

UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL

**The Acceleration of Quality Education in Rural Schools through
Systemic Curriculum Management: A Practitioner Research
Perspective**

BY

DLELWANE JOHN SAMBO

**A dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the
degree of Master in Commerce.**

**Name of School
College of Law and Management
Graduate School of Business and Leadership**

SUPERVISOR: Dr. STAN HARDMAN

2011

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

To my wife and family for their support and encouragement

To my colleagues at Head Office, District Office, circuit offices and the schools which formed the ground work for this study.

For the encouragement and support of my supervisor Dr. Stanley Hardman – a big thank you!

Reverend Dr. Graham Alston, thank you for English editing and assistance in layout of the work.

ABSTRACT

I used Soft Systems Methodology (SSM), a practitioner research methodology to foster organisational learning in poor performing schools. School Management Teams (SMTs) have a role to play in accelerating the delivery of quality education through sound management of curriculum. A closer analysis of learner performance, departmental conference discussions and school visit reports in poor performing schools in Sabie and White Hazy Circuits highlighted some of the crucial issues that informed this study. Ten schools from the two circuits were identified for the study and curriculum management discussions were held with individual and groups of SMT members in their respective schools.

The participative nature of SSM provided the opportunity to initiate further debates and discussions that enabled SMT members to understand the nature of management problems and developed intervention strategies that included SMT conferences, circuit-based SMT workshops and SMT functionality support visits. The SMT functionality visits were ongoing programmes in the two circuits. The purpose of these programmes was to identify and propose solutions to poor performance challenges resulting from dysfunctional and ineffective SMT members. The intervention sessions provided a platform for the sharing of good practices regarding instructional leadership and curriculum management to provide quality learning. Using SSM in the intervention sessions enabled SMT members to put in place curriculum management systems, develop monitoring programmes and account for learner performance. During SMT support visits programmes to support SMT members in adhering to their annual management plans, effective use of curriculum management tools, quality reporting and implementing school-based teacher development programmes would be monitored. Monthly reporting developed by consolidating reports by individual education specialists served as indicators about the state of management of curricula in the schools.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

No.	ITEM	PAGE
	Acknowledgements	2
	Abstract	3
1	Chapter 1	6
1.1	Introduction	6
1.2	Background of the study	6
1.3	Sampling of participants and subjects	7
1.4	Quality learning	8
1.5	Systems thinking and systems methodology perspectives	10
1.6	Location of the study in my professional practice	11
1.7	Rationale for the study	13
1.8	Problem statement	13
1.9	Research questions	14
1.10	Objectives of the study	14
1.11	Overview of the chapters in the study	15
1.12	Role of the Researcher	17
1.13	Ethical Measures	18
1.14	Conclusion	18
2	Chapter 2: Review of literature	19
2.1	Introduction	19
2.2	Literature study	19
2.2.1	Curriculum management principles and design	20
2.2.2	Leadership and management	27
2.2.3	Facilitation and teacher development	34
2.2.4	Management insight	42
2.2.5	Quality monitoring	47
2.2.6	Managing human resources	53
2.3	Conclusion	57
3	Chapter 3: Critical systems perspective	58
3.1	Introduction	58
3.2	Theoretical framework	58
3.3	Discourse on curriculum management	60
3.4	Conclusion	65
4	Chapter 4	66
4.1	Introduction	66
4.2	Analysis of data	66
4.2	Sharing of good practices	67
4.3	Conclusion	87
5	Chapter 5	88

5.1	Introduction	88
5.2	Support by the department	89
5.3	Introducing SSM to SMT members	90
5.4	Sharing good practices in managing curriculum	91
5,5	Conclusion	92
6.	References	93
7.	Annexure	97

CHAPTER 1

Introducing the research study

1.1 Introduction

The provision of education in rural schools is in a state of flux. My feeling about this situation is that something is seriously wrong with education management in general. The reasons are multifaceted, so the focus of this study is to introduce SSM to school management teams (SMTs) as a problem solving tool that will enable them to understand the challenges in their respective schools. The research question, the background of the problem, the rationale and the objectives to be achieved by the study are outlined in chapter one. The geographical demarcations of the study and subjects that participated in the study are identified. My interest in this study was triggered by my work as circuit manager in Sabie circuit, which involves supporting schools in policy implementation as well as monitoring and supporting curriculum delivery. The last part of this chapter gives a brief overview of the four chapters that complete the study.

1.2 Background of the study

I am employed by the Mpumalanga Department of Education as a Deputy Chief Education Specialist (DCES) and my work station is Sabie Circuit, which is at the Hazyview sub-district at Ehlanzeni District. Hazyview sub-district is mostly rural and consists of five circuits; Sabie, White River, White Hazy and Mashishing. In this dissertation I outline the challenges I experience in my day-to-day duties and presented the soft systems methodology (SSM) as a possible approach to overcome them. Due to the nature of my professional practice, I used soft systems methodology (SSM); a practitioner research methodology, to collect data by initiating a discourse to create debates and discussions that enable participants to understand the problems around lack of effective management and quality learning as measured in terms of performance by learners.

My primary profession is in the field of education as a circuit manager, but this dissertation increased my awareness of the change in my responsibilities to where I would have greater managerial responsibilities and the expectation to take a greater leadership role in my daily duties. When I took the responsibility as circuit manager, I had not done any managerial training to prepare me for the role. I have framed management as an activity that involves the coordination of human and material resources towards accomplishment of the objectives of the Mpumalanga Department of Education.

The SMT should provide instructional leadership and I understood leadership to be different from management in that it is about influencing teachers in their core responsibilities towards the achievement of institutional goals. My core responsibility was to expose schools to policies as tailor-made centrally by the national department of education and empower schools leadership to contextualise the selection of learning content, monitor curriculum delivery and teacher development. The provincial department of education instituted operation Niyabonwa, where schools that performed below 50% were visited to establish causes for poor performance. The Niyabonwa Indaba report (2007, p. 5) revealed that 60% of the schools used curriculum monitoring instruments for quality teaching, while 40% schools did not use quality teaching monitoring tools. A curriculum management tool might not necessarily improve learner performance but its impact depends on its effective use to improve teacher competence. The poor implementation and non-existence of curriculum management plans, programmes and instruments indicated a school management's lack of capacity to manage curriculum.

The National Minister of Basic Education, Mrs Angy Motshega attributed poor performance in the 2009 grade 12 results to poor curriculum management by SMT members. The inability to correctly interpret the NCS policy led to poor implementation and subsequently inappropriate support for teachers. The functionality of the SMT becomes evident when every member of the SMT develops and implements a curriculum management plan for their respective departments. When curriculum is well managed, it can facilitate the provision of quality teaching and learning and serves as the means to support teachers especially in subject content, assessment and teaching methodology.

1.3 Sampling of participating schools and subjects

The Mpumalanga Department of Education comprises four districts. The study was conducted at Ehlanzeni district, which comprises fifteen circuits and three sub-districts, Malalane, Nelspruit and Hazyview. Ten rural secondary schools from Sabie and Whitehazy Circuits in the Hazyview sub-district were sampled based on their learner performance over the past five years. Principals, deputy principals and randomly sampled education specialists participated in the study. Thirty seven subjects from the following secondary schools participated in the study.

Sabie Circuit		White Hazy Circuit	
School	No. of members	School	No. of members
Jerusalem	4	Hlong	4
Bhekiswako	3	Kadishi	3
Siphumelele	3	Pilgrims Rest	3
Lungisani	4	Memezile	5
		Sekwai	4
		LM Kganane	4

1.4 Quality learning

My interpretation of quality learning is that it is about curriculum delivery through enhanced teaching and learning that focuses on standards, fitness for purpose, fulfillment of customer needs and value for money. Curriculum delivery is about effective curriculum management that impact on performance of learners by supporting learners directly to improve their knowledge and skills and to train and support teachers to improve on their learner's performance. Many experts in education had different views about the definition of "curriculum". Lubisi et.al cited by Coetzee (2006, p. 3) argued that the first understanding of the word "curriculum" viewed the curriculum as a blue print, which was, a set of instructions similar to the drawings an architect prepared when a new building was to be constructed.

They distinguished between two main understandings of the word “curriculum”, namely a curriculum narrowly understood as a “plan” and a curriculum broadly understood as all the aspects of teaching and learning. According to Gugushe (2009, p. 2) curriculum is defined as “a prescribed course of study”. He believed that some teachers used it in its widest sense to encompass all those processes that contributed to the learner’s learning experience, while others took a narrower view defining the curriculum largely in terms of learning content. In this study curriculum was limited to the aspects of teaching and learning.

In this study managing curriculum was about planning, organising, resourcing and leading or directing the processes of teaching and learning in schools. The SMT is required to plan the school curriculum by deciding what knowledge and skills must be delivered by the curriculum to realise the educational goals of the school. Their role in managing is to plan for the optimum use of resources to deliver quality teaching and learning in classrooms. According to the Carrboro City Schools (2001, p. 1), the development of comprehensive management plans requires schools to put in place systems to enhance quality teaching and learning and provide internal congruency, quality assurance, clear linkages towards meeting the school’s mission and goals. Curriculum management tasks include planning for controlling, monitoring and checking progress against plans, which might need modification when they get feedback.

Providing quality education can create an environment where each learner will learn and develop his or her full potential by acquiring knowledge to address problems on a scale from minute to global and beyond. St Clair Dean (2001, p. 2) supports the opinion of the Africa National Congress (ANC) that education must develop the individual and the community, and strengthen respect for human rights and fundamental freedom. The delivery of quality teaching means meeting customer needs. In this case the customers are learners, parents and the communities where the schools are based. Quality management plays a vital role to the delivery of quality education in performing schools. Oakland (2004, p. 13), regards quality control as the organisation of activities and techniques with the intention to achieve quality product, service or process. The main purpose of quality control is to eliminate quality problems so the customer requirements are met. Oakland (2004, p. 17) believes that the

achievement of quality results relies on the cooperation of everyone, led by top management and in case of schools, the SMT.

I am convinced that employee development is a joint initiative of the employee as well as the employer to upgrade the existing skills and knowledge of an individual. The Teacher Development Summit (2009, p. 1) declared that teacher development initiatives can improve the quality of teaching and learning but their impact could be maximised within a wider context which should include:

- Effective leadership at all levels of the system
- Functional schools
- Effective district and provincial support structures; and
- Sufficient dedicated national resourcing.

1.5 Systems thinking and systems methodology perspectives

This study describes poor performance by learners as a complex problem that does not have straightforward or easy solutions the complex nature of schools. Senge et.al (1999, p. 32) understood systems' thinking as a growing body of theory about the changed in behavior and complexity on the innate tendencies of a system that would lead to growth or stability over time. The complex nature of schools as organisations can be better understood by using a systems perspective. McNamara (2007, p. 2) understood schools to be complex systems that comprise of subsystems and that systems theory has brought a new perspective for SMTs to interpret patterns and events in their organisations. Checkland, Ackoff and Churchman are soft systems thinkers who criticise hard systems thinking and whose arguments are based on the assumption that hard systems approaches severely limit its domains of effective applications (Jackson, 200, p. 356).

Based on the systems thinking approach, my approach to this research study was interpretive and I preferred soft systems methodology (SSM) because its capacity to foster organisational learning by advocating participative learning by individuals in their contextual environments. Reason and Bradbury cited in Sanchez and Mejia. 2008, p. 100), understood SSM to be a participatory action research methodology that is socially oriented by involving beneficiaries in the problem situation to develop new

behaviours to drive real changes in that organisation. The use of SSM as a management tool can improve the capacity and skills of SMT members to enhance their understanding of poor performance and management problems in schools.

According to Smith (2009) adopting Checkland's SSM approach involves recognising that the process of engaging in human interactions in their work places was important in collecting data that can direct desired intervention strategies. The advantage of SSM is that it fostered change in behavior among the participants because data is collected at the participants' work environment through dialogue tailoring informed intervention strategies to be implemented during the same engagement. SSM ensures organisational development because development of individual SMT members will ultimately result in school development. Participants shared different views and experiences about the learner performance and management problems. Sharing of different views about the problem leads to sharing good practices which enhanced individual growth.

1.6 Location of the study in my professional practice

1.6.1 Relevance of the study to my practice

The core business of the department is the delivery of curriculum and its performance outcomes are measured through learner performance. My job description as outlined in the personnel administrative measures (PAM) (2008, p. 1) is to support school principals, SMT members and school governing bodies (SGBs) in the management, administration and governance of schools. The support is mostly on curriculum delivery, which is the core business of schools so that schools are strengthened in general school management, policy interpretation and implementation, curriculum development, implementation and management.

The role of SMT members should be to support teachers in their bid to create environments in which learners can best achieve at their potential abilities. Support that is focused on improving the quality of teaching and learning processes influences the quality of learner performance so that each learner and teacher can experience some success, happiness, pride and joy when they achieve good results. Block (2006) argued that policy overloads contributed towards educators lacking the understanding of the new curriculum and was a barrier to the effective teaching.

Analysis of grade 12 results in the Provincial Strategy for Learner Attainment (PSLA), (2008), indicated that the Mpumalanga Grade 12 results improved from 58.6 percent in 2005 to 60.8 percent in 2006 but declined to 50.8 percent in 2008. The analysis of the results attributed the decline in the 2008 performance to schools in rural areas in the province. Some rural schools in Hazyview Sub-region have been producing pass rates of 20 percent and below over the past three years. To change this situation SMT members should have need an understanding of the poor performance problems and to be able to develop intervention strategies to remedy the situation.

1.6.2 SMT as curriculum managers

The SMT is constituted of the school principal, the deputy principal and heads of departments or senior teachers. Their role is to manage the school curriculum (Labane, 2009, p. 14). Labane, (2009, p. 15) added that the role of SMT members as curriculum managers is to conduct skills and resource audits as well as identifying behaviours and practices which need to be administered, supported, taken care of and managed. The personnel administrative measures (PAM), (1999, p. 10) places the responsibility of managing the school curriculum on deputy principals and subjects to be managed by education specialists or heads of departments (HODs).

Spillane, Halverson, and Diamond as cited by Hoadley (2007, p. 16) identified several functions that are important for instructional leaders, these include constructing and advocating the schools' vision and SMT members supporting quality teaching and learning by facilitating programmes to ensure growth and development for teachers. Their roles include the development of school improvement plans (SIP) and allocate school resources towards instruction. They oversee curriculum planning and management, protect teaching time and develop and manage assessment programs. They ensure that time is effectively used during teaching and learning. SMT members play a vital role in the placement of teachers according to their subject specialisation. Managing curriculum is a complex task that requires SMT members who are familiar with the cyclic seven- stage SSM as a management tool. This will ensure continuous learning.

1.7 Rationale for the Study

The nature of the curriculum management and learner performance problems is complex so I decided that the SSM was the relevant management tool to initiate debates and discussions to enable participants to understand the performance problems in their schools. Many writers and education experts believe that SSM can be vital to identifying intervention strategies to enhance the capacity to manage school curriculum.

Quality of teaching is a key factor in enhancing learner performance. The yearly analysis of grade 12 learner performance in Mpumalanga province categorised the demography of schools in terms of performance into three:

- (i) the high performing urban former model C schools and the independent schools,
- (ii) the mixture of high and middle performing semi-urban schools located mostly in townships and,
- (iii) the poor performing rural schools.

Sabie and White-Hazy circuits are located in rural settlements dominated by poor performing schools. The two circuits performed poorly and inconsistently in the grade 12 Nated 550 curriculum and the learner performance continued to decline in the 2008 and 2009 grade 12 examination results. The grade 12 learner performance results by the two circuits from 2005 to 2007 were as follows:

YEAR	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009
SABIE CIRCUIT	69.83%	64%	71.9%	56%	50.9%
WHITE-HAZY CIRCUIT	62.57%	48.1%	55.7%	55%	44.5%

Table 1 – Analysis of grade 12 results over the past five years

In 2009 White-Hazy Circuit achieved the lowest performance in the province with a pass rate of only 44.5 percent. The interesting thing about the analysis of Sabie circuit is that there are two former model C schools i.e. Hoërskool Sybrand van Niekerk and Hoërskool Panorama, which performed at 99.9% and 100% respectively painting the circuit as a better performing circuit.

1.8 Problem Statement

The provincial analysis of learner performance in the further education and training band (FET) has been disturbingly poor, especially in rural schools. In principle, schools have management structures that should ensure the delivery of quality education. Over the past years the provincial department enforced monitoring by putting in place strategic programmes that included coordinated school visit programmes by subject advisers, circuit managers, outreach programmes and regular meetings with SMT members. Despite all these programmes the desired outcomes remained elusive.

1.9 Research questions.

The study was guided by the following questions:

1.9.1 Grand tour question (Main question)

How can SSM be used to capacitate SMT members to make in-depth inquiry into problems regarding the delivery of quality learning and curriculum management?

1.9.2 Sub- Questions to be answered by the study

- What do SMT members understand by curriculum management?
- How can SMT members use SSM to understand curriculum management problems and implement intervention strategies to enforce organisational learning?
- How can SSM be used as the starting point in solving unstructured problems?

1.10 Objectives of the study

This research study aimed to achieve the following objectives:

- Empower SMT members with the capacity to use SSM to understand complex problems in their schools, with the understanding that SSM focuses on empowerment through its processes, not necessarily the answers they would get through their investigations.
- Make recommendations on how to empower SMT members with the capacity to effectively manage curriculum to ensure the delivery of quality education.

1.11 Overview of the chapters in the study

1.11.1 Chapter 1: Introducing the research question.

In chapter one I introduced the research question, objectives, and the rationale for the study as well as the background of the study. The chapter outlined the geographical demarcation of the study, the schools that were selected to participate in the study and the subjects. The relevance of the study in relation to the role of the researcher as circuit managers was highlighted.

1.11.2 Chapter 2: Review of literature

To understand the performance problems in rural schools, this chapter reviews literature by writers and experts in curriculum management, reports by curriculum experts and researchers who conducted studies in curriculum management studies. These sources informed me about what other researchers contributed to the research problem and that provided arguments to strengthen new learning (Lankhear & Knobel, 2004, p. 82). The sources of literature used in this study were books, journal articles, curriculum management reports and conference proceedings. These sources were sourced through internet searches, the use of libraries and school visit reports by officials from the district. The literature review served the following purposes:

- Share with the researcher the experiences and writings by other experts in the field of leadership, curriculum management, teacher development and learning organisations.
- Relate the findings of the study to the ongoing dialogue in the literature about the topic, filling in gaps and expanding on the findings of prior studies. This was critical for this research as there are developments in the National Curriculum Statement that required the study to be updated on current developments.
- Provide a framework that will elaborate on the rationale for the study, as well as putting in place benchmarks that would be used to compare the results of the study with other research findings.
- Assist the researcher to save time and avoid duplication and unnecessary repetition.

1.11.3 Chapter 3: Critical systems perspective; the Interpretive systems approach

In the new system of education many daunting challenges emerged about the delivery of quality education and raised questions about how education is best managed (Moloi & Bush, 2007, p. 15). Systems thinking philosophy was seen to be the relevant theory to help understand these problems. Schools are organisations that have management structures with a network of interdependent and synergistic function components, which are in continuous interactions thereby bringing about new behaviours among the personnel. I used Checkland's soft systems methodology (SSM) to gather data from the participants. SSM required the researcher to be fully involved with the participants by conducting face-to-face interviews and discussions in their schools. This methodology reflected on human behaviour and interactions thereby enhancing the understanding of the problem situation as it manifests in their work contexts. Participants co-owned the recommendations of the study by being involved through the use of this methodology. Models of change are discussed in chapter 3 to enhance organisational development.

1.11.4 Chapter 4: Intervention using SSM

Chapter 4 is based on the interactive session held at Glory Hill EDC on the 2nd to the 5th April 2012. The discussions are initiated by presentation of reports and conference resolutions that mostly outlined the role of SMT members in managing curriculum. Learning in this study is two pronged: firstly by sharing of good practices in managing curriculum and secondly when the SSM stages are presented in an interactive and participatory form. This exercise gives the participants the opportunity to experience the use of SSM as a management tool that will enable them understand the management and performance problems.

1.11.5 Chapter 5: Further learning

New learning was experienced in stage 7 of SSM where the design of an intervention plan to carry out specific actions, communicating the specifics of the plan to all stakeholders affected (actors), monitoring performance and the environment, and evaluation of results. Chapter 5 was devoted in discussing the consensus agreed upon regarding the curriculum management activities.

1.12 Role of the researcher

The continued poor performance by learners in rural schools is a cause for concern. As reflected in the school visit reports, analysis of learner performances and education conference where resolutions also raised concerns about non-performance by learners and made recommendations to remedy the situation were suggested but yielded no improvement. The responsibility of school managers is to provide instructional leadership by putting in place management systems to ensure performance by learners. The objective of this study was to introduce SMT members to the use of SSM to enable them to learn about and understand the management and performance problems in schools.

I identified ten schools and 37 subjects to be part of the study. The requirement of this study was that I complete the ethical clearance form that spelled out all activities that would unfold during the research process. I visited the schools to administer the curriculum management grid and the self-evaluation questionnaires to initiate the SSM process. All participants congregated on the 2nd to the 5th April 2012 at Glory Hill EDC for further engagements using SSM.

The questions I give to the SMT members during the visits are meant to create a discourse on the research topic. I listened to the presentations and discussion where SMT members gave account for the poor performance of learners in schools. Their experiences about the performance of learners and curriculum management problems were discussed in the context of schools that participated in the study. Marriman cited in White (2003, p. 16) is of the view it is important that the views and concerns of the participants take centre stage during the learning process.

Understanding the thinking participants from their personal contexts by carefully listening to the views and engaging with the participants at their respective levels of management was key to getting as much understanding of the problems in schools studying in order to understand how they experienced things. White (2003, p. 17) suggests that the qualitative researcher sets aside his own beliefs, perspectives and predispositions and that he views things as though they were happening for the first time. When conducting the data collecting meetings in schools nothing was taken for granted, everything was subjected to enquiry. To ensure that I intervened effectively, I

regarded all views and perspectives as valuable. As a researcher, I did not seek moral, but rather a detailed understanding of the perspectives that participants they hold. All participants were viewed as equals.

1.13 Ethical measures

As part of the requirements of this research study, I completed the ethical clearance procedures to ensure commitment to moral principles of a particular. Participants gave consent by completing the consent form to freely participate in the study with the understanding that confidentiality was guaranteed. The consent form also outlined that participation in this study is voluntary and that they can withdraw their participation at any time without negative consequences.

1.14 Conclusion

In chapter one the research question was introduced and the background of the study was outlined along with the performance of learners in the circuits that were identified to participate in the study. Reports from the planning and review meeting for FET curriculum held in Badplaas (2008) attributed the poor performance to the lack of capacity by SMT members to manage the school curriculum. The success of a school depends largely on the instruction the learners receive. The professional leadership role of the principal is to see to it that things really get done and ensure that staff coordinates their activities towards the achievement of clearly defined goals. The literature review provided the researcher with a better understanding of the research topic through study of the views of other writers and researchers. The last three chapters highlighted the theoretical framework of the study, the intervention using SSM and provided mapped a framework for new learning initiatives. The focus in chapter two is be on the review of literature.

CHAPTER 2

Literature study

2.1 Introduction

This chapter broadens the understanding of the research question through the review of what other writers contributed in curriculum management studies. The rationale for the review of literature was to find out how other scholars and academics viewed the role of the SMT members in managing school curriculum. I ventured into a new body of knowledge when I chose to use SSM to build the capacity of SMTs to enable them to understand management problems in their schools. Before I unpacked SSM to the participants, I had to familiarise myself with SSM as a problem solving tool by exploring the views of other researchers and writers.

2.2 Literature Study

Previous studies have taught me that education management involves creating a school environment which comprises of various management areas to create conducive conditions so that teachers are able to perform their task efficiently and effectively. The review of literature was done under the following curriculum management areas:

- Curriculum management principles and design
- Leadership and management
- Facilitation and teacher development
- Management and insight
- Quality monitoring
- Managing human resources (induction and orientation of new and promoted employees)

2.2.1 Curriculum management principles and design

2.2.1.1 Discourse of Policy and Administration

One of my responsibilities as a circuit manager is to facilitate curriculum delivery through support in various ways. The emphasis is placed on the goal of education, which is to empower individuals and provide the entire community with skills and knowledge to bridge the skills gaps in the country. Legislation created the development and management of the school curriculum so that a responsive curriculum must put be in place to transform the country to enhance the delivery of quality education to strengthen the development of our cultures, our society and the economy. The South African Schools Act of 1996 did not specify that each school should have a school management team (SMT), but it assumed that the principal would be helped by senior members of staff. Together would they form the SMT and they would be in charge of managing the professional matters of the school (Department of Education, 2000, (i)). The school management comprises staff members who were either appointed as Deputy Principals or Education Specialists (ESs) or Heads of Departments (HODs) or could be senior teachers who have the capacity to manage subjects. Duties and responsibilities of Deputy Principals and Education Specialists are outlined in the Employment of Educator's Act (76 of 1998).

My job description includes making sure that SMTs correctly interpret policy so that they implement it correctly. It is crucial that SMT members understand the development of the curriculum as the National Education Policy Act (NEPA) of 1996, outlines that this country adopted the National Curriculum Statement (NCS); a policy which aimed to change the curriculum in all schools. During the course of the study, the curriculum was in the process of being revised so that it would be more content oriented, terminology reduced to meaningful forms, and the administrative workload for educators eased. NEPA (1996) mandated the Minister to ensure a high standard of education provision, delivery and performance by monitoring the performance of the system. Managers in the department would ascertain the delivery of quality education by ensuring high levels of competence among teachers. They should instill a sense of purpose among teachers and make them believe that they can achieve high expectations to make a difference in schools. Managers should delegate authority and responsibility that would ascertain the

development of human resource capacity that would guarantee maximum functionality of the system (Performance Administrative Measures (PAM), 1999).

According to the Department of Education (2003, p. 9) it is essential that all learners completing the FET band should be equipped with sufficient knowledge to empower them to make sense of society. If teachers are to be competent in the subjects they teach, they must be in a better position to equip learners with the knowledge and skills needed for self-fulfillment and meaningful participation in society. The core business of a school is to deliver quality education, which requires schools to set high performance and measurable standards. Performance of teachers must be measured against standards, which are developed as performance objectives (Chapel Hill-Carrboro City Schools, 2001, p. 1).

2.2.1.2 Discourse of Practice

During my presentations in the Sabie circuit SMT workshops, I emphasise that management is an art of knowing what to do, when to do and see that it is done in the best and cheapest way. Managing the school curriculum is about organising, leading and controlling the teaching and learning processes so that the learner gains maximum benefit from the process. Schools as organisations must engage in careful planning to be successful institutions. SMT members can improve the performance of schools by drawing up school improvement plans that must include curriculum management plans. Assessment is one critical area to be planned for and managed by the SMT, by leading processes to develop annual assessment plans and ensuring that all assessment tasks are analysed. All assessment tasks must be quality assured by the SMT. SMT members must provide resources to support teaching and learning. Planning for resources involves determining what materials (equipment, learning aids) are needed.

The Department of Education strives to accelerate the provision of quality education. Organisational management has been considerably influenced by the views of the quality movement on quality management in organisations (van der Westhuizen, 2007, p. 287). Van der Westhuizen (2007, p. 130) added that that the vision of the school must reflect the school's intended future state in terms of teaching and learning and determine how functions ideally will be carried out to achieve the vision. Du Preez

(2003, p. 10) was of the view that, a vision conveys a sense of direction in an institution. Ngobeni (2005) cited by (Moloi and Bush, p. 18) noted that curriculum management was rooted in the organisational culture of the former model C schools, while this was not a common practice in rural schools. Rural schools remained under-resourced in terms of the appointment of education specialists and deputy principals. Thurlow (2003) cited by (Moloi and Bush, p. 18) pointed out that school managers were expected to play a supportive role in the delivery of quality education under difficult circumstances.

Effective teaching and learning does not simply happen, it should be planned, managed and monitored (Mpumalanga Department of Education, 2005, p. 7). Commitment to effective management was evident by some SMT members when there was evidence that SMT engaged in processes of developing curriculum management plans for their respective departments. The importance of such planning was that systems to manage resources, funding and strategies to improve learner performance were put in place (Chapel Hill-Carrboro City Schools, 2001, p. 2).

Beckhard and Harris (1987) cited by van der Westhuizen (2007, p. 183) indicated that changes in curriculum policies, the unavailability of resources often forced principals to review the school's management structures and procedures, redefine priorities and redeploy resources. The ability to manage changes in curriculum must be sourced in and the SMT must initiate change rather react to it. Klinginismith (2007, p. 47) stressed that poor performing schools lacked capacity of managing internal change in response to external global demands. In the context of educational management, change meant that the SMT are exposed to new management responsibilities, policy regulations, increasing competition, technological developments and developmental needs of teachers.

2.2.1.3 Discourse of Scholarship

When this country was ushered into democracy in 1994, social and economic transformation was driving the introduction of a new curriculum; known as the outcome-based education (OBE). This triggered the explosion of curriculum activity across South Africa as communities of departmental officials, curriculum developers, subject specialists, teachers, lecturers, trade unions, business representatives and

observers from across the world congregated to translate OBE into workable units of information for teaching and learning which would be ready for implementation in 1998 (Jansen, 1995). Jansen (1995) criticised the paradigm shift because it was a policy driven by political imperatives which have little to do with the realities of classroom life. He argued that the introduction of OBE undermines the already fragile learning environment in schools and classrooms of the new South Africa. Teachers assume the role of facilitating and mediation of learning by selecting and organising content to be presented in class. The readiness of teachers in the GET phase to present lessons in learning areas was another aspect to contend with in the new curriculum.

Worldwide teachers are faced with the task of continuously facilitating and implementing educational reforms (Swanepoel, 2008, p. 1). It therefore became evident that the role of the SMT has changed dramatically. In order to implement reform, school-based management emerged as the instrument to accomplish the desired reforms to achieve the vision of the school. Learning is the core business of schools and I believe that effective learning will be achieved through capacity building for teachers especially in content knowledge and outcomes-based teaching methodology. Providing leadership in the teaching and learning practice is very complex and challenging and needs SMT members to have the capacity to manage the school curriculum.

The purpose of education, as defined by the Chapel Hill-Carrboro City schools (2001, p. 3) is primarily the instruction to empower learners with skills and knowledge so that they are competent in the globalised world. Teachers must be conversant with the dynamic character of each class. Managing diversity in schools means developing environments that would enable all kinds of learners to experience their full potential. Managing school curriculum means school managers must be able to identify and respond to environmental challenges. The choice of subjects in the curriculum enhances the delivery of quality education in response to environmental demands. The Chapel Hill-Carrboro City schools (2001, p. 6) defines curriculum as the body of knowledge, skills and the methodologies used to facilitate learning in classrooms.

The NCS-Grades R-12 General (2003) is the policy that laid the foundation for social transformation in South Africa. The norms and standards for the provision of quality education prompted Prof. Bhengu the then National Minister of Education, to initiate the development of a curriculum that provides an environment that provides quality education. The National education policy clarifies the connection between the written and taught content and procedures to be followed when revising the curriculum. Each school provides education in communities with different contextual needs. The policies allow SMT members to lead curriculum development processes that respond to their contextual needs (The Chapel Hill-Carrboro City schools, 2001, p. 6).

The role of the SMT in curriculum development is to ensure that the school curriculum address the contextual needs of communities where schools are located. The National Curriculum Statement (NCS) in South Africa is decided nationally but secondary schools select subject combinations guided by the national protocol for assessment. Chapel Hill-Carrboro City schools (2001, p. 3) accepts the fact that schools can create environments that are conducive to effective teaching and learning by implementing a well structured curriculum, setting clearly-stated objectives and quality teaching standards as well as setting high expectations for all learners to achieve. A partnership with parents and the other stakeholders from the community provides a safe and orderly learning environment. Nicholls cited in Vermeulen (1997, p. 15) proposed five steps in curriculum design:

- (1) A situation analysis answers the question; “for whom was the curriculum designed?” This refers to the persons (learners and teachers) and society (country, province, job market) to which the curriculum relates.
- (2) Aims addresses the question “why a particular learning was content selected?” This referred to specific knowledge (learning content) skills and attitudes that the curriculum aimed to achieve.
- (3) Selection of content referred to “what was to be taught?” This referred to the selection and organising of the learning content to achieve the aims of the curriculum.
- (4) Design of learning opportunities and experiences referred to how the learning content is taught and is informed by information regarding the teaching-learning experiences, opportunities and activities appropriate for teaching the selected learning content in order to achieve the predetermined aims.

- (5) Evaluation is the process of making judgments about relevance of the curriculum and determining the extent to which the goals of the curriculum of the curriculum have actually been achieved.

Some of the schools that participated in this study are located in rural farming settlements, and those in the Sabie Circuit are located in the Panorama Tourist destination but the choice of subjects in these schools did not take the socio-economic drivers into consideration, as the curricula in these schools do not address the socio-economic and environmental needs of the local communities they serve. Jackson (2000, P. 157) pointed out that the Beer's Viable Systems Methodology emphasised that a school provides viable curriculum if the curriculum is capable of responding to the needs of the community, even if those needs were not identified at the time the curriculum was designed.

Klinginismith (2007, p. 35) noted that to become effective instructional leaders, principals and SMTs are actively involved and knowledgeable about their instructional practices than the passive approach used in the past. The principal and the SMT members must be competent in curriculum development as suggested by Frazer et.al cited by Vermeulen (1997, p. 18) by engaging in the following:

- (1) Planning: when a new curriculum is developed, it must be based on careful planning that will be guided by the review of the results of previous evaluation of the curriculum, the needs identified by research and conditions and restrictions identified by means of situation analysis;
- (2) Design: curriculum design follows a logical sequence that is informed by considering the goals and list topics, stating the general reasons for teaching each topic, specify learning objectives to be achieved in terms of learner achievements, list the learning content that supports each objective and the selection of learning activities and teaching media; and
- (3) Implementation: creating a climate of change by conducting advocacy campaigns about the new curricula, teaching plans and materials.

Curriculum design is the competency of the National Department of education but at school level curriculum development is about the choices of subjects that informs career pathing for learners. The newly designed curriculum is communicated to all stakeholders for their input. Stakeholders are orientated in the new curriculum so that they understand the rationale and line of reasoning that informed the development of

the curriculum. Teachers receive in-service training to prepare them for implementation of the new curriculum. Teacher training provides guidelines for selection content, teaching methods and assessment which are part of the curriculum design.

SMT members must internalise the rationale behind the use of curriculum in the transformation of the society because it encompasses the pursuit of national reconstruction and development, transforming the institutions of society in the interest of all, and enabling the social, cultural, economic and political empowerment of all citizens. Planning the curriculum takes into account all the realities of the situation for which it is intended and designed. Bossert et.al, Smith and Andrews cited in Klinginismith (2007, p. 42) suggests that effective school principals must be experts, knowledgeable and understand teaching and learning theories and be familiar with current educational trends. The time table, learning programme, work schedules and analysis of results are curriculum management tools and compliance with these tools must be monitored to ensure effective implementation and management.

The Chapel Hill-Carrboro City schools (2001, p. 7) suggests that curriculum development is an on-going process. Formal curriculum defines the teaching and learning activities, while the extra-mural curriculum is made up of other activities that take place within the school, but outside the classroom. The curriculum is designed to empower learners with high levels of knowledge and skills and set up high expectations for learners to achieve. The nationally set objectives of the curriculum guide teaching and learning. The SMT and stakeholders contextualise the curriculum so that it becomes accessible, manageable, user friendly and reflect the best practices of the profession. In order for the curriculum to stay relevant, it is assessed on regular bases at all levels.

2.2.2 Leadership and management

2.2.2.1 Discourse of Policy and Administration

When I support schools in leadership, I understand that schools contend with a number of dynamics: new relations to communities; policy change and increasing accountability; and a broader pressure to lead teaching and learning in their schools. Effective instructional leadership is about understanding that every action, whether educational or administrative is regulated by policy. SMT members and teachers make valid and informed decisions supported by the knowledge of policy. SMT members who are aware of education law get to know the rights and obligations of other parties in the education system. Successful teaching depends on the manner in which legal procedures such as education policy, rules and regulations are applied. Education management must be based on the understanding of education law and its correct interpretation as well as correct implementation procedures.

Teachers in schools assume the role of leadership, managers and administrators (Department of Education, 2001, p. 1-136). Teacher's roles imply that they participate in decision making appropriate to their levels and they mediate learning, assess learners and design learning programmes. The Employment of Educators Act (1998) profiled the post of teachers to include managing the school curriculum and creating favourable conditions for effective teaching and learning in schools. The principal assumes the role of accounting and chief executive officer in the school. To deliver on this task, the principal supported by the SMT members ensure that schools are managed effectively and in compliance with applicable legislation. Performance of schools is realised when teachers have the capacity to create conducive environments for effective teaching and learning. Schools need a combination of both good leadership and management, but there is no tailor made recipe of what constitutes good management and good leadership. School leaders must have the capacity to make the right judgments, lead and manage appropriately (Department of Education, 2000, p. 8).

2.2.2.2 Discourse of Practice

It is estimated that approximately 80% of our schools are underperforming. This translates to about 20 000 schools. International experience shows that system wide improvements in education systems can be implemented in a number of ways, including developing a turnaround plan and oversee its implementation (National Planning Commission, 2011).

The report also indicated that poor performance in rural schools resulted from a lack of capacity to manage curriculum by the SMTs and the teachers' lack of commitment to the vision of their respective schools. The SMT should provide leadership by being reasonably clear about the direction the school takes, familiarise teachers and other stakeholders about the vision and mission of their respective schools in order to define process-aligned roles and responsibilities (Oakland, 2004, p. 47).

Good leadership and management imply that the SMTs guide and inspire teachers into getting things done efficiently and effectively. A good SMT combines the skills of good leadership and management (Department of Education, 2000, p. 9). Principals are the custodians of the vision of their schools. They lead instruction by displaying expertise in curriculum management. Their expertise in leadership is their ability to create conducive learning environments that support the development of strong internal discipline and the ability of teachers to handle conflict through debate and constructive arguments.

Instructional leadership is about creating conducive environments that support learning to foster achievement and creative thinking among learners. SMT members demonstrate the understanding, concern and empathy for colleagues as well as the maintenance of sound interpersonal relationships (Davis et. al, 2005. p2). The failure of instructional leadership in rural schools resulted in major imbalances in addressing teacher developmental needs across the system, particularly with respect to building confidence and competence in dealing with the implementation of the NCS and changes in the education system more broadly. The responsibility of SMT members in schools should be to provide instructional leadership so that the quality of learner attainment is enhanced and ensuring that learners reach the expected outcomes.

2.2.2.3 Leadership role of the SMT in managing curriculum.

Schools that work have both internal and external accountability systems, which are aligned with the demands of the communities served by schools. Schools with weak internal accountability systems blame poor performance to forces outside their control; which they claim are the learners, their families, the community, or the system, while schools with strong accountability systems take responsibility for success or failures (Christie, Butler and Potterton, 2007, p. 110). Effort must be directed in clarifying roles and responsibilities within SMTs for mediation and implementation of the curriculum. The principals promote effective teaching and learning when their leadership abilities incorporate democratic procedures and accountability to the community (Davis et. al, 2005, p. 3).

The transformation process in the education system created challenges for SMT members with regard to managing human resources (Moloi and Bush, p. 18). School-based teacher training is key if performance is to improve. Lack of vision among many management teams in schools led to failure to provide proper support and implement developmental programmes in schools. The abilities of SMT members to provide teachers with the capacity to share a common vision, support teacher development programmes and effective use of resources to cultivate environments that support excellence by teachers. Ferreira (2011) believes that any leader, junior manager, politician, or sport coach should teach the organisation's vision, mission, values and objectives to their people, ensure the message that is taught is a credible one; and then authenticate the message through direct and indirect behaviour.

Principals failed to provide evidence in their leadership roles in guiding and monitoring the work and performance by all staff. Their responsibility is to support quality teaching and learning by ensuring availability of resources. SMT members manage didactic activities and encourage teachers to create mental models, which enhance the development of enquiry skills so that teachers develop awareness of attitudes and perceptions through their interactions. According to Senge (1999, p. 32) mental models enable teachers to see the bigger picture of the task that lies ahead of them in delivering quality lessons. In my opinion

instructional leaders communicate a shared vision with teachers to source in commitment to the aspirations of the school. Leadership is about guiding and inspiring. The SMT members plan, monitor and support the delivery of quality of teaching and learning practices by ensuring that there is effective teaching and learning in schools (Department of Education, 2002, p. 1). SMTs support teachers to translate the curriculum into teaching practice and oversee the selection of learning content, ways of teaching and learning and the forms of assessment.

2.2.2.4 Role of SMT in monitoring teaching and learning

Effective leadership in schools depends much on the capacity and skills to manage the curriculum. SMT members support quality teaching by empowering teachers with the skills to teach effectively by ensuring that teachers are involved in the planning and organisation of their in-service training, rather than SMT members exercising high control, authoritarian approach. SMT members must be mentors and coaches who create a climate characterised by trust. They set high expectations for performance by teachers and learners, but at the same time express confidence in teachers and learners' ability to meet the set expectations (Coetzee. 2006 P23).

The NCS is policy and monitoring its implementation takes centre stage. The curriculum review report by Dada et.al (2009, p. 18) pointed out that while the NCS is national policy, its implementation should be guided by guidelines developed to support teachers with the interpretation and understanding of policy framework. The curriculum review report by Dada et.al (2009, p. 25) further indicated that in the NCS curriculum teachers should engage in planning that include developing subject framework, work schedules and lesson plans. The report further indicated that alongside the three levels of planning, teachers are further required to develop annual assessment plans, individual teachers' assessment plan, prepare school-based assessment (SBA) marks and schedules. My interpretation of the role of principals in managing assessment is making sure that all stakeholders are familiar with assessment policies and practices. The understanding of the strengths of the assessment practices, the decisions taken and the conclusions made should be based on assessment data

that is declared as fair and authentic as outlined by the assessment policy (Davis et. al, 2005, p. 1).

2.2.2.5 School-based support for teachers

In the introduction of this study I highlighted the managerial responsibility of principals that human resource professionals must encourage teachers to participate in internal or external trainings, get enrolled in online courses to increase their professional knowledge and contribute effectively. The introduction of the NCS necessitated capacity building for the SMT in both subject content and teaching methodology but every time a new curriculum is implemented, it introduces new challenges that need problem solving expertise by the SMT emerge. Success in implementing the NCS curriculum is possible through empowering both the SMT and teachers in understanding their responsibilities towards implementing the curriculum. The SMT monitors teacher performance in content coverage so that they provide support and develop teachers. The 2011 report by the National Department of Education on content coverage outlined that on average only 24% of topics were covered in Grades 4 & 5.88% of teachers had covered no more than 40% of the 89 topics specified in Grade 5 Maths curriculum. 58% had covered no more than 20 topics in Grade 4, which make up only 22% of the curriculum (Department of Education, 2012).

The research report on schools that work by Christie, Butler and Potterton (2007, p. 108) revealed that it is important to have competent teachers, and use the mentoring of teachers as a means of improving the standards of teaching. Competent teachers in their professional practice, supported by the organisational capacity are vital in enhancing the performance by learners. In order to make a comprehensive evaluation of whether a school offers quality teaching, it is worthwhile to check whether the SMT members have the necessary capacity to support teachers in subject content mastery and the ability to assess efficiently. The failure of the SMT to uphold their responsibility in managing curriculum constitutes the blind spot as described as that part of our seeing that we usually don't see (Scharmer, 2007, p. 22). I understand the

supportive role of SMT members to be to identify instructional challenges, in the form of content knowledge gaps, assessment and teaching methodology and make the necessary intervention measures.

The Chapel Hill-Carrboro City schools (2001, p. 21) viewed the role of the principals as key in managing the implementation of the curriculum as they lead planning processes control and support teachers. As accounting personnel, principals ensure that SMT members emphasise the importance of monitoring the correct implementation of the curriculum on daily bases. Hussain and Lomas (n.d) believed that SMTs first undergo training as coaches and mentors before they attempt to become effective coaches and mentors in their teams. The SMT will use the skill acquired to facilitate and lead coaching practices in their respective departments so that they enforce organisational learning in schools.

Assessment is one way teachers can help learners to learn, and to achieve more. But teachers do not always assess learners correctly. Sometimes teachers do not have all the information necessary to make valid assessment (Jacobs, Vakalisa & Gawe, 2007, p. 270). The lack of such skills resulted in teachers making poor judgements which identifies as one area of focus for the SMT to provide the relevant support to improve the methods of assessment (Jacobs, Vakalisa & Gawe, 2007, p. 270).

2.2.2.6 Discourse of Scholarship

Soft Systems Methodology (SSM) can be an effective vehicle to deal with the complex curriculum management challenges and foster organisational learning in schools. If SMT members have the capacity to use SSM to understand different perspectives within the SMT. If the SMT have the capacity to analyse and understand complex situations they will be able to develop intervention strategies. The advantage of using SSM is that it is not prescriptive, but encourages participation by all participants.

Scharmer (2004, p. 6) pointed out that the school, as an organisation, becomes a learning organisation during the transformation process. There is minimum effort to contribute to transformation by rural schools because of poor performance by

learners yet teachers believe that they are using the correct didactic practices in their classrooms. This constitutes the blind spot. Management of schools aspire to achieve success by providing leadership that enables teachers to be aware of the blind spot at all times so that teachers make sound introspections about their practice. Scharmer (2004) believes that individual members in management teams must operate through their deep senses and sharing their experiences with fellow colleagues. Learning takes place when individual open up to the outside world and share good practices with colleagues (Scharmer, 2004, p. 10).

Curriculum management processes can be instrumental as means to identify teacher development needs. The success of a school in terms of learner performance is certain if the curriculum is well managed and driven by dedicated and competent teachers. To provide effective instructional leadership, in schools, Scharmer (2004, p10), described the three movements undertaken by individuals in the process of learning as firstly, encouraging individuals to open up new learning experiences called co-sensing, secondly opening up to the highest presence, called co-presencing and lastly co-creating the future. Ensuring school improvement and educator development must be part of a larger process that needs to be understood from a systems approach.

Schools are expected to produce certain outputs or products (for example, Grade 12 learner performance targets) based on the inputs where effective teaching is supported (Nieuwenhuis & Bernie, 2004, p. 7). These inputs are the instructional leadership support that would enable teachers to adapt to the transformation processes of the country, and update themselves with the developments in curriculum and other aspects of the teaching practice. Effective SMTs demonstrate well-developed instructional leadership qualities as outlined by Bass and others cited in Klinginismith (2007, p. 46):

- idealised or charismatic influence, in which leaders are viewed as role models to their followers;
- inspiring and motivating followers through a vision for a brighter future;
- intellectual stimulation of members through questioning of the organisational assumptions and willingness to innovate; and

- individualised considerations of organisational members through coaching and mentoring that seeks to respond to their needs, including the needs to achieve and grow.

2.2.3 Facilitation and teacher development

2.2.3.1 Discourse of Policy and Administration

When the former South African Minister of Education, Ms. Naledi Pandor, announced the 2008 grade 12 results she attributed the poor performance to lack of understanding of the NCS policy statement by SMT members, which resulted in wrong implementation and subsequently poor performance by the system. The Whole School Evaluation (WSE) policy (2000, p. 18), highlighted that the core business of schools is to create environments where learners can achieve. Empowering teachers in their practice is critical to improve the individual performance and subsequently the overall performance of schools. Quality of in-service teacher training programmes is one of the measures used by WSE to judge the performance of schools.

The department uses developmental appraisal system (DAS) to conduct teacher performance evaluation to identify developmental needs of teachers, and based on the evaluation findings; programmes to develop and support teachers are developed (ELRC, 2003, p. 1). The responsibility of the principal should be to develop staff training programmes to empower teachers, particularly the newly appointed and inexperienced teachers so that they are supported to achieve the goals of the school (PAM, 1999). Integrated Quality Management System (IQMS) and WSE are policies enacted to diagnose and coordinate relevant support for individual teachers and schools. In the province, the Ayihlome Ifunde directorate gives special and comprehensive support to all schools at the bottom of the performance continuum (Mpumalanga Department of Education, 2011, p. 18).

2.2.3.2 Role of curriculum management in social transformation

The subject statements in the NCS outline the type of knowledge, skills and values to be taught in classrooms. The knowledge to be acquired by learners is underpinned by the vision, mission and values of South Africans (Mpumalanga Department of Education, 2011, p. 2). Learning content must be meaningful to

learners and the choice of subjects must address the developmental needs of the community. This calls for contextualised selection of learning content.

The GET curriculum is structured into eight learning areas and the content in each learning area is broad and general to ensure that learners are developed to their full potential. One of the principles of the NCS is that it seeks to create life-long learners. The type of learner envisaged should be an independent thinker, multi-skilled and be able to participate in society as a responsible citizen. The FET curriculum builds on the knowledge acquired in the GET band, and at the same time equips learners so that they are ready for higher education. A pool of subjects is offered in the FET band and learners, in consultation with their families and the SMT, make subject choices that suit their career pathing.

The Department of Education developed policy that informs teacher development to drive its transformation programmes. Transformation is driven through the provision of quality education. Effective planning, monitoring and funding are part of the norms that facilitate the delivery of quality education. The responsibility of the department is to ensure that schools have sufficient and well qualified teachers (Department of Education, 2006, p. 21). Leaders for change provide the needed stimulus for change by creating possibilities for individuals to take risks and encourage them to consider new initiatives. My view of the developmental support to be provided by the SMT members is to encourage teachers to explore new innovations with a view to provide an environment that support effective teaching and learning and initiate new instructional practices to improve their professional competences. Quality teaching and learning is certain when teachers are afforded the opportunities to experiment with different approaches to classroom instruction.

The Department of Education (2000, p. 3), recognises the argument by teachers that their effort to provide quality education is not valued by officials and school management who offer little support. If human resources are of paramount importance for the provision of quality education, it follows logically that, in addition to effective recruitment, selection and development of staff,

precautionary steps should be taken to ensure the stability of the teacher corps (Heyns, 2000, p. 160). As agents of social transformation, teachers implement educational policies that drive the processes of social transformation. Social transformation in education aims to redress the past educational imbalances, and ensures that all learners are offered equal educational opportunities (Department of Education, 2003, p. 2). The fundamental role of the NCS is to facilitate the transformation processes because its objective is to develop learners who will cope with the ongoing social transformation. The critical and developmental imperatives of the NCS curriculum are rooted in the fundamental values outlined in the Constitution of South Africa (1996).

2.2.3.3 Discourse of Practise

Teachers must be supported in selecting appropriate teaching methodology that fits that particular context. The core business in schools must be what goes on inside the classroom. Block (2007, p. 8) argued that teachers have been subjected to too much administrative work, which led to the failure to focus on the actual task of facilitating effective teaching. The size, complexity and wrongly managed curricula in rural schools contribute to the failure to promote quality teaching. In some cases, the education specialist or heads of departments (HODs) that were part of this study were assigned to manage subjects they never studied in their tertiary studies.

Bressler and Bressler (2007, p. 71) believe that individual instructors show preferences to certain types of methodology that they like to use in their classes. In addition, certain particular subject contents are better suited to particular learning methods. Woolf and Carpenter cited in Danaher, Tyler and Arden (2007, p. 76) were of the view that the focus of leadership in schools, must be on improving the quality of classroom instruction. SMT monitoring reports are key in identifying teacher developmental needs and are initiated by retrieving the key information from the reports by different departments in the school in order to plan the support and professional development required. SMT members develop and inform teachers about the in-service training (INSET) and other programmes to be offered and make the necessary arrangements for teachers to attend.

Chapel Hill-Carrboro City schools (2001, p. 16) believed that school-based in-service training caters for:

- Training equips teachers with knowledge of designing their contextual curricula.
- Induction for new teachers in their schools.
- Mentoring and coaching teachers, particularly those who are new to the school.
- Equipping teachers with expertise in selecting appropriate teaching methodologies and resources
- Creating opportunities for teachers to share good practices.

Hussain and Lomas (n.d) cited the key aspect of school-based teacher development to be excellent coaching and mentoring which is about establishing relationships between more experienced and younger, less experienced colleagues. Hussain and Lomas (n.d) suggested that the key principles of workplace learning and its implementation should be:

- To move learning closer to the workplace by making work a part of learning and learning a part of work.
- Learning at the right time, ensuring the relevance of all learning.
- Developing learning partnerships in the workplace through coaching. Valuing a mutual coaching environment.
- Ensuring that learners feel that they make contributions to their teams also learn collectively.
- Nurturing an “Ask, Learn, Share” community, valuing and rewarding a learning environment.
- Build trust and relationships through each others’ contribution in the workplace.

Seaton and Boyd (2008, p. 107) suggested that learning must be designed, not with the needs and preferences of the teacher in mind, but instead, focussed on the needs of the learners. My understanding of managing the performance of the school curriculum is that learning must be continuously assessed through a process of collecting data, analysing it and making judgments about the performance of learners. Analysis of learner performance leads to decision making about the strategies to improve the performance of learners (Department of Education, 2003, p. 55). The role of the SMT is to capacitate teachers in their

respective departments to understand and implement the subject assessment guidelines (SAG) to ensure quality in assessment.

In evaluating educator competence, traditional evaluators based their evaluations only on visiting teachers in class and collect data through observation, using instruments. The use of comprehensive models can yield a broader scope on the performance of teachers. This further raises the question on the management skills and content knowledge of education specialists (ES), as people who are tasked with the role of supporting and developing teachers in their respective subjects in departments. Toch and Rothman (2008, p. 34) believed that the use of multiple evaluators who can be peer teachers, education specialists and subject advisors to evaluate the performance of teachers in multiple occasions could counter the subjective nature of conventional evaluations.

The report by Dada et.al (2009, p. 55), and submissions made by the participants during the pre-visits, indicated that many qualified teachers are not competent in teaching the content of the subjects they teach and that they did not get sufficient training in the appropriate teaching methodologies. In response to these shortcomings, the SMTs develop ongoing school-based teacher development programmes and take charge of creating conducive environments for teachers to sharpen their teaching skills and expand their subject content knowledge. It is important to note that no matter how much planning goes into individual developmental strategies, individual growth cannot take place unless the school as an entirety is also engaged in continuous review and development (van der Westhuizen, 2007, p. 246). The availability of competent teachers contributes to effective teaching and learning. This calls for the need to improve the quality of teacher education and school-based teacher development in the system and schools (Teacher Development Summit, 2009, p. 2).

Effective learning is possible with teachers who are true professionals, who experience job satisfaction, possess the required skills, knowledge, values and attitudes, and have a strong feeling of efficacy about their practice. Such educators are more likely to motivate learners to want to learn (Maritz, 2003, p.

2). Mpumalanga Department of Education Strategy for the coordination of professional development advocated that achieving such a cadre of professionals requires a process of on-going professional development. Maritz (2003, p. 2) is of the opinion that Government legislated lifelong learning be declared an Educational Strategy for the provision of quality education for all. Maritz (2003, p. 2) added that that such a process would enable the best development of every teacher and thus the best learning progress for all learners.

Effective training builds on prior learning and experiences of the teachers. Expert writers believe that the teachers' academic and professional development coupled with school-based training can produce competent teachers (Davis, 2005, p. 12). The commitment by teachers to continuous improvement to better their teaching skills cannot be over-emphasised as many teachers in rural schools need capacity in their subject content knowledge and pedagogical skills (Department of Education, 2001, p. 15). The challenge with implementing the NCS was that SMT members did not own the implementation processes but left it to the curriculum advisors. This situation was fuelled by the fact that SMT members are not well grounded with the policy.

The hearings conducted by Dada and his associates (2009, p. 56) revealed that SMT members do not understand their roles in supporting the implementation of the new curriculum. The training provided by the district and provincial trainers was insufficient as it was conducted for a minimum of three days without follow-up support. The report presented by Dada et.al (2009, p. 56) added that training should be planned to be of a high standard to avoid poor and ineffective training that could result in the lack of confidence among teachers. The understanding of the context in which the school exists is key to delivery of quality teaching and learning. Dewey (1997) was of the opinion that contextualising the teaching practice should emphasises the importance of recognising the learner's past experiences which enhance understanding and necessitates that the past experiences be taken into cognisance when designing relevant teaching and learning activities.

The Education for All Report (Mgijima, 2000, p. 51) recommended that teachers be properly prepared to manage and implement the changes in curriculum. Teachers in the previously disadvantaged schools were not offered the opportunities for self development, and consequently experienced problems in using the correct teaching methodology as well as lacking in content knowledge. The report further outlined the challenges that threaten the attainment of the goals of quality education for all, which included the following:

- Lack of maturity of the system of implementing the NCS. Lack of monitoring, evaluation especially in terms of resource allocation and administration.
- Encouraging learners to register scarce skills subjects such as Mathematics, Science and Technology. South Africa is ranked among the poor performing countries in these subjects when compared to other developing countries in the world.

The Chapel Hill-Carrboro City Schools (2001, p. 16) added that developmental programmes to capacitate the SMT members towards monitoring curriculum delivery would enhance the commitment by teachers to continuous improvement. In such schools, teachers take the ownership of their professional development with the aim of improving their performance. Programmes include training in subject content knowledge, assessment practices and quality assurance. Additional supporting programmes include training teachers to understand the NCS policy statement, conducting meetings and classroom support visits as required by the IQMS.

The teacher development policy dictates that all training programmes must aim to empower teachers to excel in their day-to-day work. It is evident from the analysis of learner performance that there are many content knowledge gaps that should be addressed by implementing school-based training programmes if learner performance is to improve (Department of Education, 2001, p. 20). Legislation dictates that all schools in South Africa must conduct official developmental appraisal for all teachers (Department of Education, 2000, p. 17). In my experience formal class visits are one form of appraisal, used by the staff development teams (SDT) to organise teacher development through developmental appraisal teams (DAT). SDTs initiate the developmental process

by organising classroom observations for each teacher (one announced and the other unannounced visit per teacher) to assess their classroom practice and decide what forms of development the school can provide to the teachers (Department of Education, 2000, p. 17). To ensure effective delivery of quality teaching, teacher observations are conducted under eight core criteria:

1. Curriculum development
2. Creation of learning environment
3. Lesson presentation and methodology
4. Classroom management
5. Learner assessment
6. Recording and analysis of data
7. Development of learning field competency
8. Professional development in the field of work and participation in professional bodies (Department of Education, 2000, p. 17).

The eight core criteria were developed to support the delivery of quality teaching and learning in the classrooms. The school curriculum committee organise informal class visits to identify teacher development needs which leads to the empowerment of teachers in curriculum delivery and enhance their abilities to implement continuous assessment strategies, establishment of a learner-centred classrooms, observing the effectiveness of group work, managing time and evaluating the learner's use of worksheets (Department of Education, 2000, p. 19). Classroom visits become more effective and developmental if teachers get feedback after each visit and such feedback to include both the positive aspects as well as highlighting areas of improvement. Hay (n.d) was of the view that transformational leaders have the potential to promote performance beyond expectation through charisma, individualised consideration, intellectual stimulation and inspirational motivation

2.2.4 Management Insight

2.2.4.1 Discourse of Policy and Administration

The ability to interpret and implement policy by SMT members can improve the quality of education in schools. The purpose of policy in schools is to afford learners equal opportunity to make the best of their capabilities. The SMT assumes the role of leading instructional leadership by providing strategic management and facilitating effective teaching and learning. Schools that acquired the section 21 status as outlined in the South African Schools Act (1994) have been given more responsibility and powers to govern and manage schools. SMT members play a bigger management role in making decisions about curriculum delivery in schools (Moloi, 2007, p. 466). This gave more management and governance responsibility to the SMT members and school governing bodies (SGBs) respectively.

The provincial performance review seminars, educations indabas have emphasised effective leadership and management as vital if schools are to be successful in providing good learning opportunities for learners. The guidelines on the duties of the school principals as outlined in the PAM (1999, p. 8) include the development of teacher development programmes and the participation of teachers in the appraisal with the aim of building their capacity to be competent in executing their duties. The PAM (1999, p. 9) further clarified the responsibilities of the Deputy Principal as the curriculum manager responsible to manage the school curriculum and pedagogy. Other duties of deputy principals include choosing LTSM for the school, coordinating the work of subject committees, time tabling and arranging educator development programmes. The responsibilities of the Education Specialist manage subjects in departments which would involve control; monitoring and support educators are to manage subjects in departments which involve control, monitoring and support for educators (PAM, 1999, p. 10).

2.2.4.2 Discourse of Practice

Effective leadership in schools can assist teachers connect their lives, their actions, focus their energies to the school's purpose, so that, that connection yields energy that will transform school into performing schools. The main challenge in poor performing schools is the lack of evidence that the SMT members managed curriculum, which impacts on learner performance. The Department of Education prioritised the in-service training of education specialists in an effort to enhance effective management of the curriculum (Mpumalanga Department of Education, 2009, p. 8). Schools set procedures and regulations to mediate the implementation and management of the school curriculum. In aspiring to effective curriculum management, managers of schools to provide instructional leadership by ensuring minimum standards for planning, design and the delivery learning programmes and formulate school improvement plans.

In my view the delivery of quality teaching and learning is possible when school managers put in place quality management systems, self-regulatory assessment procedures which enhance the auditing of the operations of the system and propose systematic reviews. Putting in place effective curriculum management systems in most rural schools is inhibited by lack of competency by education specialists as revealed by the school visit reports that indicated that education specialists were allocated subjects they never studied at tertiary institutions. This is a barrier to their abilities to undertake careful observations of teaching competencies so they make informed judgements about whether or not appropriate standards of teaching and learning are realised. Quality improvement requires the participation of all staff members (Oakland 2004, p. 17).

2.2.4.3 Discourse of Scholarship

The relevance of TQM in curriculum management is evident from the elements of TQM as outlined by Irwin cited in (van der Westhuizen, 2007, p. 289):

- Commitment of SMT members and the role of leadership
- Developing a vision for the school
- Teacher empowerment
- Management of staff
- Meeting the needs of customers
- Focus on teamwork
- Total involvement/everybody's participation
- Benchmarking
- Culture change and training

SMTs ensure that the content taught and assessed in the subjects offered in schools comply with policy. Diamond (1996) cited by Seaton and Boyd (2008, p. 116) suggest that when attempting to teach, a teacher makes a determination as to what will best facilitate the learning process for the individuals to be taught. Relevant learning content must be selected and presented in an interesting and meaningful way to enhance learner performance.

The Chapel Hill-Carrboro City schools (2001, p. 17) suggest that both the SMT in schools and district officials must be designers and implementers the curriculum. Strategies to manage the curriculum should include:

- Putting in place systems that will enhance the monitoring the delivery of the curriculum.
- Developing teachers to be in command of subject content.
- Analysing learner performance data.
- Implementing IQMS in all classrooms using tools.
- Conducting SMT and departmental meetings.
- Attending meetings with curriculum advisors.
- Ensuring that teachers participate in professional development growth processes.

- Conducting performance reviews and refining school improvement plans and address challenges in areas that need improvement.

2.2.4.4. Organisational culture

My understanding of effective teaching and learning in schools is that the principal and education specialist monitor and ensure that all aspects the curriculum are taught as well as monitoring learner assessment and undertaking quality assurance measures. Managing resources to support effective classroom instruction is prerequisite to improve the functioning and performance of schools. Taylor (n.d) defined organisational culture as the embodiment of the important elements that define the purpose of organisations namely:

- Schools exist to fulfill a purpose or goal that should presumably be worthwhile and also presumably valued by the community that the school serves.
- Schools can be known, in some sense, by the nature of their organisational form, the manner in which they are described, and by the manner in which their authority structure is defined.

Rossman et.al cited in van der Westhuizen (2007, p. 121) believe that organisational culture is the reflection of the culture in which teachers and learners live. Managing curriculum with the purpose to deliver quality teaching must be built within the organisational culture of these schools. According to Schein cited in van der Westhuizen (2007, p. 122) organisational culture relates to shared basic assumptions, beliefs, values and behaviours in a school. Outcomes-based education (OBE) is the teaching approach where teaching is learner centred and is not textbook-based but not content free and is rooted in cooperative learning in classrooms. I understand the role the SMT as curriculum managers to be to monitor the implementation of OBE as the teaching approach in the NCS curriculum with the view of ensuring the quality teaching and learning. The commitment of staff members to their work depends on the degree to which they identify with the school culture.

Teachers are deployed into departments as teams where they can work together to find solutions to problems. The culture of working as teams enabled teachers to understand their work by team planning, implementing and assessing what they achieved (Department of Education, 2000, p. 17), however the culture of teaching in some of the ten schools was found to be highly individualised, because teachers worked individually behind closed doors in egg-crate isolation (Christie, Buttler & Potterton, 2002, p. 26). Bason et.al (1994) cited by van der Westhuizen (2007, p. 121) noted the following points that defined the culture of a school:

- Characterised by certain structure
- Oriented towards aims and objectives
- Accustomed to follow prescribed methods to arrive at set goals
- Characterised by the continuity of events in the organisation e.g. recognising achievement

Schiller (n.d) believes that a group of people interacting over time for a specific purpose develop a shared sense of norms and expectations that influence the way they behave towards one another. Schiller (n.d) added that at the individual member level, culture affects the degree to which members feel invested in and appreciated by the organisation. What is frequently called “motivation” is a set of behaviors based on how committed employees feel about the organisation. In a connective culture, members feel highly motivated, whereas in a disconnected culture, members feel disengaged and unmotivated.

The schools that participated in this study are from rural communities. Ebolt (n.d) argued that international school culture should not be about turning a school building into a town center, although that might not be a bad idea. It should be about transforming the mindset of a school community, its staff, learners, and parents, from primarily dependent ways of thinking and acting, to foster greater interdependent thinking, collaborative behavior, and relational trust. Ebolt (n.d) added that the international school culture was based on an awareness of the interconnectedness and interdependence of the school administration, learners

and parents. Leadership, for example “shared leadership” should be about a school principal working collaboratively with staff, learners and parents.

2.2.5 Quality monitoring

2.2.5.1 Discourse of Policy and Administration

It is the responsibility of each school to set standards of performance guided by policy framework. Standards must be managed and monitored by management teams by assigning duties and tasks to teachers, which then form part of the contract between teachers and the school. Quality should be a measure of how well the duties and tasks are performed. Subject assessment guidelines guide assessment practices for individual subjects in the FET band. The guidelines should be used in conjunction with subject statements (DoE, 2005). The guidelines ensure quality in assessment and promote uniformity in assessment in the FET band countrywide.

The NCS policy requires the teacher to be the assessor. Teachers must be competent in assessment procedures, methods and tools (DoE, 2001, p. 1). Assessment and teaching are integrated in the NCS. The competency of SMT members can empower teachers in managing assessment processes in schools. Teachers must understand the purposes, types and methods of assessment, and must always provide helpful feedback to learners. The NCS is outcomes-based and assessment is continuous and involves the development of assessment tasks and use different types of assessment methods and tools.

In the FET band formal assessment is comprised of an annual programme of assessment tasks and informal assessment comprises of daily assessment tasks (DoE, 2005, p. 2). Assessment must be reliable and authentic. These principles clarify the ongoing school-based continuous assessment (CASS) which forms part of the requirements for the promotion of learners. The subject assessment guidelines (SAG) provide guidelines on the number of CASS activities for each subject. The assessment tasks must be quality assured by the SMT members in schools and cluster leaders and subject advisors do moderation on a quarterly

basis by. Depending on the subjects, CASS tasks include tests, examinations, projects, practical investigations and cases studies (MDoE, 2011, p. 3).

The provincial policy on assessment requires that some of the CASS tasks; like tests and examinations be set and moderated by district and provincial curriculum experts. Quarterly common assessment tasks are school-based or cluster-based. Informal assessment tasks must be monitored and quality assured by SMT members in their respective schools. These include class work and homework activities and tests. The analyses of these tasks enable teachers to identify areas that need to be emphasised in the syllabus and learners get regular feedback about their performance.

The National Policy on WSE (2000) evaluates the quality of teaching and how well it improves learner performance. The evaluation process also makes judgements on the quality of school-based teacher development as well as curriculum provision and availability of resources (2000, p. 10). The purpose of evaluation is to establish how the curriculum addresses the needs of learners and the community. Teachers as subject specialists select learning content that is relevant to their contexts as well as teaching methodology to make learning meaningful and interesting. They assess to collect data, analyse it and make interpretations to make decisions about the progress made by learners. Assessment is a critical element in the NCS. Instruments, assessment methods and media are used to collect assessment data. Teaching and assessment are integrated in the NCS.

Cooperative learning in the NCS should be about learners taking charge of their own learning, but all too often is not. The feedback they get from the ongoing assessment enable learners to keep check of their performance and make informed decisions about their progress. Regular feedback from assessment contributes towards effective teaching and is used to make decisions on promotion of learners in the FET band (MDoE, 2008, p. 2). Monitoring and moderation must be emphasised to check the adherence of assessment tasks to policy benchmarks and ensures the quality of assessment tasks (MDoE, 2006, p. 11).

2.2.5.2 Discourse of Practice

The in-depth analyses of grades 10-12 performances over the past academic years in Mpumalanga showed several trends that were greatly disturbing. The analysis of grade 12 results for the past five years (as indicated by table 1 in chapter 1) indicated that poor performance challenge mostly affects learners in rural schools. The Provincial Strategy for Learner Attainment, which aimed to enhance the quality of learner performance, did not yield any positive results. The district outreach programme reports revealed that one major contributing factor to poor learner performance was attributed to the non-functionality of SMTs hence this study seeks to establish how SSM can be used to capacitate SMT members to effectively manage curriculum to accelerate the provision of quality education in rural schools in the province.

The Mpumalanga department of education adopted a strategy of grouping schools into clusters for quality assurance and support. The purpose of clustering schools was to improve support for teachers with regard to specific subject content, assessment practices and moderation of assessment tasks. Clusters consist of groups of teachers who teach same subjects in the FET band, and they meet monthly to support one another and ensure that teachers are supported in their teaching approach and assessment. Clusters play an important role in school-based assessment and monitoring of CASS (MDoE, 2008, p. 1). The experiences by the participants were that the cluster concept could yield better results if it was supported by SMTs. Monitoring the quality of assessment tasks is the responsibility of the SMTs but clusters also play role by:

- providing teacher development opportunity;
- developing subject support for teachers;
- monitoring progress of projects/assignments/portfolio work;
- ensuring the standardisation of the moderation process on a continuous basis;
- building capacity; and
- developing the necessary support material for teachers and learners (DoE, 2008, p. 1)

The cluster policy requires clusters to meet regularly on a monthly basis to monitor and standardise the CASS items and their marking. Cluster meetings must be minuted and the minutes be submitted to curriculum advisors who compile district reports for the FET Curriculum sub-directorate. During the cluster meetings, cluster leaders and their colleagues check planning and assessment evidence in educators' portfolios, and the availability of learners' portfolios and assessment tasks in the portfolios. They also check the allocation of marks in relation to the assessment tool, check content coverage based on the learning programme, work schedule and pacesetters. As part of moderation they check the evidence of school-based moderation, marking of scripts, practical work, orals, projects and standardisation of items

The National Protocol for Recording and Reporting provides guidelines on the recording and reporting learner performances. It also guides schools with the management of assessment records. Recording and reporting tools include learner portfolios, teacher portfolios, report cards, recording sheets and composite schedules. The Mpumalanga department of education provided guidelines on the management of school-based assessment moderation and handling of computerised mark sheets for grade 12. Principals and education specialists ensure that formal tasks are moderated and that marks are correctly entered into the computerised mark sheets before they are combined with the final examination marks to constitute the promotion mark. In ensuring quality of all assessment tasks SMTs as the custodians of quality assurance, moderate all assessment tasks to ensure quality of the tasks. Assessment tasks are set in accordance with the level of academic development of each learner and must be fair to all learners and not compromise the set standards (Department of Education. 2011, P22).

2.2.5.3 Discourse of Scholarship.

Empowering SMT members will enable them to respond to challenging situations without recourse and create a no blame culture by making informed decisions that can help them achieve the set targets. My experience with developing and implementing programmes to empower SMT members are initiated and carefully planned by conducting curriculum management gap analysis to outline all

training needs. The most effective way to address the training needs identified is to engage SMT members in programmes that focus on building capacity in setting own goals, judging own performance and taking responsibility for performance. Being instructional leaders the SMTs identify with the ethos of their schools and take responsibility for the decisions they make.

In the NCS, learner achievement is measured by the demonstration of competence in skills, knowledge and values embedded in learning outcomes (LO's) and assessment standards (AS's) in subjects. LO's and AS's are outlined in the SAG which informs the annual assessment planning for each subject. Each subject has a certain number of formal assessment tasks that must be written per term, which must be quality assured by the SMT. Quality assurance measures the accuracy of the content that is assessed.

Total Quality Management (TQM) is mostly associated with business environments. A critical feature that emerges is the flexible nature of TQM as it can be adapted to specific educational contexts and culture. The major obstacles of the use of TQM in education, is failure of managers to acquaint themselves with the pre-requisites of TQM implementation. First, TQM in education, as elsewhere has to be led by the SMT. If senior managers in education institutions do not commit to TQM principles, commitment by their subordinates may not be guaranteed (AlNabbani, 2007, p. 108). According to Rowan (2003) cited by Danaher, Tayler and Arden (2007, p. 77) discourses that linked discussions about quality with the 'new managerialism,' that conceptualises quality in terms of compliance with standards, fitness for purpose for the fulfillment of customer needs and value for money.

The education specialists are responsible for ensuring that all assessment tasks adhere to the quality standards set by the school. Each task that is assessed must be analysed by the education specialist and judgements be made about the quality of assessment tasks. Schools should add value to learning experiences, which require regular team discussions and analysis of every significant processes and methods that affect outcomes and results (van der Westhuizen 2007, p. 311). Steyn as cited in van der Westhuizen (2007, p. 312) pointed out that baseline data must be collected for all the

quality indicators that the school intends to use to evaluate continuous improvement.

These include:

- Learners' tests and examination results
- Learners' attendance figures
- Staff attendance figures
- Parental involvement

Since the core business of a school is teaching and learning, every school needs to have in place some systems of measuring the achievement of learning outcomes by learners and analysing the results as a means of evaluating the performance of the school in providing effective teaching and learning (Clarke, 2007, p. 222). Quality is priority in the NCS as it ensures that the assessment tasks administered to learners will help them achieve beyond expectations (DoE, 2003, p. 3).

Clarke (2007, p. 207) viewed quality teaching as the ability to present learning content in a way that is meaningful and interesting, facilitated by teachers who identify teaching and learning resources and use the right methodology to convey knowledge to learners. Content coverage must be monitored by the SMT so that it complies with the requirements of the department of education (2012) that all content in each grade must be taught and assessed using relevant assessment methods and tools. My observation as I visited schools was that the factors that impact on quality teaching include mystery of content knowledge by teachers and the ability to select teaching methods coupled with the teachers' amount of teaching experience. The other aspect missing among teachers is the ability to ask learners higher order questions in the process of provoking higher order thinking skills and the use of learner assessment diagnostically to identify content knowledge gaps.

2.2.6 Managing human resources.

2.2.6.1 Discourse of practise

Quality education largely depends on school effectiveness. Optimal utilisation of human resources, on the other hand, is a prerequisite for school effectiveness (Heyns, 2000, p. 160). Gannon and Thronson (2004, p. 12) are of the opinion that the quality standards of practice for principals that have been developed provide a useful basis for school jurisdictions to be used to suit their needs in professional development, evaluation, and selection. The standards enhance the understanding of effective leadership and the type of leadership necessary to improve learner's learning. Scharmer (2004, p. 9) believes that the capacity building programmes for SMT members will enable them to re-create their contextual environments to help them perform well and differentiate beginners from masters in the teaching profession. Transformation in the education system means that schools become institutions that are democratic, inclusive, participatory and developmental (DoE, 2000, p. 2). Schools that bear these features develop cultures that enable them to provide quality education through sound management and leadership.

Poor performance by learners in rural schools raised questions about the capacity of SMT members to manage our education (Moloi, 2007, p. 464). District and provincial reports indicated that learning environment was collapsing in schools due to poor management of change of the curriculum from Nated 550 to the NCS. The Teacher Development Summit Declaration (2009, p. 1), noted that the historical background of the South African education system disadvantaged teachers from rural schools. Van der Westhuizen (2007, p. 247) pointed out that training (in-service training and re-training) of principals and teachers be prioritised to develop schools as organisations. According to Senge et.al (1999, p 32) organisational learning, can be achieved through the five disciplines, which emphasised the importance of individual and team learning to enhance lifelong learning. Senge (1999, p. 31) described personal mystery as a discipline that inspired individuals to create personal visions by creating coherent pictures of desired outcomes.

2.2.6.2. Discourse of scholarship

Guha et.al cited by Motwani, Pasad, and Tata (2005, p. 55) described the goal of education as a vehicle to produce positive outcomes by empowering learners with the capacity adapt and be efficient in responding to social and economic challenges. Freeman and Perez cited by Motwani, Pasad, and Tata (2005, p. 55) added that empowering learners means enabling them to make informed decisions when responding to challenges. The implication is that the organisational ability and performance of schools can improve; through individual learning which would eventually be followed by learning by the whole organisation (Yang, 2007, p. 88).

The word support generally refers to provision of assistance. The support services for schools in the Mpumalanga province include the wellness of learners, providing resources and staff development. The provincial and district offices provide support services at various levels; and may take different forms that include among others staff development, mentoring, learner support and parental support. Legislation, objectives, resource provision and support delivery structures informs the support provided to schools. My experience with the Mpumalanga department of education is that curriculum delivery is prioritised to achieve the set targets, therefore teacher development is focused on building the capacity in managing curriculum as well as teacher's mastery of subject content. The department acknowledged that support to teachers cannot be an event but a process that is to be sustained over time. Teacher participation in the support programmes is voluntary but teachers are always encouraged to participate because its priorities are not only to serve the system's needs but to address individual teacher development needs (MDoE, 2011, p. 19).

2.2.6.3. Team building and learning

Team building differs from creating teams because it is a philosophy of job design where employees engage in tasks as members of interdependent teams. It presents a wide range of activities presented by team building experts to schools to improve team performance. Team building experts engage participants in a variety of activities that range from simple bonding to complex

simulations and multi-day team building retreats to develop teams. Schrijnen (n.d) believes that if SMT members are to overcome the challenges of these times; they have to improve their relations. When they team up, they can create wonderful results. The insights, energy and action provided by colleagues empower them to understand the challenges of their lives and that of their colleagues. I used SSM to foster the understanding of the problem areas in the delivery of quality education which enabled the participants to develop intervention strategies that fostered organisational learning. Engaging in discussions and sharing good practises enabled SMTs to transform their thinking and mobilise their energies to demonstrate that the sum of their energies as teams are greater than that of individuals. Team building becomes effective if staff members work together and stay together as teams (Department of Education, 2000, p. 17).

Senge (2001, p. 5) believed that learning from practical realities can compel schools to learn how to create climates that encourage the cultivation of continual deep learning and empower those who rise to positions of authority. When teachers are promoted or appointed to schools, the SMT members puts them through carefully planned induction programmes which starts from the beginning of each year (Department of Education, 2003, p. 30). The principal appoints one SMT member or senior staff member to be the induction organiser. The induction organiser develops induction programmes at the beginning of each year and works closely with newly appointed teachers during the first term, and provides ongoing support for the rest of the first year (Department of Education, 2000, p. 30). During the induction meeting, newly appointed teachers are given information on and about the following:

- General information about the school
- A physical plan for the school
- A school year calendar and time table
- A copy of the school's prospectus
- Job descriptions of specific positions in the school
- and;
- The name of the mentor (Department of Education, 2000, p. 30)

Teachers working in teams add value to the provision of quality education through the contributions of individual teachers to solve problems. As such individual teachers take responsibility for their own growth and this translates into higher performance of teams and thus the organisation (Henley, 2008, p. 46).

2.2.6.4 Discourse of policy and administration

The teacher development policy aims to equip teachers with skills to improve their professional competence which can enhance their esteem to perform. The teaching profession is about life-long learning as teachers continue equipping themselves with skills to improve their professional practice after the completion of their tertiary studies (Department of Education, 2006, p. 4). The professional management school was delegated to the principal, supported by the SMT, but whenever a need arises, the principal may delegate certain functions including quality management matters to an appointee, or nominate one from the staff (WSE, 2000, p. 20). The WSE policy was introduced as a national system for evaluating the overall effectiveness and performance of schools by making judgments about the standard of teaching and learning to be achieved by the system. WSE processes ensure that schools comply with national and provincial policies (Mpumalanga Department of Education, 2011, p. 7).

The ELRC (2003, p. 1) defined the purpose of developmental appraisal (DA) as a programme that appraises teachers in ways that are transparent to identify areas of strengths and weaknesses. The outcome of this evaluation is used to draw up programmes for teacher development. Each school establishes a staff development team (SDT) that comprises of the principal, WSE coordinator, SMT members and post level one teachers (ELRC, 2003, p. 3). The responsibility of the SMT members is to finalise the teacher development programme and inform teachers about the planned in-service training (INSET).

Insufficient training for SMT members towards the implementation of the NCS resulted in the lack of understanding and misinterpretation of the NCS policy statement which impedes them from providing support to teachers in their respective departments (Dada et.al 2009, p. 58). A good command of the NCS brings long-lasting gains that can make a difference in the teaching practice and

ensure long term benefits towards providing quality education in each classroom. My personal view is that effective training of the SMTs puts more emphasis on equipping them with expertise in monitoring curriculum delivery through the effective use of curriculum management tools and activities which include effective planning, monitoring, time tabling; learning programme; work schedule and analysis of results. The interviews with SMT members in rural schools revealed that teachers and SMT members needed additional training in subject content and teaching methodologies (DoE 2006, p. 17).

2.3 Conclusion

The different views by other writers, researchers and scholars provided some understanding on how can effective curriculum management accelerate the provision of quality education. In chapter two I presented arguments postulated by these writers which provided clarity on curriculum development; teacher development and management of curriculum. Literature review broadened the understanding of the research questions, leading to new learning to empower SMT members with the expertise to manage curriculum. The discussion of the research findings was strengthened by the views of these expert writers and the scope of understanding the problem was enhanced. Managing curriculum has to ensure quality teaching which improves learner performance. In chapter three I introduce the systems approach to understand the curriculum management challenges in schools. The focus will be on the SSM and its relevance to the study.

CHAPTER 3

CRITICAL SYSTEMS PERSPECTIVE

3.1 Introduction

I identified the theoretical positions of both the interpretive system and functionalist approaches to management in a bid to understand them and establish if one or both of them can be used to build capacity for SMT members to understand the poor learner performance and management challenges in schools. I outlined the theoretical positions and approaches to identify the theoretical and ideological assumptions and core practical concerns. In this chapter I present SSM as the theoretical framework to map the research design and frame data collecting methods. I acknowledge that much work on this problem situation has been done by various authors through qualitative, quantitative and critical research approaches. I also acknowledge that different disciplines have privileged different paradigms and methodologies and designed specific methods and instruments to enhance curriculum management practices in schools.

3.2 Theoretical framework

The complexity of learner performance and curriculum management problems in schools warrants the use of the interpretive systems approach to map intervention strategies. The interpretive systems approach is often referred to as “soft systems thinking” because it allows the researcher to study the problem situation by encouraging participation by those affected by the problems. Jackson (2000, p.235) hinted that interactivists believe that learner performance and curriculum management problems in schools can be improved by what SMT members and stakeholders do to improve the quality of teaching. Interpretive systems approaches provide an environment that enable SMT members to project their views about challenges in schools because it accommodates multiple perceptions and contradicting views about reality. This study equipped school managers with skills to work successfully in pluralistic and dynamic school

environments. SMT members and teachers possess free will in any attempt to improve their professional practice to improve the quality of teaching.

Management problems in the schools identified for this study were defined as vague and unstructured and therefore unsuited for a functionalist approach that includes root metaphors of mechanisms which are inappropriate for this study. Schools are complex organisations that are characterised by teachers, SMT members, stakeholders, learners and parents who interact with one another every time. Teaching is about engagement between teachers with teachers and between teachers and learners and the behavior of these stakeholders cannot be predicted or explained in scientific terms.

SSM is interpretive and is therefore a relevant methodology to be used to understand and develop intervention strategies to the learner performance and curriculum management problems in schools. It does not offer final answers to problems but its cyclic nature fosters the understanding that organisational learning is an ongoing process. The “rich” picture and conceptual models simplify the contextual problems in schools; the models contribute to debates and getting different views from SMT members about the challenges and changes envisaged. Ten schools were identified from Sabie and Whitehazy circuits and I developed a programme to visit each school to share experiences with SMT members about the curriculum management challenges. I visited the schools in November 2011 at a time when schools were conducting the end of year examinations so that disruptions to teaching was minimised. I visited two schools per day and the visits took place between 11h00 to 13h00 and 14h00 to 16h00. In each case I explained the purpose of the visit; which was to create a discourse about the challenges resulting from poor performance by learners and the failure to manage curriculum which contributed to poor learner performance. I briefly presented reports by district officials, education conferences, performance review summits and the self-rating grid and SMT support questionnaire. This was a pre-

engagement with SMT members which would be followed by a five day session which was planned for the April 2012 holidays.

3.3 Discourse on curriculum management

Management's task is to bring all of the aspects of the school together, and to provide an environment in which teachers can teach and learners learn. The SMT builds a strong work ethic and a culture of learning. They provide instructional leadership and ensure that effective curriculum management systems are in place as well as putting in place accountability systems.

The pre-meeting discussions were instrumental in initiating discussions with SMTs about their day-to-day responsibilities of managing curriculum and improved team dynamics through successful leadership. I believe that providing instructional leadership is an important management aspect in any school, provided that it focuses on bringing out the best from teachers and ensures self development, positive communication, improved leadership skills and the ability to work closely together as a team to solve problems. Table 2 outlined the schedule of school visits to initiate debates and discussions that lead to the interventions in chapter 4. The ten schools had been initially visited in 2009, but there was a need to revisit them in 2011 due to the new developments and changes in the curriculum, which was the introduction of the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS). The discussions with SMT members were preceded by the following activities:

Activity 1: Self rating grid

The purpose of this grid was to enable participants to evaluate themselves on how they managed the six areas of curriculum management based on their experiences as SMT members. The ratings were from 1 to 5 where 1 was the lowest ranking and 5 the highest. Participants ranked themselves by putting a cross on the appropriate ranking. After ranking themselves, each SMT member gave account of their highest and lowest ranking. As they gave account of

themselves the other members of the SMT interrogated the presentations in a constructive manner.

AREA OF CURRICULUM MANAGEMENT	SELF-RATING				
	1	2	3	4	5
1 Monitoring the quality of assessment tasks					
2. Monitoring the quality of teaching and learning					
3.Facilitating school-based teacher development					
4.Providing feedback on control and monitoring					
5.SMT support by the circuit and district					
6.Curriculum planning and development					
7.Ability to work as team member					
8.Enforcing organisational Culture					

Activity 2 SMT support questions

The purpose of this activity was to get the feel of how much support was provided to each SMT member and what were their individual visions about curriculum support and management. Questions were asked randomly to each SMT member in the school visited. SMT members were required to give detailed account for their responses while other SMT members shared their views on the responses.

1. To what extent does your contribution in curriculum management focus on standards, fitness for purpose, fulfillment of customer needs and value for money?
2. What challenges have you encountered in your effort to manage curriculum?
3. Do you have any understanding of the root causes of ineffective learning and management challenges?
4. What is your opinion about the statement “poor learner performance can be attributed to incapacity of management”?
5. What support do you need to effectively perform your curriculum management duties?

The two activities initiated a constructive discourse as SMT members engaged with the responses provided by their fellow colleagues. I then notified them that this activity would be elaborated and be better understood when learning about SSM during the week of the 2nd to the 5th April 2012. The responses formed part of the discussions in chapter 4. Other discussions were based on my reports on the SMT support visits, provincial reports that included the Provincial Education Indaba, Operation Niyabonwa and performance review summits. These reports formed the background study during the intervention session in chapter 4. The following scheduled of school visits was developed for the discourse of curriculum management.

NAME OF SCHOOL	CIRCUIT	DATE
Siphumelele Secondary School	White Hazy	21 November 2011
Jerusalem Secondary School	White Hazy	21 November 2011
Lungisani Secondary School	White Hazy	22 November 2011
Bhekiswako Secondary School	White Hazy	22 November 2011
Memezile Secondary School	Sabie	23 November 2011
LM Kganane Secondary School	Sabie	23 November 2011
Kadishi Secondary School	Sabie	24 November 2011
Hlong Secondary School	Sabie	24 November 2011
Pilgrimsrest City Secondary School	Sabie	25 November 2011
Sekwai Secondary School	Sabie	28 November 2011

Table 2: schedule for self evaluation with SMT members

I cautioned the SMTs on the framework of SSM so that they could become familiar with them because the purpose of engaging them in this training was for them to fully understand SSM and use it to understand and solve management problems in their respective schools. Due to its participative nature, power struggles and deep-seated conflicts in schools could derail its focus especially if the real cause of poor performance and management problems were not properly delineated. Participants had differing views and beliefs on how to manage the school curriculum. Subjectivism and idealism can suppress views by other stakeholders in schools, which are dynamic institutions with structural conflicts and comprised of individuals with contradicting beliefs and cultures and

people who long for power. In some instances it was difficult to come to a consensus on ideal solutions to complex real-life situations although SSM is based on the idea that conflict can be resolved while maintaining neutrality during engagements.

SMTs strive to achieve the desired outcomes set by the department and to achieve these outcomes teachers have to teach the whole curriculum over a specified period and always demonstrate competence and confidence in the content of the subjects they teach. If the participants understand SSM as a problem solving tool they will be able to provide instructional leadership in their schools and will create environments where complex situations are better understood and dealt with. It is imperative that the SMTs possess an understanding of what constitute problem situations and have the capacity to develop intervention strategies.

Different personalities, values and beliefs of individual SMT members brought different perspectives and conflicting views on the attempts to address management challenges. A holistic approach to overcome challenges was necessary because the aspects perceived as problematic may be highly interrelated such that trying to address one aspect and neglecting another may prove fruitless. SSM facilitates organisational learning when the SMTs begin to see the bigger picture and develop a comprehensive understanding of the management and performance problems they encounter (Wikipedia, 2012, p.3). Poor performance by learners has been a challenge for the ten schools that participated in this study. Curriculum reports, izimbizo and performance review summits have attributed the challenges to the lack of instructional leadership by SMT members. I understand that SSM is interpretive and I used it to provide the theoretical framework that empowered SMT members with the framework to understand the problems in their schools improve curriculum delivery.

Developing, implementing and putting a curriculum in place are complex tasks that result in challenges in managing the school curriculum. Checkland developed the seven step approach that enabled SMT members to gain more understanding of the management problems in schools. The seven steps will be part of the SMT developmental programme in chapter 4.

The 7-Stage Approach of SSM

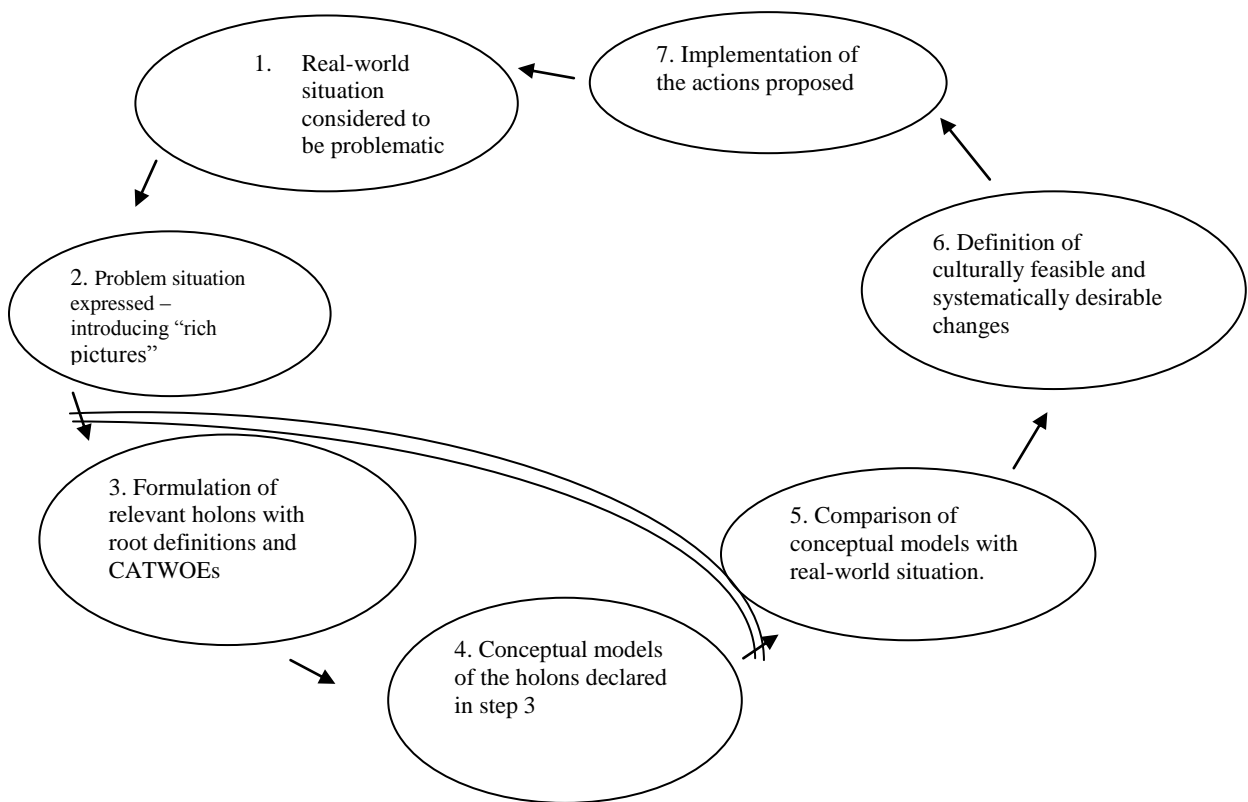


Fig 3.1 Fig 4.1 7-stage version of SSM (Sanchez and Mejia, 2008, p. 4)

3.5 Conclusion

In chapter 3 I have described why I chose an interpretive approach as the theoretical framework to initiate a discourse about the role of SMT members in managing curriculum in schools. SSM will empower participants to identify and understand the problems of poor performance in schools. I visited SMT members in their respective schools to get their views and experiences about the state of curriculum management challenges in their schools. Chapter 4 reports on how I used Checkland's seven steps to improve the capacity of SMT members in understanding the problems resulting from learner performance and management in schools. The intervention processes were initiated by visiting individual schools as outlined in the schedule of school visits, to engage in discussions with SMT members about their role of managing curriculum. Two interview activities, conference reports, performance review meetings and school visit reports were used to initiate the discussions.

CHAPTER 4

DISCOURSE ON CURRICULUM MANAGEMENT

4.1 Introduction

Chapter three I describes why I chose Checkland's soft systems methodology (SSM) to analyse and initiate discussions to enable SMT members to understand the curriculum management challenges in schools. I am convinced that learning takes place through the iterative process of using system concepts to reflect upon and debate perceptions of curriculum management in schools, taking action in the school context, and again reflecting on the happenings using system concepts. The Niyabonwa Indaba (MDoE, 2007, p. 5) recommended that all school principals, deputy principals and heads of departments from the poor-performing schools undergo intensive leadership and management training. This resolution was informed by the observation that the poor performance in poor-performing schools was as a result of inefficient management.

4.2 Analysis of data

The analysis of data was mainly interpretive. 37 subjects from ten schools comprising of principals, deputy principals and heads of departments responded to the self-rating grid and the SMT support questions. I grouped the participants into the red, blue, green and yellow and allocated the data collected to the groups. The allocation was as follows:

Red – Self rating grid, SMT support questions

Blue – SMT support visit reports

- 2011 Mpumalanga grade 12 results

Green – Niyabonwa Indaba report

Yellow – Planning and review meeting for FET curriculum report

- Investigation into internal assessment practices in Mpumalanga

Analysis of the self-rating grid was based on the frequency of the self rating by each participant e.g. number of participants with a score of 2 in a question. The

analysis of the SMT support questions was mainly based on the participants' feelings and experiences as curriculum managers. The other reports were interrogated to diagnose the depth of the management and performance problems in schools. These discussions were relevant to stage 1 to 3 of SSM where participants stated and expanded on the problems in rural schools.

I was received warmly by the principals of the ten schools and I explained the purpose of my visit, which was to collect data in preparation for our SSM workshop at Gloryhill EDC in April 2012. Participants opened up to share views and experiences on the problems in their schools. The limitation of this data collecting method was when participants got carried away with discussions and presented farfetched responses. The authenticity of the responses could not be verified because of time. I felt that some participants were not honest enough with their responses; they just responded for impressing me. I visited the schools in November 2011 when the schools were administering the yearend examinations and the participants were occupied with examination management.

4.3 Sharing of good practices

The initial intervention programme that was held on the 2nd to the 5th April 2012 at Gloryhill EDC provided a platform for SMT members to engage in the seven stage version of SSM. The intervention programme followed the school visit programme for the ten schools in November 2011. The purpose of the pre-visits was understand how much SMT members understood their roles as curriculum managers by interrogating school visit reports and resolutions taken in provincial and district conferences about the state of curriculum management in schools. Forty-one SMT members from ten poor and average performing schools in Sabie and Whitehazy circuits participated in the four day session. I explained SSM to the participants and explained its relevance as a problem solving tool in schools. SSM will enable SMTs to provide instructional leadership in rural schools because it will enable them to understand contextual problems and develop intervention strategies.

4.3.1 Day 1: Introducing SSM to Participants

Participants arrived at the venue for the day one activities. The scheduled time for the start of the day one programme was 8hrs, but some participants arrived between fifteen and twenty minutes late as they had problems in locating the venue. They were served with tea and the programme started at 9hrs. I welcomed all participants to the session and requested them to introduce themselves by stating their names and the names of their respective schools and circuits. They were given name tags to write their names. They signed the attendance register. The purpose of the session was to introduce the participants to the use of SSM to understand the curriculum management challenges and develop intervention strategies. I introduced SSM as outlined by Lester (2008) as follows:

Soft systems methodology (SSM) was developed by Peter Checkland and his colleagues at Lancaster University in the 1970s. It was designed to shape interventions in the problematic situations encountered in management, organisational and policy contexts, where there are often no straightforward 'problems' or easy 'solutions.' Though informed by systems engineering approaches, it breaks with them by recognising the central importance of perspective or world-view in social situations. It differs significantly from the 'systems science' approaches developed in the 1960s, and is more reflective of action research in its philosophy and approach.

The SSM Seven-stage Process

SSM is widely described as a seven-stage process, as follows:

1. Identifying the problematic situation
2. Researching the situation and building a 'rich picture'
(interpretive representation)
3. Selecting perspectives and building 'root definitions' (key processes that need to take place within the desired system)
4. Developing a conceptual model of the change system
5. Comparing the model with the real-world situation

6. Defining the changes to be implemented

7. Taking action.

The discussions about curriculum management gaps were initiated by discussing school visit reports by circuit managers, curriculum advisors and provincial conferences. The following reports were discussed:

4.3.2 Day 2 Description of the situation in schools

I welcomed the participants and we engaged in a reflection of the day 1 activities. The purpose of the session was to engage in further discussions about curriculum management activities and related problems situations in schools. As participants walked into the training venue, they were put into four groups using coloured cards (red, blue, green and yellow). Participants engaged in the following activities individually, as sub-groups and as the main group. Each group was allocated an activity using research and conference reports and the questionnaires and reported to the main group. Each group was given 60 minutes to do their respective tasks.

- **Discussions of the data collecting visits (Red Group)**

In chapter 3, I described how SMT members responded to two questionnaires and as we analysed their responses I found myself working with SMT members who had quite different experiences and attitudes. I provided highlights of the responses and initiated debates about their responses to the two curriculum management activities. I gave the red group the questionnaires that were completed during the visits in November 2011. The responses were summarised as follows:

Curriculum Management grid

1. Monitoring quality of assessment tasks

The average rating score for this question was 3. The majority of the schools relied on assessment tasks developed by the district. This disadvantaged teachers as they did not have the capacity to develop quality test question papers and class work and homework tasks. Participants acknowledged that they failed to respond to the quality assurance task which was about making judgments on the quality and results of assessment which aims to achieve the goals and targets of learner performance. They must ensure that assessment is fair, valid, reliable and practicable and conducted in line with assessment policy.

2. Monitoring the quality of teaching and learning

The average rating score was 2. Participants argued that due to work overloads they could not execute this task effectively. Most work overload is the result of too many subjects offered in their schools. Some participants raised a concern that the continued interference by unions impeded them from doing monitoring. Teachers viewed class visits and the demand for planning as punitive.

3. Facilitating School-based teacher development

The average rating score on this question was 1. The argument raised by the participants was that the task of teacher development was the responsibility of the curriculum section at the district. Their arguments then contradicted themselves as some participants felt that some curriculum advisors were not competent in their subjects of specialisation. I affirmed that their job descriptions as outlined in personnel and administrative measures (1999) do include teacher development. The response by the participants was that they did not have any experience of organising and facilitating teacher development programmes. Despite these shortcomings, participants were very keen to learn. What did make matters difficult is that some heads of departments manage subjects they did not study at tertiary institutions.

4. Providing feedback on control and monitoring

The average rating score was 2. There was consensus that teachers must be exposed to monitoring and control but this requires that feedback on findings and recommendations be given to teachers. The non-availability of monitoring programmes and monitoring tools made it difficult to effectively execute this task. The starting point would be to develop monitoring programmes and tools.

5. SMT support by the circuit and district

The average rating score was 3. Schools were supported by the district and circuit but the setback was that the monitoring of the implementation of recommendations was not done by the SMTs.

6. Curriculum planning and development.

The average rating score was 3. In some schools planning was done without monitoring the implementation of the plans. Reasons for not monitoring ranged from time constraints to non-availability of monitoring tools. The district and provincial offices did give monitoring tools to schools but participants felt that some of the tools were not user friendly as contextual factors and the dynamic nature of schools were not considered when they were developed.

As for curriculum development the common practice in all the schools was that schools did not make subject choices to suite the contextual needs of the communities where the schools exist but kept the subject combinations from the old curriculum. Subject combinations influence the career choices as learners proceed to tertiary institutions. Curriculum development is the vehicle to address the imbalances of the past. My recommendation to participants was that schools make subject choices that will address the scarce skills careers in the country's economy. Learners must be encouraged to choose subjects that were inaccessible in the previous education system to compete better in the job market. The strategy should also identify and address the various forms of bias which obstruct access and equity in provisioning of both human and physical resources. Curriculum redress has to include the skills development of teachers

in their specific fields of specialisation. I made this input because curriculum redress has been mentioned in strategic planning documents but no concrete plans have been developed to address these issues.

7. Ability to work a team members

The average rating score for this question was 4. The concept of working as teams was common in schools but participants felt that this was not formalised. Teams could add value to the delivery of quality teaching and learning if it could be formalised. The mutual feeling was that more information should be gathered and shared among the schools so that effective teams be established. My concluding remark was to outline the qualities that defined a team builder as a strong person who provides the substance that holds the team together in common purpose toward the right objective. In order for a team to progress from a group of strangers to a single cohesive unit, the leader should understand the process and dynamics required for this transformation. He or she should also know the appropriate leadership style to use during each stage of team development. The leader should also have an understanding of the different team players styles and how to capitalise on each at the proper time, for the problem at hand (Francis, 2007).

8. Enforcing organisational culture

The average rating score was 2. Things were done as they came. The idea of beliefs and values was never emphasised or formalised in schools.

SMT Support Question

1. To what extent does your contribution in curriculum management focus on standards, fitness for purpose, fulfillment of customer needs and value for money?

The average feeling by participants was that they were not sure if they really added value to their practice. This was so in view of the performance by learners in their schools. Schools did not standards to be adhered to; teaching was just going on. There were no accountability systems for teachers to account for poor

performance by learners. The closing remark by the participant who led the presentation was: “We are not sure if we have acquired the effective skills in dealing with specific challenges of our own schools to reach their own mission and objectives”.

2. What challenges have you encountered in your effort to manage curriculum?

The general consensus was that participants were not well equipped with skill and knowledge to effectively manage curriculum. Poor and lack of planning was viewed as a serious threat to effective management. Lack of cooperation from teachers who view monitoring as punitive was another stumbling block. The use of modern technology to teaching hampered progressive management. Almost half the participants were computer illiterate.

3. Do you have any understanding of the root causes ineffective learning and management challenges?

Participants indicated that management problems in schools were unstructured and complex, which made it very difficult to understand them. Curriculum management problems could not be isolated as the only factor that inhibits the delivery of quality teaching and learning. Participants raised other challenges that included the following:

- Lack of parental support in the education of their children. This was sighted as a major contributor to disciplinary problems in classrooms. Learners were demotivated and did not participate fully in group discussions; they did not do homework or study for tests and examinations. The level of readiness for learners for grade 8 in the FET band was also sighted as stumbling block to performance. FET schools claimed to be receiving learner who cannot read properly and cannot solve simple mathematics problems. Language proficiency was a challenge as many learners in rural schools did not have the command of English as it was the language of teaching and learning in many schools.

Teenage pregnancy posed threats to performance. Absenteeism was high during days for social grant payouts.

- Teachers were demotivated by the work conditions in schools. The level of teacher absenteeism was unacceptably high. In some schools teachers have been sick for long periods of time. There are unresolved labour relations cases that have not yet been finalised; while the teachers affected have been suspended or placed on paid leave.
- There are still inequalities in the provision of infrastructure between former model C schools and schools in rural areas. Schools requisitioned LTSM but it was neither delivered if not delivered very late.

These challenges were recognised but participants were made to understand that the focus of this study was on how effective curriculum management could enhance the delivery of quality teaching and learning.

4. What is your opinion about the statement “poor learner performance could be attributed to incapacity to manage”?

Participants concurred with the statement. One participant echoed that “Management utilises planning, organisational and communications skills. These skills are important in leadership also, but even more so are qualities such as integrity, honesty, courage, commitment, sincerity, passion, determination, compassion and sensitivity”. The presentations from the curriculum management grid and the SMT support questionnaire made thus far revealed that SMT members were not up to the management task, which could have undesired effects on learner performance.

5. What support do you need to effectively perform your duties?

“We need to be managers with the abilities to describe and analysing a problem, identify causes of a problem, develop creative options and choosing the best course of action, and implement and evaluate effective and efficiency of the decision”. Participants believed that if they would be experts in the use of SSM, they would become better

equipped to solve curriculum management problems that would subsequently enhance the delivery of quality education.

- **Sabie Circuit SMT support visit reports – 2010 and 2011 (Red Group)**

Copies of the SMT support and subject advisor's school visit reports were distributed to group members and they were requested to study them and comment on the findings and deviations from management practices. The analysis of the reports revealed that curriculum advisors' reports uncovered that there were serious challenges on monitoring by SMT members. The responsibility of curriculum advisors was to support curriculum delivery but their support could be effective if the SMT presented monitoring reports about individual teachers. The reports further revealed that poor quality and insufficient informal and formal assessment was given to learners. In most cases written work was not marked or controlled by teachers. The progress in subject content coverage was not monitored and this resulted in the scope of the year's work not being completed by teachers.

My (circuit manager) school visit reports revealed that curriculum management activities that included holding regular SMT and departmental meetings, programmes of monitoring the control of written work and supporting teachers through classroom visits were not common practice in schools. Some departments did not have subject policies while some presented poorly developed policies. Teachers could not be held accountable for being incompetent in classroom delivery because of the lack of subject policies. School did not put in place accountability systems to ensure competency in curriculum delivery by the SMT and teachers. It was evident that SMT members were not conversant with curriculum policies that guided on subject curriculum delivery, assessment practices and guidelines for the promotion of learners. The group concluded their presentation by indicating that effective management skills could help the SMT and teachers to improve their own effectiveness and efficiency in curriculum delivery.

- **Niyabonwa Indaba – 2007 (Green Group)**

The MEC for Education Mr. Masango Siphosezwe and the Head of Department Mr. M.R. Tywakadi (2007) commissioned Ayihlome Ifunde unit to investigate poor performance in schools, develop and implement strategies for improvement and to make recommendations to the HOD and the MEC on the intervention strategies to improve performance in these schools. The terms of reference included a broader look at the role of SMT members in monitoring curriculum delivery and the causes of poor performance by learners. The findings revealed that SMT members lacked the capacity to manage curriculum and assessment.

- **Planning and review meeting for FET curriculum – 2008 (Yellow Group)**

The planning and review meeting for FET curriculum reported on the 2007 grade 12 learner performances. It highlighted challenges that contributed to poor performance and suggested recommendations to improve the situation. Incapacity of SMT members to manage curriculum was identified as one of the factors that contributed to poor results.

- **An investigation into internal Assessment practices in Mpumalanga schools - 2011. (Yellow Group)**

In 2011 the MEC for education Mrs. Mhaule R commissioned an investigation into the internal assessment practices of schools. The terms of reference for the commission were (i) a thorough investigation into the assessment practices (alignment of assessment tasks to curricula requirements, early identification practices, and remedial support offered to learners, moderation practices at schools, circuits, districts and provincial levels); (ii) a detailed analysis of promotion practices in schools (adherence to policy, progression decisions and practices); (iii) investigation on processes and decisions informing retention of learners; (iv) examination of support given to schools by circuits and district on assessment; and (v) analysis of examination results over a five year period and

report emerging trends. The findings group shared their findings and recommendations with the participants and they also suggested a need to capacitate SMT members in leadership and curriculum management.

- **2011 Mpumalanga provincial results (Blue Group)**

The group presented the 2011 and 2012 provincial results which painted the following picture about the schools that participated in the study:

SABIE CIRCUIT			WHITEHAZY CIRCUIT		
School	% Performance		School	% Performance	
	2011	2012		2011	2012
Hlong	35.6	43.75	Siphumelele	53.1	44.4
LM Kganane	68.47	68.75	Bhekiswako	63.9	68.4
Makuke	54.4	56.66	Jerusalem	49.2	43.0
Memezile	82.5	47.25	Lungisani	73.8	92.6
Kadishi	50	52.08			
Sekwai	40.5	69.11			

Table 4.1 Analysis of grade 12 learner performance

Six of the ten schools performed below the provincial benchmark of 60% in 2011. The performance of schools that performed above 60% was never consistent over the past years. The analysis reports sighted poor management of the curriculum as a contributing factor to poor performance.

4.3.3 Day 3: Problem situation expressed

I introduced the concept 'rich picture' to the participants as the situation needed to be expressed in all its richness. I provided some guidelines as to what should be included in the 'rich picture' which would be structures, processes, climate, people, issues expressed by people and conflicts. I also gave the groups samples of rich pictures that were used by other researchers who used SSM. 'Rich pictures' enabled participants to get more clarity on the problem situation,

especially because it was easy to express some curriculum management problems using pictures in addition to presenting the problems in written form. The Groups then began to draw 'rich pictures' using marking pens and flip charts to express individual and collective views on the dynamics of the problem situation in detail. Groups presented their 'rich pictures' and some of them did not quite serve the purpose of summing up the problem situations in their schools. For purposes of empowering the whole group, participants decided to finalise this activity by working on one common 'rich picture' because the whole exercise was to learn more about the curriculum management challenges in schools. Groups summarised the curriculum management problems in their schools and illustrated relationships in the following 'rich picture'.

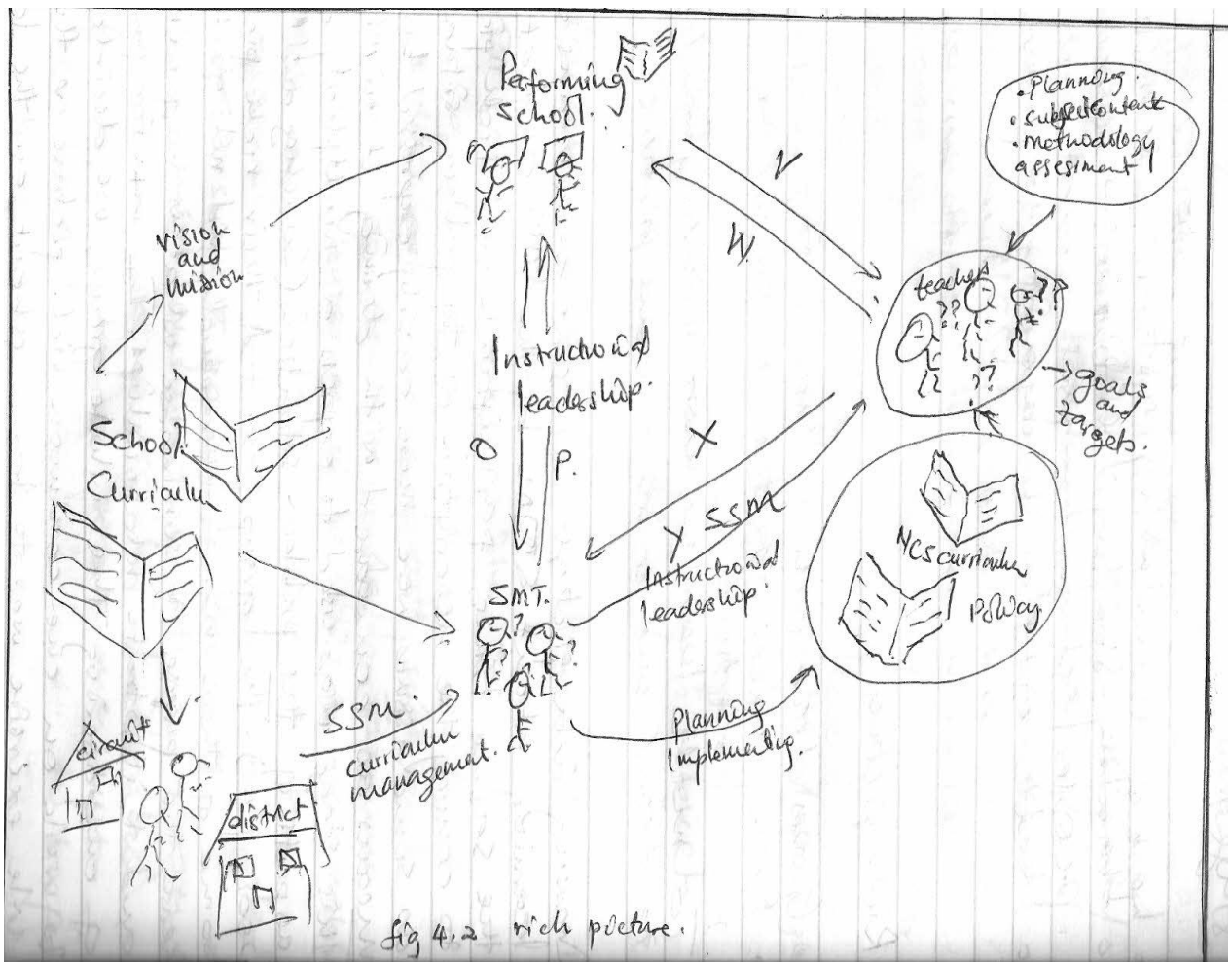


Fig 4.2 rich picture.

In fig 4.2 the participants pointed out that through a shared vision and mission statement for the school, the SMT would be able to develop and implement curricular that would to address the challenges and needs of the community. A well-managed curriculum would ensure that schools perform at expected standards. The inputs in the Niyabonwa Indaba (2007, p. 11), indicated that the SMT members in most of the underperforming schools were lacking in managerial capacity or skills. Circuit managers as immediate supervisors to school principals had to provide training for SMT members in managing curriculum (Y). SSM was effective in providing curriculum management capacity to SMT members. The relationship indicated by (X) would prevail when the district or circuit officials fail to provide instructional leadership and management to SMT members. Effective management of curriculum ensures that learner performance improves (W) and the opposite (V) would prevail if curriculum was poorly managed.

4.3.3.1 Formulation of relevant holons

The purpose formulating relevant holons (CATWOE) was to have the participants thinking deeply, creatively, and with a multidisciplinary perspective, about how things might operate in the future, but without a commitment to actually implement any of the changes. The use of holons facilitated a greater understanding of the problem situation on the part of curriculum managers so that they would understand the roles of each SMT member in ensuring effective management that would enhance the performance by learners in their schools.

Customers

I presented the wide-ranging report by the SA Institute of Race relations (SAIRR) (Sunday Times, 22 July 2012), which revealed that while thousands of teachers in state schools bunk their classes, many did not even understand their subjects or how to teach them. This was the situation in the schools that were part of this study because of failure by school managers to appoint the right people to teach

or manage subjects. SMT members and teachers would be the beneficiaries of empowerment from this study.

Actors

The participants identified the circuit manager, SMT members and teachers as people who could transform the system to support the performance by learners. My role as circuit manager is to visit schools for monitoring and support especially on the functionality of SMTs. Circuit managers and principals are at the forefront in education delivery, while district officials and the curriculum sub-directorate provide additional support. Participants alluded to the report by the Niyabonwa Indaba (2007) that indicated that SMT members in many underperforming schools were lacking managerial capacity or skills.

Transformation

The discussions revealed a need for SMT members to be capacitated in curriculum management to provide instructional leadership through proper planning and monitoring the delivery of the curriculum; with the idea of empowering teachers in providing quality teaching and assessment. My view is that confident and competent teachers in subject content knowledge, teaching methodology and assessment can provide quality lessons to benefit learners. Providing quality education does not only encourage personal development, it also offers the general growth of an entire community providing a place for people to interact, socialise, and unify societies. Principals as accounting personnel have a responsibility to ensure that a high standard of education is provided by schools.

Weltanschauung or Worldview

Teachers and SMT members viewed monitoring of their work as punitive measures, which made it difficult for those in management to support them. This problem was exacerbated by the lack of accountability systems in schools. Teachers and SMT members feared that accountability for poor work

performances could lead to people being charged for misconduct and be expelled from work. The belief that people are appointed to management positions because of their union or political affiliations also fueled the resistance of teachers to cooperate with the SMT. Cases have been mentioned where wrong appointments were made and such SMT members would fail to command leadership from their subordinates. In some schools SMT members were threatened with mass action from unions if they violate the rights of their members by monitoring their work.

Ownership

The core process in education is curriculum delivery and the strategic levers for curriculum delivery are INSET, education management and development (EMD) and enabling functions. Circuit managers facilitate curriculum delivery through support in various ways by ensuring that schools are managed in compliance with applicable legislation, regulations, ELRC resolutions and personnel administration measures. Circuit managers and SMT members are the drivers of the transformation processes. The ability of our education system to compete in an increasingly global economy depends on our ability to prepare both learners and educators for new or changing environments. This is in line with the mission in the corporate plan of the Department of Education to ensure that all South Africans receive flexible life-long learning education and training of high quality.

Environmental Constraints

Time was crucial in implementing SMT developmental programmes. The afternoons only provided for two hours only which would not be enough to accommodate all activities in the programmes. Holiday intervention programmes clashed with district and provincial programmes that would be taking place at the same time. This intervention session clashed with the Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statement (CAPS) workshops as SMT members and teachers attended this in-service training during the March holidays as CAPS was in the process of being implemented. The participants however agreed to

have the sessions on the 2nd to the 5th April 2012 Unions discouraged SMT members to attend intervention sessions during holidays as they were not going to be remunerated for attending. A stakeholder meeting was held and clarity about the purpose of study was given and they blessed it. There were not enough funds to support intervention initiatives for transport, training resources and catering. SGBs funded transport while sponsors provided funding for catering and training resources.

4.2.4 Day 4: Conceptual models

Participants did not have much experience on the development and use of conceptual models so I introduced the concept by developing descriptions, in system terms, of how the relevant activities of managing the school curriculum might ideally function. They used their curriculum management experiences and the knowledge they gained through individual and group interactions to develop conceptual models. The models consisted of curriculum activities that should be managed by the SMT but also provided material for debate about relevant human activity that suggested possible changes to remedy the problem situation. The activities were connected in a logical order, so that critical steps for each transformation could be identified. The following possible causes of the inability to manage curriculum were identified: planning, monitoring and support, control and developmental needs. After different groups made presented their models, the whole group then put together the model in fig 4.2:

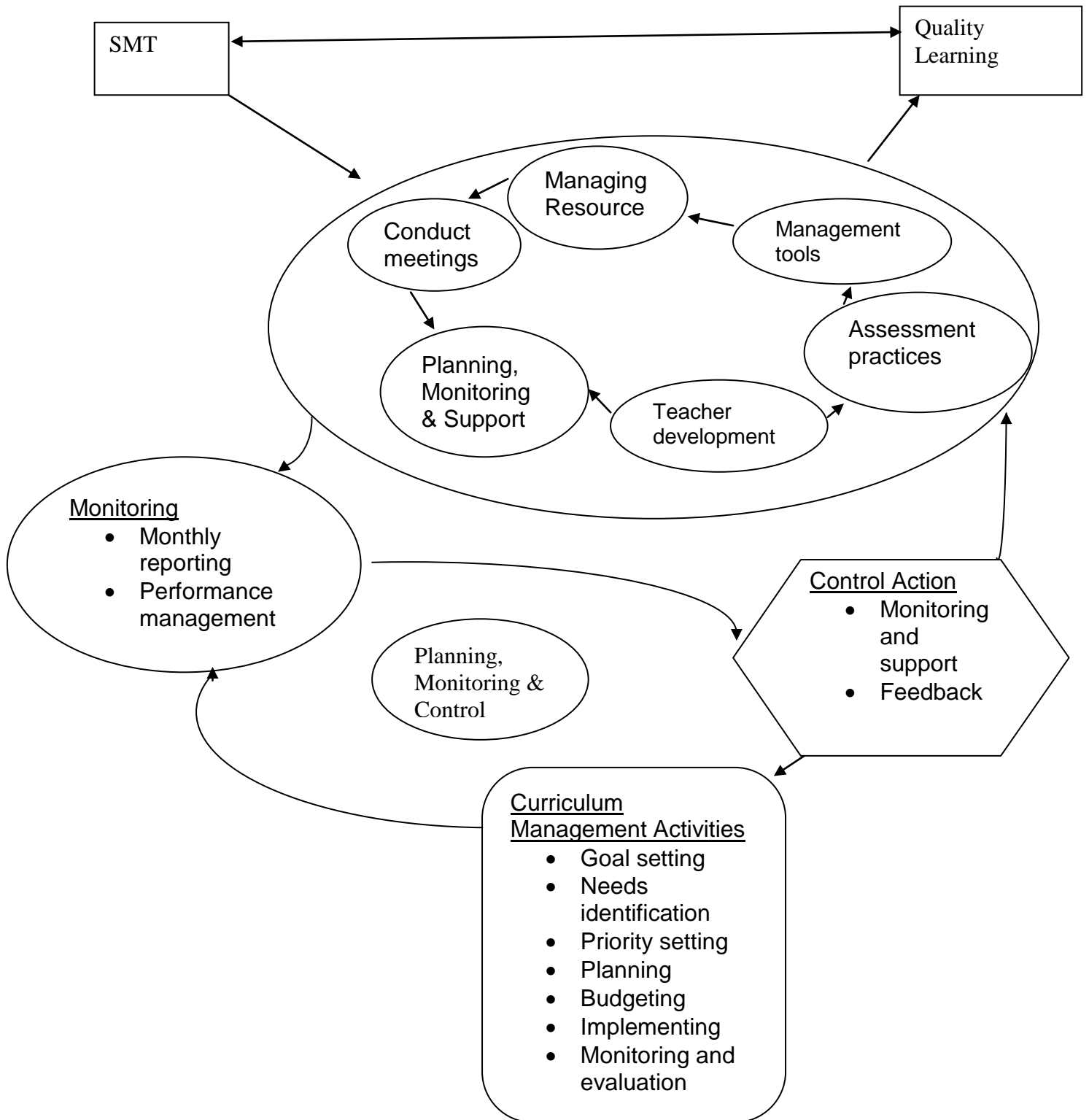


Fig 4.3 Conceptual model developed by the participants

4.3.4.1 Comparing the model with the situation in schools

The purpose of curriculum management is to ensure that all learners will get the most out of their education. The goal of curriculum management is for learners to use all the knowledge and skills they have learned to contribute to society in a meaningful and beneficial way. All stakeholders in any given school district contribute in ways that help to see to it that curriculum management is carried out, as best as possible.

The conceptual model emphasised that the SMT should play the following roles in managing curriculum:

- To be responsible for school curriculum and pedagogy, e.g. choice of textbooks, co-ordinating the work of subject committees and groups, timetabling, “INSET” and developmental programmes, and arranging teaching practice. They guide and supervise the work and performance of staff and, where necessary, discuss and write or countersign reports. For teacher development, they should participate in agreed school/educator appraisal processes in order to regularly review their professional practice with the aim of improving teaching, learning and management.
- In addition to the above mentioned tasks, education specialists or heads of departments (HODs) have a role to play as heads of subjects, learning area or phase. They jointly develop the policy for their respective departments and co-ordinate assessment, homework, written assignments of all the subjects in respective departments. They also provide and co-ordinate guidance on the latest ideas and approaches to the subject, methodology, techniques, evaluation and LTSM in their field, and effectively conveying these to the staff members concerned.

School managers exhibit competence in leadership drawing on the professional competencies of educators, build a sense of unity of purpose and reinforce their belief that teachers can make a difference. When and

where appropriate, authorities need to allocate authority and responsibility which would ensure the building of human resource capacity. My interpretation of the management and leadership responsibilities of SMT members is to guide and supervise the work and performance of staff and, where necessary, discuss and write or countersign reports.

4.3.4.2 Desirable and feasible changes

Besides the capacity building for SMT members in understanding the performance and management problems I noted that as leaders in the profession, we assumed that SMTs have the understanding of the concepts that define their job descriptions. These include concepts like planning, monitoring and development to name a few. The fact of the matter is that most of the participants were not acquainted with management concepts. For the participants to fully apply the concept “planning”, they have to be taken through a step-by-step development activity that would answer questions like “what steps and activities are involved”; “why plan”; “who should plan”; when to plan?” This engagement could be part of their induction.

However there was consensus that effective curriculum management is about focussing on improving the quality of teaching and educational outcomes and promoting the best thinking about teaching and learning. If what goes on in the classroom is key to learning, it is at this level that there have been the greatest failures in achieving performance outcomes in schools. I agree with education experts who viewed schools as learning organisations that focus on the central purpose of learning which comprises of teacher learning, organisational learning where the SMTs assume leadership roles in the learning processes.

The Niyabonwa Indaba attributed poor performance to poor or inefficient management. In cases where there was improvement in the management of the school, there was a notable improvement in learner performance.

Therefore it would be essential that principals, deputy principals and heads of departments undergo intensive management and leadership training (Mpumalanga Department of Education, 2007, p5)

4.3.4.3 Implementation

During my visits to the ten schools I administered self-rating grids and questionnaires with structured questions to individual SMT members. This was followed by a brief group discussion of their responses where they were required to motivate their responses and gave account for their ratings on the self-rating grid. The self-rating grid and the structured questions were further interrogated in the SMT intervention meeting at Glory Hill EDC that was organised from the 1st to 5th April 2012. The following challenges emanated from the discussions and required intervention:

- Planning – Developing annual curriculum management plans. This included monitoring mechanisms when the plans were implemented. SMT must be taken through step-by-step processes in planning and monitoring.
- Development of curriculum management instruments – SMT will be empowered so that they will be able to develop monitoring instruments. Teachers must participate in developing monitoring instruments and be appraised on the use of the instruments so that they take ownership of the instruments.
- Conducting In-service training programs for SMT members and teachers – intervention to focus on subject content enrichment workshops. The purpose of the four day session at Gloryhill EDC was to empower the SMTs to use SSM to understand management and performance problems in schools.
- Managing assessment programs – Empowered the SMTs in developing annual assessment programs for both formal and informal assessments. The engagement with SMTs equipped them with expertise to monitor the quality of assessment tasks and analyse the performance by learners and

give feedback on the learner performance. This will provide the basis for evaluating intervention programmes planned to improve performance by learners.

Circuit-based discussion groups were created and to hold monthly meetings which will discuss the curriculum management gaps identified. The expertise by circuit managers, teacher development and governance and FET curriculum sections is to be sourced in to provide support in the circuit meetings. The role to be played by circuit managers is to provide support in management and policy implementation while the teacher development and governance will share expertise in organising and conducting school-based in-service training. The FET section will empower SMTs with the skills to develop assessment programs, monitoring instruments and the ability to correctly interpret the analysis of learner performance.

4.4 Conclusion

Van der Westhuizen, Makhokolo, and Erasmus, cited by Moloji (2007, p. 270) pointed out that the training and development for SMT members provided during the previous education ministry was inadequate. Tsukudu and Taylor cited by Moloji (2007, p. 270) also conceded that that the training for principals in the early 1990s was inadequate. Principals are accountable for the performance of schools and therefore their role is to provide leadership to SMT members and teachers. I used the interpretive systems approach as the theoretical framework and SSM to initiate a discourse on how effective management of the curriculum could enhance the delivery of quality learning. Chapter 5 will elaborate on further SSM interventions by participants in their future meetings.

CHAPTER 5

Further learning

5.1 Introduction

I understand the purpose of curriculum management to be to help ensure that all learners get the most out of their education. The goal of curriculum management is for learners to use all the knowledge and skills they have learned to contribute to society in a meaningful and beneficial way. The district office contributes in ways that help to see to it that curriculum management is carried out, as best as possible. The interaction with participants in chapter 4 revealed some weaknesses by the provincial and district offices in our province.

5.2 Support by the department

I was involved in the recruitment processes as a departmental representative and my experience is that these processes are highly politicised. The unions use their political influence to get management positions for their district and branch leaders even if their preferred candidates do not have the experience to do the job. The SGBs recommend incompetent candidates for management posts and as they assume their positions they become redundant and frustrated.

Newly appointed SMT members must be taken through orientation programmes that provide a brief introduction to some of the most important legislation and policy documents in the field of education. If newly appointed SMTs are to settle well in schools, they must be taken through carefully planned induction programmes to help them learn about their new schools. It ensures that they learn about the values, ethos and procedures at the school. It also helps them settle down by letting them know what is expected of them. Unfortunately these two programmes have never been fully utilised by the district office or schools to help newly appointed SMTs settle down and be familiar with legislation. The district does offer induction programmes but only for a day or two.

When SMT members are appointed as curriculum managers, they must be supplied with resources. My experience is that in many rural schools deputy principals and heads of departments do not have offices. They work under very difficult circumstances as they share the same staffroom with their fellow post level one colleagues. One-on-one discussions with colleagues become difficult. The department as the employer is responsible for providing computers to each SMT member and also provides internet connectivity. Action research, communication and networking are possible with the internet. Most of them are over loaded with subjects and administrative responsibilities such that they do not have sufficient time to monitor and support teachers in their departments.

Successful organisations invest in their employees. Lack of ongoing training of SMTs predominates in the education sector, which casts serious doubts as to whether or not senior management actually does invest in the training of their management teams. The lack of in-service training for SMT members weakens their ability to effectively support curriculum delivery to ensure quality education. A few principals and deputy principals enrolled for the advanced certificate in leadership and management offered by tertiary institutions through the skills development programmes by the department of education. As circuit manager I conduct quarterly SMT functionality workshops for Sabie circuit. Curriculum management activities that include monitoring of teachers' work, assessment, quality teaching, analysing learner's performances and development of intervention strategies are discussed in these workshops. My workshops became more effective when I introduced SSM to the SMTs.

This work was carried out using SSM, therefore it is important to acknowledge that the purpose was not to find consensus about managing curriculum but to understand management and performance challenges in schools. This did not mean that it was not possible to find a consensus but that a true consensus with the participants who came from different backgrounds and differing experiences was difficult to achieve. The emphasis was to understand the conflicting worldviews held by the participants that counteracted consensus which was not

regretted because it was a great source of strong feelings, energy, motivation and creativity.

5.3. Introducing SSM to SMT members

The traditional way of conducting SMT workshops did not yield the desired outcomes. Information is merely passed on to SMT members without a thorough engagement on complex issues. The challenges in these schools cannot be explained using hard systems thinking because they are unstructured in nature. There was a consensus that there are many factors that contribute to poor performance in rural schools. SMT members did not give full account of the performance and management challenges in their schools because they never had thorough diagnostic debates about the challenges. As a circuit manager I have conducted quarterly performance review meetings with SMTs where they presented the learner performances from their respective schools. Not much account on poor performance was presented by the SMT members, except for blaming it on learners, parents and the standards of the examinations.

In the implementation stage (chapter 4) the participants planned to engage in further learning by organising themselves into clusters that will convene in monthly meetings to learn more about the use of SSM to understand the complex problems in their schools. The complexity and unstructured nature of the challenges identified in this study needed more time for proper understanding and intervention. Participants were overwhelmed by the strength of SSM that placed more emphasis on understanding the management problems in schools so that desired intervention are developed and corrective actions be put in place. In step 7 (taking action) the process took a two pronged approach; one was to share experiences in curriculum management problems as outlined in the discussion documents and the other was to introduce the participants to the use of SSM as a problem solving tool.

It was crucial that participants understand that SSM processes can become too constraint by organisational and other take for granted structures, leading to solutions that will solve immediate problems but leave the situation that give rise to the problems essentially unchanged. This situation can be fuelled if there is insufficient agreement about the changes needed and the nature of desired new state. Caution must be taken in stage 1 when they must first decide what it is they are actually exploring. At this stage they must not define the problem but assess the general area that interests them. If SMT members are not aware of this SSM critique, they may find themselves using mechanistically processes that substitute the intelligent investigation and good judgment.

5.4 Sharing good practices in managing curriculum

As I introduced SSM as a problem solving tool to the participants, participants shared good practices by engaging in discussions that unpacked curriculum reports, the curriculum management grid, the five SMT support questions, planning and performance review reports and conference reports. These discussion documents provided a framework on how effective management could improve the performance of schools in a bid to accelerate learner performance and ensure the provision of quality education in schools.

Jansen cited by Molo (2007. p17) pointed out that although the theories and models provided angles on how to construct learning organisations, in the context of South Africa, achieving the status of a learning school is difficult and complex, given the nature of the differing experiences of school leaders, teachers and learners. I share the same understanding with the writers who noted that the construction of new learning futures in rural schools is an ongoing challenge but could be an opportunity for contemporary teachers and learners alike, but the crucial element of that construction was making meaning by and for all participants in the education enterprise. The reality about making meaning depends in turn on the performance of practice – that is, on the regular, repeated enactment of situated learning and teaching in specific contexts and

environments that turn abstract and hypothetical ideas about education into experienced and lived realities (Danaher, Taylor and Arden, 2007. p74)

5.5 Conclusion.

SMT members must have the ability to direct, supervise, encourage, inspire, and co-ordinate, and in doing so facilitate action and guide change. They provide instructional leadership by developing their own leadership qualities and those of others. Management utilises planning, organisational and communications skills. These skills are important in leadership also, but even more so are qualities such as integrity, honesty, courage, commitment, sincerity, passion, determination, compassion and sensitivity.

SSM is a methodology that brought about improvement on how SMTs from the participating schools understand problems in their respective schools by engaging them in a learning cycle, which is ideally never-ending. School-based management will be challenged to translate changes and reform in the curriculum into plans and practices which provide a supportive environment at schools, and extend this support into the classroom. I used SSM to enable the participants to make comparisons between the world as it is (what actually happens in schools), and some models (theoretical framework) of the world as it might be. Out of this comparison a better understanding of the performance and management problems in rural schools arose, and some ideas for improvement were proposed.

References

1. AlNabbani, MB. (2007), Developing the Education System in the Sultanate of Oman through Implementing Total Quality Management: the Ministry of Education Central Headquarters – A Case Study. University of Glasgow.
2. Boal, KB and Schultz, PL. (2007), Storytelling, Time and Evolution: The Role of Strategic Leadership in complex adaptive systems. [Online] Available from: <http://www.sciencedirect.com>
3. Block G. (2006), Building Education beyond Crisis: Development Today Development Bank of South Africa (DBSA). [Online] Available from: <http://www.greameb@dbsa.org>
4. Chapel Hill-Carrboro City Schools. (2001), Curriculum Management Plan (Framework)
5. Clarke, A. (2007), Handbook of School Management, Cape Town, Kate MCCALLUM Publishers.
6. Christie P, Butler D and Potterton M. (2007), Report to the Minister of Education, Ministerial Committee: Schools that Work. Pretoria: Department of Education.
7. Coetzee, SA. (2006), The Educator as Leader, Manager and Administrator, Pretoria, UNISA Press.
8. Dr. Cox, G. (2010), Defining innovation: Using Soft Systems Methodology to Approach the Complexity of Innovation in Educational Technology. International Journal of Education and Development using Information and Communication Technology, Vol. 6, Issue 1, pp. 5-13.
9. Dada, F et.al. (2000), Report of C2005 Review Committee, Executive Summary, Pretoria.
10. Danaher, PA, Tyler, MA and Arden, CH. (2007), Curriculum Leadership and Technology in a Suite of Australian Further Education and Training Teacher Education Programmes: Making Meaning, Performing Practice and Constructing New Learning Futures. International Journal of Pedagogies and Learning, University of South Queensland, Australia.

11. Davis, S et.al. (2005), School Leadership Study, Developing Successful Principals, Review of Research, The Walker Foundation, Stanford Educational Leadership Institute.
12. Department of Education. (2006), An Addendum to the Policy Document, The National Senior Certificate: A qualification at Level 4 on the National Qualifications Framework (NQF), Regarding the National Protocol for Recording and Reporting (Grades R-12).
13. Department Education. (2001), Education Law and Policy Handbook.
14. Department of Education. (2008), Extract of Job Description for office-based Educators from Annexure A of Collective agreement 1 of 2008.
15. Department of Education. (2000), Government Gazette No. 21539. National Policy on Whole School Evaluation, Pretoria.
16. Department of Education. (2003), National Curriculum Statement Grades 10-12 (General), Seriti Printing (Pty) Ltd. Pretoria.
17. Department of Education. (2005), National Curriculum Statement Grades 10-12. Subject Assessment Guidelines, Physical Sciences, Pretoria
18. Department of Education (1996), National Education Policy Act No. 27 of 1996.
19. Department of Education. (2011), National Protocol for Assessment Grades R-12, Pretoria.
20. Department of Education. (2005), National Policy Framework for Teacher Education and Development in South Africa, Pretoria.
21. Department of Education. (2000), National Policy on Whole School Evaluation, Government Gazette No. 21539, Pretoria.
22. Department of Education. (2000), School Management Teams: Employment, Induction and Orientation of School-Based Educators, Pretoria.
23. Department of Education. (2000), School Management Teams: Instructional Leadership, Pretoria.
24. Department of Education. (2000), School Management Teams: Managing and Leading Schools, Pretoria.

25. Department of Education. (1996), South African Schools Act No. 84 of 1996.
26. Department of Education. (2009), Report of the Task Team for the Review of the Implementation of the National Curriculum Statement, Pretoria.
27. Dewey, J. (1997), 500 Word Summary of Dewey's "Experience & Education", Macmillan Publishers.
28. Du Preez, P. (2003), Effective Education Management Series. Module 1. Principles of Effective Education Management, Heinemann Publishers, Sandton.
29. Ebolt, CF. (n.d.), Building the Village that will raise our Children. [Online] Available from: <http://www.Elbot@dpsk12.org>
30. Education Labour Relations Council, Resolution 8 of 2003, Integrated Quality Management Systems for School-based Educators.
31. Ferreira, L. (2011), Education for better Life, The Sunday Independent, 25 September 2011.
32. Francis, M. (2007), Effective Management, Registered under GSCC UK.
33. Dr. Gannon, NC and Thronson, LJ. (2004), Quality Standards of Practice for School Principals, College of Alberta School Superintendents.
34. Groenewald, A. (2011), Leadership Platform, Moving SA's Leadership Legacy to the next Level, The Star: 19 January 2011
35. Gugushe, TS. (2009), Perceptions of Curriculum Innovation among Educators in South African Dental Schools – An Explorative Study, University of Stellenbosch.
36. Hay, I. (n.d.), Transformational Leadership, Characteristics and Criticisms, Flinders University.
37. Heyns, M. (2000), Quality Education: Review of Staff Induction in Schools, South African Journal of Education.
38. Hoadley, U. (2007), Teacher Education and Development in South Africa: A Research and Development Programme, HSRC.

39. Hussain S and Lomas A. (n.d.), Developing Local Talent through Workplace Learning. [Online] Available from: <http://www.Shabir.hussain@pdo.com> and <http://www.Adam.Lomas@Shell.com>.
40. Institute of race Relations (SARR). (2012), Crisis in the SA Education System. Sunday Times, July 2012
41. Jackson, J.C. (2000), Systems Approaches to Management. New York. Kluwer Academic/Plenum Publishers.
42. Jacobs, M Vakalisa, N and Gawe, N (Ed). (2007), Teaching-Learning Dynamics, a Participative Approach for OBE, Third Edition, Heinemann Publishers, Sandton.
43. Jansen JD, Curriculum Reform in South Africa: A Critical Analysis of Outcomes-based Education, Faculty of Education, University of Durban Westville, South Africa. E-mail: jjansen@pixie.udw.ac.za
44. Jorgensen, RD and McElyea, B. (n.d.), Organisational Success through Conversation, MPA Jorgensen Learning Center. [Online] Available from: <http://www.info@gojlc.com>
45. Keller, M. (2002), Learning Organisation in Health Care – From Metaphor to Model, Vol 6 No.2, Enigma Publishing, New Zealand.
46. Keller, M. (2005), Learning Organisations. Enigma Publishing, New Zealand.
47. Klinginismith, EN 2007, The Relative Impact of Principal Managerial, Instructional, and Transformational Leadership of Students Achievement in Missouri Middle Level Schools, University of Missouri-Columbia.
48. Labane, N. (2009), Planning and Managing Curriculum Implementation in Rural Areas, Nelson Mandela University.
49. Lankshear, C and Knobel, M. (2004), A Handbook for Teacher Research, from Design to Implementation, Bell and Bain Ltd, Glasgow.
50. Lester, S. (2008), Soft Systems Methodology.
51. Levy, DL. (2000), Applications and Limitations of Complexity Theory in Organisation Theory and Strategy, University of Massachusetts, Boston.

52. Dr. Martz, H. (n.d.), Strategy for the Coordination of Professional Development in Mpumalanga. Mpumalanga Department of Education.
53. McNamara, C. (2007), Thinking about Organisations as Systems, Authenticity Consulting LLC.
54. Moloi, K. (2007), An Overview of Education Management in South Africa, South African Journal of Education, Vol. 27 (3) 463-476
55. Moloi, K and Bush, T. (2007), An Overview of Education Management in South Africa, University of Johannesburg and University of Lincoln, MiE Journal Vol 20, Issue 5
56. Motwani, J Pasad, S and Tata, J. (2005), Research and Concepts, the Evolution of TQM, An Empirical Analysis using the Business Process Change Framework, The TQM Magazine. Vol 17 No. 1, p54-66. Emerald Group Publishing.
57. Mpumalanga Department of Education. (2011), Investigation into Internal Assessment Practices in Mpumalanga Schools: Research Commissioned by the Member of Executive Council for Education, Mrs. MR Mhaule.
58. Mpumalanga Department of Education. (2007), Niyabonwa Indaba. 2007, Ingwenyama Lodge, White River.
59. Mpumalanga Department of Education. (2009), NSC Grade 12 Examinations Results Analysis – 2008, Nelspruit.
60. Mpumalanga Department of Education. (2008), Planning and Review meeting: FET Curriculum, Nelspruit.
61. Mpumalanga Department of Education. (2011), Provincial results December 2011, Nelspruit.
62. Mpumalanga Department of Education. (2010-2011), School Visit Reports, Sabie Circuit.
63. National Planning Commission. (2011), National Development Plan.
64. Dr. Nieuwenhuis, J and Dr. Potvin, B. (2005), School Improvement Plans Initiative: Integrated Quality Management System: School-level Coordinated Professional Development, Mpumalanga Department of Education, Pretoria.

65. Personnel Administrative Measures. (1999), G.N. 222 of 1999 Published in Government Gazette No. 19767.
66. Planning Commission of SA. (2010), State of Education in SA. Sunday Independent, January 2011.
67. Oakland, JS. (2004), Total Quality Management: Text with Cases, Heinemann Publishers New York.
68. Sanchez, A. and Mejia, A. (2008), Learning to Support Learning Together: an Experience with the Soft Systems Methodology, Vol 16.
69. Scharmer, CO. (2007), Theory U: Leading from the Future as it Emerges, The Social Technology of Presencing, and the Society for Organisational Learning, Inc, Cambridge.
70. Schamer, CO. (2004), Leading Profound Innovation and Change by Presencing Emerging Futures, Massachusetts Institute of Technology.
71. Seaton, JF. and Boyd, M.(2008), The Effective Use of Simulations in Business Courses. Academy of Educational Leadership Journal, Volume 12, Number, 1, 107 - 118
72. Schiller, S. (n.d.), Building Connective Organisational Cultures. [Online] Available from: <http://www.sherry@schillercenter.org>
73. Senge, PM. (2001), Illuminating the Blind Spot: Leadership in the Context of Emerging Worlds. [Online] Available from: <http://www.dialogonleadership.org>.
74. Senge, PM et.al. (1999), The Dance of Change: The Challenges of Sustaining Momentum in Learning Organisations, Currency/Doubleday, New York.
75. St. Clair Dean, J. (2001), Coping with Curriculum Change in South African Schools Education and Professional Development, Leeds Metropolitan University, Leeds.
76. Stacey, RD. (2007), Strategic Management and Organisational Dynamics: The Challenges of Complexity, Prentice Hall Publishers New York.

77. Society for Organisational Learning. (2007), Theory U: Leading From the Future as it Emerges, Cambridge Publishers, MA
78. Swanepoel, S. (2008), The Perceptions of Teachers and School Principals of Each Other's Disposition towards Teacher Involvement in School Reform. South African School Journal of Education. Vol 28 No 1. Pretoria.
79. Taylor, RG. (n.d.), The Changing Organisational Landscape: The Role of Systems Thinking, Leadership Centre, University of KwaZulu-Natal.
80. Teacher Development Summit. (2009), Perfecting the art of Teaching. ELRC.
81. The Henley Executive MBA, 2008, Making Bold Advances: Management Today. [Online] Available from: <http://www.henleymc.ac.za>
82. Toch, T and Rothman, R. (2008), Fixing Teacher Evaluation, Academy of Education Leadership Journal. Vol. 11. 2008, Washington DC.
83. Van der Westhuizen, PC (Ed). (2007), Schools as Organisations, Van Schaik Publishers, Pretoria.
84. Dr. Vermeulen, LM. (1997), Curriculum 2005: Outcomes-Based Education and the Curriculum, A guide for Teachers, Students and Parents, Vanderbijlpark.
85. Wikipedia Encyclopedia. (2012), Soft systems methodology.
86. Yang, J. (2007), The Impact of Knowledge Sharing on Organisational Learning and Effectiveness, Journal of Knowledge Management, Vol. 11 No. 2, p83-90, Emerald Group Publishing Limited.

7. ANNEXURES

7.1. DATA COLLECTING INSTRUMENT

Activity 1: Self evaluation grid

The purpose of this grid was to enable participants to evaluate themselves on how they managed the six curriculum management tasks in their experience. Participants rated themselves between 1 and 5 where 1 is a lowest ranking and 5 the highest. Participants would rank themselves by putting a cross on the appropriate block.

CURRICULUM MANAGEMENT TASK	SELF-RATING				
	1	2	3	4	5
1. Monitoring the quality of assessment tasks					
2. Monitoring the quality of teaching and learning					
3. Facilitating school-based teacher development					
4. Providing feedback on control and monitoring					
5. SMT support by the circuit and district					
6. Curriculum planning and development					
7. Ability to work as a team member					
8. Enforcing organisational Culture					

Activity 2 SMT support questions

The purpose of this activity was to get the feel of how much support was provided to each SMT member and what were their individual visions about curriculum support and management. Questions were asked randomly to each SMT member in the school visited:

1. To what extent does your contribution to curriculum management focus on standards, fitness for purpose, fulfillment of customer needs and value for money?
2. What challenges have you encountered in your effort to manage curriculum?
3. Do you have any understanding of the root causes of ineffective learning and management challenges?
4. What is your opinion about the statement 'poor learner performance can be attributed to incapacity of management'?
5. What support do you need to effectively perform your curriculum management duties?

School copy



UNIVERSITY OF
KWAZULU-NATAL
INUYESI
YAKWAZULU-NATALI

Research Office, Govan Mbeki Centre
Westville Campus
Private Bag 54001
Westville, 6013
Tel No: +27 31 260 4582
Fax No: +27 31 260 4699
mobungu@ukzn.ac.za

12 May 2011

Mr D J Sambo (208515029)
Leadership Centre
Faculty of Management Studies
Westville Campus

Dear Mr Sambo

PROTOCOL REFERENCE NUMBER: HSS/0202/012M
PROJECT TITLE: The Acceleration of Quality Education In Rural Schools through Systemic Curriculum
Management: A Practitioner Research Perspective

In response to your application dated 9 May 2011, the Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee has considered the abovementioned application and the protocol has been granted FULL APPROVAL.

Any alteration/s to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form, Title of the Project, Location of the Study, Research Approach and Methods must be reviewed and approved through the amendment/modification prior to its implementation. If you have further queries, please quote the above reference number.
PLEASE NOTE: Research data should be securely stored in the school/department for a period of 5 years.

I take this opportunity of wishing you everything of the best with your study.

Yours faithfully

.....
Professor Steven Gillies (Chair)
HUMANITIES & SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

cc. Supervisor: Mr. S Hardman
cc. Mrs. C Hiddon

100 YEARS OF ACADEMIC EXCELLENCE
1910 - 2010
Founding Campuses: ■ Edgewood ■ Howard College ■ Pietermaritzburg ■ Westville
Medical School