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# PRINCIPALS' ROLE IN LEADERSHIP CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT OF POST LEVEL ONE TEACHERS FOR SCHOOL LEADERSHIP

ABSTRACT

*This study was undertaken to explore the role of principals in capacity development of post level one teachers for school leadership positions. The success of a school and its attendant learner achievement depends largely on good school leadership. Thus, it is highly unlikely that poor or ineffective school leadership will lead to successful schools. This study argues that it is the responsibility of principals to ensure that adequate opportunities exist for leadership development of post level one teachers. A qualitative research approach was selected to investigate the role principals play in building leadership capacity in post level one teachers. Semi-structured individual interviews were conducted with ten (10) participants at two (2) schools: one (1) principal and four (4) post level one teachers per school. Findings indicate that principals played a fundamental role, notably different, in the creation of opportunities for leadership development in post level one teachers. The opportunities ranged from the formation of committees, which offer exposure to early leadership practices, mentoring and coaching prospects and the availability of leadership training and development resulting from the outcomes of the Integrated Quality Management System appraisal system mandated by the Department of Education. Lastly, the study encapsulates these opportunities in a five-year leadership capacity building programme, to be offered as an in-service internal programme for post level one teachers to support progressive and developmental leadership capacity improvement.*

Keywords: *Teacher, leadership, capacity building, transformational leadership, distributive leadership, committees, principal*

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

The appointment of teachers in leadership positions in South African schools has been controversial, contested and disputed by teachers and teacher unions for many decades (Wills, 2015:6; Zengele, 2013:18). Many teachers have questioned the skills, qualifications and factors surrounding suitability that is required of teachers in order for them to be appointed into school leadership or senior management positions. As part of *City Press* newspaper's

"jobs for cash" exposé, Haper and Masondo (2014:2) conducted investigations into the appointments of teachers to school leadership positions. The investigation revealed many allegations of irregularities, ranging from payments for vacant posts, sexual misconduct for posts, unionised members as preferred candidates for posts, enticements/bribery transactions and even assassinations. Subsequently, in 2014 a ministerial task team (MTT) was appointed by the Minister of Department of Basic Education (DBE), Angie Motshekga, to investigate the allegations made by *City Press*. The DBE, MTT (2016:140) concluded that there were indeed irregularities in the appointment of teachers into leadership and other positions. These indiscretions put into question the suitability of candidates for leadership positions. Thus, this study was undertaken with a view of exploring: how can the current practices and opportunities regarding leadership development of post level one (PL1) teachers in two secondary schools be understood?

In 2000, the Department of Basic Education (DBE) introduced the Advanced Certificate in Education in School Leadership and Management (ACELM) to provide formal leadership capacity training programmes for school leadership. Notably, this programme was solely and strictly directed at school principals and not PL1 teachers. Bush, Kiggundu and Moorosi argued that the ACESLM programme ought to be "redesigned or restructured" (2011:41), since the programme was inadequate in meeting international standards. Similarly, in 2013 the Matthew Goniwe School of Leadership and Governance (MGSLG) revealed that the existing ACESLM qualification in leadership and management was inadequate and recommended that it be redesigned to fit the criteria of a postgraduate diploma or a series of in-service training modules (Sullivan, 2013). To date, there is no tangible evidence of leadership capacity development programmes having been instituted by the Department of Education which are aimed at PL1 teachers in schools.

## 2. CONTEXT OF THE INVESTIGATION

Leadership positions that become available in schools are awarded either to an outsider (a candidate from another school) or to a member of staff working within the school where the vacant post exists. The authors explain herein the process by which a vacant leadership and/or any other position in Gauteng, South Africa is filled. A leadership position normally commences with an incumbent being placed in an acting position in the vacant post. The post is subsequently advertised in the *Government Gazette* via a Gauteng Department of Education GDE 79 form, which is submitted to the relevant authorities for capture and distribution to all schools (Gauteng Department of Education, *Circular No.1 of 2017*). Upon the successful appointment of an incumbent into the vacant post, the post then translates into a permanent position. Bush, Kiggundu and Moorosi (2011:31) and Nielson (2001) all state that many school leaders or managers begin their school leadership careers without any formal leadership qualification(s) or having attended any formal internal training programmes.

The Integrated Strategic Planning Framework for Teacher Education and Development in South Africa (ISPFTEDSA, [2011–2025]) was established by the Department of Basic Education (DBE) and the Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET) on 5 April 2011 (DBE & DHET, 2011). According to the DBE and the DHET technical report (2011:13), teacher leadership development in South Africa was identified as being "poorly coordinated, burdensome and in some cases non-existent". Furthermore, the Integrated Quality Management System (IQMS) as a tool for leadership capacity building was identified as being "time consuming and bureaucratic, consisting of too much paperwork (administration)" (2011:13). It

was felt that it did not serve its purpose, as standard performance scores were inflated and did not reflect reality in the classroom or the school. Furthermore, neither the provincial education departments (PED) nor the teachers demonstrated a capacity to implement IQMS or benefit from it and, therefore, the report declared that teacher development should be separated from IQMS. This opinion is in line with the Declaration of the Teacher Development Summit of 2009 (Education Labour Relation Council, 2009), which declared that teacher development should be disassociated from teacher appraisal for remuneration and salary progression (DBE & DHET, 2011:13).

The DBE and DHET (2011) declared the importance of the Declaration of Teacher Development Summit and emphasised that in order to promote teacher leadership capacity, schools should become centres of leadership development. Principals need to take the lead in coordinating and facilitating leadership capacity building programmes with the cooperation of, and networking with, all stakeholders, role players, relevant district offices and PEDs. The summit also concluded that schools should be properly authorised with adequate policy, monitoring, funding and quality assurance. In addition, schools dedicated to training and development should be established to support teacher education and leadership capacity. Sullivan (2013) and Wafa (2015) both agree that professional development should be more localised, allowing for the participation of districts and PEDs. School principals should be responsible for monitoring the development of teachers, while teachers, individually or collectively, need to identify their own areas for leadership capacity development.

## 3. TOWARDS CONCEPTUALISING LEADERSHIP CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT OF POST LEVEL ONE TEACHERS

According to Stoll (2009) and Bush (2007), capacity building and training programmes are essential for the development and success of an organisation and argue that for any organisation to reform and develop, emphasis should be placed on its members' capacities and commitment to the organisation. Qualman and Morgan (1996) view capacity building as a process whereby an organisation plans long-term developmental goals. Lai defines capacity building as the

> creation of a bank of skills, knowledge, values, attitudes that an organization banks through its human capital and the creation of a capable workforce that can deal adequately with a variety of school issues and changes that are within and outside the classroom (2014:167).

School principals are responsible for identifying programmes (Ackerman & Mackenzie, 2006) that are suitable for preparing and building leadership capacity for all teachers, while Barkley, Bottoms, Clark and Feagin (2004) contend that teachers need to be more involved in decision making at school level as well as other school leadership activities since this brings about change in a school and builds confidence for leadership capacity.

Leadership capacity building is essential for sustainable quality education; it is about empowering teachers with leadership knowledge and skills that are required for the improvement of the entire school and beyond classroom instructions (Stoll, 2009). Similarly, Fullan (2007) states that leadership capacity building is about creating and maintaining the necessary conditions that facilitate learning and create experiences and opportunities that ensure synergy among relationships. Leadership capacity building is about catering for the needs of the present and the future sustainable development of a school (Lai & Cheung, 2015).

The researchers draw on Mitchell and Sackney (2001), who scrutinise three areas for leadership capacity development, namely: personal capacity, interpersonal capacity and organisational capacity. Personal capacity refers to values, beliefs, attitudes, knowledge, assumptions and perceptions that teachers carry within the teaching profession, whilst interpersonal capacity relates to group relations, collegial relations and collective practice among staff within the school. Lastly, organisational capacity begins with an awareness of organisational structures that can open doors for teachers to enter school management positions, which is achieved by removing the wall that sometimes persists between management teams and teachers. Bennet, Wise, Woods and Harvey (2003) concur with this and believe that in order to remove the wall between management and teachers, leadership duties should be distributed. In distributive leadership, boundaries are broken and a collective leadership style is conceived, thus, building the teachers' leadership capacity. Stoll (2009) suggests that a teacher's perception and professional beliefs are best challenged and enhanced through dialogue built by a culture that focuses on human development, when people from different backgrounds work and learn collaboratively in teams.

The creation of professional learning communities (Jones, 2007; Steyn, 2016) bring the teachers' working lives and learning together; the school's vision and goals are shared, destinies chosen, the necessary adjustments to accomplish their goals are chosen and teachers develop themselves professionally. Both authors agree that teachers become actively good learners in the environments in which they lead, and this increases their capacity for leadership.

Naicker and Mestry offer another perspective: leadership capacity building can occur through "job-embedded learning, organizational embedded learning and system embedded learning" (2016:3). Job-embedded learning is described as learning that occurs in a school environment where teachers learn whilst entrenched in a job situation and, thus, are able to draw from previous and current experiences. They explain organisational embedded learning as learning that the whole school engages in and system embedded learning as learning taking place within a system.

In this article, the researchers argue that developing a teacher's leadership capacity is one of the core duties of the principal and this can be accomplished through various opportunities such as individual or group mentoring and coaching, where teachers receive individualised or group support and guidance (Ghosh, 2013; Bass 1999). Another strategy according to Leithwood, Harris and Hopkins (2008) is the restructuring or redesigning of the organisation by creating new leadership positions within the hierarchical structure of the school. As transformational leaders, principals have the responsibility of distributing leadership through creating, supporting and overseeing committees and sub-committees that offer leadership roles to post level one teachers (Diamond & Spillane, 2016).

## 4. THE ROLE OF DISTRIBUTIVE LEADERSHIP IN CAPACITY BUILDING

Distributive leadership according to Bennet, Wise, Woods and Harvey (2003), is defined by three elements: emergent property, openness of boundaries and leadership expertise. The authors explain that emergent property is collective leadership where the sum is greater than its parts. Leadership roles are distributed, fluid in nature and not fixed, are less hierarchical and allows for "top-bottom" and "bottom-top" flexibility. Openness of boundaries is where

leadership practices are stretched and shared among the members of the organisation, thus, opening boundaries and building leadership expertise.

How does the practice of "distributive leadership" in schools lead to capacity building in PL1 teachers? Distributive leadership is about "leadership practice, which is imbedded in interactions between leaders, followers and their situation" (Diamond & Spillane, 2016:148; Spillane, Halverson & Diamond, 2007). They further explain that situations that include material, organisational structures and cultures are the core variables that shape these interactions, where leadership is stretched across people enabling collaborative, collective and coordinated distributed leadership, resulting in teachers serving in school committees where they work together (collaborate) and make decisions as a collective on behalf of the school (Bennet, Harvey, Wise & Woods, 2003).

Duignan (2007), a critic of distributive leadership, argues that distributing tasks, responsibilities and duties does not guarantee that the school will be successful in terms of leadership development. But a supportive principal who provides strong leadership in teacher development through advocacy and the ability to influence others will ultimately lead to staff's leadership capacity building (Bredeson, 2000). Moreover, Diamond and Spillane (2016) advocate for distributive leadership that is less hierarchical and more linear where teachers belong to committees and sub-committees that provide opportunities for leadership roles and informed decision-making responsibilities.

The researchers were guided by an over-arching research question, namely: How can the current practices and opportunities regarding leadership development of post level one teachers in two secondary schools be understood?

## 5. METHODOLOGY

### Research design and method

The researchers adopted a qualitative research design (Creswell, 2009; Ritchie, Lewis, Nicholls & Ormston, 2013) to investigate the role of principals in the leadership capacity development of PL1 teachers. Qualitative research was executed in a natural setting (source) where the phenomenon (leadership capacity development) occurred, thus, allowing the researchers to collect "live" data from the participants' own environment, which was familiar and comfortable to them (Ritchie & Spencer, 2002; Denzin & Lincoln, 2011). Qualitative research aims to provide an in-depth interpretive understanding of the social world through the experiences, material circumstances, viewpoints and history of the participants (Creswell, 2009; Ritchie, Lewis, & Ormston, 2003). The empirical inquiry allowed for detailed explorations of leadership capacity development taking place in two schools.

By employing qualitative design, the researchers used the case study approach (Gustafsson, 2017; Yin, 2016), which permitted the researchers to investigate the phenomenon of leadership capacity development. A multiple case study was used in this investigation whereby two secondary schools were chosen as research sites. This approach enabled the researchers to compare data by drawing on differences and similarities between the two cases (Baxter & Jack, 2008:548). The two schools, named School A and School B were categorised as quintile one schools (Education Labour Relations Council, 2003b: B52). The Department of Education (DoE) funding grows incrementally from quintile five to quintile one schools (quintile one being the lowest on the poverty index). School A has an enrolment of one thousand and

twelve learners, with thirty-three staff members, which is inclusive of nine school management team members. School B has an enrolment of one thousand, one hundred and twenty-four learners, with thirty-six staff members, which is inclusive of nine school management team members. The first author works in this sector and he was able to gather anecdotal information indicating the presence of leadership positions (temporary in nature) created by the principal, solely for the purpose of PL1 teachers' exposure to leadership development opportunities.

## Sample and data collection

Ten participants, five from each school, purposively selected, constituted the sample (Babbie & Mouton, 2008). This allowed for different perspectives on the phenomenon under study (leadership development of PL1 teachers) from a humanistic and social behavioural perspective (Ary, Jacobs, Sorensen & Razavie, 2010; Baxter & Jack, 2008; Spencer, Ritchie & O'Connor, 2003). Four PL1 teachers and the principal from each school were chosen for this study (Ritchie & Spencer, 2002). The authors identified participants that were experienced as well as "novice" teachers. Another important criterion was the selection of PL1 teachers, who were serving in temporary PL2 acting positions, as it was expected that PL2 acting position incumbents were receiving some level of leadership development. The teaching experience of the PL1 participants ranged from one year to twenty-three years, while the principal of School A admitted to having sixteen years of leadership experience and the principal of School B declared a teaching career trajectory of twenty-nine years. This sampling technique was used because it provided avenues for detailed exploration and understanding of leadership development initiatives in the respective schools (Mason, 2006; Patton, 1990) considering that these were "no-fee" paying schools and entirely dependent on the DoE's funds for all teaching and learning resources.

The method of data gathering was semi-structured individual interviews, conducted with the ten participants in order to understand their views on their leadership capacity development. The main attribute of a semi structured individual interview is its ability to concentrate on the individual (Lewis, Saunders & Thornhill, 2009:322). Open-ended questions were posed to the participants in order to understand how they were prepared for leadership positions by their respective principals. The researchers piloted the interview schedule with two teachers, who were not part of the main sample, to test the feasibility and reliability of the study on a small scale (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2007: 355). The researchers refined the interview schedule for suitability, relevance and to avoid any biases (Bell, 2005).

The interviews were conducted at a suitable time and venue, mutually agreed upon to ensure that the participants' natural settings were not compromised. The researchers aimed to discover meanings that the participants attached to their behaviour; how they interpreted situations and what their perspectives were on issues or processes relating to leadership capacity development (Snape & Spencer, 2003:3). All interviews were audio-recorded, transcribed verbatim and stored in a safe place and made available to the participants when requested. In keeping with Lincoln and Guba, (1985) and Merriam, (2009), who emphasise the importance of keeping an audit trail in research, the authors maintained a detailed record of each stage of the data collection process, transcription methods and the data analysis. In so doing, the researchers worked with reliable, trustworthy data sets, which were verified and authenticated by all participants.

## Data analysis

For this study, the analysis of data explored and interpreted the role of principals in leadership capacity development of PL1 teachers. The interviews were analysed using the content analysis technique (Creswell, 2009; Creswell, 2014), which is used in qualitative research to describe and explain social occurrences in a natural setting, and from the view of the participants (Pope, Ziebland & Mays, 2000:144). In keeping with the qualitative paradigm, the authors first read through the raw data (ten interview transcripts) to obtain a general sense of the data as a whole; this was achieved using Tesch's method (1990) cited in Creswell (2009:186). Comprehensive ideas, views and thoughts alluded to by the participants were noted by the researchers. Secondly, the interview transcripts (data) were segmented into significant units and coded using clear explanations and meanings. These fundamental meanings were then interrogated; emerging topics, which were similar, were identified and clustered. The topics were then scrutinised and coded into categories; "all related categories were grouped together to identify the common themes or trends in accordance with the research question" (Creswell, 2008:251; Creswell, 2009:187) and the literature review. This method of analysis made it easier for the researchers to understand and interpret the results of the study (Nieuwenhuis, 2012) while the literature review served as a crucial additional avenue to contextualise the findings.

## Research ethics

The researchers observed research ethics as "participants being informed in writing of their voluntary consent, their guaranteed confidentiality, protection from any harm and their ability to withdraw at any time without any sanctions (Akaranga & Makau, 2016; Oliver, 2010). The researchers also conformed to the participants' right to request information and refrain from disclosing sensitive information that might bring discomfort or sanction from their employers. Ethical clearance for this study was obtained from the University of Johannesburg's Ethics Committee and permission to conduct research in public schools in Gauteng was obtained from the Gauteng Department of Education.

# 6. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

When analysing the results, the researchers identified a common trend in the participants' discourse. They underscored the various strategies adopted by their principals in leadership capacity development (Gibson, 2018), although these initiatives were sometimes haphazardly coordinated and did not always produce the desired results.

We now discuss each strategy with quotations from the interview transcripts as well as excerpts from literature to support our claims.

## The Integrated Quality Management System (IQMS) used as tool for leadership development of PL1 teachers

The Integrated Quality Management System is aimed at enhancing and monitoring the performance of schools and educators. The system consists of the Whole School Education, the Development Appraisal System and the Performance Measurement (De Clercq, 2008: 12). Through the implementation of IQMS in public schools, the Department of Education is mandated to provide personal and professional development plans to cater for individual

needs of teachers according to the schools' improvement plan (SIP), which is a direct outcome of the appraisal system (IQMS, Collective Agreement No. 8 of 2003).

Principals are expected to embrace an all-encompassing leadership role (Mahlangu, 2014) in which teachers are supported in the IQMS implementation. Teachers need to be developed and evaluated according to the appropriate performance standards as per the IQMS document. Principal 1 (P1) refers to IQMS as *"the one staff development plan which is a legislative process that must be implemented"*. P2 explained in detail, *"Teachers are evaluated, supported and appraised against the performance standards in IQMS, some [teachers] do well, others don't."* However, both teachers and principals concurred that IQMS, as an appraisal tool for leadership capacity building initiative, is challenging with regard to its implementation:

> *"We fill out forms, but we not really sure how does it benefits us, you recommend some things, but you don't see that much, documents are submitted and nothing happens."* (Teacher 1).

P2 is *"unhappy"* about IQMS, which is internal, *"teachers evaluate each other and they are friends".* P1 concurred, *"friendships cloud judgements in scoring, it is not the true reflection of work done."* The participants alluded to teachers awarding maximum scores (16) per performance standard, although some teachers were not deserving of such scores (IQMS, Collective Agreement No. 8 of 2003). P1 stated that the financial gain (annual increment received through a satisfactory performance evaluation) associated with IQMS was also problematic: *"Monetary attachment is problematic; people want to get money without working for it"* (P1).

The PL1 teachers argued that they were not allowed to select their own areas of development in leadership since they were not incumbents of "practising leadership positions". Hence, participant T3 felt *"excluded*", T5 felt, *"ignored"* and T8 alluded to, "*not having any power in decision-making",* as they were not developed for leadership purposes through formal processes. This is evidenced in a direct verbatim extract from T3:

> *No, leadership is for HODs, not for PL1, we don't fill that part, we only fill the classroom areas of development, we only stop at number 7 of development, from 8 to 14 that's where it starts with leadership, we don't go to that part because it is not for PL1.* [IQMS document, *Collective Agreement No. 8 of 2003* outlines the relevant performance standards for the various post level staff in schools]

The researchers highlight the deficiencies in the implementation of IQMS in schools and we concur with the participants. IQMS as an appraisal tool appears to be merely a "*paper trail*" (T1, T3 and T4) submission to the DoE rather than a professional development system. The participants also alluded to schools and education district officials being insufficiently capacitated to manage IQMS. T3 states:

> *It is a waste of time and paper because the district never comes and say this is your area of development, … how can we assist you?*", whilst T8 claims: *"Many of the people who are specialists in district offices have never been into class, so they don't know what is happening in the class.*

The authors recognised teachers in both schools having a misguided notion of IQMS, which in essence should produce legitimate and positive results, but in reality produces the opposite effects in public education (De Clercq, 2008).

## The creation of grade heads and subject heads as a strategy for leadership development

What was clear to the researchers is that principals created *"leadership positions"* in the form of grade heads and subject heads in preparation for succession planning (Bush, Kiggundu & Moorosi, 2011) and transition planning (Hamilton, Forde & McMahon, 2018). In school A, *"grade heads were operational"* (T3) while subject heads were non-existent. In School B, T6 alluded to the principal creating *"subject heads"* but not in all departments. Furthermore, in School A, *"vacant HOD positions were temporarily filled by teachers on a rotational basis"* (T4), and this gave many teachers opportunities to experience working in formal leadership positions before the DoE advertised those positions. However, in School A, where the rotation of a vacant position was taking place, some teachers were reluctant to assume a leadership role in a temporary acting leadership position, *"if it carried no remuneration, then I'm not interested"* (T3). This is problematic for school management teams, since teachers intentionally withdraw from opportunities for teamwork rotational leadership duties, which is crucial for leadership development (Leithwood, Jantzi & Fernadez, 1994: Diamond & Spillane, 2016).

The researchers noted the responses of teachers to the following question: "How does the principal assist in your personal growth for leadership positions? T1 claimed:

> *Every term we make sure that there is a grade head responsible for the grade, so there the principal called me aside and said he wants me to be involved in developing the team's growth plans for IQMS.*
>
> *Department of History is very huge, many subjects, so it's difficult for an HOD to manage all these subjects, So, last year he appointed me as the Head of History and I am serving on several teachers' developmental support groups? (T8).*

When principals were asked which leadership roles were assigned to PL1 teachers in order to develop their leadership capacity, they responded as follows:

> P1: *Normally in promotional positions like HOD, we give people opportunities to act, where we expose them to leadership and see how they perform to see if they must be given that job permanent*.

P2 explained that other leadership tasks assigned to PL1 teachers were "*LTSM coordinators, grade heads and sometimes subject heads".*

Cliffe, Fuller and Moorosi (2018) advocate for in-service leadership opportunities to be made available to all staff. These opportunities were limited in both schools. T3, attended one workshop when occupying an HOD position in an acting capacity. T4 confirmed that PL2 teachers received *"some external leadership training"* as T4 had attended two workshops on monitoring and evaluation, whole school evaluation and developing programmes whilst serving in an acting HOD position. Teachers were eager to assume *"leadership responsibilities that were previously reserved for formally appointed school leaders"* (T1). This suggests that there is an interest and willingness to participate in leadership capacity development initiatives or programmes. T1 stated that workshops on leadership would be more beneficial than curriculum workshops because teachers are reluctant to apply for leadership positions due to their *"lack of leadership abilities and skills".* Teachers who had opportunities to attend PL2 leadership workshops attest to those workshops being beneficial to their leadership

development and believe that it would be appropriate to extend them to PL1 teachers. T3: *"I think the workshops that I attended when I was an acting HOD should be extended to PL1."* T4 rated these workshops for SMT members as exceptional *"nine out of ten".*

The above responses suggest that participants as grade heads or subject heads were exposed to limited internal or external leadership capacity development training programmes that were directed at PL1 teachers, even though teachers were ready to acquire new roles and responsibilities within their schools.

## Mentoring and coaching as an opportunity for leadership development and capacity building

The researchers identified mentoring and coaching as a worthy strategy used for leadership development in both schools, where senior members served as mentors assisting with the career development of novice or junior staff members (Ghosh, 2013; Leithwood, Patten & Jantzi, 2010). The mentors were the principals, members of school management teams or experienced school managers, who assisted with career and psychosocial support of PL1 teachers (Thomas & Kram, 1988). The authors therefore considered mentoring as one of the many responsibilities that the principals performed in their schools to build teachers' leadership capacity (Msila, 2012). When teachers were asked what kind of mentoring was afforded, the response from T1 was as follows:

> *Principals are supportive, sometimes, there are some departments where normally there is a clash with SMT, when the SMT does not want something to happen, but overall the SMT will have a finally say, only if it is those minor issues where, they would say let the committee decides*.

T3 also mentioned the guidance and support provided by the SMT, *"The SMT will guide, give advice and direction because we report to them".* T2 indicated that in her school, an SMT member is allocated to a team for mentoring and coaching purposes and they *"obtain clarification, guidance and support",* from this SMT member. However, T6 in School B pointed out that mentoring was different in her school, *"the support from the SMT in my school was not enough".*

We therefore concluded that mentoring opportunities existed in both schools, although approaches were different and executed on wavering levels, since T2 and T3 are from School A while T6 is from School B.

## Promoting the establishment of committees and sub-committees for leadership development of PL1 teachers

The study scrutinised the role of collaborative environments (Alci, Balyer & Karatas, 2015) where PL1 teachers worked within smaller teams in committees, established for the execution of duties and responsibilities. The teachers declared that support from the principal contributed to their leadership development, indicated by T6 and T7 as "*support*" from their respective HODs and from the principal who was "*knowledgeable*" and "*accountable*". T7 alluded to receiving support from the principal in the form of "*advice on what type of leave to request when one is ill*". T6 indicated support was in the form of "*provision of appropriate workshops, in-service training initiatives and a safe place* [to go to]" when in need of advice and emotional support.

The researchers learnt that in both schools, committees were either *"low-functional or functional, but with limited powers to make decisions"*, and this was corroborated by T1, T7 and T8. Some committees existed on record only and *"no tangible work was undertaken"* (P2). In this regard, it became clear that not all principals were successful in setting direction for their teachers. Furthermore, not all committees were *"properly constituted"* (T6) or *"monitored by principals"* (T7) and this was a clear indication of monitoring, support and evaluation being inadequate. Teachers indicated that minimum power and authority is sometimes bestowed upon committees to make decisions and viewed this as a debilitating factor to their leadership growth.

We also examined the teachers' membership and participation in the various committees. Their interest in membership varied, school-based support team (T1; T6; T7); Examination committee (T1; T3); Learning Teacher Support Material; Sports and SGB (T4); Arts and Culture (T7; T8); Finance (T2); LTSM; School Assessment Team (T1; T5); Bereavement committee (T6; T7) and Teaching and Learning committee (T2; T3 and T7). Moreover, both principals were members of all committees, in their capacity as ex-officio, while only two participants in School A served as HODs in an acting capacity in School A (T2 and T3). Anecdotal evidence from the first author who works in the teaching sector suggests that PL1 teachers were reluctant to serve on the school governing body (SGB), since this structure is responsible for the governance of the school in respect of staff recruitment and recommendations, formation of policies and management of school finances. The researchers attribute this observation to the controversy regarding the "filling" of promotional posts in public schools as a huge deterrent to teachers volunteering to serve on some of the committees (Wills, 2015; Haper & Masondo, 2014).

However, T1, T3 and T8 assigned some merit to being members of committees,

> (T1): *committees are responsible for the smooth running of the school because the principal cannot do all the job by himself, so he need assistance, people to handle the minor issues as well as major issues.*
>
> (T3): *School committees' purpose is the smooth running of the school, so that the management do not do everything by themselves, so they delegate other functions to staff.*
>
> (T8)" *committees play a very important role because the leadership of the school will not be able to do everything all the time, that's why committees are there.*

Participants concurred on the benefits of working in committees by supporting Greenlee (2007), who advocates for increasing teachers' expertise and leadership development through access to information and resources. We were encouraged that all participants were members of at least one committee. We suggest a framework consisting of a five-year leadership capacity development programme for PL1 teachers to be decisively implemented in all schools to enhance leadership development of PL1 teachers.

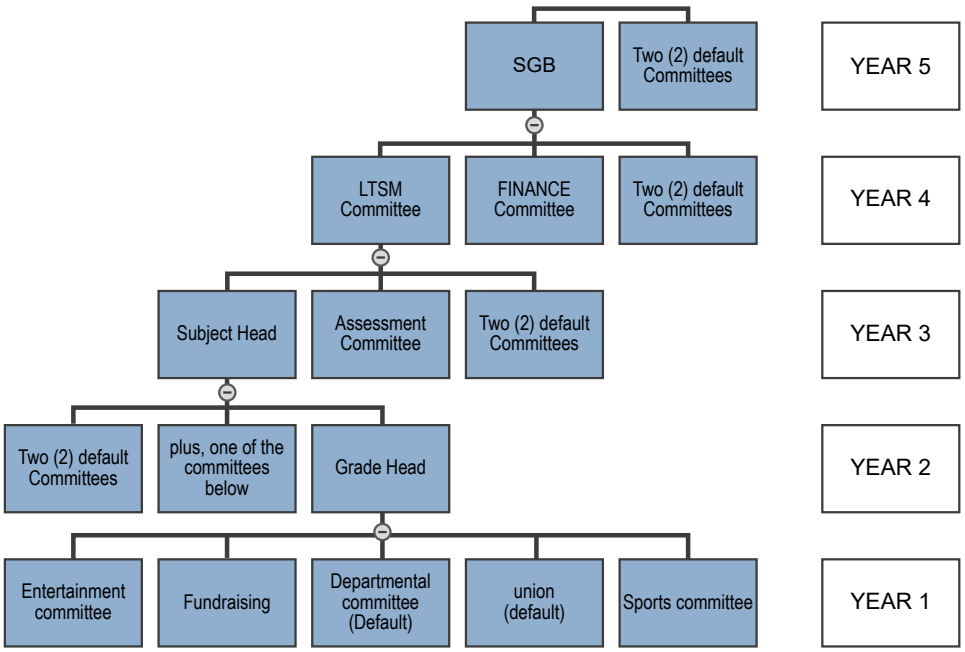


**Figure 1:** Proposed leadership capacity development programme over five-year period

## 7. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The researchers embarked on this study to understand the role that principals play in the leadership capacity development of PL1 teachers for school leadership. This paper answered this research question, "How can the current practices and opportunities regarding leadership development of PL1 teachers in two secondary schools be understood?" In response to this research question, this study has shown that the principal plays a fundamental role in the creation of opportunities that promote and advocate for leadership capacity development among PL1 teachers and therefore this role cannot be underestimated. This study has also demonstrated that PL1 teachers' requirements in terms of leadership advancement has to be specifically needs-driven and contextualised within each school with the principal leading the process towards leadership capacity enhancement. The authors draw the attention of education policy makers to the contentious issue of non-subsidised "acting leadership positions" in schools. "Acting leadership position" in the context of public education refers to a temporary position filled for a limited period until the position is officially occupied by an incumbent. This study alerts teachers, principals and school management teams of the invaluable knowledge gained through assuming leadership positions, albeit in temporary capacities, since "in-practice" leadership experience is immeasurable.

Considering the participants' insights from the interviews, the authors therefore recommend a series of incremental opportunities for leadership development captured in a five-year leadership capacity development programme of PL1 teachers to be undertaken during their initial five years of teaching.

The findings of this investigation should be viewed in the context of the limited sample, ten participants at two schools. A study conducted with the remaining participants in the same schools or a larger number of participants at other research sites may shed more light on the findings.

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