

GOING BEYOND PERCEPTION: A CASE STUDY OF THREE  
TEACHER LEADERS IN A RURAL SECONDARY SCHOOL

BY

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## Declaration

**I declare, that unless stated in the text, this dissertation represents my own work. Quotes have been acknowledged; opinions expressed and conclusions arrived at are those of the author.**

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**(Author's signature)**

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**(Date)**

**I declare that this work was supervised by me and I support its' submission for examination.**

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**(Supervisor's signature)**

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**(Date)**

## Dedication

**This work is dedicated to my late parents Mavis Fikile and Boyi Paul Xulu for it was through their tireless contribution and prayers that I made it in life. I thank them for exposing me to educational opportunities. May their soul rest in peace.**

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**Last but not least, to God the Almighty for courage and strength He gave me.**

**“You are worthy to be praised”.**

## List of abbreviations

RTT	TASK TEAM REPORT ON EDUCATION AND MANAGEMENT
SBM	SCHOOL BASED MANAGEMENT
ACE	ADVANCED CERTIFICATE IN EDUCATION
HOD	HEAD OF DEPARTMENT
SMT	SCHOOL MANAGEMENT TEAM
ABET	ADULT BASIC EDUCATION AND TEACHING
IQMS	INTERGRATED QUALITY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM
SDT	SCHOOL DEVELOPMENT TEAM
SDG	SELF DEVELOPMENT GROUP
SPSS	STATISTICAL PACKAGE FOR THE SOCIAL SCIENCE
FGI	FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW
I	INTERVIEW
TL	TEACHER LEADER
Z	ZONE
NCS	NATIONAL CURRICULUM STATEMENT
SGB	SCHOOL GOVERNING BODY
SIP	SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT PLAN

## Abstract

Teacher leadership is a relatively new concept in the South African educational research context. It is in line with the expectation of the Department of Education which envisage that schools be managed effectively, professionally and democratically. The issues of democracy and the empowerment of ordinary teachers with leadership skills are postulated in the South African Schools' Act of (1996) and the Task Team Report on Education Management and Development, 1996.

The purpose of the study is to explore how teacher leadership is enacted in a rural secondary school in the deep rural area of Msinga in the Umzinyathi District in KwaZulu-Natal and to find out the enhancing factors and the barriers to this enactment. The research design followed a qualitative approach. A case study methodology was adopted with the case being a school and three teacher leaders as the units of analysis. Data were collected through questionnaires, focus group interviews, school and participant observation as well as a self-reflective journaling process. The research was informed by distributed leadership theory.

The findings revealed that in the case study school even though there are challenges like the lack of parental support, the school is conducive to the enactment of teacher leadership. All teacher leaders were found to be free to pursue their respective leadership initiatives. They were involved in leadership in the classroom and beyond (Grant, 2008) which involve zone 1, zone 2, zone 3 and zone 4. TL 1's activities were centered around organizing academic and non-academic events in the school, which indicated the teacher operating in the zone of the school (z 3). TL 2's leadership roles were found to be mainly within the classroom as well as in the zone of a teacher's activities involving continuing to teach and improve one's own teaching (z 1). TL 3's main area of operation was found to be in extra-mural activities, wherein his activities were found to be involving the children in the zone of the teacher's dealing with the children (z 2). The enactment of teacher leadership in a case study school was helped mainly by the School Management Team's willingness to offer a space for each and every individual teacher to exhibit his / her capabilities. Moreover, there was a sufficient space for all teachers to be part of a decision-making process.

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# **CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND TO STUDY**

## ***1.1 INTRODUCTION***

With the dawn of a democratic dispensation in 1994, South Africa emerged from an era of apartheid wherein our education system, among other things, served to perpetuate inequality among the racial groups. This was perfected through the promulgation of the Bantu Education Act of 1953, Extension of Universities Act of 1959, Coloured Persons Education Act of 1963, Indian Education Act of 1965, and the National Education Act of 1967, to mention just the few. These acts did not only inculcate a sense of inequality among the South African population but they also helped to entrench the strong hierarchical management structure within our school system, wherein a top-down approach was the order of the day in running the business of the school. During apartheid, a mentality prevailed that in each educational institution someone had to hold the power and rule from above. Within the school context, the control of power was vested in the person of the principal, who was tasked with the responsibility of implementing the rigid legislations which regulated the school. Under such circumstances, teachers were at the receiving end hence they were expected to carry out whatever instruction came from the authorities and implement them without any question or contribution.

The democratic government under the new dispensation has gone an extra mile in attempting to address the past mistakes in our education system. In a post apartheid era, which encompasses a period of reconstruction and change, there is a move towards making our schools operate with a democratic ethos, with flatter management structures and a process of self-governing (Department of Education, 1996). This has been achieved so far through the promulgation of the South African Schools' Act (1996) and in reports such as the Task Team Report on Education Management and Development (1996), which intends, at a policy level, to undo the traditional management practices in schools. Quite a number of South African research studies have reflected on the need for our school management to

embrace the new trends of management which are underpinned by democratic values (Moloi, 2002; Singh, 2007; Khumalo, 2008). I fully agree with the new concept about management which encompasses flatter management structures and self-governance within institutions such as schools which are expected to be underpinned by democratic practices. The bottom line is that the school principals ought to be introducing a democratic ethos within their schools where teachers will be empowered in their routine duties and be offered a space to exhibit their leadership skills and be allowed to be part of decision-making.

### ***1.2 MOVES TOWARDS A DEMOCRATIC FORM OF LEADERSHIP***

The calls for democratic management and leadership practices in our South African schools are taking centre stage. The policies underpinning our education system call for managers to change the culture and practice of schools by moving away from bureaucratic, top-down, autocratic management styles and begin to create a space for individual and organizational growth and development. This paradigm shift in management practice, which has been advocated in many of the policy documents, embraces the concept of teacher leadership. I argue that this concept will help South African education stakeholders to transform the hierarchical structure of school management to be flatter and self-governing (DoE, 1996). Teacher leadership, among other things, will enable “teachers to model methods of teaching, coach and mentor colleagues, study critically and thoughtfully various aspects of classroom life, develop curriculum and instructional materials, and strengthen relationships between school and home” (Howey, 1988, p.43).

Owing to the above argument about the new roles of a teacher, including that of a leader my position is that the bottom line is for all stakeholders involved in the education system to embrace the democratic ethos and invite a practice of inclusive leadership in schools. This can further be achieved through the accommodation of the concept of creating self managing schools in South Africa, in line with the provisions reflected in the Task Team Report on Education Management and Development of 1996. Caldwell and Spinks (1992) define a self-managing school as one where there is significant and consistent decentralization of authority. There must therefore be a greater engagement with regard to distributed and instructional leadership.

### ***1.3 MOTIVATION FOR THE STUDY***

As a teacher and also a principal in my school, I acknowledge the significance of empowering teachers with leadership skills and feel that there has to be a paradigm shift in management practice which was inculcated by the old apartheid order. I acknowledge the importance of the concept of teacher leadership and believe it should be allowed to develop for the benefit of our education system as a whole. I am of the view that this concept will help South African educational stakeholders to dispel the notion that leadership is confined only to formal position which, in most cases, is attributed to the principal. Teacher leadership, among other things, will further encourage other “colleagues to change, to do things they would not ordinarily consider without the influence of the leader” (Wasley, 1991 in Muijs and Harris, 2003, p. 82). My take is that, in allowing teacher leadership to flourish, the playing field will be leveled for every individual teacher to exhibit his/her leadership skills and the manner in which the schools are managed will be conducive to each individual teacher’s growth and development in all aspects of the teacher’s professional life.

My interest in this study is further underpinned by the desire for the elevation of ordinary educators (post level one) to leadership roles, which is reflected in South African Schools’ Act (1996), the Government Gazette of the Norms and Standards for Educators (2000) as well as the Task Team Report on Education Management and Development (1996), which challenges schools to review their management practice which have been top-down. There has been a call for a paradigm shift which will embrace the new approach to managing schools where management is “seen as an activity in which all members of educational organizations engage and should not be seen as the task of a few’ (DOE, 1996, p. 27). In line with this idea Gronn argues that leadership is more appropriately understood as “fluid and emergent, rather than as a fixed phenomenon” (2000, p. 324) which will result in “the abandonment of fixed leader-follower dualisms in favour of the possibility of multiple, emergent, task-focused roles” (2000, p. 325). It is incumbent upon the school /institution managers to provide unconditional space for each individual teacher to emerge as a leader in every respect.

My involvement with this study is further informed by the desire to address the gap between the ideals of policy and their actual implementation at school level. Post 1994 South Africa has provided us with educational policies which embrace democracy, participatory decision-making, social justice, inclusivity and gender equity. In particular the Task Team Report on Education Management Development, (1996) argues that “self-management must be accompanied by an internal devolution of power within the school – by giving teachers greater decision-making power – and in transformational leadership” (DoE, p. 54). These policies suggest schools comply with transformation which will see them moving from reflecting institutions that were tightly controlled and autocratically managed into democratic organizations in line with what Senge (1990) calls learning organizations.

My passion for this topic also emanates from the fact that the whole concept of teacher leadership is new in the South African educational context; therefore it is an area that is still under-researched and under-developed. A lot of research on the subject of teacher leadership has been carried out in countries like Canada, United States and the United Kingdom (see for example Wasley, 1991, Katzenmeyer and Moller, 2001; Muijs and Harris, 2003). The implication is that, in South Africa, there is still a literature gap in the subject of teacher leadership. Where research on teacher leadership exists in South Africa, it is still at a level of perception, where our academics reflect an interest in teacher leadership (see for example Mloi, 2002; Grant, 2006; Singh, 2007; Khumalo, 2008). My engagement with the study is also underpinned by the need for looking beyond perception regarding the concept of teacher leadership; hence my study is designed as a case of teacher leadership in action and tracks three teacher leaders in a school. Owing to the fact that the study explores teacher leaders’ reflections on their leadership, the study is contextualized within the interpretive paradigm. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007) describe the interpretive paradigm as an attempt to understand how people make sense of the contexts in which they live and work.

#### ***1.4 RESEARCH QUESTION***

Since it has been mentioned that the area of teacher leadership in the South African context is under researched and under developed, I set out to participate in a group research project which explored the topic of teacher leadership in action. My study was underpinned by the two broad questions:



- How is teacher leadership enacted in a rural KwaZulu-Natal secondary school?
- What factors promote or hinder this enactment?

### ***1.5 METHODOLOGY USED IN THIS RESEARCH***

The study was conducted in a rural secondary school in KwaZulu-Natal, where three teacher leaders were identified. The study was designed as a case study and used predominantly qualitative methods which, according to Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2000) are used when an in-depth study is required. The study was designed over a period of two terms, which was the 4<sup>th</sup> term of 2008 and the 1<sup>st</sup> term of 2009. Since the study was expected to be carried out for a long period, my own school seemed appropriate and convenient for the study, owing to the logistics and complications which would be expected had the study been conducted outside the school. The methods adopted included a focus group interview, individual interviews with teacher leaders, observation, self-reflective journaling and document analysis. These activities attached to the case study approach were in line with a case study being “a holistic research method that uses multiple sources of evidence to analyze or evaluate a specific phenomenon or instance” (Anderson and Arsenhault, 1998, p. 152). All the activities of data collection methods which were part of the case study, helped to inform a decision to opt for my school in carrying out my study.

My case was part of a group research project where I happened to be one of the eleven researchers. Most of the researchers involved in this project chose a case study to “strive to portray ‘what it is like’ to be in a particular situation, to catch the close reality and ‘thick description’ (Geertz 1973b) of participants’ lived experiences of thoughts about and feeling for situation” (Cohen *et al.* 2007, p. 254). This definition about the case study is corroborated by McDonald and Walker (1997), cited in Bassey, (1999) who argue that a case study is the examination of an instance in action. The question of choosing the research school was further underpinned by the fact that the study was loosely ethnographic if one defines ethnographic as examining “a single case in-depth through participant observation supported by interview” (Stenhouse, 1985, p. 50). As a group we, as the research team,

developed the research questions, the research design and the instruments together. However, the research was done independently where we each worked in our own case school. We also each analyzed our own data and wrote up our studies independently.

## **1.6 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

The theoretical framework of the study where the concept of teacher leadership is located is distributed leadership. Most of the current views of teacher leadership are centered within this theory. Bennett, Harvey, Wise, and Woods note that “distributed leadership is not something ‘done’ by an individual ‘to others’, rather it is an emergent property of a group or network of individuals in which group members pool their expertise” (2003, p. 3). By so doing distributed leadership is a form of collective agency incorporating the activities of many individuals in a school who work at mobilizing and guiding other teachers in the process of instructional change (Spillane *et al.*, 2001). On the other hand Hopkins and Jackson (2002) suggest that it is where “leadership and organizational growth collide and by definition, it is dispersed or distributed” (p. 99).

Some articles have endeavoured to reflect on how teacher leadership impacts on the development of individuals within the school environment. Day and Harris (2002) observe that recent assessment of the leadership role of the principal implies that giving others real responsibility and developing others in the best possible way of the organization to move forward. A similar view is expressed by Sergiovanni (1998) who believes that “the required leaders ought to focus on the relationships among individuals within a school and the promotion of pedagogical leadership which places an emphasis upon the development of the school through shared purpose and the development of others” (p. 98). Lambert (1998) suggests that leadership is a shared and collective endeavour that engages all teachers within the school. Leightwood and Reil (2003) note that “research suggests that teacher leaders can help other teachers to embrace goals, to understand the changes that are needed to strengthen teaching and learning and to work towards improvement” (p. 3). In summary teacher leadership impacts on the professional development of others and teacher leaders are able to capacitate others on the issues of leadership.

In addition, I adopt three characterizations of distributed leadership offered by Gunter (2005). She argues that leadership is currently, in research, being characterized variously as authorized, dispersed and democratic (ibid, p. 51). The idea of associating distributed leadership with democracy can also be deduced from Astin and Astin who argue that the value ends of leadership should be “to enhance equity, social justice, and the quality of life; to expand access and opportunity; to encourage respect for difference and diversity and to strengthen democracy.....”(2000, p. 11).

Harris and Spillane, argue that “a distributed model of leadership focuses upon interactions, rather than actions, in formal and informal roles” (2008, p. 31). The distributed leadership theory is underpinned by the whole concept of democracy. This is reflected by Gunter where she argues that “democratic leadership opens up possibilities for leading teachers because it widens their gaze from school as an organization to the wider role of the school as a public institution with a democracy” (2005, p.51).

### ***1.7 LAYOUT OF THE STUDY***

This section serves to outline the chapters of the dissertation in summary form. This will help the reader to develop an understanding of the whole study. The current chapter serves to introduce and discuss the background of the study. The aim is to provide an outline for the reader about the whole study and research activities which underpin the dissertation. Chapter two constitutes the literature review wherein literature dealing with leadership and management are reviewed with the intention of establishing solid ground from which the concept of teacher leadership emerges. This chapter also explores the theory of distributed leadership. Chapter three presents the research design and methodology. In this chapter I present and explain the aim of the study, the research questions, and the context of the school where the research was conducted as well as methods used to collect data. Chapter Four is about the discussion of findings from the collected data. The dissertation ends with Chapter Five which consists of the conclusion, reflections and recommendations.

## **CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW**

### ***2.1 INTRODUCTION***

The promotion of the concept of teacher leadership is largely determined by the opportunities and the threats existing at a school, the surrounding environment as well as the political climate of a country in which the school operates. Teacher leadership refers to “teacher taking up informal and formal leader roles in the classroom and beyond into areas of whole school development and community involvement” (Grant, 2005, p.44). Through this literature review the initial purpose will be to unpack the concepts of leadership and management with the intention of establishing the ground from which the concept of teacher leadership can emerge.

The chapter also unpacks the concept of teacher leadership by drawing from the different definitions offered by the different authors. It further explores how teacher leadership is enacted in schools, what factors enhance or hinder this enactment as well as the role played by teacher leaders in schools. In exploring teacher leadership, distributive leadership theory as the conceptual framework for the dissertation is presented and scrutinized which will assist when I unpack the concept of teacher leadership later on in the chapter.

### ***2.2 LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT***

The concepts of leadership and management must be scrutinized in order to locate where the concept of teacher leadership can emerge. Traditionally, leadership and management have been understood within a top-down approach, more especially in the South African context. Grant (2005) alludes to the fact that, in the pre-democratic South Africa, leadership was perceived as the prerogative of an individual in a formal position of power, the head of school. The traditional sense of leadership is also evident in the work of Troen and Boles (1994) in the US context where they refer to the hierarchical nature of public schools as being based on the 19<sup>th</sup> century industrial model, with the adversarial relationship of administration as management and teachers as labour. The traditional approach to leadership can further be detected in the work of Grant (2008) who in the South African context, refers

to the concept of leadership being “commonly equated with headship and often seen as the domain of the male” (p.2).

The traditional approach to leadership and management is sometimes associated with gender. The notion of associating gender with leadership is based on the claim that leadership is informed by the gender of an individual. This is evident in Coleman (2005) who reports some views which claim that, “sometimes male leaders have a strong ability and are brave and act quickly and are wise, female leaders are reluctant” (p.12). The perception that males, rather than females, can lead is further evident in the study conducted by Grant (2005). All these traditional views on leadership and management have contributed in one way or another in perpetuating the notion that leadership is an activity of a chosen individual.

International and South African literature calls for a paradigm shift from the traditional approach of leadership to more inclusive forms of leadership. The new approach to leadership and management is evident in the report of the Task Team on Education Management Development (DoE, 1996). The report advocates a ‘new’ approach to management. Thurlow (2003) expresses the view that the core purpose of education management is to facilitate effective learning through effective teaching. Thurlow (ibid) further argues that the process of management is concerned with the transformation of schools so that effective learning may take place.

The concepts of leadership and management differ in the sense that leadership is about moving forward, and having a sense of direction, whereas management is about balance and making sure that the school functions properly and achieves its vision (Davidoff and Lazarus, 1997). In a related sense, West-Burnham (1992) distinguishes between leadership, as being concerned with values, vision and mission; management as being concerned with execution, planning, organizing and deploying. Similarly, Louis and Miles (1990, cited in Fullan 1991, p.157-158) refer to leadership as relating to “mission, direction, inspiration; whereas management involves designing and carrying out plans, getting things done, working effectively with people”. Furthermore, Cuban (1998) cited in Bush (2007, p.392)

reveals that “leadership is linked with change while management is seen as a maintenance activity”.

The difference between leadership and management is further illustrated in Law and Glover (2000, cited in Coleman, 2005) and Gronn (1999). Leadership is viewed as an aspect of management in Glover, whereas leadership is viewed as a qualitatively different function from both management and administration in Gronn (1999). My take on the differences between management and leadership is that they are both required on a daily basis for the proper management of the school. Proper understanding of the difference between leadership and management assists an individual to be clear as to when each of these concepts is required in the day-to-day operations of the school. This is properly illustrated in Bush (2007) who links leadership to values or purpose while management relates to implementation or technical issues.

Regarding the concept of leadership, Hoy and Hoy (2003) argue that the responsibility for leadership in instruction should not rest with the principal alone but should emerge freely from both the principal and teachers. Leadership, according to Davidoff and Lazarus (1997, p. 66) should be “visionary, looking towards the future, and nudging people within the organization to be alert and awake to the challenges”. Davidoff and Lazarus (1997) further argue that being a good leader means making sure that all people in your organization can share your vision, or build upon it, challenge it and make it their own. This is in line with participative leadership discussed in Coleman (2005), wherein this style of leadership is said to be focusing on the sharing of decision-making.

Hopkins, Ainscow and West (1994) reflect on management as being about holding the school, establishing certainty, confidence and security, and allowing for rest and reflection. They also argue that relevant management issues involve among other things, system management i.e. ensuring the relevant structures and procedures are in place and function effectively. They further address the issues of time management i.e. prioritizing tasks, setting time-frames and keeping to them, using time productively (Hopkins et al., 1994). Day and Harris (2002) also reflect the concept of leadership and management through their

reflection on transformational leadership. Leadership and management are “concerned with exploring conventional relationships and organizational understandings through involvement and participation” (Day and Harris, 2002, p.958).

The concepts of leadership and management are also consistent with the issue of the personal management of change. Personal management of change is a prerequisite for anyone who is expected to embrace the concept of teacher leadership, especially those in the formal leadership positions. Morris (1993) feels that change can only work when implemented by those who are likely to resist it as well as those who embrace it. Similarly Fullan and Miles (1992) are explicit about the prerequisite for implementing change. They feel that change requires skills, capacity, commitment, motivation, beliefs and insights, and discretionary judgment on the spot.

### ***2.3 LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT ON SCHOOL CULTURE***

Some literature endeavours to outline the role played by the culture of the school in leadership and management. Research indicates that effective implementation of leadership and management is influenced by the culture of the school and can help to accommodate the concept of teacher leadership. In defining culture, Deal and Kennedy (1983) perceive culture as the way a school does things. They further see it as being elusive and hard to capture. On the other hand Schein (1985) defines culture as being “observed in different behaviour regularities, including language, rituals, norms and values, also the climate conveyed in an organization” (p. 25).

The concepts of leadership and management can be further interrogated through the investigation of the factors that influence culture. Stoll and Fink (1996) argue that schools are shaped by their history, context and the people within them. They further allude to external political and economic forces and national or local educational policies as being influential to the school’s culture. Furthermore, Bolman and Deal (1991) argue that culture is both a product and a process. As a product, “it accumulates the wisdom of past staff, as a process it is renewed and recreated as new staff are taught the culture of the school”

(Boleman and Deal, 1991, p. 82). All these theories about the culture of the school can help to strategically position the concept of leadership and management for the benefit of all the stakeholders within the school. This is corroborated in Stoll and Fink (1996) wherein the ten cultural norms are linked with successful school improvement. “Shared goals” has been mentioned as one of the cultural norms. The bottom line is the central role a leader is expected to play in the establishment of a culture of staff and student improvement.

Leaders ought to be unearthed, owing to the fact that leadership is a scarce resource. This can be attained through the implementation of the training programme proposed by Bush and Jackson (2002, cited in Colman, 2005) in the UK context. They believe that training programmes should involve the acknowledgement that leadership is not confined to the principal alone. It is also encouraging that in South African context, the Advanced Certificate in Education (ACE) in school leadership aims to do a similar job. A similar view is expressed in Barth (1990) who argues that teachers and heads in schools ought to be trained to display the desirable traits of their counterparts in high-achieving schools, which will enhance the performance of their pupils. Having tackled the concepts of leadership and management, the focus now will turn to the concept of teacher leadership.

## ***2.4 TEACHER LEADERSHIP***

Owing to the fact that the concept of teacher leadership did not originate in South Africa, it is important to first reflect on the definitions of teacher leadership provided in the international literature. Muijs and Harris (2003) reflect on the fact that the definitions provided by the international literature on teacher leadership are overlapping and competing. Wasley (1991) in Muijs and Harris (2003, p.438) defines teacher leadership as the "ability to encourage other colleagues to change, to do things they wouldn't ordinarily consider without the influence of the leader". In a meeting of teachers of the year in 2001 from six states in America, the facilitator requested that this well respected group build up their own definition of teacher leadership. After carefully considering those definitions they came up with this definition “teachers who are leaders lead within and beyond the classroom, identify with and contribute to a community of teacher learners and leaders and influence others towards



improved educational practices’’ (Katzernmeyer and Moller, 2001, p. 147). Also in the US context, Lambert (1998) defines teacher leadership for school capacity building as broad-based, skillful involvement in the work of leadership.

Some South African researchers have taken a keen interest in the concept of teacher leadership. Different researchers have endeavoured to examine the concept within the South African context as a developing country. However, the whole concept of teacher leadership in South Africa is still at a level of description and perception. It is an under developed field of study. Some quantitative surveys have been undertaken (Khumalo, 2008). Small qualitative studies have also been undertaken (see Grant, 2005; Grant, 2006; Singh, 2007; Ntuzela, 2008). What ought to be done in South Africa is research that looks beyond description and perceptions to contexts where teacher leadership is studied, as this study intends.

In defining teacher leadership, Grant (2005) sees the role of a teacher leader as being beyond a managerial position: “teacher leadership implies a form of leadership beyond headship or formal position’’ (p.45). According to one tutor in Grant’s study: “A teacher leader is someone who is aware of the demands made by the changing South African situation on the schools to change’’ (Grant, 2006, p.522). Grant (2006) highlights the importance of understanding teacher leadership within the context and legacy of South Africa’s Apartheid and colonial past. According to Grant (2006) educational leadership, especially during the apartheid era was often equated with headship and understood in relation to formal position, status and authority. This is a confirmation of the role which the political climate can play in determining the day to day leadership practices of the school.

In contrast, I argue that the whole concept of teacher leadership ought to be informed by a proper understanding of the change process. Change is the process of making something different and, as a result, it needs to be adopted along the concept of innovation. Bishop (1986) defines innovation as “a process, a continuous and complex negotiation between people involved in establishing new ideas and practice’’ (p.6). This also applies to the concept teacher leadership which has to be embedded within an interaction between a leader

and the followers. On the other hand Fullan (2001) defines innovation as “a process not an event” (p.52). This process of innovation is required in teacher leadership where the concept will be allowed a space to unfold for the benefit of the school. Similarly, Kotoli (2006) sees innovation as the process of making improvement by introducing something new, a change that creates a new dimension of performance. The enactment of teacher leadership ought to reflect all these aspects of innovation. Hart (1995) also perceives the issue of teacher leadership in the context of change. This is evident in his study where his focus is to “examine challenges to traditional views of school leadership posed by many school reform initiatives, curriculum innovations, and teacher incentive plans” (Hart, 1995, p.9). This perspective paves the way for the recognition of a new approach to leadership which involves the change process of teacher leadership.

## ***2.5 TEACHER LEADERSHIP AND SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT***

The concept of teacher leadership has to do with the concept of school improvement, where teacher leaders can be instrumental in the development of the school in many aspects. This is evident in Day and Harris (2002), where there are four dimensions of the role of teacher leadership being associated with school improvement. They are concerned with the way in which teachers help translate the principles of school improvement into practice and they emphasize participative leadership, the mediating role of teacher leader, and teacher leaders forging close relationships with individual teachers. An article by Harris (2004) attempts to unpack how distributed form of leadership can contribute to school improvement. Harris and Muijs (2005) also dwell much on the role of teacher leadership in improving schools.

The contextualization of teacher leadership with the concept of school improvement is further evident in Hopkins (1994). According to Hopkins “school improvement is about raising student achievement through enhancing the teaching-learning process and the conditions which support it” (1994, p.126). I fully subscribe to the idea that the proper enactment of teacher leadership can serve as an instrument for the general improvement of the school. This can be possible if the teacher leaders are afforded a fair chance in executing their duties.

## ***2.6 TEACHER LEADERSHIP AND COLLABORATION***

The whole concept of school leadership is also underpinned by the concept of collective decision making, where every individual teacher is provided a space to express his views about school related activities. “The importance of effective professional development is magnified substantially when schools embark on site-based, collaborative decision making” (Ash and Persall, 2000, p.20.). The idea of sharing decision making is also evident in Barth (1998) who suggests that “usually the school community deals more kindly with mistakes that are jointly made by a teacher and an administrator than mistakes that can be attributed to either party alone” (p.64). Similarly Sergiovanni (2001) reflects on the benefits which can be obtained when there is cooperation where he refers to a principle “ when teachers cooperate with each other by working together, trying out ideas together, examining student work together, and helping each other, teaching and learning will be enhanced” (p.116). This can be attained through the shared vision which occurs “where the principal had a clear vision for a better future for the school that was not imposed on staff but filtered through by a process of engagement and discussion of beliefs and values, such that it become shared vision” ( Stoll, 1994, p.133).

The question of collaboration is taken up further by Stock and Fink (1996) who attempt to illustrate how departmental divisions can serve to prove as powerful barriers to whole-school communication and collegiality. Through collaboration they believe that teachers “choose, spontaneously and voluntary, to work together, without an external control agenda” (Stock and Fink, 1996, p.88). A similar view is expressed in Barth (1990) who suggests that collegiality “involves mutual sharing and assistance, an orientation towards the school as a whole, and is spontaneous, voluntary, development-orientated, unscheduled and unpredictable” (1990, p.30). Fullan (2001) touches on the role which the principal can play in promoting collaboration in school. He asserts that the principal is the person most likely to be in a position to shape the organizational conditions necessary for success, such as the development of shared goals, collaborative work structures and climate. Similarly Grant and Singh (2009) in the study found that “some of the teachers in the focus group made reference to their involvement and decision –making (role 6) in developing school policy on

aspects relating to homework, assembly, discipline, pupil admissions and sporting codes (Grant and Singh, 2009, p. 12). All these views expressed around the issue of collaboration are conducive towards the development of teacher leadership in any school.

Muijs and Harris (2003) base their views on Gronn (2000) and argue that one of the dimensions of a teacher leader is to focus “upon participative leadership where all teachers feel part of the change or development and have a sense of ownership” (p.439). Blasé and Anderson (1995) further argue that teacher leaders may assist other teachers to cohere around a particular development and to foster a more collaborative way of working. A similar idea is expressed by Barth (1988) who sees the responsibility of a teacher in empowering the teachers with leadership duties. According to Barth “to foster leadership, principals must give individual teachers responsibility for matters about which these teachers care deeply” (1998, p.64). Barth (1998) also feels that both teachers and the principals need assistance if they are to become successful school leaders.

Little (2007) argues that lead teachers participate productively in school-level decision making. She highlights various activities and achievements which can be enjoyed in working collaboratively within the school. For her, “shared decision making has taken a range of forms, from formally organized and specially scheduled goal-setting sessions to a once-a-week staff meeting that engaged principal and grade level team leaders in routine decision-making” (2007,p.26). The concept of participative decision-making is also evident in Hart (1995) who contends that “shared governance or participative decision making, is the only one that explicitly includes a more democratic or communitarian in the structure itself” (1995, p.23). This argument by Hart around the concept of participative or shared decision-making epitomizes what the theory of distributed leadership is all about. Similarly, Darling-Hammond, Bullmaster and Cob (1995) see professional development schools as emphasizing “collaborative planning, teaching and decision making within and across institutions in ways that redefine both the act of teaching and the nature of the school” (p. 92). The involvement of teachers in the decision making is the main driving force behind the theory of distributed teacher leadership.

## ***2.7 THE FACTORS THAT HINDER TEACHER LEADERSHIP***

A number of articles dwell much on the factors that hinder the promotion of teacher leadership in schools. Troen and Boles (1994) suggest that teaching is not a profession that values or encourages leadership within its ranks. They further argue that “leadership roles – in curriculum writing, school improvement and professional development – are developed and delegated by the central office and are therefore limited in scope and vision and are subject to cancellation” (Troen and Boles, 1994, p. 40). Barriers to teacher leadership were also evident in the study conducted by Muijs and Harris (2007). One of the findings of the study reveals that “teachers interviewed commented that they did not feel they are always listened to when consulted, and that some managers still prefer a ‘top – down’ leadership style” (p.24). A similar scenario is reflected in research by Grant and Singh (2009), which reveals that school leadership remained firmly within the formal management structure at the top of the hierarchy.

The manner in which management hierarchy is structured can negatively impact upon the concept of teacher leadership. This is evident in Bush (1995) who states that “organizational charts emphasize vertical relationships between staff...secondary schools and colleges staff are responsible to heads of departments who in turn, are answerable to heads and principals for the activities of their departments” (p.29). This rigid form of leadership leaves no space for creativity and initiative drives which are associated with teacher leadership. This is also illustrated in Bush (2003) who discusses the bureaucratic or formal models of organization. These formal models involve among other things the hierarchical structure with formal chains of command. In these organizations decisions are governed by rules and regulations, and neutral and impersonal relations between staff are a feature. These formal models leave no space for the enactment of teacher leadership.

Gender stereotyping has been portrayed by some of the literature as hindering teacher leadership. This gender stereotype has been illustrated in the South African context where Grant (2005) describes how “in the majority of rural communities, women are viewed (both by men and women) as less than equal to men...” (p.47). The study reveals that this gender stereotype is reflected in schools in these communities where “the majority of the

community in that area believe that the person who can lead the school better is a male, especially in that area” (Grant, 2005, p. 47). Traditional culture has also been portrayed as part of the threat to teacher leadership. Hall (1996, cited in Grant 2005, p.48) argues that “power in organizations is associated mainly with men, based on a general cultural attitude that men make better leaders”. Grant (2005) also quoted Ngcongco’s argument that “African feminism is viewed by many as having no relevance to African culture because it leads women away from their families and responsibilities” (2001, p.25).

In the South African context, Grant (2006) reveals a further barrier to teacher leadership, where teachers themselves are portrayed as part of the threat to teacher leadership.... “Like they have been asked to do extra and they feel like it is the SMTs responsibility to lead and they are just there to do the minimum or what they are expected to do between the walls of the classroom” (2006, p.527). A similar scenario can be drawn from the study by Muijs and Harris (2007) which reveals that some teachers want remuneration for their leadership efforts and for doing “something extra” (p. 128). Grant and Singh also highlighted teachers complaining about extra work: “many of the teachers felt that the extra management duties they were forced to take on was an unfair practice as management was merely passing down functions within their own job descriptions to teachers” (2009, p. 14).

## ***2.8 FACTORS THAT PROMOTE TEACHER LEADERSHIP***

In spite of the factors that have been mentioned as hindering the concept of teacher leadership, there are number of factors portrayed in the literature which promote it. The school’s culture can play a critical role in promoting the concept of teacher leadership. Caldwell and Spinks (1992) simply define the school’s culture as: “the way we do things around here” (p.68). They embrace a culture of self-management which is underpinned by the notion of empowerment. Through the notion of empowerment “a leader is committed to providing all in the school community with an opportunity to influence decisions and to contribute to day-to-day activities of the school” (Caldwell and Spinks, 1992, p.75).The cultural role in enhancing the concept of teacher leadership can also be drawn from the study

conducted by Muijs and Harris (2007). The study by Muijs and Harris reveals among other things that in school A “schools’ culture that is perceived to be a key factor in securing a successful teacher leadership is trust” (2007, p.119). The study further reveals that in school B “support from school management at all levels (senior and departmental) is seen as another key factor in encouraging teacher leadership at the school by interviewees” (Muijs and Harris, 2007, p.124).

Furthermore, Smylie (1995) describes how “stories have developed around particular opportunities for leadership, such as lead and mentor teacher programs, career ladders, and participative decision making” (p. 5). A similar scenario emerged where “principals involve teachers in decision making; that teachers play an active role in setting the school budget and in evaluating the performance of their principal” (1988, p.42). The benefits which can be accrued out of giving a chance to teacher leadership are well articulated in many articles. Barth (1998) attributes the responsibility of inviting teacher leadership to a principal: “it is important for a principal to relinquish decision-making authority to teachers” (1998, p.10). He further draws the benefits the school can enjoy out of giving the leadership opportunities to untried and perhaps untested teachers who express a passionate interest in given issues i.e. everyone can win. Similarly, Ash and Persall (2000) allude to principal’s responsibility of helping the staff to overcome their fear of failure and grapple with difficult problems, not only with easy issues. They also suggest that this involves the principal “spending time – lots of it – with teachers, in and out of classrooms, engaged in conversations about teaching and learning” (Ash and Persall, 2000, p.18).

Literature has pointed to the roles which teachers can play in the leadership practices of the school. Through teacher leadership, the issue of general staff development can be carried out. Little (2007) is of the opinion that lead teachers advise and assist individual teachers through methods that have come to be called mentoring, coaching, or consultation. This idea is echoed in Zimpher (1988), who argues that teacher leaders are perceived as being involved in the induction or initial years of teaching through their role as teacher mentors. She also expresses the importance for teacher leaders to be “involved as well in the continuing development of teachers as professionals” (Zimpher, 1988, p.55). A similar idea

is also expressed in Day and Harris (2002) who suggest that teachers leaders are viewed as being able “to draw critically upon additional resource and expertise if required and to seek external assistance.” (p.973). The benefits associated with teacher leadership are further reflected in Yukl (1994, cited in Smylie, 1995) who perceives teacher leadership as exerting influence on the structural dimensions of school organizations.

Beside the impact on educators, teacher leadership can also play a beneficial role in as far as the learners are concerned. This has been highlighted in articles which shed light on the role which teacher leadership can play in schooling activities of a learner. Ash and Persall (2000) reflect on the fact that “all rules, regulation, roles, and work processes in the school should be designed to support and enhance the faculty’s ability to design quality learning experiences for all students”. (p.19). The idea of the role which good leadership can play to everyone (including the learners) is evident in the work of Barth (1998) who argues that “if a principal gives opportunities for leadership to untried (and perhaps untrusted) teachers who express passionate interest in given issues, everyone can win” (p.64).

Teacher leadership opportunities in South African context have been unpacked further in a research conducted on HIV/ AIDS education in some schools in small rural community in KwaZulu-Natal (Grant and Jugmohan, 2008). Although there is still lot to be done around HIV/ AIDS education, part of the finding reveals “educators were trained on HIV/ AIDS, in some instances teachers took on leadership role in dealing with HIV/ AIDS in schools and policies were in place to guide stakeholders in the process” (Grant and Jugmohan, 2008, p.10).

## ***2.9 DISTRIBUTED LEADERSHIP THEORY***

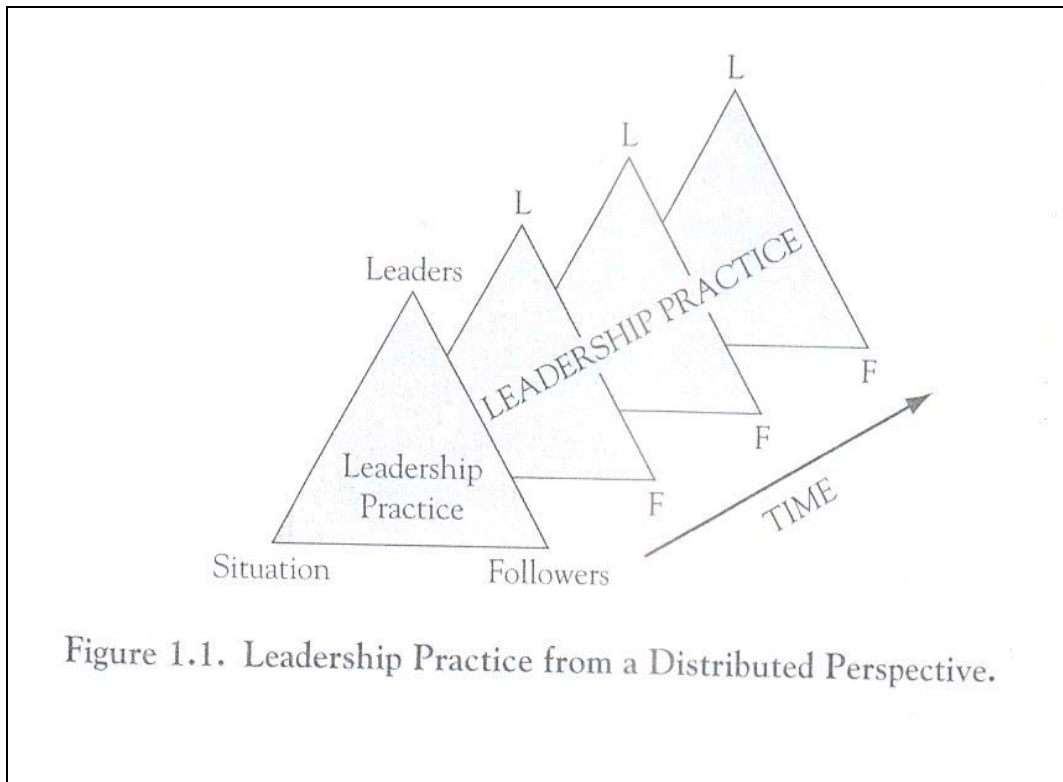
International and South African literature locates teacher leadership firmly within distributed leadership framework. The theory of distributed leadership is generally regarded as the current view on teacher leadership. The practical side of the theory of distributed leadership is illustrated in Gronn (2000). The practical side of distributed leadership is further illustrated by Bennett et al. (2003), wherein they note, “distributed leadership is not



something 'done' by an individual 'to others', rather it is an emergent property of a group or network of individuals in which group members pool their expertise'' (Bennett *et al.*, 2003, p. 3).

In the South African context, Grant advocates a form of distributed leadership where the principals are prepared to relinquish powers. This is evident where she argues for a "form of distributed leadership which is required at the level of the school, where principals are willing to relinquish their power to others and where fixed leader follower dualisms are abandoned so that South African schools are no longer led by one figure at the top of the hierarchy'' (p.514). Grant and Singh (2009) also argue for a change in school leadership, towards more participation. This is where the research conducted reveals that opportunities for teachers to take on leadership roles beyond their core function of classroom teaching have recently surfaced in South African schools.

In defining distributed leadership Harris and Spillane argue that "distributed model of leadership focuses upon the interactions, rather than the actions, of those in formal and informal leadership roles'' (2008, p.31). Parts of this leadership theory reflect the role of teacher leadership. Spillane (2006) describes distributed leadership as practice which is framed in a very particular way, as a product of the joint interactions of school leaders, followers, and aspects of their situations. He further criticizes heroic leadership which tends to equate leadership with school principals and their valiant actions. On the other hand Day and Harris (2007) allude to the role of a teacher leader which is to help to "translate the principles of school improvement into the practices of individual classrooms'' (p 973). Their main emphasis is on the teacher leadership role in "forging close relationships with individual teachers through which mutual learning takes place. The way in which teachers learn together is an important determination of school improvement'' (Day and Harris, 2007, p.973). Below is an illustration of a leadership practice emanating from a distributed perspective.



The distributed leadership model prominently features in Rizvi (2008). In this article Rizvi perceives distributed leadership theory as a form of leadership which has been spread throughout an organization with leaders' roles overlapping and shifting as different development needs arise. Through the study which he conducted in Palestine he concluded that in the Alif School the distributed leadership model played a very important role in enhancing teachers' professionalism. This is also corroborated in Howey (1988) where teachers are called to "assume leadership positions that will enable them to model the methods of teaching, coach and mentor colleagues, study critically and thoughtfully various aspects of classroom life, develop the curriculum and instructional materials, and strengthen relationships between the school and home" (p. 83). All these expectations about teacher leadership distribute and broaden the teacher's role. The concept of distributed leadership requires an "enormous task of meeting the schools' challenges requires that teachers assume the responsibilities that were previously reserved for the principals" (Howey, 1988, p.18). A similar idea is expressed in Stoll (1994) who contends that "in some pilot schools, principals were more effective in building a culture in which teachers are not afraid to try out new

ideas and take risks”(p134). Stoll’s pilot study reveals the sense of distributed leadership theory, wherein the teachers are given the space to initiate leadership for the benefit of the entire school.

Similarly, Harris (2004) found that “distributed leadership resulted in positive effects on pedagogy on school culture and an educational quality” (p.21). In addition, Harris and Spillane (2008) see the role of distributed leadership as offering schools with “the opportunity to stand back and think about exactly how leadership is distributed and the difference made, or not made, by the distribution” (p. 33). They further argue that distributed leadership suggests that followers may actually be a key element in determining leadership through their interactions with leaders (Harris and Spillane, 2008). These views of distributed teacher leadership emphasize the need for teachers to be afforded the opportunity and the space to exhibit their leadership skills.

Distributed leadership theory is also well catered for in Sammons, Hillman and Mortimore (1995), wherein leadership and culture have been defined in the context of effective school. According to Sammons *et al.*, leadership involves a “transformational, collegial, participative, need to consult with all stakeholders in decision making, innovative” (1995, p.8). In this definition of leadership, consultation with all the stakeholders is in line with distributed leadership. The concept of distributed leadership is also reflected in the definition of culture i.e. “collaborative / share responsibility with all, risk taking, stakeholders value good teaching-devolved to creating a culture of learning environment” (p.8). Collaboration is a process which can be attained over a certain period of time through training. This view is expressed by Hart (1995) who states that “collaboration skills, structures for promoting collaboration, and the norm of collaboration develop over time through experience, training, and socialization” (p. 24). This is the route which distributed teacher leadership can take. Through collaboration the leadership talents from the ordinary teachers can be afforded the opportunity to develop which, in return, can help to benefit the school in different ways.

The theory of distributed leadership can also be modeled along the school restructuring theory (Morrison, 1998). Morrison believes that “changes require a form of leadership that is

sensitive to organization building: developing shared vision, creating productive work cultures, distributing leadership to others, and the like” (Morrison, 1998, p.25). Distributed leadership in this fashion is in line with the principle of empowerment (Sergiovanni, 2001). Sergiovanni believes that “when teachers experience empowerment, this contributes to ownership, increased commitment, and motivation to work” (Sergiovanni, 2001, p.117). The principle of empowerment is also explicit in Arcaro (1995, cited by Steyn, 2000), where empowerment is defined as “people are open, creative and innovative in attempting new ways of working to achieve a vision for the school” (p. 271). Therefore the issue of empowerment, which is about giving teachers the authority to perform those duties which were previously reserved for the principal, is equivalent to distributing leadership throughout the teaching staff.

The role of the principal is critical to the distribution of leadership in schools. Hopkins and Jackson (2002) suggest that formal leaders in schools need to orchestrate and nurture the space for distributed leadership to occur and to create the ‘shelter conditions’ for the leadership of collaborative learning. This demands a paradigm shift on the side of the principals to provide leadership. In addition, Merten and Yarger (1988) call for teacher empowerment through school-based management and assert that this form of empowerment “could provide the impetus and the structure for better aligning the best professional teacher culture with the legalities of school policy making and administration” (p.36). According to Rogus, “effective leaders further understand that if efforts to achieve the vision are to be successful, the vision must grow from the needs of the organization and be owned by those who are instrumental in its actuation” (1988, p.49). This is evident in the exchange theory espoused by Burns (1978). This theory was embraced by Hart (1995) who states “a wholesome professional exchange between a teacher leader and another teacher could consequently include loyalty and support for the teacher leader in exchange for professional growth opportunities...”(p. 17). The bottom line is for the principal to develop the vision about the school he leads and then communicate that vision throughout the stakeholders in the school. Thereafter, in collaboration with the entire teaching staff, they will be expected to devise some means of achieving that vision which can be made possible by affording sufficient leadership initiatives to all.

## ***2.10 CONCLUSION***

In conclusion, this literature review has endeavoured to explore teacher leadership together with the threats and the opportunities in schools. The literature review focused on the definition of teacher leadership with an aim of establishing exactly what the concept of teacher leadership is all about. The main claim that emerged from these definitions is that teacher leadership goes beyond the classroom or school's responsibilities. What also emerged from the definitions are the benefits which can be enjoyed out of affording the opportunities to teacher leadership. The literature review also explored different arguments around the threats to teacher leadership by drawing from both international and South African literature. The literature review further touched on distributed leadership theory as the theoretical framework for the study. In the next chapter I discuss the research design and methodology of the study.

## **CHAPTER 3: RESEARCH DESIGN ANG METHODOLOGY**

### ***3.1. INTRODUCTION***

This chapter presents the research methodology and design used in this study to explore the research questions. It includes the research questions, paradigm, methodology, context of the study, data collection methods adopted and data analysis procedures used. The methodology that was chosen was based on the belief that it would enable me to address the key questions. An understanding of the term ‘methodology’ is of vital importance in order to comprehend the reason as to how methodology was chosen. Kaplan (1973) argues that the aim of methodology is to enhance understanding in the broadest possible terms, not only the products of scientific inquiry but the process itself. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2000) distinguish between methods and methodology. Cohen *et al.* (2000) define method as the “range of approaches used in educational research to gather data for interpretation or explanation of the study whereas methodology is viewed as a means to understand in the broadest possible term, not the products of scientific inquiry but the process itself” (p. 82). Methodology in Henning, Van Ransburg and Smit (2004, p.36) is defined as “coherent group of methods that complement one another and that has a ‘goodness fit’ to deliver data and finding that will reflect the research question and suit the research purpose’”. The latter

definition fits comfortably with my research design hence my decision to adopt it.

### ***3.2 THE AIM AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS***

The study intended to explore teacher leadership in action in a rural secondary school in KwaZulu-Natal. This emanates from the fact that the whole concept of teacher leadership is new to the majority of South African educators; hence it was inherited from countries such as Canada, Britain and USA (Grant, 2005). To remind the reader the following broad research questions frame the research project:

1. How is teacher leadership enacted in a rural secondary school?
2. What factors enhance or hinder this ‘enactment’?

### ***3.3. RESEARCH PARADIGM***

The research adopts an interpretive qualitative paradigm as guided by the nature of the questions. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007) define the interpretive paradigm as the process of examining the situation through the eyes of participants rather than the researcher. Terre Blanche and Durrheim (1999) argue that an interpretative paradigm provides relevant information to the researcher in terms of “subjective reasons and meanings that lie behind social action” (p. 6). With the interpretive paradigm, efforts are made to get inside the person and understand from within, this is done to retain the integrity of the phenomena being investigated. Pring (2000, p.96) argues that “we need to know their intentions and their motives.... For this reason, researchers talk of the ‘subjective meanings’ of those whom they are researching – that is, the different understandings and interpretations which the participants bring with them to the situation”. Wellington (2000, p. 16) acknowledges that the interpretive researcher accepts that “the observer makes a difference to the observed and that reality is a human construct”. Terre-Blanche and Durrheim describe interpretive researchers as people who want “to make sense of feelings, experiences, social situations or phenomenon as they occur in the real world, and therefore want to study them in their natural setting” (1999, p. 127). This definition fits with my study since my questions were

interpretative in nature; I wanted to understand the experiences of teachers on teacher leadership that they brought to their situation; their ‘subjective meaning’. The study was qualitative in character owing to the fact that it involved different methods of data collection. This is echoed by Creswell (1998, cited in Cohen *et al*, 2007) who argues that the feature of qualitative study involves rigorous procedures and multiple methods of data collection.

### **3.4 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

A case study was adopted as the general approach intended of this study. Merriam (1998) distinguishes among different senses in which the term ‘case study’ is used in qualitative research:

- the process of conducting a case study (studying the case);
- the unit of study (the case that is studied);
- and the product of this type of investigation (the final written document).

All these afore-mentioned stages applied to my research. The process of conducting a case study involved observation of the three teacher leaders, who were also interviewed and requested to participate in reflective journaling. The unit of study was a school and the final stage involved documentation of the whole activities undertaken throughout the study.

Yin, (2003, p.23) defines case study research method as “an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident, and in which multiple sources of evidence are used”. This definition is in line with Creswell (2003); Cohen, Manion and Morrison, (2000) and Geertz, (1973) who also define case study method as an in-depth, intensive enquiry reflecting a rich and lively reality and exploration of a bounded system. Furthermore, Yin (2003) distinguishes between three forms of case study, namely exploratory, explanatory and descriptive. For Yin (2003) descriptive case study presents a complete description of a phenomenon within its context. An exploratory case study could involve grounded theory. Both descriptive and exploratory fit the nature of my study hence three teacher leaders were described within the context of the case study school.



### 3.4.1 The Strengths of the Case Study

The strengths of the case study are reflected when one looks at the definitions drawn from different articles. MacDonald and Walker (1975, cited in Bassey, 1999) argue that case study is the examination of an instance in action. This definition directly relates to my study, since it examined teacher leadership in action with the intention of also determining the threats and opportunities of teacher leadership. Furthermore, “case studies strive to portray ‘what it is like’ to be in a particular situation, to catch the close up reality and ‘thick description’ of participants’ lived experience” (Geertz 1973, cited in Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007, p. 254). This definition also links to my study since it endeavours to establish the experience of the teacher leaders in a school situation.

Yin (1994) provides a two-part technical definition of a case study which reads as follows:

1. A case study is an empirical inquiry that

- investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when
- the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident

2. The case study inquiry

- copes with technically distinctive situation in which there will be many more variables of interest than data points, and as one result,
- relies on multiple sources of evidence, with data needing to converge in a triangulating fashion and as a result,
- benefits from the prior development of theoretical positions to guide data collection and analysts (p.13).

This two-part definition does apply to my research. Teacher leadership can be referred to as a “contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context”, since the whole study is around teacher leadership in action while the second definition alludes to a case study being reliant

on “multiple sources of evidence...” which my study was. Yin (2003) goes beyond the definitions of the case studied by distinguishing between three forms of case study i.e. exploratory, explanatory and descriptive. For the purpose of my research, a descriptive case study applied since it presented a complete description of a phenomenon within its context, in this case the enactment of teacher leadership in the school.

### **3.4.2 The Limitations of the Case Study**

The case study as methodology used in my research was chosen although I was fully conscious of its challenges and limitations. A number of writers (for example, Merriam and Simpson, 1984; Nisbet and Watt, 1984; Bell, 1987 and Anderson and Arsenhault, 1998) identify strengths and limitations of the case study approach. According to Anderson and Arsenhault (1998), “critics of the case study method argue that it lacks reliability and that another researcher might come to a different conclusion” (p. 159). Merriam and Simpson (1984) state that limitations of the case study include the danger of distortion, since it is not easy to cross-check information in all cases. This is echoed by Lindegger (1999) who purported that “there may be problems with the validity of information; causal links are difficult to test; and generalisations cannot be made from single case studies” (p. 256). Maximum efforts were undertaken in my study to address these limitations. I attempted at all times to be as honest as possible in presenting the findings in order to avoid distorting the facts. As researcher, I also endeavoured to interpret and adopt a neutral stance during the observation stage in order to guard against any element of biasness.

## ***3.5 CONTEXT OF THE CASE STUDY***

### **3.5.1 The Profile of the School**

The school where the study was undertaken is situated in a deep rural area in Msinga, KwaZulu-Natal. It is situated in the Endumeni Circuit in UMzinyathi District. The nearest town is Dundee which is 69 kilometres away. The gravel road which serves as an access road to the school is generally poor. The school is a small secondary school offering grades 8 to 12. It consists of a learner population of 177. The entire learner population consists of

isiZulu speakers. There are nine teachers in the school all of whom are state paid. Out of the nine teachers' five are unqualified. By virtue of it being a small school, there is only one HOD, who takes care of the science subjects and has also adopted other streams like languages and humanities. I am the principal of the school and also a researcher. The School Management Team (SMT) consists of two people, an HOD and the principal.

The school offers two streams i.e. a science stream and a general subjects' stream. It is a no-fee school which is categorised under quintile 1 which indicates an exceptionally low socio economic status of the surrounding community. Furthermore, the majority of the parent body lacks a formal education. Due to the low socio economic status of the surrounding community, the school has recently been granted permission to offer a feeding scheme by the Department of Education. Some of the learners are orphans. Many of these learners are from families where both parents are unemployed. Many of the children live with their grandparents; consequently they rely entirely on the old age pension grant.

The school's buildings are not up to the required standard. There are two buildings i.e. classroom buildings and a small administration consisting of a principal's office, the store room and the staff room. The school is generally under resourced i.e. there is no laboratory and no library. Even the textbooks which are in circulation are in short supply. All these shortfalls impact directly on the day-to-day schooling activities. Be that as it may, the school is electrified and properly fenced, which provides a much needed sense of security.

### **3.5.2 Participants and Sampling**

The entire staff of teachers participated in the study during the survey stage at the beginning of the research process. This was where all the teachers in the school were requested to respond to the questionnaires which were about teacher leadership. The survey was conducted on 20 October 2008. There were 2 sets of questionnaires. There was a questionnaire intended for the post level one teachers (see Appendix 2) and another questionnaire was intended for the SMT (see Appendix 3). For the remainder of the study there were three primary participants. The unit of analysis in the case were the three post

level one teacher leaders. All three teacher leaders were Africans and aged between 35 and 40 years. Their experiences ranged from four to 15 years. Amongst the participants two were males and one female. Only one participant had a teaching qualification while the others were under qualified, one had Adult Basic Education and Teaching Certificate (ABET) and one had a matriculation certificate. Further details about the teacher leaders are covered in Chapter Four.

Purposive sampling procedure was carried out to yield the sample. This sampling procedure is clearly articulated in Cohen *et al.* (2007). They state that “in purposive sampling, often (but by no means exclusively) a feature of qualitative researchers, researchers handpick the cases to be included in the sample on the basis of their judgement of their typicality or possession of the particular characteristics being sought” (p.114-115). In respect of my research, I selected my own school based on the challenging circumstances (those that were mentioned under the context of the school) the given school operated under. From these challenging circumstances the study intended to reflect on the teacher leaders striving with leadership qualities under difficult contextual circumstances. The main reason for the selection of the school was also based on the fact that I worked in the case study school. It was therefore convenient for me to conduct a case study in my work station.

The selection of three teachers was based on their being in possession of leadership qualities. As the principal in the case study school, I was in a good position to identify those teacher leadership qualities required. Leadership qualities that were sought were those demonstrated both in the classroom environment and beyond. Their being included in the study was purely based on my identification of the contribution of the three teacher leaders to core curriculum activities, extra-mural activities, as well as involvement or communication with the stakeholders i.e. other teachers, learners, parents and sister departments in their activities. The characteristics that were considered further included their level of contribution in decision-making processes, in conflict resolution and in the promotion of a team spirit among the teachers in executing their duties.

### **3.5.3 Positionality of the Researcher**

As researcher, I am also the principal of this case study school. There were possibilities that the participants might have felt threatened to divulge some information pertaining to the school management team in providing sufficient space for teacher leadership to blossom. This possible threat was addressed by reinforcing time and again that the research exercise was quite different from my official duties as principal. The participants were also assured that the information generated from the interview session would be in no way be used for victimisation or any other purpose.

To further address the question of my possible authority as a principal being attached to my research exercise, interviews were scheduled outside the school environment. Venues which were convenient to the participants and neutral were selected for interview purposes. Two of the participants were visited in their homes while one interview was organised in a nearby park under relaxed conditions.

### **3.6 ETHICAL ISSUES**

Ethical issues were carefully considered throughout the study. Kvale (1996) identifies three main areas of ethical issues i.e. informed consent, confidentiality, and the consequences of interviews. Owing to the fact that the study was designed as a case study of the school in which I was the principal, permission for conducting a research was solicited from the Ward Manager in writing. Since the study entailed the involvement of three teacher leaders as participants in the study, educators in question were informed well in advance about the whole study and their informed consent was also gained. At the outset of the study, I explained the aim of the study to the three participants and they were requested to be part of the project and the roles they were expected to play were also outlined. This was done through the letter of consent (Appendix 10) which was addressed to each of the three teacher leaders. All three teacher leaders signed the letter of consent as a sign of their commitment to the project. Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007) refer to comprehension which entails the participants' fully understanding of the nature of the research project, even when procedures

are complicated and involves risks.

An assurance of the name protection during the reporting of the findings was communicated to the participants well in advance before they engaged in the study. An explanation was given to the participants that they were at liberty to withdraw should they feel uncomfortable to further participate in the study. An explanation was also given that there would be no incentives for participating in the project. All measures were undertaken to protect the name of the school and the participants. The ethical issues were informed by the principles outlined by Durrheim and Wassenaar (2001, p. 66) as autonomy, nonmaleficence and beneficence. The principle of autonomy according to Durrheim and Wassenaar (2001) entail respect of autonomy of all the people participating in the research. The research should do no harm to the participants (nonmaleficence) and should be of benefit to the participants (beneficence).

### ***3.7 DATA COLLECTION METHODS***

The project was carried out over two school terms, which were the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter of 2008 and the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter of 2009. The research methods used to collect data from the population (three teacher leaders as primary participants and the entire staff which participated in the survey stage) included observation, questionnaires, interviews (both focus group and individual interview), self-reflective journaling and document analysis. I believe that these techniques for gathering data were appropriate for various reasons. Observation took place throughout the research process where the three teachers were observed for the purpose of detecting their leadership roles in the smooth operation of the school. For this purpose an observation schedule which is about “Zones and roles of teacher leadership” borrowed from Grant (2008) was used (see Appendix 5). I now move on to discuss each of the data collection methods used in the study.

#### **3.7.1 Survey**

In this study, a questionnaire was designed for the entire teaching staff at my school. It was part of the survey conducted at the beginning of the research exercise (20 October 2008).

Seven questionnaires were administered to all the post level one teachers (see Appendix 2). One questionnaire was intended for the SMT member (see Appendix 3). Each of the two questionnaires consisted of both closed and open questions. The questionnaire was divided into three sections. Section A dealt with biographical information, section B dealt with the teacher leadership survey and section C included open-ended questions based on teacher leadership.

Owing to the advantage of conducting a survey within the school which was my own work station, the return rate of the responses was 100 percent. Borg (1981) states that the most difficult problem in conducting a questionnaire study is to obtain a sufficient percentage of responses. If this percentage is below 70 percent, for an example, one can place little confidence in the results reported. Thus, in this study, the percentage of responses was entirely addressed.

### **3.7.2 Interview**

Another tool for gathering data was the interview. Interviews enable participants, be they interviewers or interviewees, to discuss their interpretations of the world in which they live, and to express how they regard situations from their own point of view (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2002). The advantage of using interviews as a data collection method is that it allows for greater depth than is case with other method of data collection (Borg, 1963). However, interviews are not without disadvantages. As Arnold and Feldman (1986) put it, the information collected in interviews is subject to potential bias by the interviewer, who may consciously ask certain types of questions and not others.

Interviews are divided into four types according to Patton (1980, cited in Cohen *et al.* 2007). They are informal conversational interviews, interview guide approach, standardised open-ended interviews and closed quantitative interviews. The current study was compliant with the interview guide approach; hence the topics and issues that were deliberated upon were specified in advance, in outline form where the interviewer decides sequence and working of questions in the course of the interview (Patton, 1980, cited in Cohen *et al.* 2007). The issues to be discussed were prepared by myself, as the interviewer and the sequence of the questions were also decided by me as the process unfolded. The current study further

adopted informal conversational interview where, according to Patton (1980) questions emerge from the immediate context and are asked in the natural course of things, there is no predetermination of question topics or wording. Some of the questions emerged from the observation stage, where the participants were asked about some aspects of their leadership activities, either in the classroom or beyond.

### **3.7.2.1 Focus Group Interview**

Focus group interviews, according to Cohen *et al.* (2007, p. 336), “are contrived settings, bringing together a specifically chosen sector of the population to discuss a particular given theme or topic, where the interaction with the group lead to data and outcomes”. Within the case study, the focus group interview involved interviewing all the three participants where they were interviewed simultaneously. It was conducted near the beginning of the study during the 4<sup>th</sup> term of 2008. The purpose of the focus group interview was explained to all the participants which included the design and aim of the research. The aim was also to get the views of all three participants pertaining to the issues of teacher leadership. It was also intended to introduce the project and develop trustworthiness and win their confidence. The focus group interview was tape recorded and transcribed. Fortunately all the participants agreed to be interviewed. The focus group interview session centred on the issues pertaining to teacher leadership (see Appendix 7). Apart from the questions taken from Appendix 7, other questions for the focus group interview were developed prior to the interview session. Probing questions automatically emerged during the session. Some of the questions that were part of the interview session included questions such as “Talk to me about leadership. What does the word leadership mean to you?” and “Talk to me about teacher leadership? What does the term mean to you?”

### **3.7.2.2 Individual Interview**

Individual interviews with each of the three teacher leaders were conducted during the 1<sup>st</sup> term of the 2009 academic year. Teacher Leader 1 was interviewed on February 5, 2009. The second interview which was conducted with Teacher Leader 2 was carried out on 22 February 2009. The third interview which was conducted with the Teacher Leader 3 was held on 16 March 2009. All the interviews were arranged in advance and adopted an



interview guide approach. The researcher made appointments with all of the three participants respectively. The purpose of the interview was explained to the participants, which was to get their reflections on the opportunities or threats to teacher leadership. The interview session was allocated one hour, but this was determined by the openness of the interviewee. Some interviews utilised less than an hour, and some ended exactly within an hour. With the first and the second interviewee the venue for the interview was the park. The venue for the third interview was the restaurant.

During the interview process written notes were taken by the researcher. The interviews were later transcribed. Individual interviews were necessary to get the teacher leaders' independent views on the issue of teacher leadership. The interview schedule consisted of two major questions, that is 'How is teacher leadership enacted in schools?' and 'What factors enhance or hinder this enactment?' Specific questions were formulated before the interview. Probing questions were used during the interview process. All the questions were open-ended.

### **3.7.3 Journal Entries**

A self-reflective journaling process was part of the research design and used to obtain the data from the participants (see Appendix 6). The process was divided into seven stages. Journal entry 1 was scheduled for week three of October 2008. It was intended for extracting background information about the social context of the school where the study was conducted. It also helped the researcher to get to know each participant better. Journal entry 2 was scheduled for the 1<sup>st</sup> half of November 2008. It was intended to obtain the experiences of each individual participant when as teacher leaders they executed duties or took initiative in their respective classrooms or in the school. Journal entry three 3 was scheduled for the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of November 2008. It was intended to have the participants reflect on the fourth term of school as a term of assessment and examination. Journal entry four was scheduled for the 1<sup>st</sup> half of February 2009. The participants were expected to reflect on themselves as teacher leaders and personal attributes they had which made them teacher leaders.

Journal Entry 5 was scheduled for the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of February 2009. The participants were

expected to think about the first term of the school, which is often described as a term of planning, especially around curriculum issues. Journal Entry 6 was scheduled for the 1<sup>st</sup> half of March 2009. The participants were expected to reflect on their respective experiences as teacher leaders where they were to ponder on the barriers they had come up against. The final journal entry involved Journal Entry 7, which was scheduled for the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of March 2009. This journal entry was aimed at having the participants telling a story or describing a situation in each of the different contexts when they worked as teacher leaders, for instance, in their classroom, in school-wide issues and so forth.

### **3.7.4 Document Analysis**

All the information that was collected through the methods discussed in the previous section was verified through document analysis. The documents that were targeted for analysis were minutes of the staff meeting, year plan and Integrated Quality Management Systems (IQMS) records. The purpose for analysing the minutes of the staff meeting was to verify the role played by these three teacher leaders in decision-making processes of the school, how they communicated their thoughts to other colleagues, how the decisions were taken in assigning special duties to them. Through the analysis of the minutes of the staff meetings, the roles played by the teacher leaders were confirmed since the decisions pertaining to the academic and non academic issues were dominated by their suggestions. The minutes also revealed their role in initiating activities to be undertaken by the entire staff.

The year planner was another document that was analysed. The aim of analysing the year planner was to ascertain the space provided by the school for teacher leadership to flourish. This is in line with one of the key research questions “What enhances or hinders this enactment?”. Analysing the year planner was also in line with the key question: “How is teacher leadership enacted in the school?” The records of IQMS were also analysed with the aim of deducing the role played by the three teacher leaders in developing other teachers in academic and non academic matters. The focus was on the role played by the three teacher leaders in the School Development Team (SDT) which is the committee that coordinates the activities of IQMS. As part of IQMS activities, each teacher is expected to form his /her own

Self Development Group (SDG) which serve to guide, support, develop each and every teacher in academic and non academic issues. The role of the three teacher leaders within the SDGs was also going to be scrutinised.

### **3.7.5 Observation**

Unlike some of the data collection tools which were used occasionally, observation was carried out throughout the research activities. Observation played a vital role in addressing the two key questions i.e. how teacher leadership is enacted in a rural secondary school? Which factors hinder or promote teacher leadership? Participants were also observed with an aim of verifying leadership qualities from each teacher leader. An observation schedule which served as a 'mirror' to detect activities which were leadership related was used. The school environment proved to be a suitable venue where the observation activities were undertaken. In most cases observation was loosely conducted with an aim of not interrupting the routine duties of the participants. The manner in which the participants interacted with their colleagues, teachers from the neighbouring schools, parents and the learners received special attention during observation stage. Teacher leaders' dealings with their colleagues were mainly detected during the staff meetings and the social gatherings. Class visits were also conducted with an aim of deducing the manner in which teacher leaders enacted their leadership in as far as the learners were concerned. The outdoor events were easily observed, owing to the fact that in most cases they were less formal. The findings which emerged from observation played a crucial role in verifying the findings which emerged from other data collection tools (This will be thoroughly covered in chapter four).

## ***3.8 TRUSTWORTHINESS***

The issues of validity and reliability were catered for in the following stages of data collection i.e. observation and interview. Denzin and Lincoln (1994, cited in Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007) suggest that reliability in qualitative research can be addressed in many ways, one of it being the stability of observation. Stability of observation looks at whether the researcher would have made the same observations and interpretation of these if they had been observed at a different time or in a different place. This is true in my study since the

observation process was underpinned by an observation schedule which is about “Zones and roles of teacher leadership” borrowed from Grant (2008a), (see, Appendix 5).

Regarding the interviews, several measures were undertaken to achieve greater validity. One of the methods that was used in achieving validity was to minimise the amount of bias as much as possible (Cohen *et al.*, 2007). The elements of bias were taken care of through ensuring that the researcher’s opinions and expectations were not imposed on the participants. The participants were provided sufficient space to express their opinions on several issues without being influenced.

The issue of validity and reliability was further addressed through piloting of questionnaires and the interview schedule. According to Anderson and Arsenault (1998), pilot testing of questionnaires identifies ambiguities in the instructions, helps clarify the wording of questions, and may alert the researcher to omissions or multiple choices. This is elaborated further by Borg (1981), who advocates that the validity of data collection addresses the question of whether a data collection process is really measuring what it purports to be measuring. A small sample is selected for this purpose, and the respondents are requested to respond to the whole or part of the questionnaire (Sarantakos, 1993). The questionnaire did not need to be piloted because it was piloted and used in a previous study. The interview was piloted with one educator who was not a primary participant in the study. Her fluency in responding to the questions posed gave the green light for the interview process to continue.

### ***3.9 DATA ANALYSIS PROCEDURE***

#### **3.9.1 Thematic Content Analysis**

Qualitative data were analysed using thematic content analysis. Terre Blanche and Durrheim define data analysis as encompassing “reading through your data repeatedly, and engaging in activities of breaking the data down (thematizing and categorizing) and building it up again in novel ways (elaborating and interpreting)” (1999, p. 140). When analysing data for each of the three cases, concepts were generated through the data process of coding.

According to Cohen, *et al.* ( 2007) coding is “a word or abbreviation sufficiently close to that which it is describing for the researcher to see at a glance what it means” (p. 478). In analysing and interpreting the data, I used transcripts of the interviews and journal entries and allowed themes to emerge. In this instance, transcription did not only facilitate further analysis but it also established a permanent written record of the interviews to be shared with other interested parties. I was conscious of the fact that transcripts did not reflect the entire character of the discussion. An example could be drawn from non-verbal communication, gestures and behavioural responses which were not reflected in the transcript. Journal entries and observational data obtained during the study were used to supplement the transcribed data.

Qualitative data were analysed and interpreted after they had been collected and gathered together. Data from the transcriptions of individual interviews, the focus group interviews and the self-reflective journaling were analysed by breaking down the information, exploring concepts and putting it back in new ways for better understanding (Pandit, 1996). Thereafter the findings from all the participants were compared and were grouped together to form themes which were given the same conceptual label. Pandit (1996) argues that the products of labelling and categorising concepts are basic building blocks in grounded theory construction.

I broke down the data and looked for key words and phrases. I looked for ideas and themes and made detailed notes to link them together. I looked for words that gave me an idea of the qualities that teachers possess that would make them leaders. I made notes on the roles that teachers took on how they were selected to these roles. I selected ideas and themes that related to the structure and culture of the school. I looked at the roles that the SMT, teachers, SGB, the learners, parents played in facilitating or hindering teachers taking on these roles. The following model in Diagram 1 indicates how the themes were organised according a multi-layered understanding of teacher leadership for the South African context within four zones. The model incorporated leadership in (Zone 1) and beyond the classroom including working with learners and other teachers (Zone 2), involvement in the whole

school development initiatives (Zone 3) as well as leadership beyond the school into the community (Zone 4). Six roles (Devaney, 1997) of teacher leadership were then incorporated into 4 zones of teacher leadership in order to articulate more coherently with the four zones (Grant, 2008). This model assisted me in analysing data in terms of the school research question of the study, what factors enhance or hinder teacher leadership?

**Figure 1. Towards a model of understanding of zones and roles of teacher leadership in South Africa**

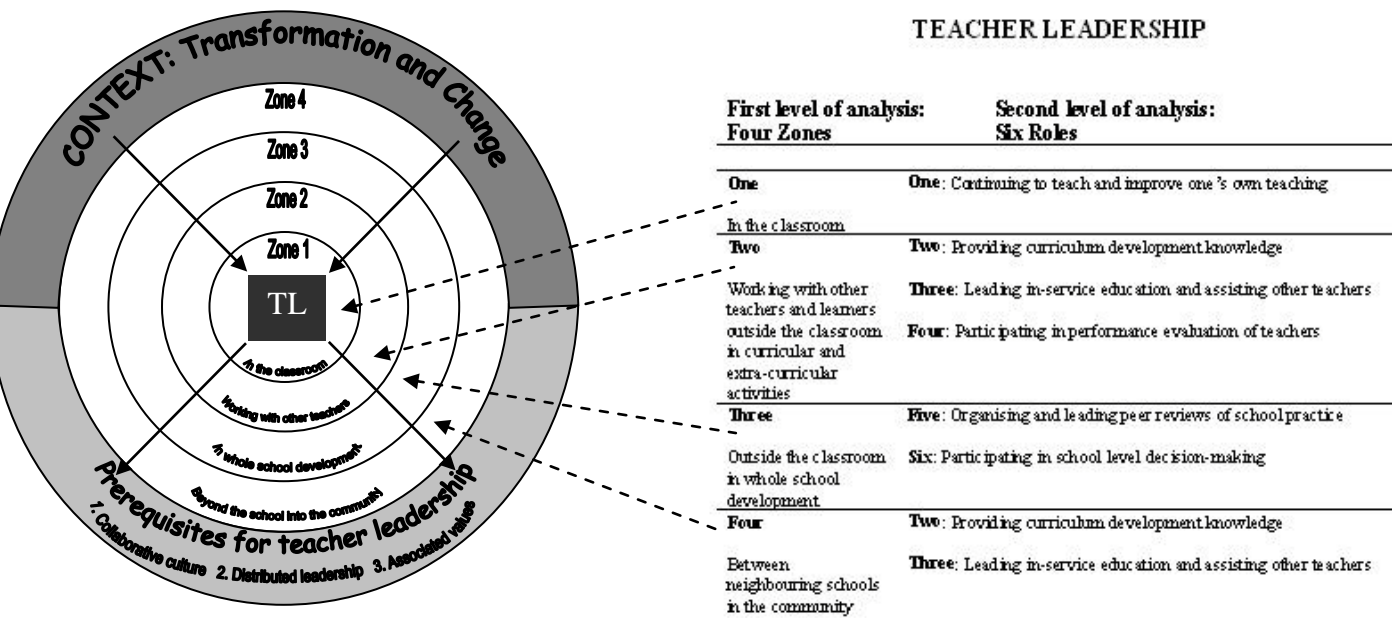


Diagram 1 – Model of teacher leadership (Grant, 2008, p. 93)

### 3.9.2 Statistical Package for the Social Science (SPSS)

In contrast, the quantitative data were analysed using SPSS. Fink (1995), in relation to the survey questionnaires used in the case study raises very important issues that need to be resolved before quantitative data analysis. These issues include the need for prior editing for each completed questionnaire, reviewing the entire data set, checking the missing value or

data, and screening the data for incorrect values if the correct response is obvious, the researcher may allow corrections to be made by the respondent. The questionnaire data collected in my study were analysed using a computer programme called the Statistical Package for the Social Science (SPSS) for windows (Einspruch, 1998). SPSS allowed me to assign labels to my variables. According to Cohen and Manion (1994) a variable is something that can be observed and can take on more than one value. SPSS allowed me to assign labels to variables for two reasons, to easily remember what they were and to assign codes to the values of variables with the aim of making it easy to remember and making data entry easier and computer storage more efficient.

### ***3.10 CONCLUSION***

The main focus of this chapter was to unpack the methodology and design of the study. This chapter endeavoured to unpack the technicalities and the activities that were involved in collecting the data pertaining to three teacher leaders in the case study school. Further attempts were made to provide a description of the context of the school; a rural secondary school in KwaZulu-Natal. The findings of the study cannot be generalised owing to uniqueness of the context of the school. In data collection an attempt was made by the researcher to guard against any form of bias.

## **CHAPTER FOUR: PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS**

### ***4.1. INTRODUCTION***

This chapter presents the major themes and findings, which were drawn from the different data collection techniques. It is divided into four sections. Firstly, all the data collected regarding the manner in which the concept of teacher leadership was enacted by each of the three Teacher Leaders in the case study school is examined. Secondly, this chapter examines the factors within the school which promote teacher leadership. The role of the stakeholders is also scrutinized i.e. the SMT, the staff, the Governing Body and the parents. A discussion of how teacher leadership was enacted in the school is dealt with using the themes that emerged in the study. The discussion that follows presents each of the teacher leaders independently. This serves to portray to the reader a clear picture about each of the teacher leaders featured in the study, according to the zones and roles of teacher leadership set out in Diagram 1 in section 3.9.1. Thirdly, this chapter also examines the factors within the school which hinder or threaten the enactment of teacher leadership. The tensions that arise from issues surrounding leadership styles, decision making and distributed leadership are explored. Finally, I conclude with the summary of the key findings with an intention of stressing the need for teacher leadership to be embraced by the educational the stakeholders in the South African schooling system for the benefit of the South African schools.

Very little or no survey data is used in chapter 4. I elected to use mainly qualitative data in presentation and discussion of findings. This decision emanated from the fact that qualitative data offers a rich description of the enactment of teacher leadership. Consequently, in retrospect I realized survey not being a useful data collection tool to properly address the first key research question i.e. how teacher leadership is enacted in a rural secondary school in KwaZulu-Natal. Moreover, with quantitative data collection methods findings were superficial which necessitated the usage of quantitative data.

In presenting data, I label the data sources in the following way: focus group interview (FGI), individual interview (I), journal entry (J. E) and document analysis (Doc).



Furthermore, in discussing the findings I refer to my 3 Teacher Leaders as TL 1, TL 2 and TL 3. The zones adapted from Grant (2008a) will be presented under discussion as z 1, z 2, z 3 and z 4. Furthermore the six roles contained in Grant (2008) were used to match the activities of the 3 Teacher Leaders in the study. As indicated by Harris and Muijs (2005), “distributed leadership is characterized as a form of collective leadership where all the people in an organization can act as leader at one time or another” (p. 2). Some practices and understandings around teacher leadership in this study were found to be in line with the above quotation. In the next section I present my first teacher leader. I have called TL 1 an events organizer because of his extensive involvement in co-curricular activities specifically in the zones of the whole school (z 3)

## ***4.2. TEACHER LEADER ONE: EVENTS ORGANISER***

I begin this section by describing TL 1. I then move on to demonstrate TL 1’s enactment of teacher leadership in terms of the range of themes that emerged in the study.

### **4.2.1 Description and Involvement Teacher Leader One in School Activities**

Teacher Leader 1 (TL1) was an African male of approximately 40 years at the time of my study. His experience involved having taught in an Adult Centre for four years before he was recruited to work in the main schooling stream three years ago. He was a language teacher who offered English (grades 10 and 11) and Zulu (grades 10 and 12) to the learners in the school. He was a man of his word and endeavoured to be a perfectionist in whatever he did. Teacher Leader 1 was always prepared and willing to share whatever was in his thoughts. He was involved in a range of events in the school, which addressed the interests of his learners and their welfare in the community. These events included HIV/AIDS awareness campaigns (Staff minutes, 2 February 2009) in which the Health Departmental personnel were organized to address the learners on HIV/AIDS related issues. Personnel from the South African Police Service (SAPS) were brought on board as well for a

campaign against drug abuse and criminal activities in the school under his leadership.

At the time of the research, TL1 was also involved in career guidance where the experts from different departments such as Health, Agriculture and the Police as well as the learning institutions such as Ladysmith Further Education and Training (FET) College were invited to offer guidance on career choices to learners in our school. Learners were assisted in that they were exposed to a range of careers they could pursue on leaving Grade 12. TL 1 assisted different subject teachers in facilitating educational tours (excursions) where learners doing Travelling and Tourism went on an excursion under his leadership which enhanced their understanding of the subject (Notes, 4<sup>th</sup> quarter, 2008). Furthermore, he served as sports coordinator for the entire school. He was tasked with the responsibility of liaising with other schools with the intention of getting the school to participate in a range of sporting activities and tournaments involving learners from other schools (Doc, Staff minutes, 2 February 2009). TL 1 was also instrumental in organizing certain co-curricular events such as Arbour Day where the learners and the teachers were taught about the issues of nature conservation, especially trees (Dc, Staff minutes, 16 November 2008). As a result, trees were planted which served to beautify the school and helped to give much needed shade to the learners during sunny days as well as the protection of the school building against windy conditions. In the next section, I move on to explore some of the themes that emerged from the data in relation to the enactment of teacher leadership by TL 1.

#### **4.2.2. Self Motivation as an Attribute of TL 1**

Data collected across the many data sets proved beyond any reasonable doubt that TL 1 was naturally self motivated in whatever he did. This emerged in the study where the inner qualities of the teacher unfolded. This firmly attested to his elevation to being a Teacher Leader; hence the bold statement was made by the teacher himself: *“Naturally, I am self motivated and self driven which makes it possible for me to take a leading role in academic matters. I am always prepared to face new challenges which are academic related. I strongly believe that education is able to bring about development in many respects (I, p.2).* The above quotation points to the nature of TL 1 which drove him to engage professionally in whatever task which was bestowed upon him. His involvement in academic issues was an indication of a Teacher Leader who was operating in the zone of the classroom (z 1) and the

zone involving working with learners outside the school on curricular activities (role 1). It also embraced role 2 which is about providing curriculum development knowledge. It further helped to reveal his belief about education which was a catalyst to his commitment in his routine dealings with the school activities. Furthermore an example of his motivation about the academic matters and his preparedness to face new challenges was not difficult to identify in the data. In one instance he was part of an initiative that set up a study camp for matriculation students who were preparing for the final examination. The following quotation highlights his commitment to matriculation students:

*Owing to the fact that most of our learners are coming from an environment which is not user friendly to preparing for the exams I therefore suggest that we book them in the nearby camping site wherein they will have to spend the night preparing for the next paper with the relevant learning area teacher (Doc, Staff minutes, 20.10.08).*

Furthermore, TL 1 was instrumental in organizing extra classes for English tuition. These English lessons contributed immensely in enhancing the learners' understanding of the language owing to the fact that English is the medium of instruction in the school. This constituted an example of teacher leadership which had an impact on the teaching and learning process in the classroom which was reflected when TL 1 "*organized extra classes for grade 11 with an aim of helping them to enhance their understanding of the language. Extra classes were scheduled after school. Learners seemed to be interested in these extra classes even though some were ignoring them or not cooperative*" (Notes, 1<sup>st</sup> quarter of 2009). This quotation was a typical example of a teacher who was self motivated and dedicated in his duty. It portrayed a teacher leader who was prepared to go an extra mile in giving the best and getting the best out of his learners. His involvement in organizing extra classes was an indication of a Teacher Leader who operated in the zone of the classroom (z 1). The attempt to help the learners to enhance their understanding of English was also in line with role 2. The phrase "teacher leader" is perfectly suited the description to such a teacher. I now move over to the section that tackles TL 1's passion for school activities.

### 4.2.3 A Passion for School Activities

The data collected revealed that TL 1 was passionate about every school activity that was assigned to him. This helped to distinguish him from the rest of the other teaching staff when it came to the question of leadership. This quality of being passionate about school activities was evident, especially in his readiness to act beyond the classroom in the area of whole school development. TL 1's interest in sport events was evidenced wherein he expressed being passionate "*about sport, which is driven by the belief that sports can help to instill the learner's positive attitude about the school. I also believe that sport can help to instill discipline to the learners*" (I, p.3). The importance of passion in this quote highlighted the care this TL 1 had about his learners' social welfare. This passion for sport was recognized by the entire staff at the school in that he was unanimously elected to a position of being a sport organizer for the school (Doc, Staff minutes. In executing his duties as a sport organizer, TL 1 had to operate in the zone involving working with other teachers and learners outside the classroom in extra-curricular activities (z 2). The confidence demonstrated by the teaching staff to TL 1 was reflective where: "*The entire staff unanimously agreed that Mr. N serve as school sport coordinator for the academic year 2009. He gladly accepted the appointment and highlighted his desire to work collaboratively with all the stakeholders*" (Staff minutes, 28 January 2009).

His passion for sports highlighted his attempts to discipline learners where he tried by all possible means to link his passion for sport activities or events to a sense of being a disciplinarian which was illustrated wherein TL 1 "*was hard on the learners who failed to show up on time during the practice session. He rebuked them by referring to the code of conduct which was agreed upon. He was very much upset about failure by some of them to bring along with them the sport attire as they agreed the previous day*" (Notes, 15 February, 2007). This quotation helped to highlight the importance of discipline when it came to issues of leadership. TL 1's obsession about sport and the issues of discipline epitomized a teacher leader who was operating in the zone involving working with the learners outside the classroom in extra-curricular activities. Effective leadership requires a leader to set the targets and endeavour to get his subjects to engage themselves on the path leading to the

achievement of the target (Spillane, 2006).

Whilst discipline was important for learners, TL 1 also recognized that his passion for teaching was underpinned by the challenges of the job which is illustrated in the excitement when he expressed enjoying teaching *“because it is challenging. This profession needs one to be prepared thoroughly before entering the classroom, because of the question and comments by learners. This is because it is a high school”* (J. E 1). Besides being interested in teaching matters, TL 1 was also passionate about the social issues which illustrated TL 1’s obsession about inculcating the religious values in the learners (irrespective of being unpopular with the current education thinking) with the intention of moulding future leaders. His seriousness about social issues was reflected when he led morning and afternoon devotions. These, *“were characterized by the rich spiritual messages with an attempt of linking them to day to day challenges of life. His messages touched the range of issues like HIV/AIDS, drug abuse and general good conduct in the community and good citizenship”* (Notes, 1<sup>st</sup> quarter 2009). This statement revealed not only the deep intentions which TL 1 had about the safety and the welfare of the learners he dealt with but also concerned about their life in totality. It portrayed the image of a teacher who was not only concerned about the academic needs of a learner but who catered for the learners’ needs in totality. I now move over to explore collaboration and support to TL 1’s enactment of leadership, which illustrates the importance of people.

#### **4.2.4 Collaboration and Support: The Importance of People**

Leadership without any form of collaboration and support is doomed to fail. In the schooling context there is a critical need for the stakeholders to support one another in every respect for the benefit of the school as an organization. This culminates in collaboration where the contribution of individuals within the school will be valued. This culture of collaboration and the need for support was evident in my study where TL 1 expressed his feelings around the support that was needed in enhancing any form of leadership within the school. Data from my study revealed that TL 1 appreciated the support which he enjoyed from the school management team (SMT), the entire staff, the learners and the parents on a number of schooling activities. In the zone of the classroom (z 1), TL 1 commented on the availability of the learners who participated in the study programme where he praised their

support by saying, *“The learners’ support is enormous in that they do avail themselves during the study programme I initiated. I am instrumental in organizing the study which is currently underway for the grade 12 students”* (I, p.4).

TL1’s appreciation of the learner’s support is underpinned by his belief in the form of leadership that was inclusive and people oriented. This was reflected when TL 1 alluded to the kind of leadership that appealed to him which *“is the form of leadership wherein the leader will be leading among his people. If a leader maintains this position he will be able to avail himself to his subjects whenever they are in need of him for support”* (FGI, 2 February 2009). This form of leadership fits within a distributed form of leadership, advocated by Spillane (2006). Furthermore, TL 1 was full of praise for the support which he enjoyed from his colleagues when they were on duty. For example, TL 1 expressed his appreciation of the support he enjoyed from his colleagues wherein he revealed that *“Educators are supportive in that during the workshops I am free to express my opinions and the educators are always willing to take my advices. Teaching materials are easily shared by all educators”* (I, p. 2). This quotation embraced role 3 which involves leading in-service education and assisting other teachers.

Furthermore, TL 1 worked really hard to develop projects in which staff worked together in the interests of the entire school. His desire to pull the staff together was underpinned by his awareness of the social issues at hand such as the terminal diseases that affect our societies. The following quotation highlights the manner in which TL 1 went about in getting the teachers working together: *“I got educators involved in a fight against HIV/AIDS, which was through engaging them on the provincial and national policies on dealing with the infected people. This resulted to the drawing of the school policy on HIV/AIDS and care”* (J E 7). The latter statement is a reflection of the fact that TL 1 was comfortable to operate in the zone involving working with other teachers and learners outside the classroom in curricular and extra-curricular activities (z 2). It also invoked role 6 which is about participating in school level decision-making, hence the decision to craft a policy on HIV/AIDS was taken. His willingness to work with other people in leadership initiatives and his recognition of the role played by other teachers was perfectly illustrated.

While TL 1 seems to be impressed by the support which he enjoyed from his colleagues, this could not be said of the SMT. TL 1 expressed some reservations about the lack of proper support from some members within the SMT. The following quotation illustrate these reservations: *“I do get the support from the SMT even though it not sufficient. I am having some reservations about the fact that an HOD sometimes fails to reveal the critical information”* (I, p.3). The following quotation reflected on the reason the HOD was unable to always provide the support to the teacher: *“TL1 was thriving to apply the NCS requirements in the delivery of his lessons and to get all the required materials in his learning area in spite of the fact that the available Mathematics and Science HOD who was serving him was not meant for the languages. He was only ‘borrowed’ to service other departments”* (Notes, 1<sup>st</sup> quarter of 2009). This quotation corroborated the call made by Day and Harris (2002) who view teacher leaders as being able *“to draw critically upon additional resource and expertise if required and to seek external assistance”* (p. 55).

Moreover, TL 1’s active participation in networking with teachers from neighbouring schools further attested to his belief in collaboration. TL 1 was, *“always willing to work with other colleagues offering the same learning area as his, this had helped to develop them in curriculum delivery....The TL 1 works comfortably with other isiZulu teachers from the neighbouring schools wherein they share the resources and teaching approaches for the benefit of the learners. He was also spotted meeting with them with an intention of setting a question paper for assessment purposes”* (Notes, 1<sup>st</sup> quarter of 2009).

In spite of the support that TL 1 claimed to enjoy from the teachers and the learners, the same cannot be said about the parental component which was mentioned by TL 1 across the data sets as being the main source of the failure of his leadership initiatives. This lack of parental support was portrayed as being responsible for hampering most of the developmental initiatives within the school. In commenting about this difficulty, TL 1 expressed his concern about the lack of parental support when he said: *“It is difficult to freely exhibit one’s leadership qualities in the context of this school because there is a lack of parental support. There are number of instances including academic activities where one*

*needs the role of parents in successful implementation of some of the school activities”* (FGI, 2 February 2009). This statement reflected the difficulty sometimes TL 1 was confronted with when operating in the zone of the school (z 3). The bottom line as illustrated by the findings was that for the school to be successful there must be unconditional support and collaboration amongst the stakeholders on a daily basis (Muijs and Harris, 2003). Having dealt with the importance of collaboration in executing the duties of the school, the next section will explore democracy as a way of working.

#### **4.2.5 Democracy as a Way of Working**

The study revealed that TL 1 believed in leadership which was based on democratic principles. The circumstances within the school had helped the teacher in question to pursue his initiatives without any disruption within the school. This further attested to TL 1’s preparedness and being comfortable to execute his duties within the zone of the school (z 3). TL 1 expressed his excitement about the democratic culture of the school where he said, *“I am impressed by the culture of the school wherein the teachers are afforded a platform of expressing themselves through the meetings that are taking place on a regular basis. These platforms give me an opportunity of expressing my opinions on a number of issues”* (I, p.2). This statement helped to align TL 1 within distributed form of leadership as it was espoused by Spillane (2006), Gunter (2005), Day and Harris (2007). The democratic environment in the school afforded TL 1 an opportunity to freely exhibit his leadership skills and to express himself on different issues which might have helped to address various problems the school might have. The culture of a school was also a breeding ground for role 6 which recognizes participating in school level decision-making. TL 1’s conviction about the democratic culture of the school was reflected in his comment wherein he portrayed his school as, *“a democratic school, in the sense that all committees and structures were constituted democratically. Learners were represented as the stakeholders, parents and members of the community were also part of the decision making”* (J E 1). Moreover the implementation of democracy was witnessed when TL 1 as Teacher Liaising Officer (TLO) was conducting the voting for Representative Council of Learners (RCL). During the election process learners were: *“encouraged to participate in this democratic exercise through their vote”* (Notes, 1<sup>st</sup> quarter of 2009). This statement is an illustration of the fact that the activities of TL 1 were



underpinned by his democratic beliefs.

TL 1's thinking around the issues of democracy were reflected when the said teacher expressed his opinion on the form of leadership that was appealing to him. He revealed being "*impressed with the form of leadership which is based on the will of the people wherein the leader is prepared to take his subject as his colleagues not as their boss. I am opposed to a leader who is leading from the front wherein his subjects are far behind which makes them not to be in a position of relating to them*" (FGI, 2 February 2009). The study around the question of democracy revealed the importance of an open leadership style which helped to get the best out of the teacher when it came to the day-to-day school's activities. The study demonstrated the need for consultation and openness to other people's opinions for the smooth and effective running of a school. I now move over to the importance of communication.

#### **4.2.6 The Importance of Communication in the Running of the School**

Communication is one of the themes that featured across data sets from TL 1 in this study. The study revealed TL 1's excitement with communication as the main exercise around which successful leadership in the context of the school ought to be based. TL1 expressed his strong appreciation of a leader who is able to communicate with his followers and engage them on a number of issues pertaining to school. His comment on the issues of communication was reflected when he said, "*The first thing I will do is to communicate with all the stakeholders and try to establish the goals under which the given school is operating. I will then attempt to position myself within the operational channels of a given school and begin to exhibit all the leadership qualities which might have been bottled up before*" (FGI, 2 February 2009). This comment did not only serve to portray the belief the TL 1 had about communication but also helped to demonstrate the solutions which could be obtained when the communication channels were cleared. It also helped to portray TL 1 as a teacher who was happy to execute his duties at school level by bringing on board all the stakeholders (z 3). He further expressed his strong reservations about a form of leadership which was imposed and forced upon others.

The study also illustrated that there was a level of communication between the SMT

members and the teachers in relation to decision making at the school. This helped to make a good impression on the teacher in question, as the following statement illustrates: *“I am quite impressed about the fact that the SMT does involve the entire staff when it comes to decision making. This is done through the general meetings which are held once in every quarter. This helps the individual teachers to reflect on every issue pertaining to the smooth running of the school”* (I, p. 2). Moreover communication was not only important between SMT members and its teachers but also between teachers and parents. The impact of communication with parents will have bearing on the teaching and learning process in the zone of the classroom (z 1). TL1 supported the idea of regular meetings with parents in an attempt to improve relations and communication amongst the stakeholders. His comment reflected his strong conviction about the importance of meeting parents when he said:

*My suggestion is that at the end of each and every quarter we organize the parents’ day wherein the parents will be invited to come and monitor the work of their pupils. This will help to enhance the required relations between teachers and parents; teachers will be in a position to draw the attention of the parents to learners’ problems* (Doc, Staff minutes, 2 February 2009).

Furthermore TL 1 highlighted a number of benefits and the advantages which could be obtained through the parents’ meetings. He was of the view that this would have an effect on the behaviour of the learners as:

*Communication with the parents could culminate to an improvement in the behaviour and education of a learner. Therefore there is a need for parents to be brought on board whether there is a bad or good situation, so that they can feel that they are part or they can play an important role in school activities at stake* (J E 6).

This quotation points to a strong belief that TL 1 had about the importance of communication with all the stakeholders for the benefit of the school. However, there seemed to be some instances where communication was unable to bring about the smooth

running of the school. In relation to communication with parents, TL 1 explained how leadership initiative failed in spite of the proper usage of the channels of communication as the following quotation illustrates:

*As a sport organizer I was in charge of facilitating for our learners to take part in the cultural event. I followed all the procedures. I communicated with other teachers and the principal about the event. I was given the green light that they are fully behind the preparations. Everything went well until the last week before we leave for the event, where the learners told me that they do not have money (J. E 2).*

In summary, the study demonstrated TL 1's need for communication in all the spheres of the school life. For him, communication played a fundamental role in the day to day running of the school as some of the difficulties highlighted by the study could be attributed to the lack of proper communication amongst the stakeholders. Communication is central to the practice of distributed leadership (Gunter, 2005; Spillane, 2006; Day and Harris, 2007). Having tackled the importance of communication, I now move over to the importance of development of teachers and learners.

#### **4.2.7 The Importance of Development of Teachers and Learners**

Development featured prominently in most of the data sets in my study. The question of development was highlighted as the vehicle through which teachers and the learners could be helped to grow in their respective roles. This served to illustrate TL 1's sense of growth which was expected from every stakeholder within the school, which would culminate in the school's activities meeting the fundamental aspects of the society we are living in i.e. economy, politics and social. This was clearly illustrated when TL 1 was reflecting on the measures which ought to be taken in promoting teacher leadership in the zone involving working with other teachers and learners outside the classroom in curricular and extra-curricular activities (z 2). TL 2 also emphasized the importance of development in the zone of the classroom.

He envisaged teacher leadership taking place in community development where he expressed his feelings that *“teacher leadership can be improved by being involved in community development as well as some of the social gatherings. It can also be improved by being together as staff members sharing ideas and developing one another”* (J E 6). This statement stressed the importance of teacher leadership at a community level as well as for teachers to establish common ground which would culminate in smooth working relationships. It also catered for the one involving working with other teachers outside the classroom in curricular and extra-curricular activities (z 2). The statement also matched the zone which looked at teacher leadership beyond the school (z 4). The role that speaks to leading in-service education and assisting other teachers (role 3) was also accommodated in the above statement. The study further highlighted TL 1’s ultimate aim of being involved in development process as the following statement demonstrates: *“I feel great if I see my duty of nurturing and moulding the learner coming to finality, wherein a learner progresses in life.”* (FGI, 2 February 2009).

The latter statement epitomized a Teacher Leader who took satisfaction from watching his former learners prospering in life. This helped to portray the reason for TL 1 to be committed to his developmental role. The study also revealed his belief in collective efforts when it came to further developmental issues in relation to his learners in the zone of the classroom (z 1) where he wanted his learners’ development in languages. For this to be achieved, *“all the teachers need to be part of developing the learners’ language proficiency by encouraging the learners to communicate in English. This can be done by strictly adhering to English as a medium of instruction in every learning area”* (Staff minutes, 28 January 2009).

In summary, a passion for school activities, both academic and non academic was a driving force behind TL 1, who did not wait to be instructed in carrying out his duties. The theme about collaboration and support revealed the importance of bringing the people on board about the activities within the school. Working with the people ought to be driven by democracy, communication and a sense of development as it was illustrated in the study. In

the next section I present TL 2. Her involvement in giving care to the learners with special needs has prompted me to refer to her as the care giver.

### **4.3 TEACHER LEADER 2: CARE GIVER**

I begin this section by describing TL 2. I then move on to explore her involvement in a range of school leadership activities which are presented thematically.

#### **4.3.1 Description of TL 2 and her Involvement in Pastoral Care and Counseling**

Teacher leader 2, an African female, was aged between 30 and 40 years at the time of the study. She was a lady of impeccable integrity, with strong values and a high level of resolve. She was extremely well organized, inclusive and worked well with other people. TL 2 had an ingrained sense of fairness and her career demonstrated this. She was under-qualified in that she taught with a matriculation certificate plus an Adult Basic Education (ABET) certificate. She had been a teacher for 3 years. She taught Life Sciences in Grades 10-12 and English in Grades 8 and 10. In all the learning areas she offered she strived to be the perfectionist in that she saw to it that she provided the teaching material for the effective delivery of her learning area. While she was not a sport fanatic she was involved in extra mural-activities in a capacity of counseling and supporting the vulnerable learners who experienced a range of different problems.

Through her interventions, quite a number of learners were assisted in their respective predicaments. The study uncovered the role that was played by TL 2 in the development of the learners through the process of teaching which happened to be the main area of operation in which the said teacher was comfortable. This help to affirm TL 2's main zone of operation, the classroom (z 1). Her seriousness about teaching also corroborated role 1 which calls for continuing to teach and improve one's teaching. TL 2 was proud to reveal her involvement in offering pastoral care and counseling when she said, "*I have a great*

*input in developing my school I am a teacher who possesses skills of solving problems. As a teacher I am able to identify a learner who needs help in different ways, even with educators I am able to develop those who need my help” (I, p.1).* Furthermore, TL 2’s sense of caring was comfortably transferred to her professional life when she mentioned her wish to be professionally developed in order to execute her pastoral care in an effective manner. The envisaged development which TL 2 highlighted was to be undertaken through working collaboratively with other stakeholders. The following quotation reflects the need to be empowered on the issues of development:

*I would like to be developed in filing as well as to be skilled in helping those learners who are experiencing learning problems. I would also be interested in developing myself when it comes to crafting the subject policy (J E 4).*

The above quotation highlighted the fact that TL 2 did not wish to be developed for the sake of it but with an intention to further pursue her intrinsic motivation about the issues of caring for the learners with different learning problems both in the zone of the classroom and beyond. Her obsession about development was further manifested when she mentioned being involved in development for the sake of helping the learners to realize their potential and become motivated, despite poor socio economic background from which most of the learners came. This was also illustrated, when she said:

*The possibility of identifying the unknown capabilities from the learners serves as a motivating factor. The problem with most of the learners is that they are from poor socio economic background, therefore I take pride in helping them in every way possible to get them realize their potential. I am involved generally with the learners who need different assistance, which happens to be the area I always involve myself with (I, p.2).*

Furthermore, TL 2 stressed the importance for a teacher leader: *“to be a role model by avoiding doing bad things in front of the learners. A leader also needs to possess different skills of helping the learners, be able to solve any problem the learner brings forward for his*

*attention without any failure*” (Journal Entry 1). TL 2 was also found to be instrumental in helping the learners with problems in different ways and, in so doing, the teacher won their confidence in that they freely confided about their problems to the teacher. Problems ranged from abuse in the family ranks, being unable to meet all the school requirements due to a lack of finance as well as problems related to teenagers. The following quote attests to this: *“learners with different problems were observed going to TL 2 for her advices and help. All those learners were enjoying her undivided attention”* (Notes, 4<sup>th</sup> quarter of 2008). This quotation points to genuine concern which TL 2 had about caring for the needs of her learners. The next section will explore passion for curriculum issues and improved teaching.

#### **4.3.2 The Passion for Curriculum Issues and Improved Teaching**

Curriculum-related issues dominated the professional life of TL 2. The study revealed that the teacher was involved in a number of curriculum activities which indicated teacher leadership in the zone of the classroom (z 1). The following comment reflected her undivided commitment to her teaching duties, *“A desire to be the best in whatever I do is the motivating factor. This desire is reflective in my learning areas. I want to help my learners to have an informed decision when they choose a career they wish to pursue, therefore my teaching is career oriented”* (I, p.3). This comment did not only attest to the commitment the teacher had about curriculum issues but also highlighted her long term goal of loyalty to her learners and the school. It is also an example of role 2 which calls for providing curriculum development knowledge.

Moreover the study reflected the instances where TL 2 was found to be going an extra mile in trying to organize the teaching material from the neighbouring schools with the intention of making her lessons more effective. This was an indication of a teacher leader who was operating in the zone between neighbouring schools in the community (zone 4). This was made possible by TL 2’s active involvement with cluster schools’ activities (Notes, 1<sup>st</sup> quarter of 2009) wherein she positively exploited the relationship that she forged with the teachers from the neighbouring schools. The following quotation reflected the manner in which TL 2 went about in successful effecting curriculum delivery and organizing material:

*The TL 2 was found to be instrumental in organizing textbooks for the learners through networking with neighbouring schools. It was through her initiatives that the school was able to source previous question papers for grade 12 for revision purpose. TL 2 was also encouraging the learners to bring newspapers in order to help them to enhance their English language proficiency (Notes, 1<sup>st</sup> quarter of 2009).*

A teacher who was committed to her duties and prepared to leave no stone unturned in order to get her learners to enjoy quality education was highlighted in the above quotation. TL 2 did not want the circumstances around her to impact negatively on her teaching such as the shortage of teaching material. In addition there was evidence of a teacher leader who was willing to work in the zone involving working with other teachers in curricular and extra-curricular activities (z 2). This was illustrated when TL 2 stressed “*the importance for all teachers to be part of cluster activities since they help to facilitate networking with other schools, moreover the school stands to benefit in terms of sharing resources. This opinion was seconded by most of the teachers*” (Minutes of the staff meeting, 28 January 2009).

TL 2’s commitment to curriculum issues and improved learning was also evident during the study where extra time was organized for additional tuition for her learners. Her being motivated about the curriculum issues and improved learning helped to uncover one of the qualities TL 2 possessed which was being a disciplinarian. This was typical of a leader who was prepared to achieve her goals and would not allow any obstacle to stand in her way. The manner in which she went about in her duty was reflected where: “*TL 2 was found to be instrumental in organizing extra classes over the weekends where she applied strong disciplinary measures to those learners who were not turning up for extra classes accordingly. This served to reveal the side of being strict where she took no nonsense*” (Notes, 1<sup>st</sup> quarter of 2009). This statement pointed to the critical commitment of TL2 to her learners. Her motivation was perhaps because of her family background which was underpinned by a strong desire for success. The following comment highlights TL 2’s



motivation about the curriculum issues as being driven by her family philosophy: *“As a family we speak a lot as to how we can develop ourselves through education, since we are loving family we love other people. What I can say is that we are a successful family”* (J. E 1).

The study has so far illustrated TL 2 as a person who was motivated about curriculum issues and improved teaching in the zone of the classroom (z 1). In the next section I explore the role of collaboration in the life of TL 2.

### **4.3.3 Collaboration with Colleagues on Professional Issues**

For any educational institution to be successful, collaboration among the teaching personnel plays a central role in the development of the school as well as in each and every individual teacher’s professional growth (Harris, 2004). This was endorsed in this study where, on a number of occasions TL 2 claimed to be instrumental in the development of other teachers through collaborating with them on professional issues outside the classroom in curricular and extra-curricular activities (z 2). TL 2 was confident about the benefits of working with other teachers in the improvement of learners where she emphasized *“a need for the teacher leader to be able to work with other teachers. This will enable a teacher leader to be in a position of developing other teachers. In return he will be developed through his working relationship with other teachers”* (FGI, 2 February 2009). This quotation indicates that TL 2’s involvement in professional growth of her colleagues helped to build confidence from her colleague which is a critical area in every leadership activity. It demonstrated the fact that TL 2 was comfortable in operating in role 3 which promotes leading in-service education and assisting other teachers.

The study uncovered TL 2 being instrumental in helping other teachers in many educational activities such as mentoring, development in curriculum delivery and the interpretation of the school policies. For an example, *“TL 2 seemed to be enjoying the confidence of her colleagues who were observed on many occasions looking up to her for professional advice. One of the teachers was in the dark about lesson preparation which was underpinned by National Curriculum Statement (NCS). TL 2 had to sit down with the teacher in question explaining as to how lesson was arranged using the Assessment Standards (AS)”* (Notes, 1<sup>st</sup>

quarter of 2009).

Furthermore, TL 2 was concerned about eradicating absenteeism, late coming and a lack of commitment in professional duties which negatively impacted on the expected professional life of a teacher in the school context. The study uncovered that, to TL 2, collaboration among the teachers complemented the protection of a learner's fundamental right to teaching and learning. In her attempt to do away with such unwanted elements, she used whatever platform that was available where she was seen:

*Working cooperatively with other teachers, where she brought their attention on issues like eradicating absenteeism among the learners as well as late coming. She also suggested to the SMT the need for the creation of the study time table, which also served as a homework time table. Teachers from the neighbouring school were observed coming to her for advices pertaining to Life Science (Notes, 1<sup>st</sup> quarter of 2009 & 4<sup>th</sup> quarter of 2008).*

This statement is the evidence of the collaborative effort which TL 2 created in zone 2 and which was utilized for the benefit of both teachers and the learners. It corroborates the view of Mitchell and Sackey (2001, p. 105) who refer to a "collaborative climate among the teachers" which gives attention to the voice of all stakeholders. It was an example of role 3 which calls for leading in-service education and assisting other teachers. Furthermore, the issues of discipline and calling into order those teachers who deviated from their duties were instilled through collaboration as it was evident when she expressed his opinion in the following quotation: *"I suggest that teachers who are not part of the sport codes that are being prepared for an incoming trip must assist the teachers who are concerned with the sport by maintaining a discipline to those learners who are non cooperative. It is upsetting to see a teacher who is not involved in sport doing something else during the sport day"* (Doc, Staff minutes, 15 March 2009).

The latter statement is an indication of a teacher leader who was prepared to instill her work ethic to other colleagues for the development of a number of school aspects such as sport

and the maintenance of discipline. My take on this statement is that teachers, regardless of their duties and interest, should strive to work collaboratively as a team in handling the big events at school such as sport day. The study so far has helped to illuminate the importance of collaborative efforts in the leadership practice of the school as espoused by Spillane (2006) when he refers to interaction between leaders, followers and their situation. I turn my attention to the next section which will explore the importance of communication in the enactment of teacher leadership.

#### **4.3.4 The Importance of Communication**

The importance of communication was illustrated in the study when TL 2 communicated successfully with the stakeholders across the zone of the school (z 3) with the intention of addressing both academic and non academic matters. Communication proved to be a vehicle for TL 2's professional working relationship with stakeholders. Problems experienced by the learners were also addressed through TL 2's working together with her colleagues through communication. This was reflected, when she said, *I communicate with my colleagues on the learners' problems like teenage pregnancy; this culminates to us working together in formulating the relevant solution. I also enjoy support through communicating with my colleagues on assisting the learners with exceptional talents. They communicate their ideas on how to assist those learners* (I, p.4).

This quotation portrays the image of the school where teachers were allowed to express themselves through formal meetings and private consultations on different issues for the smooth running of the school. This was a typical example in which communication was used in the zone of the whole school (z 3) in school level decision-making (role 6). The bottom line was that learners stood to benefit in different ways since teachers were able to communicate amongst themselves: *"I strongly believe in proper communication channels which can be used to link the management with the entire staff. It can also be used with an intention of selling ideas to all the stakeholders"* (FGI, 2 February 2009). This statement attested to what Spillane (2006) referred to as a distributed form of leadership in issues of school level decision-making. TL 2 further expressed herself on the academic needs of learners, where she stressed the need *to communicate with the parents about the failure of some of Grade 12 learners to attend extra classes....Teachers need to communicate and*

*work together in order realize the true potential among the learners....teachers must learn to give learners a platform to talk about their problems* (Doc, Minutes of the staff meeting, 28 January 2009).

TL 2's activities always served the interests of learners and there was no doubt in her mind that communication between the teachers and the learners ought to address the learners' needs. TL 2 was able to mobilize other teachers with the intention of getting them to address the learners' needs where she was: *"observed taking part in informal discussions with other teachers about the learners who were absenting themselves from school. This helped to open the eyes of the class teachers who took the drastic steps in eradicating those bad habits. The TL2 communicated with other female teachers to play a role in trying to help the female learners around the issues of teenage pregnancy"* (Notes, 1<sup>st</sup> quarter of 2009). This statement pointed to the role that can be played by communication in addressing school related issues. This was in line with the view of Sackney and Dibski (1994) who stress the importance of a shared vision based on effective communication. The study uncovered that there were many learners in the case study school who were orphaned who lacked the parental guidance, support and care. Under these circumstances learners needed someone to act as their parents, for them to be able to confide about whatever problem they had. The bottom line was that those learners with problems needed someone who was trustworthy, who will uplift them spiritually and help to fine tune their future. TL 2 played this role of a mother figure which was entrusted to her by the learners, where she seemed *"to be enjoying full confidence of the learners hence she was seen being in serious talks about their problems ranging from academic related problems and the problems emanated from their respective families with them. This kind of communication culminated in parents being brought on board around the issues pertaining to their pupils"* (Notes, 1<sup>st</sup> quarter of 2009 & 4<sup>th</sup> quarter of 2008).

Besides being active in responding to the needs of her learners and in addressing their problems, TL 2's communication skills also went beyond the case study school, wherein good relations were forged with the teachers from neighbouring schools (z 4). The following quotation depicts the benefit which could be mutually enjoyed by the teachers from

neighbouring schools if proper channels of communication were well exploited: “TL 2 was observed on many occasions liaising with the teachers from the cluster on different issues such as sharing of resources, cross teaching, assessment and so forth” (Notes, 4<sup>th</sup> quarter of 2008). TL 2 was able to effectively execute her professional duties out of exploiting the communication channels with all the stakeholders for the benefit of her learners as it was demonstrated by the study. I now move on to explore the barriers encountered by TL 2 that impacted negatively on the enactment of teacher leadership.

#### **4.3.5 Barrier to leadership for TL 2: Lack of Parental Support**

For any form of leadership to be effective and be in a position to respond to the daily needs of those that are being led, there must be unconditional support that is offered to the one executing leadership. This study uncovered that on a number of occasions, TL 2 expressed her dissatisfaction on the fact that one of the support systems crucial to the daily operation of the school which happened to be the parental component, was lacking when it came to the question of support. TL 2 reflected in her comment why there was a lack of parental support: “*the parental support is almost non existence owing to the fact that most of the parents lack formal education. There are very few parents who turn up during open day events which are organized with an aim of getting parents to monitor their pupils’ academic work*” (I, p.4). This statement is a typical example of a situation which proved to be an obstacle to the leadership practices of TL 2. The claim of the lack of parental support which manifested itself where parents failed to turn up during the parental meetings was corroborated by the data in the study when parents failed to offer support at critical moments as the following quotation highlights:

*Parents were invited to school to attend to learners who were having different problems including those with disciplinary problems, but they failed to turn up. Results were issued at the end of the fourth quarter of 2008 but parents failed to come to school to meet with the teacher around the results of their pupils in spite of being informed to do so well in advance. Failure to honour the financial obligation from the parents was the order of the day (Notes, 4<sup>th</sup> quarter of 2008 & 1<sup>st</sup> quarter of 2009).*

The quotation above is a further illustration of the threat emanating from the lack of parental support that TL 2 was confronted with. Furthermore the study uncovered that the entire staff was concerned about the lack of parental support. An example of this staff concern was evidence when staff was brainstorming about the solutions which they could use to eradicate the tendency by the parents of distancing themselves from the school. In contributing to the meeting TL 2 reflected her thoughts when she said, *“I suggest that the SGB be used extensively in bringing the parents on board to attend to school events”* (Doc, Staff minutes, 16 March 2009). Furthermore, staff members suggested a range of ideas like organizing a party of some sort which would attract the parents to come to school. The study revealed that lack of parental support adversely affected any form of leadership initiative, as was illustrated in the following comment: *“A leader has to be supported all the way; this will help to unfold his leadership abilities through the support that he will be getting from the people he leads. One cannot afford to exhibit the kind of leadership which is required in the school like the one we are serving since the parents are unable to offer the required support”* (FGI, 2 February 2009).

Besides the lack of parental support, the geographical position of the school was uncovered by the study as a challenge to the leadership practices of TL 2. The case study school is almost 70 km from the nearest town, which posed a challenge when it came to the acquisition of resources such as accessing the material from the community library and forging relationship with the business people based in town for the benefit of the school. Be that as it may, teachers in this school (including TL 2) were found to be striving against all odds. This emerged when TL 2 reflected on her feelings about working in the case study school, where she said, *Working in this school with challenges makes me feel proud of myself, since I have witnessed the fruit of being a teacher leader even though there are challenges like not having sufficient material, I am proud with some of my learners who are striving for excellency in spite of being in geographic disadvantage hence they are living in rural areas where there is lack of resources* (Journal Entry 5). This statement pointed to the fact that some of the learners might have been influenced by TL 2 to strive for excellency.

The study revealed the challenging conditions under which TL 2 was working. Lack of parental support and the geographical position of the school were mentioned as the main threats to the leadership practices of TL 2. A parallel can be drawn between the experiences of TL 1 and TL 2 where both of them expressed dissatisfaction about the lack of parental support. This serves to confirm the existence of the problem in the case study school which needs the attention of the relevant structures. In the next section I present my third teacher leader. His enthusiasm and extensive involvement in sport activities precipitated me to refer to him as the sports fanatic.

#### ***4.4 TEACHER LEADER 3: THE SPORT FANATIC***

Physical education plays a critical role in the school life of learners and TL 3 was able to exhibit his leadership qualities through physical education and sport. His involvement in sport was appreciated, not only within the case study school, but attracted the attention of other schools within the circuit. The current study was able to unlock several themes around the leadership involvement of TL 3; this helped to portray the complete picture of TL 3 as an academic and non academic activist. His involvement with the sport activities attested to his operation in the zone involving working with other teachers and learners outside the classroom in curricular and extra-curricular activities (z 2) and the zone outside the classroom in the whole school development (z 3). I begin this section by describing TL 1 and his involvement in sport which happened to be his main area of leadership. I then move on to illustrate TL 3's enactment of teacher leadership in terms of a range of themes.

##### **4.4.1 The Description of TL 3 and His Involvement in Sport**

TL 3, an African male, was aged between 30 and 40 years at the time of the study. He had taught in the case study school for the past 15 years. He hailed from the area where the case study school was located. He was highly dedicated in whatever he did, more especially in sport events. At the time of the study he offered Geography in Grades 10-12 and Life Orientation in Grades 10-12. He had a direct interest in career guidance and issues pertaining to career choices. This was evident where, "*ex-students were looking up to his*

*intervention when it came to applying to different institutions of higher learning. These ex-students were also assisted in terms of filling up the forms for applying for jobs”* (Notes, 1<sup>st</sup> quarter of 2009). Furthermore, he was very versatile when it came to sport issues, taking care of sporting codes like cricket, volleyball and athletics across the school (z 2). His passion about sports did not go unnoticed by the local schools which had, on a number of occasions, asked for his intervention when it came to those sport codes regarded in the South African context as a former “White Man’s sport”, like cricket and volley ball (z 4) (Notes, 1<sup>st</sup> quarter of 2009). His sports involvement makes him the best friend of the learners across the school.

As can be expected learners did not find it difficult to approach TL 3 when they had personal problems, which culminated in him playing a similar role to TL 2. The difference was that TL 3’s pastoral care was confined to the learners who participated in sport, whereas TL 2’s pastoral care role embraced learners across the school. TL 3’s involvement in sport went with the responsibility of ensuring that all learners participated in sport activities with the intention of helping to unearth a variety of talents. This was reflected in his comment where he said: *“I see to it that there is maximum participation of learners, by making sure that participation is balanced throughout the school existing sporting codes, I also make sure that as educators we are also directly involved”* (J. E 7). This quote reflects the seriousness and unconditional commitment TL 3 had about sport activities. This was a kind of leadership which catered for the entire learner population in the school and which sought to realize the learners’ potential in sport without any form of discrimination. What emerged from the study was TL 3’s commitment in sport events where he drew the attention of the School Management Team around the acquisition of sports equipment (z 3, role 6). For an example, TL 3 was seen, *“on a number of occasions visiting the Principal’s office asking for the procurement of sport equipment. When this equipment is acquired TL 3 saw to it that it is kept in a safe place, the strict measures were placed around the utilization of sport equipment. When it comes to engagement of learners in different sport codes TL 3 was much comfortable when he was alone with the learners”* (Notes, 4<sup>th</sup> quarter of 2008 & 1<sup>st</sup> quarter of 2009).



This quotation refers to the safe keeping of sport equipment which became the responsibility of TL 3. His passion for sport was strategically transferred to the learners whose participation in sport was used to develop in learners a sense of responsibility and care for equipment. Moreover, the conduct of the learners who participated in sport improved drastically, owing to the fact that TL 3 taught life skills and instilled discipline during sport. This was reflected in his comment where he said: *My influence through sport has begun to bear some fruit out of guiding many learners against the dangers of smoking. To me it is an achievement that since I have spoken to them against smoking, the rate of smoking in general has drastically decreased. I was also instrumental in discouraging the learners in involving themselves in cultural events which are detrimental to education through getting them to participate in sport* (I, p.3). This quotation highlighted the kind of leadership which was influential and beneficial amongst the pupils in terms of the development of good conduct. This kind of leadership stood the chance of going a long way since it was not enforced but strategically inculcated through sport involvement. The teacher's passion for the sport events was always ready to be extended to learners. The following quotation further attests to TL 3's willingness to use his sportsmanship in relation to the learners:

*TL 3 was witnessed developing sportsmanship amongst the learners which in return forged friendship between the TL 3 and the learners who participated with enthusiasm in his sport initiatives. The learners who took part in Volleyball were remarkable for their good conduct in school life in general* (Observation, 1<sup>st</sup> quarter of 2009 and 4<sup>th</sup> quarter of 2008).

The manner in which TL 3 dealt with the learners was witnessed when he *“met with the learners on several occasion with an aim of discussing the envisaged trips associated with sports. In those meeting the learners were free to express themselves on a number of issues related to that trip. The SMT, parents and the entire staff were briefed on a number of occasions about those trips”* (Notes, 1<sup>st</sup> quarter of 2009). This quotation is an evidence of TL 3's willingness to develop amongst the learners long lasting communication skills as well as the culture of respecting one another's point of view hence different opinions

emerged during the sport meetings.

The study portrayed TL 3 as the sport fanatic where the learners were the main beneficiaries in his passion for the sport events. Parallel can be drawn between TL 3 and TL 1, since TL 1 was partly involved in sport activities. The difference was that with TL 3, sport seemed to be his main area of operation, whereas TL 1 happened to be involved with sport through his primary involvement as events' organizer. TL 3's sportsmanship could not have come at a better time given the vision our government of the day has about the youth participation in sport events in our country. In the next section the focus will be on TL 3's involvement in the issues of teaching, learning and development.

#### **4.4.2 TL 3's Passion about the Issues of Teaching, Learning and Development**

Besides being a sport fanatic, TL 3 was also passionate about teaching and learning activities in the zone of the classroom that were central to his professional life. The issues of teaching, learning and development were common among all the participants (TL 1, 2 & 3). The difference was that, with TL 2, it seemed to be her main area of operation. It emerged from the study that TL 3 contextualized issues of teaching and learning within the framework of development. This was evidence when the teacher clarified the driving force behind his involvement in teaching, where he said, *"My deep desire of being a role model to the learners is my main driving force. The knowledge that through teaching I am helping to create the future of the learners is one of the driving forces"* (I, p.1). This was further evident when the teacher reflected on his leadership style which he claimed were underpinned by the sense of development and building confidence in them (FGI). This was corroborated by Hoy and Hoy (2003) who argue that learner motivation is enhanced when teachers use strategies that help learners develop confidence in their ability to learn.

Furthermore, TL 3 was explicit about his intentions of teaching which were to empower the learners in order to prepare them for the future. Through his engagement in the zone of the classroom (z 1) TL 3 intended to uplift his learners' standard of living by developing their learning skills in order for them to be able to work their way out of poverty, which he

claimed was one of his main objectives (FGI). TL 3's obsession with teaching was evident when he was observed working in order to improve and develop learning amongst his learners through *"involving himself in extra classes as well as organizing some learners for special classes with an aim of developing them in English"* (Notes, 1<sup>st</sup> quarter of 2009). His sense of development extended beyond the case study school into z 4 when he, *"was also observed being much involved with developing the learners including those from a local primary school in different sport codes"* (Notes, 1<sup>st</sup> quarter of 2009). The issues of development through teaching are well reflected in these quotations. TL 3 was clearly prepared to go the extra mile in his duties by leading his learners in extra classes. This form of leadership catered for the slow learners hence through additional time remedial work featured.

Furthermore, commitment to the issues of teaching and learning was also communicated to other teachers. This was a reflection of a teacher leader who operated in the zone involving working with other teachers outside the classroom in curricular activities (z 2). Commitment to teaching and learning was illustrated in the following quotation: *"Teachers need to be in the same boat of thinking regarding the question of providing quality education, if one staff member deviates from his teaching duties we are all going to fail in our respective duties"* (Doc, Staff minutes, 28 January 2009).

Moreover the study uncovered that TL 3 had a good relationship with his learners which yielded the good results. His accessibility was, *"strategically exploited by the learners for academic purpose / benefit; he was very dedicated in the learning areas he offered. He was offering Geography in Grade 10 to 12 (during the study). Although he was not a language teacher but he was willing to go an extra mile by getting involved in helping the learners to master English language"* (Notes, 4<sup>th</sup> quarter of 2008). TL 3 successfully balanced his friendship with the learners and his being a disciplinarian. This was reflected in the following quotation: *"His intimate relationship with the learners does not compromise the command of discipline from the learners; he is one of the disciplinarian teachers in the case study school"* (Observation, 1<sup>st</sup> quarter of 2009). The sense of discipline as it emerged in the study was in line with discipline expected in every sport code, since the success in sport relied on high level of discipline among the participants, which was the case with TL 3. The

next section explores the importance of communication in the school's activities.

#### **4.4.3 The Role of Communication in Leadership**

Across the data sets, communication in leadership played a vital role in the day-to-day business of the school. In as much as it was the case with TL 1 and TL 2 it was also the case with TL 3 whose activities were found to be embedded in communicating with various stakeholders on a daily basis, both in the zone involving working with other teachers outside the classroom in curricular and extra-curricular activities (z 2) and the zone involving the whole school (z 3). The study also uncovered that the exercise of liaising with the people called for a leader to forge a good working relationship with the people he dealt with on a daily basis. The centrality of communication is evidenced in this quote:

*To every leader or person who aspires to lead communication is important. It is through communication that we learn about other people, communication makes it possible for people to get to know each other. It takes a good communication skill to have people listening to you (J. E 3).*

This reflected a leader who understood the need to be of service to the people; not a leader who expected to be served by the people. It further challenged the notion and the traditional concept of leadership that an effective leader is the one who give orders and the people ought to unconditionally obey and follow a leader. This was further proven in the following quotation: “*I strongly believe that to become an effective leader people must not struggle to understand you – communication is an important tool that links you as a leader with people you lead*” (I, p. 3). In addition, TL 3 reflected on the role played by communication in the zone of the classroom (z 1) and the zone of the school (z 3) in the following statement:

*I believe that the teacher leader needs to exhibit leadership qualities in the classroom and beyond wherein he communicates with all the stakeholders i.e. the learners, parents and the educators. The advantage of communication can be drawn from the learners who are having personal problems and which calls for the intervention of a teacher (FGI).*

The importance of communication in this quotation was not only mentioned but its advantage as well was reflected which was to address the personal problems learners had. What was prudent about TL 3 was that he was not only expressing good ideas about the importance of teacher leadership but the study witnessed his *“being instrumental in organizing parents for the grade 12 learners in order to be updated about their pupils’ schooling activities. TL 3 was also observed being active in the meeting of the staff wherein he communicated his ideas on academic as well as on non academic matters”* (Notes, 1<sup>st</sup> quarter of 2009 and 4<sup>th</sup> quarter of 2008). This statement is a reflection of TL 3’s ability to communicate in order to address the needs of learners. The TL 3’s concern about the utilization of communication with an intention of addressing different school related issues including the question of teaching and learning is further reflecting in the following quotation: *“I believe that study camp need to be set up for the grade 12 learners in line with the preparation for the upcoming examination in order to assist them to catch up with the scope of work to be covered”* (Doc, Staff minutes, 16 September 2008). The important role played by communication in the practice of school leadership, as far as TL 3 was concerned, was of vital importance. The current study was able to prove the central role played by communication in forging good working relationship between the role players within the school. In the next section the focus will be on the importance of the democratic values in the school activities.

#### **4.4.4 The Importance of the Democratic Values in the Business of the School**

A strong sense of democracy was evident throughout the study from the data sets. This helped to illustrate the kind of leadership which was associated with the TL 3. In the school context, democracy was mentioned as the leadership practice required in order to get the best out of the people a teacher leader worked with, in the zone outside the classroom in whole school development (zone 3). This was illustrated when TL 3 expressed himself on the form of leadership which appealed to him as the following quotation attests:

*The form of leadership which also appeals to me is the one that is based on democracy. Where all the teachers are free to express themselves on issues*

*pertaining to the school. This form of leadership will go a long way in giving the people a sufficient space for them to exercise their leadership skills or roles which in return will help to get the best out of their ability (FGI, 2 February 2009).*

Furthermore, the study also revealed instances wherein TL 3 had to rely on democratic processes in order to get the support from the stakeholders. This confirmed the TL 3's ability to get the job done without imposing on his colleagues and the learners when operating in the zone outside the classroom in whole school development (zone 3). This was reflective in his comment about such support where he said:

*I was impressed with the support I got from the grade 12 learners' parents. At one stage I organized a meeting in collaboration with the SMT where we sat with the parents trying to initiate study camp for final examination. Through negotiations we had with them we were able to come up with a plan wherein teachers were to volunteer to monitor the study for grade 12 learners. This helped to improve the grade 12 results (I, p.4).*

The results of allowing the people to air their views in an unthreatening environment is clearly articulated in this quotation, where the stakeholders had to take a constructive decision which bore the results which were enjoyed by all the participants in a long run. This was an example of role 6 which embraces participating in school level decision-making. The sense of democracy was further evident in the study where TL 3 reflected on moments in the zone of the school (z 3) where the school policies needed to address crucial issues were crafted along the democratic principles as the following quotation illustrates: *"I got educators involved in a fight against HIV and AIDS, which was through engaging them on the Provincial and National Policies on dealing with the infected and affected people. This resulted to the drawing of the school policy on HIV/AIDS"* (Journal Entry 7).

Furthermore, the study went as far as establishing the fact that TL 3 had a deep seated belief in democracy hence the study highlighted the instances where TL 3 expressed himself on the

need for school decision-making processes to be carried out democratically in the zone of the school (z 3). This was reflected in the following comment: *“Colleagues we need to guide against the tendency of taking unilateral decisions without the involvement of the whole stakeholders. This ought to be reflective in our dealing with the academic and non academic issues. This also goes for a teacher, who represents us in a workshop wherein she/ he returns without giving a feedback to the entire or relevant staff”* (Doc, Staff Minutes, 28 January 2009).

The democratic principles referred in this quotation were used for the achievement of the smooth running of the school in the zone involving working with other teachers outside the classroom in curricular and extra-curricular activities (z 2) as well as other issues like academic and non academic issues. The latter quotation also embraced role 3 which involves leading in-service education and assisting other teachers. My take is that democracy was strategically utilized by TL 3 in the interests of whole school development (z 3). The culture of democracy was not only inculcated among the teachers but TL 3’s dealing with the learners was found to be informed by the democratic approach. The study observed the instances where:

*TL 3 engaged the learners in long conversations with an aim of facilitating many trips his players were always involved with. These engagements culminated to trips that were undertaken successfully. In these meetings learners were free to express their opinions on the issues related to envisaged trip. Some of the decisions taken were informed by the democratic principles wherein the will of a majority was considered* (Observation, 1<sup>st</sup> quarter of 2009).

The creation of a democratic environment in the execution of teacher leadership duties has been highlighted in the study. The findings suggest that in a democratic environment the enactment of teacher leadership becomes more effective which was evident with all the participants i.e. TL 1, TL 2 and TL 3. This understanding of a democratic environment was informed by the definition of democracy which was advanced by Hope and Timmel (1984) who view democracy as involving a participatory, consultative, negotiating and inclusive

style of leadership. The next section explores the barriers to TL 3's leadership roles.

#### **4.4.5 The barriers to TL 3's leadership roles**

Across data sets, resistance from colleagues was one of the main challenges which was experienced by TL 3 during the moments where he was trying to exhibit his leadership among the colleagues in the zone of the school (zone 3). TL 3 alluded to the issue of resistance where he pointed out that *“sometime resistance from the colleagues to accept change; attitude and arrogance with deliberate passive resistance to initiatives I have taken; lack of debate, ideas (constructive debates) to help the school was a problem”* (J. E 6). This quotation is a direct contrast to the democratic atmosphere described earlier in relation to other teachers in the practice of leadership. A complete picture has been drawn about the working relationship TL 3 experienced from his colleagues in the zone involving working with other teachers outside the classroom in curricular and extra-curricular activities (z 2). TL 3 spoke of the challenges he met as the following quotation attests:

*Some of the colleagues do offer some support but others are selfish when it comes to sharing on professional matters. This has been the case wherein some colleagues have been unable to come on board when the need to work as a team has been identified. Lot of excuses was brought forward for failing to be part of a team (I, p. 4).*

Teachers failing to work collectively seemed to have been the main concern in some of the leadership activities involving TL 3. The resistance that emanated from teachers regarding the leadership of colleagues is in line with the literature (see for example, Katzenmeyer and Moller, 2001; Muijs and Harris, 2003). Most of the school business called for the stakeholders to put aside whatever form of difference they may have and strive to work towards a common goal. This manifested itself where the teachers were:

*Striving to get the best out of the learners on academic and non academic events. In all these struggles TL 3 was part of the collaborative effort of the team. He contributed in every way possible in benefitting the learners academically and more especially in sport but unfortunately his efforts*



*sometimes was disturbed by the lack of motivation by some of the learners. Poor socio economic backgrounds of the learners have prevented some to take part in the outgoing trips (Notes, 1<sup>st</sup> quarter of 2009).*

Apart from the obstacles emanating from some of the teachers, the parental component has been mentioned as posing a serious challenge to teacher leadership. Problems far beyond the control of the learners like poor socio economic status of their parents were mentioned as a threat to the leadership of TL 3 who was concerned about the lack of parental support, as is evidenced in the following quotation: *“As a teacher in the school like this one we serve taking initiative is sometimes a big challenge owing to the fact that most of the school’s activities require monetary obligation from the parents. Things have not been easy where parents were expected to pay for the outgoing trips but couldn’t”* (FGI, 2 February 2009).

The lack of parental support was further mentioned in the area involving the curriculum delivery. The effective curriculum requires the collective efforts from both the teachers and the parents where the learners are supported in their learning activities. This cannot be said about the case study school where the lack of parental support was an obstacle in the effective delivery of a curriculum, as the following quotation attests:

*The biggest challenge about this school is the lack of parental support wherein as teachers we are expected to motivate these learners to engage themselves with their academic work seriously. Cultural way of life which these learners are exposed have led to some of the teenage girls to quit school and went for marriage prematurely, this has served as a setback to our professional expectation (Doc, Staff meeting, 28 January 2009).*

This statement reflects the serious challenges confronted by TL 3 in the zone of the classroom (z 1) and role 1 which entails continuing to teach and improve one’s own teaching. What also emerged from this statement was the manner in which the cultural way of life negatively impacted on the academic life of the learners. This was a typical example of the routine challenges TL 3 was confronted with.

In summary, the parental component was portrayed as the source of problems by all the 3 Teacher Leaders when it came to the enactment of teacher leadership. Although TL 3 earlier praised Grade 12 parents for their support but as the study progressed he began to change his tune where he expressed his reservation about the lack of parental support.

## **4.5 CONCLUSION**

The main focus of this chapter was to present the findings about the enactment of teacher leadership in a rural secondary school in KwaZulu-Natal. This enactment was sourced through three teacher leaders who happened to serve in the case study school. The findings also unpacked the factors that hindered or supported teacher leadership. What transpired across the participants was that even though there were challenges in the case study school but generally, the school was conducive to the enactment of teacher leadership. Pertaining to the factors which enhanced teacher leadership, the findings indicated that teachers, the SMT to a certain extent and the learners impact positively in supporting teacher leadership initiatives. The parental component was portrayed as the main threat that hindered teacher leadership. The next chapter focuses on concluding the whole study.

## **CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION**

### ***5.1 INTRODUCTION***

This study aimed at exploring the enactment of teacher leadership in a rural secondary school in KwaZulu-Natal. This was done by tracking three teacher leaders in the case study school. This study aimed to answer the following two research questions:

1. How teacher leadership is enacted in a rural secondary school in KwaZulu-Natal?
2. What factors promote or hinder this enactment?

The main purpose of this chapter is to conclude the whole study, which will be done by summarizing the findings of each participant. Recommendation for future research also features in this chapter. The findings indicated that teacher leadership was enacted in the case study school, although the whole concept of ‘teacher leadership’ for the teachers in the school was relatively new which serves to confirm the research of Grant (2005). The findings uncovered that Teacher Leaders were involved in leadership in the classroom and beyond. TL 1’s leadership activities centered around organizing academic and non-academic events across the school which indicated the teacher operating as leader in the zone of the school (z 3). TL 2’s leadership roles were found to be mainly within the classroom as well as in the zone of a teacher’s activities involving continuing to teach and improve one’s own teaching (z 1). TL 3’s main area of operation was found to be in extra-mural activities, wherein his activities were found to be involving the children in the zone of the teacher’s dealing with the children (z 2). For clarity reason, the findings of each of the teacher leader will be summarized separately.

### ***5.2 SUMMARY OF FINDINGS***

#### **5.2.1 Teacher Leader 1**

The research findings clearly suggest that TL 1 participated in leadership roles in the classroom and beyond. One can clearly state that in the research school distributed leadership took place which served as an advantage for TL 1 to exhibit his leadership capabilities. As an event organizer TL 1 was involved in a range of the school events which he helped to organize which were academic and non academic in nature. For the mere fact

that the SMT was prepared to offer a space for a distributed form of leadership TL 1 was able to exhibit the leadership skills for the benefit of the entire school. Furthermore, the kind of leadership which was demonstrated by TL 1 was compliant with dispersed distributed leadership, which according to Gunter (2005) refers to a process where much of the workings of the organization take place without the formal working of a hierarchy. This was evident in the study where TL 1 organized the personnel from sister departments such as Department of Health, the Department of Social Welfare and the Department of Police for the benefit of the school. Furthermore, the study further discovered that TL 1 enjoyed the confidence from of his colleagues which made his work to be easier when he executed his duties. This was revealed when TL 1 was referring to instances where he was free to express his views during the workshop involving the teachers.

### **5.2.2 Teacher Leader 2**

The findings about TL 2 indicated that she was mainly concerned about the well being of the learners in the case study school. This was reflected in a number of themes where TL 2 was portrayed as a care giver to the learners who were experiencing problems involving the range of issues like family related abuse, the learners struggling academically and financially, teenage related problems, and so forth. The pastoral care which TL 2 possessed was even extended to teachers, which was evident during the study wherein TL 2 revealed being available for any teacher who needed to be developed in any aspect. Another theme that emerged from TL 2 was her passion for curriculum issues which was evident when she revealed in the study being driven by the learners' poor socio economic status to do the best in her curriculum delivery. Her passion about curriculum issues was also manifested when she networked with the neighbouring schools in order to solicit the teaching material for her learners. The study further uncovered that her leadership qualities served to alleviate the difficulties which the case study school was operating under, like the shortage of teaching material. Collaboration with other teachers on professional issues also emerged during the study, where the study portrayed TL 2 as being instrumental in motivating other teachers on a number of professional issues, especially on curriculum delivery. It was also evident where TL 2 was involved in development of the newly recruited teachers on issues related to curriculum delivery. TL 2 was also concerned about the good conduct expected from the teachers like punctuality.

### **5.2.3 Teacher Leader 3**

There were many themes that emerged in the study about the leadership activities of TL 3. Those themes not only served to illustrate the leadership roles associated with TL 3 but they also helped to unpack the manner in which teacher leadership was enacted in the case study school. What emerged from the findings was that TL 3 was much involved in sport events which supported him to operate mainly in the zone involving the teacher and the learners on extra-curricular activities (z 2). The findings also uncovered that TL 3 was able to strike a balance between being a sport fanatic and instilling a sense of discipline among the learners. This was evident when TL 3 crafted the code of conduct among his players which resulted in the generation of good conduct among those learners who participated in sports. TL 3 also revealed during the interview that those learners who were involved with sport were developing good behavioural patterns generally, which he claimed were a culmination of discipline that was being instilled through sport activities. Furthermore, the findings also reflect the introduction of different sport codes in the case study school through the initiatives taken by TL 3 such as volleyball, cricket, rugby and athletics. Apart from being a sport fanatic the study also uncovered that TL 3 had a passion in academic related activities. Having briefly reflected on the 3 teacher leaders featured in my study, I now explore the limitations of the study.

### ***5.3 THE LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY***

The study was conducted at the school where the researcher was based. This was found to be convenient in that the case study was adopted as a general approach or methodology. The form of a case study which was pursued by the study was an ethnographic case study. Stenhouse (2003) refers to an ethnographic case study as examining a single case in-depth through the participant's observation followed by an interview. The current study took the form of a case study as defined by Stenhouse which involved observation of three Teacher Leaders in 2 terms (4<sup>th</sup> term of 2008 and 1<sup>st</sup> term of 2009) which was supplemented by interviews (individual interviews and focus group interview). Opting to work in my school was the best because I was able to do extended observation. In other words, I was able to 'go beyond perception' and observe the enactment of teacher leadership. However, the problem with the case study is that its findings cannot be generalized (Cohen, Manion and Morrison,

2007). This applied to the current study, and I was unable to generalize its findings to other schools.

As was mentioned in an earlier chapter, the researcher happened to be the principal in the case study school. There was thus a high possibility that the participants might have felt threatened to divulge information pertaining to the SMT as a barrier to the enactment of teacher leadership in the case study school. I concede that my position as principal in the school may well have influenced the findings in this regard.

#### ***5.4 RECOMMENDATION FOR FUTURE RESEARCH***

My engagement with this study has afforded me an opportunity to identify a number of gaps regarding the issue of distributed leadership and teacher leadership research. These gaps can be addressed through the following suggestions which need to be part of future research:

- The policies of the Department of Education are user friendly and promote the concept of teacher leadership and distributed leadership. The challenge is the gap between the policies and the implementation of these policies, which calls for research to explore this gap more closely.
- The Task Team Report on Education Management Development by the Department of Education (1996) is explicit about the forms of change which are required in the administration of our South African schools, which ought to reflect a democratic ethic, but there seem to be no proper mechanisms to monitor democratization of our schools. I think there is potential for research in this area.
- More research is needed on finding out about the factors which threaten the promotion of distributed leadership and teacher leadership in schools.
- It would be of vital importance to investigate the amount of classroom leadership expected as opposed to the leadership role expected from the teacher beyond the classroom. This will help to determine the possibility for proper enactment of teacher leadership in our schools.
- The role of teacher trade unions in enhancing or hampering the concept of teacher

leadership and distributed leadership would be interesting to scrutinize, given the dominant position which they play in the school's activities.

- Since the concept of teacher leadership and the theory of distributed leadership is still in its infancy in South Africa, more stories need to be told about the enactment of teacher leadership across the length and breadth of our country.

## ***5.5 CONCLUDING THOUGHTS***

Being involved in case study research was challenging and demanding due to the nature and duration of the study and the logistics involved. Observing three Teacher Leaders, interviewing them, organizing a focus group interview and three individual interviews; administering journal entries and analyzing the documents required patience and an ability to operate under a complex situation. Moreover, being a part-time student with a routine job to take care of (principal of a secondary school) was more demanding. Complicating the situation was the fact that my study required me to utilize the university resources like the library, which was not easily accessible due to the distance of my school and home from the university. Be that as it may, engagement with this study was an eye opener to me since I was able to read and comprehend different educational theories which helped to enhance my professional growth. This study has also helped to illuminate my understanding on the role an ordinary teacher can play in the effective daily running of the school. Through this study, I came to realize the fact that given the opportunity and trust, ordinary teachers can effectively impact on the general growth of the school. A deeper knowledge and understanding of how distributive leadership can help to bring about transformation in schools can be gained from a study like mine.

In responding to my research questions, it can be seen that in spite of the challenges which the case study school was confronted with, like the lack of resources, lack of parental support, geographical position of the school, the lack of understanding of the concept of teacher leadership and so forth, the school was on the right track regarding the enactment of teacher leadership. This enactment was reflected in the findings where three Teacher Leaders claimed to be enjoying the support of the SMT, teaching staff, the learners and some of the parents in their leadership initiatives. The findings indicated a number of

activities the three Teacher Leaders were involved with like sport activities, organizing co-curricular events, giving pastoral care to vulnerable learners and so forth. This helped to attest to the space which these Teacher Leaders claimed, which also helped to portray the manner in which teacher leadership was enacted in the case study school.

And finally, this research throws some light on the following questions. How do we go about exposing all the stakeholders in education system to the concept of teacher leadership and how can we distribute leadership more fully in schools? I believe my study has gone beyond perception of teacher leadership and, in so doing, has gone some way to contributing to the research base of teacher leadership in South African context.



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**APPENDIX 1**  
**TEACHER LEADERSHIP IN ACTION 2008 - 2009**  
**SCHOOL OBSERVATION SCHEDULE**

**1. Background information on the school**

- Name of the school
- Number of learners
- Number of teachers
- Number on SMT
- School Quintile
- Subjects offered
- What is the medium of instruction
- Pass rate 2005\_\_\_\_\_ 2006\_\_\_\_\_ 2007\_\_\_\_\_ 2008\_\_\_\_\_
- Classrooms: Block\_\_\_ Bricks\_\_\_ Prefab\_\_\_ Mud\_\_\_ Other \_\_\_\_\_
- Does the school have the following:

○ List	○ Yes (describe)	○ No
○ Library	○	○
○ Laboratory	○	○
○ Sports facilities/sports kit	○	○
○ Soccer field	○	○
○ netball field	○	○
○ tennis court	○	○
○ cricket field	○	○

- School fence
- School fees per annum
- Does your school fund raise
- List your fundraising activities
- School attendance : Poor\_\_\_ Regular\_\_\_ Satisfactory\_\_\_ Good\_\_\_ Fair\_\_\_ Excellent\_\_\_
- What is the average drop-out rate per year:
- Possible reasons for the drop out:
- Does the school have an admission policy:
- Is the vision and mission of the school displayed
- What is the furthest distance that learners travel to and from school
- Have there been any evident changes in your community after 1994.

**2. Staffing**

- Staff room- notices (budget), seating arrangements
- Classroom sizes
- Pupil-teacher ratio
- Offices- who occupies etc
- Staff turnover- numbers on a given day
- School timetable visibility
- Assemblies- teachers' roles
- Unionism-break-time, meetings

- Gender-roles played, numbers in staff
- Age differences between staff members
- Years of service of principal at the school
- Professional ethos- punctuality, discipline, attendance, general behaviour.

### **3. Curriculum: What teaching and learning is taking place at the school?**

- Are the learners supervised?
- Is active teaching and learning taking place?
- Are the learners loitering? Reasons?
- What is the general practice of teaching – teacher or learner centred?
- What subjects are taught?
- Is there a timetable?
- Do learners or teachers rotate for lessons?
- Has the school responded to national/provincial changes?
- Is the classroom conducive to teaching and learning?
- Is there evidence of cultural and sporting activities?
- How are these organized and controlled?
- Is there evidence of assessment and feedback based on assessment?
- Evidence of teacher collaboration in the same learning area?
- Is homework given and how often is it marked?
- Are learners encouraged to engage in peer teaching or self-study after school hours?

### **4. Leadership and decision-making, organisational life of the school.**

#### Organisational Structure

- Is there a welcoming atmosphere on arrival?
- Is the staff on first name basis?
- How does leadership relate to staff and learners?
- What structures are in place for staff participation?
- What admin systems are visible?
- What type of leadership and management style is evident?
- Is the leadership rigid or flexible?
- Are teachers involved in decision-making?
- Is there a feeling of discipline at the school?
- How would you describe the ethos of the school?
- Are teachers active in co and extra curricular activities?
- Is there an active and supportive governing body?
- Is the educator rep on the SGB active in the decision making process?
- Are teachers active on school committees?
- Do teachers take up leadership positions on committees?
- Working relationship between the SGB and staff?
- Is the governing body successful?

- Is there evidence of student leadership?
- Relationship between the SGB and the community?
- How does the governing body handle school problems?

**5. Relationships with Education department and other outside authorities**

- Are there any documents signed by the Department officials during their school visits? e.g. log book
- Is there a year planner, list of donors, contact numbers e.g. helpline, department offices etc.?
- Is there any evidence pertaining to the operation of the school eg. Minute books and attendance registers?

**APPENDIX 2**  
**TEACHER LEADERSHIP IN ACTION 2008 - 2009**

**TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRE**

**INSTRUCTIONS FOR QUESTIONNAIRE**

- Use a **BLACK** or **BLUE** ink pen. Please do not use a pencil.
  
- In the interests of confidentiality, you are not required to supply your name on the questionnaire.
  
- Please respond to each of the following items by placing a **CROSS**, which correctly reflects your opinion and experiences on the role of teacher leadership in your school.
  
- This questionnaire is to be answered by an educator.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The word 'educator' refers to a post level 1 educator

**A. BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION**

**1. Gender**

Male	Female
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2. Age

21-30	31-40	41-50	51+
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3. Your formal qualification is:

Below M+3	M+3	M+4	M+5 and above
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4. Nature of employment

Permanent	Temporary	Contract
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5. Employer

State	SGB
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6. Years of teaching experience

0-5yrs	6-10yrs	11-15yrs	16+yrs
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**B. TEACHER LEADERSHIP SURVEY**

**Instruction: Place a CROSS in the column that most closely describes your opinion on the role of teacher leadership in your school.**

**Scale: 4= Strongly Agree 3=Agree 2= Disagree 1= Strongly disagree**

**B. 1**

<b>I believe:</b>	4	3	2	1
7. Only the SMT should make decisions in the school.				
8. All educators <sup>1</sup> can take a leadership role in the school.				
9. That only people in positions of authority should lead.				
10. That men are better able to lead than women				

**B. 2**

<b>Which of the following tasks are you involved with?</b>	4	3	2	1
11. I take initiative without being delegated duties.				
12. I reflect critically on my own classroom teaching.				
13. I organise and lead reviews of the school year plan.				
14. I participate in in-school decision making.				
15. I give in-service training to colleagues.				

16. I provide curriculum development knowledge to my colleagues.				
17. I provide curriculum development knowledge to teachers in other schools				
18. I participate in the performance evaluation of teachers.				
19. I choose textbook and instructional materials for my grade/learning area.				
20. I co-ordinate aspects of the extra-mural activities in my school.				
21. I co-ordinate aspects of the extra-mural activities beyond my school.				
22. I set standards for pupil behaviour in my school.				
23. I design staff development programmes for my school.				
24. I co-ordinate cluster meetings for my learning area.				
25. I keep up to date with developments in teaching practices and learning are				
26. I set the duty roster for my colleagues.				

**Instruction: Please respond with a CROSS either Yes/ No/ Not applicable, to your involvement in each committee.**

**If YES, respond with a CROSS by selecting ONE option between: Nominated by colleagues, Delegated by SMT or Volunteered.**

### B.3

				<b>How I got onto this committee:</b>		
<b>I play a leadership role in the following committee/s:</b>	<b>Yes</b>	<b>No</b>	<b>Not</b>	Nominated by colleagues	Delegated by SMT	Volunteered
27. Catering committee						
28. Sports committee						
29. Bereavement /condolence committee.						
30. Cultural committee.						
31. Library committee.						
32 Subject/ learning area committee.						
33 Awards committee						
34 Time- table committee.						
35. SGB (School Governing Body)						
36. SDT (School Development Team)						
37. Fundraising committee.						
38. Maintenance committee.						
39. Safety and security committee.						



40. Discipline committee						
41. Teacher Union						
42. Assessment committee						
43. Admission committee						
44. Other (Please specify)						

**Instruction: Place a CROSS in the column that most closely describes your opinion on what factors support or hinder teacher leadership.**

**Scale:** 4= Strongly Agree 3= Agree 2= Disagree 1= Strongly Disagree

**B.4**

<b>My school is a place where:</b>	4	3	2	1
45 The SMT has trust in my ability to lead.				
46. Teachers resist leadership from other teachers.				
47. Teachers are allowed to try out new ideas.				
48 The SMT (School Management Team) values teachers' opinions.				
49. The SMT allows teachers to participate in school level decision-making.				
50. Only the SMT takes important decisions.				
51. Only the SMT takes initiative in the school.				
52. Adequate opportunities are created for the staff to develop professionally.				
53. Team work is encouraged.				
54. Men are given more leadership roles than women.				

**D. Teacher Leadership: Open-ended questions**

**1. What is your understanding of teacher leadership? Please explain.**

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**2. Have you ever been involved in leading in any school related activity, which is outside your classroom? If so, please give examples of your teacher leadership.**

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**3. In your opinion what hinders the development of teacher leadership in the context of your school? Please discuss.**

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**4. In your opinion what are the benefits to teacher leadership in the context of your school? Please discuss.**

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**Thank you for your time and effort!**

**APPENDIX 3**  
**TEACHER LEADERSHIP IN ACTION 2008 - 2009**

**SMT QUESTIONNAIRE**

INSTRUCTIONS FOR QUESTIONNAIRE

- Use a **BLACK** or **BLUE** ink pen. Please do not use a pencil.
  
- In the interests of confidentiality, you are not required to supply your name on the questionnaire.
  
- Please respond to each of the following items by placing a **CROSS**, which correctly reflects your opinion and experiences on the role of teacher leadership in your school.
  
- This questionnaire is to be answered by a member of the School Management Team (SMT).

**A. BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION**

**1. Gender**

Male	Female
------	--------

**2. Age**

21-30	31-40	41-50	51+
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**3. Your formal qualification is:**

Below M+3	M+3	M+4	M+5 and above
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**4. Nature of employment**

Permanent	Temporary	Acting
-----------	-----------	--------

**5. Years of teaching experience**

0-5yrs	6-10yrs	11-15yrs	16+yrs
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**6. Period of service in current position**

0-5yrs	6-10yrs	11-15yrs	16+yrs
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**B. SCHOOL INFORMATION**

**7. Learner Enrolment of your school**

1-299	300-599	600+
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**8. Number of educators, including management, in your school**

2-10	11-19	20-28	29-37	38+
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**9. School type**

Primary	Secondary	Combined
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**10. School Fees**

No Fees	R1-R500	R501-R1000	R1001-R5000	R5001+
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**C. TEACHER LEADERSHIP SURVEY**

**Instruction: Place a CROSS in the column that most closely describes your opinion on the role of teacher leadership in your school.**

**Scale 4= Strongly agree 3= Agree 2= Disagree 1= Strongly Disagree**

**C. 1**

<b>I believe:</b>	4	3	2	1
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11. Only the SMT should make decisions in the school.				
12. All teachers should take a leadership role in the school.				
13. That only people in formal positions of authority should lead.				
14. That men are better able to lead than women				
15. Educators <sup>ii</sup> should be supported when taking on leadership roles				

**Instruction: Place a CROSS in the column that most closely describes your opinion on the role of teacher leadership in your school.**

**Scale 4= Strongly agree 3= Agree 2= Disagree 1= Strongly disagree**

**C.2**

<b>Which of the following tasks are you involved with?</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>
16. I work with other educators in organising and leading reviews of the school year plan				
17. I encourage educators to participate in in-school decision making				
18. I support educators in providing curriculum development knowledge to other educators				
19. I support educators in providing curriculum development knowledge to educators in other schools				
20. I provide educators with opportunity to choose textbooks and learning materials for their grade or learning area				
21. I work with other educators in designing staff development programme for the school				
22. I include other educators in designing the duty roster				

**Instruction: Place a CROSS in the column that most closely describes your opinion on what factors support or hinder teacher leadership.**

**Scale: 4= strongly agree 3= Agree 2= Disagree 1= strongly disagree**

**C.3**

<b>My school is a place where:</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>1</b>
23. The SMT has trust in educator's ability to lead.					
24. Educators are allowed to try out new ideas.					
25. The SMT (School Management Team) values teachers' opinions.					

26. The SMT allows teachers to participate in school level decision-making.					
27. Only the SMT takes important decisions.					
28. Only the SMT takes initiative in the school.					
29. Adequate opportunities are created for the staff to develop professionally.					
30. Team work is encouraged.					
31. Men are given more leadership roles than women.					

**D. Teacher Leadership: Open-ended questions**

**1. What is your understanding of teacher leadership? Please explain.**

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**2. Have you ever encouraged educators in leading in any school related activity, which is outside their classrooms? If so, please give example**

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**4. In your opinion what hinders the development of teacher leadership in the context of your school? Please discuss.**

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**5. In your opinion what promotes the development of teacher leadership in the context of your school? Please discuss.**

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**Thank you for your time and effort!**

**APPENDIX 4**  
**TEACHER LEADERSHIP IN ACTION 2008 - 2009**

**TEACHER LEADERSHIP OBSERVATION SCHEDULE**  
**(BORROWED FROM HARRIS & LAMBERT, 2003)**

<b>A. Adult Development</b>			
1. Defines self in relation to others in the community. The opinions of others, particularly those in authority, are highly important.	Defines self as independent from the group, separating needs and goals from others. Does not often see the need for group action.	Understands self as interdependent with others in the school community, seeking feedback from others and counsel from self.	Engages colleagues in acting out of a sense of self and shared values, forming interdependent learning communities.
2. Does not yet recognise the need for self-reflection. Tends to implement strategies as learnt without making adjustments arising from reflective practice.	Personal reflection leads to refinement of strategies and routines. Does not often share reflections with others. Focuses on argument for own ideas. Does not support systems which are designed to enhance reflective practice.	Engages in self-reflection as a means of improving practices. Models these processes for others in the school community. Holds conversations that share views and develops understanding of each other's assumptions.	Evokes reflection in others. Develops and supports a culture for self-reflection that may include collaborative planning, peer coaching, action research and reflective writing.
3. Absence of ongoing evaluation of their teaching. Does not yet systematically connect teacher and student behaviours.	Self-evaluation is not often shared with others; however, responsibility for problems or errors is typically ascribed to others such as students or family.	Highly self-evaluative and introspective. Accepts shared responsibility as a natural part of a school community. No need for blame.	Enables others to be self-evaluative and introspective, leading towards self- and shared responsibility.
4. In need of effective strategies to demonstrate respect and concern for others. Is polite yet primarily focuses on own needs.	Exhibits respectful attitude towards others in most situations, usually privately. Can be disrespectful in public debate. Gives little feedback to others.	Consistently shows respect and concern for all members of the school community. Validates and respects qualities in and opinions of others.	Encourages & supports others in being respectful, caring, trusted members of the school community. Initiates recognition of ideas and achievements of colleagues as part of an overall goal of collegial empowerment.
<b>B. Dialogue</b>			
1. Interactions with others are primarily social, not based on common goals or group learning.	Communicates with others around logistical issues/problems. Sees goals as individually set for each classroom, not actively participating in efforts to focus on common goals.	Communicates well with individuals and groups in the community as a means of creating & sustaining relationships and focusing on teaching and learning. Actively participates in dialogue.	Facilitates effective dialogue among members of the school community in order to build relationships and focus dialogue on teaching and learning.
2. Does not pose questions of or seek to influence the group.	Makes personal point of view, although not assumptions, explicit.	Asks questions and provides insights that reflect an understanding	Facilitates communication among colleagues by asking

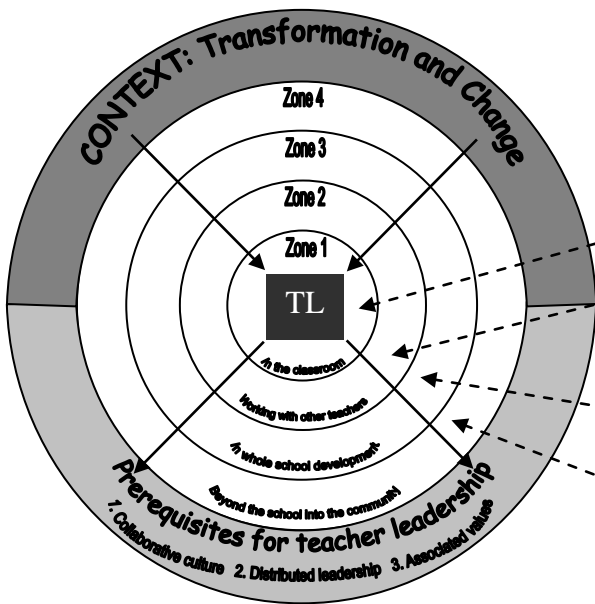


Participation often resembles consent or compliance.	When opposed to ideas, often asks impeding questions which can derail or divert dialogue.	of the need to surface assumptions and address the goals of the community.	provocative questions which open productive dialogue.
3. Does not actively seek information or new professional knowledge which challenges current practices. Shares knowledge with others only when requested.	Attends staff development activities planned by the school or district. Occasionally shares knowledge during informal & formal gatherings. Does not seek knowledge that challenges status quo.	Possesses current knowledge and information about teaching and learning. Actively seeks to use that understanding to alter teaching practices. Studies own practice.	Works with others to construct knowledge through multiple forms of enquiry, action research, examination of disaggregated school data, insights from others & from outside research community.
4. Responds to situations in similar ways; expects predictable responses from others. Is sometimes confused by variations from expected norms.	Responds to situations in different, although predictable ways. Expects consistency from those in authority and from self.	Responds to situations with an open mind and flexibility; welcomes multiple perspectives from others. Alters own assumptions during dialogue when evidence is persuasive.	Promotes an open mind and flexibility in others; invites multiple perspectives and interpretations as a means of challenging old assumptions and framing new actions.
<b>C. Collaboration</b>			
1. Decision making is based on individual wants and needs rather than those of the group as a whole.	Promotes individual autonomy in classroom decision making. Relegates school decision-making to the principal.	Actively participates in shared decision-making. Volunteers to follow through on group decisions.	Promotes collaborative decision-making that provides options to meet the diverse individual and group needs of the school community.
2. Sees little value in team building, although seeks membership in the group. Will participate, although does not connect activities with larger school goals.	Doesn't seek to participate in roles or settings that involve team building. Considers most team building activities to be 'touchy-feely' and frivolous.	Is an active participant in team building, seeking roles and opportunities to contribute to the work of the team. Sees 'teamness' as central to community.	Engages colleagues in team-building activities that develop mutual trust and promotes collaborative decision-making.
3. Sees problems as caused by the actions of others, e.g. students, parents; or blames self. Uncertain regarding the specifics of one's own involvement.	Interprets problems from own perspective. Plays the role of observer and critic, not accepting responsibility for emerging issues and dilemmas. Considers most problems to be a function of poor management.	Acknowledges that problems involve all members of the community. Actively seeks to define problems and proposes resolutions or approaches which address the situation. Finding blame is not relevant.	Engages colleagues in identifying and acknowledging problems. Acts with others to frame problems and seek resolutions. Anticipates situations which may cause recurrent problems.
4. Does not recognise or avoids conflict in the school community. Misdirects frustrations into withdrawal or personal hurt. Avoids talking about issues that could evoke conflict.	Does not shy away from conflict. Engages in conflict as a means of surfacing competing ideas, approaches. Understands that conflict is intimidating to many.	Anticipates and seeks to resolve or intervene in conflict. Actively tries to channel conflict into problem-solving endeavours. Is not intimidated by conflict, though wouldn't seek it.	Surfaces, addresses and mediates conflict within the school and with parents and community. Understands that negotiating conflict is necessary for personal and school change.
<b>D. Organisational</b>			

<b>change</b>			
1. Focuses on present situations and issues; seldom plans for either short or long term futures. Expects certainty.	Demonstrates forward thinking for own classroom. Usually does not connect own planning to the future of the school.	Develops forward thinking skills in working with others and planning for school improvements. Future goals based on common values and vision.	Provides for and creates opportunities to engage others in forward (visionary) thinking and planning based on common core values.
2. Maintains a low profile during school change, basically uninvolved in group processes. Attempts to comply with changes. Expects compliance from others.	Questions status quo; suggests that others need to change in order to improve it. Selects those changes which reflect personal philosophies. Opposes or ignores practices which require a school-wide focus.	Shows enthusiasm and involvement in school change. Leads by example. Explores possibilities and implements changes for both personal and professional development.	Initiates action towards innovative change; motivates, draws others into action for school & district improvements. Encourages others to implement practices which support school-wide learning. Provides follow-up planning and coaching support.
3. Culturally unaware. 'I treat everyone the same'. Stage of naivety to socio-political implications of race, culture, ethnic and gender issues.	Growing sensitivity to political implications of diversity. Acknowledges that cultural differences exist and influence individuals and organisations.	Understanding and acceptance: 'aha' level. Has developed an appreciation of own cultural identities and a deeper appreciation / respect for cultural differences. Applies understanding in classroom and school.	Commitment to value of and build on cultural differences. Actively seeks to involve others in designing programmes and policies which support the development of a multi-cultural world.
4. Attends to students in his or her own classroom. Possessive of children and space. Has not yet secured a developmental view of children.	Concerned for the preparation of children in previous grades. Critical of preparation of children and readiness of children to meet established standards.	Developmental view of children translates into concern for all children in the school (not only those in own classroom) and their future performances in further educational settings.	Works with colleagues to develop programmes, policies that take holistic view of children's development (e.g. multi-graded classes, parent education, follow-up studies).
5. Works alongside new teachers, is cordial although does not offer assistance. Lacks confidence in giving feedback to others.	Shares limited information with new teachers, mainly that pertaining to school admin functions (e.g. attendance accounting, grade reports). Does not offer to serve as master teacher.	Collaborates with, supports and gives feedback to new and student teachers. Often serves as master teacher.	Takes responsibility for support & development of systems for student & new teachers. Develops collaborative programmes with school, district and universities.
6. Displays little interest in the selection of new teachers. Assumes that they will be appointed by the district or those otherwise in authority.	Assumes that district will recruit and appoint teachers. Has not proposed a more active role to the teacher association.	Becomes actively involved in the setting of criteria and the selection of new teachers.	Advocates to schools, districts and teachers' association the development of hiring practices that involve teachers, parents and students in processes. Promotes the hiring of diversity candidates.

**APPENDIX 5  
TEACHER LEADERSHIP IN ACTION: 2008 – 2009**

**ZONES AND ROLES MODEL OF TEACHER LEADERSHIP**  
(Grant, forthcoming 2008, p. 93)



**TEACHER LEADERSHIP**

<b>First level of analysis: Four Zones</b>	<b>Second level of analysis: Six Roles</b>
<b>One</b> In the classroom	<b>One:</b> Continuing to teach and improve one's own teaching
<b>Two</b> Working with other teachers and learners outside the classroom in curricular and extra-curricular activities	<b>Two:</b> Providing curriculum development knowledge <b>Three:</b> Leading in-service education and assisting other teachers
<b>Three</b> Outside the classroom in whole school development	<b>Four:</b> Participating in performance evaluation of teachers <b>Five:</b> Organising and leading peer reviews of school practice
<b>Four</b> Between neighbouring schools in the community	<b>Six:</b> Participating in school level decision-making <b>Two:</b> Providing curriculum development knowledge <b>Three:</b> Leading in-service education and assisting other teachers

**APPENDIX 6**  
**TEACHER LEADERSHIP IN ACTION: 2008 – 2009**

**TEACHER LEADER JOURNAL ENTRIES**

**Journal Entry 1 (Week 3 October 2008)**

Please would you fill in this information in your journal and bring to the focus group interview next week. This information will provide me with background information about the social context of your school and it will help me to get to know you a little better. Please be as honest as you can! I will ensure your anonymity at all times.

About your school:

1. What kind of school is it? (level/ resources/diversity/ size etc)
2. Describe the socio-economic backgrounds of the learners in the school and the surrounding community?
3. How would you describe the culture of your school; in other words, 'the way things are done around here'?

About you:

1. Name
2. Age
3. Gender
4. Years of experience as a teacher
5. Qualification
6. Which subjects do you teach and which grades?
7. Do you enjoy teaching? Yes/No/Mostly/Occasionally. Why do you say so?
8. Describe your family to me.

Think about yourself as a teacher leader:

1. What do you understand the term 'teacher leader' to mean?
2. Describe at least two examples of situations where you work as a teacher leader in your school.

### **Journal Entry 2 (1<sup>st</sup> half of November 2008)**

Think about a memory (strongly positive or strongly negative) you have when, as a teacher, you led a new initiative in your classroom or school.

1. Tell the story by describing the situation and explaining the new initiative.
2. How did leading this initiative initially make you feel?
3. What was the response to your leadership (either good or bad)?
4. How did this response make you feel?

### **Journal Entry 3 (2<sup>nd</sup> half of November 2008)**

Think about the forth term of school. It is often described as a term of learner assessment and examination.

1. Describe the different situations where you have worked as a teacher leader. What were the leadership roles you filled? What did you do?
2. How did your leadership impact on others? What was the response from your SMT? What was the response from the teachers?
3. How did being a teacher leader in these situations make you feel?

### **Journal Entry 4 (1<sup>st</sup> half of February 2009)**

1. Think about yourself as a teacher leader and the personal attributes you have that make you a teacher leader.

- i. List these personal attributes.
- ii. Why do you think these particular attributes are important in developing teacher leaders?
- iii. Are there any other attributes you think are important and which you would like to develop to make you an even better teacher leader?

2. Think about yourself as a teacher leader and the knowledge and skills you have that make you a teacher leader.

- i. List the skills and knowledge you have.
- ii. Why do you think this knowledge and these skills are important in developing teacher leaders?
- iii. Are there any other skills/knowledge you think are important and which you would like to develop to make you an even better teacher leader?

### **Journal Entry 5 (2<sup>nd</sup> half of February 2009)**

Think about the first term of school. It is often described as a term of planning, especially around curriculum issues.

1. Describe the different situations where you have worked as a teacher leader during this term. What were the leadership roles you filled? What did you do?
2. How did your leadership impact on others? What was the response from your SMT? What was the response from the teachers?
3. How did being a teacher leader in these situations make you feel?

### **Journal Entry 6 (1<sup>st</sup> half of March 2009)**

Think now about your experience as a teacher leader and ponder on the barriers you have come up against.

1. Describe some of these barriers.
2. What are the reasons for these barriers, do you think?
3. How do you think these barriers can be overcome?
4. How do you think teacher leadership can be promoted?

### **Journal Entry 7 (2<sup>nd</sup> half of March 2009)**

1. Can you tell a story / describe a situation in each of the following contexts when you worked as a teacher leader:

- i) in your classroom
- ii) working with other teachers in curricular/extra-curricular activities
- iii) in school-wide issues
- iv) networking across schools or working in the school community

2. You have come to the end of your journaling process. Please feel free now to:

- i) ask me any questions
- ii) raise further points
- iii) reflect on the writing process
- iv) reflect on the research process as a whole

**APPENDIX 7**  
**TEACHER LEADERSHIP IN ACTION: 2008 – 2009**

**TEACHER LEADER FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW**

1. Talk to me about leadership. What does the word 'leadership' mean to you?
2. Who is your all time favourite leader? Why?
3. Do you believe that a leader is born or is being produced by the circumstances?
4. What might be the reasons for leadership not to be effective?
5. Talk to me about teacher leadership? What does the term mean to you?
6. When you think of yourself as a teacher leader, what emotions are conjured up? Why do you think you feel this way? What do you suspect is the cause of these emotions?
7. Think of yourself as a teacher leader in a school where the principal is not interested in decentralizing the duties! How can you address that situation?
8. Think about teacher leadership in a perfect school! What would the teacher leader be able to achieve (probe roles/skills/knowledge/relationships)? What support would the teacher leader have (probe culture/ SMT/other teachers etc.)?

Then spend the rest of the interview outlining the project, and explaining our expectations of the teacher leaders. Also talk about the subjective role of the researcher in the process, as well as all the ethical issues.

Thank you!

**APPENDIX 8**  
**TEACHER LEADERSHIP IN ACTION: 2008 – 2009**

**TEACHER LEADER INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEW**

This interview will be loosely structured and based on the reading of the journals of the teacher leaders. Questions cannot therefore be planned at the outset of the project but will emerge as the research progresses. Questions may also differ from the one teacher leader to the other.

However, broadly speaking, we would like to ascertain during this interview, the following:

1. the personal attributes of these teacher leaders
2. the zones and roles that teacher leaders are engaged in
3. the main barriers that the teacher leaders experience

**QUESTIONS PREPARED FOR INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEW**

1. What motivates you to take a leadership role in academic matters?
2. What motivates you to take a leading role in non academic matters?
3. Do you get a necessary support from the SMT on academic matters?
4. Do you get a necessary support from the SMT on non academic matters?
5. Do you get a necessary support from other colleagues on non academic matters?
6. Do you get a necessary support from other colleagues on academic matters?
7. Do you get a required support from the learners on academic matters?
8. Do you get a required support from the learners on non academic matters?
9. Do you get a necessary support from the SGB on academic matters?
10. Do you get a necessary support from the SGB on non academic matters?
11. Are there any challenges which emanate from the school which adversely affect your school?
12. Are there any challenges which emanate outside the school which adversely affect your leadership?
13. Is there any question you would like to pose based on the study?





**Faculty of Education**  
University of KwaZulu-Natal  
Private Bag X01  
Scottsville  
3209

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The Ward Manager  
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Dear .....

I am currently a part time student at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg. I am presently involved in a group research project which aims to explore teacher leaders in action in school. Teacher leadership is an emerging field of research in South Africa and I believe that teacher leadership has a powerful role to play in improving the teaching and learning in our South African schools. In this regard I have identified the school where I am stationed as a successful school which exhibits strong leadership at various levels within the institution. I would very much like to conduct a research on teacher leadership at this school, and work particularly with three teacher leaders who are willing to work closely with me to extend the boundaries of our knowledge on this concept.

Please note that this not an evaluation of performance or competence of the teachers involved and by no means is it a commission of inquiry! The identities of all the participants in this study will be protected in accordance with the code of ethics as stipulated by the University of KwaZulu-Natal. I undertake to uphold the autonomy of all participants and

they will be free to withdraw from the research at any time without negative or undesirable consequences to themselves. In this regard, participants will be asked to complete a consent form. Furthermore, in the interests of the participants, feedback will be given to them during and at the end of the project.

As a researcher I can be contacted at 082 4845 954, during and after hours.

For further clarity and correspondence on this subject the applicant is prepared to co-operate.

Yours faithfully

-----

Armstrong M. Xulu  
Group Member

**Declaration**

I ..... (full names of a respondent ) hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of this research project. I am willing for my school to be a research school in this project.

Signature Ward Manager

Date

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**UNIVERSITY OF  
KWAZULU-NATAL**  
**Faculty of Education**

University of KwaZulu-Natal  
Private Bag X01  
Scottsville  
3209

Letter of Invitation

Dear .....

I am sending this invitation to you as a teacher who might be interested in participating in a research project about teacher leadership in schools. My name is Armstrong Xulu and I am currently a part time student at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg. I am presently involved in a group research project which aims to explore teacher leaders in action in schools. Teacher leadership is an emerging field of research in South Africa and I believe that teacher leadership has a powerful role to play in improving the teaching and learning in our schools. In this regard I have identified your school as a successful school which exhibits strong leadership at various levels within the institution. I would very much like to conduct research into teacher leadership in your school, and work closely with you, particularly, to extend the boundaries of our knowledge on this concept.

The research project is framed by the following broad research questions:

1. How is teacher leadership enacted in schools?
2. What factors enhance or hinder this 'enactment'?

I am seeking three teachers from your school who:

- Are interested in making a contribution to this research.
- See themselves as teacher leaders.
- Are interested in developing teacher leadership opportunities in schools.

Please note that this is not an evaluation of performance or competence of you as a teacher. Your identity will be protected in accordance with the code of ethics as stipulated by the University of KwaZulu-Natal. I undertake to uphold your autonomy and you will be free to withdraw from the research at any time without negative or undesirable consequences to themselves. In this regard, you will be asked to complete a consent form. Furthermore, feedback will be given to you during and at the end of the project.

As a researcher I can be contacted on my cell number which is 082 4845 954. Feel free to contact me at any time should you encounter some problems or in need more clarity.

Looking forward to working with you harmoniously and professionally during this career development exercise.

Yours sincerely

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Armstrong Xulu  
Project Member

**Declaration**

I ..... (full names of participant ) hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of this research project. I am willing to participate in this research project.

I understand that I reserve the right to withdraw from this project at any time.

Signature of Teacher Leader  
Date

.....  
.....



**UNIVERSITY OF  
KWAZULU-NATAL**  
**Faculty of Education**

University of KwaZulu-Natal  
Private Bag X01  
Scottsville  
3209

The Educator

Dear .....

I am currently a part time student at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg. I am presently engaged in a group research project which aims to explore teacher leaders in action in schools. Teacher leadership is an emerging field of research in South Africa and I believe that teacher leadership has a powerful role to play in improving the teaching and learning in our South African schools. In this regard I have identified your school as a successful school which exhibits strong leadership at various levels within the institution. I would very much like to conduct research into teacher leadership in your school, and work particularly with three teacher leaders who are willing to work closely with me to extend the boundaries of our knowledge on this concept.

Please note that this is not an evaluation of performance or competence of your teachers and by no means is it a commission of inquiry! The identities of all who participate in this study will be protected in accordance with the code of ethics as stipulated by the University of KwaZulu-Natal. I undertake to uphold the autonomy of all participants and they will be free to withdraw from the research at any time without negative or undesirable consequences to themselves. In this regard, participants will be asked to complete a consent form. Furthermore, in the interests of the participants, feedback will be given to them during and at the end of the project.

As a researcher I can be contacted at my cell number, which is 082 4845 954. Please feel free to contact me at any time should you have any queries or questions you would like answered.

Yours sincerely

-----  
Armstrong M. Xulu  
Project Member

**Declaration by the Participant**

I ..... (full names of participant ) hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of this research project. I am willing to participate in this research project.

I understand that I reserve the right to withdraw from this project at any time.

Signature of participant

Date

.....  
.....



**UNIVERSITY OF  
KWAZULU-NATAL**  
**Faculty of Education**

University of KwaZulu-Natal  
Private Bag X01  
Scottsville  
3209

Letter of Invitation

Dear .....

I am sending this invitation to you as a teacher who might be interested in participating in a research project about teacher leadership in schools. My name is Callie Grant and I am currently a staff member at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg. I am presently leading a group research project which aims to explore teacher leaders in action in schools. Teacher leadership is an emerging field of research in South Africa and I believe that teacher leadership has a powerful role to play in improving the teaching and learning in our schools. In this regard I have identified your school as a successful school which exhibits strong leadership at various levels within the institution. I would very much like to conduct research into teacher leadership in your school, and work closely with you, particularly, to extend the boundaries of our knowledge on this concept.

The research project is framed by the following broad research questions:

3. How is teacher leadership enacted in schools?
4. What factors enhance or hinder this 'enactment'?

I am seeking three teachers from your school who:

- Are interested in making a contribution to this research.
- See themselves as teacher leaders.
- Are interested in developing teacher leadership opportunities in schools.

Please note that this is not an evaluation of performance or competence of you as a teacher. Your identity will be protected in accordance with the code of ethics as stipulated by the University of KwaZulu-Natal. I undertake to uphold your autonomy and you will be free to withdraw from the research at any time without negative or undesirable consequences to themselves. In this regard, you will be asked to complete a consent form. Furthermore, feedback will be given to you during and at the end of the project.

As project leader, I can be contacted on 033-2606185 at the Faculty of Education, Room 42A, Pietermaritzburg Campus (School of Education

and Development) or on my cell, 0844003347. Please feel free to contact me at any time should you have any queries or questions you would like answered.

Yours sincerely

-----

Callie Grant  
Project Leader

**Declaration**

I ..... (full names of participant ) hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of this research project. I am willing to participate in this research project.

I understand that I reserve the right to withdraw from this project at any time.

Signature of Teacher Leader  
Date

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.....

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