



British Journal of Educational Research
1(1): 1-17, 2011

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Professional Development of Principals: A Recipe for Future Schools?

Vuyisile Msila^{1*} and Jabulani Mtshali¹

¹University of South Africa, Further Teacher Education, UNISA, 0003, P.O. Box 392,
South Africa.

Review Article

Received 14th July 2011
Accepted 11th August 2011
Online Ready 24th August 2011

ABSTRACT

More research results are explicating that in order to have better schools, there needs to be empowered school managers and leaders. Many dysfunctional schools are not performing because the people at the helm have no vision and are failing to uplift the morale within the school as an organisation. It is then no wonder that countries around the world are beginning to take principalship seriously by introducing programmes that would better the position of these school leaders; to harness them with skills that would also filter through the entire organisation. However, some candidates might not continue the best practices learnt from such programmes due to a number of reasons. The nature of the school, the team a principal works with and a number of other circumstances might determine the application of such programmes in the actual schools. This article uses literature to explore an aspect of school management that is known but usually ignored; professional development. The authors explore various arguments as to why all school principals in South Africa and the world need continuous professional development. Professional development of school leaders is a universally needed process in all schools; poor performing schools need it to improve their practice while effective performers need it to sustain and improve their good practices.

Keywords: Professional development; school leaders and managers; effectiveness; learner success;

*Corresponding author: Email: vmsila@hotmail.com; msilavt@unisa.ac.za;

1. WHY PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT NOW?

The introduction of the Advanced Certificate in Education School Management and Leadership (ACE-SML) qualification came at a time when many education stakeholders in South Africa were showing growing concerns about school performance. The ACE-SML is a part time programme that utilizes interactive materials to empower school managers. It was started by the national Department of Education (DoE) in 2007 and the first cohort completed in 2009. The preliminary research results of this programme have shown its invaluable nature in empowering principals (Bush et al. 2008). Similar programmes have been developed around the world. Stewart (2010) stated that in England the national College of School Leadership was established in 2000 for new head teachers. In China there are two university based centres on school leadership. This reflects the recognition that weak school leadership can result in poor school performance and high teacher turnover (Stewart, 2010). Generally, many countries are beginning to see the need for continuous development of teachers. Darling-Hammond (2010) cites an interesting policy in Singapore where the policy is for teachers to “teach less and learn more”.

This article looks at professional development as encapsulated in the above framework from Singapore; transforming the role of school leaders to that of learners learning about their profession. In South African secondary schools it is usually the matric (grade 12) results used as a yardstick to differentiate effective schools from non-performing schools. Rightly or wrongly, the public perceive these end-of-the-year matric results as a way of determining which leaders work hard. The need for the professional development school principals and school effectiveness emanates from; inter alia, the poor grade 12 examination results (Lethoko et al., 2001). Research shows that many historically black African (township) schools in South Africa are underperforming (Lethoko et al., 2001; Taylor, 2008). It is usually stated that one of the reasons for unsatisfactory matric results is that many principals have had no formal training in leadership and management skills and are thus ill-prepared to effectively run schools (Van der Westhuizen, 1991; Van der Westhuizen et al., 2004; Heystek, 2006). Some critics have also argued that even primary schools fail to prepare learners well for secondary school education and again, this is attributed to the neglect of professional development for school leaders and managers. Tucker and Coddling (2002) highlight the neglect of professional development for school principals as “education’s disaster area.”

2. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND THE CHANGE STRATEGY

The above introduction shows that professional development has become crucial in all countries. Research conducted currently is also showing why teachers need to be change agents and agents of change. Empowered managers would be receptive to any change initiatives. There are so many aspects about change that require teacher preparation for change is about new paradigms and when teachers have not been prepared for change initiative, change can be frustrating. Leaders who have been constantly developed professionally will be victors in a time of change. A DoE (2007) ACE-SML study guide stipulates:

Some will embrace change and some will resist it: hidden norms and mores may come to the fore, with the potential to unsettle or even derail the process. A prepared leader will spend time gathering information, observing and predicting. This makes the difference between ‘winners’ and

'losers' in change...a simple model for placing people in terms of support for, and resistance to, change and the likely impact that may have on the planned change intervention is offered.

Professionally developed leaders will be ideal in equipping their own teachers in a time of change. Leaders also live in a time where the most conscientious of them would want to create more leaders. Crowther et al. (2002) argue that principals need to play a huge role for successful school reform to occur. These writers also found that successful school transformation encompassed five functions:

- (i) Visioning: Links to developmental work in schools with an inspiring image of a preferred future.
- (ii) Identity generation – this promotes the creation of cultural meaning. Here it is important to look into the values of the school and the broader community.
- (iii) Alignment of organisational elements- this refers to the holistic implementation of school based reforms.
- (iv) Distribution of power and leadership – this encourages teachers and community members to view themselves as important role players in shaping the school's direction.
- (v) External alliances and networking – this last one allows schools to work closely with other schools and with the community.

All these cannot happen when the school leaders and managers are not well prepared for changes. Craig et al. (1998) point out that teachers need to be actively involved in the change process. They also contend that teacher development is about ongoing professional growth and support.

When teachers are actively involved and empowered in the reform of their own schools, curriculum, pedagogy, and classrooms, even those with minimal levels of formal education and training are capable of dramatically changing their teaching behaviour, the classroom environment, and improving the achievement of their students. Conversely, when teachers are ignored, or when reforms come from above are not connected to the daily realities of the classroom and local environment (Craig et al., 1998).

Teachers who are active participants in their roles as agents of change grow professionally. This has positive implications for the schools. Malgas, (2003) highlight on-going staff development and in-service training as being among the characteristics of effective schools. These factors underscore the importance and relevance of the professional development of school principals and educators. A number of writers state the importance of being a strategic leader in an organisation and the best way for them to thrive in the face of this new reality is to become continual learning engines (Hughes and Beatty, 2005). Davies and Davies (2010) also posit that strategic leaders envisage what a desirable future for the school will be and are "often change champions' building coalitions of staff to create conditions for change and embedding new ways of working." This then implies that for all principals, new and old organisational strategies have to be held in an ongoing state of formulation and reassessment. Fink (2010) supports this when he emphasizes the need to develop and sustain leaders of learning. This author states that the most fundamental

question that all educators should ask is, what is our purpose? There is this need to sustain learning to lead in all organisations and Fink refers to this as deep broad learning. Effective leaders will be lifelong learners who enhance their human capital throughout their lives; they need to redefine leadership and refocus leadership on learning.

Fink (2010) identified seven sets of learning that provide a useful organizer for redefining leadership:

- (i) Contextual knowledge – effective and successful leaders make connections by developing firm knowledge and understanding of their contexts well. Fink emphasises that schools can be understood in their context. In South Africa for example schools in rural areas operate differently from urban schools. Former white schools are different from historically black school. It is crucial to understand these contexts as a leader.
- (ii) Political acumen – in schools there are people with varying interests and different degrees of power; these usually lead to conflict. Effective leaders utilise political methods such as negotiation to move schools towards agreed-upon goals. In many South African schools there might be many political differences among staff members and it usually matters which teacher union teachers belong. Effective leaders need respect the unions' existence while upholding the vision and mission of the school.
- (iii) Emotional understanding –Fink points out that leaders of learning read emotional responses of their followers. “Leaders with emotional understanding do, however, lead their colleagues into uncharted territory on the change journey, through the ‘impassioned and critical engagement or critique’ of ideas, purposes, and practices” (Fink, 2010).
- (iv) Understanding learning – Leaders need to have an understanding of the learning process to promote learning and support others' learning. In a discussion below we show how leaders need to nurture others in their staff as teacher leaders. Therefore, while ensuring that learners learn, their colleagues need to learn as well.
- (v) Critical thinking - leaders need to make quality judgments; they need to make informed choices for the benefit of their schools. The reason that many schools fail is because the people at the helm are not critical thinkers. “Innovation and creativity, which are the lifeblood of leadership for learning, require the ability to ask better questions not recycle old answers” (Fink, 2010).
- (vi) Making connections- leaders of learning need to make connection with all the stakeholders. Stakeholders within and outside the school need to see what is happening within the school. This helps in understanding the school as a holistic organisation. The parents, the community, the district office, business should view the school and see the interconnections and interrelationships happening in a school.
- (vii) Futures thinking – Fink cites Davies (2006) who avers that leaders of learning need to be able to connect the past, the present and the future. In order to be able to communicate a shared vision and a sense of purpose, leaders have to understand the forces that influence the life and culture of a school. It helps to anticipate the

future because among others, colleagues will not be shaken by educational changes and transformation.

What Fink (2010) stresses above, is that all school leaders should be leaders of learning. The above sets of learning also show how important it is to look at various facets of the organisation when developing leaders. It would also help to see professional development as a process that might glean from eclectic approaches than a single one. One approach might be better in exposing the strengths of some leaders than other approaches. Effective organisations have able strategic leaders at the helm. Strategic leaders are able to utilise the vision and ensure that there is commitment among organisation's members towards the organisation. The constant changes in education require leaders who are strategic in their approach so as to be able to deal with constant changes. There are a number of ways in which a strategic leader can plan the running of his or her school. One of these is discussed below is to develop teacher leaders within their schools. Developing other teachers within the school should be the focus of professional development; the focus of strategic leadership is to ensure that the organisation is sustained. "The focus of strategic leadership is sustainable competitive advantage, or the enduring success of the organisation. Indeed, this is the work of strategic leadership: to drive and move an organisation so that it will thrive in the long term" (Hughes and Beatty, 2005). Among the reasons why today's leaders need to be strategic leaders is as highlighted above; to be able to deal with change. Professionally developed leaders will be effective, and effective leaders will be effective change managers. Herold and Fedor (2008) point out that leading implies change and change implies leadership. Again professional development is very crucial in this regard.

It is clear from much leadership literature that leaders need expertise and can only steer their organisations to success if they are aware of their role. Herold and Fedor (2008) underscore the need to emphasize the role of being a change leader. They averred that managing and leading are both embodied in the change leader. Change leadership is not only about setting new directions. Although it does often require the articulation of a future vision, it is also about properly setting the stage, making convincing arguments, developing a reasonable plan, being realistic about resources, assessing capabilities, and attending to execution details. In other words it is about applying the change framework we are proposing, thus taking into account the interplay between the nature of the change, the cast of characters expected to lead and enact it, and the situation in which it is to take place.

For leaders to be able to motivate change, they have to work well with other stakeholders. For leaders to have effective organisations they must articulate the vision mentioned above well to the colleagues hence the idea of developing other teachers as leaders. One cannot be a true leader when they cannot develop others in their organisation. The latter requires people who have been well prepared for this role and effective leaders will use their credibility to lead others. Leaders are able to persuade their followers through the strength of interpersonal credibility that they enjoy (Herold and Fedor, 2008).

3. TEACHER LEADERSHIP: A CHALLENGE OF THE NEW PRINCIPAL

What is apparent in the above discussion is that even the best of principals need assistance for the work of principals has become so complex. Barth (2007) states that principals who encourage teachers' leadership leverage their own; effective principals work smarter and this is something they need to develop. Any professional development programme would not be complete if it does not accommodate the creation of teachers as leaders. In today's schools it is unlikely that leaders and managers will be successful if they work alone. Crowther et al.,

2002) point out that a programme of development that encompasses teacher leadership development requires four conditions:

- (i) Public and professional acceptance of the existence of teacher leaders in the profession and in the schools.
- (ii) Active support of principals and system administrators.
- (iii) Greater development of teachers' roles in school reform and transformation.
- (iv) Acknowledgement that teacher leadership produces positive school outcomes.

Teacher leadership has become a reality in today's schools and experts maintain that it can be nurtured. Crowther et al. (2002) argue that a new working relationship between teachers and administrators needs to be endorsed. Teacher leadership concept is also based on achieving the whole school achievement. Crowther et al. (2007) define teacher leadership as a concept that facilitates principled action to achieve whole school success. Furthermore, these writers contend that it applies the distinctive power of teaching to shape meaning for children youth and adults and that it also contributes to long-term enhanced quality of community life. Crowther et al. (2007) have also drawn *Teachers as Leaders* Framework that emphasizes two aspects:

- (a) The values of teachers who enhance learner outcomes and elevate the quality of life in their schools and communities.
- (b) The power of teaching to create new meaning for people in schools and communities (Crowther et al., 2007).

The framework developed by these writers clearly show the crucial role that principals play in moulding teacher leaders in their schools. Again, looking at this framework, it clear that disempowered principals will never have teacher leaders in their schools. The following shows the *Teachers as Leaders* framework:

3.1 Teacher Leaders

Convey convictions about a better world by

- articulating a positive future for students
- showing a genuine interest in students' lives
- contributing to an image of teachers as professionals who make a difference
- gaining respect and trust in the broader community
- demonstrating tolerance and reasonableness in difficult situations

Strive for authenticity in their teaching, learning, and assessment practices by

- creating learning experiences related to students' needs
- connecting teaching, learning, and assessment to students' futures
- seeking deep understanding of tacit teaching and learning processes
- valuing teaching as a key profession in shaping meaning systems

Facilitate communities of learning through organization wide processes by

- encouraging a shared, school wide approach to pedagogy (teaching, learning, and assessment)
- approaching professional learning as consciousness raising about complex issues
- facilitating understanding across diverse groups while also respecting individual differences
- synthesizing new ideas out of colleagues' dialogues and activities

Confront barriers in the school's culture and structures by

- testing the boundaries rather than accepting the status quo
- engaging administrators as potential sources of assistance and advocacy
- accessing political processes in and out of the school
- standing for children, especially marginalized or disadvantage individuals or groups

Translate ideas into sustainable systems of action by

- organizing complex tasks effectively
- maintaining focus on issues of importance
- nurturing networks of support
- managing issues of time and pressure through priority setting

Nurture a culture of success by

- acting on opportunities for others to gain success and recognition
- adopting a no-blame attitude when things go wrong
- creating a sense of community identity and pride

Principals who have undergone effective professional development can realize the ideal of the framework above. Effective teacher leaders are able to overcome some of the most challenges in their schools. In today's schools, challenges are unending and principals need to be prepared at all times. To professionally develop practicing school principals one is on a proactive path to a better society. Crowther et al. (2007) highlighted other qualities that can be attached to effective teacher leaders which need to be nurtured:

- Teacher leaders strive for authenticity
- Teacher leaders facilitate communities of learning
- Teacher leaders confront barriers
- Teacher leaders translate ideas into action
- Teacher leaders nurture a culture of success

The above discussion shows the potential of professional development of principals. The contemporary education organisations demand much innovation if teaching and learning are to be successful. Principals should know much about their professional development.

4. WHAT PRINCIPALS NEED TO KNOW ABOUT THEIR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Leadership research reflects a number of dimensions that leaders need to know as discussions above show. Much useful information above reveals what school leaders need to know about effectiveness and performing schools. Valerio (2009) states that people who aspire to be leaders in their organisations may want to better understand the factors involved in the emergence of leadership in addition to what we have discussed above. Leadership competencies, necessary for success, attitudes about male and female managers, intelligence, personality, ethics and leadership style are all crucial (Valerio, 2009). In this work though we will only discuss leadership competencies, personality and leadership styles although all of these are important. When leaders and prospective leaders are involved in professional development programmes, they need to understand the ethical actions required and know which intelligences they will employ in executing their duties.

4.1 Leadership Competencies

New leaders in particular need to know their leadership competencies or preferred leadership models. These need to be clear during the professional development process. These leadership competencies can be very useful in selecting people who should lead organisations. Valerio (2009) argues why leadership competencies are useful:

An advantage for organisations that utilise competency models is that women and men learn what behaviours are effective to become strong leaders within that organisation. When used in conjunction with rating scales, the competency models offer a way of evaluating both oneself and the other managers with greater objectivity. Thus, training on the proper use of leadership competencies can assist people in making more objective judgments related to success or failure in a managerial role.

Recent research is also showing that gender differences between male and female principals are negligible. This is very vital for professional development programmes which might not have to be gender specific. Coleman (2005) cites the results from two studies, one in Hong Kong and the other in England. In both studies women and men principals were asked about their leadership styles. The principals were asked to identify three adjectives that expressed the way they saw their own management and leadership style. "The most popular words chosen by the principals were very much the same for both men and women. Although the order was slightly different":

open	supportive
consultative	collaborative
inclusive	democratic
collegiate	coaching

Valerio (2009) also points out that generic leadership competency model contains the following factors in all potential leaders and leaders:

- Cognitive abilities
- Interpersonal skills
- Communication skills

- Leadership abilities
- Technical skills.

Each of these contains certain abilities linked to leadership. Cognitive abilities for example include competencies such as being a visionary; communication skills contain listening to others; leadership abilities can include coaching others and technical skills might mean developing the functional expertise. Various approaches can be made part of professional development and can be able to an expose the competency models of leaders. The following three models can be used to bring out the leadership competencies.

4.2 Training

The training model is widely used and considered synonymous with professional development (Valli and Hawley, 1998). It is variously referred to as the defect model (Bagwandeem, 1991), deficit model (Pather, 1995), traditional model (Bennett et al., 1994), cascade model (Heystek et al., 2008). In this model an “outsider” or “expert” conducts training in a workshop in which principals are passive recipients of new knowledge and skills (Valli and Hawley, 1998; Bennett et al., 1994). According to Mofokeng (2002) this model assumes that principals bring weaknesses to the learning encounter which needs to be remedied or fixed by an expert outsider through professional development training programmes.

Guskey (2000) contend that for training to be effective it must include “an exploration of theory, demonstrations and modeling of skills, simulated practice, feedback about performance and watching in the workplace. The advantages of the training model is that it is cost effective as it requires little time, contact and skill on the part of the facilitator; hence it may be the most practical and efficient model where the facilitator-principal ratios are high (Mofokeng, 2002; Guskey, 2002). However, its major shortcoming is that it offers few opportunities for choice or individualisation and follow up activities.

4.3 Mentoring

Recent South African studies of principals show that mentoring is a powerful tool for improving the leadership and management skill competence of principals and school effectiveness (Bush, 2005; Msila, 2010) In this regard, Msila (2010) avers: “with no induction of principals apparent, mentoring can be the best remedy for beginning principals in particular” Mentoring affords newly appointed principals opportunities for peer learning, coaching and networking (Walker and Dimmock, 2006). Mentoring involves pairing an experienced, highly successful principal with an inexperienced colleague (Guskey, 2000). This model of professional development provides opportunities for regular discussions, sharing of ideas and strategies on effective leadership and management practice; reflection on current methods and procedures; on the job-training and observation as well as tactics for improvement (Guskey, 2000; The Education Alliance, 2003).

This model’s advantage is that it offers a highly individualised approach to professional development that benefits both parties involved. However, its shortcoming is that it may limit opportunities for broader collaboration and collegial sharing unless it is supplemented by other forms of professional development such as training, networking and reflective practice (Guskey, 2000).

4.4 Reflective Practice Model

Reflective practice is a form of professional growth and development model whereby principals develop greater self-awareness about their leadership and management performance (Skrla et al., 2001). Bennett et al. (1994) argue that this model is undergird by the experiential learning cycle and is school-based. The experiential learning cycle embraces four stages: experience, observation, reconceptualisation and experimentation which lead to principal behavioural change and improved performance (Bennett et al. 1994). Principals engaged with the reflective practice model use reflection as an integral part of their learning (Guskey, 2000). Skrla et al. (2001) consider reflection as one of the best practices of professional development as they concede:

The application of skilled reflection is an essential component of job-embedded learning. Reflection helps the principal examine gaps or congruence between what they say they believe (espoused theory) and what they actually do (theory-in-use).

According to Evans and Morh (1999) focused reflection will enable principals to improve their ability to plan, analyse, solve problems and increase their creativity and effectiveness. The advantages of the model is that it integrates theory and practice; it involves learning on-the-job; and promotes collaboration (Rich and Jackson, 2006).

4.5 Personality

Certain personality traits are said to enhance leadership qualities. Some researchers have highlighted the Big Five personality traits as crucial for leaders;

- Openness to experience
- Conscientiousness and strong work ethic
- Extraversion, assertiveness and sociability
- Agreeableness and other gentle qualities
- Neuroticism – showing negative emotions of anger and fear

The Big Five traits determine the kind of leaders that can emerge as a result of certain personality traits. People who show extraversion and conscientiousness are likely to emerge as effective leaders. Effective leaders also display greater openness to experience and creativity (Valerio, 2009). Moreover, Valerio contends that agreeableness and neuroticism are less important than other personality traits in understanding leadership. “Successful leaders find ways of interacting with others, have wide networks of associates, build teams, and motivate others. Leaders must also be willing to be open to new experiences , “think outside the box”, take some risks and be creative” Valerio, 2009).

5. LEADERSHIP STYLES

In any professional development programme the preferred leadership styles of principals will always show. Leadership styles are influenced by personal characteristics such as personality and values, the leadership styles the leader has observed in bosses, mentors and other managers, the organisation’s values concerning “the right way” to manage and the specific management situations faced by the leader (Valerio, 2009). Fink (2005) Leithwood who have outlined seven major approaches to leadership that influence educational policy

approaches to leadership – managerial, contingent, instructional, transactional, moral, transformational and participative. Various leadership styles serve various purposes. Collaborative styles such as transformational and participative styles are both intended to involve people in organisations in the decisions that will enhance an organisation's capacity to improve (Fink, 2005). Furthermore, Fink states that in other five styles formal leaders try to influence followers to achieve organisational goals by employing various sources of power – the positional power of the manager or contingent leader, the expertise of the instructional leader or the system values of the moral leader. Professional development programmes have to take into cognizance the preferred styles at all times so as to maximize the effectiveness of a leader or manager. Usually there is no right or wrong leadership style and circumstances will determine the suitability of a style. Fink for example, states that leadership styles explicate two general approaches to the ways leaders influence others to achieve organisational goals; one set is can be described as instrumental and the other as empowering. Fink (2005) contends:

Instrumental strategies can be overt, such as a demand for compliance, or subtle, such as involving teachers in committees in which the goals are predetermined. Regardless of the style, instrumental strategies represent the calculated and sometimes cynical ways employed in order to 'influence' others to improve their procedures and practices, and to submit sources of power that reside outside themselves and their school community.

The above styles will always be influenced by the personality of the leaders concerned. Valerio (2009) also argues that it is important for men and women to know about leadership styles; some researchers have found out that there is a tendency for women to adopt a more democratic (participative) style and men to adopt a more autocratic (directive) style. The latter postulations are however, contested by emerging leadership research where men and women are seen as being similar in many ways. Valerio (2009) also posits that in various studies women leaders demonstrate more transformational leadership than males especially when it comes to communicate the organisation's mission, examining new perspectives for solving problems, and develop and mentor followers. While male leaders are more transactional in "management by exception"; attending to followers' mistakes and waiting until problems become severe before intervening. Furthermore, men are more likely to be laissez-faire leaders who are absent and uninvolved at critical junctures (Valerio, 2009).

6. BUSH AND LEADERSHIP APPROACHES

Bush (2007) summarizes a number of some of the leadership styles discussed above in one of his papers. He links three leadership models to his "collegial" management model. The first of these being transformational leadership. Bush (2007) cites Leithwood who conceptualises transformational leadership along eight dimensions:

- building school vision;
- establishing school goals;
- providing intellectual stimulation;
- offering individualized support;
- modeling best practices and important organisational values;
- demonstrating high performance expectations;
- creating a productive school culture and;
- developing structures to foster participation in school decisions.

Furthermore, Bush argues that a transformational leadership approach has the potential to engage all stakeholders in the achievement of educational objectives. The aims of followers and leaders combine to such an extent that it may be realistic to assume a harmonious relationship and a genuine convergence leading to agreed decisions.

The second of Bush's leadership models is participative leadership and Bush concurs with Leithwood that this is underpinned by three assumptions:

- participation will increase school effectiveness;
- participation is justified by democratic principles;
- in the context of site-based management, leadership is potentially available to any legitimate stakeholder.

Bush also contends that the participative model is consistent with the democratic values of the "new" South Africa. He then delineates the political and transactional leadership. He links transactional leadership to his political model; where there is conflict between stakeholders with disagreement being resolved in favour of the most powerful protagonists. Whilst Bush mentions a number of other models he sums up his argument aptly when he states:

Regardless of which approaches are used, there should be a focus on the key task of managing teaching and learning... The task Team set up by the South African government shortly after the first democratic elections in 1994 argues that addressing such attitudes [of inequality] needs new management strategies (Bush, 2007)

7. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT: LEADERS FOR TOMORROW'S SCHOOLS

All the above strategies and approaches are crucial parts of professional development. Fink (2005) says once an organisation has identified its potential leaders it must find ways to attend to their development. Therefore, once School Governing Bodies (SGBs), the District Offices have identified school principals, they need to see to it that they are professionally developed. Fink (2005) cites Mintzberg who has identified five general approaches to leadership development that apply in business and are applicable in education:

- (i) Sink or swim – leaders are identified and then placed in leadership roles without any guidance. What happens here is that districts might hire principals and hope that they do well because they will not be guided in any way.
- (ii) Moving, mentoring and monitoring – this includes rotating potential leaders through a number of leadership experiences. Leadership development is seen as a personal responsibility and it should encourage this self-development.
- (iv) Spray and pray – this refers to the practice of credentialing leaders through leadership development courses offered by school districts, universities and consultants. These are normally uncoordinated course that vary in efficacy tending to emphasise teaching over learning.
- (v) Learning in action – this involves the potential leaders in field projects and activities followed by serious reflection that creates a learning laboratory for leaders. "Schools and school districts have often organized potential leaders into problem-solving committees to address systems problems (Fink, 2005).

- (vi) Corporate academies – this includes establishing academies that provide co-ordinated, contextualized leadership development that focuses on developing leadership potential to ensure a continuing supply of quality leaders.

Some of these general approaches have a direct bearing and familiarity in South African education. Many principals can vouch that they were victims of sink or swim. They had to learn leading schools through trial and error. Furthermore, principals will be familiar to district workshops as they spray and pray. These are workshops that are usually labeled as ineffective by participants. Yet in all these there will be some aspects that can be deemed beneficial to principals and other aspiring leaders. All these approaches yearn to develop strategic leaders to guide successful schools.

Developing strategic leadership is a learning process (Hughes and Beatty, 2005). These writers also develop a strategic leadership cycle which looks like this:

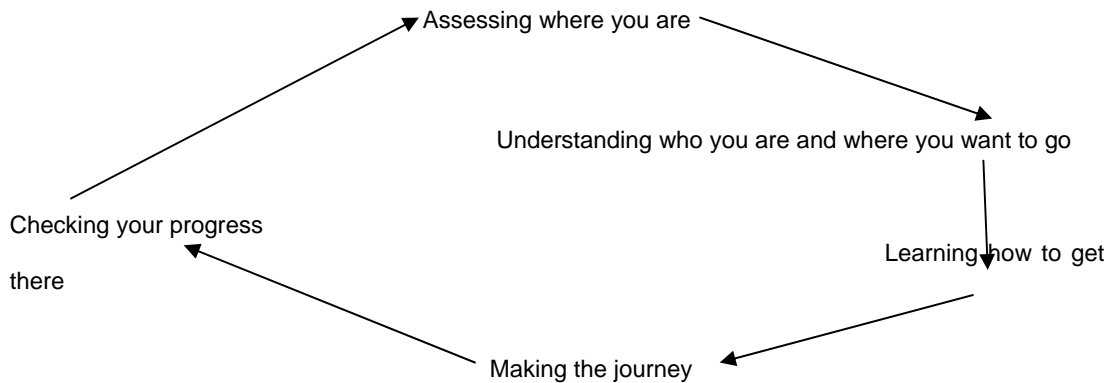


Fig. 1. Developing Strategic Leadership (Hughes and Beatty, 2005).

This cyclical model shows the need to do a SWOT analysis when one considers the present and future effectiveness as an effective leader. It shows the importance of understanding the weaknesses and strengths of the people involved. It is during this cycle that an individual can understand much of what was discussed above; leadership styles, the environment, and other related aspects. This model also shows some kind of a map as how to move towards being the “ideal” envisaged leader. Important in this model too is the idea of assessing and evaluating oneself as one moves towards the realization of being an effective leader. The above model can briefly be explained as follows:

- (i) Assessing where you are – this involves assessing one’s own leadership development needs. This personal SWOT. The acronym refers to Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats. At this stage of the process one searches for any of these elements.
- (ii) Understanding who we are – Hughes and Beatty state that this refers to the “aspirational dimension of organisational strategy, including the organisation’s vision, mission and core values (Hughes and Beatty, 2005).

Learning how to get there involves understanding and carefully preparing the essential elements of the strategy.

Making the journey involves translating the strategy into action by identifying and implementing tactics. Checking progress refers to the continuing assessment of effectiveness. It completes the learning cycle.

In the final analysis, it can be seen that effective professional development is not an event; it is a carefully planned process that requires planning. The plan must be focused and outcomes be clearly spelt out.

8. PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND SOUTH AFRICAN SCHOOLS

The above literature has shown the various important aspects of professional development. The arguments also show that professional development cannot be limited to single workshops; professional development should be a well planned process. The discussion highlighted a number of crucial points when it comes to professional development and schools; professional development can make school leaders effective change managers and change agents. Moreover, empowered teachers who have been developed will develop others as they would know what it is that is required for effective leaders. South African schools (especially those that are underperforming) can learn from successful experiences of professional development. Researchers in South Africa are beginning to realize that professional development is an ingredient essential to creating effective schools and raising learners' performance (Steyn, 2005). Steyn writes about the concept culture of learning and teaching (colt) widely used in South Africa to refer to the attitude of educators and learners to learning and teaching as well as their commitment to the school. When this breaks down it manifests itself in the disruption of classes, the malfunctioning of management, the collapse of authority and the disruption of disciplined learning and teaching (Steyn, 2005). When COLT crumbles in schools, more often than not it is the inadequacy of the school managers and leaders that is usually questioned. Many principals who have never been inducted and professionally developed can be daunted with the task of rebuilding a school whose COLT has crumbled.

Furthermore, Steyn (2005) underscores the need to build Invitational Education, a strategy that has been applied in various countries over the epochs. This refers to a theory of practice where schools work for success among learners and teachers. Teachers who want to make their schools invitational have to have a map of how to get there; this is unlikely to be achieved through a fluke. Empowered leaders need to set an agenda of how they want to achieve such schools. The discussion in this paper has highlighted the ingredients of effective professional development. Literature above has also shown the importance of understanding aspects such as context, the self, other people, the processes before one can be professionally developed.

Traditionally professional development has been conducted outside school where participants had to leave their jobs and attend workshops elsewhere (Valli and Hawley, 1998). However, it is now suggested that professional development of school principals should ideally and primarily be school-based and be part of school operations (Valli and Hawley, 1998). This implies that newly appointed principals be mentored at their schools by experienced people on a one-to-one. The learning should connect theory to practice and be contextually relevant. Valli and Hawley (1998) refer to this situation as "job-embedded learning" which is considered as one of the best practices of professional development. According to Wayne et al. (2008), school-based professional development requires an experienced mentor to work with a colleague. School based professional development through mentoring is beneficial in that participants can form support teams and networks while exposed to learning

opportunities and the acquisition of practical knowledge, skills that directly address their immediate problems.

9. STAKEHOLDERS AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The above paragraph mentions the important need to include other stakeholders in professional development of school leaders. It is also apt to look at the role of outside stakeholders as we round up the discussions. Brundrett and Rhodes (2011) define stakeholder as a concept referring to any group or individuals who have a legitimate expectation of a company. Furthermore, these writers say that stakeholders can include employees, groups, the general public, government and any other groups that have entered into a relationship with the company. Mentors, parents, the community, the district officials are some of the stakeholders who can play a role in the enhancement of quality in schools. Leadership development cannot be restricted to schools; it is distributed across the various cells that affect a school such as students, parents, unions, social services and local communities (Fink, 2010). Fink illustrates this further when he states:

Schools, districts, and other educational jurisdictions are ecosystems within ecosystems – classrooms connected to schools, connected to school districts, connected to communities and their agencies, and so on. Like a web of interconnected communities, each has an essential skeletal structure of rules and regulations that frame relationships among people and tasks, distribute political power, and guide daily practice.

It is then important for school leaders to understand what the other stakeholders want. If school leaders do not know the aspirations of the parents they can hardly develop professionally. School leaders need to understand the perceptions and realities pertaining to the relationship with their stakeholders. Brundrett and Rhodes (2011) cite Glater who accedes how the internal processes of schools are influenced by their external environments has been poorly researched. Furthermore, they state that the learners and school staff may well live in local communities and the views about the school they express in their communities can affect the way in which the school is generally perceived. School leaders have to create a situation of how they will deal with external stakeholders. They need to ensure that stakeholders can play a role in their professional development by making their schools permeable.

10. CONCLUSION

This paper has shown the various theories and processes involved in professional development of principals. A number of processes such as the context, circumstances as well as the individuals involved will determine what strategies need to be employed. However, what should be central to any professional development programme is learner achievement. The various theories and approaches highlighted here show certain commonalities; the idea of vision, commitment and being goal directed is among the commonalities. However, there are different ways of achieving many of these goals. Hallinger (2010) sums it up well when he states that Leithwood and his colleagues noted that school leaders tend to enact the same basic leadership practices but in a manner that is responsive to the particular contexts of their own schools. The latter is then consistent with the contingency approaches of leadership. In South Africa there are various schools whose history influences the way they are run; historically black schools, historically white schools,

farm schools, rural schools will all require certain skills from their principals. Success in these schools cannot be determined by a "one-size-fits-all" approach to leadership. Emerging school leaders in South Africa have to contend with challenges such as diversity and parental choice of schools in the post-apartheid South Africa. There are many challenges that keep on sprouting for school leaders; developing instructional leadership, forming teams, sharing leadership and nurturing teacher leaders are some of the challenges school leaders have to confront. Around the world school leaders are expected to ensure good quality as they enhance the culture of learning and teaching in their schools. However, many of these countries still require programmes that would realize these ideals of teaching and learner performance. It is apt to close this discussion with the following quotation from Kaser and Halbert (2010)

Good teaching matters and so does good leading. There is a strong knowledge base (Leithwood et al. 2004) that supports the view that school leadership is second only to classroom instruction among all school-related factors that contribute to what students learn at school. Where learners come from challenging backgrounds the impact of positive leadership is especially significant.

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