants. The use of such an emergent and collaborative approach is consistent with the interpretivist belief that humans have the ability to adapt, and that no one can gain prior knowledge of time and context-bound social realities (Hudson & Ozanne, 1988:58).

Therefore, the goal of interpretivist research is to understand and interpret the meanings in human behaviour, rather than to generalize and predict causes and effects (Neuman, 2000; Hudson & Ozanne, 1988:35). For an interpretivist researcher it is important to understand motives, meanings, reasons and other subjective experiences, which are time and context-bound (Hamid et al., 2023; Neuman, 2000; Hudson & Ozanne, 1988:39).

## **2.5 AFRICANA CRITICAL THEORY AXIOLOGY**

### **2.5.1 Reasons for using the theory**

Africana critical theory turns to the long-overlooked thought and texts of men and women of African descent who have developed and contributed radical thoughts and revolutionary practices that could aid in endeavours to continuously create an anti-racist, anti-sexist, anti-capitalist, anti-colonial and sexual orientation sensitive critical theory of contemporary society, to guide and to select the relevant data, as well as for the interpretation of the relevant data. Critical theorists study how the construction of knowledge and the organisation of power in society generally, and in institutions, such as schools and governments specifically, lead to the subjugation or oppression of particular individuals, groups or perspectives (Reeves, Albert, Kuper & Hodges, 2008:631).

### **2.5.2 To identify literature relevant for the study**

African educational leadership has drawn attention and focus, as managers and leaders want to ensure success of their institutions. Different models are used by leader trainers to demonstrate the complexity of leading organisations (Msila & Gumbo, 2016:141; Msila, 2005:173).

### **2.5.3 To decolonise the minds of African people**

Many South Africans are happy to celebrate every anniversary of their freedom, though some celebrate with one eye dripping tears of fear, shame and confusion (Tshelane, 2015:37). They are not entirely hopeless, or pessimistic about their future, however, they struggle to ponder the thought of how they, as black South Africans in particular, will survive in this modern-day South Africa without being fully decolonised. From 6 April 1652, Europeans settled permanently in South Africa. Through the use of arms and international bullying, colonisation swiftly changed the landscape of this country. Even though the main reasons for colonisation of South Africa were settlement, economic resources (e.g., raw materials), prestige and strategic reasons, these would not have been achieved without the colonisation of the African mind. It is for this reason that Steve Biko wrote, “The most potent weapon in the hands of the oppressor is the mind of the oppressed”. In order for the coloniser to feel at ease that his subjects were colonised, he had to win them not only militarily, but psychologically as well. This culminated in, amongst others, the use of religion, Christianity in particular, to de-Africanise the natives. This practice ensured that natives would abandon those practices and values that used to unite them, and replace them with new ways of thought and belief.

The second method used by colonisers was to plant seeds of hatred and suspicion among and between people of different tribes and clans. This was important, because a divided Africa is a breeding ground for deepened exploitation. The infamous Bantustan system, where black South Africans were clustered according to tribe, is a case in point here. The Basotho were clubbed at QwaQwa, the Batswana in Bophutatswana, the amaNdebele in KwaNdebele, and so on. These ensured that Basotho regarded AmaZulu, for example,

as their enemies, rather than brothers and sisters, and this was the case for many other tribes. For Africans originating outside of South Africa, the hatred was even more severe. Those who came from Mozambique, Lesotho and Swaziland have derogatory names given to them by black South Africans. These names are still used by many, even today.

So, the battle to free an African mind from colonialism is one battle we have not fought with the same vigour as we did with apartheid, for example. Have we thought deeply about the impacts of colonisation of the African mind? I think we have. But have we really practically demonstrated our commitment towards the decolonisation of the African mind? I think our attempts have not been sufficient to defeat this colossal challenge. I fully understand that decolonisation, defined as a process by which a colony becomes independent of the colonising country, is a gradual process that takes many years. I also understand that decolonisation of the mind, in particular, is a much longer, harder process. However, any struggle towards decolonisation must be radical, decisive and proactive.

Acclaimed Afro-Caribbean writer and philosopher, Frantz Fanon wrote; “Imperialism leaves behind germs of rot which we must clinically detect and remove from our land and from our minds as well”, a thought correlating strongly with the concept of critical leadership (Tulloch, 1993:488). Fanon’s advice is informed by his understanding that far long after independence, many previously colonised nations remain chained by the same chains that colonised them. One of the most pertinent remnants of colonisation is the deculturalisation or brainwashing of the colonised. In South Africa, the majority of people have been brainwashed to accept the dominance of Europeans and European institutions over their own heritage. This manifests in the growing number of black families who not only speak English in their homes, but also reject their own cultures in exchange for the colonial cultures. While this may seem normal, it is actually a symptom of a disease of colonisation.

The other germ of colonisation, which may be undetected or confused for something else, is the wrong use of love of culture to hide one’s hatred for another clan or tribe. The example here is a Xhosa person who refuses to speak or learn the culture of his fellow

African, while they are able to enrol their children for English or Italian classes. It is part of the indoctrination by the coloniser to hate and undermine other Africans from differing tribes, while holding in high regard all those of European origin, even worshipping anything that has European connotations. For as long as we are colonised in the mind, we will slaughter one another like flies, we will hate each other on the basis of the country of origin, ethnic group and even skin complexion and we will continue to hate everything African, including our creations, our designs, our governments and even our talents (Bush & Glover, 2016). All these shall bring nothing less than poverty, wars, hatred and economic slavery. So, we must decolonise ourselves now.

#### **2.5.4 To restore confidence and self-esteem**

Self-confidence is the belief in oneself and our abilities, it describes an internal state made up of what we think and feel about ourselves (Brocker and Augustijn, 2023: 99 & Pinquart, 2023: 2101). This state is changeable, according to the situation we are currently in and our responses to events going on around us. It is not unusual to feel quite confident in some circumstances and less confident in others. It is also influenced by past events and how we remember them; recalling a former success has a very different outcome in terms of our confidence levels than thinking about an occasion when we failed.

A diagrammatic approach is applied in this sub-section, to confirm how the colonial project has reduced the image of Africans globally – while amazingly, people from other racial groups openly showed support. **Figure 2.1.** just below firmly avails both psychological and empirical evidence of a unified front ACT is attempting to globalise. By being globalised – the #Black Lives Matter has openly and scientifically validated itself as a global community, not a Black people emancipation project. I believe, no social sciences research project should promise to be on a holy journey to explore or unearth the feelings or ideas of non-Black communities regarding the view of systemised or police institution monopoly on violence and deliberate oppression as no longer a Black people issue. Research answers are all over the popular social media platforms as people are bold to

photograph or video and share the systemic violence delivered by state institutions against its citizens.

Personally, I hold a strong belief that Africans globally are prone to have low self-confidence related to their image and how institutional authority such as the police, schooling system have tended not to only segregate but deliberately suppress through violence. South Africa's apartheid system's design of separate educational services for the Black children, and the violent response against opposing view circa 1976 Soweto Uprising. The United State's police deliberate selection of harassing young Black males with brute force considering recent #Black Lives Matter campaigns.



**Figure 2.1:** The global #Black Lives Matter movement  
**Source:** Wikimedia, 2023

Confidence and self-esteem are terms, which are often, used interchangeably, but although there is over-lap, perhaps there are also subtle differences. Self-confidence can refer to how we feel about ourselves and our abilities, whereas self-esteem refers directly to whether or not we appreciate and value ourselves. We may have been discouraged from being boastful, but a healthy amount of self-liking and self-approval is necessary if we are to have the confidence to meet life's challenges and participate as fully as we wish to in whatever makes life enjoyable and rewarding for us. In a sense, we could say that having a healthy self-esteem leads to being self-confident.

Where does self-confidence come from? Early experiences are influential in achieving a healthy level of self-esteem. If we are fortunate and had relatively favourable conditions and experiences whilst we were growing up, we are likely to develop a healthy self-esteem and become confident people. However, if conditions and experiences are mainly negative, we are more likely to experience difficulties developing our confidence. Some of the negative messages we have received will have been internalized and become part of what we think and feel about ourselves. A person lacking in self-confidence, who receives a low mark for an assignment may think, "What else could I expect? I am stupid, this proves it, and I might as well leave." A person with healthy self-esteem, who receives a low mark may think, "I wonder where I went wrong? I will find out so that I can do better next time." Although this person may feel disappointed, s/he does not feel diminished as a person by the low mark.

then the 'low mark' scenario may trigger memories of similar events in the past and then lead to a cycle of negative thinking in the form of self critical put-downs. This is how we intensify and perpetuate a lack confidence. When we feel low like this, our expectations about the future tend to be negative and this discourages us from really trying. Then we experience another disappointing result and feel negative about ourselves again. The impact of having low confidence and self-esteem varies greatly and can range from only impacting in one specific setting to being very restricting and debilitating. We can improve our self-confidence in a number of ways. One of the most important ways is to become

more accepting of ourselves. Look at your strengths and achievements and put a plan in place to address areas of weakness.

Below, **Figure 2.2.** plays a crucial role to help us identify self-empowerment resources such as having a positive mindset. Certainly, the colonisation process was not designed to enhance, but to belittle indigenous belief and technology systems. The duty of civilising a native community certainly came with a burden of negative mindset related to an inferior self-image. As a self-empowering resource – ACT strives to help others overcome their self-belittling image due to the entrenched hegemonic duty of civilising or Westernising local communities.



**Figure 2.2.:** Self-Esteem Building Resources  
**Source:** Destiny's Odessey, 2023

By consistently taking notice of our fluctuating levels of self-confidence, we may discover important information about ourselves. We need to practice self-acceptance, feeling okay

about ourselves and others, regardless of the existing conditions. If we make mistakes, hurt or offend other people, it may be appropriate to make amends, but it need not lead to low self-confidence. In this way, we may sometimes think it is reasonable to be critical of our behaviour and try to change it, but without being critical of ourselves. This attitude helps maintain a healthy level of self-confidence.

If you take time to think, you will realise that you have achieved so many things in your life. It does not matter what these achievements are; only that they are important to you. List them and remember what they meant to you. It does not matter what you think about your life at present, if you are honest with yourself, you will make a long list and that will make you feel good. Every small thing you are proud of should be added to your list. The fact that you are focusing on positives will also help you to increase your level of self-esteem.

If, as a result of monitoring your self-esteem and confidence, you decide that you want to change, it is best to identify some specific goals. What can you change that will make you feel better about yourself? There are two kinds of changes you may wish to focus on. The first are changes in your life and how you live it. Ask yourself if you are happy in your job? Is it satisfying? Is there something else you would rather do? What about your relationships or your social life? If you would like to be more assertive for example, then start working on that immediately. Having done that, it is necessary to make sure that they are manageable; break it down into smaller steps or identify a less ambitious change to attempt first. For example, in order to be able to speak up in seminars, it may be easier to begin by expressing opinions more often with friends. Becoming comfortable with this can make the next step, contributing in a seminar, easier.

We can give ourselves positive experiences as a way of increasing our self-confidence. Also, spending time with people who like us for who we are, is helpful. Surround yourself with positive influences and avoid those who are constantly being negative. Being around critical people most of the time or withdrawing from genuine social contact can have a detrimental effect on how we feel about ourselves and our self-confidence. Use positive self-talk and affirmations to reprogram your thinking. "I am a good and worthwhile person".

Way too often we are uncaring and unsupportive of ourselves. We can be very generous and loving towards others, but sometimes we forget to be loving and kind to ourselves. Monitor your self-talk and eliminate negative thoughts.

Give yourself rewards as you practice building your self-esteem. It does not really matter what the reward is, as long as it is something you value. It may be a night out, a bar of chocolate, or watching your favourite TV programme. If you can, tell a good friend what you are doing; their encouragement and feedback on the changes you are making could be invaluable support. Self-esteem is a term often used to describe how we feel about who we are and the value that we place on ourselves. People develop self-esteem, because we are able to have both a self-identity and also the ability to judge interpretations of ourselves.

Self-esteem impacts on the ways in which we think and view ourselves; do we feel competent and confident? Having a realistic view of our abilities and strengths can strengthen our feelings of confidence. We also regularly measure ourselves against others, thus adjusting our value in relation to other people. Having a peer group that you feel comfortable with and who has realistic expectations of the individual, goes a long way to enhancing our self-esteem.

### **2.5.5 How does low self-esteem develop and the dangers of low self-esteem?**

Self-esteem develops and changes, as a result of our differing life experiences, the lessons we learn as we interact with others and the world in general. Feeling loved and accepted by our families can form a solid foundation for our self-esteem. While feeling as if you are not meeting other people's expectations, receiving no praise for your efforts and bullying, etc. can contribute to negative beliefs about yourself. As a result of negative or unpleasant experiences, we may develop a strong inner critical voice, which tends to express itself loudly when we are feeling distressed, overwhelmed or judged by others. The inner critic uses a range of words as weapons to make us believe that these negative thoughts are facts and that they are always true. However, there are ways to recognise and challenge this inner critic to allow us to take a more balanced view of our self-worth.

I believe, when opposing groups miss an opportunity to enhance each other's self-esteem, that is give hope for an amicable resolution or dignified compromise – emotional tensions which have been long bottled up, boil to a point of extreme violence. **Figure 2.3**, demonstrate how a low self-esteem can evolve into a collective project or mass movement, where negotiations are abandoned in place of weapons by both sides. The massive loss of lives in Marikana, South Africa – through open and deliberate organised state-authorized violence against its own people affirms the crucial value of ACT's pillars of philosophy when a plea for critical institutional leadership is beckoned by this thesis. Through ACT, I have learned that there exists a strong evidence that ontological and axiological basis of organised violence, comes as a result of absence of high self-esteem within a leader who decides to authorise the use of violence.



**Figure 2.3.:** Marikana Massacre as aftermath of a violent mining strike for fair wage  
Source: <https://www.csvr.org.za/> , 2023

It is not unusual to have a negative reaction in a specific situation where, for example, you may only hold negative views about how you cope at work (e.g. “I am hopeless at using the cash register”). However, when our negative self-opinions are always with us they start to be judged as a fact and that can impact on our lives and wellbeing. For example, saying “I am not good enough” or “I always say stupid things” about yourself in all situations, may indicate low self-esteem.

It is important to remember that you are not alone in having these experiences, as low self-esteem is a common experience for many people. These feelings can also be experienced as part of depression and anxiety symptoms when self-confidence and problem-solving skills are affected. Despite these challenges, it is possible to make changes in your life that will enhance your self-esteem.

## **2.6 STEPS TO BE FOLLOWED WHEN USING AFRICANA CRITICAL THEORY**

Africana critical theory consists of steps that need to be followed when using it, which are: recognition phase, relationship analysis phase and the reflection phase (Morrow & Tracey, 2012:89) The purpose of these steps is to develop a strategy for research process. During the recognition phase, core researchers are encouraged to evaluate the provided information against their daily lived experiences, emotions and feelings, which foster self-awareness and has a potential for change and social engagement (Lee & Smagorinsky, 2000:9) People’s behaviour could only be understood in the light of their interest in the way that they created their experiences (Denscombe, 2003:267).

Lee and Smagorinsky (2009:9) argue that critical analysis encourages critical examination of social issues, generated by reading the text. The core researchers’ voices carry meaning and experiences and focuses on the essence of the challenge. Analysis is used to shed light on various parties and groups that are concerned in the project, directly or indirectly, who may benefit from, support or even oppose the activities of the project. The success of the project is dependent upon the knowledge from the planning of a project, or of the significance of the core researchers (Fine, 2000:17). The reason for this is for their interests and expectations that have to be taken into consideration, otherwise they

would not participate fully in the project. General listing is made from the beginning that shows the relevant institutions, individuals or persons, interest groups, and target groups related to the project and its activities (Denscombe, 2003:26).

Denzin and Lincoln (2011:11) argue that in the educative phase, the researcher and core researchers take a position to intervene in hegemonic practices and serve as advocates in exposing the material effects of marginalised locations, while offering the alternatives. In this way they encouraged all members to promote creative and constructive actions that address the social realities through a variety of transformational leadership practices (Lee & Smagorinsky, 2000:9).

(cf. 1.3, 1.7, 2.2, 2.2.8.3, 2.7.1. 2.7.2, 2.7.3, 5.1, 6.2.2.3,

## **2.7 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK**

From subsection 2.7.1. up to 2.7.3, the thesis magnified how the proposed theoretical framework – namely, Africana Critical Theory, becomes carried across all the chapters to motivate for an establishment – if observed to be lacking, school leadership which has teamwork traits founded on critical leadership studies (cf. 1.6.1 & 1.6.2), for a firm stakeholder participation culture to prevail (cf. Figure 7.1, Figure 1.1. & Figure 3.1).

### **2.7.1 To Africana critical theory (ACT)**

Unfortunately, instead of playing a counter- or “against” role – ACT celebrates ideas, incidents and events coming from historically marginalized sections of the global community – of which Black Africans are just a section amongst the many in recognition that in Asia, the Americas there still exists a history (narratives) as a past, and requiring a re-writing of indigenous peoples who faced and still face oppressive systemic policies and norms. Europe too, has a history of internal oppressive tendencies where a white skin is overlooked – but something else accentuated to system oppression. White people of a Jewish cultural background, Russians of Caucasian descent to mention just two holocaust events internally in Europe between the 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> centuries. ACT encourages other oppressed groups to narrate their ‘good stories, without shying away from their past sad stories. We will find that Ubuntu or lack thereof, is not regional but a global phenomena

worth conceptualizing to recognise past and present problems and collaborate through dialogue to forge unity or symbolically – to forge a framework.

A conceptual framework is an analytical tool with several variations and contexts. It is used to make conceptual distinctions and organise ideas. The conceptual framework that shaped this study was one intended to improve curriculum leadership in primary schools that believe the improvement of learners' achievement as being dependent upon improved curriculum leadership, influenced by commitment of curriculum leaders and the community (Keane, Khupe & Seehawer, 2017:12). There is an inherent paradox in this practice. An endeavour that aims to redress Western knowledge hegemony and decolonise the school curriculum often judges its own value in terms of the very system it critiques. While much useful work has been done in IK-science curriculum integration, and calls are made for appreciating both knowledge systems, it is concerning that the research knowledge is available to academics and generally not to indigenous communities, who are usually contributors (at least) to the research data.

Currently, distributed leadership is receiving attention in the literature, where it is strongly associated with democratic and participative leadership styles, and places emphasis on a less heroic and a more shared approach to leadership (Harris, 2013; Spillane, 2012). Parallels and dichotomies have been drawn between democratic, transformational, participative and distributed leadership (Harris, 2004:22; Woods, 2004:87), due to their collaborative nature, involving decision-making that is found to be more inclusive. It is this inclusive nature of these leadership approaches that also attracts connections to the more African-oriented form of leadership of Ubuntu (Msila, 2008:67; Bush, 2007:79). Msila (2008:67) posits that interdependence, interconnectedness and compassion studies are needed in this area. It is observed that effective leadership for local contexts are vital. However, there seems to be overall consensus that effective leadership styles encourage more collaboration. In this sense, the choice of term is not just cosmetic, or semantic, but denotes a more substantial link to improvement and change (Moorosi & Bantwini, 2016:3).

## 2.7.2 Critical leadership

As its conceptual framework, this study explored the growing impact of Critical Leadership Studies (CLS). Covering a diverse set of theories and approaches, critical perspectives hold that, whether for good and/or ill, and whether focusing on individuals and/or collectives, power in all its forms is a central, under-examined issue for leadership (Learmonth & Morrell, 2017:257). Problematizing the dichotomizing tendency in leadership, CLS also emphasize the value of analysing leadership power relations through dialectical perspectives. Critical approaches address the asymmetric interplay between leaders, managers, followers and contexts, as well as their potentially contradictory conditions, processes and consequences. Aptly, qualities or traits of stakeholder participation are observed as of fundamental importance as the basis of testing the validity of the proposed conceptual framework ((cf. 1.3, 1.7, 2.2, 2.7.1, 2.7.3, 2.8, 5.1, 6.2.2.3, Figure 7.1, Figure 1.1. & Figure 3.1). By addressing the dialectics of power, conformity and resistance, critical perspectives challenge conventional understandings of leader-follower dynamics. In so doing, they open up new ways of theorizing, researching and enacting leadership (Collinson, 2018:89).

Calls for more leadership are everywhere. Businesses large and small, the government, public administration and the non-profit sector are abuzz with demands for increased leadership. We are told that almost every problem - including the global financial crises, failing schools, the spread of HIV and AIDS and global warming - is solvable through more or better leadership. Indeed, leadership seems to have become a kind of universal solution for any issue, irrespective of context (Alvesson & Spicer, 2014:40)

Curriculum leadership ethics takes all five challenges seriously: (1) the problem of moral constraints, (2) the problem of partiality, (3) the problem of status and inequality, (4) the problem of consequentialism, and (5) the problem of influence. A successful treatment of these challenges requires that we address each systematically and provide responses that hang together consistently. This approach is also at pains to ensure that its answers are sufficiently critical of the phenomenon of leadership itself, one respect in which organizational approaches to ethics are often lacking. Fortunately, philosophical ethics

lends itself to systematic and consistent application across problems. Virtue ethics, deontological theories, such as Kant's, and consequentialist theories, such as utilitarianism are considered theories for precisely this reason. They allow us to confront particular problems and move among them without contradiction. As we shall see, however, the critical recourses of some moral theories will mean that they are better equipped to serve as safeguards against the distinctive challenges of leadership than are others. To address the first challenge, we must ask whether the moral constraints on leaders are at the level of behaviour or character. Is the conduct of leaders the primary object of moral concern, or should we focus instead on their "traits?". This thesis concurs with Price (2017:12) assumption on precision of thought for making sense of our judgments about ethical leadership.

### **2.7.3 Curriculum theory**

The curriculum is designed to ensure that knowledge is conveyed in a systematic and planned way so as to impart an amalgam of knowledge and skills that are determined to be appropriate and necessary to society. A curriculum, therefore, refers to what knowledge is included or excluded in teaching (Msila & Gumba, 2016:7). The aim of reconstructing the curriculum should be to give the Indigenous epistemologies their rightful place as equally valid ways of knowledge systems in the world, so as to solve global and local problems more effectively. We need to also take into cognisance the fact that the disease in research of the African content is the fact that the intrinsic value of African culture is attempted to be dismissed systematically; language, and curriculum practices. It is critical therefore, for the curriculum planners to understand how they can promote the decolonisation of the curriculum in Africa, among others.

Curricular content should be informed by the wishes, thoughts and practices of local communities in that education should be firmly anchored in the cultural and intellectual environment of the community in which it is located.

- Eliminate what is imposed on or prescribed for Africa, which is non-African.

- Knowledge of the curriculum should be interrogated in ways that validates and promotes critical leadership practices, and which ones are invalidated and ignored.

Teaching and learning within the African context should primarily be involved in processes of enquiry that do not see the oppressive situation as a closed world from which there is no exit, but rather as a process of constructing and building possibilities through imagination and hope. Hence a curriculum constructed on the basis of indigenous African epistemologies is primarily concerned with empowering educators and learners to gain confidence in their own capabilities and acquire a sense of pride in their own ways of being in the world.

As a result, it is incumbent upon planners of the curriculum to contribute to the project of epistemological redress to infuse the content of the curriculum with the wealth of knowledge that emanates from local communities and appropriate such knowledge towards human-centred development (Higgs, 2016:1).

After moments of reflection and self-understanding that the analytic phase provides, in the synthetic moment, we reconstruct ourselves, both as individuals and as a profession. After the evaporation of the ego that regression to the past and contemplation of the future invites, we return to the present, mobilising ourselves as individuals, as a profession - for public service, educating the public (Amin, 2016:291). I am of the firm belief that public education structures and social reconstruction while, in its present deformation, its destruction blocks both. The democratic project of educating the public is the service of an ethically and politically self-conscious understanding of society (Pinar, 2015:112).

## **2.8 SUMMARY OF THE CHAPTER**

This chapter focused on ACT as a theoretical framework and used operational concepts derived from this research study. This theory recognises that humans are the architects of their own destiny, as described by different proponents of ACT. This is a process of critique that is self-conscious and a development of a discourse of social transformation and emancipation. The theory furthermore raises our consciousness beyond the walls of the classroom and the school boundaries to broader social and cultural concerns.

The following chapter focuses on discussions and definitions of concepts in curriculum leadership, the principal's role in curriculum leadership, as well as constraints that impact on curriculum leadership in different countries around the world. For this study, the following countries were used: USA, Ethiopia, Zimbabwe and South Africa. The discussion would also be undertaken on the unique nature of available and applied curriculum approaches, as well as the hurdles in the path of curriculum leadership implementation in South Africa and the chapter summary.

## CHAPTER 3: LITERATURE REVIEW

---

### 3.1 INTRODUCTION

The aim of the study was to develop a framework to improve curriculum leadership in schools and how the identified problem could be resolved. The study of curriculum leadership and its possible contribution to improve school management has received broad scholarly attention for decades. A considerable body of literature, focusing on school effectiveness and improvement, leadership and different leadership practices, and challenges faced by principals of schools with regards to under performance of learners, has been produced. However, none of this literature has produced a definite answer on how performance of learners in primary schools can be improved.

Nonetheless, while today's model of education is based on learning as a process of knowledge construction and critical thinking, we still have some way to go before we perfect the practical integration of content and process to engage learners, particularly the beginning and the middle years of schooling in every aspect of their lives (Wilks, 2005:26). It provides a link between existing knowledge and the research problem being investigated, which enhances significance, and to provide very helpful information about the methodology that can be incorporated into a new study (McMillan & Schumacher, 2010:73).

This chapter presents information gathered from a diverse range of researchers and sources, which includes articles, journals, books, circulars, as well as government legislations and reports on curriculum leadership and underperformance. Issues and current debates are highlighted in view of the researchers on matters mentioned above.

Educators designing a thinking curriculum should focus on teaching learners' skills, not in discrete elements or subject areas, but as whole tasks with purpose, relevance and interest outside the requirements of achieving a passing grade. The thinking curriculum should inspire learners' self-motivated learning and equip them with cross discipline skills

in problem solving, self-monitoring, reading and study strategies and critical thinking (Wilks, 2005:27).

A large number of studies have reflected on the growing interest by various researchers and leadership practitioners in the school leadership domain. Research has revealed in particular, different views that exist between scholars, as to whether curriculum leadership practices of principals have a measurable effect on learner performance. This chapter therefore, ventures into literature to form a theoretical base for the investigation of the variables, related to curriculum leadership and their contribution to the improvement of learner performance.

To achieve the aim of this study, four countries were selected for the review of literature, namely: USA, representing the developed world, Ethiopia representing the horn of Africa, Zimbabwe, representing the SADC region and South Africa from where the research originates. Five barriers that hinder the improvement of curriculum leadership were identified and opportunities on how to mediate were used as guiding principles to give direction on the selected literature. It is equally important for principals in South Africa to familiarise themselves with school leadership theories. These principals were represented by their peers in a primary school in the historically impoverished yet communally resilient township of Botshabelo (cf. 4.3.5, 4.4.4 & 4.4.5).

The school leadership theories for school curriculum leaders, as presented by Bush (2015:76), and DeMatthews (2014:193), takes into account the willingness and capabilities of staff, and accurately selects appropriate leadership responses that are in part guided by concepts associated with these theories:

- **Instructional leadership theory**, which implies functions associated with teaching and learning or more specifically, as the duties and responsibilities that curriculum leaders perform daily to support teachers and learners in their work towards educational excellence. Other leadership activities that are part of instructional leadership include developing a school mission and vision, coordinating, monitoring and evaluating curriculum, instruction, assessments, promoting a safe

and supportive learning environments for learners and creating a supportive and collaborative work environments for teachers.

- **Distributed leadership theory** recognises that leadership extends beyond hierarchy and formal roles of authority and prompts principals to engage in a more diffuse approach to leadership that incorporates a multitude of stakeholders with different areas of expertise (consultants in areas of educational development sponsorship, curriculum development and other related areas), while at the same time encouraging the professional growth of teachers (cf. Figure 1.1. & Figure 3.1). Principals still maintain their formal roles and authority, but leadership practice is distributed across different teams.
- **Social justice leadership theory** emphasises the role of the principal in dismantling barriers and obstacles to equity for marginalised learner groups. Principals drawing from these theories, recognize policies, procedures, cultures, and histories that perpetuate inequalities and respond in an ethical and persistent manner. Goldfarb and Grinberg (2002:160), and Shields (2014:49) describe social justice leadership theories as an exercise engaged in reclaiming, appropriating, sustaining, and advancing inherent human rights of equity, equality and fairness in social, economic, educational, emotional and personal dimensions (Goldfarb & Grinberg, 2022:162 and cf. 7.2.1 & Table 7.1) Parents, learners, teachers and community members are made valuable members of a school community participating in school improvement processes.
- **Transformational leadership theory** refers to the leaders moving the follower beyond the immediate self-interest and elevates the follower level of maturity and ideals, as well as concerns for achievement, self-actualisation and the wellbeing of others (Meresa, Tadesse, Zeray & Haile, 2019:2). In South Africa, this model of leadership has been seen as central to school activities, because of the vision of a new, equitable and fair education system for all. Transforming from the old paradigm to the new paradigm is therefore essential (Richards & Clark, 2006:75).
- **Moral leadership theory** means that the moment one accepts a leadership position, one has to be prepared to be in public gaze. As a leader, one is

accountable to the employees and to the society at large. The implication, as well as the impact of anything that the leader says and does, can range from small to immense. Leadership, as a result, comes with responsibilities to take care of and being extra cautious (Bedilu, 2014:63).

The above mentioned above leadership theories compound leadership models that have vision and a sense of where the school should go in a short to long term. The leadership mentioned above is the one that has the ability to build a school, using a top-down and bottom-up approach technique of leading, managing and learning. Effective leaders are those who involve all stakeholders in their work and endorse the view that it is the purpose of the school to improve the performance of learners by focusing on teaching and learning. This study strongly believes that all the above leadership theories have a direct relevance on curriculum leadership.

## **3.2 DISCUSSIONS AND DEFINITION OF CONCEPTS**

In order to scientifically design a framework for improving curriculum leadership in primary schools, key operational concepts need to be clearly defined (Goud & Carson, 2008:59).

### **3.2.1 Curriculum framework**

A curriculum framework is a particular set of ideas for dealing with problems in order to decide what to do (Hu & Campbell, 2017:20). It is an organised plan or set of standards or learning outcomes that defines the content to be learned in terms of clear, definable standards of what the learners should know and be able to do. It therefore refers to the means and materials learners will interact with, for the purpose of achieving identified educational outcomes (Cheung & Yuen, 2017:1020; Stabback, 2016:4). The term can also be referred to as a document or documents that specify the general outcomes that may be attained throughout the grades and the outcomes that are to be attained by the end of a given grade. The achievement indicators would then be a list of the breath, depth and expectations of the outcomes. The documents may include syllabi, programmes of

study, year plans and lesson plans. They may be developed centrally, locally or by individual teachers, and may have the status of supporting material or official documents, which must be used.

Formulating a curriculum framework is one of the initial tasks of curriculum planning. It is important to note that a curriculum framework is an organised plan, set of standards, or list of outcomes, defining recommended curricula. Initiating curriculum framework should first define clear goals to be achieved by all learners. In the past, many schools used a traditional approach, based on delivering content. Today most schools are developing and aligning framework to new standards.

### **3.2.2 Curriculum leadership**

Leadership is a process of social influence, which maximises the effort of others towards the achievement of a goal (Ferkins, Skinner & Swanson, 2018:77; Borin, Goma. Kolomitro, Lavery, Openo & Stranach, 2017:6). Quality curriculum leadership is having a thorough understanding of curriculum and being able to change roles and responsibilities when the need arises, in order to meet new challenges of curriculum design. Curriculum leadership is often a role within a broader spectrum of administration – from classroom management, school finances management, educational resources management, assessment outcomes/results management, as well as people management. Succinctly, it has a strong element of servant leadership, because the assumptions and principles upon which curriculum leadership are based, have congruence with the nature of curriculum functions in schools and the nature of the people who must implement the curriculum function (Bradley, Meyers, Curtis & Kessinger, 2017:12) At times, curriculum leadership calls for many different styles as it demands servitor, or mentor, or facilitator. It always demands non-authoritarian behaviour and has one purpose of ensuring involvement and responsiveness/ownership by the principals and teachers in the curriculum design and implementation (Bradley et al., 2017:17).

Historically, educational curricula were filled with oppressive practices, where colonisers – as supreme designers of what can be taught formally - would mount an attack on

indigenous cultures and people and demean them by banning languages, cultures, rituals and all things spiritual. The illegal, unethical and immoral acts followed. Curriculum management is easy to grasp. An administrator with curriculum-management obligations ensures that the curriculum gets revised or at least examined in cycles – for example, every five years, on a staggered calendar. The manager ensures that time and money are set aside for the work. Then, the writers make some decisions (with limited overall and guidance or design criteria) on how to tweak lessons or activities. Such work requires no leadership per se. Graven and Venkat (2017:11) maintain that leadership in curriculum differs from management in curriculum, yet the suspicion is that few people with curriculum responsibilities appreciate how different the two really are – and why real curriculum leadership is sorely needed.

Curriculum leadership, on the other hand, requires questioning the current enterprise of curriculum writing and creating something that is far more effective. Here are 13 questions all curriculum leaders should be asking themselves – before, during, and after curriculum writing:

- What is the purpose of the curriculum? Is it obligatory or suggestive?
- For whom is the curriculum written?
- What must the design and review process be, given the purpose and audience?
- What level of detail is demanded, given the purpose and audience?
- Why do most current curricula rarely get consulted? What must a curriculum entail for it to be more regularly used and more effective?
- What are the key deficits of the current curriculum (and student performance) that need to be better addressed?
- What role should textbooks/programs play and not play in the curriculum?
- How will best practices and research-based approaches to learning be implemented into and highlighted in the curriculum?
- How will mere coverage of content be avoided and deeper learning promoted? In other words, what categories and types of information should be mapped to ensure a focus on student understanding and transfer?

- Given the heterogeneity of each classroom, how should curriculum be written to help teachers effectively differentiate?
- What assessments are needed to test understanding-based goals? Based on these goals, what typical assessment should the curriculum suggest be used or not used?
- What troubleshooting advice should be built into the curriculum in order to address likely rough spots and student misconceptions?
- By the criteria, will the designing and revising of the curriculum be judged before determining that it is up to standard and finished?

From a historical perspective, curriculum is any document that exists in a school or school system that defines the work of teachers. The intention is to assist educators in curriculum leadership by identifying trends in materials to be taught. Many work plans may consist of textbooks, resource materials, or scope and sequence charts. By definition, the purpose of curriculum is not to abandon organisational boundaries, but to enable the organisation to function more efficiently (English & Clearly Larson, 1997:30). Curriculum leadership requires a new vision, a significant long-term agenda, and lots of deep thinking and experimentation. That is what leaders set in motion.

### **3.2.3 Dynamic Instructional leadership**

Instructional leadership involves setting clear goals, managing curriculum, and monitoring lesson plans – its follower only becomes dynamic if as a principal, she/he allows it to become enhanced by other leadership theories. It also involves allocating resources and evaluating teachers regularly to promote student learning and growth. Quality of instruction is the priority for the curriculum leaders. Instructional leadership is committed to the core business of teaching, learning and knowledge. Members of staff should meet on a regular basis to discuss how to do their jobs better and ultimately assist students to learn more effectively.

### **3.2.4 A primary school**

South Africa recognises independent and private schools for primary education. From age 6, all children are of compulsory school age and should attend a primary school. A primary school or primary education consists of two phases: the foundation phase (from Grades 0-3) and the intermediate phase (from Grades 4 -6). It is governed by two national departments, namely the Department of Basic Education (DBE), which is responsible for primary and secondary schools, and the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET), which is responsible for tertiary education and vocational training. Prior to 2009, these two departments were represented in a single Department of Education. The dynamics of an efficient primary school principal has to consider global leadership theories.

The DBE department deals with public schools, private schools (also referred to by the department as independent schools), Early Childhood Development (ECD) centres, and special need schools. The public schools and private schools are collectively known as ordinary schools and comprise roughly 97% of schools in South Africa. The nine provinces in South Africa also have their own education departments that are responsible for implementing the policies of the national department, as well as dealing with local issues. In 2010, the basic education system comprised 12 644 208 learners, 30 586 schools, 439 394 teachers. The GET (General Education and Training band) is subdivided further into “phases” called the Foundation Phase (Grades 0-3) and Intermediate and senior phase (Grades 4-7).

The administrative structure of most ordinary schools in South Africa do not reflect the division of bands and phases, however. For historical reasons, most schools are either; “primary” schools (Grade R plus Grades 1 to 7) or “secondary” schools, also known as high schools (Grades 8 to 12).

### **3.2.5 Enhancing**

Enhancing means the improvement of something that is already good. Farlex Dictionary (2012:4) explains that enhancing refers to attempts to temporarily or permanently overcome the current limitations of the human body, through natural or artificial means. Tshelane (2015:36) further explains the meaning of enhancing as heightened or intensified qualities, powers and values. Increase, raise, augment, add to, deepen, strengthen, reinforce, develop, enlarge, expand, maximise, elevate, improve, polish, refine, boost, lift, upgrade, and enrich, are other synonyms (Tshelane, 2015:37; Tulloch, 1993:488).

### **3.2.6 The principal**

The word is explained in five different ways by Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary. Its first meaning is given as the person who is in charge of a college or university. The second explanation of the meaning refers to a head teacher; the third one puts emphasis on finance, and the fourth to the person who plays the most important part in a game of play, for example an opera singer. The last explanation brings a totally different dimension to the word, namely, "person that you represent, especially in business or in law" (Tshelane, 2015:30; Hornby, 2005:1153 and cf. 7.2.1 & Table 7.1).

The first two explanations and the fourth explanation can add value to constructing a common understanding of the concept. In the centralised system of education prevalent in the majority of countries, the principal's position is a public position, with the duty of leadership, management and administration, while in some countries, a principal is regarded as a means to improve student achievement and focus on curriculum professional practice (Zeybekoqlu & Tabancali, 2009:112). Based on the above, the principal, as a curriculum leader, can be understood to be a leader who has the responsibility to ensure that teaching and learning takes place as it is supposed to.

Therefore, for the purpose of this study, the principal is someone in a public position with leadership, management and administrative responsibility and a core function in

curriculum professional practice, whose role is to create an atmosphere for learners to achieve better and the sustainable outcomes, as required by needs of the 21st century curriculum.

### **3.3 THE PRINCIPAL'S ROLE IN CURRICULUM LEADERSHIP**

Curriculum leadership is defined by “functions that enable school systems and the schools to achieve their goal of ensuring quality in what learners learn” (Glatthorn & Jailall, 2017:36). It is important to note that these are functions, not roles that help mould curriculum. The author of this thesis has thought about a potential future research enquiry based on an in-depth critique of differentiating between curriculum leadership roles and functions and the possible emancipatory impact on both the person in charge of an institution as well as on the place itself. Such type of an inquiry; would be iconised as offering both a professionally essential and empirical service to the proposed conceptual framework of enhancing the critical leadership studies. (cf. 1.3, 1.7, 2.2, 2.7.1. 2.7.2, 5.1, & 6.2.2.3)

Principals' effectiveness depends on their ability to identify the functions that tend to be goal-oriented that may maximize the learners' learning by providing quality content. Principals should be able to develop, implement, monitor, align and evaluate curriculum, as well as provide resources and time. In order to create an effective school and to show improvements, Weaver and Glatthorn (2018:178) suggest that leaders should develop “teamwork, real-time professional learning, and system and school cultures that allow new ideas and practices to grow and flourish.” Teamwork and high-quality professional learning begin at the highest leadership levels and curriculum leaders should be fully committed to and engaged in their own development. “Significant change throughout the system requires that leaders be willing and able to change their own beliefs, understanding, and actions.”

### **3.3.1 Principals and their role as instructional leaders**

Some aspects of school leadership and management in South Africa, particularly managing teaching and learning, are still understudied. Wills (2015:234) reaffirms previous remarks by Hoadley, Christie, and Ward (2009) that the school leadership research base is limited in her study on the labour market for South African principals. According to studies on instructional leadership, principals' understanding of their critical role in promoting curriculum delivery in their schools appears to be contradictory.

The NEEDU Report (2013:19), which focused on 133 primary schools across the country, found that principals were generally aware of the importance of their responsibility and instructional leadership in leading the school's program. Despite this awareness of the importance of instructional leadership, the report found that schools' implementation of instructional leadership was not in line with policy, as outlined in the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements (CAPS).

In contrast, Hoadley (2018:47) and Hoadley and Jansen (2009:32) discovered that principals understood their primary tasks as administration and chastising students, using data from a stratified sample of 142 high schools in the Eastern Cape and Western Cape provinces. Principals were unaware of the significance of their role as leaders in curriculum monitoring. Another study in Gauteng found that principals were unaware of their role as instructional leaders (Bush & Glover, 2016). In their review of literature on school leadership and management in South Africa, Bush and Heystek (2006:147) identify a growing recognition that instructional leadership may be a viable option for school improvement in South Africa.

Robinson et al. (2008),,In Bush and Glover (2016:177) argue that for school leaders to have a positive impact on student outcomes, they must focus more on the core business of teaching and learning. According to Bush and Glover (2016:118), this can be accomplished through appropriate classroom visits as well as phase and learning area discussions among educators. Taylor, Mabogoane, and Akoobhai (2011:16), for example, emphasize instructional time management as an important aspect of instructional

leadership. These researchers observe inefficiencies in the use of time in many South African schools.

This manifests itself on three levels: arriving at school, getting to class, and covering the curriculum in class. Taylor et al. (2013:28) discovered the prevalence of ineffective management practices, as well as very low levels of teachers' subject knowledge and destructive union activity, in their mixed method study conducted in high schools in the Eastern Cape and Free State Provinces. An earlier study (Chisholm et al., 2005:287), commissioned by the Education Labour Relations Council, found a gap between policy and practice when comparing hours spent on various activities by educators to those recommended or implied by national policy. The study discovered that South African educators spend far less time on actual teaching than the policy requires.

### **3.3.2 Principal as a reason for poor academic performance**

Taylor (2011:123) discovered that while school resource variables were not important correlates of student performance, indicators of effective school management were related to learning outcomes in a paper using multivariate analysis to identify the factors associated with academic performance using NSES data. Simultaneously, the study revealed that South African schools differ greatly in terms of aspects such as good management practices, teacher commitment, planning, teacher knowledge, and curriculum coverage. Furthermore, these variables are strongly related to student achievement.

There are several reasons for the school system's lack of responsiveness to various government reform efforts. Researchers cite persistent shortages of physical and human resources, a lack of professional training among educators (Jansen, 2005:233), socioeconomic issues, family structure breakdown, poverty, vandalism, and a lack of respect for teachers as some of the reasons (Jacobs, 2014:57; Ngcobo & Tikly 2010:387; Kamper, 2008:348). However, there is growing evidence that, rather than poverty, systematic variation in school performance may contribute to low academic learning in historically disadvantaged South African schools (Spaull, 2011:48; Van der Berg,

2007:79). Using SACMEQ 2000 and SACMEQ 2007 data, the latter researchers discovered that poor South African children outperform similarly poor children in neighbouring countries. Based on their findings, the authors concluded that factors other than poverty may be impeding effective learning in historically disadvantaged schools in South Africa. Taylor et al. (2013:67) discovered that weak instructional leadership and classroom practices affect achievement among students in historically disadvantaged schools by comparing curriculum coverage across historical parts of the school system using data from the National School Effectiveness Study (NSES).

The recommendations in the NEEDU Report (2013:19) place a strong emphasis on Instructional leadership. It is written as follows: “It is the responsibility of the principal to lead curriculum delivery. While tasks and responsibilities should be formally distributed to members of the SMT and teachers, the principal must direct the overall strategy.” Within the school, a division of labour must be established, with important tasks defined, planned, and assigned to senior members of staff.

### **3.3.3 Incapability to implement the prescribed curriculum adequately**

Milondzo and Magongoa (2018:60) argue that recent social changes in South Africa has resulted in numerous transformation on curriculum practices, which ultimately impact on how curriculum leaders have to operate. Even well after 1994, when South Africa tasted a new dawn of democracy, majority of schools in the township are still considered to be having learners whose achievements is below average (Bush & Glover, 2016:86; Naicker & Mthiyane 2015:278). For instance in primary schools, curriculum adequately (Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement [CAPS], 2017), demotivated teachers, who lack content knowledge, inadequate resource and overcrowded classes, developing a strong school-based policy capable to accommodate classroom contexts reflective of cultural diversity (Anderson, Young, Blanch & Smith, 2018:11 Harju-Luukkainen & McElvary, 2018:88) and leadership that remains focused on administration rather than on teaching and learning (Bush & Glover, 2016:211). Thus the situation is not uniquely South African. Globally, inadequate performance by learners in primary schools is symptomatic

of, among other reasons, a lack of effective curriculum leadership (Karisa, Erick & Mathuva, 2017:10; Spaul, 2013:437).

During the process of curriculum implementation, there are obstacles that vary with curriculum itself, location, political situation, teacher preparation, economic situation, and plenty of other factors, making it more complex to execute (Nieveen & Plomp, 2018:259; Patino, 2015:2). Exponential growth in learner population, resulting from the abolition of school fees and the introduction of free primary education and an insufficient number of teachers, resulting in high teaching loads, prompt the use of ineffective teaching methods (Orodho, Waweru, Ndichu & Nthiguri, 2013:14). Teachers' lack of motivation means they do not focus on learners and thus, there is little room for the use of modern teaching techniques that require individualised teaching (Teygong, Moses & Daniel, 2018:118). The operations and or inadequate achievement of learners, add to the demotivation of teachers. Conflict that arises between principals and school governing bodies, due to principals who cling to power even in South African schools, acts to decentralise governance (Hill, 2018:1; Heystek, 2006:477). Principals and teachers are more concerned about meeting the submission deadlines as required by districts and compromise teaching and learning as a result.

### **3.4 CONSTRAINTS AND ENABLERS IMPACTING ON CURRICULUM LEADERSHIP IN DIFFERENT COUNTRIES**

For the purpose of this study, four countries were selected in order to compare and copy the best practices. An overview of how these countries, i.e., USA, Ethiopia and Zimbabwe have been practicing curriculum leadership was looked into, in order that a better understanding of the impact on how curriculum leadership in South African can be improved. The following barriers and opportunities were closely scrutinised: demographic changes, policy changes, emerging technologies, overcrowded classes, and continuous professional development.

### **3.4.1 Constraints and opportunities to curriculum leadership**

The following three barriers and opportunities were grouped together, due to their relatedness to one another: demographics changes, policy changes and emerging technologies. The remaining two will be dealt with thereafter, which are overcrowded classes and continuous professional development.

#### **3.4.1.1 *The impact of demographics, policies and technologies in the USA***

America's demographic profile, including its public school population, is changing at a rapid and profound rate. Hochschild and Scovronick (2005:421) predict that racial and ethnic diversity will increase in the early decades of the twenty-first century as baby boomers age and birth rates and immigration laws change. According to Hochschild and Scovronick (2003:301), school-aged children will be the most diverse segment of the US population.

They conclude that, while demographic changes may lead to serious disagreements about public education, they also provide an opportunity for citizens to strengthen their commitment to public education. Thus, changes in classroom demographics caused by an increasingly diverse student population should be viewed as both a challenge and an opportunity by educators. The 2014-2015 school year marked a significant cultural shift: it was the first time in American public schools that the majority of students were not white (Rich, 2021:175; The National Centre for Education Statistics [NCES], 2015:14).

This demographic shift has widened the experiential gap between teachers and students, posing difficulties for both teachers and curriculum leaders. In 2011-12, white teachers made up 82% of K-1 to K-7 teachers in the United States, but no other racial/ethnic group made up more than 10% of the teaching force.

A decrease in the number of white students enrolled has exacerbated the cultural and experiential mismatch between teachers and their students. In 2000, 61% of students in American schools were white, but by 2014, the percentage of white students had dropped

to 49.7%. (NCES, 2016). The National Centre for Educational Statistics (2014) predicts that by 2022, 54.7% of students in the United States will be members of minority groups.

As a result, a largely homogeneous white teaching force is tasked with instructing a student body that is becoming increasingly culturally and ethnically diverse. Students "arrive in class with varying degrees of competence and academic preparation, varying degrees of motivation to succeed in schoolwork, varying levels of social skills, and varying levels of maturity" (Florin & Hall, 2008:40). These students also differ in terms of race, culture, socioeconomic status, and belief systems.

Even more significant than differences between students are differences between students and their teachers, as well as differences between students' learning styles and needs. As a result, a differentiated curriculum must include programs that address the social and emotional needs of diverse students in addition to meeting their academic needs. Two issues stand out: the difficulty of multilingual classrooms and the need for more minority teachers (Aydin & Ozfidan, 2014:29; Faltis, 2014:49; Aydin, 2013:12). To address these challenges, a more diverse teaching force, including highly qualified bilingual education teachers and English language teachers, will be required (Ozfidan & Burblaw, 2014:397, Florin and Hall (2008:41) & (Florin & Hall, 2008:88).

#### ***3.4.1.2 Frequent changes in educational policy also influence curriculum and instruction.***

Implementation of Common Core State Standards (CCSS) and 21st century skills "are not only beneficial to students and teachers but also necessary to prepare our youth for their future careers. In an age of education in which standardized tests determine the success of our schools, allowing students to be creative and to use the power of technology to support necessary skills and learn in unique ways is critical" (Aydin, Ozfidan & Carothers, 2017:80; Alismail & McGuire, 2015:150).

Historically, education policies in the United States have been constantly debated and revised to reflect a constantly changing societal views on appropriate methods of

educating students and the overall goals of education. Some of the goals of public education have been to prepare children for citizenship, to cultivate a skilled workforce, to teach cultural literacy, to assist students in preparing for college, to assist students in becoming critical thinkers, and to assist students in competing in a global marketplace (The Encyclopaedia of American Politics, 2014). School choice and academic accountability have emerged as two major trends in educational policy in the twenty-first century. Parents want more educational options as well as a more active role in selecting schools that they believe will provide a better education for their children. Education reform groups and federal and state government agencies have been debating whether there can or should be common standards for all educational instruction and achievement (U.S. Department of Education [U.S. DoE], 2014a).

Two pieces of legislation have addressed these issues in recent years. The first was the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB), which was signed into law by President Bush in 2001. This law was based on the premise that student achievement would increase if schools established measurable goals and set high (U.S. DoE, 2014a). Second, as part of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA), a \$4.35 billion fund was established to support 'Race to the Top' grants. This grant program, which went into effect when President Obama signed the ARRA in 2009, provided incentives for states and districts to reward states that were creating conditions for education innovation and reform; achieving significant improvement in student outcomes, including substantial gains in student achievement; closing achievement gaps; improving high school graduation rates; and ensuring student preparation for success in college and in their careers (U.S. DoE, 2009:29).

Aside from these two legislative actions, the creation of Common Core State Standards was a third attempt to improve students' academic performance. Their designers describe these standards as a compilation of the highest, most effective standards from across the United States and other countries (Common Core State Standards, 2017a). As of 2017, 42 states, the District of Columbia, four territories, and the Department of Defense Educational Activity had adopted high-quality academic standards in English language,

arts, and mathematics at each grade level from kindergarten through twelfth grade (Common Core State Standards, 2017b). Government and policymakers have attempted to implement effective reforms, many of which have a significant impact on curriculum and instruction.

According to David (2011:54), standards-based reform is based on the belief that if demanding standards for student achievement are set and student performance is measured using accurate tests that reflect the standards, curriculum and instruction will become richer and more rigorous. Furthermore, serious consequences were imposed on schools that failed to raise test scores, forcing educators to focus on the content of the tests. Adoption of test-based teacher evaluation frameworks has occurred in dozens of states, owing largely to federal mandates. Regardless of the best intentions, standardized testing may have unintended consequences.

While educators pay attention to the content of high-stakes tests, Valli and Buese (2007:13) argue that even the most carefully designed standards are only as effective as the tests that assess how well students have achieved them, and standardized tests can only assess a small portion of the curriculum. Indeed, the 10-year experiment with federally mandated standards and tests under No Child Left Behind (NCLB) was widely regarded as a failure. Nonetheless, Au (2007:6) reports that "high-stakes testing will likely remain the coin of the realm for the foreseeable future". The stakes will rise even higher if the use of test scores to evaluate students is extended to individual teachers. The challenge, then, "is to ensure that state tests do not continue to distort the curriculum in ways that deprive students of meaningful learning" (Hamilton et al., 2007:209).

In this regard, two complementary approaches appear promising. First, Hamilton et al. (2007:170) stated that "one is to improve testing by increasing both the number of subjects tested and items that tap understanding and reasoning; the challenge in doing so lies in not increasing total testing" (as cited in David, 2011:3). Federal policymakers must encourage states to prioritize social science, history, English, art, and music education. States should review their curriculum guidelines to ensure that adequate attention and time are given to these areas. They should consider including knowledge

and skill measures in social science and humanities courses, such as language, literature, art, and music, as part of the multiple measures used for NCLB accountability. Karp (2014) and Aydin et al. (2017:81) seem to agree that educators and policymakers fight back by challenging implementation deadlines, resisting the stakes and priority attached to high-stakes testing, and disclosing the truth about the commercial and political interests promoting this approach as a panacea for all that ails public education.

Another concern raised by researchers is that, while most school districts have made progress toward implementing standards-aligned curricula and textbooks, curriculum developers are still working hard to ensure that all educators in the system understand and embrace a view of curriculum that is focused on outcomes rather than content (Bickford, 2017:348; The Marzano Centre, 2017:318). In this context, schools must be more deliberate in developing and implementing policies that affect student outcomes in school settings.

Emerging technologies pose a challenge to education as well. According to studies, today's students are technophiles. They adore video games, which are all fast-paced and addictive, and they are unable to put down their smartphones, iPods, or social networks (Flannery, 2010:87). Furthermore, Murphy (2015:199) emphasized that the advancement of educational technologies is altering our beliefs about how learning occurs, resulting in increased government pressure and shifts away from teacher-to-learner-centered approaches to instruction. In fact, some school districts have implemented "bring your own device" (BYOD) policies that encourage students to bring their own technology, with the goal of increasing student engagement while also lowering district technology costs (Tatnall et al., 2022:1359).

As a result, some high school students now bring their mobile devices to school to communicate, collaborate, and solve problems, even if they are not part of a teacher's lesson plan (Daggett, 2014:16). Educators may or may not be enthusiastic about new technologies, but they recognize that technology is frequently the key to piquing a student's interest. The challenge is determining how to use technology to pique that interest. Nager (2013) contends that significant obstacles are impeding large-scale

implementation of technology, despite its increasing widespread adoption in virtually every aspect of K-12 education. According to researchers, teachers and education leaders share the need to meet these challenges, even though some of them are systemic in nature and others are related to the technologies themselves (Nager, 2013:45). Furthermore, teachers and teacher educators face a number of challenges when it comes to successfully implementing technology in their classrooms. One challenge highlighted by Nager (2013) is that teachers and school leaders frequently see technological experimentation as outside the scope of their job description (Aydin et al., 2017:472). A second issue is that some experienced teachers prefer to use approaches they are already familiar with rather than utilizing the technology that has been provided to them (Harwen, 2013:76).

They have been teaching for years and do not want to change their tried-and-true lesson plans. Some schools are pressuring teachers to incorporate technology into their curricula, but when that technology is poorly taught, it is not used to its full potential. Any teacher who is given a high-tech program and expected to teach it in the classroom deserves proper training, but it is not always provided (Altuna et al, 2013:378). The failure to develop personalized learning is a third challenge for using technology in the classroom. Researchers describe a mismatch between the vision of personalized, differentiated instruction and the technologies available to make it a reality. As a result, even when K-12 teachers recognize the need for personalized learning, adequate tools to support it either do not exist or are not provided to teachers (The NMC Horizon Report, 2013:254). New digital technologies are enabling new methods of teaching and learning in the face of these challenges.

The problem for educators is to create curricula that are not simply replicas of past formats, but are also sustainable and meet future challenges (Torrise, 2002:39). A responsive curriculum looks beyond the ever-changing influences of technology to address societal changes and students' learning needs (Aydin, 2013:289; Parsons & Beauchamp, 2012:61). This includes ideas like allowing more "white space" to customize lessons using a variety of teaching and assessment methods to better meet the needs of students. Singapore is an example of this, where technology has been used to enable

deeper learning and to make learning more accessible through various e-learning models (Parsons & Beauchamp, 2012:143). Teachers, teacher educators, and policymakers must embrace the power of technology in this context to make learning relevant for all students and adults. According to the International Centre for the U.S. DoE (2014b), using technology effectively in everyday learning can help students strengthen their learning experiences and build on their intuitive technology skills. Furthermore, thoughtful use of technology for instructional purposes will allow teachers to stretch learners' thinking in ways that will lead to success in today's increasingly global economy and rapidly evolving digital environment (Daggett, 2014:72).

Moreover, e-learning, is “a rapidly expanding type of education not only in the United States, but throughout the world”. Although the first virtual classroom was an experiment that used closed circuit television and an early computer network, online education has improved alongside technology (Aydin et al, 2017:65; Bollotpedia, 2016:97; Aydin, 2013a, 2013b; Hossain & Aydin, 2011: 354). According to the National Centre for

Statistics (2012), “around 5.5 million college students took at least one online class in 2012. However, this data only accounts for a small fraction of students who participate in online education, as students of all ages, from anywhere in the world, and across all grade levels can potentially take classes online” (Kolowich, 2014:231). Because technology is a powerful tool, which allows students to independently access information and knowledge, teachers should give students the opportunity to research and obtain information to develop different skills. As a result, technology could prepare students to “learn how to learn” to get information from different online tools (Alismail, 2015:34). Jacobsen (2001:90) argued that using technological tools in teaching, gives students the opportunity to engage in the real world, helping them to increase their understanding and develop creativity and innovation skills. Alismail and McGuire (2015:150) indicate that “education needs to make an instructional shift to ensure that students succeed as the innovators of the future”. As a result, educators need continuous professional development that allows them to use the newest continually evolving technology to plan their courses and improve their pedagogy.

### **3.4.1.3 *The impact of demographics, policies and technologies in Ethiopia***

According to the MoE Annual Abstract of 2014/2015, about 1,03 million children of official school-going age, were not in primary education and even when adjusted, the net enrolment considered nearly one million children were excluded from the education system and are considered as out-of-school children (MoE, 2016;32). Education is now recognized to be a key instrument for the overall development of a country. In this respect, Lockheed and Vekspoor (1991:76) argued that education is a corner stone of economic and social development; it improves the productive capacity of learners and their political economic and scientific institutions. In the same argument, in the Ethiopian context, is education is highly expected to contribute much for an overall national development.

The education and training policy of 1994 states that, education enables individuals and societies to make all-rounded participation in the development process by enabling learners to acquire knowledge, ability, skills and attitudes. In line with the attention given to education, the importance of curriculum leadership is a major concern for it is considered as a vehicle for the change required in educational development (Yitbarek et al., 2022:89; Musaazi, 1988:12). With the increased value put on educational leadership, what comes to vision is the school as an environment of change and the productivity of which depending mainly on the ability of its leader, analyses existing conditions and future challenges in order to implement strategies for attaining the goals (Ubben & Hughes, 1997:23).

The Ethiopian Government has given more emphasis to the school improvement program, and the growth and transformation plan of Ethiopia has also forwarded that improving and ensuring the quality and efficiency of education at all levels will be an important priority. Implementing of this program effectively in a school means, there is an effective leadership in the school (Hassen, 2014:44 and Khosa, 2009:13).

In the Ethiopian case, although an attempt has been made to make the educational management system decentralized and professional, a lot still remains to be done, particularly in the area of training and professionalizing principalship. As to Musaazi

(1988:12), inadequate curriculum leadership at the school level is the one that adversely affects the progress of education, because success in any educational institution depends on it. Successful school improvement involves building leadership capacity for change by creating high levels of involvement and leadership skilfulness.

Many researchers mentioned several factors that affect instructional leaders' perception, regarding media technology integration in classroom teaching. For instance, Waxman, Boriack, Lee and McNeil (2013:76), stated that many school leaders are novice technology users and have little experience or training in the knowledge and skills required to be effective technology leaders. In addition to this, instructional leaders must first have positive perception in the use of media technology in classroom teaching before they can help teachers use technology as a tool for learning. It is obvious that there are problems of shortage and access for media technology materials, electricity problems, lack of technical know-how, and so on. At this point however, given all the materials are easily available, Haank (2003:41) citing Kearsly and Lynch (1994; 87), indicated that administrators' perceptions about educational media technology are influenced by their beliefs and attitudes. According to Ether (1999), instructional leadership can be categorized into internal (i.e., intrinsic) and external (i.e., extrinsic) factors:

Internal (i.e., Intrinsic) - attitude, belief, resistance, knowledge, perception, motivation, intention, self-confidence, phobia, and reluctance. External (i.e., Extrinsic) - access, time, support, resource, training, practice, skill, culture of school climate, teaching load, monitoring and supervision, reward and recognition.

Other researchers, namely Rao (2008) and Robbins, Millett, and Waters-Marsh (2004) and, in the field of perception study, categorized the factors in to three groups, i.e., factors in the perceiver (i.e., attitudes, motives, interests, experience, and expectations), in situation (i.e., time, work settings, and social settings) and in the target (i.e., novelty, motion, sounds, size, background, proximity and similarity).

Using different methods and frameworks, knowing the status of perception of instructional leaders towards the utilization of media in classroom teaching, as well as reasons and factors affecting the integration, are the two important steps. However, finding solutions

for the problems identified in the first and second steps, is the third most important step that gives inspiration to take practical actions.

#### **3.4.1.4 *The impact of demographics, policies and technologies in Zimbabwe***

Most leaders (i.e., 90% in each case), are reported to have lack of trust and respect from the community. Too much community interference and confusion on the role of the community and that of parents on issues of school governance were also reported (The Herald, 2013:37). There exists a lack of trust from the politicians and exclusion from government programs. They were also denied the right to engage in any money generating activity outside their work as civil servants (SI 1 of 2000). Most school heads thus felt that the loyalty they were showing to the employer was not really benefitting them. Loyalty, because when most other teachers were leaving the country in search of greener pastures, following the economic challenges of the decade ending 2008, most school heads decided to remain with the people. It is estimated that more than 20 000, teachers left the country during this period. The fact that school heads remained behind makes the government better placed to reconstruct the sector, for at least leadership is available to catalyse the change process, through providing the needed vision and influence. Lack of motivation among teachers and leadership is normally associated with the low salaries received. Leadership, therefore, have grappled with leading teams of poorly motivated teachers. There is neither leadership training of school leaders, nor inservice training as the department adopt the sink or swim approach to school leaders. There are few who benefit from the university degree programs in which there are courses in educational leadership. Senior teachers are promoted to leadership positions without any training (Makura, 2010:39).

Policies are not adhered to. Ministry officials often quote policies when it suits them. They can afford to add or remove from public policies willy-nilly and with impunity for as long as it suits them. The other inconsistency is that of a policy, which demand that school heads should be full-time classrooms teachers. Leadership responsibilities involved in the job, made it impossible for most school heads to be full-time classrooms teachers. In the

light of the conclusions above, the author makes the following recommendations: The social status of school heads as community leaders should be protected to make sure that children benefit from the education system. Taking teachers as second-class citizens and subjects of ridicule will militate against the recovery of the education system to the performance levels of the 1990s (Waxman et al., 2013:94 and Shan Fu, 2013;70, Susan, 1997:26; Holloway, 1996:97).

There is a need to come up with a handbook for educational leadership and management to assist heads through the muddy waters of educational leadership and management. The training should include among other things, all the key policy instruments that need to be understood by heads, for them to effectively and efficiently cope with their leadership and managerial roles. In other words, there is need to consolidate the various policy instruments into a single handbook for educational leadership and management. Ministry should also facilitate the setting-up of training programmes for educational leadership and management. This can be in the form of short courses offered through the many universities scattered throughout the country. The thrust of the courses should be to inculcate leadership and management skills and not to control and manipulate through instilling fear, in line with theory X assumptions. The training should be compulsory and be a prerequisite for promotion. Ministry may take a leaf from what is done in uniformed forces where members are promoted only after passing a specific training programme. For example, for one to be promoted to a rank even as low as a sergeant in the police force, one just need to have written and passed a specific in-house examination; otherwise, one may never be promoted. Ministry should also avoid assumptions X in its dealings with educational leadership and management, but assumptions Y, which promote a democratic dispensation in dealing with people as human beings. In terms of this perspective, people are expected to lead and be led by example with the humility of *unhu*, the old age African value system that brings dignity and integrity to the educated individual (Ngara, 2013:150). School heads, as educational leadership, should be properly motivated, through both monetary and non-monetary rewards. The key is on the ministry recognizing talent and rewarding performance without prejudice and

discrimination and people should feel comfortable and secure in the hands of the ministry as an employer of first choice. It should not be seen as a crime and a source of ridicule to be a school head. Such an approach will prevent down-shifting and also attracts non-heads to headship positions, a situation which is good for succession planning in the sector. School heads should also be properly compensated, in line with their responsibilities, the demands of their job and their status as community leaders and role models of school children. Seniority should also be a basis for salary discrimination, to motivate non-heads to headship positions (Gabriella, 2011:12 and Handal, 2004:3).

If children are led by people who sort of struggle to survive, people who may not even be too sure as to where and how they will get their next meal, it may be difficult for them to appreciate the beauty of going to school. In other words, education should be seen to be relevant through the quality of life of the people who have been to school, otherwise it may be perceived wrongly. This therefore implies that even classroom teachers should also be properly rewarded to ensure that children will feel that what they learn at school is useful, otherwise it is not. The government should also include school heads in particular, and school teachers in general in all government empowerment programmes to promote financial inclusion of this loyal group of the country's citizens. This inculcates an attitude of security and control and hence motivation to work. There is also need for school heads to revive institutional files and make them adopt trade union approaches when handling issues affecting their lot. ZIMTA may not be doing justice to the sectorial interests of school heads. In any case, in trade union circles, rarely do we see management and their subordinates in the same trade union. Curriculum leaders should also be properly trained and their roles clearly spelt out, vis-à-vis those of RAs and school heads. In other words, issues of management and those of governance should be clearly separated to avoid unnecessary conflict. The lifespan of SDCs and that of SDAs should be increased to at least three years to allow for the learning time and to stabilize school governance. This also makes training feasible as the system should not appear like it aims to train the entire nation on school governance. Ministry should also establish a clear mechanism for encouraging parents to pay fees for their children. The system should not

be that parents should pay fees when they so wish and yet schools wholly depend on the same fees for all their activities, including payment of bills, wages, various types of subscriptions and insurance premiums for school assets. Ministry should also consult with professional associations of school heads and or SDCs/SDAs, on all issues affecting their lot. There is need to avoid a paternalistic approach, typical of transactional leaders in favour of transformational approaches in which stakeholders are treated as people (cf. Figure 1.1. & Figure 3.1).

A large body of literature, which includes studies conducted by Jita (2016:17), Albugarni and Ahmed (2015:276), as well as Hilman (2015:78) generally reveals that principal leadership perspectives influence levels of ICT infusion. Presby (2017:29) further argues that where players do not share a vision and a clearly defined and communicated role for ICTs in the school curriculum, school goals will not be achieved. Msila (2015:157) argues that staff development and equity of access to teachers and learners, should be prioritised. King (2016:49) claims that principals, who play various roles in order to ensure effective ICT integration into the school curriculum, have been found to be complementing their pedagogical leadership practices with transformational, technological and distributed leadership practices (Abdullah et al., 2013:794). However, Macleod (2015:76) notes situations where weak structures influenced the implementation of ICTs and educators had conflicting roles concerning ICTs, such as discouraging students from using their own media devices. Abdullah et al. (2013:799) also stress that effective school improvement reforms require the entire institution working in collaboration to inspire and motivate everyone to achieve a well-communicated and shared ICT vision.

#### **3.4.1.5 *The impact of demographics, policies and technologies in South Africa***

Studies on instructional leadership seem to provide conflicting evidence regarding principals' understanding of their key role in taking up curriculum leadership in their schools. The NEEDU Report (2013), which focused on 133 primary schools throughout the country, noted that generally principals were quite aware of the centrality of their responsibility and that of instructional leadership in leading the programme of the schools.

However, the report noted that despite such awareness of the importance of instructional leadership, principals' implementation of instructional leadership was not in line with policy, as outlined in the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements (CAPS).

The Labour Relations Council (LRC) concluded that there was a gap between policy and practice when comparing hours that educators spent on their different activities to that recommended or implied by national policy. The study found that South African educators spend far less time on actual teaching than the amount of time specified in the policy. Managing instructional time in their review of education studies on developing countries, Glewwe and Muralidharan (2016:98) maintain that the high rate of teacher absenteeism contributes to ineffective school and teacher governance in developing countries.

Several South African studies (Moletsane et al., 2015:99; Reddy et al., 2010:307; Carnoy & Chisholm, 2008:397) have found that less than half of the officially scheduled lessons are taught. In their study, Carnoy, Chisholm and Chilisa (2012:341) evaluated 58 schools in the North West Province and 58 schools in Botswana, and found that Grade 6 teachers in North West had only taught 40 percent of the scheduled lessons by the beginning of November, while their counterparts in Botswana taught 60 percent of the lessons.

In the same study, it was found that principals from North West did not have a problem with teacher absenteeism, but rather noted that in most cases where teachers were present in schools, they failed to teach learners, due to lack of confidence in their Grade 6 mathematics content. In a study by the Human Sciences Research Council, commissioned by the United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF) on behalf of the Department of Education, Reddy et al. (2010) argue that the time spent on teaching and learning activities in schools is among the reasons for low quality education provision in South African schools.

They found that the leave rate of teachers in South Africa was between 10% and 12%, which translates to 20 to 24 days out of the official total of 200 school days. In its literature review, this study additionally found that in high-income countries, teacher absence rates were between 3% and 6% and that there was a system of substitute teachers to compensate for teacher absence (Reddy et al., 2010:76). Contrary to this, most less

developed countries did not have provisions for substitute teachers and in these countries, teacher absence rates averaged at 19%.

The Employment of Educators Act 76 of 1998 stipulates that educators are regarded as being on annual leave during the institutional closure periods that are outside of scheduled working time. The exception is when the educators are required to perform some their normal duties (such as preparation for the new school term or marking of internal examination scripts). It should be noted that in South Africa, the educator leave policy is not clear as to the acceptable number of days educators may be absent from school, but there is general agreement that 10% should be used as a benchmark (Republic of South Africa [RSA], 2013a).

Moletsane, Juan, Prinsloo and Reddy (2015:343) point out that, while educators' leave policies are meant to enhance teachers' conditions of service, their objective is also to safeguard the rights of students to good quality education by ensuring that teachers remain on task, and that teaching and learning is not disrupted. This means that the principals, as curriculum leaders, are duty-bound to ensure that that happens. The Human Sciences Research Study defines educator leave as including the following leave categories: (i) times taken according to leave measures; (ii) when educators are on duty, but away from school attending professional development workshops; and (iii) when educators participate in school activities like sports, excursions and festivals, while promoting teachers' conditions of service, they at the same time do not deprive students of their right to education (Enguday, 2003:201; Ponticell, 2003:78; Duhaney, 2000:191 & Ether, 1999:16).

A survey of 2005 schools conducted by Social Surveys on behalf of the Department of Basic Education found that nationally 6.1% of educators were absent on an average day, with the highest absentee rate in KwaZulu-Natal at 8.2% (RSA, 2013a). This finding means that educators on average, were absent for 12 teaching days per year in South Africa. This refers to those educators who had not signed the educator leave register and are not in school, due to ill-health, attending to family matters or studying.

Some aspects of school leadership and management in South Africa, notably managing teaching and learning, remain inadequately researched. In her study on the labour market for South African principals, Wills (2015:34) reaffirms previous remarks by Hoadley, Christie and Ward (2009:87) that our school leadership research base is limited. Principals seem oblivious to the importance of their leadership role in curriculum monitoring. Another earlier study in Gauteng came to a similar conclusion, as principals were shown to be ignorant of their role as instructional leaders (Bush & Heystek, 2006:332). Bush and Glover (2016:161), in their review of literature on school leadership and management in South Africa, discern a rising recognition that instructional leadership might be a proper route to follow for school improvement in South Africa. Bush and Glover (2016:65) cite Robinson et al. (2008:230), who maintain that for school leaders to have a positive influence on learner outcomes, they should pay more attention to the core business of teaching and learning. This, according to Bush and Glover (2016:80), may be conducted through appropriate class visits, as well as phase and learning area discussions among educators.

Other researchers, such as Taylor, Mabogoane and Akoobhai (2011:76) highlight, more specifically, instructional time management as an important aspect of instructional leadership. These researchers note inefficiencies in the way time is utilised in many of South African schools. This manifests at three levels, namely: arriving at school, getting to class, and covering the curriculum while in class. In their mixed method study, undertaken in high schools from the Eastern Cape and Free State provinces, Taylor et al. (2013) found the prevalence of weak management practices, together with very low levels of teacher subject knowledge and destructive union activity.

Public schools in South Africa can look forward to joining the digital education revolution, as some of their private school counterparts have been experiencing this for the past few years, but education experts have cautioned against a rush to provide tablets and other digital infrastructure before a solid strategy and fundamentals have been put in place. In the rush to get on board with the 4th Industrial Revolution – a term many are invoking without truly understanding the issues involved – private schools have increasingly been offering coding, robotics and digital learning in their schools, says John Luis, Head of

Academics at ADvTECH Schools, which has been one of the companies at the forefront of introducing technology in South African schools for several years.

However, simply offering content that previously used to be in book or paper format, and not investing time and money in a holistic approach to content and delivery, as well as proper educator and support staff training, will render such initiatives a futile and expensive exercise, he says. Luis says while there is much talk about coding and ICT in schools, the key success factor when introducing technology in classrooms, is the development of an appropriate and defined curriculum. Also very importantly, technology in the classroom can never replace the fundamental core skills required for academic excellence. In his State of the Nation address in February 2019, President Cyril Ramaphosa announced that Government would, over the next six years, provide every schoolchild in South Africa with digital workbooks and textbooks on a tablet device.

While the sentiment is welcomed, there is much work to be done before the time arrives to unbox devices. It is extremely important to understand that learning is served and not defined by technological tools. All too often we think that the technology will fix our teaching and learning problems in schools, but what is truly important is that the technology is embedded firmly and seamlessly within the curriculum and lesson delivery in the classroom. There is great potential in creating online learning systems to close the widening educational gap, especially in crucial times like the recent COVID-19 epidemic, where schools were suspended and there was no contact with learners (Morake-Toolo, 2023:77). However, to get to this point in education, it is vital that the Government first understand the relevance of emerging technologies and the means of how to offer the necessary digital literacy skills for leaders in curriculum. For technology to become relevant in education, a strategy considering the grand scheme of systems, teaching and learning, curriculum redesign, teacher training, community, new partnerships and the relevant stakeholders, has to be considered. It is now time to act on delivering the right education to our students, by using the technology we know can make it happen (cf. Figure 1.1. & Figure 3.1).

## **3.5 OVERCROWDED CLASSROOMS AND PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT**

### **3.5.1 Overcrowded classes in schools in different countries**

Overcrowding is one of the most significant issues facing schools and curriculum leaders today, thereby creating challenges regarding managing and overseeing curriculum implementation. This problem is a combination of an increase in population, a shortage of teachers and a decrease in funding, which has caused class sizes to soar. This is what is experienced in all of the four mentioned countries under scrutiny, i.e., US, Ethiopia, Zimbabwe and South Africa. Class sizes are supposed to be capped at 15-20 students in the USA as an ideal situation. In discussing ways of meeting the challenges faced by curriculum leaders regarding prevailing and planned school settings in the United States; Aydin, Ozfidan and Carothers (2017: 76-92), while Collinson (2018: 260-278) emphasised the value-adding skill of critical leadership studies in successful exploration and resolution of such curriculum contexts. It will be an interesting discovery to magnify how the African continent's selected countries each plans, explores and reflects on its chosen critical leadership studies approach – as represented by South Africa's primary school in Botshabelo township (cf. 4.3.5 & 4.4.4).

Regrettably, many classrooms now regularly exceed 30 students, and even in some situations, schools exceed more than 40 students in a single class. In Ethiopia the number goes to 53.75, but in most cases they exceed this number. In Zimbabwe the primary school pupil teacher ratio is supposed to be 36:1, but due to lack of funding and shortage of teachers, the numbers exceed by far (World Bank 2013:34). As part of a recent parliamentary presentation in South Africa, the Department of Basic Education stated that as of March 2018, the national average LER (Learner Educator Ratio) for government primary schools was 35:1 (Businessstech, 2018:297). It is now commonplace to have overcrowding in schools. However, this issue is not likely to be solved soon, so teachers and schools must come up with plans and solutions to limit the negative impact of overcrowded classrooms that also have its effect on curriculum leadership. The following are some the challenges created by overcrowded classrooms:

Teaching in an overcrowded classroom can cause many problems, such as stress and frustration for teachers and learners. A crowded classroom may provide some challenges that can be nearly impossible to find a solution to or even overcome. Overcrowding became a solution that many schools resort to, due to problems in school funding or teacher shortage and sometimes the following reasons are the results of overcrowding:

- **Noise** — with all the learners present in the classroom, the noise level increases naturally. It also becomes harder for teachers to teach and for students to concentrate in louder classrooms. While teachers are fighting hard to stop noise in order to teach, much of the time is wasted, and lots of lessons will be missed, due to the time wasted.
- **Less individualized focus** — when there are more students in the classroom, teachers cannot spend the same amount of time with each student. If a student is finding it hard to understand a particular topic, there may not be enough time to attend to him/her, because there are 30 or more other students in the same class. A teacher may not even notice that a student is struggling, due to the larger size, and they may not even have the time to help them if they finally notice them.
- **More people** — One simple fact to notice when there are more people in a classroom, is that there are more people to deal with. That means more levels of intelligence, more distractions, and more everything. This can, lead to a slower pace or a faster pace for some of the students and can make it harder to learn.
- **Overcrowding increases classroom discipline issues** – With an increase in students' count, comes an increase of risk factors, such as tensions, conflicts and disruptive behaviour. Even the best teachers in the school find it difficult to successfully manage an overcrowded classroom. As a result, teachers will be forced to shift their focus from teaching to trying to manage their classrooms and controlling all students.
- **Struggling students fall further behind** – Average students and students that fall below average, will struggle the most to progress in an overcrowded classroom. These students require additional attention, resources, intervention and sometimes individualized attention.

- **Lack of personal connections** – In an overcrowded classroom, it may be difficult to have certain teachers who always stand out in our minds. Students may find it difficult to have personal contact with their teachers in a class of above 30 students. Teachers may not have enough time to invest in a student individually.

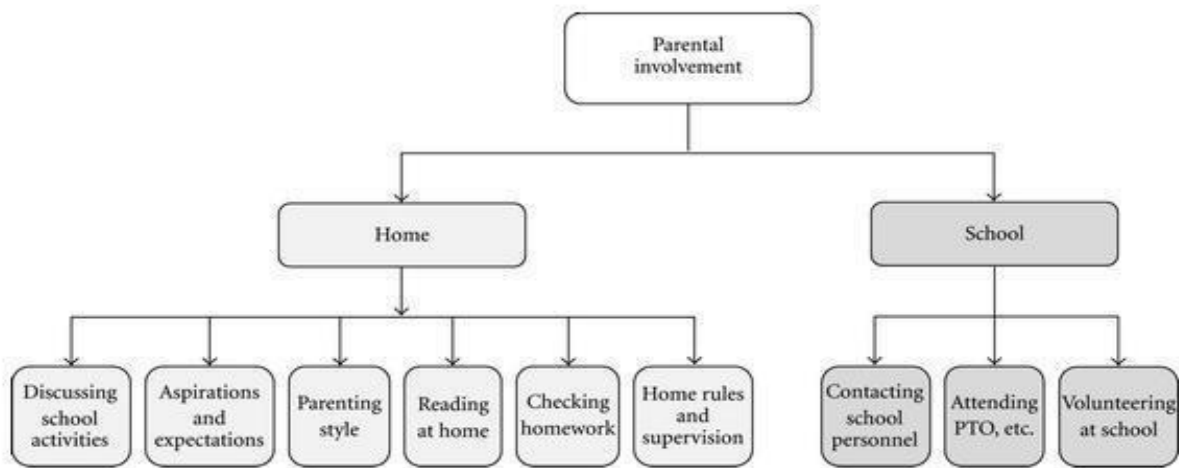
### 3.5.2 Solutions to overcrowded classes in different countries

- **Hire aids for teachers** – The provision of an aide can help decrease the burden on the teacher. Aides may not affect the school that much, since they receive a lower salary, but they will help improve the student-to-teacher ratio and reduce cost when they are placed in overcrowded classrooms.
- **Lobbying of local and national representatives**– Schools should build great relations with their local and national representatives, in order to lobby them for more funding. During meetings, school leadership can explain the issues faced by their schools, due to overcrowding and even invite them to join teachers in the classrooms to see the problem first-hand.
- **Solicit local donations** – Every community has individuals who are willing to support public schools and invest in a better educational system. Private schools can charge a tuition and collect donations to be able to cover their costs and keep their door open. Public schools should tap into local unsung heroes to bring in more monetary support for their buildings. Any extra amount will help a lot in an overcrowded classroom.
- **Apply for grants** – Public schools should take advantage of the thousands of grant opportunities available every year. Teachers and administrators can apply for grants that help with classroom supplies, technology, activities and training.
- **Start an education foundation** – Education foundations can raise funds to directly impact the public-school classrooms in their districts. In a large part, these foundations exist to fund student programs and classroom tools that school budgets cannot cover.
- **Use Crowdfunding** – Since we are living the era of internet and social media, schools can use these tools to fundraise for school projects. Administrators may

be able to fundraise enough money every year to even hire more intervention teachers or aides.

### 3.5.3 Parental involvement in children’s education in different countries

**Figure 3.1** illustrate the crucial aspects of effective parental involvement. This is in noting how the parents organic context – namely, the home; remains a fundamental stakeholder element vis a vis holistic well-being of the child (cf. Figure 1.1.).



**Figure 3.1: Parental Involvement in the education of their child**

**Source: DBE (2017)**

In the US, parents have higher rates of attendance at school meetings, conferences, and events, and of volunteering in their children’s school, when their children are in elementary or middle school. In 2016, at least 90 percent of learners in kindergarten through to eighth grade had a parent who attended a general meeting with their teachers, compared with 82 percent of students in Grades 9 through to 12. In the same year, 92 percent of learners in kindergarten through second grade and 90 percent of learners in third through fifth grade, had a parent who attended a scheduled parent-teacher conference, compared with 73 percent of middle school learners and 58 percent of high school students.

Parent attendance at school or class events is also highest for learners in elementary school - at 85 percent of learners in kindergarten through second grade and 84 percent of learners in third through fifth grade, compared with 76 percent of middle school learners and 73 percent of high school learners (LaRocque, Kleiman & Darling, 2011:66). The term 'parent' in this context conveys both the mother and father of a child. Therefore, both the mother and father have responsibilities to be involved in their children's education. However, empirical evidence has shown that the involvement in their children's education, is of the utmost importance. However, empirical evidence has shown that the extent and effect of a mother's involvement, is most of the time greater than that of the father. For example, Hsu et al. (2011:83) conducted a study, which indicated that mothers were more involved than fathers were, and that the mother's involvement had more effect on students' academic achievement, in a broad aspects of involvement: discussion, listening, monitoring academic progress and participation in school activities. It has been suggested that the need exists to investigate the contexts that are believed to be different to understand parental involvement and its effects on students' education (Zhang, 2006 cited in Hsu et al., 2011:11).

The Ethiopian culture is unique in which parents communicate orally with their children (Rosemarin, 2011:74), though collective like the Chinese culture. Thus, it is important to understand parental involvement and its effects on students' academic achievement in Ethiopian context and to compare it with Western and Chinese contexts. Schools, teachers and other relevant stakeholders need to promote a culture of a balanced and explicit commitment by both parents in their children's education (cf. Figure 1.1. & Figure 3.1). In Zimbabwe, Chindanya (2011:34) carried out a study on parental involvement in primary schools, and the results revealed its many benefits. Some of the benefits of parental involvement, included promotion of teacher motivation, pupils' motivation, improved school attendance and good behaviour. The idea that parental involvement engenders learners' academic achievement is appealing to the point that society in general and teachers in particular, have considered involving parents as an important ingredient for the remedy of many ills in education today. Donoghue (2014:91) argues that there are however, some factors that constrain parents' ability to become actively

involved in their children's education. It is crucial to uncover factors contributing to the gaps in educational achievement for all children. The study established that a number of factors leading to lack of parental involvement in education were parent-related factors. One of the parent related factors noted by the study, was that of parents' socio-economic status, which include parents' level of education, occupation status and income (Harris, 2014:369). With low levels of literacy, parents were said to lack the knowledge and skills needed to help their children with schoolwork. On the other hand, it was said that parents who are educated are more likely to be involved in their children's work, than illiterate parents are. The excerpt below from one teacher is a clear indication that levels of parents' literacy affect their involvement in their children's' education:

*“If parents have low education they have challenges in assisting their children with schoolwork. Such parents, even when they attend some school activities, they are hesitant to take part in decision-making, because they feel they have nothing valuable to offer. Parents who are well educated communicate high academic aspirations for their children.”*

Parents are more likely to be involved when they feel that they are welcomed by the teachers and that their views are of value. It is widely acknowledged that involvement of parents decreases, as children grow older. The involvement of parents is greater for younger children, partly because younger children are more positive about their parents going into school. The home, child and school form a trio that creates a special climate that is desirable for effective education (Maphanga, 2006:56).

Many parents want a better education for their children than they had and to have opportunities that they never had. The challenges for parents increase when their children enter school. Even though a child enters a classroom, leaving his or her parent's side for six or more hours a day, the role of a parent does not cease to exist, it merely changes.

Parents and families play a critical role in their children's education. Schools simply cannot educate every child independently. Schools need support from a variety of resources, the most important being community and family (LaRocque et al., 2011:76). The involvement of parents in education is perceived to be instrumental in improving children's access,

attendance and retention in school. However, this involvement also has the potential to improve parents' sense of empowerment and support the greater achievement of valued educational outcomes. Parental involvement may even compensate for the lack of meaningful learning in schools, especially when an environment conducive to learning, is created in the home (Fleisch, 2008:98; Grant Lewis & Motala, 2004:76). Numerous studies have documented the positive correlation between parent involvement in education and academic achievement. Galindo (2012:56) found that, on average, students whose parents were more involved at school had higher educational expectations and more substantial gains in reading and mathematics at the end of kindergarten. Creating a bridge between home and school is a major goal for many school reform initiatives. Discontinuity between the school and home culture, tied to inequities in the social structure, is often cited as the cause of poor achievement among minority children (Vasquez et al 1994:98)..

### **3.5.4 Curriculum leadership: why it matters**

The related literature review had to be done in this section, in order to understand the research problem with the aim of trying to determine the efforts that were done about it.

This teacher's engagement of a large-scale curriculum reform is a single example that highlights both the potential and the power of teacher leadership in action. Instead of simply being passive recipients of change, they are actively leading the change process and jointly responsible for delivering a significant change in the system's level (Pinar, 2015). This is not to say that the process of developing a new national curriculum is without challenges, tensions, or critics; quite the contrary. Engaging teachers in largescale curriculum reform is a major task, and some would argue, a significant risk (Fullan & Gallagher, 2020:39).

### **3.6 THE UNIQUE NATURE OF CURRICULUM LEADERSHIP**

The organizational functions, like the curriculum program for school systems' aims are similar, as they all strive for: quality, accountability, effectiveness, efficiency, continuous improvement, high moral and extensive involvement of stakeholders (Bradley et al., 2018:15, cf. Figure 1.1. & Figure 3.1).

### **3.6.1 Curriculum leadership is non-authoritarian in nature**

Curriculum leadership calls for the use of many different styles. Sometimes it demands servitor, or mentor, or advocate, or facilitator behaviour – except when presenting hard data that are irrefutable and vital to the curriculum assessment process. Non-authoritarian leadership is called for, because the principals and teachers exist in the curriculum design and implementation (Uljens & Ylimaki, 2017:17).

### **3.6.2 Curriculum leadership is defined more by the concept than the position**

The job descriptions of administrative staff of schools and teachers are clearly defined and indicate their areas of responsibility. On the other hand, the school management teams that include principals, deputies and departmental heads, have clearly delineated tasks and decisions for which they are held accountable. Bradley et al. (2018:16) assert that leadership is clearly defined as being part of their position, even though they may decide to delegate. For them to effectively administer their roles, the persons occupying those positions have within their capacity the control of the organizational variables necessary to effectively administer their role. The chain of command does not necessarily give the curriculum leader the authority to force processes and products to conclusion. They must build relationships that will motivate other key education stakeholders to implement the curriculum program, mission, vision and goals (Day, GU & Sammons (2016:26, cf. Figure 1.1. & Figure 3.1).

### **3.6.3 Curriculum leader competency is in process, not content**

In school systems, a teacher will not claim to have the level of expertise that is necessary to be a principal or superintendent. The tasks performed and the decisions made at these organizational levels are not part of a teacher's professional training. Administrative functions, such as scheduling, budgeting, public relations, law, and policy are taught only in graduate programs designed to train educational administrators. However, all teachers claim expertise in their subject area.

Whatever the outcome of this reform process, it serves to highlight the importance of curriculum leadership as a distinct form of teacher agency, not as a subset or variant of

teacher leadership. Curriculum leadership necessitates a thorough examination of content, progression, assessment, and pedagogy: the heart of teaching. This is why curriculum leadership is important and deserves far more research attention and prominence in school and system improvement discourse. Looking ahead to 2021, education systems around the world are unlikely to become less complex or demanding.

The pressures placed on those who work in schools appear to be here to stay. A lot of the teaching profession will be asked, a lot will be expected, and a lot will have to be delivered. Teachers take on and fulfil many leadership roles throughout their careers, including curriculum leadership. This type of leadership makes an important contribution to classroom, school, and system improvement that should not be overlooked or undervalued. The curriculum leader is asked to lead curriculum development in as many as 14 different content fields. Except when they are leading a curriculum development in their own teaching field, the expertise level of the people they are leading - the teachers - is greater in content knowledge than that of the curriculum leader. The curriculum leader is the expert in facilitation, but the teachers are the experts in content. The vital competency for the curriculum leader is facilitation skills that will create the environment in which the teachers will make wise content decisions. It follows logically that educational outcomes for children from minority backgrounds can be improved, both when schools value and integrate the children's home strengths, beliefs, goals and practices into the school community (Souto-Manning, 2010:98), and when families understand and support the school's expectations (Civil, 2007:56). In order to achieve this goal, schools need to take the initiative to create effective family and school partnerships

#### **3.6.4 For the curriculum leader, tasks and relationships are inseparable**

The role function by task and relationships are separated by an administrative theory. Blake's Power Cycle theory specifically indicate that, depending on the situation, either a task or a relationship demeanour is called for. The assumption is that sometimes an administrative member is called upon to perform or dictate to other tasks that need to be accomplished for the effective operation of the school. It is something that has to be done, so somebody is told to do it immediately. Relationship building is either not called for, or

there is no time to pursue it. For the line administrator this is clearly delineation (Bradley et al., 2018:17). No such clear delineation is present for the curriculum leader

### **3.6.5 The curriculum leader must have a strong ego and confidence in their importance to the success of the school curriculum**

Question - How many R's in the curriculum? Answer - Who cares? This joke symbolizes the attitude of a school administrator who do not regard curriculum as a high priority. This attitude leads them to place all facets of the curriculum, from development to assessment, in a low priority. In school systems where a significant number of the administrators have this attitude, apathy toward curriculum becomes an organisational climate. Curriculum leaders must not let this prevailing attitude defeat them (Bradley et al., 2017:17). They must have confidence that once the teacher, community and administrators see the contribution that effective curriculum processes make to school accountability, the anti-curriculum climate will cease.

### **3.6.6 The curriculum leader must learn two languages: the language of education and the language of the public**

How many times have you heard an educator say, "We'll never get the public to understand this?" Or, "if we tell the public this, they will misinterpret the information." These are unacceptable responses to educational accountability. Somebody in the school system must know how to explain to all the different audiences and stakeholders in education, the meaning of the educational program and its results (Graven and Venkat, 2017:11). The curriculum leader is the person equipped to do this (cf. Figure 1.1. & Figure 3.1). A weakness of some curriculum leaders is that they can communicate with only one of the audiences, that is, either the educational audience or the public audience. For a school system to be effective, all stakeholders must interact with the school on the educational program (cf. Figure 1.1. & Figure 3.1). This is not a public relations strategy; it is a communication strategy. It is not an attempt to convince the public or the teachers that the school system is a good one. It is an attempt to explain in fair terms the status of the educational program, and its successes and failures. You do not have to be weak, non-assertive, or reactive to be an effective curriculum leader. However, neither can you

be a Neanderthal. You must have the knowledge and communication skills to explain all aspects of curriculum to audiences of different levels of sophistication.

### **3.6.7 The curriculum leader must be knowledgeable and skilled in data analysis**

Continuous skills development for workplace leaders is considered a crucial attribute for effective performance by the Encyclopaedia of American Politics (2014) as well as by the U.S. Department of Education (2014a). Did you think that when you finished graduate school you would never use statistics again? And did you think that research was an abstract concept for doctoral students? Well, guess what? The curriculum leader needs to use both of these orientations to be effective. The assessment of curriculum will be based on both qualitative and quantitative methods. Gone are the days when schools evaluated themselves based on the informal feedback. Data must be used in all assessment. The curriculum leader is the person looked to for the analysis, synthesis, and evaluation of the data that describe the educational program.

### **3.7 DYNAMICS OF CURRICULUM LEADERSHIP**

The study believes that there is huge vacuum for a school leadership style which embraces the benefits available leadership styles – while making effort to modernise or innovate a unique yet productive style. When this ideal leader emerges, the study would label her/him as a dynamic curriculum leader – given the effort to explore the dynamics of each leadership style.

By having such a broad exposure to the dynamics or characteristics, weaknesses and strengths of available leadership styles, such depth of studying and knowing leadership theories – would empower her/him to view and apply available resources critically. This, is the envisaged image of a critical curriculum leader.

All schools are not equal in their ability to promote desired improvements (Giles and Hargreaves, 2006 & Louis and Kruse, 1995). Although I recognize that basic curriculum maintenance is vital, I feel that for balance between maintaining the curriculum and upgrading school programs, the curriculum leader must always seek a greater and more

visionary kind of role. The fact is, our world is not static and the curriculum in schools represent our nation's program for preparing students to live in the future.

Curricula differ from each other on the basis of the extend of emphasis given to each of the above elements, and the manner of linking these elements with each other and the style of decision-making pertaining to each of these elements. For example, one institution places more emphasis on the intellectual development of learners, whereas another institution emphasizes developing ideal, democratic citizens. The selection of subject matter will differ in these two institutions, with the first institution incorporating programmers and activities aimed at developing rationality and thinking. Thus, both of the institutions would believe in different theories of learning and teaching, thereby differing in nature and in the sequence of subject matter and learning experiences.

The idea of the teacher as a leader is far from new. There is a wealth of evidence underlying the pivotal importance of leadership at the classroom level, illuminating how teachers actively contribute to school and system change (Campbell, 2015:67). Netolicky et al. (2018:298) propose that the system needs to be 'turned inside out' so that teachers have more influence to lead meaningful change that will positively impact on the young people they teach. There is empirical evidence that would support this position and reinforce how teachers are leaders within and beyond their classroom. A recent review of the literature on teacher leadership (Dong, Harris & Ng, 2019:76) revealed that this area of empirical enquiry remains buoyant, extensive and international. It seems that there is great interest in how teachers lead in their classrooms and outside their classrooms. There is a growing narrative about the outcomes and impact of teacher leadership, but still much more work to be done to strengthen this section of the knowledge base. Much of this literature tends to focus on processes, behaviours and practices of teacher leadership with the descriptive often outweighing the evaluative or empirical (Male & Palaeologus, 2015:59).

The focus on leadership at the classroom level is also reflected in the vast literature on instructional leadership, e.g., Hallinger et al. (2015:478). The work of researchers largely, but not exclusively from the USA, has consolidated both the nature and outcomes of

instructional leadership practices in schools. The work of Robinson (2010:98) further reinforces the primacy of instructional leadership practice and its potential benefits to learners' learning outcomes.

The work on pedagogical leadership is also prominent in the field of education with many researchers looking at aspects of pedagogical leadership in various settings and countries, e.g., Martinez and Tadeu (2018:45), Waniganayake et al (2018:83). This body of work explores the nature of pedagogical interactions, practices and enactments, offering both rich descriptions of practice and grounded empirical studies.

All this sounds both positive and encouraging. It seems that the international discourse on teacher leadership is alive, well and thriving. Yet, there is a missing component. There is a 'Cinderella' form of leadership that is less prominent and less visible within the international evidence base. A quick search on various research databases reveals that the contemporary literature on 'curriculum leadership' is less well developed than the other variants highlighted above (Bradley et al., 2018:34). Now it could be the case, of course, that discussions about curriculum leadership naturally fall under teacher leadership, instructional leadership and pedagogical leadership, more generally. Plus of course, curriculum change is dynamic and therefore studies would naturally follow the peaks and troughs of large-scale and small-scale curriculum change in different contexts and countries (Glatthorn et al., 2018:330, Law et al., 2016:230).

It is interesting, however, that this type of curriculum-focused leadership practice, enacted by teachers, is not more prominent, particularly when many countries like Hong Kong, Singapore and Wales are addressing their educational shortfalls through major curriculum change. Within these policy contexts, it is assumed that teachers would be playing a pivotal role in the design, delivery, evaluation and refinement of any new curriculum, but how far teachers are playing an active role as curriculum leaders, remains a moot in South Africa (Naidoo & Pieterse, 2015).

### **3.7.1 Understanding dynamic leadership.**

Taking my experience in diverse school leadership role for over four decades, to assist the description of what qualifies as dynamic leadership – it is the accomplishment of a goal by availing your professional skills and personality strengths while not hiding both professional and personal shortcomings – to select, mentor and groom a loyal yet productive followership and future capable leaders. The man who successfully marshals his human collaborators to achieve particular ends, is a dynamic leader. The greatness of such a leader, is the ability to excel day-after-day, as well as year- after-year, in a variety of circumstances (Hallinger, 2018). The quality of sustainable leadership never evades such a school principal, deputy, departmental head or classroom teacher.

He may not possess or display power; force or the threat of harm may never enter into his dealings. He may not be popular; his followers may never do what he wishes out of love or admiration for him. He may not ever be a colourful person; he may never use memorable devices to dramatize the purpose of his group or to focus attention on his leadership. As for the important matter of setting goals, he may actually be a man of little influence, or even of a little skill; as a leader he may merely carry out the plans of others. His unique achievements is a human and social one, which stems from his understanding of his fellow workers and the relationship of their individual goals to the group goal that he must carry out.

In a nutshell, curriculum development tasks involved, do not form part of anyone's job description other than the curriculum leader. Therefore, they must rely upon relationships that are strong enough to sustain the accomplishment of the tasks.

### **3.7.2 Principles of leadership**

Sustainable leadership creates and preserves sustaining learning. In education, the first principle of sustainability is to develop something that is itself sustaining. To sustain means to nourish. Sustaining learning is therefore learning that matters, lasts and that engages students intellectually, socially and emotionally. It is not the achievement of

results, but the learning behind them that matters most. The prime responsibility of all educational leaders is to sustain learning (Stoll, Fink & Earl, 2003; Glickman, 2002).

Sustainable leadership secures success over time. Leadership succession is the last challenge of leadership. It is the challenge of letting go, moving on, and planning for one's own obsolescence. Sustainable improvements are not fleeting changes that disappear when their champions have left. Sustainable leadership is not achieved by charismatic leaders whose shoes are too big to fill. Instead, it spread beyond individuals in chains of influence that connect the actions of leaders to their predecessors and successors.

Leadership succession events are almost always emotionally charged with feelings of expectation, apprehension, abandonment or relief (Hart, 1993). Frequent and repeated successions aggravate these anxieties. Sustainable leadership therefore plans and prepares for succession, not as an afterthought, but from the first day of a leader's appointment. It also regulates the rate and frequency of successions so that a staff does not suffer from the cynicism that is brought on by succession fatigue (Fink & Brayman, 2004:433).

Sustainable leadership sustains the leadership of others. One way for leaders to leave a lasting legacy is to ensure it is developed with and shared by others. Leadership succession therefore means more than grooming principals' successors. It means distributing leadership throughout the school's professional community - so it can carry the torch once the principal has gone, and soften the blow of principal succession (Spillane, Halverson & Drummond, 2001).

Sustainable leadership addresses the issue of social justice. Sustainable leadership benefits all students and schools – not just a few at the expense of the rest. Sustainable leadership is sensitive to how lighthouse, magnet or charter schools and their leaders can leave others in the shadows, and how privileged communities can be tempted to skim the cream of the local leadership pool. Sustainable leadership is an interconnected process. It recognizes and takes responsibility for the fact that schools affect one another in webs of mutual influence (Baker & Foote, 2006:97). In this respect, sustainability and succession are inextricably tied up with issues of social justice.

Sustainable leadership develops, rather than depletes, human resources. Sustainable leadership provides intrinsic rewards and extrinsic incentives that attract and retain the best and brightest of the leadership pool; and it provides time and opportunity for leaders to network, learn from and support each other, as well as coach and mentor their successors. Sustainable leadership is thrifty without being cheap. It carefully husbands its resources in developing the talents of all its educators, rather than lavishing rewards on selecting and rotating a few already proven stars.

A sustainable leadership system knows how to take care of its leaders and how to get leaders to take care of themselves. Teachers and school leaders, who are 'burnt out' by excessive demands and diminishing resources have neither the physical energy nor the emotional capacity to develop professional learning communities (Byrne, 1994). The emotional health of leaders is a scarce environment resource. Leadership that drains its leaders dry is not leadership that will last. Unless reformed and policymakers care for leaders' personal and professional selves, they will engineer short-term gains only by mortgaging the entire future of leadership.

Sustainable leadership develops environment diversity and capacity. Promoters of sustainability cultivate and recreate an environment that has the capacity to stimulate continuous improvement on a broad front. They enable people to adapt to and prosper in their increasingly complex environment by learning from one another's diverse practices (Capra, 1997).

Standardization is the enemy of sustainability. Sustainable leadership recognizes and cultivates many kinds of excellence in learning, teaching and leading and provides the network for these different kinds of excellence to be shared in cross-fertilizing processes of improvement (Giles and Hargreaves, 2006 & Louis and Kruse, 1995). It does not impose standardized templates on everyone.

Sustainable leadership undertakes activist engagement with the environment. In the face of standardized reform, all the traditional schools in our study have become an exaggerated and less motivated version of their former selves. Meanwhile, the innovative schools have lost a lot of their edge. However, of all of them, Durant has proven the most

resilient - not just because of its innovativeness or its strength as a learning community, but because it engages assertively with its environment. Durant is driven by an activist leadership (Oakes, Quartz & Lipton, 2000).

There is a great interest in educational development today, especially curriculum leadership, because of the widespread belief that quality leadership makes a significant difference to school and learner achievement (Bush, 2007).

### **3.7.3 Curriculum leadership theories**

The narrative design of this study, it is in such way that the following leadership theories, are observed as enhancers of a critical leadership style – in a specific management context. It not the intention of this study to pit one theory against the other but to honour the dynamics of each. In the context of school management, curriculum leadership is a neutral resource until dynamics of all available leadership theories and applications are studied and embraced.

#### **3.7.3.1 *School leadership theories***

A school leader is the one who is aware of different leadership theories, takes into account the capabilities and the willingness of those involved and accurately selects appropriate leadership responses that are in part guided by the theory. Different theories and concepts provide insight and a foundation on the application of leadership across differing situations, as essential to mould critical curriculum leader. To follow, each

#### **3.7.3.2 *Contingent leadership theory***

The contingency theory is a class of behavioural theory that claims that there is no best way to organize a corporation, to lead a company, or to make decisions. Instead, the optimal course of action is contingent (dependent) upon the internal and external situation. All leadership theories provide applicable and helpful insights into one particular aspect of leadership. Some focus on the process by which influence is applied, while others lay emphasis on one or more aspects of leadership.

However, none of these theories provide a complete picture of school leadership. The contingent leadership theory provides an alternative approach, recognizing the diverse nature of school contexts and the advantage of adapting a specific leadership approach to a particular situation, rather than adopting a one-size-fits-all position. This theory assumes that what is critical, is how leaders respond to unique school circumstances or problems. It recognises that there are wide variations in the contexts for curriculum responses (Leithwood, Jantzi & Steinbach, 1999:15).

### **3.7.3.3 *Distributed leadership theory***

A host of many curriculum leadership experts give honour to the role distributed leadership has played in enhancing effective school management (Harris, 2013; Spillane, 2012; Harris, 2004:22; Woods, 2004:87; Msila, 2008:67; Bush, 2007:79 and Moorosi & Bantwini, 2016:3).

The distributed leadership theory recognises that leadership extend beyond hierarchy and formal roles of authority and prompts to engage in a more diffuse approach to leadership that incorporates a multitude of stakeholders with different areas of expertise, while at the same time encouraging the professional growth of teacher leaders (cf. Figure 1.1. & Figure 3.1).

### **3.7.3.4 *Social justice leadership theory***

On the other hand, the social justice leadership theory emphasizes the role of the principal in dismantling barriers and obstacles to equity for marginalised learners. Principals therefore, as they draw from these theories, have the ability to recognise policies, procedures, cultures and histories that perpetuate inequalities and respond in an ethical and persistent manner. Social justice leadership work is described as “the exercise of altering these arrangements by actively engaging in reclaiming, appropriating, sustaining and advancing inherent human rights of equity, equality, and fairness in social, economic, educational, emotional and personal dimensions” (Goldfarb & Grinberg, 2002). Parents,

learners, teachers and community members are made valuable members of the school community, which is evidenced by the way they are treated and their role in school improvement processes. It draws from theories of social justice to critically analyse the existing curricula, better understand the implications of this curriculum on learner population, consider how to engage parents, learners and community in curriculum topics and discuss potential improvements and how to engage teachers with more culturally relevant teaching strategies and practices.

### **3.7.3.5 *Instructional leadership***

Instructional leadership is about marshalling influence to achieve a certain desirable outcome towards instructional decisions for better learning outcomes (Jita & Mokhele, 2013:124).

It can be defined as leadership functions associated with teaching and learning. In developing a school mission and vision, coordinating, monitoring, evaluating curriculum assessments, promoting a safe and supportive environment for learners and creating a supportive and safe environment for teachers, are leadership activities that have been described as part of instructional leadership (Bellibas et al., 2022:812).

Leadership is increasingly conceptualised as an organisation-wide and collective phenomenon (Ni et al., 2018:216). The conversation has shifted toward focusing on the contributions made by each source (Ni et al., 2018:217). It is believed that the collective influence of key participants working together towards a common goal can be greater than the sum of an individual's influence, because democratic decision making tends to be more consistent with the beliefs and values of employees in a democratic society (Ni et al., 2018:217). To include members and stakeholders in decision making, enhances a sense of township, and contributes to higher levels of job satisfaction (cf. Figure 1.1. & Figure 3.1).

### **3.7.3.6 *Situational leadership theory***

This theory appeared as an alternative to the trait theory leadership; it suggests that different situations require different styles of leadership. That is, to be effective in leadership, one requires the ability to adapt or adjust one's style to the circumstances of the situation, according to Morgan (1997:93). The primary factors that determine how to adapt are an assessment of the competence and commitment of a leader's followers. The assessment of these factors determine if a leader should use a more directive or supportive style. Therefore, leadership behaviour becomes a function not only of the characteristics of the leader, but of the characteristics of followers as well. Yukl (2002:162) argues that leadership should be less about ones needs, and more about the needs of the people and the organization.

Satisfaction and morale increase the responsiveness to the demand of its environment. Although limited empirical research has shown that collective leadership has a stronger influence on learner achievement than individual leadership (Ni et al., 2018:219; Leithwood, Leithwood, Wahlstrom & Anderson, 2010; Leithwood & Mascall, 2008). In addition, higher achieving schools tend to school members and other stakeholders to a greater degree than lower achieving schools (Ni et al., 2018; Leithwood et al., 2010:221; Leithwood & Mascall, 2008, Figure 1.1. and Figure 3.1).

However, our knowledge of the source of collective leadership is very limited. Most existing research has focused on shared or distributed leadership among school personnel within schools, such as principals and teachers (Harris, 2009; Spillane, 2006). Only a few studies have extended the list of sources outside the school setting to include parents, school districts, and state agencies (Ni et al., 2018; Leithwood et al., 2010; Leithwood & Mascall, 2008; Pounder, Ogawa, & Adams, 1995).

A curriculum framework is intended as a supportive structure to help schools to plan and develop their own curricula. It comprises a set of interlocking components including essential learning experiences, generic skills, value and attitudes and key learning areas. The framework sets out what learners should know, value and be able to do at the various

stages of schooling. It gives schools and teachers flexibility and ownership to plan and develop alternative curriculum modes to meet their varied needs.

A principal's role in curriculum leadership was explored. A comparison was done in four countries, and on account of the lessons learnt in those countries, it could be concluded that much still needs to be done with regard to curriculum leadership in primary schools. The hurdles and opportunities regarding curriculum leadership were discussed, as well as the dynamic nature of the curriculum

### **3.8 CHAPTER SUMMARY**

In this chapter, the indication was that curriculum leadership is a worldwide challenge that confronts all nations and countries alike. Different countries are confronted with same constraints, but the difference is how they respond to them. A definition of concepts and discussions was done, which are: curriculum framework, curriculum leadership, instructional leadership, a primary school, enhancing and the principal.

At this stage, this thesis holds the view that curriculum leaders around the world tend to display a reluctance to involve communities in curriculum leadership plans, priorities and practices. It further believes firmly that modern education has evolved well past the traditional conception of knowledge as a set of data to be memorised, revised and recited by rote. This stance – which was influenced by explored literature and the deliberated conceptual framework called critical curriculum leadership studies.

The chapter that follows deals design approach of the research, and how it relates to curriculum leadership. With its principles of self-reflection, honesty, hope and respect for others, it is strongly aligned Critical Discourse Analysis (Kemmis, 2014). The chapter to follow will assist in shaping the research findings based on the collected data from active participation of all participants and stakeholders, as well as evidence obtained from the documents that were found in the two focused schools. Supporting and monitoring records that were analysed during data collection procedures will reflect back on Chapter 3 as

evidence to inform the team about the schools, while motivating them to mould a framework that they will proudly co-own and co-apply.

## CHAPTER 4: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

---

### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

The study sought to design a framework conceptualised to improve curriculum leadership in primary schools in two selected schools in the Province of Free State, South Africa. Succinctly, the study's theoretical framework is synonymous to the aforementioned conceptual framing of the thesis (cf. 1.3, 1.7, 2.2, 2.2.8.3, 2.7.1, 2.7.2, 2.7.3, 5.1 & 6.2.2.3). This chapter therefore gives the explanation and the justification of the research design and methodology used for the achievement of the aim of the study. The empirical perspectives and theoretical constructs developed in Chapter 2 and 3 are integrated in this chapter in order to answer the research question, which is:

*How can a framework to improve curriculum leadership in primary schools be designed?*

In an attempt to answer the above research question, a critical participatory action research (CPAR) process was adopted and applied to operationalise the study. Although there are numerous types of action research, for this study we have opted for critical participatory action research, since it complements the lance adopted in this study. According to McNiff (2013), there is no such 'thing' as action research; rather, action research refers to a process in which people interact with one another, learn from one another, and describe how the learning can improve their practices and situations. The fundamental concepts and themes that define CPAR are discussed under the subheadings of the origins of **action research**, its objectives, formats, steps, ontology, epistemology, as well as the rhetoric. Furthermore, CPAR's cyclical steps are explained, namely, identifying and clarifying the problem, developing a plan for improvement, implementing the plan, observing and documenting the effects of the plan, reflecting on the effects of the plan for further planning, and informed action.

The chapter discusses the ethical considerations guiding all aspects of interaction with the co-researchers, which proceeded in ways that did not harm or pose a threat of any kind to their persons.

Firstly, we constituted ourselves into an organising research team with co-researchers at both research sites. We made sure that the vision and mission statements were collectively designed and developed to give direction and a common understanding to us all regarding the aim of the study. Then we collectively conducted the SWOT analysis, which led to a number of issues being raised relating to the vision of the study and the team as a whole. We identified nine manageable intervention strategies that we could achieve within the specified time. We then used these strategies as the basis for formulating the strategic plan that enabled us to achieve the aim of the study.

On the basis of each of the priorities, we identified and operationalised five powerful and meaningful activities spanning a period of eight months in pursuance of each of the respective strategies. For each activity, we assigned responsible people who would ensure that the activities took place in a meaningful manner in relation to the identified priority. We also collectively identified, prepared and provided the required resources to perform each of the tasks. The operationalisation of each strategy was linked to particular and identifiable time frames. We also formulated mechanisms and opportunities for monitoring progress and initiating reflection by the entire team towards the achievement of each strategy. All the information per intervention strategy was audio-taped, in addition to being transcribed to serve as data for analysis at a later stage. CDA was used as the strategy to systematically and scientifically analyse, interpret and process the data generated, in order to present it in a meaningful and logical manner. The chapter concludes with a summary of processes implemented; I restate the purpose and aim of the chapter and highlight important points, thereby tying loose ends.

## **4.2 CRITICAL PARTICIPATRY ACTION RESEARCH (CPAR)**

CPAR puts emphasis that creates a space for participants to address collective problems, especially for the marginalised communities. These are problems that are irrational,

unsustainable, and unjust. Kemmis et al. (2014:154) suggest that critical participatory action research is 'critical'. This section briefly discusses the historical origins of CPAR, objectives of CPAR, formats of CPAR, steps of CPAR, including the spiral process of CPAR, ontology, epistemology, the role of the researcher in CPAR, the relationships with co-researchers in CPAR and rhetoric of CPAR.

#### **4.2.1 Origins of action research and its influence on this study**

The origins of action research are mostly attributed to Lewin (1946:23), who published a paper on action research and minority problems in 1946. Action research, as defined by Lewin (1946), is a type of comparative research that focuses on the conditions and effects of various types of social action. Lewin has influenced the narrative style of this study – specifically how it perennially sets the conceptual framework as a proposed work instead of a definitive or conclusive research writing product. The two points below clarify how he influenced the mentioned concept design (cf. 1.3, 1.7, 2.2, 2.2.8.3, 2.7.1, 2.7.2, 2.7.3, 5.1 & 6.2.2.3) :

- (a) This comparative element contained in Lewin's brilliant theorising work, is much more of a cognitive reflection – hence the origination of a concept, is not static or linear but cyclical – informing why this thesis' design of its conceptual framework relies on the actioning of the verb 'proposed' instead of the definitive 'established' framework.
- (b) Being sensitised to each stakeholder's subtle or overt behaviours and ideas, our proposed framework assumes a power-sharing character -allow itself to be influenced, promoting the reflective process of re-learning and/or un-learning amongst the focus group members.

He considers action research to be as important as other types of science, and considers action research to include mathematics, conceptual analysis, field and laboratory experiments, and the ultimate goal of social change. According to Lewin (1946: 35), social practice research can be classified as research for social management or social engineering. It is a type of action-research that compares the conditions and effects of various forms of social action, as well as research that leads to social action. Research

that only yields books will not suffice. This is not to say that the research required is any less scientific or 'lower' than that required for pure science in the field of a social event. Engineering schools, such as the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, are increasingly focusing on what is known as basic research. Progress in social engineering will be largely determined by the rate at which basic research in social sciences can develop deeper insight into the laws that govern social life. This 'basic social research' must include mathematical and conceptual theoretical analysis problems. It must include the full range of descriptive fact-finding for small and large social bodies. Above all, it will have to include social change laboratory and field experiments (Lewin, 1946:25).

Lewin (1947:89) described a research process that included planning, fact-finding (i.e., reconnaissance), and execution in his paper on group decision and social change. Lewin's model is a process in which someone begins with a general idea and/or an objective they wish to achieve. To begin, action researchers conduct preliminary research on the idea, then modify the original plan based on what is learned. The plan is implemented once it has been established. The action is then evaluated during a reconnaissance period. Once the action has been evaluated, the information is used to re-plan another action based on the knowledge gained during the reconnaissance period. According to Lewin, planning typically begins with a broad concept. For one reason or another, it appears desirable to achieve a specific goal. It is frequently unclear how to define this goal and how to achieve it. The first step is to carefully examine the concept in light of the available resources. More information about the situation is frequently required. If the first phase of planning is successful, two items emerge, namely an "overall plan" for achieving the goal and a decision on the first step of action. Typically, this planning has also slightly altered the original concept.

The following period is dedicated to carrying out the first step of the overall plan reconnaissance or fact-finding, which serves four purposes: It should assess the action by indicating whether what was accomplished exceeded or fell short of expectations. It should serve as a foundation for properly planning the next step. It should serve as a foundation for revising the "overall plan." Finally, it allows planners to learn, that is, to gain new general knowledge. The following step is made up of a circle of planning, executing,

and reconnaissance or fact-finding for the purpose of evaluating the results of the second step, preparing the rational basis for planning the third step, and possibly revising the overall plan once more. As a result, rational social management proceeds in a spiral of steps, each of which consists of a circle of planning, action, and fact-finding about the outcome of the action (Lewin, 1946:27).

Many other researchers, particularly in education as a discipline, have modified Lewin's model to fit their approach. Elliot (1991:28) revised Lewin's original concept to allow the overall concept to change from cycle to cycle. He also thought that reconnaissance should be used more frequently in the reflexive process. An action research cycle, according to Calhoun (1994:29), includes identifying a problem, collecting data, organizing data, analysing and interpreting data, and taking action. The action research cycle, as idealized by Wells (1994:30), includes observing, interpreting, planning change, acting, and interpreting thoughts of the practitioner's personal theory informed by the action research cycle. Similar to Lewin, Kemmis (1998) developed a spiral, action-reflection model that includes reconnaissance, planning, first action, monitoring, reflecting, rethinking, and evaluation.

Selecting an area of concentration, developing theories, identifying research questions, collecting data, analysing data, reporting results, and taking informed action are all steps in Sago's (2000) seven-step process. Stringer's (2004) action research helix consists of three components: looking, thinking, and acting. This process is repeated over and over again. Creswell's (2005) model entails determining the best research approach, identifying the problem, locating resources to assist with the problem, identifying information sources, collecting data, analysing data, developing a plan of action, implementing the plan, and reflecting on the impact on the plan. The action research process is reflexive in each example, involving planning, acting, researching, interpreting the effect of the action, reflecting on the plan, and reorganizing a new action. I continue by expanding on participatory research, then I explore critical participatory action research.

According to Kemmis et al. (2014), only participatory research creates the conditions for practitioners to transform the conduct and consequences of their practice to meet the needs of changing times and circumstances by confronting and overcoming three types of unintended consequences of their practice. These consequences are:

- a) Irrational, because participants' understanding of the conduct and consequences of their practices is unreasonable, incomprehensible, incoherent, or contradictory, or, more broadly, because the practice unreasonably limits the individual and collective self-expression of those involved and affected by the practice.
- b) Unsustainable, because the participants' practices are ineffective, unproductive, or non-renewable, either immediately or in the long run, or, more broadly, because the practice unreasonably limits the individual and collective self-development of those involved and affected.
- c) Unjust because the way participants relate to one another in practice, and to others affected by their practice, serves the interests of some at the expense of others, or causes unreasonable conflict or suffering among them, or more broadly, because the practice unreasonably limits the individual and collective self-determination of those involved and affected; this makes critical participatory research 'critical.'

As previously stated, critical action theory seeks to assist participants in transforming their understanding, conditions, and conduct of their practice in order to be more just, sustainable, and rational. According to Kemmis et al. (2014), the first step is to take a historical approach to determine how we got there - how things came to be. Second, participants and researchers must adopt a critical mind-set in order to determine the effects of current practices. Third, researchers and participants communicate to better understand each other's perspectives. Fourth, researchers and participants take action to change their practices in order to achieve desired results. Fifth, the process is documented and monitored to determine what positive and negative outcomes resulted from the action. These steps do not have to be done in that order.

Critical participatory action research focuses on empowering communities and eliminating social injustice. A critical participatory action research project can be designed in a variety of ways.

#### **4.2.2 Objectives of CPAR**

The objectives of CPAR are as follows:

1. Participatory research creates the conditions for practitioners to understand and develop the ways in which practices are conducted 'from within' the practice traditions that inform and orient them.
2. Participatory research creates the conditions for practitioners to speak a shared language, using the interpretive categories, and joining the conversations and critical debates of those whose action constitutes the practice being investigated.
3. Participatory research creates the conditions for practitioners to participate in and develop the forms of action and interaction in which the practice is conducted.
4. Participatory research creates the conditions for practitioners to participate in and develop the communities of practice through which the practice is conducted, both in the relationships between different participants in a particular site or setting of practice, and (in the case of a professional practice) in the relationships between people who are collectively responsible for the practice (whether as members of a professional body or as professional educators or as researchers into the practice).
5. Participatory research creates the conditions for practitioners, individually and collectively, to transform the conduct and consequences of their practice to meet the needs of changing times and circumstances by confronting and overcoming three kinds of untoward consequences of their practice, namely, when their practices are:
  - a) irrational because the way participants understand the conduct and consequences of their practices are unreasonable, incomprehensible, incoherent, or contradictory, or more generally, because the practice

- unreasonably limits the individual and collective self-expression of the people involved and affected by the practice,
- b) unsustainable, because the way the participants conduct their practices are ineffective, unproductive, or non-renewable, either immediately or in the long term, or more generally because the practice unreasonably limits the individual and collective self-development of those involved and affected, or
  - c) unjust, because the way participants relate to one another in the practice, and to others affected by their practice, serves the interests of some at the expense of others, or causes unreasonable conflict or suffering among them, or more generally, because the practice unreasonably limits the individual and collective self-determination of those involved and affected.

#### **4.2.3 Formats of CPAR**

It will then depend on the aspects of practice that need to be changed. Clearly, the researcher and participants will focus on changing their own sayings, doings and relating's - aspects of their own practice, not the practices of others, though others might sometimes change along with, and in response to, what they change in their own practices (Kemmis and McTaggart, 2007:282). As they change aspects of their practice in action research, they will also observe simultaneously:

It will then be determined which aspects of practice must be altered. Clearly, the researcher and participants will focus on changing their own sayings, doings, and relating - aspects of their own practice - rather than the practices of others, though others may occasionally change in tandem with, and in response to, what they change in their own practices. They will observe concurrently as they change aspects of their practice in action research. These observations are:

- How their planned changes play out as they work through them (how the conduct of their practices and the practices of co-researchers changed);
- How different aspects of their practice changed or remained unchanged, intentionally or unintentionally;

- How the consequences of their practices changed for different participants and for others involved or affected by their practices; and
- How their planned changes turn out as they work through them (how the conduct of their practices and the practices of co-researchers changed);
- How different aspects of their practice changed or remain unchanged, intentionally or not;
- How the consequences of their practices changed for different participants and for others involved or affected by their practices;
- The effects of the changes in their practices on the practices of others, including, for example, the learning practices of students (if they are not already within the public sphere for the critical participatory action research initiative); and
- They will have noticed any other changes in the situation. Researchers must be aware of, and monitor, changes in the sayings, doings, relating, and project of their practices and the practices of their co-researchers, and how these are held in place (or not held in place, or undermined) by changes in the corresponding practice architectures that support (or do not support) their practices: the cultural discursive, material-economic, and social political arrangements that make those sayings, dos, and projects possible.

#### **4.2.4 Critical participatory action research as a discipline**

##### **4.2.4.1 *Way of making change***

We refer to critical participatory action research as a "disciplined" approach to change because many of the changes in our lives are imposed, appear random, or ill-considered. Unexpected or imposed changes can cause individuals and groups to feel frustrated, dissatisfied, or alienated. When this occurs, some people turn to critical participatory action research to reshape their lives and work - to change the arrangements they are in, and to take an active and thoughtful approach to changing themselves, their practices, and the conditions under which they practice. They do so in order to make their own individual and collective practices more rational and reasonable, productive and sustainable, just and inclusive. To bring discipline to this task, they look for evidence of

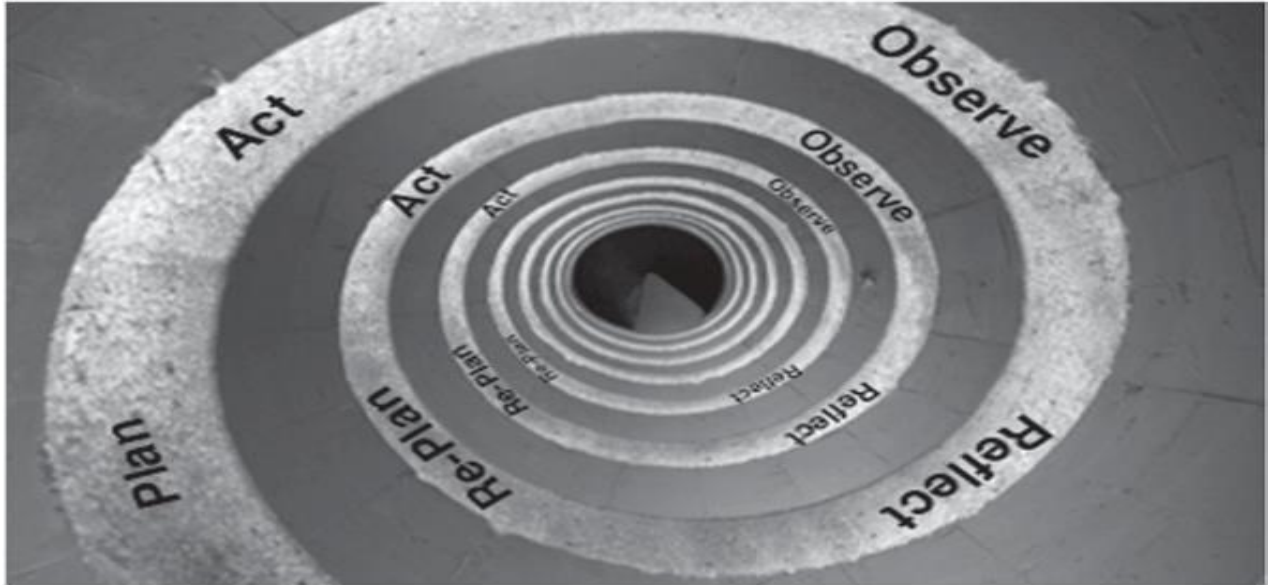
how things are working and how they could work better. They gather evidence with others in their settings, analyse, interrogate, and interpret the evidence they collect, and reformulate their action in light of their evidence, analysis, and interpretation, successively, over time - writing their unfolding history as they go.

Lewin (1946), known as the "Father of Action Research," defined action research as a cycle of steps that included planning a change, putting the plan into action, observing what happened, and re-formulating the plan in light of what had happened. This way of thinking about action research was popularised in earlier editions of *The Action Research Planner* (for example, the fourth edition, Kemmis & McTaggart, 1988), especially in terms of what came to be known as the 'self-reflective spiral'. By 1988, many researchers were well aware that the process of action research could only be described sporadically in terms of a mechanical sequence of steps. The spiral of self-reflection was then described as a spiral of self-reflective cycles of:

- *Planning* a change,
- *Acting* and *observing* the process and consequences of the change,
- *Reflecting* on these processes and consequences, and then
- *Re-planning*,
- *Acting* and *observing*,
- *Reflecting*, and so on...

Around the world, many people are now familiar with this 'spiral of action research'.

In practice, action research is rarely as tidy as this spiral of self-contained cycles of planning, acting, observing, and reflecting implies. The stages overlap, and initial plans quickly become obsolete as a result of experience-based learning. In practice, the process is more likely to be fluid, open, and responsive. The criterion of success for critical participatory action research is not whether participants faithfully followed the steps, but whether they have a strong and authentic sense of development and evolution in their *practices*, their *understandings* of their practices, and the *situations* in which they practice.



**Figure 4.1: The Action research spiral**  
Source: Kemmis & McTaggart, 2007:282

Critical participatory action research works at its best when co-participants in the process undertake each of the steps in the spiral of self-reflection collaboratively.

Not all theorists of action research place this emphasis on collaboration; they argue that action research is frequently a solitary process of systematic self-reflection. Researchers have accepted that action is sometimes only for short periods of time, but they still believe that critical participatory action research is best conceptualized in collaborative terms. Critical participatory action research is viewed by researchers as a social and educational process. People who conduct critical participatory action research, in their opinion, do so with a clear and conscious commitment to the idea that it will be a social and educational process for each individual involved as well as for everyone involved collectively. They recognize and purposefully engage in it as a process of individual and collective selfformation.

Critical participatory action research participants recognize that the 'object' of their research is social. It is about human coexistence (Schatzki, 2002), and the various forms that coexistence with others can and should take, with a focus on the consequences of how they organize and reorganize their collective affairs. Of course, critical participatory

action research is primarily concerned with studying, reframing, and reconstructing social practices. Because practices are formed through social interaction between people, changing practices is a social process. To be sure, one person can change so that others are forced to react or respond differently to that person's new behaviour, but the willing and committed participation of those whose interactions comprise the practice is required.

Critical participatory action research provides a forum for people to join together as coparticipants in the struggle to remake the practices in which they interact. Critical participatory action research creates spaces where rationality and democracy can coexist without an artificial divide that is ultimately hostile to both. At its best, critical participatory action research is a social process of collaborative learning for the sake of individual and collective self-formation, realized by groups of people who join together in changing the practices through which they interact in a shared social world - a shared social world in which we live with the consequences of one another's actions, for better or for worse. It should also be stressed that critical participatory action research involves the investigation of *actual* practices, not practices in the *abstract*.

It is for the reason emphasised above that the study firmly concurs with assertions by Kemmis and McTaggart (2007) that CPAR entails learning about the actual, material, concrete, and specific practices of specific people in specific places. While it is impossible to avoid the inevitable abstraction that occurs whenever we use language to name, describe, interpret, and evaluate things, critical participatory action research differs from other forms of action research in its insistence on changing the specific practices of participating practitioners.

This is in sharp contrast to the viewpoint of some action researchers, who claim to be interested in classroom practice and whose first question is, 'Which aspect of practice are we interested in?' The answer is frequently something along the lines of 'assessment,' 'consonant blends,' or 'behaviour management,' concepts that are already abstract and fragmentary in comparison to the dramatic and varied experience of classroom life.

Critical participatory action researchers, like other people, are interested in practices in general or in the abstract, but their primary concern is changing practices in 'the here and

now' - they want to change 'the way we do things around here'. Critical participatory action researchers, in our opinion, do not need to apologize for seeing their work as mundane and mired in history; on the contrary, by doing so, they may avoid some of the philosophical and practical dangers of idealism, which suggests that a more abstract view of practice might allow one to transcend or rise above history, as well as the delusions of the view that it is possible to find a safe haven in abstract propositions, which construe, but do not themselves constitute, practice (McTaggart, 1997:9). Critical participatory action research is a learning process whose fruits are real and material changes in:

- What participants think and say (their *sayings*), and the cultural and discursive arrangements (like languages and specialist discourses) that shape the ways they understand and interpret their world,
- What participants do (their *doings*), and the material and economic arrangements that make it possible for them to do these things, and the people who typically conduct critical participatory action research,
- How participants relate to others and the world (their *relating*), and the social and political arrangements that shape the ways they interact with the world and with others.

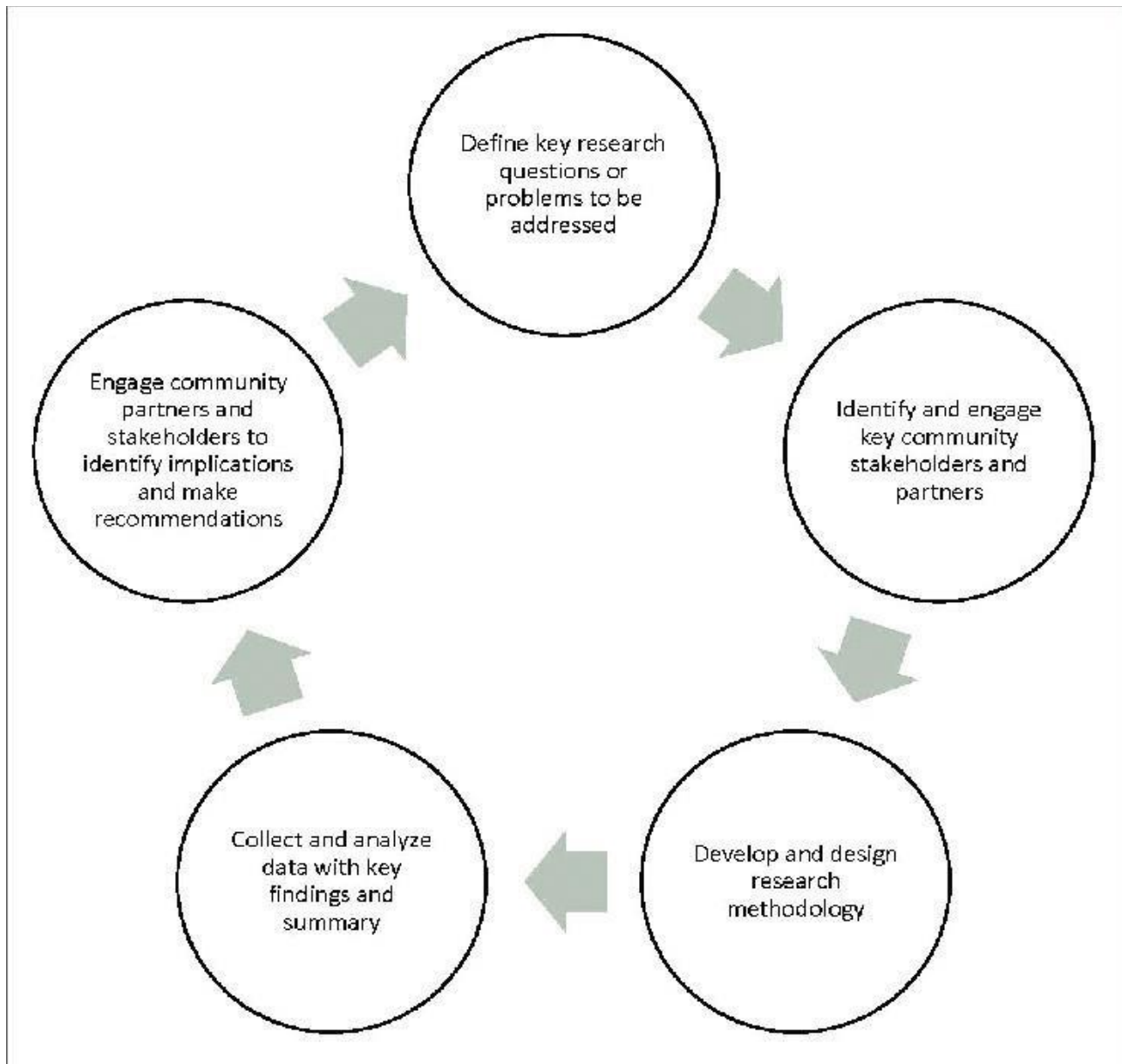
Through critical participatory action research, people can come to understand how their social and educational practices are *produced* by particular cultural-discursive, material, economic, and social-political circumstances that pertain at a particular place at a particular moment in history, and how their practices are *reproduced* in everyday social interaction in a particular setting, because of the persistence of these circumstances and their responses to them (Kemmis, 2014). By understanding their practices as the product of particular circumstances, participatory action researchers become alert to clues about how it may be possible to *transform* the practices they are producing and reproducing through their current ways of working. If their current practices are the product of one particular set of intentions, conditions and circumstances, then other (or transformed) practices may be produced and reproduced under other (or transformed) intentions, conditions and circumstances. Focusing on practices in a concrete and specific way, makes them accessible for reflection, discussion and reconstruction as products of past

circumstances that are capable of being modified in and for present and future circumstances:

- the term 'action research' embraces a wide range of activities, one of which is critical participatory action research, and that critical participatory action research is distinctive, partly because it *understands itself as a social practice* - in fact, as a *practice-changing practice* (Kemmis, 2014 and McTaggart, 1997:9);
- CPAR takes a particular view of what it means to be *critical*, emphasising, in particular, a collective intention to make our practices, our understandings of our practices, and the conditions under which we practise, more rational and reasonable, more productive and sustainable, and more just and inclusive;
- CPAR takes a particular view of what *participation* means, focusing not only on people's participation in a practice, but also on their participation in *public spheres* in which people involved in or affected by a practice collectively open up a *communicative space* for *communicative action* - that is, when they jointly agree to strive to reach an inter-subjective agreement about the meaning of the words and ideas they use, mutual understanding of one another's points of view, and unforced consensus about what to do as they explore felt concerns about their practices, their understandings of their practices, and the conditions under which they practise;
- critical participatory action researchers can develop a theoretical language for discussing their practice so they can understand how their practices (composed of *sayings, doings* and *relating* bundled together in the *project* of a practice) are prefigured by and embedded in historically-formed practice architectures (respectively, *cultural-discursive, material-economic* and *social-political arrangements*) that are found in or brought to a site, and thus understand more richly **Doing Critical Participatory Action Research:**

The 'Planner' Part is what things need to be transformed (not only practices, but also the practice architectures that make them possible), if we are to bring about significant transformations in the conduct and consequences of our practices;

- CPAR employs some features of other kinds of research, but also takes a distinctive view of research, especially in terms of the relationships between research and practice that are formed when people research their own practices and practice traditions *from within* (with the insights that only insiders can have into their own practices), as they critically explore the historical formation and transformation of their own practices, their understandings of their practices, and the conditions under which they practise;
- changing educational practice is often a messy business that can unsettle previously settled arrangements, including people's established self-interests, and that critical participatory action researchers therefore need to be able to justify the transformations they propose, and make, and monitor, in terms of:
  - a) the *validity* of their understandings (in terms of the four validity claims, namely, that they are comprehensible, true in the sense of accurate, sincerely and not deceptively stated, and morally-right and appropriate under the circumstances),
  - b) the *legitimacy* of their proposals (that they have the authentic assent of those involved and affected, reached by communicative action in a public sphere), and
  - c) the *wisdom and prudence* of the actions they take when they propose and make and monitor transformations of their practices, their understandings of their practices, and the conditions under which they practise; and that
- CPAR involves monitoring our practices, our understandings of our practices, and the conditions under which we practise as they change over time, in order to ensure that the conduct and consequences of our changed practices are in fact more rational and reasonable, more productive and sustainable, and more just and inclusive, than our former practices



**Figure 4.2: Overview of CPAR approach**  
Source: Kemmis, 2014

#### 4.2.5 Ontology of CPAR

There are other methodological principles outlined by different authors. McNiff (2013:57) emphasizes that action researcher's focus on ontological issues, how participants and researchers can come together and co-create knowledge. Furthermore, in defining political activist ethnography, Smith (1990) stressed the importance of ontological

approaches to activist knowledge formation. While studying the AIDS epidemic in Toronto, Smith (1990:117) recommended that researchers take the 'ontological shift' by focusing on the individual and their experience rather than the narrative upheld by the ruling political regime. Smith (1990:127) recommends taking the following approach,

- “Start with the actual lives of people and undertake an analysis of a world known reflexively,
- Stake out an ontological commitment to a social order constituted in the practices and activities of people,
- Take their analytic, the notion of “social relations”,
- Are based on the use of meetings with government officials and professional cadres as ethnographic data,
- Analyse texts, such as media reports of government departments, in developing a description of how the ruling regime works,
- Illustrate the necessity of the bracketing ordinary political explanations – the technique of the materialist epoch, as I call it – in order to provide a scientific account of the social organization of a ruling regime.”

In addition, McNiff (2013) also points out that action researchers take a different epistemological approach than positivists. McNiff (2013) emphasizes that learning is rooted in experience rather than in something that is separated from the people, the researcher and/or the research process. Furthermore, McNiff (2013) believes that knowledge is not a static process; it is dynamic and continuously changing.

#### **4.2.6 Epistemology of CPAR**

As affirmed earlier by Hamid, Kumar, Ahluwalia and Ray (2023) it is a firm belief of this thesis that knowledge is not static, but rather fluid and most surprisingly never universal but regional and individualised (cf. 2.3). No two experiences are exactly the same despite taking place during the same time. Our perceptions and emotions are not synchronized to sense and comprehend in real time to duplicate exactly of what we know. The same bears fruit for the concept epistemology. As the name given to the study of what we know and

how we come to know it, episteme refutes traditional scientific and social scientific research's tendency to see knowledge as a freestanding unit, to be found 'out there' in books and databases, where knowledge now becomes separated from the people who create it. Action researchers see knowledge as something they do, a living process. People generate their own knowledge from their experiences of living and learning. Knowledge is never static or complete; it is in a constant state of development, as new understandings emerge. This view of knowledge regards reality as a process of emergence, surprising and unpredictable. There are no fixed answers, because answers become obsolete in a constantly changing present, and any answers immediately transform into new questions. Learning is rooted in experience. It involves reflecting on practice (a process of critical discernment), deciding whether this practice is in line with your espoused values, and deciding on future action.

#### **4.2.7 The role of the researcher in CPAR**

In CPAR, the researcher serves as a facilitator and the most important research instrument, working collaboratively to involve stakeholders in all aspects of the research process (McTaggart, 1997:198, cf. Figure 1.1. and Figure 3.1). As a leader, the researcher identifies with stakeholders and, using excellent communication skills, persuades relevant key stakeholders to participate in the study. Developing trusting relationships with key stakeholders is an important part of the research process that requires collaboration and mutuality. The researcher's goal is to gather detailed information about the co-researchers' core experiences. As a result, the researcher must depower himself/herself in order to create a neutral environment for the co-researchers in which researchers and co-researchers are equals. In this way, the co-researchers become involved in the study with the hope of improving learning at their respective schools. The CPAR researcher's responsibilities include contributing to research in terms of substantiation or improvement of existing theories, as well as to practice by proposing practical solutions to the problem situation under investigation (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2007:309). According to Lewin (1944:195), consumer researchers interested in

developing a transformational research agenda can use existing theory and practice examples to improve their definition of their relationships with the people whose lives they hope to change, as well as to explicate a theory of social change to guide their research efforts and inspire creative data generation methods. CPAR, on the other hand, emphasizes improved educational conditions that foster and enable successful and confident learner identities (Ratcliffe & Newman, 2011:108).

#### **4.2.8 Purposeful Sampling and Relationships with co-researchers in CPAR**

Trustworthiness from purposive sampling was tool to design validity or truthfulness of responses among, across and from selected participants thus elevating them to a position of co-researchers. The work of Adler, 2022:598 has asked for researchers and their participants to be sensitive to the epistemological nuances of the entire research process – where an agreement that knowledge is not fixed but rather fluid is reached. For this research project, different categories of participants were invited to participate, namely, school-based participants, community-based participants, and members of the school governing body (SGB).

A quorum limit is 50% or half of the total 20 members above. This is a complex attendance management system because at least half of attendees have to be from each of the 2 primary schools to qualify as a 50% minimum attendance protocol. The sampled number of participants of 20 was broken down as below:

The breakdown of research participants was in the following format:

- 2 principals (1 from each of the 2 primary schools)
- 2 deputy principals (1 from each of the 2 primary schools)
- 2 departmental heads (1 from each of the 2 primary schools)
- 2 subject heads (1 from each of the 2 primary schools)
- 6 SGB members (3 from each of the 2 Figure schools)
- 6 QLTC (3 quality learning and teaching campaign members per school)
- 1 BEC member

CPAR is a social phenomenon (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2007:280). The goal of CPAR was to investigate the relationship between individuals and the social understanding of how individuals are formed and reformed (Kendall et al., 2011:3). I was involved in preliminary visits to the schools in order to establish a relationship and to determine the written, oral, and unspoken protocols and behavioural norms of the co-researchers. The researcher's relationship with the co-researchers was bridged through one of the co-researchers, eliciting input on the definition of the problem and suggestions for addressing the problem. In the context of this study, co-researchers were required to evaluate themselves in terms of their specialties and capabilities in order to work together harmoniously. According to Kemmis and McTaggart (2007:282), CPAR examines co-researchers' knowledge and ability to present themselves in their social realm collectively. As a result, CPAR served as a means of assisting SMTs and principals in recovering and releasing themselves from the constraints of an unproductive management setting that limits their self-development and self-determination, as well as bringing hope and freedom to every individual, regardless of background. CPAR is a reflexive and deliberate process in which co-researchers seek to transform their situation and the learning capabilities of their students. Spiral cycles of critical and self-critical action and reflection were used to carry out activities (Kemmis & McTaggart, 2007:282). The coordinating team collaborated on fact-finding, conceptualization, planning, implementation, and evaluation to solve a leadership problem while also generating new knowledge. The core searchers prioritized and strategized their work in these activities by sharing meaningfully. Each activity was assigned to a specific person or people and was accompanied by the necessary resources, a time frame, and execution mechanisms. Opportunities for advancement were carefully monitored. These engagements occurred as a result of equality of access and cohesive communities coming together in one spirit to enable managers to demonstrate levels of competence and achievement in ways that best suited their needs (DoE, 2009:98).

#### **4.2.9 Rhetoric in PAR**

The language used in the CPAR has the potential to empower, evolve, or marginalize the oppressed. CPAR does not treat co-researchers as research objects, but rather provides a space for development by encouraging people to collaborate as knowing subjects and agents of change and improvement (McTaggart, 1997:9). CPAR is interested in changing people's real-life situations rather than simply interpreting them. CPAR not only helps us learn from our mistakes and successes, but it also helps us avoid mistakes and emulate the successes of others. To manoeuvre the CPAR process effectively and efficiently, the co-researchers must recognize the process's appropriateness and thus own it. The core researchers were given the right to receive feedback on the research findings, return raw data, and control the publication of results in any format (Kendall et al., 2011:2). These rights demonstrated long-term learning environments that benefited the community, as well as sufficient community participation in and control over the entire research project.

#### **4.2.10 Selection of participants as a first cycle**

I was troubled by the problem as stated in Chapter 1 (cf 1.2), which is that of poor learner performance in primary schools and that propelled me to engage other people in leadership positions they hold in their respective schools (cf. 1.8). Thus I invited them to a meeting in which we realised that we have a common problem (cf. Appendix 1). We agreed that this situation is undesirable, thus we decided to take action to combat the undesirable situation we commonly experienced in our respective schools. During our discussion process, I realised that this problem needs to be investigated deeper and I decided to register for a PhD at the University of Free State (cf. Appendix 2). After having registered with the university, I had to apply for ethical clearance, which I received and invited the group again, which increased in number.

### **4.3 PARTICIPANTS IN THE STUDY**

As elaborated in Chapter 1 (cf. 1.8), the breakdown of research participants was in the following format:

- 2 principals (1 from each of the 2 primary schools)
- 2 deputy principals (1 from each of the 2 primary schools)
- 2 departmental heads (1 from each of the 2 primary schools)
- 2 subject heads (1 from each of the 2 primary schools)
- 6 SGB members (3 from each of the 2 Figure schools)
- 6 QLTC (3 quality learning and teaching campaign members)

Below, each participant's position is clarified.

#### **4.3.1 The principals**

The principals, as the heads and primary leaders of a school, have many responsibilities (Borg, 2009:59). They both displayed enough experience and knowledge of their leadership roles. A good principal is able to balance all his roles and work hard to ensure that he is doing what he believes is best for all constituents involved in his/her school. In this case, the principals' vision for the school was that the entire community should commit themselves to developing the full potential of all learners. They believed that the school should be characterised by respect, tolerance, democracy and a desire to learn and grow. Thus, learners should leave the school equipped with knowledge, skills and competencies that enable them to take their meaningful place in the development of their society. Furthermore, it was important to them that parents and the wider community be involved in the activities of their schools. The mission of both schools was to promote active participation amongst all co-researchers. Thus, we can say that the principals' leadership qualities affect school success, staff effectiveness and learner achievement directly. Hence, their involvement in this study was very important. Many other strategies and studies have been designed and employed to enhance curriculum leadership. However, they have not been as successful as when the community is involved, which requires parents and teachers to talk to one another about real-life situations, and where

language usage serves the purpose of communicating real ideas and solutions to real life challenges (Mahlomaholo, 2013:2).

#### **4.3.2 Deputy Principals**

In this study, the deputy principals from the two schools engaged in this project were responsible for ensuring the smooth running of the study, which means making sure that all the reports required were delegated from and to the other participating members. They were expected to organise and monitor the progression of activities on the research sites respectively, and to take the responsibility to resolve any obstruction that may occur in the progress of project (Rousmaniere, 2013:87). As curriculum delivery drivers, deputy principals hold important positions that provide for effective implementation of the school's programmes. Through their leadership skills, the primary goal was to provide guidance for the development of quality discussions on curriculum leadership for participants to have a clearer view on curriculum leadership that would improve learner achievement. Their positions provided participating members with the opportunity to have a significant role in school-level planning, programme development and an opportunity to develop positive leadership traits further (DeMatthews & Mawhinney, 2014:2).

#### **4.3.3 Departmental heads**

They made a valuable contribution to the project with their expert knowledge of matters regarding curriculum. They supported the Deputy Principals in order for the project to run smooth by providing the required information from their schools regarding previous records. Their responsibilities in assessing teachers gave them more of a chance to evaluate where their challenges have been regarding curriculum leadership and underperformance.

#### **4.3.4 School governing body members and Botshabelo education committee member**

Community members are an important resource for learners' development and success in schools. The participating SGB members and BEC member were members who are respected in the community, because of their involvement in different community activities. The SGB were members who were serving either their second or third term as SGB members. The implementation of equitable and inclusionary practices in education influenced all aspects of school life. It promoted an academic climate that encouraged all learners to work hard to reach their highest performance standards, affirming the worth of all learners and helping them strengthen their sense of identity and develop a positive self-image. These collaborative learning communities encouraged learners to think critically about themselves and others in the biosphere around them, in order to promote fairness, healthy, active relationships and responsible citizenship (Cummins et al., 2007:9).

#### **4.3.5 Researcher's background**

The researcher is a teacher principal in primary schools in Botshabelo from January 1981 to date. He held positions of a principal in three different schools since he started working in the Department of Education in the Free State Province. He started to occupy different leadership positions from 1997 as a chairperson of Botshabelo Principals Cluster, which focused on supporting newly appointed principals. In 2007 he was elected the chairperson of the South African Principals Association (SAPA) in Motheo District. Every year SAPA organises provincial and national conferences that focus on enhancing school leadership and the researcher has been attending these conferences. From 2014 to December 2020 he held a position of Deputy President of SAPA in the Free State Province. He was elected the President of SAPA Free State in March 2021 up to present. SAPA is affiliated to the International Confederation of Principals (ICP), which is the organisation of school leaders globally; it holds its conferences biennially in different countries around the world and the focus is on school leadership. He was privileged to

attend the following conferences where he had the opportunity of learning from the countries that are ranked high in education leadership and management: 2007 New Zealand, 2009 Singapore, 2011 Canada, 2013 Australia, 2015 Finland and 2019 China. The experience gained in attending these conferences both locally and internationally boosted the researcher's wish to advise and support school leaders, as well as to guide them where necessary for them to lead their schools in our province.

He therefore decided to embark on this study after realising the poor performance outcomes of primary schools that, according to his observation, was related to ineffective curriculum leadership. Many primary schools were regarded as dysfunctional due to low performance outcomes and were always requested to explain to the Head of Education (HOD) why they could not be charged for misconduct, due to poor performance.

#### **4.4 CO-RESEARCHERS' INVOLVEMENT IN THE IMPROVEMENT OF CURRICULUM LEADERSHIP IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS**

Having identified and briefly explained the role, strengths, opportunities, weaknesses and threats of the co-researchers, this section attends to way the intervention to design a framework to improve curriculum leadership in primary schools, was to be operationalised.

##### **4.4.1 Brainstorming session**

The brainstorming session was a way of helping the team to collectively gather what the group needed, determine where the challenges were, and find out how things could be done differently in order to transform the learners' learning capabilities. The main reason for the brainstorming session was to encourage all the co-researchers taking part in the study, to become actively involved by explaining to them exactly what the study was focusing on, so as to motivate them to participate and get to know one another better, while in the process of changing the situation within which they find themselves in. The process of deciding collectively on valuable key issues required unity to produce freedom, thereby expanding learners' learning capabilities and enabling them to lead more

meaningful and freer lives (Ratcliffe & Newman, 2011:104). This session yielded opportunities to develop a sustainable learning environment through the implementation of a SITS. As a CPAR team, we were collectively involved in discussing and making sense of the findings and their implications so that we could draw on the conclusions and collectively create knowledge. I took a leading role in writing up the findings, while other group members had the opportunity to make inputs, thereby ensuring the collaborative nature of the research. This ensured that co-researchers were involved from the beginning of the process and they were aware of the research at an earlier stage; this meant that they were more likely to respond well once the research had been completed. There was a lot of interest the co-researchers displayed for the research project, which made it clear that it affected their well-being directly, and as a result they were fully involved emotionally and physically. The step that followed after the common vision was formulated, was to conduct the SWOT analysis.

#### **4.4.2 Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT) analysis**

The team used a SWOT analysis, which comprised an assessment of strengths, weaknesses, internal opportunities and external threats, to help the team assess issues within and outside the study and to conduct proper strategic decision-making. The aim was to leverage our strengths, to focus on and exploit opportunities or employ them to counter the threats and understand the weaknesses, in order to decide what areas needed serious attention. When properly applied, a thorough SWOT analysis could serve as an irreplaceable strategic tool that has the potential to help navigate and implement a sound strategy to deal with school leadership problems in relation to curriculum.

##### **4.4.2.1 *Strengths were highlighted***

We identified the internal characteristics of the two schools under study that differentiated them from the other primary schools in the same community. We took into consideration the reasons why parents and learners chose these schools. We realized that some parents chose the school as they were closer to where they stayed while other parents chose the school because of the academic performance. Learners chose the school,

because their friends were attending at that school. Most importantly was that the schools were preferred, because of continuous updates that parents were getting from schools.

#### **4.4.2.2 Weaknesses were recognized**

We agreed that it would not be easy to seek for the weaknesses, but because we want change, we had to be honest with the prevailing weaknesses that have resulted in the kind of performance that we experience in our schools. We also recognized that they as were as important as the identifying strengths (cf 4.4.4). Weaknesses were identified in areas where there is inadequate leadership, which have resulted in academic underperformance in schools.

The following were considered as serious weaknesses that contributed to the state that schools find themselves in:

- Leadership, Management and Communication (LMC)
- Governance and Relations (GR)
- Quality of Teaching and Learning and educator Development (QTLD) □ Learner Achievement (LA)

#### **4.4.2.3 Opportunities were identified**

The team intended to turn the recognized weaknesses into opportunities. There was an agreement that in order for schools to improve performance, the question of leadership is a non-negotiable item. Curriculum leaders should be informed about current curriculum issues, which is done through educator development. The external circumstances that could lead to positive outcomes were considered. Botshabelo principals cluster is an organized body of principals in Botshabelo where the study is conducted and the principals meet often to discuss the challenges they face, including learner underperformance. This grouping of principals' affiliate to SAPA (Southern African Principals Association), a non-partisan agency formed to enhance and recognise

principals and deputy principals' continuous professional development. The professional learning committees contribute to teacher development and leadership and management, as well and teachers should participate in it.

#### **4.4.2.4 Threats to be addressed.**

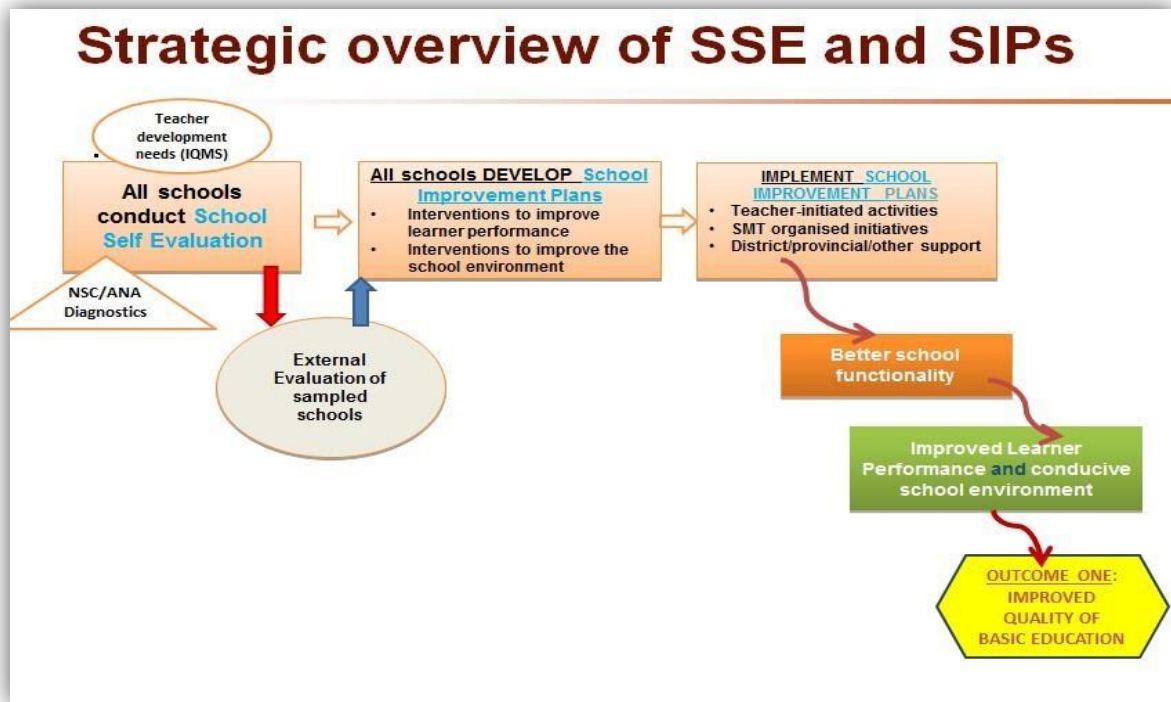
Threats, like opportunities are also external, but the difference is that threats are negative and cannot necessarily be controlled and contained. The team agreed to acknowledge those threats in order for them to be able to create and draft an action plan, moving forward.

The identified threats included:

- The challenges that the community was faced with, namely of a slow economy
- Municipal infrastructure in schools and poor services that affect the school environment.
- Gangs that are ravaging the community, which impact negatively to learning and schooling.
- The prolonged presence of COVID-19 restrictions, which limited face-to-face interactions.

#### **4.4.2.5 Setting priorities**

Successful implementation of strategic planning at all levels needs to be prioritised as a leadership and management discipline that needs to be exercised (Kerzner, 2013:104). The idea of setting the priorities was to enable participation by members of the team to direct their efforts to the aims and objectives of the study, as highlighted in Chapter 1. A strategic overview of school self-evaluation and the school improvement plan were followed, as indicated in the **Figure 4.3** below.



**Figure 4.3:** Strategic overview of SSE and SIPs

**Source:** DBE (2017)

The core mission of the schools is to improve the educational achievements of the learners. The road map that sets out the changes that schools need to improve the level of learner achievement and the school environment, is the School Improvement Plan (SIP). The coordinating team organised a planning session that lined up all the agreed upon intervention strategies to be implemented, and the details were set out on how curriculum leadership can be responded to, in order to improve learners' performance.

#### 4.4.3 Organised planning session for strategic intervention

The coordinating team followed the set strategies with the expectation that the data to be collected, would give courage to the members to respond to issues raised in the process that would affect learner outcome (Spicker, 2009:117). They also agreed on using the school self-evaluation and the school improvement plan by focusing on the following areas for development as priorities to improve curriculum leadership: Basic Functionality of the school (BF), Leadership Management and Communications (LMC), Governance

and Relations (GR), Quality of Teaching and Learning and educator development (QTL), Curriculum Provision and Resources (CPR), Learner Achievement (LA), School Safety, Security and Discipline (SSSD), School Infrastructure (SI) and Parents and Community (PC). The team then divided the SIP priorities into two dimensions, namely interventions that lead to improved learner performance and interventions that lead to improved school environment (cf Tables 7.1 & 7.2). All of the above intervention strategies were rated according to the evidence available, with a scale from 1 to 5. Descriptor 1 indicates that it needs urgent support while descriptor 5 indicates outstanding. Below is the rating scale:

**Table 4.1: Rating scale**

Rating to be awarded	Descriptor	Look at the <u>indicator</u> and ask the following <b>QUESTION</b>	What is the prevailing scenario in the school after examining available <b>EVIDENCE</b>	Interpretation
1	<b>Needs urgent support</b>	Is it available?	<u>No:</u> It is <b>not available</b> , is not done, does not exist, does not occur	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It also means “Does it exist? Is it done? Does it occur?” To answer this question the evaluator must look at documentary evidence or evidence gathered through interviews, lesson and other observations, etc. and may also refer to a particular practice or occurrence that is happening at the school.</li> <li>• Non-compliance, not appropriate, not available, not adhered to, not implemented. There are major weaknesses that require immediate remedial intervention and action.</li> </ul>

				<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Province/District need to intervene urgently</li> </ul>
2	<b>Needs improvement</b>	Is it appropriate?	It is available. <b>Some of the aspects</b> are appropriate, with some that are not	<input type="checkbox"/> Non-compliance with a significant number of minimum requirements for a particular indicator, there are some strengths but it is outweighed by areas for development (weaknesses). The school needs structured and planned

				<p>action to provide learners with basic education. Implementation is not effective and assisted by all stakeholders</p>
3	<b>Acceptable</b>	Is it implemented?	<b>It is available and appropriate. Majority of the aspects</b> are implemented, comply with legislation and add value to school operations	<input type="checkbox"/> Policies, procedures, practices and planning at school are implemented. Evidence may be gathered through observations, registers, written communication, interviews with stakeholders, questionnaires etc. Implementation must also be appropriate and in line with legislation.

				Adequate, compliance with most minimum requirements, strengths just outweigh areas for development, policies, plans and procedures are fully implemented. Quality of teaching is reasonably good and learners achieve on average (60% - 70%) in annual national assessments and Grade 12. Learners have access to a basic level of provision, minimum expectations are met (cf. Figure 1.1. & Figure 3.1).
<b>4</b>	<b>Good</b>	<b>Is it effective?</b>	<b>It is available, appropriate and implemented. All the aspects are</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> The policy, plan, procedure, conduct, occurrence adds most possible value to school operations, it works and is
			implemented, comply with legislation and add value to school operations.	cost-effective; School complies with all legislative, regulatory and policy requirements, quality of teaching is characterises by major strengths that clearly outweigh any areas for development, learners' experiences and achievement is above average expectation, the schools' policies, plans and procedures are fully effective.

5	Outstanding	Is there innovation?	<p><b>It is available, appropriate, implemented and effective. All the aspects</b> are implemented, comply with legislation and add value to school operations, with clear evidence of <b>innovative practice</b>.</p>	<p>□ Exceptional, very best practice that inspires other schools, exceptional effective implementation, exceptional quality of learning and teaching, learners' experiences and achievements are of very high quality as a result of innovative practices.</p>
---	-------------	----------------------	--	--

#### **4.4.4 First dimension: interventions that lead to improved school management**

The purpose of this dimension is to evaluate whether **the school functions effectively** and efficiently to realise the educational goals and social goals, as well as the effectiveness of **leadership, management and communication** in the school, as well as to evaluate the quality of teaching and learning and the extent to which the school provides and promotes educator development (cf. 7.2.1, & Table 7.1). The implementation of the curriculum and enrichment programmes offered at schools and the extent to which it does enhance the aims and objectives of the education system, will also be evaluated. The evaluation of **learner academic achievement level, as well as extra and co-curricular** activities will be done.

##### ***4.4.4.1 Intervention Strategy No. 1: Basic functionality for curriculum to thrive in a conducive environment***

There were three criteria which, had to be considered by the team that constitute the intervention strategy number 1. The first criteria was to establish whether there were appropriate procedures in place to deal with absence, late-coming and truancy among learners, which was the responsibility of the departmental heads and Botshabelo education community member. The second criteria was the responsibility of deputy principals, which was to find out how absence and late-coming of educators can be curbed. The third criteria was to deal with the learners code of conduct, which was the responsibility of principals and members of school governing bodies.

##### ***4.4.4.2 Intervention Strategy No. 2: Leadership, management and communication in a school***

There were seven criteria for intervention strategy number 2. The first criteria was to establish whether the SMTs give clear direction to the schools and this was the responsibility of the researcher, SGB and member of Botshabelo education committee. The second criteria was to establish whether there was equitable and fair delegation of

roles and responsibilities to all managers by principals and deputy principals. The third criteria was the responsibility of departmental heads to establish whether quality of teaching and learning is appropriately promoted through curriculum management. The fourth criteria was to establish whether the SMTs promote quality of teaching and learning through physical resources management, and this responsibility was for the principals and SGB. The fifth criteria was to establish the appropriate use of human resources in promoting quality of teaching and learning and this was led by the coordinating team. The sixth criteria was to establish the promotion of stakeholder involvement through communication strategies by members of SMTs. The seventh criteria was the responsibility of the researcher to establish whether there are policies and procedures in place that provide guidance to SMTs and the decisions they take.

#### ***4.4.4.3 Intervention Strategy No. 3: Quality of teaching and learning and teacher development for teachers to be aware of continuous changes in education***

There were seven criteria for intervention strategy number 3. The first criterion was the effective time management of teaching and learning, which was to ensure that teaching takes place at the appropriate time and this was the responsibility of the deputy principals.

The second criterion, the creation of a positive learning environment and the third criterion, which is knowledge and understanding of curriculum were the responsibilities of the departmental heads, as they should monitor and guide educators with respect to time management and curriculum matters so that learners find the welcoming classrooms to experience effective learning. Lesson planning, preparation and presentation, as well as learner assessment and achievement as fourth and fifth criteria respectively, were the responsibilities of teachers and departmental heads to monitor compliance and implementation of rules with regards to lesson planning and assessment. The sixth and seventh criteria, which was the assessment of learner competencies and that good standards are recorded correctly, were the responsibility of the principals from the two schools under review.

#### ***4.4.4.4 Intervention strategy No. 4: Curriculum provisioning and resources in order to be compliant with CAPS***

This strategy consists of four criteria. The first and the second one, which were led by principals of both schools, was to establish whether the curriculum offered, complies with CAPS, and whether there were resources in schools to support teaching and learning. The third criteria was to establish whether the schools manage procurement, distribution and retrieval of LTSM effectively, and this responsibility was given to departmental heads. The fourth criteria, which was led by a member of education committee of Botshabelo, was to establish whether the enrichment programme provides for extra and co-curricular activities for learners.

#### ***4.4.4.5 Intervention strategy No. 5: Learner achievement***

The success or failure of curriculum leadership becomes evident on the achievement of learners. This strategy consists of five criteria, which were all led by teachers and a member of Botshabelo education committee, the first one being learner achievement, which indicates the success or failure of school leadership with regards to curriculum. The second criteria was to establish whether learners can read, speak, listen and write well in the language of learning and teaching. The third criteria was based on how capable learners are in terms of handling numbers, calculate mentally and with electronic devices, and apply these skills to solve problems in mathematics. The fourth criteria was to find out if the school supports learners with learning barriers to learning. The fifth criteria was to establish the participation of learners in extra and co-curricular activities and how they perform.

#### **4.4.5 Second dimension: intervention that lead to improved school environment**

The purpose of this dimension was to evaluate the effectiveness of the school governing body in fulfilling roles and responsibilities with regards to the establishment of a purposeful and disciplined school environment (cf. 7.2.1, & Table 7.1). The evaluation

was of the level at which the school provides for a healthy, safe and secure environment for learners, staff and parents, as well as sufficient and appropriate maintenance of infrastructure. The aim was to evaluate the extent to which the community and parental involvement was encouraged in the learners' education and the support and the contributions to learners' progress.

#### ***4.4.5.1 Intervention strategy No.6: Governance and relations in order to give the direction to schools***

This strategy consisted of four criteria with the first one being the investigation as to whether the SGB was duly established and functions properly, which was led by the researcher. The second criteria was based on the provision of a clear strategic direction by the SGB, which was also led by the circuit manager. The third criterion was to find out if the schools had capacity to handle finances within their legal mandate and the fourth was if the schools were able to execute their function with regards to human resources within their legal mandate.

#### ***4.4.5.2 Intervention strategy No.7: School safety, security and discipline***

Learning and teaching can only take place in a safe and secure environment. This strategy has six criteria. The first one, which was based on the health, safety and security of learners, staff, parents and others in schools, was led by chairpersons of the two school governing bodies of the two schools under study. The aim was whether the schools implement safety practices against potential hazards. The third criterion was led by school safety teachers to implement security regulations that aimed to ensure the safety of learners, staff and visitors on the school premises. The schools implement regulations in compliance with legislation to keep the school violence and drug free. The fifth was the learner discipline policy and procedure for learners to focus in a welcoming environment. The sixth was focused on the contribution towards the welfare of learners.

#### **4.4.5.3 Intervention strategy No.8: School infrastructure**

This strategy had five criteria; the first one was to determine whether the school had reliable and sufficient functional services, and this was led by support staff members, who were SGB members in the schools under study. They also looked into the ablution facilities' appropriateness and functionality and whether they were sufficient and in working order. The third criteria was led by the principals and chairpersons of both schools, which dealt with the establishment of appropriately furnished and sufficient classrooms that were maintained and used for their intended purpose. The fourth criteria dealt with non-educational rooms to support a positive teaching and learning environment. The fifth criteria was to evaluate whether the schools have appropriate school grounds, play grounds and sport facilities to allow for outdoor activities.

#### **4.4.5.4 Intervention strategy No. 9: Parents and community**

This strategy had five criteria and the coordinating committee led by myself decided to get involved in all criteria regarding parents and community. The first criteria was to establish if the schools communicate regularly and effectively with parents. When communication with parents is regular and effective, no learner will be left behind, due to truancy and unnoticed behaviour that may be unacceptable. The second criteria was whether the schools use local services and institutions. The third criteria was to encourage learners to respect the local and global environment and appreciate the surroundings. The fourth criteria was to establish whether there are good relationships links established with other schools. The fifth was to establish parental involvement in schools.

### **4.5 MONITORING THE PROGRAMME**

Based on a series of steps that aim to address learners' needs, as well as the needs of a community and the demands of a subject, a curriculum was formally prepared by

education professionals and experts. In this case, curriculum leadership was formulated and created by a committee composed of school principals, teachers, parents and a departmental official. The purpose of designing a framework to improve curriculum leadership was to consolidate efforts done to improve learner achievement in all grades. Thus the involvement of parents was of critical importance in pursuing this aim. The coordinating team was able to lead the processes of SSE and SIP. Analysis was done on the findings of SSE and key areas that needed attention, were identified. The coordinating team was then able to develop SIP to address the identified priorities in SSE at the end of the year. The two principals worked closely with their SGB chairpersons and SMT's. The monitoring was done closely to ensure that the project benefited the schools that participated.

#### **4.6 DATA GENERATION PROCEDURES**

Data generated was analysed by using CDA to reveal the discursive source of power. The identified stakeholders were engaged by the coordinating team in order to gather information from focus groups, workshops and photo voice were used as techniques to collect data (cf. Figure 1.1. & Figure 3.1). As the country was in the middle of a pandemic (COVID-19); Morake-Toolo (2023:53) noted earlier that restrictions on human interaction were fiercely curtailed through hard lockdowns – to interact smoothly with research participants – the study adopted the 'new normal' engagement on a virtual platform digitally. The co-researchers from the two schools were requested to undertake a realistic and evidence-based assessment of their schools against the nine intervention strategies to be implemented to improve learner performance. There were engagements and discourses around the research proposed, and a discussion on the problem statement. A permission letter from the Free State Department of Education, as well as an ethical clearance certificate from UFS circulated among the co-researchers. An agreement was reached that the team can begin with the work as the project met all the ethical standards.

#### **4.6.1 Instrumentation**

The main data collection tools used, were video recordings, photos and minutes of the meetings held both virtually and face-to-face. A free attitude interview (FAI) technique was adopted, as advocated by Meulenberg-Buskens (2011). A FAI technique involves asking a question that will trigger discussions with respondents. The FAI as a nondirective technique opens the space for participant to begin the discussions (Meulenberg-Buskens, 2021:1). We had five successful virtual meetings, as well as focus group meetings where we evaluated the progress of the project.

#### **4.7 DATA ANALYSIS**

The data collected and the reflection on our interpretation enabled the participants to gain better understanding of their role in schools. The data collected was analysed by using CDA, as advocated by Van Dijk (2011). CDA acknowledges the need for examination of cortisol analysis of text-and-talk (Van Dijk, 2011:89). CDA requires strategies and structures of text, talk interaction or communicative events, playing a role in the modes of reproduction of power relations, mitigation or concealment of dominance, among others (Van Dijk, 2003:352). Govender and Muthu Krishna (2012:29); De Vos et al. (2005:431) argue that CDA as a technique in primary research, used for students that aim to expose how social power is abused, where dominance and inequalities are enacted, reproduced and resulted in a text-and-talk in social and political context (Shopen, 2013, Peltridge, 2006:10). CDA is a type of discourse that requires the connection between language used and social context, in which it occurs as it relates to gender, ethnicity, cultural, difference, ideology and identity. The analysis, interpretation, discussion, as well as challenges with regard to the collected data, will follow in the next chapter.

## **4.8 CHAPTER SUMMARY**

CPAR is described as a disciplined way of making change, because many of the kinds of changes that we experience in our lives are either imposed, random or ill considered. Some of the dissatisfaction or sense of alienation for individuals and groups are sometimes generated by unexpected changes. This chapter attempted to present the research methodology used in this study. The historical background of this methodology and the reason for using it, were explored. The research was undertaken and designed, following a continuous underperformance of many primary schools in the township in relation to academic underperformance. Data collection procedures and instrumentation were also presented.

## CHAPTER 5 :

### ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF GENERATED DATA FOR A FRAMEWORK TO IMPROVE CURRICULUM LEADERSHIP IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS

---

#### 5.1 INTRODUCTION

This study aimed to design a framework to improve curriculum leadership in primary schools. In this chapter; data presentation, analysis and interpretation were discussed. The universe of responses generated by the four categories of participants against the backdrop of magnified literature, were cross-referenced to shape the concluding response. The **cross-referencing** process is narrated with the abbreviation **cf**, to note and emphasize the correlation of content and/or contexts between what was explored and discussed in Chapters 2 and 5. The data presented herein, informed the findings of this research – to be discussed in Chapter 6, hence cross-referenced (cf) with Chapter 5. The empirical data generated through the course of the study, sought to answer the following research question:

***How can a framework to improve curriculum leadership in primary schools be designed?***

In attempting to answer this question, a Critical Participatory Action Research (CPAR), as a point of departure, was initiated with participants from two primary schools. The team of co-researchers, consisting of people from diverse backgrounds and experiences, conducted CPAR in a professional curriculum leadership context and produced data by conducting Free Attitude Interviews (FAI) with stakeholders, and created voice recordings (cf. Figure 1.1. & Figure 3.1). Documents, such as management files, support and monitoring records, were analysed. The required information and data were generated through the active involvement of the stakeholders. Therefore, data are presented as follows: firstly, the process of establishing a research agenda is outlined as background information. Secondly, data that relates to the school self-evaluation are presented in an attempt to answer the research question. Thirdly, data that relates to the collaboration

and networking dimension are presented in a deliberate attempt to address the aim of the study by focusing on areas for development. Fourth, data that relates mainly to learner performance, follow. Patterns of analysis, informed by themes from the initially proposed and consequently discussed conceptual framework of this thesis, namely - critical leadership studies, are used to give meaning to the discussions, interpretations and findings (cf. 1.3, 1.7, 2.2, 2.2.8.3, 2.7.1. 2.7.2, 2.7.3 & 6.2.2.3). Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), is a technique used primarily to expose how social power is abused and dominance, unjust practices and inequalities are enacted, reproduced and resisted by text-and-talk in a social and political context (De Vos et al., 2005:431). CDA is used to analyse comments through a type of discourse that requires a connection between the language used and the social context in which it occurs, as an issue of gender, ethnicity, culture, difference, ideology and identity (Shopen, 2013:221; De Vos et al., 2005:430; Van Dijk, 2003:352). CDA explores how connections of language and social context are constructed and inflicted in text (Paltridge, 2006:10). Modes of reproduction of domination, power relations and inequality are shown by CDA, as to which structures and strategies of communicative events play a role (Van Dijk, 2008:250). Finally, a summary account of the trajectory path and interventions followed in enhancing the leadership roles of stakeholders in curriculum is discussed, in order to arrive at prudent findings, directed by the literature (cf. Figure 1.1. & Figure 3.1).

## **5.2 BACKGROUND INFORMATION TO THE INTERVENTION PROCESS OF DESIGNING A FRAMEWORK TO IMPROVE CURRICULUM LEADERSHIP**

This section deals with a background of the intervention procedures that had to be undertaken that would help in the generation of data that relate to the two schools under review. It gives a brief background of answers to the question of how the research coordinating team was able to form relationships, which is the basic principle required for conducting qualitative research using CPAR as a methodology. To begin with, the team that was coordinating the project, established working relations with all stakeholders involved in a project by engaging them in a team-building exercise (Bhasi, 2012:132; Lin & Lin, 2012:98; Liou et al., 2009:536; Yuen et al., 2003:161, cf. Figure 1.1. & Figure 3.1). The intention was to make a true reflection of the importance of conducting this research

on a framework to improve curriculum leadership in primary schools. Numerous findings of research studies on curriculum leadership in schools, which were presented in Chapter 3, produced frameworks that could enable the school leadership to use informed practices in leadership. Kim, Kim, Lee, Spector and De Meester (2013:77) posit that limitations are however, often to the applicability of such models, such as context, as was the case in this research study. We attempted to understand the leadership role of school management teams in curriculum and their contribution to influencing teachers to lead curriculum practices in their different subjects. The team was driven by a strong conviction that, although research is about understanding the “phenomenon”, the reality is that the true contribution of research is the ability to solve the problem being investigated.

### **5.2.1 Lack of knowledge on the importance of vision and mission statement**

In an institution or organisation, both mission and vision statement play an important role, as they provide the direction for the institution. The mission statement gives the institution a clear and effective guide for making informed decisions and the vision statement assures all decisions made are properly aligned with what the institution hopes to achieve.

A school as an organization, needs to have a vision and mission statement to guide and direct it in order to define its existence (Carmen et al., 2006:181). For a purposeful direction, a school should have a vision that defines its existence and purpose with regards to leadership in curriculum. It is important for all stakeholders to know the vision and mission statement of the organization, as it provides the focal point that helps to align and ensure that all are working towards a single purpose. This helps to increase efficiency and prediction in the organisation. A vision statement serves as a strategic plan for success, guiding the employees and motivating them when facing challenges. Employees are guided by the vision statement towards a shared goal (Zhou, 2021:21 and (cf. Figure 1.1. & Figure 3.1).

Leadership in the schools under review indicated that there was no significance attendance to vision and mission of the school. The comments made by participants was evident during the intervention.

Mr A/Focus Group Session 1: *“We have not revised the vision and mission statement or we did not have enough time since we started working at the school policies, but we are definitely prepared to start on aligning our vision and mission to the goals of our school”.*

**Spoken words analysis:** “We have not revised the vision and mission statement”, indicates that there is a vision and mission statement, but its importance is down-played by not attending to its priority. Mr A suggests that vision and mission is just one of the policies at the school they are working on. He indicates that they did not have enough time, meaning that it is not of so much importance to draft a vision and mission statement. The above statement also indicates how of less importance is the attachment to the vision and mission statement of the school.

**Social structure perspective analysis:** The statement that says, “We are definitely prepared to start aligning our vision and mission statement”, suggests that Mr A is aware that there is a statement, but it is not aligned with the goals of the school. This can be interpreted as meaning that the presence of a vision and mission statement may not have involved all stakeholders. If not all stakeholders were involved in drafting the vision and mission statement, then its importance would not be realised. Other members felt that they could not own up to the vision and mission statement, because they were left out when it was drafted or they were not alerted about its importance (cf. Figure 1.1. & Figure 3.1).

**Discursive practice perspective analysis:** In accordance to Mr A’s response to lack of knowledge of the importance of vision and mission statement, the indication is that even though it is available, it is not aligned to the school goals. Participation of all stakeholders is central to the successful grafting of vision and mission that will be owned by all (cf. Figure 1.1. & Figure 3.1). Mr A is also aware that there was a negligence on the importance of vision and mission, hence no review was made on it. Mr A is aware that by

aligning the vision and mission statement to the goals of the school, will improve the learner performance, which is all about the intent of the stakeholders.

### **5.2.2 Curriculum leadership team's commitment to the achievement of the educational goals**

The realisation during the intervention process was that both schools did not have teamwork with school management teams. Educational goals could be better achieved through teamwork. Teamwork improves productivity curriculum leadership, which would be realised by increased productivity, because the teams that work together have employees that are motivated towards the goals that the schools have set for themselves. The commitment of stakeholders in curriculum leadership would enable them to socialise, discuss openly, and have conversations beyond work (cf. Figure 1.1. & Figure 3.1). Commitment to work together would create bonds, which will result in creating a sense of belonging and uplift overall morale. School principals need to accept and believe that “coming together is the beginning, staying together is progress. Working together is success” (Henry Ford, 1863- 1947).

Everyone's strength and areas of expertise are utilised by good teamwork. When participants' contributions are valued and they feel they are part of the team, everyone feels motivated to speak up, participate and share what they know (Kemmis, 2014). Shared information among team members maximises the level of knowledge and learning for the whole school. A conversation among participants indicated that for goals of the schools to be met, teamwork is of utmost importance in order to effectively implement curriculum leadership. Extracts below indicates the importance thereof,

Mr B/Focus Group Session 5: *“Teachers must begin to take us serious as parents, you must not think because we are parents, we are not educated. “*

Mr C/Focus Group Session 5: *“Some teachers really undermine us as parents, so we are sometimes afraid of speaking out, because we think we might offend teachers”.*

Teacher A/Focus Group Session 5: *“It is unfortunate that there are teachers who think they know more than parents do, but some of the parents have even more qualifications than us. Even if they may not be educated, some of them have knowledge that can assist us”.*

**Spoken word perspective analysis:** Mr B indicated that some teachers are reluctant to work with them, as they think that parents are uneducated. The statement made by Mrs B is supported by Mrs C, who says that as parents, they are afraid to contribute, because they might offend teachers. So clearly it means teachers are doing their thing and parents cannot get involved. Teacher A immediately responds by indicating that teachers are making a mistake by undermining the parents, as some parents’ experiences contribute a lot to the school development.

Teacher A also draws from the cultural capital that is available in the community, by indicating that even if parents may not be educated, they have cultural knowledge of many things that teachers may not know.

**Discursive practice perspectives analysis:** As the discussion continue, Teacher A explained the importance of involving parents, as they have cultural capital that includes, value and knowledge. In his response, Teacher A indicated that Mrs B was displaying resistance capital, which is used to nurture oppositional behaviour that challenges authority and stands for equality.

**Mrs C in support of Mrs B** displayed a sign of agreement in unity of a quest for equality in the SMT and education stakeholders in a school (cf. Figure 1.1. & Figure 3.1). Mrs C’s utterances were that they were willing to contribute, though they were being side-lined by some teachers. Both parents are supported by the teacher who accepts and shows that there will be changes.

### **5.2.3 Prioritisation of curriculum leadership to improve learners’ achievements**

There is a wealth of evidence that underlines the importance of curriculum leadership, illuminating how school leadership actively contributes to school and learner

performance. The schools need to be “turned inside out” so that whoever is involved in school have more influence to lead meaningful change that will positively impact on the learners. School management teams should be engaged in a large scale curriculum leadership reform to improve learners’ performance, whatever the outcomes of the said report it underlies, for the importance of curriculum leadership.

Curriculum leadership requires rigorous consideration of content, progression, assessment and pedagogy, which is the essence of teaching (Haines et al., 2020:3). This is why curriculum leadership needs to be prioritised and why it deserves greater research attention in schools and system improvement discourses.

Principal A/Focus Group Session 5: *To be honest, we do not do justice in terms of considering content and assessment, we usually do things to comply.*

**Spoken word perspective analysis:** The word “comply” indicates that there is little focus on the importance of curriculum leadership as it proves that, principals only comply and not really go deeper into the leadership of curriculum. “We do not do justice” shows that there is no sense of agency with regard to curriculum leadership in the schools under study.

**Social structure perspective analysis:** It is a clear indication from the above statement that curriculum leadership only concerns School Management Teams (SMT), hence they have ignored doing the right thing by only complying. This puts the future of learners at risk who are not correctly monitored, guided and supported

**Discursive practice perspective analysis:** Principal A highlighted a challenge that was also acknowledge by principal B and other participants in SMT. A major concern was that learners who are progressed to the next grade, are disadvantaged as there is no certainty as to whether the curriculum has been covered in their previous grades.

The principal role and that of SMT are very crucial as they have an impact on learners’ futures and decrease a breeding ground for a bunch of illiterates. The discussion indicated that teachers and SMTs require parental involvement in the leadership of curriculum.

#### **5.2.4 Absence of strategic planning for curriculum leadership with regards to teaching and learning**

Contemporary strategic plans have multiple components and each of them serve a specific purpose. To ensure alignment of the components of a strategic plan, a planning process has to be followed. In the absence of a small process, the institution's success will be difficult to realise (Hinton, 2020:170). Teaching and learning should not be automatic and according to the extracts from the participants. Strategic planning was not part of the practice in these schools. ACT is a theory placed on the peripheral space, it is not popular like colonial studies. It refuses to be considered a sub-theory of colonial studies, hence carries an air of post-modernism, by looking into the future, while narrating a balanced menu of past good and sad stories to remain empirical to avoid being classified as romantical.

Mrs D/Focus Group Session 6: *“All we know is that teachers must teach and learners must learn. As to the planning, we only thought that planning is done by department and not schools”.*

Principal B/Focus Group Session 6: *“Parents may not be in the know that schools should plan, but the school has never involved parents in planning for teaching and learning.”*

Principal A/Focus Group Session 6: *“It has always been our impression that when it comes to planning and other things, only teachers and professionals are required and parents will always hear from us.”*

**Spoken word perspective analysis:** In accordance to Mrs D's understanding, teachers have to teach and learners have to learn. This shows that Mrs D only learned about planning for teaching and learning during the meeting. The two principals responded by saying, they know planning is the responsibility of schools. This gives the impression that there is little communication in these schools with parents. It shows that teachers still regard themselves as “us and them” to parents and community. This is alluded by principal B, who says schools have never invited parents to planning.

It is important for members of the school community to be informed about every development that takes place in a school.

**Social structure perspective analysis:** The attitudes displayed by the two principals indicate that, the connection of schools and community still has a long way to go before it normalises. The schools still regard themselves as a separate entities from the community. It is the responsibility of the principals to engage with community for schools to operate fully. The argument above indicates that there has never been a strategic planning meeting at these schools. The discussion is indicative of the need for leadership that is in agreement with the curriculum leadership impact programme, focusing on curriculum coverage leading change, curriculum management and support, etc. Fixed social roles of society has the tendency of preventing the people from realising their full human potential (Franses, 2001:361).

**Discursive practice perspective analysis:** The discourses above suggest the absence of strategic planning at both schools, as there is no evidence of planning that involves all stakeholders. The success of curriculum leadership in schools depends largely on the leadership in schools led by principals. Leadership plays a crucial role in guiding the practitioners (teachers) to realise their goals of improving learners' achievement. All the participants realised the importance of strategic planning in schools for good implementation of curriculum leadership (cf. Figure 1.1. & Figure 3.1).

### **5.2.5 Lack of community involvement in curriculum leadership**

Msila and Gumbo (2016:63) posit that there is a better chance of working with others rather than stress individualism in education. Robert Sobukwe, the founder of Pan African Congress, say that education should mean service to Africa and should be a barometer thought. Bantu Biko, the black consciousness leader, concurred with this view when he contended that education should be geared towards raising the cultural, social, economic and intellectual level of all the country's citizens (Msila & Gumbo, 2016:63). The statement above indicates the importance of community involvement in curriculum

leadership. The schools involved in the study seem not to be involving communities in their affairs; this was highlighted by the following extracts from participants,

Mr E: *“In our school, the teachers and SMT do not call us to give our inputs in school activities, e.g., soccer and netball, some of us have been playing soccer in our schools and netball even now I am still a member in our local soccer team, I can advise even coach the learners.”*

Mr F added: *“Some of us as members of the community, we even know more about such activities like sports etc., and some of the learners always see us participating in games in community.”*

Principal B: *“We fully agree that if we could have invited you for a challenge in soccer may be you would have shown our teachers and learners one or two things they could have learnt from you.”*

**Text and spoken-word perspective analysis:** “Teachers and SMT do not call us to give our inputs”, indicates that the school is operating as an island, and the community is never involved in school matters. The argument that Mr E is making that, “some of us have been playing soccer in our school days”, can be interpreted as meaning that there are some important contributions we can make to the school to help make it functional and better. The argument advanced by Mr F that, “we even know more about such activities and some of the learners always see us participating”, can be interpreted as meaning that even learners know how good they are as members of community in some of the things that interest learners, which means they can influence learners positively to achieve the planned results and better performance.

The extracts above only prove that the schools are taking the communities as “us and them” as I indicated earlier. This is evidenced by the comment made by Principal B who accepts that if ever community was invited, more could be achieved in schools, especially leadership in curriculum, as it also has extra mural activities.

**Social structure perspective analysis:** The comment by Mr E (SGB member) seem to have been given an opportunity by their participation in this research, otherwise they were still eager to give their inputs, but were not given a chance, because they were not

considered. The same applies to Mr F, who also added that their contribution can be of great value to the schools. The situation is compounded by westernization, which has corrupted African culture through its progressive technological changes in communication where people do not meet to communicate, and instead only social media is used (Msila & Gumbo, 2016:17).

**Discursive-practice perspective analysis:** The concerns raised by Mr E and Mr F can be linked to imply that they need improvement on development. They are concerned about how the schools will improve without improving the relations between the schools and communities. Critical participatory action research, therefore, has the goal of assisting the participants to work together towards making their individual, sustainability and justice a reality (Kemmis et al., 2014:25).

### **5.3 INTERVENTIONS TO IMPROVE LEARNER PERFORMANCE**

After having undertaking analysis of the schools under study, the team realized that curriculum leadership is not properly implemented and practiced. During the process of intervention, the participants wanted to understand the roles that principals play in curriculum leadership, in order to enable the team to work out the intervention program. The accountability movement has resulted in increased demands on school leaders.

School principals as instructional leaders are expected to serve as curriculum leaders, managing teacher evaluation and development, learner assessment, yet principals continue to serve as managers in their schools (Koers, 2017:82). Fallen (2002:55) argues that principals should be people who are equipped to handle a complex, rapidly changing environment and can implement achievement reforms that lead to sustained improvement in students' achievement. The purpose of education goes beyond the transformation of knowledge, it aims to implement changes in the patterns of behaviour of a social group in the direction of their choice (Farivarsadri, 2001:4).

The coordinating team realized that for a school to effectively implement curriculum leadership, it should be in a position to have the following in place: (i) School basic functionality, (ii) Quality of teaching, learning and educator development (iii) Learner

achievement, (iv) Leadership management and communication, and (v) Curriculum provision and resources. The assumption by the coordinating team was that if the school has an outstanding response, in all the five responses it will be able to improve learner performance, as curriculum leadership will be correctly implemented and practiced (Maroa, 2022:10).

The school self-evaluation instrument with reference to the SMT of schools, has four document response guidelines. The participants of the two schools had to respond honestly to the areas of assessment and development, in order to improve performance in their schools. Each area of development has criteria and sources of information. The criteria and core information indicators are placed on a five-point scale (**Table 5.1**). If a school obtains a rating of four and five green, it will indicate that the school is outstanding and should keep it up. When the self-evaluation rating is amber, which is a rating of three, it means minimum requirements are met, however, there is a room for improvement. When the rating of the school self-evaluation is two, it indicates that it requires immediate remedial action and if it obtains the rating of one, it needs urgent support.

**Table 5.1: Evaluation scale**

<b>Key:</b>		
<b>GREEN</b>	<b>Outstanding (5)</b>	Well done, keep it up!
	<b>Good (4)</b>	
<b>AMBER</b>	<b>Acceptable (3)</b>	Minimum requirements are met; however, there is still room for some improvement.
<b>RED</b>	<b>Needs improvement (2)</b>	Requires immediate remedial action.
	<b>Needs urgent support (1)</b>	

**Source:** Shale M. I.

To find out if schools meet policy requirements, the coordinating team agreed that they will look into each of the following areas of development.

### **5.3.1 Basic functionality**

For schools to function effectively and efficiently, in order for them to realise their educational and social goals, they have to start fixing their basics. The Department of Basic Education introduced a national policy on whole school evaluation (NEPA, 1996:8), which put in place mechanisms for determining the performance of schools, using internal and external evaluation. The indication has always been that interventions are more likely to succeed when they are implemented in schools with a certain level of functionality.

There are some useful resources that will determine levels of functionality in a school, some of which are as follows: admission policy, admission register, attendance register, summary register, quarterly attendance returns, late-coming register for teachers and learners, time register, leave register, leave forms file, as well as code of conduct for educators and learners. It is expected that schools should be able to implement the above resources at all times as the indication of basic functionality. As the coordinating team was trying to establish the availability of the above said resources, Principal B//Focus Group Session 1 commented, *“We do things to comply”*.

This indicates that not all resources were implemented and produced when required. The indication was that both schools were on a number two, which indicates that it “needs improvement”.

It was evident that the schools do not have appropriate procedures in place to deal with absence, lateness and truancy. The procedures to monitor and curb absence and late coming amongst educators was not enough, as there was no evidence to prove to the contrary. A code of conduct for learners was not available to establish a disciplined and purposeful school environment.

### 5.3.2 Quality of teaching, learning and educator development

For the improvement of performance, schools should be committed to a high quality of teaching and learning. Teachers should have been developed or they must engage in self-development. The SMTs are responsible for the creation of conditions for professional supportive and collaborative conversations and reciprocal accountability. The teachers are accountable for the improvement in learning of their learners, but they are accountable to the extent that they have been given the necessary support to complete the tasks expected of them. Therefore, professional support must be afforded before demands for improved performance can be made.

Teacher F/Focus Group Session 7: *“What we have been experiencing all along at our school, has always be that we need to improve results and get to a certain percentage, without been given enough support and guidance.”*

Principal B/Focus Group Session 7: *“But all teachers have always been welcome to the office of the principal if they experienced challenges.”*

Principal A/Focus Group Session 7: *“We are supposed to induct teachers, though in some years we really do not induct them and that should be a challenge that we must overcome.”*

The frustrations expressed by the teacher who says that they have experienced instructions that they must improve results, indicate that the leadership of this school has not been leading and that can affect performance of teaching and learning. The documents that will serve as a source of information to the coordinating team would include: Curriculum Policy (CAPS), national policy pertaining to the programme and promotion requirements, records of School Based Support Team (SBST), subject policies, IQMS documents and records of Continuous Professional Development (CPD). It is therefore important for a school to build practices that enables it to function as a professional learning community, and internal accountability systems and practises must be characterised by a culture of professional, supportive, evidence-based conversations.

Principal B commented that all teachers have always been welcomed to the principal's office if they experienced challenges.

The acceptance by Principal A, that they are supposed to induct teachers, though in some years they have not been doing it, is indicative of how induction of newly appointed teachers is handled in these schools. Teachers will only be willing to share their hard challenges if they feel that conversations are not about fault findings, but are safe spaces where they can talk about what they are struggling with professionally.

### **5.3.3 Learner achievement**

Empirical evidence points overwhelmingly to the link between increased teaching time in schools and better outcomes for learners (Needu Report, 2017:24). More compelling research findings, according to Needu's (2017:24) report is that the impact of time loss is often more detrimental in schools serving economically disadvantaged learners. The amount of time that the teachers and learners spend at school should not deviate from the allocated time in the school calendar.

Mr E/Focus Group Session 3: *"Our children may not perform according to how we as parents would wish, because some teachers come late and long after the school has started."*

Mrs E/Focus Group Session 3: *"Some teachers blame it on the transport they are using, which is public transport."*

Principal B/Focus Group Session 3: *"But it is the responsibility of the teacher to arrive on time at school he/she must arrange a transport that will arrive in time at a workplace".*

The conversation above indicates that time is not well managed at these schools. If time is not effectively managed, it has a negative impact on learners' proficiency owing to limited learning opportunities, like poor curriculum coverage, with addition to continued disruptions due to lockdowns caused by the Corona Virus (.

For the coordinating team to evaluate the achievement level of learners academically and in extra and co-curricular activities, the following were to be made available:

- Promotion schedules for past three years
- School assessment plans
- Assessment records
- School based assessment tasks
- Records of extra and co-curricular activities.

Principal A/Focus Group Session 11: *“Our school has been vandalized on several occasions and many of the school records were destroyed or disappeared and therefore we are unable to present all the required documents as even our main server was destroyed.”*

Principal B/Focus Group Session 11: *“There are some records available, but truly speaking, not all documents are available as required. Can we have your assessment records ladies and gentlemen”? Principal’s request from teachers who are in a coordinating team.*

Teacher B/Focus Group Session 11: *“But this is not fair as we are here to honestly reflect on improving our schools and not really to be inspected on the records that we have or do not have.”*

Researcher/Focus Group Session 11: *“If records are available, let us have them, if they are not available, let us agree that, that is where we need to improve so as to put our school on the right track in relation to performance. No witch hunt, just to reflect and see how best we can improve and what has been a hindrance to our performance.”*

From the conversation above, there is an indication that there is no focused commitment to improve learner achievement, as there were no records available to prove it, in order to make informed findings.

#### 5.3.4 Leadership, management and communication

Through document analysis – what is communicated non-verbal has equal importance or even utmost value than the spoken word. These could be posters on the wall, which give silently give strong authority such as highlighting the policies and culture of the institution. For the coordinating team, the aim was to evaluate the effectiveness of the leadership and management of the school. It may be said in different ways, but researchers who have examined education leadership agree that effective school leadership is responsible for establishing a school wide vision of commitment to high standards of the success of all learners (Louis et al., 2010:81). The SMT should provide a clear direction to the school by having a vision and mission for the school. The school's self-evaluation should take place annually, in order to develop a school improvement plan, which should be integrated into the school calendar for implementation. There must be a year calendar for schools under review. Every member of SMT must have a job description that they understand and roles and responsibilities clearly set out and signed. The role of SMT is to promote quality of teaching and learning in the school through appropriate curriculum management.

At these schools, vision and mission statements are well displayed on the walls, but some members of SMT do not remember what they stand for. As per CDA data-handling and analysis criteria, non-verbal directions in support of policy or authoritative nuances are well achieved through posters which are placed in places visually accessible by all. Unfortunately, the vision and mission statements were in one A4 sheet, instead of each on its own A4. In one of the planning meetings where leadership was identified as a weakness in schools, some of the following comments were made:

Mr P/Focus Group Session 2: *“The vision and mission that you see there, is just for display, because we do not follow them.”*

Mrs B/Focus Group Session 2: *“It is because they were drafted by old members of SGB and former principal of the school and needs to be revisited.”*

The comments indicated that the well-framed vision and mission displayed at the foyer was just for compliance, as it was unknown to some members what its importance was.

Epistemologically, there are diverse reasons why some members could not be well conversant with the school's vision and mission. Option A – no special workshops on how to actualise the mission and vision has ever been held, Option B – the school's curriculum leadership as a collective held to the notion that if it is on the wall, it is visible, it is known so it can be put into practice. Maybe one curriculum leader, can invite a critical overview as proposed by ACT and ask: "Are we sure we are doing it the right way, and if so how do we know and how can we confirm that our knowledge is accurate and institutionally effective?". By not knowing their own mission and vision, can have a negative self-esteem bearing on these members (cf. Figures 4.1, 4.2. & 4.2). Worse, a collective leadership assumption which is misplaced can have very destructive collective results as evidenced by the Marikana day-by-day events and the final massacre incident. The SMT whose job descriptions were available, were not signed; it was clear that teachers could not be given any clear direction as there was no school calendar in both schools that showed different activities in a year.

Principal B//Focus Group Session 12: *"We could not implement the school calendar, because schools were closed and opened and closed again and again due to the pandemic. All other plans were shuttered due to lockdown of the country in order to save lives."*

Principal A//Focus Group Session 12: *"We have been working under stress as teachers were also scared to come to work and parents also very sceptical of sending their children to schools. That affected our planning of school activities. We had rotational systems of timetable, which made it difficult for us to allocate responsibility adequately. Departmental heads could not be able to provide files that show curriculum coverage and whether they are keeping up to date with subject policies and changes in subject development. Therefore, there was no evidence of monitoring of teaching plans."*

Mrs B//Focus Group Session 12: *"Our children's future has been destroyed by this pandemic, even though teachers are trying their level best, they also get tired and sick and afraid of catching the virus. They have seen most of their friends passing on."*

There then followed a silence after one of the SGB members, Mr G, suggested that the team pray silently and then he pronounced “AMEN”. The SMT manages the asset registers and maintenance registers effectively as there was evidence thereof (Mojapelo, 2022:31). The stakeholders are involved through continuous communication strategies done by the SMT (cf. Figure 1.1. & Figure 3.1). During focus group session number 8, evidence of solid communication between the parent body of leaders and the school principal, which is open and with teachers timeously informed about decisions taken at the level of SGB, was demonstrated in the dialogue to follow.

MRS C/Focus Group Session 8: *“Most of decisions taken at the level of SGB are really not implemented, even though they can be urgent.”*

Principal A/Focus Group Session 8: *“Sometimes it is because of the unavailability of resources and the challenges of funds that may not have been paid on time into the school accounts.”*

The school policies have been revised, but the parent-component disagree that they were not involved when they were revised. Only school A’s parents are in agreement that they were involved in drafting the school policies. In other schools, the only part of the school policy that parents are conversant with, is the learners’ code of conduct as workshops are a mandatory calendar item.

### **5.3.5 Curriculum provision and resource**

The coordinating team aims to evaluate the implementation of the curriculum and enrichment programmes offered at schools and to what extent it enhances the aims and objectives of the education system. The information regarding aims of evaluation would be observed in the following documents: school curriculum and year plan, timetables, school annual report, resource of extra and co-curricular activities and planning, school inventory lists, lesson plans, distribution lists, retrieval system documents, lesson observations and observation of storeroom (Button, 2021:18).

The subjects that are offered at both schools are in line with the CAPS requirements. The correct notional time is allocated for each subject on the timetable. There is however a concern from teachers in the team.

Teacher C/Focus Group Session 9: *“The time-table and contact time displayed there is only for compliance as most of the time children are not at school due to contact with COVID-19 positive people or teachers are absent because they are COVID-19 positive.”*

Teacher C gave an affirmation to Morake-Toolo’s assertion that leaders within institutions responsible for strengthening the social fabric were emotionally drained by the loss of long serving colleagues and congregants – especially for schools, churches and traditional-cultural ceremonies, not to mention the disruptions to their ordinary time-table events (2023: 53, 77 & 85). The monitoring of sanitation protocols, unplanned expenses related to maintain these protocols, shortened services as well as cancelled events or low attendance became an unusual administrative burden.

Teacher D/Focus Group Session 9: *“The rotational system of time-table is also having negative impact on timetable as some learners do not come because they shall have mistaken their time-table by coming to school the current week when they were supposed to attend the following week.”*

The textbooks are not enough for learners at schools and the COVID-19 protocols demand that each learner use their own books (Morake-Toolo, 2023:77). This was a challenge as schools did not have sufficient funds to buy textbooks for all learners. This posed a concern for parents who were not comfortable with it, as dialogue from focus group number 10 clarifies.

Parent C/Focus Group Session 10: *“The government money has been given to the Guptas and now we are in the middle of a pandemic, our children are suffering.”*

Parent E/Focus Group Session 10: *“No, we must not get into politics because that is being handled at the Zondo Commission, let’s see how we can find a solution because this is a challenge.”*

Teacher C/Focus Group Session 10: *“There is no provision of extra curriculum activities due to the observation of COVID-19 protocols at our schools.”*

Teacher E/Focus Group Session 10: *“What we should be honest with, is that even when there was no COVID-19 protocols or pandemic, there’s still was no extra-curricular activities of the school.”*

Principal A/Focus Group Session 10: *“We want to change and this is the time to reflect and look at what was done wrong and correct all we need is to improve from what we have been doing.”*

Principal B/Focus Group Session 10: *“Most of our teachers are not qualified in some sporting activities, therefore they cannot provide enough support to such sporting activities, but we have to plan to support and provide different sporting activities.”*

This thesis firmly believes that how a principal manages communication with stakeholders such as parents elected as school leaders, versus ordinary parent queries differs from how a principal exposed to the critical leadership studies of ACT tenets reflects and responds (cf. Figure 1.1. & Figure 3.1). This belief is rooted on a conceptual framework assumption that the latter principal stands to apply school improvement interventions much more effectively (cf. 1.3, 1.7, 2.2, 2.2.8.3, 2.7.1. 2.7.2, 2.7.3, 5.1, 6.2.2.3 & Figure 7.1). Parents denote SGB members.

Parent C/Focus Group Session 10 in support: *“Yes in fact we have even forgotten that we are still SGB members.”*

Principal B/Focus Group Session 10 *“The reason for not convening meetings were that the chairperson has been sick, but that was also because of the fear of pandemic and Covid protocols.”*

Principal A/Focus Group Session 10: *“Can we please focus on the good things that we can do to improve the current situation in our schools, to make them functional and better.”*

Teacher B/Focus Group Session 10: *“With regards to the finance, we do not have knowledge of how they are used at our school, but we always bought things and the staff does not have information.”*

Below, is a dialogue conversation which correlates with session four although it took place in session 4. Showing that a reflective discussion atmosphere was stimulated, thus promoting the conceptualised framework of critical thinking vis a vis critical leadership skills.

Teacher A/Focus Group Session 4: *“The same at our school, we are only told that a certain amount of money has been shifted to buy something which was not budgeted for.”*

Principal A/Focus Group Session 4: *“Yes funds are allowed to be shifted with the approval of HOD, but it is necessary to inform all stakeholders.”*

**Textual and spoken word perspective analysis:** The participants take turns to air their views and the discourse is dominated by “We,” which indicates that the participants are united in practice. This also suggest to some extend the degree of collective ownership.

**Social structure perspective analysis:** The conversation indicates a respectful relationship even though, the participants come from different experiences and backgrounds. There seems to be a degree of equality indicated by all participants. Therefore, all participants feel valued and respected. Principal B’s comments are to explain the reasons behind lack of meetings, due to Covid protocols and this is levelling the playgrounds for all to understand.

**Discursive practice analysis perspective:** CPAR aims to help people understand and to transform “the way we do things around here”. In particular, CPAR aims to help participants to transform (Kemmis et al., 2014:67). The comments by Principal B suggest that the participants should focus on the current situation at their school and change it. They must understand their practices and conditions under which they practice. Principal A comments, “Yes funds are allowed to be shifted with the approval of the HOD”; in this way there is engagement in communicative action with others to reach unforced consensus about what to do.

## **5.4 INTERVENTION TO IMPROVE SCHOOL ENVIRONMENT**

The school environment refers to a set of relationships that occur among members of a school community that are determined by structural, personal and functional factors of the educational institution, which provide the distinctiveness of schools. The characteristics of the school environment is learner friendliness that is motivated by the leadership of principals and SMTs that can often show the following qualities within the effective school culture: Safety, respect, student responsibility for learning, intellectual rigor, and ongoing support and concern for student welfare. The internal surroundings of a school is its environmental factors, which include: teaching, learning materials, information technology and teacher support, as well as the school climate.

### **5.4.1 Governance and relationship**

Respectful relationships in schools recognize that schools are a workplace, a community hub and a place of learning. All who are invited in a school community deserve to be respected, valued and get equal treatment. This area of development evaluates the effectiveness of the governing body in fulfilling its roles and responsibilities with regard to the establishment of a purposeful and disciplined school environment, as well as management of resources.

We know, accept and acknowledge that attitude change and behaviour can be achieved when positive attitudes and behaviours, as well as equality are lived across the school community. The classroom learning is reinforced by what is modelled in the school community.

The coordinating team had to investigate whether the following are implemented:

#### **a) SGB functionality**

- i.) To check if the stakeholder composition of the SGB is in line with legislation.
- ii.) Number of formal SGB meetings held in the last reporting period.
- iii.) Whether the members of the SGB had undergone training.
- iv.) Appropriate records of meetings maintained by the SGB and its committees.

## **b) Financial management**

- i.) Proper procedures for collecting, receiving money and banking are implemented.
- ii.) Proper payments procedures are followed. iii.) Petty cash is managed in a proper manner. iv.) Proper procedure followed to approve budget for the current years. v.) The budget contains appropriate income and expenditure items.
- vi.) Audited financial statement available for the previous financial year.

## **c) Asset management**

- i.) Proper procurement procedure are practiced. ii.) Proper asset management procedure are practiced.

## **d) Human Resource Management**

- i.) The SGB ensures the due process in interviewing and selecting of staff. ii.) The SGB remunerates staff in compliance with legislation.

Parent B/Focus Group Session 4: *“The last time we had a formal meeting in our school as members of SGB, was more than six months ago until we were invited to this team”*

### **5.4.2 School Safety, Security and Discipline (SSSD)**

Learners have a right to a clean and safe environment that is conducive to education (SASA, 1996). Security of property, well cared for school facilities, school furniture and equipment, clean toilets facilities, water and green environment, absence of harassment in attending classes and writing tests and examinations, all create an atmosphere that is conducive for education and training. The school has been developed to cater for all learners attending the school; it is therefore the privilege and obligation of every learner

to protect and carefully use all the facilities and equipment so that others who come after them, can also enjoy the privilege.

The parent or legal guardian of anyone who intentionally misuses, damages or defaces any school property, should replace it or pay for the property that was damaged. Destruction of property is a punishable offence. The aim of the coordinating team was to evaluate the levels at which the schools provide for a healthy, safe and secure environment for learners, staff and parents. The schools under study displayed non implementation of health, safety, and security policies to support, care and protect the learners, staff and others.

The following policies were looked into:

- Safety practices against potential hazards, unsafe and unhealthy structures.
- Security regulations that aim to ensure the safety of learners, staff and visitors on the premises.
- Regulations in compliance with the legislation to keep the school violence and drug free.
- Learner policy and discipline and procedure contributions towards the welfare of learners.

Researcher: *“Can we all agree that all learners are safe in our schools, as well as staff and visitors?”*

Principal A/Focus Group Session 12: *“Sir, we cannot guarantee total safety of everybody based on strange behaviours learners have shown nowadays around the country.”*

Principal B/Focus Group Session 4: *“Recently, there was a video clip circulating of a learner attacking the teacher.”*

Teacher A/Focus Group Session 4: *“We as Africans, your child is my child, but some parents do not assist in disciplining children who are not theirs, because their parents may fight, that is why we have discipline problems in schools.”*

Teacher B/Focus Group Session 4: *“We are very careful when we talk to these children because nowadays, they take you a video and circulate it, and once the Department get hold of it, you may be suspended if found to be on the wrong side.”*

Parent B/Focus Group Session 4: *“The school is ours and we have to take responsibility as the community to see to it that it is protected and its property.”*

Teacher C/Focus Group Session 4: *“Otherwise it is in the best interest of the community to have our schools free from violence and drugs, those learners who attack teachers are sometimes doing those things while under the influence of something.”*

Teacher A/Focus Group Session 4: *“I agree with you as we found some two boys in Grade 7 with a box of dagga and they said that they are only smoking after school.”*

Mrs. B/Focus Group Session 4: *“It takes a village to raise a child, what I mean is that, it is the responsibility of all of us here and those who are not here to participate in the affairs of our schools. We can’t be expecting teachers to be all-rounders when we as parents fold our arms and expect schools to perform.”*

**Textual and spoken word perspective analysis:** CPAR aims at changing practitioners’ practices, their understanding of practices, as well as conditions in which they practice. The comment by Mrs. B, that it takes a village to raise a child, can be viewed in the light of teachers who should know the conditions under which they practice and the responsibilities that all the participants should take, in order to help their schools to improve in performance.

**Social structure perspective analysis:** The comments of Principal B about the clip that was going around of a learner attacking a teacher provides information of the power of social media on performance of both learners and teachers. Parent A’s comment of parents who do not support those who assist in shaping the behaviour of their children, indicates concern and commitment of wanting to change the current situation. This shows how things change through your efforts and the efforts of your fellow critical participatory action researchers (Kemmis et al., 2014:67).

**Discursive practice analysis perspective:** Parent B and Parent C are finding what they are doing as rational and reasonable to take responsibility as a community to see to it

that the school and its property are protected and violence free. “Otherwise, it is the responsibility of the community to see to it that the school are violent and drug free.” The participants believe that what they say are comprehensible, coherent, accurate, sincerely stated and morally right and appropriate (Kemmis et al., 2014:82).

### 5.4.3 School Infrastructure (SI)

The school infrastructure displays a conducive learning environment when it is properly maintained. The coordinating committee would evaluate the extent to which the school infrastructure is maintained. The following would be evaluated to check if schools are compliant:

- Basic services: Which would include water supply, electrical supply and ablution facilities.
- Classrooms: Whether accommodation is sufficient for learners at school and appropriately utilized.
- School terrain: The school has appropriate grounds.
- Maintenance: The initiative to maintain and protect the infrastructure.

Principal A/Focus Group Session 9: *“The water supply in our schools is disrupted by municipality as they open and close water supply due to the debt that we have, even electricity is switched on and off due to high debt we owe to municipality.”*

Principal B/Focus Group Session 9: *“Even the meter boxes and pre-paid meters units that we buy do not last long, so we are struggling because of the old debt that was inherited from apartheid days.”*

Teacher D/Focus Group Session 9: *“We need to take care of leaks that we have in our schools, if we would be taking care of maintenance. There is always water leaking in underground pipes and we need to fix that.”*

Teacher A/Focus Group Session 9: *“The closing and opening of water can be blamed for bursting pipes, as the time water is opened, there’s a high pressure that gets into the pipes and that causes pipes to burst.”*

Teacher B/Focus Group Session 9: *“Have you seen the learner’s toilets lately? They are a mess and they can increase the spread of illnesses.”*

Principal B/Focus Group Session 9: *“That is why the Department has employed the general workers during this time of pandemic to clean every time so as to alleviate the possible spread of diseases.”*

The discourse above indicates that CPAR’s initial approach is their own situation as participants want first to know and understand how things work here, how things have come to be, what kind of consequences our practices have produced (Kemmis, 2014:68).

It is common for education experts to call for schools to engage within their surrounding communities. Community engagement consists of intensive use of schools’ physical facilities by the broader community. In most communities, school buildings are the most prominent public buildings; the centre of many civic activities, social life and sports events, in addition to cultural and educational activities (Barret et al., 2019:36)

Teacher B/Focus Group Session 10: *“There is a church, which is using our school facilities and every Monday, teachers complain about their classes that have been burgled into.”*

Principal A/Focus Group Session 10: *“We have reported that to the church leaders and they have promised to investigate the matter.”*

Sydel (2017) posits that providing community members with access to school facilities, can yield many benefits. Though it may sometimes create some security complications, these can usually be resolved by allowing adults to use the facility only after normal school hours.

**Textual and spoken word perspective analysis:** Teachers and parents are free to express their opinion on school safety and the prevention measures. The engagement with municipality will be of great importance in this regard as most of the challenges and problems emanate from the municipality: these are the general views of participants.

**Social structure perspective analysis:** The teachers and the principals are providing assurance that there will be improvement in the maintenance of infrastructure, like leaking

pipes and learners' ablution facilities as there are general school cleaners and workers employed. The school involvement with the community can also mean providing learners with educational opportunities outside the school. This can also be a source of additional income for many schools.

#### **5.4.4 Discursive practice analysis perspective**

The discussion of the relationship between schools and communities, is that providing school facilities that meet current and future needs in a given community, is to constantly scan the environment, communicate regularly with educators, community leaders, businesses and policymakers, and to stay aware of the current educational, design and environmental issues (Walden, 2015:68). Anything that threatens the safety of the school can come from inside and outside the school buildings. It is not abstract to imagine how distracting it would be for learners, teachers and parents if, for example the school structure may not withstand the next storm, or if electrical wiring is exposed, its window panes broken or its bathrooms are a source of contamination, instead of being sanitary. The school buildings are prone to be flooded by intensive rains, swept away by high winds, exposed to hazardous material, or decaying for lack of maintenance, and it hinders both teaching and learning, making it harder to produce the level of academic results that are possible in a safe and healthy building (Walden, 2015:71).

#### **5.4.5 Parents and Community (PC)**

Parental involvement is important to help their children in schools and home, beside the role that has been taken by teachers and the school authorities. It is important to engage family members in motivating them to influence the learners' academic achievements (Senin & Health, 2021:2). The family daily life influence, as well as the formation of the home-based self-esteem, will affect the learners. Contribution to the school in any form, either money, expertise or voluntarism towards school activities and programs have created a harmonious atmosphere among school children and parents. This indirectly

improves the motivation level among pupils, and will improve and encourage them to improve their level in education. Parental involvement can create a good example for children to inculcate in themselves the values that they can practice. Thus, the involvement of parents in the development of the school can create a positive impact on the children and among the school community in delivering the best results. The relation between community, parents and the school is crucial to help the education authorities and the community with the importance of having a good collaboration between the communities and parents towards the school to develop the learners' achievements.

The coordinating team aims to evaluate the extent to which the school encourages parental and community involvement in the education of the learners and how it makes use of their contributions to support learners' progress.

Researcher: *"Are we satisfied with the level of participation of parents and community in our schools?"*

Mr E/Focus Group Session 12: *"The involvement of parents in our school has been hindered by the Covid restrictions and protocols."*

Mr F/Focus Group Session 12: *"Yes, we use to have meetings in phases and general meetings, but then there is no way we could meet because of pandemic, but in reality our community also needs revivals and reminder that it is important to participate in the affairs of their school."*

Teacher C/Focus Group Session 12: *"We have a WhatsApp group where every teacher communicates with parents of their learners and that has improved engagement with parents."*

Teacher B/Focus Group Session 12: *"Yes we also have healthy relations with businesses around the school as they alternate in supply of food for learners (NSNP)."*

Mr F/Focus Group Session 12: *"As parents, we get information about the progress of our children every quarter, it remains our responsibilities to motivate and encourage them to work hard."*

Principal B/Focus Group Session 12: *“Yet not enough motivation and encouragement is given to the children, hence the performance indicate.”*

**Textual and spoken word perspective analysis:** When considering the text structure of the extracts above, it is evident from the words of participants above such as “we have a WhatsApp group that they are empowered for participating in this research”. These words represent the voices of the liberated, empowered and emancipated people (Tshelane, 2015:15). The school context indicates that participants are free to raise their views in a meeting or in public without fear of what others will think of them.

**Social structure perspective analysis:** Parents help with homework, while community members assist with the events in the school or make decisions with teachers and principal about how to improve learners’ achievement. Some parents and community members volunteer as teachers’ aides or collaborate with community groups to build support for neighbourhood schools. This is indicative of Mr F’s “it remains our responsibility to motivate and encourage our children”.

**Discursive practice analysis perspective:** The observation by Mr E that the involvement of parents in schools has been hampered by Covid protocols and of no meetings, has highlighted the fact that parents used to meet in the past before the pandemic. This is supported by Mr F, who on the other hand is still concerned about the participation of parents in school activities, as he indicates, “but in reality our community also needs a revival and reminder that it is important to participate in the affairs of the school.”

#### **5.4.6 Reflections on the intervention in the improvement of both learner achievement and the school environment**

In order for the research project to achieve the aim and objectives of the study, it was important to focus on the Whole School Evaluation (WSE), School Self Evaluation (SSE) and School Improvement Plan (SIP), as contained in the National Policy (NEPA, 1996). The research participants and the researcher attempted to answer the question of the project, “How can curriculum leadership in primary schools be improved”.

The co-researchers understood the policy on external evaluation, as it was presented to them by the researcher and that it is periodical and its primary purpose is verification. They also understood school self-evaluation, which is undertaken by the school community (SMT, teachers, SGB, parents and learners) on an annual basis. There was a clear understanding of the school improvement plan, which would detail what the key challenges of the school are and how they would be addressed. This would then translate into improved learner performance, which is what this research was aiming to achieve.

## **5.5 CHAPTER SUMMARY**

This chapter focused on analysis and interpretation of data collected with the aim of designing a framework to improve curriculum leadership in primary schools. CDA, as advocated by Teun van Dijk, was used to examine how data was collected and interpreted. Extracts from photo voices, which were guided by CDA, have raised concerns relating to power, oppression, domination and hegemony.

The coordinating team, with the use of the CPAR paradigm, focusing on the roles and responsibilities of the school communities to improve curriculum leadership, were deliberated upon, on the basis of the two themes. This path was explored through the use of the CPAR paradigm, and was focusing on the impact that the communities have on curriculum leadership.

In order to understand the important roles and responsibilities that the school communities have on the curriculum leadership of schools, the chapter analysed data from learners' achievement with special attention to SMTs and their commitment to monitoring, guiding and providing support to learners and members of SGB. Recommendations were discussed under the theme "Learner Achievement" (LA).

Participants were able realize that curriculum leadership is defined more by the concept than the organizational position (Bradley et al., 2018:16). Principals, SGBs, SMT, and all other stakeholders have clearly delineated tasks and decisions for which they are held accountable. They may decide to delegate, but the leadership is clearly defined as being a part of their position.

Furthermore, the people who are in those positions have within their capacity the control of their organizational variables necessary to effectively administer their roles. All the nine areas of development were discussed in accordance to the whole school evaluation and the intervention strategies, divided into two, which were also discussed. The next chapter presents a summary of the findings and draws conclusions based on the summary, recommends and proposes a framework to improve curriculum leadership in primary schools. The following Chapter 6 is presented on the next page.

## CHAPTER 6:

### FINDINGS AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR: A FRAMEWORK TO IMPROVE CURRICULUM LEADERSHIP IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS

#### 6.1 INTRODUCTION

The study was about designing a framework to improve curriculum leadership in primary schools, pillared on Africana Critical Theory as the theoretical foundation (CF. 2.2, 2.5 & 2.6). This chapter therefore gives a summary of the findings and recommendations for the implementation of a sustainable framework to improve curriculum leadership in primary schools, in order to achieve the improved academic performance. The chapter further explores the growing impact that critical leadership has in education. It is used here to denote the broad, diverse and heterogeneous perspectives that share a concern to critique the power relations and identity constructions through which leadership dynamics are often reproduced, frequently rationalized, sometimes resisted and occasionally transformed (Gabriel et al., 1997). The chapter is divided into two subsections. The first sub-section presents the summary of the findings and forward recommendations of designing a framework that can improve curriculum leadership in primary schools in order to achieve improved results. In a nutshell, the aim of the study is to:

*To design a framework that will improve curriculum leadership in primary schools towards improved learned performance. The intention to demonstrate the correlation between critical leadership and ACT.*

The second sub-section deals with the implementation of the framework to improve curriculum leadership in primary schools. Furthermore, the participants in the coordinating team enabled the engagements as members consisted of principals, deputy principals, departmental heads, teachers and parents. CPAR guided the views of participants, while addressing the lacuna in curriculum leadership; this chapter is driven by the research question, “How can a framework to improve curriculum leadership in primary schools become designed?”

## **6.2 THE RESEARCH FINDINGS**

The research findings are presented and linked to the research question. Firstly, the findings are based on the collected data from active participation of all participants and stakeholders, as well as evidence obtained from the documents that were found in the two focused schools. Supporting and monitoring records that were analysed during data collection procedures were used as evidence to inform the team about the schools. The findings are discussed below. The data presented in the previous chapter guided the arguments that followed the emergence of major deliberation findings.

### **6.2.1 Identify and justify the need for improved curriculum leadership: interventions to improve academic achievement**

The objective of a framework to improve curriculum leadership, is to ameliorate school academic performance. It is the responsibility of curriculum leaders to always monitor the alignment of instruction to learning standards. Monitoring of instruction for an assignment should always be clearly aligned to learning targets and tasks for mastering learning standards (Diloya, 2021:144; Gentile et al., 2003:89). Measurable learning targets will always indicate that learners have met learning standards. The intervention program should be drawn that will assist curriculum leaders to ascertain learner performance improvement. Formative assessment should be able to inform that learners are able to understand quality work and are also able to assess the quality of their own work. Providing learners with consistent feedback and using formative assessment have indicated a significant improvement of learner performance on standardised tests (Callahan, 2021:257).

#### **6.2.1.1 *Understanding the importance of vision and mission***

The schools under review should always realign and revise their mission statements regularly to enable them to ensure they benefit and meet the needs of the school community. According to the Values Education Good Practice Project, centering schools

on a value-packed vision statement can bring positive changes in teachers on professional practice in the classrooms, especially in communication with students. This can improve student-teacher relationships and enable students to self-regulate and selfmanage better (Ibrahim & Zaatari, 2020:382). A mission and vision can inspire greater capacity for reflection for the entire school community. It can increase teachers' confidence in their work, giving them an increased sense of professional fulfilment. Parents can have increased confidence in a school. It can therefore be concluded that mission and vision play an important role in the life of an institution for better results (cf. 5.3.1) Vision and mission statements should be carefully considered when picking a school for learners, as they have the potential to transform school communities.

#### **6.2.1.2 *Lack of commitment by curriculum leadership team to the achievements of educational goals***

A committed curriculum leadership team plans together to achieve educational goals they have set for themselves. Working as a team involves more than one person in a process of achieving a goal. This aspect needs to be emphasised in the strategic management of a school organisation in pursuit of forming a working team that is active and able to work together to achieve organisational goals (cf. 5.2.2). Therefore, the success of the efforts of a group that was formed, the spirit of cooperation and good relations among group members, need to be nurtured (Matashu, 2022:36).

#### **6.2.1.3 *Competing priorities on curriculum leadership to improve learners performance***

School principals are regarded as school leaders and therefore are required to be the curriculum leaders (Tapala, Van Niekerk & Mentz, 2022:16). Curriculum leaders are faced with competing priorities, all yearning for their attention. There are priorities that, as they are identified, turn into barriers and curriculum leaders cannot perform all of them at once (Ogina, 2017:79). The priorities referred to are meetings, monitoring and

moderation of learners, planning and receiving visitors, including parents and district officials, and other competing priorities that curriculum leaders have to deal with while still having other planned activities.

A comment was made by one of the principals, “to be honest we do not do justice in terms of considering content and assessment, we usually do things to comply” (cf. 5.2.3). These competing priorities hinder curriculum leaders from performing their work. They may know what is expected of them, but will struggle to be good at it, due to workload, therefore rendering them incompetent (Brady, 2020; Seobi & Wood, 2016; Pinkelman et al., 2015:11).

#### **6.2.1.4 Absence of strategy in curriculum leadership**

The concept of strategic leadership has been in the discourse of education literature for the longest of time, but in recent days, curriculum strategic leadership has become a need for in-depth discussion. Successful educational primary school institutions do not depend on a number of learners the institution graduates every year, but the competent way in which the leadership handles affairs of the school, pursuant of the school’s vision and mission, the achievement of the school’s goals and objectives, as well as the value addition that is noticed in the numerous learners that pass through the institutions (Cobbinah, 2020:82). Strategic planning is one of the key components in education institutions and school leaders.

The coordinating committee found out that there was no strategic planning in the two schools, as indicated by one of the principals, “Parents may not be in the know that schools should plan, but the school has never involved parents in planning for teaching and learning”. The coordinating team realised the importance of strategic leadership in education as a process that provides school leaders with a clear direction for their schools.

### **6.2.1.5 Lack of community involvement in curriculum leadership**

Primary schools are under increasing pressure to improve learner outcomes and current educational reforms require schools, especially those serving black majority, to partner with families and communities (Wills et al., 2021:8). Parental involvement in curriculum leadership is crucial. Studies on academic achievement have indicated that variables, such as learners' socio-economic status, and self-efficacy of curriculum leaders' skills had an impact on the academic success of the learners (Shava et al., 2021:117). These studies have shown that variables at the student-level and school-level affect the academic success of the student directly or indirectly. The coordinating team realised that parental involvement was absent in the two schools under study. The parents were displaying their willingness to participate, but were denied access for participation by the SMT. There was a general feeling that the relations between the school and community were inadequate and this had an impact on learner achievement.

Governance in both historically advantaged and disadvantaged schools is underscored by different historical experiences and framed by a stark authoritarian climate; a concept which is not new to the South African discourse (Davids, 2022:4). While parents and other stakeholders had limited say at historically advantaged schools and had to exercise their limited powers through school management councils, parents at historically disadvantaged schools - mainly black schools - virtually had no say in their children's education (Beckmann & Prinsloo, 2009:173).

### **6.2.2 Identify the key components of designing a framework for curriculum leadership: interventions to improve learner performance**

It is upsetting for everyone involved in curriculum leadership to find some learners struggling in school. Many schools in mostly disadvantaged communities are still set up with a "one size fits all" model. Meaning that we often see learners who are not doing well in one way or the other in the same way as those who are brighter. When this happens there can be reasons for that, and sometimes it happens all at once. It does not matter what the cause may be, finding the right support for learners is extremely important.

School can be a very difficult place for learners and having to come and receive a negative feedback on a daily basis may be awful for their mental wellbeing. The coordinating team agreed that underperformance will be eradicated by improving on the following.

#### **6.2.2.1 *Basic functionality***

Fixing the basics for the school to function efficiently should be the first priority of leaders who seek to see change and improvement in their school. The coordinating team was able to determine the level of school functionality by seeking to peruse the resource documents required to establish the functionality of the school (cf 5.3.1). The evidence obtained was that the schools were not having appropriate procedures in place to make their schools as functional as they were supposed be. The comment of one of the principals when the coordinating team was requesting the documents for verification purposes, said “We do things to comply” and it was an indication that not all is well with the basic school functionality.

#### **6.2.2.2 *Quality of teaching, learning and educator development resulting from teacher development***

Learner outcomes are improved by the influence of teachers’ Professional Development (PD). Teacher development involves a multidimensional structure and changes across a teacher’s professional life, defining PD is complicated, and existing studies fail to meaningfully define it. To offer a working framework for optimal PD, I reviewed existing articles on the subject in different journals in teacher education and informed the coordinating team. We found that effective PD is attentive to assessment, research scale, duration, comprehensiveness, dissemination, context, support and control, and collaboration. As the study’s focus group, we agreed to cognitively situate this conceptual framework as a new take on pre-existing definitions of PD that advises how to more effectively apply PD within the selected Botshabelo school, and hopefully – globally as

an emancipative institutional leadership instrument or administrative resource (Sancar, 2021:103 and cf. 1.3, 1.7, 2.2, 2.2.8.3, 2.7.1, 2.7.2, 2.7.3, 5.1, 6.2.2.3 & Figure 7.1). The results of the study point to the fact that primary teachers need continuing professional development in managing learner behaviour and classroom structures to promote collaboration, active learning in the classroom and to achieve equal learning opportunities for the learners (Caingcoy, 2022:69-81). If all of the above mentioned can be satisfied, the learner performance is bound to improve.

### **6.2.2.3 *Learner achievement as a sign of performance outcomes***

A popular explanation for low learner achievement in many developing countries' primary schools is that learners have relatively little opportunity to learn the required skills needed for academic success. The pandemic, COVID-19, also had a devastating impact as school programs came to a halt (Morake-Toolo, 2023:53 & Msila, 2022:2281). However logical this explanation may be, unfortunately there is little empirical evidence that has been presented to support the first assumption made above according to Besharati et al., (2021:27) and Reeves et al. (2013:426), while there is so much valid scientific evidence that indeed – curriculum trimming led to both overt and subtle curriculum gaps across schools in South Africa. Several policy-relevant studies point to class size as an important determinant of learner outcomes in SA. In the 2016 *Identifying Binding Constraints in Education Report*, ensuring that no Foundation Phase class is in excess of 45 learners', serves as one of six core components of a proposed national reading strategy (Van der Berg et al., 2016:55). Despite the focus of that report on the Foundation Phase, such a component is arguably also suitable for higher phases (Kohler, 2022:126).

### **6.2.2.4 *Leadership, management and communication to improve learner achievement***

Primary schools are the building blocks in any education system. Enhancing sustainability is apposite to leadership, management and communication (Khumalo, 2021:42). In its examination, the study provides insights on the role of primary school principals in

promoting sustainable education through inspiring teachers. Teacher motivation is a very critical focus research area, particularly in the present depressing times and particularly in promoting sustainability. Without ignoring and dismissing other factors that have a bearing on the poor performance of the South African primary schools, teacher discouragement is one of the factors. The purpose of this investigation was to explore the extent in which the leadership practices of primary school principals promote teacher motivation and ultimately achieving a sustainable teacher workforce.

School leadership that is tyrannical and abusive is on the rise in many primary schools in our country. Abusive leadership is a destructive form of leadership that have a lasting negative influence on the subordinates (Mullen, Fiset & Rheume, 2018:946). Communicating with stakeholders is vital for the school and its learners and all who are involved with learners deserve respect including teachers, as they become demotivated when they are abused rather appreciated, which ultimately affect the learners and their performance.

“Abusive supervision” is defined as “subordinates” perceptions of the extent to which their supervisors engage in the sustained display of hostile verbal and non-verbal behaviours, excluding physical contact (Mullen et al., 2018:947). It is very difficult to operate in an environment which is abusive. Different forms of abuse from school principals include hurling insults, talking one down in the presence of others and ridicule (Mkhize, 2021:18).

#### **6.2.2.5 Curriculum provision and resources for performance enhancement**

This section provided a brief discussion on the allocation or availability of the school resources in the schools under study, which has been identified by the coordinating team. There are three basic components of school resources identified by the team, which are material resources, physical facilities, and human resources. It showed how the provision of basic resources could contribute or not to improvement in learner achievement (Molaudzi, 2021:529). The literature review has revealed contrasting views from different studies on the relationship between provision of resources and learner achievement in

primary schools. Some studies confirmed the view that regards resources as determinants in promoting teaching and learning in schools. Resource availability in most cases in developing countries, was found to improve attendance of learners in schools. Most of the studies reviewed, acknowledged the critical role played by the following document analyses instruments in schools: year plan and timetable, results of extracurricular activities and planning, lesson plans, etc (cf. 5.3.4). A strong school library promotes collaboration between the subject educator and the qualified librarian in supporting access to information by learners. The school library was characterized as either a powerhouse or a learning centre of educational institution, because it is a centre where all educational, social, and cultural activities happen. Some institutions have advanced their libraries through technology, whereas others are still lacking (Chabalala & Naidoo, 2021:3).

### **6.2.3 Identify conditions conducive to successful implementation of a framework: improved school environment conducive to learning**

It is known a fact that surroundings affect learners consciously or unconsciously (Lyons, 2002:10). The environment we are living in can motivate us to focus on our tasks or cause distractions that will make us lose concentration (cf. 5.4). It is essential for both the school and community to ensure that the learners have a conducive environment that promotes learning as they spend significant time daily in their classrooms. Creating a space that promotes learning among students, does not only benefit students, as teachers will also find it easier and more enjoyable to teach students who are focused on their lessons (Makela et al., 2014:268).

#### **6.2.3.1 *Enhancing governance and stakeholder relationship***

Governance in schools has never been more important, because ensuring the institutional legitimacy of schools is in effect what they do and what they are responsible for (Ranson et al., 2005:305). The governance of the school is largely hidden from view; it is very much a 'behind the scene' activity (cf 5.4.1). All those connected with the school

feel the effects of good governance deeply. Good governance and healthy relationships provide a secure foundation for a school, an underpinning of what happens in a school on a daily basis, and an overall framework within which the work of teachers and learners can take place (cf 5.4.1)

There has been a negative attitude in behaviour of governing bodies and school management teams in schools under study. School governing bodies were found to be dysfunctional and not properly constituted in line with the legislation. The meetings were not held regularly as required. The management of finances were not proper and transparent. The coordinating team also discovered that members felt valued, irrespective of the dysfunctionality and non-commitment to roles and responsibilities. Strengthening and constantly improving relationships and collaboration between parents and teachers is essential for personal and academic growth of learners. Teachers work with learners more than anyone else in the school and there is evidence locally and internationally, showing that effective school-parent collaboration has been coupled with lower rates of grade retention and school drop-outs, learner absenteeism, as well as a decrease in unruly conduct. The need for the review of empirical research (Leithwood, 2021:244), which concluded that improving the nature of both student–parent and parent– school relationships was central to the work of leaders demonstrably successful in improving equity in their schools.

### **6.2.3.2 *Secure, safe and discipline in school***

Parents, as well as community leaders, need to make informed judgements about which systems to put in place in an attempt to curb violence and antisocial behaviour in schools (Ibekwe, 2021:233). The plans for school safety must target what is required for the school to become safer, secured and disciplined by describing activities or programs to be adopted that will address those targets. The Department of Basic Education has put policies and measures in place to ensure the safety of all learners, educators and stakeholders (cf. 5.4.2). The Department also reiterates that there is no place for violence, drug abuse, sexual harassment and other criminal acts in schools, as it poses a threat

and a serious barrier to learning. There should be great focus on the inculcation of values and ethics and of a just and caring society within school communities. The ills highlighted above should be viewed in a serious light, because they carry a potential to deprive learners of their inherent constitutional rights to life, education, equality and dignity. Schools are critical in instilling discipline and ensuring safety, thus codes of conduct for learners in all public schools, are essential. Schools are therefore directly responsible for providing an environment conducive to the delivery of quality teaching and learning by among other things, promoting the rights and safety of all learners, teachers and parents (cf. 5.4.2). Curriculum leaders in the schools under study, did not take full responsibility of the behaviour of some learners and teachers. ‘Sir, we cannot guarantee total safety of everybody based on strange behaviours learners have shown nowadays around the country” (cf, 5.4.2).

### **6.2.3.3 School infrastructure**

The Department of Basic Education encourages schools to maintain infrastructure at all times. The interventions have focused on addressing elements of physical infrastructure related to proper fencing, classrooms, laboratories and equipment infrastructure, which are crucial elements of learning environment in schools. There is strong evidence that links high quality infrastructure with better educational instruction, improved student outcomes and a reduced dropout rate, among other benefits (Peurach et al., 2019:32-37).

The Department of Basic Education’s (DBE) statistics, released in 2015, highlight the disparities in education where a privileged few (mostly white learners) are able to study in comfortable, well-resourced and safe environments, while others (black learners) struggle to get a seat in a classroom (cf 5.4.3). They have shown that of the 23 589 public ordinary schools in the country, 77% do not have stocked libraries, 86% do not have laboratory facilities and 5 225 schools have either unreliable water supply or none at all. A total of 913 schools are expected to function without electricity and a further 2 854 must make do with an unreliable supply (cf 5.4.3). The DBE’s national policy for an Equitable

Provision of an Enabling School Physical and learning Environment (NPEP), emphasises the negative effects of a poor schooling environment on learners. These include irregular attendance and higher dropout rates. Importantly, NPEP also recognises the detrimental effects of an inadequate school infrastructure on teachers; cite attrition high turnover and teachers' absenteeism, no doubt in working in demoralising unhygienic and often unsafe environments. The coordinating team's findings are that the curriculum leadership teams in these schools do not have capacity to change the current situation in municipalities in order to find their schools running properly in terms of their infrastructure. The maintenance of the available resources is poor, as there were no efforts done to show the documentation relating to maintenance.

#### **6.2.3.4 *Parents, community and stakeholders to influence curriculum outcome***

The school principal plays a critical role in engaging parents and their communities to enhance student learning and wellbeing yet, the qualities and strategies of leadership to encourage and sustain engagements are little researched hence our firm believe that this thesis has begun the process of contributing knowledge and thus build a solid operational framework to address the dilemma asserted to by Willis et al. (2021:6 and cf. 1.3, 1.7, 2.2, 2.2.8.3, 2.7.1. 2.7.2, 2.7.3, 5.1, 6.2.2.3, Figure 1.1. & Figure 1.2). Durišić and Bunijevac (2017:137) indicates that the schooling takes place in the context of complex social interactions within the school and the parents, as well as community structures. It should be the responsibility of the principal and leaders of curriculum to ensure that the parents and the community members are involved in school activities. The principal, as the instructional leader, must build a relationship of trust with the parents and community leaders by continuous communication with them and listening to all stakeholder groups and individuals (Kearney et al., 2013:332). To ensure that parents are able to support learning at home and in the school, the principal and curriculum leaders should ensure that the parents are familiarized with the curriculum. Von Preventer and Kruger (2003:257) posit that the curriculum leader should encourage participation of learners in social economic and cultural life of the community, make school facilities available, as

well as other resources to the community. Effective relationships and working together rely on trust. A key ingredient of building trust is a sense of care and commitment, not only to children, but also to the local community (Epstein, 2019:636). The cases show that characteristics of trust are compassion and good will, reliability, competence, honesty and openness. These characteristics built into school relationship, enable problem solving, sharing and the building of an ethic of care (cf. 2.2.5). School leadership, teachers, and community relationships are a critical part of a school change. All these are reasons behind the commitment to School Governing Bodies (SGB) and attempts to improve the quality of education delivery through structured democratic organization and development. However, there is limited understanding about how working together improves learning.

The coordinating committee identified some root causes of dysfunctionality in schools, which were material and institutional causes. Material causes, being the effects of poverty and inequality, while the institutional causes were identified as social fragmentation, unemployment, substance abuse, violence, single/child headed households, hunger and poverty (cf. 1.3, 1.7, 2.2, 2.2.8.3, 2.7.1, 2.7.2, 2.7.3, 5.1 & 6.2.2.3). Covid 19 added to already existing challenges and the community's and parents' participation was badly affected in schools (cf. 5.4.4).

#### **6.2.4 Anticipation of possible threats that may hinder the implementation of a framework.**

Several challenges standing in the way of realising the adoption of the proposed conceptual framework were discussed thus:

##### **6.2.4.1 *Lack of ability to influence teachers on content and method of teaching.***

Some conducive conditions need to be considered in order to ensure the success of a framework, Principals create a support, well organised, nurturing school environment where staff feel safe and appreciated (Mbokazi,2015:468). Teachers are encouraged to

identify their professional needs and communicate them to the principal who then assists them in addressing these needs (Steyn, 218: 10788), which will in turn motivate them.

In trying to address the challenges related to curriculum leadership in primary schools, researchers have in relation to curriculum implementation, suggested that internal control measures need to be put in place to increase accountability, transparency and integrated monitoring systems, as well as a learning resource in school? Some educators do not have the basic content knowledge competencies needed to impact knowledge and skills needed by the learners, therefore, the reopening of teacher training colleges are important, as they provided a focused approach in the development of teachers and instil a sense of pride among teachers and teaching in general. Principals' relationship with school governing bodies should be characterised by mutual trust and respect.

There is provision of clear rules about learners and teaching and learning (Gillett, Clarke & O'Donoghue, 2016:592). The principal as transformational leader, inspires others toward collaboration and interdependence, as they work towards a purpose to which they are all committed. They should be able to conceptualise new avenues for change. I have increasingly come to realize that the curriculum is the single most distinctive concept that has emerged in the field of educational studies. No other institution – no hospital, no government, no corporate office, and no factory - has a curriculum in the sense that colleges, schools and universities do. Educational institutions all assert and assume that they have knowledge, which others are entitled to have access to, and they employ people (teachers) who are specialists in making this knowledge available obviously with carrying degrees of success. If you want to acquire specialist knowledge, you may start with a book or the internet, but if you are serious you will go to an institution with a curriculum that includes what you want to learn and teachers who know how to teach.

This leads to the crucial question, “what knowledge should make up the curriculum?”, not in the absolute sense of true knowledge, which is a better termed belief, but in the sense of the “best knowledge we have in the field.” If we cannot answer this question, or if there is no “better knowledge,” this raises the question about our authority as curriculum

theorists and the basis on which we expect parents to trust teachers when they hand their children over to them.

The reality is that we do not know much about curriculum, except in everyday common sense terms, such as timetables, lists of subjects, exam syllabuses and increasingly competence or skill statements.

A decade earlier, Scott (2014) made a point that not curriculum as such, but learning is the most basic human activity. What makes human learning human, he argues, is that it is an epistemic activity – in other words, it is involved in producing knowledge. Why else would we learn, if not to find out something or how to do something - on a continuum in two senses: historically, as over time learning has become increasingly complex and differentiated; and in terms of types of learning in today's modern societies.

So, think of a continuum of learning in any modern society – there are the myriad forms of learning that make up our everyday lives. In these processes of learning, we produce knowledge all the time, mostly tacit, rarely codified or written down and sometimes remembered, sometimes not. This “everyday learning” is closely related to the everyday common-sense knowledge that each of us build up during our lives. In the broad sense of the term these forms of learning are epistemic or producing activities, although the knowledge they generate is always tied to specific places, contexts and people, It is useful, even necessary knowledge, to carry on our lives, but it is not enough in modern societies; that is why we have schools and curriculum to store and make available specialist knowledge that our ancestors did not need and were not discovered.

At the other end of continuum, we have the knowledge producing activity, undertaken by researchers at the leading edge of disciplines, mostly, but not only in universities. They are engaged in producing new knowledge, and having it tested, criticized and evaluated by their peers; it is highly specialized and involved languages and symbols like mathematics that most of us understand. Somewhere in the middle of the continuum are a range of types of knowledge, including the specialized knowledge of many occupations, as well as curriculum or school knowledge that makes up the educational programs from the early years to master's degrees.

Curriculum knowledge is basically specialized knowledge, organized for transmission, usually, but always from one generation to another; I use the transmission without assuming that it is the one-way process that the metaphor implies. It is this curriculum knowledge that is the phenomenon that we claim to have specialist knowledge of as curriculum theorists, and hopefully develop better alternatives.

We could describe curriculum theorists as specialists in a particular form of applied knowledge – knowledge that is “applied” in ways that make it both teachable and learnable for students at different stages and of different ages.

#### **6.2.4.2 *Inadequate resources management***

Poor management creates a system of inefficiencies that compromise the stability and success of organisational workflow. It can impact every aspect of an enterprise, from interdepartmental relations to top-level planning and execution. Working with an effective resource management solution gives companies the tools necessary to access risks and organize manpower and plan accordingly. As an essential part of an organized workplace, resource management, ensures that skillsets are optimized, equipment is available, and projects run smoothly. One of the simplest ways to see that resources are being mismanaged, is by examining departmental performance. Organizations that do not properly manage resources cannot accurately forecast capacity when sleeping and prioritizing projects. Many schools have limited physical resources to support learning, but once the mind-set changes, all resources in the school – including the people, its surroundings, and, beyond, in the wider community – become available as resources for learning. School leaders and teachers need to adopt this wider perception of educational resources to be able to enrich the teaching-learning experience of both teachers and students.

#### **6.2.4.3 *Inability to deal with overcrowded classrooms***

The impact of the baby boom and increasing birth rates are contributing to an unprecedented level of demand for school places across the UK. This is particularly intense in London, the South East and large cities of Manchester and Birmingham.

Schools are increasingly facing overcrowding as the demand for places escalates; today, as many as 12.5% of primary school pupils and 343.000 secondary school pupils attend classes containing more than 30 children. The realities behind children not getting into their local or preferred school are extremely serious for both parents and for teachers. As the supply of school places simply cannot keep up with the demand, parents are forced to commute long distances to take their children to school or have siblings at different schools, making daily life unmanageable. Teachers must deal with larger classes and children who are tired and frustrated by longer journeys and less time at home. What can be done to ease the burden of overcrowded classrooms? We take a look at some of the issues and how to overcome them. It becomes difficult when the pupil-teacher ratio starts to rise, and when overcrowded classrooms reach education – a stressful experience for all around. With larger class sizes, students may not feel so comfortable asking questions or seeking the help they need, so quitters or less confident pupils risk staying under the radar.

The more pupils in classroom, the more the noise and distraction increases, and thus overcrowded classrooms are bad news for focus and concentration. In addition, pupils with added needs, such as dyslexia may not get all the attention they need. So, what is the solution? Are there realistic actions that schools can take to address the problems with overcrowded classrooms?

#### **6.2.4.4 *Dealing with diversity in primary schools***

In South Africa, with its culturally diverse society, desegregation and the changes in educational systems and educational institutions (e.g., schools, universities) brought great challenges for educators, for example the heterogeneity of the student population has increased, curricula have changed and new educational legislature is being instituted.

The increasing cultural diversity in educational institutions necessitates that educationists teach and manage learners with cultures, languages and backgrounds that are unknown to them. Du Toit (1995:212-212) takes the view that the opening of schools to all races

does not automatically ensure mutual understanding and acceptance between educators and learners amongst learners themselves. Therefore, desegregation per se does not lead to predictable and meaningful attitudinal changes of groups to each other and can, in actual fact, lead to the heightening of tension and prejudice.

The problem is not that school starts here, but that they often stop here. What schools need to do is instead, is to move very quickly and steadily to transform the entire curriculum. Schools need to get clarity on issues like whose culture they reflect, who is getting equal access to knowledge in the school, whose perspective is being heard and whose is being ignored (Vandeyar, 2006). Notwithstanding the approach to or model for education, learner diversity will always be a characteristic of education that needs to be addressed.

#### **6.2.4.5 *Leaders focusing more on administration than classroom teaching***

One of the primary reasons for the poor academic standards of learners in South African public schools is the ineffective instructional leadership role of principals. This study has shown that many principals places more emphasis on their managerial and administrative duties rather than focusing on teaching and learning. Although principals are accountable for the plethora of administrative and managerial tasks, there is a dire need for them to take action in an instructional leadership role, which is pivotal to enhance learner performance. Principals should be conversant with innovative teaching theories and practices, and encourage teachers to model them in classrooms. The principal has the power to influence learner-learning outcomes by setting the school's goals and promoting effective instructional practices cf. 1.3, 1.7, 2.2, 2.2.8.3, 2.7.1. 2.7.2, 2.7.3, 5.1, 6.2.2.3). The core of instructional leadership is to transform schools into conducive environments where teachers and learners reach their full potential. To advance a culture of teaching and learning in schools, where learner achievement features strongly, principals are duty-bound to balance their administrative and managerial duties with instructional leadership functions. Although principals can apply a distributive leadership style of school management, they should not abdicate their responsibility of driving the teaching and

learning agenda. The principals may apply the distributive style of leadership by delegating the varied administrative and management duties to subordinates. In this way, they will empower their subordinates to take on leadership positions, while they devote more time to instructional matters. Thus, a paradigm shift is required where principals devote more serious attention to instructional leadership. Principals should be empowered to generate new knowledge, skills, values and attitudes to manage curricula matters effectively. This is achievable through well-constructed professional development programmes between the DBE and Teachers Union.

The work of improving educational affairs at national level lies with both government and the teacher unions (Mahlangu & Pitsoe, 2011:367), with government (represented by the DBE) making policy, and teacher unions (representing teachers) implementing it. According to Govender (2008:39), the formulation of policy by policymakers and policy specialists, while at its implementation, is perceived as the responsibility of teachers. A gap is therefore created between policy formation and policy implementation, which leaves teachers marginalised. This is because, firstly, government policymakers consult with teachers' unions' representatives, and not with the policy of teachers; and secondly, because teacher unions themselves are unable to sufficiently involve grassroots' members in policy-making activities within their unions (Govender, 2008:39).

Although teacher unions' consultation is acknowledged, this article presents considerable evidence to suggest that teachers view policymaking at the national level as something far removed from their classroom realities as asserted by educators themselves.

#### **6.2.4.6 *Absence of strategic leadership in curriculum leadership***

For schools to establish and monitor their progress towards the goals and targets they set themselves, they should have a strategic planning program. This will set the direction for the school, establish annual goals that are centered on the students and their learning, setting targets and taking action (cf. 5.2.4). This kind of planning gives curriculum leaders the opportunity to use their different styles of management, develop a vision for their organization that enables it to adapt to or remain relevant and competitive in a changing

economic and technological climate. Through strategic leadership, the activities are lined and linked to operational planning, in order to respond to immediate events (Zang et al., 2022:444). Therefore, the strategic leadership defines the vision and purpose of the school and translates them into the desired action (Chan et al., 2021). The schools under study, displayed lack of strategic leadership that involves all stakeholders. The SMT of these schools were not inviting other stakeholders to strategic planning meetings as they did not regard them as professionals who would assist in planning, hence the comment by one of the principals that, “it has always been our impression that when it comes to planning and other things, only teachers and professionals are required and parents will always hear from us “(cf. 5.2.4).

### **6.2.5 Formulating a strategic plan to embrace curriculum leadership framework**

The main objective of this study is to formulate a framework to improve curriculum leadership in primary schools; this has been the process that began in the initial stage of this project. The poor performance of primary schools raised concerns among teachers and stakeholders and its impact has been negative in the community. The cooperation and collaboration amongst stakeholders lead to the effort of answering the question above, “How can curriculum leadership in primary schools be designed?”

### **6.2.6 Leading curriculum in times of crises**

Primary school curriculum leadership has never been easy during times of crises. The leadership attributes and skills required of school leaders in times of crises are fundamentally different from those required as part of normal school environment (Netolicky, 2022:391). The coordinating team discovered that some of the participants were still sceptical about the challenges that both teachers and learners were facing in class, due to fear of contracting the virus (COVID-19), as some of their loved ones have since passed on. This was highlighted by one parent, “The involvement of parents in our

school has been hindered by the Covid restriction and protocol” (cf. 5.4.4 & Morake-Toolo, 2023).

### **6.3 RECOMMENDATIONS**

Curriculum leadership and instructional leadership have dominated educational administration training for a long time, but including community in curriculum leadership has not been implemented enough. As we consider challenges confronting the education system today, there are even more compelling reasons why educational leaders cannot lose sight of the importance of community involvement and participation in curriculum leadership. There are different forms of community involvement in curriculum leadership, according to Shaeffers (in Ehren et al., 2022:17) and Aref (2010).

#### **6.3.1 Recommendations for wider curriculum leadership participation in primary schools**

Family engagement is viewed as a critical link in the advancement of school reform efforts. Therefore, parents and schools have much to do to fit family engagements into the leadership of the curriculum puzzle (Rudo & Dimock, 2017:4). Contemporary school reform strategies require extensive school community collaboration, yet the actualization of this goal is sometimes difficult to achieve. Social class and cultural barriers often impede the development of cooperative relationship between school staff, parents and other community members. Community involvement in curriculum leadership in primary schools, facilitates the identification of specific education issues and informs the development of strategies to remove barriers to access and quality in education within a given community (Shasma et al., 2014). Efforts to enhance community participation in curriculum leadership, so as to have ownership of institutions, thus begin with a question of whether and why is participation in this regard important. The coordinating team and all participants agreed that community participation in curriculum leadership was essential to better accountability in the system to promote community development. The

coordinating team in the study noted that well-functioning schools require the collaboration of learners, teachers and parents. Their ideas though, varied about the medium and purpose.

### **6.3.2 Recommendations for improving guidelines on curriculum leadership**

It appears vital to note how managers seem only to manage while, in contrast, leaders in curriculum actually lead. A major key to school success is focusing on the quality of leadership, as well as shared leadership with the teachers and community of the school. The coordinating team believed that people will support what they help create, so that all stakeholders, both community and teachers, share commitment of curriculum leadership (Cilathorn et al., 2018:9). Leadership in schools cannot ignore the current emphasis on creating high performing schools. Municipalities, governments, media, general population and other public and private organizations demand school improvement (Blasé et al., 2010: xix)) Curriculum leaders are faced with ever-increasing time constraints and are expected to perform miracles in leading schools, while increasing students' achievement. From the point of view of inclusivity, regarding all stakeholders, Goa and Hao (2020) define curriculum leadership as a community of curriculum workers who take on the responsibility of service in order to develop the ability to generate new solutions and expand the collaborative practice of curriculum creation (Mantashu, 2022:36).

### **6.3.3 Further reading recommendations**

Based on the arguments made in this research project, it is evident that much still has to be done in order to improve curriculum leadership in primary schools. In multiple countries, curriculum leadership has been used as a tool to address poor learner performance (cf. Chapter 2). Curriculum leadership in primary schools has not been given much attention in South Africa and this approach of leadership in South African schools, has not been fully implemented yet, therefore, it is worth recommending that further research needs to be undertaken, focusing on curriculum leadership In primary schools.

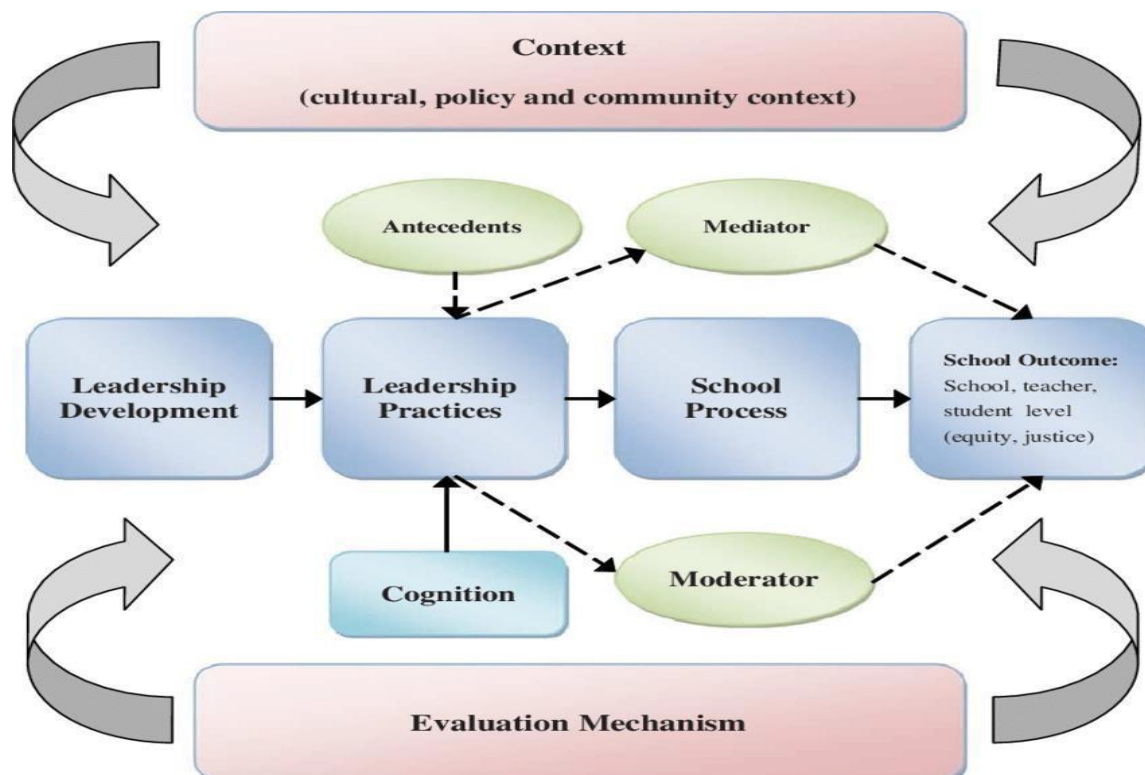
This research therefore, has its limitations as it could be replicated on a larger scale. There are findings that may warrant studies that relate to decolonization of curriculum, the importance of learner dropout rate from Grade 1 via Grade 7 to Grade 12 and the need to recognize the parents of the learners who at times are not literate versus teachers who are professionals. Policies need to be amended whereby emphasis is placed on the importance of curriculum leadership in primary schools, with regards to the continuous assistance that it provides to learners' performance. The policies must be introduced that will outline that leadership process in schools and it must not just be the responsibility of the principals, but must be a shared initiative with the ultimate aim of improving learner performance and involving parents in participation (Matashu, 2022:39).

**CHAPTER 7 :**  
**PRESENTATION OF THE FRAMEWORK TO IMPROVE CURRICULUM  
LEADERSHIP IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS**

---

**7.1 INTRODUCTION**

This is section of the work which celebrates the reality that the framework is now co-owned by the two primary schools. It is *their* resource. They lay claim to it as it was not couriered in by the researcher, but it was moulded by a team. A collective effort to improve learner achievement. The research aimed to design a framework to improve curriculum leadership in primary schools with the goal of guaranteeing that a school is established as a *learning organisation*. Elucidated through **Figure 7.1**, the final shape of the framework proposed and discussed along the previous chapters is now presented, as an effort to establish sustainable stakeholder participation, aptly *learning organisation*.



**Figure 7.1: Framework for school leadership**

Source: Matashu, 2022:39

When teachers and learners acquire their ability to construct desired outcomes while the learning process is ongoing, the school becomes a learning organization. It is precisely for this reason that curriculum leadership plays an important role towards the improvement of the school, because curriculum leadership supports both teaching and learning (De Matthews, 2014:144 & Singh, 2018:89)). Through its ability to support teaching and learning, that on its own serves as evidence that curriculum leadership can serve as a tool that can be used to improve learners' performance. CPAR was used as a first part to put into operation the building towards the framework. The coordinating team also understood that the "object" of this research is social. Since practices according to Kemmis et al. (2014:146) are constituted in social interaction between people, it follows that changing practices is a social process. After having gained understanding of the situation, the team made a conscious decision to transform curriculum leadership, while simultaneously empowering themselves and an emancipatory agenda framed and set by the consultative forum (Tshelane, 2015:209).

Therefore, the final chapter of this study, a framework to improve curriculum leadership in primary schools, will discuss the conditions for the successful implementation of a framework as a proposed strategy for the improvement of curriculum leadership in primary schools in order to improve learner performance. The second part is that of integrating stakeholders who are interested in finding a solution to the continued underperformance and who want to make change. Africana Critical Theory (ACT) has had a very strong impact and influence on how principals and their management teams – if to become critical curriculum leaders, should explore and invite other stakeholders, while reflecting on new future researchable innovations to improve and sustain the quality of their framework.

## **7.2 OVERVIEW OF CORRELATION BETWEEN ACT AND THE FRAMEWORK**

In strengthening the framework herein presented – there are numerous stakeholders who can add value to its quality and sustainability. This is to form an organisation that fosters on continuous learning and knowledge creation, herein called *learning organisation*.

A correlation or connection between schools is an essential unifying principle emphasised by Africana Critical Theory (cf. 2.1 - 2.8), noting how the colonising project was never designed to promote unity or genuine connectedness or sharing of ideas and technologies. If not ignoring the other's ideas or technologies, colonisation would impose its own ways of doing things. According to my own observation as a principal - a disconnect between creches who feed potential Grade 1 learners into the

primary school system tends to leave the Grade 1 teachers administratively shocked as to which intervention mechanisms to explore and apply when numeracy and literacy rates are below par for some new Grade 1 entrants. As a feeder to secondary schools, negligence of a constant interaction between primary school teachers with their secondary school peers tends to expose very late at Grade 8 entry that a child has suffered prolonged drug abuse tendencies. Once again, the secondary school principal and his teachers become administratively shocked – thus professionally helpless to reach full circle of solutions even when social workers and the nurses are involved. Succinctly, it is almost too late to fruitfully deliver curriculum scope of work to affect a recognisable progress to Grade 9. Below, we present potential co-owners of the framework, if a strong culture of collaboration is promoted by curriculum leaders according to the philosophical tenets of ACT to foster organizational learning or a sustained effort to learn from experiences of the other organizations (c.f. 2.1 – 2.8).

- Teachers in childhood education and care centres.
- Health professionals.
- Community educators.
- Community action groups and many more others, though the coordinating team acknowledges that learners are key, because teaching and learning centres around them.

The third part is that of school self-evaluation and related improvement planning that should be taken annually and needs to be supported by the instruments and processes. Later, Table 7.1 offers elucidation of the points listed here just below. These nine areas of evaluation were addressed by the team in pursuit of curriculum leadership implementation:

1. Basic functionality.
2. Quality of teaching, learning and educator development.
3. Learner achievement.
4. Leadership, management and communication
5. Curriculum provision and resources.
6. Governance and relations.
7. School safety, security and discipline
8. School infrastructure.
9. Parents and community

The above areas had to be evaluated by all members of the team through involvement and participation.

### **7.2.1 Conditions conducive to the successful implementation of curriculum leadership in primary schools through ACT**

Below, the thesis identified numerous interventions which carry potential for contributing towards improved primary schools' management and leadership (CF. 2.1 – 2.8). Firstly, in a tabular format, with resources identified as essential for the establishment of a critical leadership culture in schools outlined, and secondly – a few future research themes innovated within this thesis are outlined. As an effort to forge a correlation of ideas and practices being shared between curriculum leaders across schools, Africana Critical Theory was observed as contributing towards the presence and sustainability of conducive conditions to reduce or eliminate ineffective school leadership affecting planned learner performance (cf. 5.3. & 2.1 - 2.8).

Curricula need to be fully utilized as it has the power to transform the education system. There is a need for a transformed curriculum leadership in schools and for curriculum to be transformed, teachers have to be transformed or otherwise teachers will keep on teaching what they know. Transformed curriculum with the right and relevant leadership will be able to equip learners and prepare them to thrive in a fast changing world.

Learners' performance can be affected by the surroundings where they find themselves in, consciously or unconsciously (Lyons, 2002:10). The environment that learners live in, can be the source of motivation to them in order to focus on their tasks or can cause distractions that will make them lose concentration. (cf. 5.4). It is therefore essential for both the school and community to ensure that the learners have a conducive environment that promotes learning as they spend significant time daily in their classrooms. Creating a space that promotes learning among students, does not only benefit students, as teachers will also find it easier and more enjoyable to teach students who are focused on their lessons. (Makela et al., 2014:268).

### **7.2.2 Themes for potential future scientific research to improve curriculum leadership**

The thesis holds strongly to the assumption that a correlation or connection between past and current challenges which have become a common and permanent feature of ineffective curriculum leadership can be addressed in the near future as researchable themes (cf. 2.1 - 2.8). in my experience as a principal, I have observed the long ongoing prevalence of teenage drug abuse in Grade 6 - 7, which if not abruptly curtailed; threatens to overflow to the pre-teen population groups at middle primary (Grade 4 – 5).

(a) Much earlier in the thesis (cf. 1.6.2), a rich cognitive stimulus is availed by enquiring how successful can we determine relevant traits a parent possesses as school leadership candidate. When do we gauge if suitable characteristics essential to mould and monitor policy progress, are missing or are being applied, when an SGB position is initially assumed and gradually activated.

(b) A bit later (cf. 3.3), the author of this thesis presented a potential future research enquiry based on an in-depth critique of differentiating between curriculum leadership roles and functions. Here, should the research be undertaken in the future - the possible emancipatory impact on both the person in charge of an institution and the school itself will be the fundamental research traits to solidify the proposed conceptual framework of enhancing the critical leadership studies.

### 7.2.3 Limitations of the Study

- The main shortcoming of the study were logistical challenges of meeting participants as a collective during the social distance and hard lockdown contexts related to the COVID-19 pandemic (Morake-Toolo, 2023).

The demarcated timeline of the study was planned as minimum of 24 months (2018 – 2019), which became extended due to the COVID-19 pandemic restrictions, and related ‘new normal’ disruptions. Schooling times also evolved to two separate sessions in a day – the morning group and the afternoon group of teachers and learners for strict adherence to social distancing protocols of reducing infection prevalence. As a result, where the focus groups were planned for after-school engagements, it was now impossible as the afternoons were now schooling slots. The study realised completion of its fieldwork phase in the last quarter of the year 2022.

- The research supervisor got to assume job positions across three universities in the duration of this study across two cities, two provinces. A need for face-to-face interactions meant extensive travel and accommodation arrangements by the candidate.
- The unwillingness of some research participants to honour discussed calendar meetings. Postponements laid a costly element in terms of time wasted and related resources such as petrol.

Internal to the study – the selection of a qualitative research approach had the following shortcomings.

- Lack of trustworthiness or effort to maintain it. When a participant is reluctant to contribute statements seemingly critical of own institution in the presence of his/her superiors – would mean final data as collected, lacked truthfulness.
-

## 7.2.4 Interventions that lead to improved learner performance

**Table 7.1: Dimensions identified as essential resources for effective primary school leadership**

<b>First Dimension resources</b>				
<b>Basic functionality</b>	<b>Leadership, management and communication</b>	<b>Quality of teaching, learning and teacher development</b>	<b>Curriculum provisioning and resources</b>	<b>Learner achievement</b>
<p>3 Criteria</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>procedures in place to deal with absence, late coming and truancy</li> <li>absence and latecoming of educators</li> <li>learners code of conduct</li> </ul>	<p>7 Criteria</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SMTs give clear direction</li> <li>fair delegation of roles and responsibilities</li> <li>quality of teaching and learning</li> <li>physical resources management</li> <li>-appropriate use of human resource</li> <li>-promotion of stakeholder involvement</li> <li>-policies and procedures in place</li> </ul>	<p>7 Criteria</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>effective time management</li> <li>the creation of a positive learning environment</li> <li>knowledge and understanding of curriculum</li> <li>monitor compliance and implementation</li> <li>Lesson planning, preparation and presentation</li> <li>learner assessment and achievement</li> </ul>	<p>4 Criteria</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>whether curriculum offered complies with CAPS</li> <li>whether resources support learning</li> <li>Management of procurement, distribution and retrieval of LTSM</li> <li>enrichment programmes provides for extra and co-curricular activities</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5 Criteria</li> <li>learner achievement</li> <li>whether learners can read, speak, listen and write well in the language of learning</li> <li>Capability of learners are in terms of handling numbers, calculate mentally and with electronic devices and apply these skills to solve problems- Mathematics.</li> </ul>
<b>Second dimension resources</b>				
<b>Governance and relations</b>		<b>School safety, security and discipline</b>	<b>School infrastructure</b>	<b>Parents and community</b>
<p>3 Criteria</p> <p>When principals execute their function with regards to human resources.</p> <p>visitors on the school premises compliance with legislation to keep the school violence and drug free learner discipline policy and procedure</p> <p>Contribution towards the welfare of learners.</p>	<p>6 Criteria</p> <p>Health, safety and security of learners, staff, parents and others in schools</p> <p>Whether the schools implement safety practices against potential hazards</p>	<p>3 Criteria</p> <p>Reliable and sufficient functional services</p> <p>The ablution facilities' appropriateness and functionality</p> <p>establishment of appropriately furnished and sufficient classrooms</p>	<p>5 Criteria</p> <p>establish if the schools communicate regularly and effectively with parents</p> <p>Use local services and institutions</p> <p>Encourage learners to respect local and global environment</p>	

Whether the SGB was duly established and functions properly	security regulations that aimed to ensure the safety of learners, staff and		Good relationships links established with other schools
Whether provision of a clear strategic direction by the SGB			Parental involvement in schools
Capacity to handle finances within their legal mandate	Non-educational rooms to support positive teaching and learning environment whether the schools have appropriate school grounds, play grounds and sport facilities		

Table 7.1 was designed to enhance the participation of the wider stakeholders, as discussed earlier in the overview of ACT as it corresponds to the established framework with each evaluation criteria availed as a guide. In the interest of learning organisations, these dimensions are identified by this study as essential resources for effective primary school leadership.

### 7.3 SUMMARY OF RESEARCH

The main objective of the research project of designing a framework to improve curriculum leadership in primary schools has been achieved. The theoretical framework for this study was ACT, which emphasized the emancipation of co-researchers. ACT is a philosophical discourse that critiques domination and affirms the empowerment of black people in the world (cf. 2.1.2). This was confirmed by our meetings where there was no one who was above others in terms of giving instructions and appearing to be in charge; instead all of us were equal and recognized the contributions of everyone in a meeting. The data generation method for this study was CPAR. The objectives of CPAR were also achieved, as discussed in Chapter 4 (cf. 4.2). The research objectives guided the literature review, data generation, data presentation, data analysis, data interpretation, research findings, conclusions and recommendations. The study managed to propose curriculum leadership in primary schools as a concept that should be distributed amongst stakeholders. Therefore, the aim of the study was achieved as proposed, namely that curriculum leadership can influence learners' performance. This research could not have been totally objective as there were human beings involved who at all times will have a human element in them that may have an impact on their judgement. There is no

guarantee that co-researcher as participants were completely honest during the reflection stages of CPAR. The methodological approach of this project is itself critical while emancipatory, empowering and transformational, which produces real change and improvement in their lives, as imaged through an ideal of a dynamic school leader. (Zuber-Skerritt, 1996:99).

## **7.4 CONCLUSION**

This research aimed to design a framework to improve curriculum leadership in primary schools, with the transparent intention of stimulating ownership of the problem, engaging in dialogue with the broader stakeholders through school-to-school engagements, herein referred to as *learning organisation*. The general academic performance of learners in primary schools needed to be improved and the schools' outcomes have not been satisfactory, hence there was a need for a framework. Teaching and learning affected the schools' outcomes negatively as a direct result of ineffective leadership with regards to curriculum. Curriculum leadership is assumed to contribute to improved learner performance. That is the reason why curriculum leadership is vital to the school and its environment, because instead of accepting the Department of Education's curriculum as is, curriculum leadership encourages active participation of all stakeholders in the process of changing the curriculum to meet the needs of the school and aid in the development of the participants. Eventually there will be a pleasant teaching and learning environment if the principal and curriculum team work together to influence the curriculum process to the best of their abilities (Harris et al., 2020:3). The lesson I have learned in this study is that curriculum leadership is not only concerned with curriculum matters, but it also stresses the point that, in order to ensure that curriculum is effectively implemented, the leadership role must be played by all stakeholders. This is in line with Kihara, Yana and Mori (2013:113128).

## REFERENCES

- Adler, R.H., 2022. Trustworthiness in qualitative research. *Journal of Human Lactation*, 38(4), pp.598-602.
- Alvesson, M. and Spicer, A., 2014. Critical perspectives on leadership. In D.V. Day (Ed.), *The Oxford handbook of leadership and organisations* (pp.40-56). New York: Oxford University Press.
- Amin, N., 2016. Curriculum without Borders? In M.A. Samuel, R. Dhunpath & N. Amin (Eds.), *Disrupting Higher Education Curriculum: Undoing Cognitive Damage* (pp.289-303). London: Brill.
- Anderson, V.R., Young, S., Blanch, K. and Smith, L., 2018. Mobility, place and affect in transnational teacher education graduates' accounts of their first year teaching. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 69, pp.11-20.
- Aref, A., 2010. Community participation for educational planning and development. *Nature and Science*, 8(9), pp.1-4.
- Asante, M.K., 1991. The Afrocentric idea in education. *The Journal of Negro education*, 60(2), pp.170-180.
- Aydin, H., Ozfidan, B. and Carothers, D., 2017. Meeting the challenges of curriculum and instruction in school settings in the United States. *Journal of Social Studies Education Research*, 8(3), pp.76-92.
- Baker, M. and Foote, M., 2006. Changing spaces: Urban school interrelationships and the impact of standards-based reform. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 42(1), pp.90-123.
- Beckmann, J. and Prinsloo, I., 2009. Legislation on school governors' power to appoint educators: friend or foe? *South African Journal of Education*, 29, 171–184.
- Bellibaş, M.Ş., Polatcan, M. and Kılınç, A.Ç., 2022. Linking instructional leadership to teacher practices: The mediating effect of shared practice and agency in learning effectiveness. *Educational management administration & leadership*, 50(5), pp.812-831.

- Benoot, C., Hannes, K. and Bilsen, J., 2016. The use of purposeful sampling in a qualitative evidence synthesis: A worked example on sexual adjustment to a cancer trajectory. *BMC Medical Research Methodology*, 16(1), p.21.
- Besharati, N.A., Fleisch, B. and Tsotsotso, K., 2021. Interventions to improve learner achievement in South Africa: A systematic meta-analysis. In F. Maringe (Ed.), *Systematic Reviews of Research in Basic Education in South Africa* (pp.27-57). Stellenbosch: SunMedia.
- Blase, J., Blase, J. and Phillips, D.Y., 2010. *Handbook of school improvement: How highperforming principals create high-performing schools*. London: Corwin Press.
- Bogotch, I., Schoorman, D. and Reyes-Guerra, D., 2017. Educational Curriculum Leadership as Currere and Praxis. *Leadership and Policy in Schools*, 16(2), pp.303-327.
- Bogues, A., 2015. *Black heretics, black prophets: Radical political intellectuals*. New York: Routledge.
- Bohan, C.H., 2020. Curriculum concerns in times of crisis. *Curriculum and Teaching Dialogue*, 22(1-2), pp.55-60.
- Bradley, L.H., Meyers, M., Curtis, S. and Kessinger, T., 2017. *Curriculum leadership: Beyond boilerplate standards*. London: Rowman & Littlefield.
- Brady, J., 2020. *Workload, accountability and stress: A comparative study of teachers' working conditions in state and private schools in England* (Doctoral dissertation). University of Cambridge.
- Brocker, S.A. and Augustijn, L., 2023. Adolescent self-esteem, parent-child relationships, and joint physical custody. *Journal of Family Trauma, Child Custody & Child Development*, 20(1), pp.99-117.
- Bush, T. and Glover, D., 2016. School leadership and management in South Africa: Findings from a systematic literature review. *International Journal of Educational Management*, 30(2), pp.211-231.

Caingcoy, M., 2022. Competencies and professional development needs of kindergarten teachers. *Competencies and professional development needs of kindergarten teachers. International Journal on Integrated Education*, 3(7), pp.69-81.

Callahan, C.M., 2021. Making the Grade or Achieving the Goal? Evaluating Learner and Program Outcomes in Gifted Education. In F.A. Karnes & S.M. Bean (Eds.), *Methods and materials for teaching the gifted* (pp. 257-304). New York: Routledge.

Centre for the Study of Violence and Reconciliation. 2023. Marikana Mining Strive and Massacre. <https://www.csvr.org.za/> Accessed: 08 October 2028

Chabalala, G. and Naidoo, P., 2021. Teachers' and middle managers' experiences of principals' instructional leadership towards improving curriculum delivery in schools. *South African Journal of Childhood Education*, 11(1), pp.1-10.

Chen, J., Yang, Y., Xu, F., Xu, W., Zhang, X., Wang, Y. and Zhang, Y., 2021. Factors influencing curriculum leadership of primary and secondary school teachers from the perspective of field dynamic theory: An empirical investigation in China. *Sustainability*, 13(21), p.12007.

Chen, M.J., Fan, H.H., Guo, C.Y. and Kang, J.L., 2020. How do they transform? The story of two primary schools about curriculum leadership and development in Taiwan curriculum reform. *International Journal of Social Sciences & Educational Studies*, 7(1), pp.42-61.

Cheung, A.C. and Yuen, T.W., 2017. Examining the perceptions of curriculum leaders on primary school reform: A case study of Hong Kong. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership*, 45(6), pp.1020-1039.

Chimakonam, J.O., 2014. *Ezumezu: A Variant of Three-valued Logic. Insights and controversies*. Paper presented at the annual conference of the Philosophical Society of Southern Africa (PSSA), Department of Philosophy, The Free State University Bloemfontein, South Africa. January 20th-23rd, pp.20-22

Cobbinah, J.E., 2020. Barriers to Strategic Leadership in Education. In *Strategic*

*Leadership in PK-12 Settings: A multifaceted approach to improving outcomes* (pp. 8293). New York: IGI Global.

Collinson, D., 2011. Critical leadership studies. In A. Bryan, D. Collinson, K. Grint, B. Jackson & M. Uhl-Bien (Eds.), *The SAGE Handbook of Leadership* (pp.181-194). London:

Collinson, D.L., 2018. Critical leadership studies: Exploring the dialectics of leadership. In R.E. Riggio (Ed.), *What's Wrong with Leadership? Improving Leadership Research and Practice* (pp.260-278). New York: Routledge.

Conyers Jr, J.L., 2016. *Africana Theory, Policy, and Leadership*. New York: Routledge.

Crossman, A., 2014. Deductive reasoning versus inductive reasoning. About. com Sociology.

Cull, R., Demirgüç-Kunt, A. and Lin, J.Y., 2013. Financial structure and economic development: A reassessment. *The World Bank Economic Review*, 27(3), pp.470-475.

Curtis, S., Gesler, W., Smith, G. and Washburn, S., 2000. Approaches to sampling and case selection in qualitative research. *Social Science & Medicine*, 50(7-8), pp. 1001-1014.

Davids, N., 2022. Governance in South African schools: Democratic advancement or hindrance? *Educational Management Administration & Leadership*, 50(3), pp.436-451.

de Dieu Karasenga, J. and Nzanana, J.B., 2023. Quality education and the use of English language as a medium of instruction in Rwandan schools: An interpretivist study. *International Journal of Educational Review*, 5(1), pp.21-30.

DeMatthews, D. and Mawhinney, H., 2014. Social justice leadership and inclusion: Exploring challenges in an urban district struggling to address inequities. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 50(5), pp.844-881.

- DeMatthews, D.E., 2014. How to improve curriculum leadership: Integrating leadership theory and management strategies. *The Clearing House: A Journal of Educational Strategies, Issues and Ideas*, 87(5), pp.192-196.
- Deng, Z., 2020. *Knowledge, content, curriculum and didaktik: Beyond social realism*. New York: Routledge.
- Denscombe, M., 2003. *The good research guide for Small-scale Research Projects* (4<sup>th</sup> Ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Denzin, N.K. and Lincoln, Y.S., 2011. *The Sage Handbook of Qualitative Research*. London: Sage.
- Department of Basic Education (DBE). 2017. *Curriculum assessment policy statement – Guidelines to strengthen CAPS implementation: GET*. Pretoria: Government Printer.
- Destiny's Odessey. 2023. Self-Esteem Building Resources.  
<https://destinysodyssey.com/personal-development/self-development-2/self-concepts-self-constructs/self-confidence/building-self-confidence/> Accessed 08 October 2023
- Diemer, M.A., Rapa, L.J., Park, C.J. and Perry, J.C., 2017. Development and validation of the Critical Consciousness Scale. *Youth & Society*, 49(4), pp.461-483.
- Dilova, N.G., 2021. Formative assessment of students' knowledge—as a means of improving the quality of education. *Scientific Reports of Bukhara State University*, 5(3), pp.144-155.
- Duff, A., 2008. The normative crisis of the information society. *Cyberpsychology*, 2(1).
- Dündar, H. and Akçayır, M., 2017. Tablet vs. paper: The effect on learners' reading performance. *International Electronic Journal of Elementary Education*, 4(3), pp.441-450.
- Durišić, M. and Bunijevac, M., 2017. Parental involvement as a important factor for successful education. *Center for Educational Policy Studies Journal*, 7(3), pp.137-153.
- Ehren, M., Paterson, A. and Baxter, J., 2020. Accountability and trust: Two sides of the same coin? *Journal of Educational Change*, 21(1), pp.183-213.

- Epstein, J.L., 2018. *School, family, and community partnerships: Preparing educators and improving schools*. New York: Routledge
- Evans, D., 2018. Inside out leadership: leadership strategies when resistance is high. *Education Today*, p.7.
- Ferkins, L., Skinner, J. and Swanson, S., 2018. Sport leadership: A new generation of thinking. *Journal of Sport Management*, 32(2), pp.77-81.
- Fink, D. and Brayman, C., 2004. Principals' succession and educational change. *Journal of Educational Administration*, 42(4), pp. 431-449.
- Garza, A., 2014. A history of the# BlackLivesMatter movement. Are all the women still white, pp.23-28.
- Gentile, J.R. and Lalley, J.P., 2003. *Standards and mastery learning: Aligning teaching and assessment so all children can learn*. Corwin Press.
- Giles, C. and Hargreaves, A., 2006. The sustainability of innovative schools as learning organisations and professional learning communities during standardised reform. *Educational administration quarterly*, 42(1), pp.124-156.
- Giroux, H., 2018. *Pedagogy and the politics of hope: Theory, culture, and schooling: A critical reader*. New York: Routledge.
- Glatthorn, A., Boschee, F., Whitehead, B. & Boschee, B., 2018. *Curriculum leadership: Strategies for development and implementation*,. 4<sup>th</sup> Ed. London: Sage.
- Glatthorn, A.A., Boschee, F., Whitehead, B.M. and Boschee, B.F., 2018. *Curriculum leadership: Strategies for development and implementation*. London: SAGE publications.
- Goldfarb, K.P. and Grinberg, J., 2002. Leadership for social justice: Authentic participation in the case of a community centre in Caracas, Venezuela. *Journal of School Leadership*, 12(2), pp.157-173.
- Hallinger, P., 2018. Surfacing a hidden literature: A systematic review of research on educational leadership and management in Africa. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership*, 46(3), pp.362-384.

Hamid, Z., Kumar, D., Ahluwalia, G. and Ray, S., 2023. Value Investing: From Perspective of Interpretivism. *Journal of Informatics Education and Research*, 3(2).

Hargreaves, A. and Fink, D., 2004. The seven principles of sustainable leadership. *Educational Leadership*, 61(7), pp.8-13.

Harju-Luukkainen, H. and McElvany, N., 2018. Immigrant student achievement and education policy in Finland. In L. Volante, D. Klinger & O. Bilgili (Eds.). *Policy implications of research in education*. Vol. 9. (pp. 87-102). Cham: Springer.

Harris, A., Jones, M. and Crick, T., 2020. Curriculum leadership: a critical contributor to school and system improvement. *School Leadership & Management*, 40(1), pp.1-4.

Hayes, S.D. and Irby, B.J., 2020. Challenges in preparing aspiring principals for instructional leadership: voices from the field. *International journal of leadership in education*, 23(2), pp.131-151.

Henning E., 2005. *Finding your way in qualitative research*. Pretoria. Van Schaik.

Higgs, P., 2016. The African Renaissance and the decolonisation of the curriculum. In V. Msila & M.T. Gumbo (Eds.), *Africanising the curriculum: Indigenous perspectives and theories* (pp.1-16). African Sun Media.

Ibekwe, P., 2021. Management strategies for students' anti-social behaviour in schools. *Nigerian Journal of Social Studies*, 24(2), pp.232-245.

Ibrahim, A. and El Zaatari, W., 2020. The teacher–student relationship and adolescents' sense of school belonging. *International Journal of Adolescence and Youth*, 25(1), pp.382-395.

Igwe, L., 2014. The Untold Story of Africa's Secular Tradition. *Conscience*, 35(1), p.25.

Jamali, D. and Karam, C., 2018. Corporate social responsibility in developing countries as an emerging field of study. *International Journal of Management Reviews*, 20(1), pp.32-61.

- Karisa, M.C., Erick, P.M. and Mathuva, 2017. Influence of teacher leadership roles on learners' academic performance in public primary school In Kaloleni sub-county, Kilifi, Kenya. *Imperial Journal of Interdisciplinary Research*, 3(10).
- Keane, M., Khupe, C. and Seehawer, M., 2017. Decolonising methodology: who benefits from indigenous knowledge research? *Educational Research for Social Change*, 6(1), pp.12-24.
- Khumalo, S.S., 2021. A descriptive analysis of the leadership practices of primary school principals in promoting sustainability through motivating teachers. *Discourse and Communication for Sustainable Education*, 12(1), pp.42-54.
- Kihara, T., Yano, H. and Mori, H., 2013. Development of a New Curriculum Leadership Model with a Focus on its Relation to the Professional Learning Communities. In M.A. Flores, A.A. Carvalho, F.I. Ferreira & M.T. Vilaça (Eds.), *Back to the Future: Legacies, Continuities and Changes in Educational Policy, Practice and Research* (pp.115-128). London: Brill.
- King, J.E., 2017. Education Research in the Black Liberation Tradition: Return What You Learn to the People. *The Journal of Negro Education*, 86(2), pp.95-114.
- Köhler, T., 2022. Class size and learner outcomes in South African schools: The role of school socioeconomic status. *Development Southern Africa*, 39(2), pp.126-150.
- Krog, A., 2016. In the name of human rights: I say (how) you (should) speak (before I listen). In N.K. Denzin & M.D. Giardina (Eds.), *Qualitative inquiry and human rights* (pp.125-135). New York: Routledge.
- LaRocque, M., Kleiman, I. and Darling, S.M., 2011. Parental involvement: The missing link in school achievement. *Preventing School Failure*, 55(3), pp.115-122.
- Learmonth, M. and Morrell, K., 2017. Is critical leadership studies 'critical'? *Leadership*, 13(3), pp.257-271.

Lee, C.D. and Smagorinsky, P., 2000. *Vygotskian perspectives on literacy research: Constructing meaning through collaborative inquiry*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Leithwood, K., 2023. Building Productive Relationships with Families and Communities: A Priority for Leaders to Improve Equity in Their Schools. In W. Jeynes (Ed.), *Relational Aspects of Parental Involvement to Support Educational Outcomes: Parental Communication, Expectations, and Participation for Student Success* (pp.244-262). New York: Routledge.

Luschei, T.F. and Jeong, D.W., 2021. School governance and student achievement: Cross-national evidence from the 2015 PISA. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 57(3), pp.331-371.

Lyons, J.B., 2002. The Learning Environment: Do School Facilities Really Affect a Child's Education? *Learning by Design*, 11, pp.10-13.

Mäkelä, T., Kankaanranta, M. and Gallagher, C., 2014, October. Involving students in the redesign of learning environments conducive to learning and wellbeing. In *Proceedings of the Annual Architectural Research Symposium in Finland* (pp. 268-282). Available from <https://journal.fi/atut/article/view/46489> [accessed 20 March 2023].

Mandela, N., 2008. *Long walk to freedom: The autobiography of Nelson Mandela*. UK: Hachette.

Mann, G. and Sahuguet, A., 2018. With great data comes great responsibility: How data science can be applied to solve public interest problems without losing its soul. *Journal of Technology in Human Services*, 36(1), pp.1-7.

Maponya, S.H., 2015. *The role of the principal as instructional leader in improving learner achievement in South African primary schools* (Doctoral dissertation). University of South Africa).

Maponya, S.H., 2015. *The role of the principal as instructional leader in improving learner achievement in South African primary schools* (Doctoral dissertation). University of South Africa.

- Marais, L., Van Rooyen, D., Lenka, M. and Cloete, J., 2014. Planning for economic development in a secondary city? Trends, pitfalls and alternatives for Mangaung, South Africa. *Bulletin of Geography. Socio-economic Series*, (26), pp.203-217.
- Marwa, D. and Onyango, D.O., 2022. The Efficiency of Head Teachers in Coordinating Curriculum Implementation in Public Primary Schools in Tarime Town Council in Tanzania. *The International Journal of Humanities & Social Studies*, 10(2).
- Masango, M., 2003. Leadership in the African context. *The Ecumenical Review*, 55(4), pp.313-321.
- Mayger, L. and Provinzano, K., 2022. Leadership for family and community engagement: A qualitative policy analysis of state principal evaluation processes. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 58(1), pp.141-177.
- Mbembe, A., 2019. Future knowledges and their implications for the decolonisation project. In J. Jansen (Ed.), *Decolonisation in universities: The politics of knowledge* (pp.239-254). Johannesburg: Wits University Press.
- McKenney, S. and Reeves, T.C., 2018. *Conducting educational design research*. New York: Routledge.
- McMillan, J.H. and Schumacher, S., 2014. *Research in education: Evidence-based inquiry*. New York: Pearson Higher Education.
- McTaggart, R., Nixon, R. and Kemmis, S., 2017. Critical participatory action research. In L. Rowell, C. Bruce, J.M. Shosh and M Riel (Eds.), *The Palgrave international handbook of action research* (pp. 21-35). New York: Palgrave MacMillan.
- Meresa, M., Tadesse, M., Zeray, N. and Haile, G., 2019. Leadership roles and challenges of school improvement program: the case selected primary schools in Dilla City, Ethiopia. *Academy of Educational Leadership Journal*, 23(3), pp.1-10.
- Meulenberg-Buskens, I., 2011. Free attitude interview technique. London: unpublished notes.

- Mhlongo, D. and Alexander, G., 2021. Sustaining a Democratic Culture through Collaborative Engagements for Citizens with Disabilities–Part 2. In *Interpersonal Relationships*. IntechOpen.
- Mojapelo, S.M., 2022. Records management in government schools in South Africa: a case study in Limpopo province. *Records Management Journal*, 32(1), pp.21-42.
- Molaudzi, A.M., 2021. The role of resources in promoting teaching and learning in South Africa. In K.S. Adeyemo (Ed.), *The Education Systems of Africa* (pp.529-548). Cham: Springer.
- Morake-Toolo, M.L., 2023. *A Ke Jona Boikhutlo?* (a Setswana language title translated in English as – “Is This The End?”). Academic and Non-Fiction Authors Association of South Africa. New Literary Voices. Johannesburg.
- Moorosi, P. and Bantwini, B.D., 2016. School district leadership styles and school improvement: evidence from selected school principals in the Eastern Cape Province. *South African Journal of Education*, 36(4), pp.1-9.
- Morrow, L.M. and Tracey, D.H., 2012. *Lenses on reading: An introduction to theories and models*. New York: Guilford Press.
- Msila, V. and Gumbo, M.T., 2016. *Africanizing the curriculum: Indigenous perspectives and theories*. Stellenbosch: African Sun Media.
- Msila, V., 2008. Ubuntu and school leadership. *Journal of Education*, 44, pp.67-84.
- Muchie, M., Osha, S. and Matlou, M.P., 2012. *The Africana world: From fragmentation to unity and renaissance*. Pretoria: African Books Collective.
- Mullaly, R.P., 2002. *Challenging oppression: A critical social work approach*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Mullen, J., Fiset, J. and Rhéaume, A., 2018. Destructive forms of leadership: The effects of abusive supervision and incivility on employee health and safety. *Leadership & Organisation Development Journal*, 39(8), pp.946-961.

- Mwaseba, D.L., Msolla, S.N., Hella, J., Sanga, N.A.C., Selemani, I.S., Kyaruzi, A.A., Haug, K.M.R. and Westengen, O., 2018. *Country Report: Tanzania, European's Union H2020 Research and Innovation Programme Grant Agreement No. 727201*. European Commission.
- Nederhand, J. and Klijn, E.H., 2019. Stakeholder involvement in public–private partnerships: Its influence on the innovative character of projects and on project performance. *Administration & Society*, 51(8), pp.1200-1226.
- Netolicky, D.M., 2020. School leadership during a pandemic: navigating tensions. *Journal of Professional Capital and Community*, 5(3/4), pp.391-395.
- Nieveen, N. and Plomp, T., 2017. *Five guiding principles for curriculum change*. Enschede, the Netherlands: SLO.
- Nwosu, L. and Matashu, M., 2021. The perceived influence of instructional leadership roles played by accounting educators on learner performance in South African secondary schools. In *ICERI2021 Proceedings* (pp.2250-2256). IATED.
- Okoth, U.A., 2018. Head teachers' characteristics and instructional leadership in curriculum implementation in secondary schools, Siaya County, Kenya. *European Scientific Journal*, 14(19), pp.75-89.
- Osuji, U.C., 2021. An ontological deconstruction of the 'epistemic agents' in indigenous knowledge structures. *Journal of African Studies and Sustainable Development*, pp.83107. Available from <https://www.acjoi.org/index.php/jassd/article/view/1576/1558> [accessed 20 march 2023].
- Outlaw, L.T., 2017. Black” Philosophy, “African” Philosophy, “Africana” Philosophy: Transnational Deconstructive and Reconstructive Renovations in “Philosophy. In A. Afolayan & T. Falola (Eds.), *The Palgrave Handbook of African Philosophy* (pp.245-267). Palgrave Macmillan, New York.
- Parkay, F.W., Anctil, E.J. and Hass, G., 2014. *Curriculum leadership: Readings for developing quality educational programs*. New York: Prentice Hall.

- Perkins, D.D. and Zimmerman, M.A., 1995. Empowerment theory, research, and application. *American Journal of Community Psychology*, 23(5), pp.569-579.
- Peurach, D.J., Cohen, D.K., Yurkofsky, M.M. and Spillane, J.P., 2019. From mass schooling to education systems: Changing patterns in the organisation and management of instruction. *Review of Research in Education*, 43(1), pp.32-67.
- Pinar, W.F., 2012. *What is curriculum theory?* New York: Routledge.
- Pinar, W.F., 2015. Individuality as an educational project: Kilpatrick, curriculum theory, teacher education. *Encounters in Theory and History of Education*, 16, pp.112-128.
- Pinkelman, S.E., Rolf, K.R., Landon, T., Detrich, R., McLaughlin, C., Peterson, A. and McKnight-Lizotte, M., 2022. Curriculum Adoption in US Schools: An Exploratory, Qualitative Analysis. *Global Implementation Research and Applications*, 2(1), pp.1-11.
- Pinquart, M., 2023. Associations of self-esteem with attachment to parents: A meta-analysis. *Psychological Reports*, 126(5), pp.2101-2118.
- Price, T.L., 2018. A “critical leadership ethics” approach to the Ethical Leadership construct. *Leadership*, 14(6), pp.687-706.
- Rabaka, R., 2006. The souls of Black radical folk: W.E.B. Du Bois, critical social theory, and the state of Africana studies. *Journal of Black Studies*, 36(5), pp.732-763.
- Rabaka, R., 2007. *W.E.B. Du Bois and the problems of the twenty-first century: An essay on Africana critical theory*. London: Lexington Books.
- Rabaka, R., 2010. *Africana critical theory: reconstructing the black radical tradition, from W.E.B. Du Bois and CLR James to Frantz Fanon and Amílcar Cabral*. London: Lexington Books.
- Rabaka, R., 2014. *Concepts of Cabralism: Amílcar Cabral and Africana Critical Theory*. London: Lexington Books.
- Ranson, S., Farrell, C., Peim, N. and Smith, P., 2005. Does governance matter for school improvement? *School Effectiveness and School Improvement*, 16(3), pp.305-325.

Reeves, C., Carnoy, M. and Addy, N., 2013. Comparing opportunity to learn and student achievement gains in southern African primary schools: A new approach. *International Journal of Educational Development*, 33(5), pp.426-435.

Reeves, S., Albert, M., Kuper, A. and Hodges, B.D., 2008. Why use theories in qualitative research. *BMJ*, 337(7670), pp.631-4.

Republic of South Africa (RSA). 1996. *National Education Policy Act, 27 of 1996*. Pretoria: Government Printer.

Rich, W.C., 2021. *Black mayors and school politics: The failure of reform in Detroit, Gary, and Newark*. New York: Garland Science.

Robinson, V.M.J., Lloyd, C.A. & Rowe, K.J., 2008. The Impact of leadership on student outcomes an analysis of the differential effects of leadership. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 44, pp.635-674.

Rudo, Z. and Dimock, V., 2017. *How family, school, and community engagement can improve student achievement and influence school reform. Literature review*. Available from <https://campussuite-storage.s3.amazonaws.com/prod/898838/03afb8bb-09b2-11e7-b6d9-22000bd8490f/2014308/d73b9888-04bd-11ea-ac08-0ad72507d897/file/Article%201-%20Final-Report-Family-Engagement-AIR.pdf> [accessed 27 Jan 2023].

Sancar, R., Atal, D. and Deryakulu, D., 2021. A new framework for teachers' professional development. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 101, p.103305.

Sandwick, T., Fine, M., Greene, A.C., Stoudt, B.G., Torre, M.E. and Patel, L., 2018. Promise and provocation: Humble reflections on critical participatory action research for social policy. *Urban Education*, 53(4), pp.473-502.

Saputra, T. and Budimansyah, D., 2022, January. Strengthening Character Education Through the Natural School Leadership Curriculum. *Advances in Social Science, Education and Humanities Research*, 636, pp.615-621.

Scott, D., 2014. Knowledge and the curriculum. *Curriculum Journal*, 25(1), pp.14-28.

Seabi, J., 2012. *Research designs and data collection techniques. Complete your thesis or dissertation successfully*. Cape Town: Juta.

Senekal, Q. and Lenz, R., 2020. Decolonising the South African Higher Education curriculum: An investigation into the challenges. *International Journal of Social Sciences and Humanity Studies*, 12(1), pp.146-160.

Seobi, B.A. and Wood, L., 2016. Improving the instructional leadership of heads of department in under-resourced schools: A collaborative action-learning approach. *South African Journal of Education*, 36(4), pp.1-14.

Sharma, S., Burnette, D., Bhattacharya, A. and Nath, S., 2014. *Community participation in primary education*. Columbia: Earth Institute, Columbia University.

Shava, G.N., Heystek, J. and Chasara, T., 2021. Instructional Leadership: Its Role in Sustaining School Improvement in South African Schools. *International Journal of Social Learning*, 1(2), pp.117-134.

Sprague, J.R. and Walker, H.M., 2021. *Safe and healthy schools: Practical prevention strategies*. New York: Guilford Publications.

Steinberg, S.R. and Kincheloe, J.L., 2010. Power, emancipation, and complexity: Employing critical theory. *Power and Education*, 2(2), pp.140-151.

Tapala, T.T., Van Niekerk, M.P. and Mentz, K., 2021. Curriculum leadership barriers experienced by heads of department: a look at South African secondary schools. *International Journal of Leadership in Education*, 24(6), pp.771-788.

Tatnall, A. and Fluck, A., 2022. Twenty-five years of the Education and the Information Technologies journal: Past and future. *Education and Information Technologies*, 27(2), pp.1359-1378.

Tillotson, M.T., 2016. Reiland Rabaka's Africana critical theory: a genealogy of Asantean Afrocentric sources and influences. *Journal of Pan African Studies*, 9(10), pp.45-55.

Tshelane, M., 2020. Sustainable Professional Curriculum Practice for School Leadership Capacity Building. In K.G. Fomunyam & S.B. Khoza (Eds.), *Curriculum Theory, Curriculum Theorising, and the Theoriser* (pp.271-291). London: Brill.

University of Cambridge.

Van Dijk, T.A., 1993. Principles of critical discourse analysis. *Discourse & Society*, 4(2), pp.249-283.

Walsh, D. and Downe, S. 2006. Approaching the quality of research. *Midwifery*, 22(2), pp. 108-109.

Wikimedia. #Black Lives Matter Images. 2023.

[https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/2/29/George\\_Floyd\\_protest\\_in\\_Grand\\_Army\\_Plaza\\_June\\_7\\_%2873297%29.jpg](https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/2/29/George_Floyd_protest_in_Grand_Army_Plaza_June_7_%2873297%29.jpg) Accessed: 08 October 2023

Willis, L.D., Povey, J., Hodges, J. and Carroll, A., 2021. *Principal leadership for parent engagement in disadvantaged schools: What qualities and strategies distinguish effective principals?* Amsterdam: Springer Nature.

Yitbarek, S., Wogasso, Y., Meagher, M. and Strickland, L., 2022. Life Skills Education in Ethiopia: Afar Pastoralists' Perspectives. *Life Skills Education for Youth*, 2022, p.245.

Ylimaki, R.M. and Uljens, M., 2017. Theorising educational leadership studies, curriculum, and didaktik: NonAffirmative education theory in bridging disparate fields. *Leadership and Policy in Schools*, 16(2), pp.175-227.

Ylimaki, R.M., 2012. Curriculum leadership in a conservative era. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 48(2), pp.304-346.

Ylimaki, R.M., Fetman, L.J., Matyjasik, E., Brunderman, L. and Uljens, M., 2017. Beyond normativity in sociocultural reproduction and sociocultural transformation: Curriculum work–leadership within an evolving context. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 53(1), pp.70-106.

Zhang, X., Wong, J.L. and Wang, X., 2022. How do the leadership strategies of middle leaders affect teachers' learning in schools? A case study from China. *Professional Development in Education*, 48(3), pp.444-461.

## APPENDICES

### APPENDIX A: ETHICAL CLEARANCE



#### GENERAL/HUMAN RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (GHREC)

09-May-2019

Dear Mr Shale, Motsamai MI

#### Application Approved

Research Project Title:

**A framework to improve curriculum leadership in primary schools**

Ethical Clearance number:

**UFS-HSD2018/1555/0905**

We are pleased to inform you that your application for ethical clearance has been approved. Your ethical clearance is valid for twelve (12) months from the date of issue. We request that any changes that may take place during the course of your study/research project be submitted to the ethics office to ensure ethical transparency. Furthermore, you are requested to submit the final report of your study/research project to the ethics office. Should you require more time to complete this research, please apply for an extension. Thank you for submitting your proposal for ethical clearance; we wish you the best of luck and success with your research.

Yours sincerely

**Dr. Petrus Nel**

**Chairperson: General/Human Research Ethics Committee**

201 Nelson Mandela Drive/Ryalaan  
Park/Vlei/Parowes  
Bloemfontein 9301  
South Africa/Suid-Afrika

P.O. Box / Posbus 339  
Bloemfontein 9300  
South Africa / Suid-Afrika  
T: +27(0)51 401 2116  
F: +27(0)51 401 3732  
W: [ethics@ufs.ac.za](mailto:ethics@ufs.ac.za)  
[www.ufs.ac.za](http://www.ufs.ac.za)



## **APPENDIX B: LETTER TO PRINCIPAL**

From: Motsamai I Shale

Researcher Study Leader

11 Tsessebe Street

Fauna

Bloemfontein

[motsamaishale5@gmail.com](mailto:motsamaishale5@gmail.com)

Contacts 081 547 8893

and

Research Supervisor

Dr. MD Tshelane

Faculty of Humanities : School of Teacher Education

Central University of Technology

Bloemfontein

9301

[tshelanemd@ufs.ac.za](mailto:tshelanemd@ufs.ac.za)

Contacts 082 970 8243

Last Updated: 27 March 2019

### **INVITATION TO DISCUSS CRITICAL CURRICULUM LEADERSHIP**

Prospective Participant: Principal

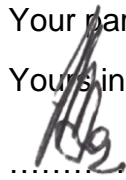
Please accept my invitation to request your participation in this research project, Titled: **A framework to improve curriculum leadership in primary schools.**

The study is about designing a framework to improve curriculum leadership in primary schools. The mission of the schools is to improve the educational achievements of learners. The current curriculum leadership is faced with challenges of not involving all stake holders, hence the underperformance of learners in primary schools.

Your participation in this project is voluntary and your basic human rights will be respected and protected at all times. Your personal information and identity will be maintained and treated as confidential at all times. The processes involved in this project will be communicated to you and you will be allowed to make your inputs. You have the right to withdraw your participation at any stage in case you may feel uncomfortable. You are also free not to comment on issues you may not be comfortable with.

Your participation will add great value to this project.

Yours in continuous professional development



.....

Motsamai I Shale

## APPENDIX C: LETTER TO DEPUTY PRINCIPAL

### INVITATION TO DISCUSS CRITICAL CURRICULUM LEADERSHIP

Prospective Participant: Deputy Principal

Please accept my invitation to request your participation in this research project. **A framework to improve curriculum leadership in primary schools.**

The study is about designing a framework to improve curriculum leadership in primary schools. The mission of the schools is to improve the educational achievements of learners. The current curriculum leadership is faced with challenges of not involving all stake holders, hence the underperformance of learners in primary schools.

Your participation in this project is voluntary and your basic human rights will be respected and protected at all times. Your personal information and identity will be maintained and treated as confidential at all times. The processes involved in this project will be communicated to you and you will be allowed to make your inputs. You have the right to withdraw your participation at any stage in case you may feel uncomfortable. You are also free not to comment on issues you may not be comfortable with.

Your participation will add great value to this project.

Yours in continuous professional development



Motsamai I Shale

**APPENDIX D: DEPARTMENTAL HEAD**

INVITATION TO DISCUSS CRITICAL CURRICULUM LEADERSHIP

Prospective Participant: Departmental Head


Please accept my invitation to request your participation in this research project. **A framework to improve curriculum leadership in primary schools.**

The study is about designing a framework to improve curriculum leadership in primary schools. The mission of the schools is to improve the educational achievements of learners. The current curriculum leadership is faced with challenges of not involving all stake holders, hence the underperformance of learners in primary schools.

Your participation in this project is voluntary and your basic human rights will be respected and protected at all times. Your personal information and identity will be maintained and treated as confidential at all times. The processes involved in this project will be communicated to you and you will be allowed to make your inputs. You have the right to withdraw your participation at any stage in case you may feel uncomfortable. You are also free not to comment on issues you may not be comfortable with.

Your participation will add great value to this project.

Yours in continuous professional development

  
.....

Motsamai I Shale

## APPENDIX E: LETTER FROM LANGUAGE EDITOR

# Michelle Woolley

WRITER EDITOR PROOFREADER TRANSLATOR  
Bachelor of Library and Information Science: B.Bibl.  
Reference & Research Librarian  
Bachelor of Arts Honours in Translation Studies and Editing

Associate Member of Professional EDITORS' Guild (PEG)

## CERTIFICATE OF EDITING

This letter certifies that I have edited the Thesis detailed below.

Title:

A FRAMEWORK TO IMPROVE CURRICULUM LEADERSHIP IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS

Author:

MOTSAMAI ISHAMEL SHALE  
Student number: 1997732589

Regards  
Michelle Woolley

  
Date: 27/01/2023

michellewoolley12@gmail.com  
083 298 2077



## APPENDIX F: TURN IT IN REPORT

# A FRAMEWORK TO IMPROVE CURRICULUM LEADERSHIP IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS

*by M I Shale*

---

**Submission date:** 29-Mar-2023 10:03PM (UTC+0200)

**Submission ID:** 2050251252

**File name:** A\_FRAMEWORK\_TO\_IMPROVE\_CURRICULUM\_LEADERSHIP\_IN\_PRIMARY\_SCHOOLS.docx (986.9K)

**Word count:** 65600

**Character count:** 367805

## A FRAMEWORK TO IMPROVE CURRICULUM LEADERSHIP IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS

### ORIGINALITY REPORT

<b>9%</b>	<b>6%</b>	<b>2%</b>	<b>7%</b>
SIMILARITY INDEX	INTERNET SOURCES	PUBLICATIONS	STUDENT PAPERS

### PRIMARY SOURCES

<b>1</b>	<a href="http://www.planview.com">www.planview.com</a> Internet Source	<1%
<b>2</b>	<a href="http://kapanjadibeda.files.wordpress.com">kapanjadibeda.files.wordpress.com</a> Internet Source	<1%
<b>3</b>	Submitted to University of Stellenbosch, South Africa Student Paper	<1%
<b>4</b>	<a href="http://section27.org.za">section27.org.za</a> Internet Source	<1%
<b>5</b>	<a href="http://newarkccb.org">newarkccb.org</a> Internet Source	<1%
<b>6</b>	<a href="http://www.colorado.edu">www.colorado.edu</a>	<1%

