Leadership and Professionalism- An Act of Faith

A Case Study of Leaders as Professionals in South Africa

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A dissertation submitted in partial fulfilment of the Academic Requirement for the degree Master of Education: Education, Leadership, Management and Policy

University of KwaZulu-Natal

Pietermaritzburg

2012

DECLARATION

I, BASIL LAWRENCE MANUEL, declare that the work presented in this document s my own.

References to work by other people have been duly acknowledged.

Signed: _____

          Student

I declare that this information has been submitted with/without my approval.

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          Supervisor

Pietermaritzburg 2011

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to acknowledge the following persons without whose help and wisdom this study would not have been completed.

- Ms Callie Grant and Neil Avery for their support, guidance and invaluable insight.
- The support staff at the University of KwaZulu-Natal for the warm smiles, the willing assistance and encouragement.
- The five teacher leaders and management staff in the school where this research was conducted.
- Bronwynne Alexander and Mark Lawrence, my companions on the journey, for support advice and inimitable leadership when it really mattered.
- My patient children Lauren, Jade and Vaughn for enduring my absence and inattention.
- My eternally supportive wife Wendy for understanding, for typing, for proof reading, for being there on the journey.

ABSTRACT

Our South African schools are seventeen years after the advent of democracy still under the grip of predominantly hierarchical management with limited devolution of leadership functions to teachers. Principals and SMT's are caught between the demands of a policy driven Department of Education, the unions who 'control' the teachers and a desire to transform their schools into 21st century centres of learning and teaching excellence. Somewhere into this maelstrom ones needs to factor in the expectation of teachers, parents and even the pupils who are living in a 21st century environment with all the technological trappings and a democratic dispensation which has promised to deliver a better life for all.

Given the current negative view of schooling with the poor matric and grade three and six performance levels and the negative view of teachers especially after the teacher strikes of 2007 and 2010 there is an urgent need for intervention to save our education system and children. I am however not advocating a narrow view of policy intervention, which has already proven to be a failure. Such interventions fail to penetrate to the depth of the problem. I am advocating for a much more sustainable longer term intervention that must change our teachers' views to their job, their commitment to the task and the child. I am advocating for a return to professional values and commitment coupled with a new age distribution of leadership that recognises the contribution and worth of all teachers. This recognises that all teachers have skills and insights to contribute that can change the face of schools.

Given this background I attempted using a case study of five teacher leaders in an urban primary school to understand their views on professionalism, their involvement in leadership and whether the link between the two does impact positively on the culture of teaching and learning. I employed a multiple data collection method and used a questionnaire, semi-structured individual interviews, a focus group interview and observations.

The findings of the study indicated that there was genuine commitment to professionalism. The teacher leaders viewed themselves as professionals. They were further deeply committed to teacher leadership which they demonstrated in various ways. Their professionalism combined with their involvement in leadership spilled over into a culture of learning and teaching. Teacher leadership was present in various spheres but was limited by hierarchical school structures, time constraints and scepticism from other teachers. This relationship between teaching, professionalism and learning and teaching needs to be further researched

especially in the context of South African schools in their current change environment, overshadowed by the legacies of the past.

Our schools need to succeed now. Our children need it now. If the route to sustainable teacher and learner performance lies in professional leadership development, then we must explore it further without delay.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION AND ORIENTATION TO THE STUDY

1.1   Introduction to the Chapter

Education and educational issues occupy countless newspaper headlines and are the focus of innumerable conferences. In addition, our Department of Education (DOE) is one of the largest ministries in government in South Africa. There can thus be little doubt of the importance of education or of the fact that parents see a good education as the key to access and success. This access means access to higher education, access to the formal economy, access to the world of a better life for all. As a teacher of long standing, I can personally attest to the hopes and dreams pinned on children entering the 'better schools'. This is exactly where the South African dream of 'a better life for all' starts to unravel. The South African public at large have on numerous occasions expressed doubt about the ability of most teachers to deliver on the dream of 'a better life for all'.   This doubt is confirmed by both the matric results and the results of the Annual National Assessments 2011 (ANA). The ANA are designed to test the levels of attainment of grade 2 – 7 learners in Mathematics and Literacy. In the ANA tests of 2011, the national achievement for grade 3's in numeracy was 28% and Literacy 35% (ANA Results Report 2011). Such results could hardly inspire confidence in or generate sympathy for the teaching community. The Minister of Basic Education, Mrs A Motshekga in presenting the results, curiously chose to euphemistically lament "the results do not point towards the presence of the critical upward turn needed to attain the 60% target." (ANA Results Report 2011, p.6)

This softly-softly approach by the minister points to what many commentators see as the kid-gloves approach to the unions, suggesting that the minister would not challenge the teachers on the poor results since she is afraid of the reactions of the powerful unions.   The elusive question is what is the solution to improving the performance of both teachers and learners?   Alternatively what are the stumbling blocks to teacher and learner achievements?

I believe that the solution to the crises enveloping teaching and learning is the promotion of a new professionalism and teacher leadership. This ontological disposition of mine is informed by my own growth and development as a teacher, leader and professional. I believe that these realities are intertwined and interdependent and together not only form the basis for a renewal of our much maligned profession, but are the key to realising the dream of 'a better life for all' through quality education.

Fullan (1991, p.36) reminds us, that "the personal cost of trying new innovations are often high ... and seldom is there an indication that innovations are worth the investment. Innovations are acts of faith." Howey (1998, p.1) acts as the compass bearer when he suggest, "the most important key to developing a collective will to overcome many of our common place problems is leadership." This is corroborated by Timperley (1998, p.3) when she states that: "A more integrated and collaborative view of professional development needs to be fostered in the minds of teachers preparing for leadership roles." With a commitment to teacher leadership and a move towards professionalism the challenges to effective teaching and learning would not be eradicated but would certainly be limited and would set our schools on a new path to effectiveness.

Post -1994 Educational reforms in South Africa implicit in various policy documents such as the Norms and Standards for Educators (2000) and the Employment of Educators Acts 76 of 1998 (EEA), suggests that all teachers must take up some form of leadership and that professional conduct is expected. Despite this the relationship is tenuous, leadership development and enactment is ad-hoc and professionalism is a word claimed by all but lived by few.

These introductory comments must be viewed as the broad framing of the purpose of this dissertation which is to determine how teachers can lead schools better to ensure that they are professional places of learning and teaching. This chapter provides an executive summary of the dissertation and provides the background and rationale to the qualitative case study, which was conducted in an inner-city primary school in Pietermaritzburg. I further introduce the research questions, research design and

methodology and the theoretical framework, underpinning, this study. I move now to the purpose and focus of the study.

1.2   Purpose and focus of the study

The purpose of this case study was to explore the perceptions the participants have of the relationship between leadership and professionalism their performance and attitude and the perceived impact on school effectiveness. The debate of this relationship has been raging for ages. Sachs (1999. P.14) suggests that, "democratic professionalism is an emphasis on collaboration, co-operative action between teachers and other stakeholders." This resonates with the ideas of many researchers on teachers leadership such as Timperley (2005, p.397) "... is a collective endeavour involving all teachers". At face value there appears to be much commonality between the concepts of professionalism and teacher leadership.

In addition teachers, in my opinion, have in the South African context always aligned themselves with the view that they are members of a profession. This contrasts with the views articulated by Kercher and Caufman (1995) who suggests that teaching has never possessed the status of traditional professions. Govender (1996) dismisses professionalism as a mere strategy used by teachers as well as their employer against them to respond to political and economic pressures.

Furthermore as a teacher in an inner city South African school, I too have been touched by the problems of schooling in general, the leadership vacuum, the hierarchical management and leadership styles and the dearth of professionalism in schools and difficulty in promoting a 'leaderful' culture imbued with a professional ethos is complicated by the absence of what Hoyle (1992) and the South African Council of Educators (SACE) (2005) suggest are foundational characteristics of a professional. If one adds into this cauldron the impact of a powerful teacher union one is left with an entangled web that appears impossible to unravel.

Current research, both local and international focussing on the relationship between leadership, professionalism and effective teaching and learning has identified numerous gaps. Collay (2006) suggests that the link between leadership and

professionalism is both tenuous and somewhat under explored. She further suggests that entrenched and historic management practices as well as unionism, limit professional expectations and opportunities further. This begs the question whether teachers do aspire to greater professionalism. Sachs (1999, p.3) articulates a view that the resurgence in the professional debate is raging at a time when, "there is evidence that teachers are being deskilled and their workload is intensifying." Collay (2006) concurs with this view. On the issue of teacher leadership Ash and Persall (2000) promote the view of formative leadership theory based on the belief that numerous leadership possibilities and leaders exist in a school. Complementary views include those of Muijs and Harris (2003) Harris (2004) and Grant (2006) all of whom expound on the social distribution of leadership implying interdependence, collective action and shared agency. This leadership distribution is, according to Grant (2006), about the exploration of untapped leadership potential and collegiality with the purpose of school improvement.

The gaps that exist in the current literature, the desperate need for a solution to our South African education crisis and my own ontological disposition are the inspiration for my research focus. The research will focus on how teachers can lead schools better to ensure that they are professional places of teaching and learning.

1.3   Background to the study

The fragmented, racially polarised and unequal system of education of South Africa pre-1994 and the struggle to change this post-1994 forms the big picture or backdrop to this study. Christie (2010, p. 701) contends that, "the landscape of education policies has experienced seismic changes in the post apartheid period." Given where the country was educationally this should be no surprise. Eradicating inequalities, achieving quality education, changing the mindset of teachers from one of resistance to one of innovation and embracing of change proved to be much more difficult than changing the policy framework. The changes in policy were, according to Christie (2010), accompanied by a growing militancy from teacher unions like SADTU, impatient with the slow rate of change and the difficult conditions that teachers had to work in. The landscape of change affected schools differently, with the more affluent schools, the schools outside the townships, and in a rural setting better able to

embrace the change environment. Christie (2010, p.701) citing Christie and Taylor states that, "schools in South Africa do not function equally and many schools are dysfunctional".

What is therefore evident is that the change environment we find ourselves in, the legacy left by apartheid that we continue to battle to shake off, the resultant problems with teacher morale, inform the need for greater teacher leadership and teacher professionalism. These, unlike most policy reforms, are not imposed but can grow from within the school. I therefore concur with Spillane (2004) that the most critical aspect of successful innovation in schools is leadership. Teacher leadership development and take-up by teachers is not at the levels it should be. This is partially because of the hierarchical culture of leadership still prevailing in many schools, (Christie 2010) but also because principals are caught between the demands of accountability set by the DOE and the desire for greater devolution of authority. The middle road between these two is not so obvious. The situation is referred to by Christie (2010, p.2) as, "a mismatch between the ideal and the actual, (which) may impede rather than assist attempts to improve schools". I agree with Greenlee (2002, p.46) citing Glover, Miller, Gamling, Glough & Johnson that " teachers participating in decision making and collaborative teacher-principal leadership contribute to school effectiveness, teaching quality and improvement in student performance'. This is certainly what we need to see in our South African schools.

Complementary to the notion of teacher leadership is teacher professionalism. Here I align myself with Troen and Boles (2005) who articulate the view that institutionalising professional practice depends on changing school culture which in turn depends on reinventing the job of teaching, transforming it into an open, collaborative culture that fosters excellence and accountability. This then, is what we in South Africa must be striving towards: a new model of teacher leadership, complemented by teacher professionalism. This will give us the much needed edge to give our children a fighting chance and truly create a better life for all. In the next section I will explore the rationale for my study.

1.4. Rationale for the Study

I understand the rationale of the study to be my justification for embarking on it or as Vithal and Jansen (2010, p 11) contend, it addresses "how the researcher came to develop an interest in the topic and why the researcher believes that the topic is worth researching" simply stated; I need to articulate the reasons for doing this study.

I have long held a view that schools can only be fixed by those within them. In my twenty-seven years of teaching I have spent time as a post level 1 teacher and considerable time at different levels of promotion and fourteen years in my current position as principal. During these years I involved myself fully in the life of the school and the union, living out my belief that only people like me, in the school, can make a difference. Three fundamental issues have shown themselves time after time in my passage through the system to be the things that matter most to school effectiveness.

The first: the desire of teachers to lead, juxtaposed against the lack of leadership space initially, then the lack of readiness to lead when opportunities presented themselves.

Secondly: the changing tide of professionalism. At its lowest ebb the teachers seemed to be worst off. They lacked commitment and care for their students. Even the enactment of the SACE Code of Professional Ethics made little difference which resonates with the view of Macmillan (1993, p. 196) that "a code of ethics does not make individual professionals ethical".

Thirdly: the role of the almost frighteningly powerful unions. Their role as a positive force almost entirely overshadowed by the fear and the paralysis they have wrought on schools as well as the provincial DOE. At the same time I have also witnessed the enormous benefit of unions that have a more professional ethos and the difference they have made to the changing of teacher work culture and by extension to delivery in the class.

These three issues I believe have had a major impact on the culture of learning and teaching in all three schools in which I gained my experience.

My study is thus an attempt to draw together the participating teachers' knowledge and practice, to give an overall picture to the reader of their world seen through their

eyes. Being a qualitative study in the interpretivist paradigm my study is not meant to provide a solution but rather to better understand the dynamics of schools and to show what works for this particular case in its own context. From this there may be similarities that resonate with educators and schools in a similar context and will therefore hopefully begin a process of development that will result in a larger study aimed at developing a blueprint for schools with a similar dilemma. I hope that this study will add to the literature on the subject.

1.5. Research Questions

Core Question

How can teachers lead schools better to ensure that they are professional places of teaching and learning?

Subsidiary Questions

1. How is professionalism understood by teachers?
2. What are the factors which enhance / inhibit teacher leadership and professionalism in schools?

1.6. Research Design and Methodology

The research project is designed as a collective case study, following the interpretive paradigm, though there will be a component of quantitative data. The interpretive paradigm will allow us to interact closely with the participants to gain insight and get a clear understanding of how teacher leadership and professionalism is enacted within the schools and the relationship between teacher leadership and professionalism within the context of the case. Nieuwenhuis (2007, p.51) describes qualitative research as "...a research methodology concerned with understanding the process and cultural contexts which underlie various behavioural patterns.... studies people or systems by interacting with and observing the participants in their natural environment". The emphasis is thus on the quality and depth of the data. I approached the research project with the following assumptions. Teacher leadership is being implemented although it may not always be democratic but may take on authorised and dispersed forms (Gunter 2005); that there is a desire to be professional and that

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professionalism makes distributed leadership easier to enact; that communities of practice do exist but that the odds are stacked against them succeeding, for various reasons.

1.6.1. **Methodological Approach**

The proposed research followed a collective case study approach. The case for each researcher in the group was the group of five teacher leaders with the individual teachers being an imbedded unit within the case. As we looked at the responses of teachers to the distribution of leadership as well as their views of teacher professionalism the case study approach was appropriate. Maree (2007, p.5) citing Yin (1994) defines the case study research method as "an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within a real life context". Using the case study methodology allowed me to probe deeply and analyse intensively the various phenomena that impacted on my research project realising what is referred to as 'thick descriptions' (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2007).

1.6.2. **Methods of Data Collection.**

At first a large scale survey of all the educators at the school was conducted. The questionnaire consisted of closed questions as well as a few open ended questions. The purpose of the survey is as Maree (2007) suggests, to learn about the views, opinions, and behaviours of the participants and to see the world as they see it, whist collecting rich descriptive data. During the first level of the process a quantitative approach was adopted. Between this process and the individual interviews I observed the participants in various settings in the school. The observation process allowed me, as Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007) suggests, the opportunity to gather live data from the participants in their natural setting. I will use a staff briefing, staff meeting, and a professional development workshop to do my observations. As suggested by Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007) I paid particular attention to issues of context, physical setting, interactional setting and programme setting.

The second level of the research was the individual interviews with my five participants. The data gathered was qualitative in nature and largely textual, as I have transcribed the interviews from the recordings, deriving thick descriptions which Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007, p.21) describe as "... descriptions representing

the complexity of situations rather than simplistic ones". Semi-structured questions were used. Continuing the qualitative data collection at the third level I used focus group interviews which Maree (2007, p.90) suggests yield "... a wide range of responses, activating forgotten details of experiences, releasing inhibitions that they otherwise might not have disclosed ... producing data rich in detail". Throughout the process observations occurred whenever the opportunity arose.

1.6.3. Design Limitations

The use of four data collection instruments could be seen as a potential overload. They will however allow greater opportunity to check the trustworthiness of the data. This Nieuwenhuis (2007) suggests makes the research more defensible. All this adds to the volume of data for analysis which will certainly be a challenge. Another obvious limitation with case studies is the availability of people and the fact that someone may in fact withdraw from the sample. To obviate this I have selected an additional participant.

Finally the issue of positionality, especially as I will be doing research in the school in which I teach will be something I will have to be especially aware of. Nieuwenhuis (2007) cautions, that familiarity with the research participants creates a greater risk of bias. This positionality is especially true in my case as I am the principal of the school and also the deputy president of one of the unions. As I am currently on secondment away from the school my positionality within the school is slightly altered but not changed.

1.7. Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework I used in the study is teacher leadership theory as defined by Katzenmeyer and Moller (2001) Muijs and Harris (2003) as well as the complementary concept of distributed leadership theory as developed by theorists such as Gronn (2000) and Gunter (2005). Gronn theorises that our own perspective of leadership must be grounded in a theory of action which requires us to rethink current organisational practices. Muijs and Harris (2003) suggest that distributing leadership means that teachers must be given opportunities to lead and take responsibility within

their learning organisation. Gunter (2005) in turn refers to leadership that is authorised, dispersed or democratic distributed leadership.

In addition I align myself with to the professional conceptual framework of Sachs (1999) and Collay (2006). Collay (2006, p.4) contends that teachers' values define their practice, not the values of policy makers." Sachs (1999, p.2) distinguishes between different types of professionalism, articulating a view that," democratic professionalism is collaborative, co-operative action between teachers and education stakeholders". The relationship between these theories is best captured by the sentiments of Mertens and Yarger (1998), "teaching will not be professionalised until teachers become more involved in making decisions that not only affect the classrooms but also their professional lives beyond the classroom". I will elaborate on the theoretical framework more fully in chapter 3.

1.8. **Layout of the Dissertation**

In Chapter one I introduce the reader to my research, explaining the background as well as providing the rationale for my study. I then guide the reader through my research questions and the research design that guided my study. In Chapter two I review a wide range of local and international literature that I encountered to get a clearer picture of teacher leadership and professionalism. Herein I focus on the gaps I observed in the literature.

In Chapter three I focus on the research design and methodology, data collection methods, context of my study, the analysis process, ethical issues as well as limitations I encountered. This is followed by Chapter four. This chapter covers the presentation and findings of my research. I then move to Chapter five which is my final chapter. Here I conclude the dissertation and make several suggestions for future research.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

2.1   Introduction

The latter half of the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st century has witnessed erosion in the status of teachers, both in the communities they serve and amongst themselves. That teachers play an important leadership function within and beyond the classroom is widely recognised, debated and intensely researched. Linking this leadership to professionalism and the impact this will have on teaching, schools and individual teachers is the thrust of my study. The focus of my study will be on leadership in its various forms as I ascribe to a view that leadership is the capacity to release and engage human potential in the pursuit of common cause (Moore and Diamond, 2000).

In this chapter I will review the some of the vast international and local literature on the subject of leadership and professionalism in an attempt to ascertain how teachers can lead schools better to ensure that they are professional places of learning and teaching. In the context of the highly unionised workers ethic which predominates in South Africa, professionalism has at times been seen as part of an anti-worker camp. Given, however, the extremely dismal performance of our teachers and schools in this environment the clarion call for a return to a more professional ethic is an idea whose time has come.

To explore my topic of *Leaders as professionals: what does this mean for teachers'? Further;* I will focus on three research questions. I wish at first to seek answers to the question, how teachers can lead schools better to ensure that they are professional places of teaching and learning. Secondly I will explore how professionalism is understood by teachers and finally what the factors are that enhance or inhibit teacher leadership and professionalism in schools. For the purpose of this literature review I will focus on defining leadership and professionalism, thereafter I will explore the link between leadership and professionalism to determine what impact the one may have on the other. I will then look at the factors which promote teacher leadership and teacher professionalism. Finally I will explore the factors which inhibit teacher

leadership and teacher professionalism. This will be done to identify the conditions under which leadership and professionalism will flourish as well as recognising the adversity faced by many teachers in their quest for leadership and improved professionalism.

2.2 Professionalism

In an attempt to address the research question *of how teachers can lead schools better to ensure that they are professional places of teaching and learning*, I wish at first to focus on teacher professionalism and use it as the lens to focus the relationship between teacher professionalism and teacher leadership as alluded to in my research question. Two elements stand out in the title of my study, leadership and professionalism. The impact professionalism has on teachers is important in the unravelling my research questions. Webster's dictionary defines professionalism as the conduct, aims and qualities that characterise or mark a professional or profession. Timperley (2010) suggests that teachers who engage in professional learning and have a heightened responsibility define themselves as professional. Various authors, including Hoyle (1982), Kercher and Caufman (1995), Sachs (1999) and Govender (1998) include characteristics of independence, defined knowledge base, control over access, expertise, collaborative, co-operative action, reflection in action and experiential knowledge to name a few as core criteria in defining teaching as a profession and teachers as professionals.

The literature reviewed makes a loose connection between leadership and professionalism. Kerchner and Caufman (1995), Sachs (1999) and Troen and Boles (2005) concur that the notion of professional autonomy, accountability, knowledge and professional ethics are central elements of professionalism. This is echoed by Timperley (2005) who suggests that leadership is about promoting successful schooling, autonomy and accountability, whilst at the same time interacting with others. In my view leadership is hardly achievable without a handsome measure of professional respect, accountability and ethical conduct as outlined in the South African Council of Educators (SACE) code of professional ethics. There is thus a clear relational path between leadership and professionalism. Kerchner and Caufman (1995) suggest that teaching does not possess the occupational characteristics of

defined professions such as independence, defined knowledge and access control. They, however, suggest that it is critical reflection that raises teaching from a craft to a profession. The importance of professionalism lies in its ability to change the work culture of those who subscribe to it, which is what I am suggesting professionalism linked to teacher leadership, can do.

Mertens and Yarger (1998, p.4) state that "teaching will not be professionalised until teachers become more involved in making decisions that affect not only their classrooms but their professional lives beyond the classroom. This is echoed by Kerchner and Caufman (1995) who hold that professionalism is recognised by autonomy in decision making, expertise and standards of practice. This is entirely achievable according to Blegen and Kennedy (2000, p.6) "if principals in partnership with teachers create the time for all adults in the school to learn to talk together and build schools into centres of knowledge and understanding". Attempts to change teacher practice without due regard to those conceptions of professional responsibility which are deeply rooted in particular traditions as well as classroom realities will result in a lowering of morale and decreased effectiveness. This has certainly been the South African experience. The research into teacher workload by Chisholm, wa Kisilu and Hoadley (2005) showed that the impact of policy changes and workload negatively affected the South African teacher who was unprepared for such major changes. Broadfoot, Osborn, Gilly and Paillet (1998) contend that any attempt at change which fails to take into account the real influence of teacher professionalism and practice will be unnecessary. This suggests that professional considerations should be key to any educational change being contemplated. The relationship between professionalism and leadership is accepted but ill defined.

Leaders who have a professional ethic and disposition have much greater impact on the people with whom they work. Creating a professional ethic and institutionalising professional practice depends on changing school culture and creating a culture that fosters excellence and accountability according to Broadfoot et al (1998). Sachs (1999) suggests that an attack on professionalism is an attack on leadership because of the close relational bond shared by leadership and professionalism. Ironically the thrust by teachers to re-establish themselves as professionals "is occurring at a time when there is evidence that teachers are being deskilled" (Collay, 2006, p.4) and are

under increasing surveillance from politicians and the community. Professionalism has a few serious limitations to overcome before universal embrace can happen again.

Notions of professionalism differ and a view of what constitutes professionalism is relative according to Broadfoot et al (1988). Professional expectations and opportunities of teachers have been limited by years of entrenched managerialism suggests Collay (1999). Time to explore professional issues is severely limited in an environment that measures progress by achievements. Furthermore according to Holland (2005) professional development seldom addresses developmental issues rather it often dwells on teacher - pupil problems. Research by the OECD and Thovinen (2008) suggests that Finland has one of the highest performing education systems in the world. Thovinen (2008) cites the performance of Finland in the PISA international testing programme which sees them achieving in the top two positions in all categories out of seventy five countries. This she attributes to high degrees of professional teacher training, professional practice and highly educated teachers. Curiously these are the very qualities Christie, Butler and Potterton (2007) suggest may be lacking in South African schools to a great measure. I move now to a discussion of teacher leadership to assist in further exploring my research question.

2.3   Defining Leadership

At first I wish to focus on leadership and the different dimensions and forms of leadership particularly its impact on professionalism and vice versa. In my view, from the South African experience, professionals do not automatically make good leaders. However, leaders who are professional set themselves apart from the rest. The understanding of what constitutes leadership and particularly good leadership differs from context to context. In many contexts it is not uncommon for leadership to be confused with management or for the terms to be used interchangeably. This has led to a situation where people can often identify or describe a good leader but will find it near impossible to define the term. Starrat (1993) thus suggests that leadership is a complex phenomenon which cannot be separated from the historical social context in which it operates. This in turn has generated a set of unique terminology in different contexts and histories. In the context of the business world and politics, adjectives used to ascribe meaning and give understanding of a definition on leadership include terms such as influence, character, vision, mission, communication, and the art of

motivation, one who makes a lasting impact, and has a mixture of diverse qualities. This is not an exhaustive list but begins to give body to what people understand when they refer to leadership. In latter years the leadership debate has primarily been between what Gronn (2000) refers to as 'the power of one'- authoritative leadership versus a more democratic, inclusive power sharing leadership model. I now briefly turn to this debate in order to position my choice of leadership model more clearly.

Leadership has traditionally been synonymous with authority, position and a view that leaders are superior to followers. Gronn (2000) describes this as something to do for and on behalf of others. A tremendous amount of power is thus vested in this type of leadership. Gunter (2005) suggests that this power is about influence and is tied up with a range of practices around authority legitimacy, accountability and responsibility. In the education dynamic leadership has until recently been synonymous with the principal which according to Spillane (2004) has resulted in researchers for the most part ignoring other sources of leadership in schools. Crowther, Kaagen, Furguson, and Hann (2002) suggest that educational leadership is firmly grounded in ideas of authority, bureaucracy, hierarchy, the right to command and instruct. These traditional tendencies of authority could also be blamed for the lack of change in some South African schools. Crowther et al. (2002) ascribe this to the fact that this institutionalised authority inhibits the embracing of reforms. This view speaks directly to the South African scenario and my own experience of reform in schools, especially in the post apartheid years. The lack of adequate and quality leadership training in schools leaves principals with little but what they learnt from their own principals and school management teams (SMT) as examples of leadership. Inevitably the example was about authority. This has negatively impacted the change dynamic which we all need to embrace in South Africa. The latter half of the twentieth and the beginning of the twenty first century has witnessed a change revolution in leadership signalling a movement away from the authoritative towards a much more inclusive, democratic leadership dispensation.

Furthermore in this age of leadership gurus the one certainty preached by all is that leadership is much more than about the individual; the age of inclusivity has dawned. The age of authoritarian, dictatorial leadership is over. Ash and Persall (2000) refer to 'leaderful organisations' in their attempt to describe the need requirements of the new leadership environment as opposed to what was acceptable previously. Spillane

(2004) concurs with this view adding that leadership is not simply a group of functions, but the activities engaged in interaction with others in specific contexts and tasks. This leadership according to Day and Harris (2002) has several dimensions, setting directions, developing people, organising and building relationships to name a few. It is to this type of leadership style that I align myself, what Rogus (1988) describes as leading in transformational ways. I believe that this is what is demanded of leadership in an environment of change such as South Africa finds itself in. Harris and Muijs (2005) report that successful leaders consistently articulate a vision for their schools that is understood by everyone, they share influence, authority, responsibility and accountability with the staff in shaping the vision so that there is a shared ownership of the vision. I now move to a discussion of teacher leadership to assist in clarifying what needs to be done in my research to answer my core research question of how teachers can lead schools better to ensure that they are professional places of teaching and learning.

2.3.1   Teacher Leadership

In attempting to navigate my way through a plethora of views and defining statements on teacher leadership I am left with many similar, yet competing, conflicting and divergent, yet coherent and even some incoherent definitions of the term. This concurs with the findings of Muijs and Harris (2003), that there are overlapping and competing definitions of the term. Greenlee (2002, p.65) defines teacher leadership as, "… not about empowering teachers. Rather it is about organising the largely unused leadership capital in teachers to positively affect school change". Muijs and Harris (2003) agree with this and add that teacher leadership is exclusively concerned with the idea that all organisational members can lead. Similarly Rogus (1988) suggests that leadership is about increased teacher participation in decision making, creating opportunities for teachers to take the initiative and lead as well as setting an invitational example. According to Hart (1995) Fortune magazine call this the era of 'post heroic' leadership. Alternative ways of thinking about leadership are in terms of activities and interactions that are distributed across multiple people and situations and involve role complementaries and network patterns of control according to Timperley (2005). Katzenmeyer and Moller (2001, p. 11/12) further see teacher leaders as having three leadership functions:

- Leadership to students and colleagues
- Leadership in operational tasks within and outside the school.
- Leadership in decision making within governance structures within or outside the school.

Spillane (2004) suggests that teacher leaders often assume these leadership roles from a perspective that they are distinct from that of positional leaders reinforcing the view that this is leadership separated from the trappings of position. This position imbues the teacher leader with enormous influence which Wasley (1991) describes as having the ability to encourage colleagues to change, to do things they wouldn't ordinarily consider doing without the influence of the leader. This is where the strength of schools lies. Even in the most dysfunctional setting you might find teachers working together creating a foundation for change with the only shortcoming being, a leadership catalyst.

Katzenmeyer and Moller (2001) suggest that teacher leadership develops naturally among professionals who learn, share and address problems together. Working together creates effective teacher leaders who exercise an indirect but powerful influence on the effectiveness of the school as well as student achievement according to Harris (2004). A clear correlation is thus drawn between effective schools, student achievement and concerted teacher effort guided by effective leadership. One must question which of these elements are absent in a failing school environment that is bedevilling South Africa currently. Teacher leadership or the lack of it must surely rank high among those elements that are absent. The collaborative effort that Greenlee (2002) refers to is also sadly lacking. Rogus (1998) highlights that teacher leaders are first effective teachers who can demonstrate on a daily basis competencies associated with effective classroom instruction. Only effective teachers can take up the combination of empowering possibilities which Wasley (1991, p.170) suggests is critical for teacher leaders viz.

- Autonomy to decide which strategies work.
- Freedom to experiment with students and teachers.
- The opportunity to be engaged in learning about the foundations of the methods they recommend to their colleagues.

Viewed from a distributed leadership perspective teacher leadership emerges and grows rather than being appointed or assigned, suggesting that there are different paths to developing teacher leadership, which could be formal or informal as defined by Muijs and Harris (2007). I will now briefly explore these two dimensions of teacher leadership.

2.3.1.1 *Formal teacher leadership*

Gunter (2005) further suggests that distributed leadership is characterised variously as authorised, dispersed and democratic. Authorised distributed leadership is the most common form, where work is distributed from the head teachers to others. Dispersed distributed leadership is the core of distribution where work goes on outside of the formal workings of a hierarchy. Democratic distributed leadership shows a clear dispersal of influence with a distinctive inclusivity. We thus recognise that both formal and informal leadership is vital to encouraging and developing a culture of distributed leadership within schools which is essential if one wishes to utilise the power of distributed leadership to improve and develop the school in its entirety.

To begin with all leadership is either formal or informal and can have elements of both. Existing literature identifies formal teacher leadership as, encompassing roles such as head of department, subject co-ordinator, head of year etc. (Ash and Persall, 2000). According to Muijs and Harris (2007, p.112) formal leadership roles that teachers undertake "have both management and pedagogical responsibilities". Implicit herein is a suggestion that management roles are primarily linked to formal positions, but that formal leadership positions also have pedagogical responsibilities such as with the position of head of department and subject coordinator. Often formal leadership roles are distributed by school management teams (SMT) and the principal to the teachers. This is undoubtedly the most common form of teacher leadership. Even though there is sometimes a reluctant take-up of teacher leadership it does expose people to their own potential and a taste of what leadership is about. In the process other leadership skills develop and emerge. The formal distribution of leadership responsibilities has much to do with the quality of leadership of the SMT. In many schools all leadership is vested in the SMT simply because they are either unwilling or unable to delegate. Opportunities for formal leadership can take various forms.

In addition, the form leadership delegation can take is dependent on the context and willingness of teachers. Blegen and Kennedy (2000) suggest that teachers attending workshops, conferences etc must be expected to present what they have learnt, to the staff. Leadership teams must be vested with decision making power on issues such as fundraising and special projects. The latter should be led by emerging leaders. Curriculum, assessment, instructional improvement and budgeting are ideal ways of drawing on expertise of individuals and in so doing make them lead. Informal teacher leadership, however, is now being recognised as equally or even more important than formal teacher leadership according to Katzenmeyer and Moller (2001). This is important to my study as the qualities people ascribe to informal leaders are often similar to those ascribed to professional leaders.

2.3.1.2   *Informal teacher leadership*

Informal leadership has always been present in our schools but its importance has largely been unrecognised. It was often referred to as setting a good example which was expected of experienced teachers who should know better. We have learnt a hard lesson that experience in a bad setting does not mean people know better. Muijs and Harris (2005, p.21) define informal leadership to include, "… leadership of teachers regardless of position or designation." They also call it "invisible leadership". This leadership is primarily exercised from the classroom, but is equally valuable and as powerful as formal leadership according to Katzenmeyer and Moller, (2001). They further conclude that this informal leadership is a symptom of teaching transformation wherein leadership is defined in terms of function rather than titles. I believe that informal leadership will be the salvation of our struggling education system and its many sinking schools. The example of a knowledgeable teacher, giving feedback inquiring into practice and reflecting with peers on classroom practice whilst exchanging views is, according to Howey (1998) not only what informal teacher leadership is, but is the hallmark of professionalism. According to Darling-Hammond, Bullmaster and Cobb (1995) this form of teacher leadership is embedded in tasks and roles that do not create artificially imposed formal hierarchies. In their research Lieberman and Miller (2004) concluded that teachers come to leadership informally through the construction of peer interaction. Since teaching is a social activity, even the most anti-social teacher will find it difficult not to interact with those showing positive examples and leadership. It thus stands to reason that that there is tremendous

untapped power and potential to change the course of many schools with the skilful use and encouragement of informal teacher leadership.

In addition various authors such as Gronn (2000), Timperley (2005), Gunter (2005), Grant (2006), Muijs and Harris (2003) and Katzenmeyer and Moller (2001) suggest that leadership in schools is almost always distributed whether formally or informally. I will now focus attention on the distribution of leadership in schools, which I believe, is a model of leadership that is key, not only to building more but better leaders to drive the change dynamic in schools.

2.3.2 Distributed Teacher Leadership

Our schools need a form of leadership that is empowering, inclusive and change enhancing. I see distributed leadership as such a model, one that will force the adoption of greater accountability to self, to our pupils, to the school as community and institution. Distributed leadership theory at first incorporates the activities of multiple groups, secondly it implies a social distribution of leadership, and thirdly it implies interdependency rather than dependency. (Muijs and Harris, 2003). This resonates with the views of Woods and Gronn (2009) that suggest that distributed leadership is a dispersal of leadership expectations amongst a wide range of colleagues, and those of Day and Harris (2002) who suggests that leadership is dispersed across a broader range of teachers who have responsibilities for managing departments, subject disciplines and student activities. Distributed leadership is thus not only about devolution of responsibilities or the taking up of leadership responsibilities, it is also about the classroom, student performance and school improvement. This is the leadership model that appeals to me, in which I see the solution to our schools crises; the challenge lies in separating it from the role that principals see as their preserve.

Moreover, implicit in this perspective, according to Day and Harris (2002, p. 959) "… is a notion of shared or devolved leadership where leadership activity is not only the preserve of the principal", Gronn (2000) suggests that this then changes the power relationship within the school with the most important outcome being the blurring of the distinction between leaders and followers. Spillane (2004) sees this act as potentially stretching the leadership tasks over the practice of two or more leaders and followers. Enacting distributed leadership remains a challenge.

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In addition, according to Woods (2004) distributed leadership can take the form of spontaneous collaboration, role-sharing or institutionalised means of working together such as a committee or task team structure. Harris (2004, p.14) equates this to "… maximising the human capacity within the organisation". Muijs and Harris (2007, p. 113) concur with this when they state "… (It) is increased teacher participation in decision making and opportunities for teachers to take initiative and lead school improvement". Teachers thus take on responsibilities once reserved for the administrative hierarchy in a variety of ways as part of their expanding roles, according to Darling-Hammond et al. (1995). A cautionary note is sounded by Timperley (2005) when she admonishes us to note that distributed leadership is not the same as dividing task responsibilities among individuals who perform defined and separate organisational roles but rather, it comprises dynamic interactions between multiple leaders and followers. Hess (1988, p.50) refers to this as "leadership density", thus the greater the distribution, the greater the density. A concomitant to this is Hartley's (2004, p.203) assertion that, "leadership makes a difference; therefore schools need many leaders at all levels". Can distributed leadership be the answer to all leadership problems?

It would be safe to suggest that no one model has all the answers to leadership problems however; the distributed leadership model is one that has an appeal to many teachers at the chalkface. Furthermore, whilst cautioning that distributed leadership, "… is not a panacea or a blue print," Harris and Spillane (2007, p.33) are emphatic that "… it is a way of getting under the skin of leadership practice, of seeing leadership practice differently and illuminating the possibilities of organisational transformation". Woods and Gronn (2009, p. 441) add that "… it might just provide an antidote to role overload", whilst Day and Harris (2002) see it as a means to build capacity within a school through the development of intellectual and professional capacity of teachers. For this reason Gronn (2000) believes that distributed leadership is more appropriately understood as fluid and emergent rather than a fixed phenomenon. The recent literature on leadership and distributed leadership is clear; distributed leadership is an idea whose time has come (Gronn, 2000). Furthermore countries the world over are beset by policy changes. Hartley (2007) suggests that distributed leadership is a pragmatic response to the demands of (these) recent policy shifts. Distributed leadership, like all forms of leadership is about authority, power,

legitimacy, responsibility and relationships. Distribution is not just about the technical aspects but also about distributing authority, responsibility and hence legitimacy (Gunter 2005).

There are however a range of issues which either impede or encourage the development and nurturing of all forms of leadership. To these enhancing and inhibiting factors I now turn my attention as the understanding of these factors is essential to understanding how teachers could be better leaders.

2.3.3 Factors Enhancing and Inhibiting Teacher Leadership

All forms of leadership have certain conditions that either favour their development or retard their progress. It is widely recognised that the role of principals and their management teams is crucial to the promotion and sustaining of teacher leadership. Little (1995) in her study of two schools shows that heads that had introduced shared leadership claimed that influence on teaching had actually increased. Harris and Lambert (2003) suggest that head teachers have a key role to play in developing teacher leadership. Furthermore, they need to encourage teachers to become leaders. Barth (1988), Blegen and Kennedy (2000), Spillane (2004), and Gunter (2005) all agree that the role of the principal is critical in promoting conditions which encourage the development of leadership, by creating opportunities, giving acknowledgement and by subtly relinquishing his own authority. Barth (1988) adds that principals must assign responsibilities wisely and also share responsibility for the future. Spillane (2004) suggests six strategies which principals could use to promote leadership. These include, making suggestions, giving feedback, modelling, using enquiry, soliciting advice and opinion and giving praise. Barth (1988) and Crowther, *et al.* (2002) all support the view that principals who share their visions and patterns of action transparently are more likely to encourage leadership among teachers. The importance of the head teacher as a catalyst for distributed leadership is highlighted further by Ash and Persall (2000, p.17) who argue that "… heads will need to become leaders of leaders, striving to develop a relationship of trust with staff and encouraging leadership and authority throughout the school". Barth (1988, P.40)) is even more emphatic about the role of the principal stating that "the fate of teacher leadership lies in the relationship between principals and their faculties." What is clear is that the role of principals in developing leadership is undeniable. In the South

African context the answer to leadership development seems to lie in the development of principals first to ensure that they develop the next tier of leaders. In my own context formal delegation of leadership is fairly common; it is informal leadership development that is slower in developing. Sadly however, many principals and SMT's are also the very factors inhibiting the development of leadership because they seem to fear ceding some of this authority to others. The challenge facing many schools and even the DOE is how to move principals and SMT's from their current position of top down leadership to a position where they will embrace the value of teacher leadership development.

Additionally many researchers agree that one of the main barriers to teacher leadership is what Harris and Lambert (2003, p.44) describe as the top down leadership model that still dominates many schools, and what Greenlee (2002, p.47) describes as "...the bureaucratic organisational structure of schools," and in Grant's words (2006, p.525) "… many South African schools are still bureaucratically and hierarchically organised with principals who are autocratic". This approach is unintentionally supported by policy documents which, according to Grant (2006, p. 527), "emphasise principal accountability and this may be why school principals are afraid to delegate authority." As a result many of schools have remained stagnant with respect to leadership development. This is very typical in the context in which I teach. There are still far too many schools where all authority is vested in the principal and the SMT.

A common thread in much of the literature on leadership is the view that mentoring, collaboration and collegiality are key elements promoting distribution. Little (1995) suggests that the possibilities of teacher leadership are significantly enhanced when teachers learn more from one another through mentoring, peer coaching and mutual reflection. In this regard mentoring has been one of those areas which has come naturally to teacher leaders and is often a first indicator of teacher leadership. Even in dire conditions where teacher leadership is not encouraged, mentoring does take place and is extremely important as a catalyst in developing a culture of leadership. Additional to the role of principals, the development and encouragement of teacher mentoring is crucial in developing leadership and encouraging leadership take up. That teachers are willing to readily take up these leadership roles, is a clear indication of their willingness to lead and shows a desire to make schools better places of

teaching and learning. Mentoring is one of a number of contributions teachers can make to enhancing teacher leadership. Gehrke (1988) strongly supports the idea of mentoring describing it as being provided by, "a role model, and a master teacher, a developer of talent, opener of doors, sponsor and successful teacher". Mentoring is closely aligned to collegiality which promotes trust, collaboration and closeness amongst teachers.

In addition collegiality is extremely important in creating an environment for leadership to be nurtured in. Harris and Lambert (2003, p.15) suggest that, "a culture that promotes collegiality, trust and collaborative working relationships, focus on teaching and learning and that respond to improvement efforts are more likely to encourage teacher leadership." Lieberman and Miller (2004), Muijs and Harris (2007) and Grant (2008) all concur that collaboration and collegiality, which includes mutual trust, creates greater chances of success of teacher leadership. Leadership programs flourish and opportunities are more regularly created for leadership. Furthermore the literature highlights the creation of an atmosphere of trust, space and time for professional development, teacher empowerment and interdependent teacher roles as well as space for teacher involvement in decisions on what roles they wish to take on as important factors that would promote teacher leadership. There are many factors which promote and encourage teacher leadership. There are, however, equally as many factors inhibiting teacher leadership in many schools. I now briefly refer to some of these as they are also the factors which prevent teachers from becoming better leaders.

Following on the enhancing factors to teacher leadership already mentioned many researchers have also identified a host of interpersonal factors as important barriers to distributed leadership, such as "teacher hostility towards colleagues in leadership", (Harris, 2004, p.20), "relationships between teachers change." Muijs and Harris (2007) contend that issues of conflict arise between those that accept the leadership challenge and those that don't. Teachers are ostracised by their colleagues and are even labelled as sell-outs when there is disagreement with the SMT. Many of the teacher leaders also complain about the complications that come with the dual roles of teacher and leader, with time being uppermost in those complaints. Often the lack of financial recognition for the additional tasks leaves a somewhat bitter taste in the mouth. These aspirant teacher leaders have often to bear the brunt of professional

tensions such as questions about their expertise and authority to instruct their colleagues. That these barriers are somewhat irksome is true but none are insurmountable especially when the right conditions are created by the school management. This notwithstanding, leadership must be about change development, agency and growth. It is to the issues of leadership as agency that I now turn to.

2.3.4 Leadership as Change Agency

A discussion on agency is appropriate particularly from the perspective of leadership being about change and the improvement of leadership capacity resulting in a more ready acceptance of change and becoming better teachers. Human agency refers to the actions of individuals within the context of and through structure (Spillane, 2004). To maximise student learning, teachers must assume leadership roles and take responsibility for school-wide change according to Katzenmeyer and Moller (2001). Gronn (2000, p.318) agrees that, "distributed leadership is about the emphasis of the centrality of co-joint agency". According to Ash and Persall (2000), existing administrative structures, many still organised bureaucratically and hierarchically are often in conflict with the kind of change that time demands. Old leadership forms created individuals with an exaggerated sense of agency thereby creating a legitimate hierarchical monopoly of influence according to Woods and Gronn (2009). Reflecting on the South African context with its history of hierarchical, bureaucratic leadership styles, Grant (2006, p.512) suggests that "a form of distributed leadership is needed where principals are willing to relinquish their power to others and fixed leader – follower dualisms are abandoned in favour of the possibility of multiple, emergent task focused roles." Herein lies the potential of teacher leadership as agency.

Furthermore, distributed teacher leadership affords a voice and potential to access the decision making agenda according to Gronn and Woods (2009). Harris and Lambert (2003, p.43) argue that "teacher leadership is not a formal role or tasks, it is more a form of agency where teachers are empowered, to lead developmental work that impacts directly on the quality of teaching and learning". Harris and Muijs (2005, p.14) concur with this view when they state that where distributed leadership is in place there is greater potential for building the internal capacity for change. According to Harris and Lambert (2003) schools that build the capacity for

implementing change are more likely to sustain improvement over time. Capacity building means different things to different people but most researchers agree that building capacity and extending the potential capabilities of individuals' means investing in professional development. In this respect many schools fall short citing financial and time constraints especially in the South African context. A variety of opportunities exist for distributed leadership to promote a change agenda. One such, according to Hargreaves (1992), is collegiality which promotes professional growth and internally generated school improvements. Thus this study seeks to understand the role teacher leaders can play to ensure that schools are professional places of learning and teaching.

In addition teacher leadership develops naturally among professionals who learn, share and address problems together. (Katzenmeyer and Moller, 2001). Day and Harris (2002) argue that only with teacher collegiality and collaboration can positive change occur. Blegen and Kennedy (2000, p.3) refer to collegiality as 'talking together'; which they suggest takes time, training and change. Wasley (1991) suggests that schools which are characterised by collegiality and experimentation have teachers who work with the principal, set realistic goals and share leadership. This resonates with the views of Muijs and Harris (2007, p.123) who contend that "collegiality, the ability to work together, is seen as central to school improvement and a main driver of change". Extending this idea Grant (2008) suggests that any teacher professional development initiative must be linked to issues of leading. This is underscored by the views of Harris and Muijs (2005, p.3) who state that, "working collaboratively, they (teachers) automatically become catalysts for change and development and take on the prime task of leading change". It is this positive energy created by collegiality that can begin to change schools especially in the context referred to by Grant (2008). Agency is best enacted when people work, learn, collaborate and develop together. A useful conceptualising framework for extending agency is communities of practice. I will now explore the role of communities of practice as a means to drive and sustain leadership development.

2.3.5 Communities of Practice

The term 'communities of practice' was initially used by Lave and Wenger in the early 1990's. According to Smith (2003) their model of situated learning proposed

that learning involved a process of engagement in a 'community of practice'. A community of practice involves a shared practice with members involved in a set of relationships over time and develop around things that matter to people (Smith, 2003, citing Lave and Wenger). The shared ideas, commitments, members, enterprise and identity resonate with the operations in a professional place of teaching and learning making schools ideal settings for the development of communities of practice. Harris and Muijs (2005, p.18) list a number of characteristics of communities of practice

- Everyone is a member of more than one community of practice.

- Through this multiple membership individuals transact the expectations of one community into another

- Communities of practice are resources for organising our learning through an identity of participation

- New collective leadership with greater opportunity for organising development and change is stimulated

The contribution that communities of practice make to the lives of teachers i.e. the members of the community, is extremely important in that the value of communities of practice lies in the contribution of participants in leadership activities. Harris and Lambert (2003) further suggest that professional learning communities promote greater participation in leadership activities and decision making, giving teachers a shared sense of purpose and joint responsibility for the outcomes. Muijs and Harris (2003, p.440), citing Holden (2002), state that "an organisation's ability to improve and sustain improvement depends on its ability to foster and nurture professional learning communities or communities of practice." This is supported by Harris and Lambert (2003), who further suggest that teacher leadership is inseparable from identifying with and contributing to a community of teachers which in turn contributes to improved educational practice. All theories have limitations though, especially when faced with contexts such as the South African scenario of high pupil: teacher ratios, a rapidly changing learning environment, powerful and sometimes interfering trade unions and an existing hierarchical leadership culture.

Most teachers would cite time as one of the great stumbling blocks to most initiatives. Communities of practice are no different. In my own context the ideology of

managerialism is often seen as a means to solve school problems and create a mirage of school success. Muijs and Harris (2000) suggest that an organisations ability to sustain improvements depend on its ability to nurture and foster professional learning communities. The problem lies with the formal leadership and management's willingness, ability and desire to nurture such activities which inevitably spells a change to the existing culture of top-down leadership. I am of the view that this ability is lacking in many South African schools because of the dearth of leadership.

The leadership vacuum in many schools will forever be a thorn in the side of sustainable, meaningful change. If this is so, then what Harris and Muijs (2005) suggests as the principal reason for teacher leadership i.e. transforming schools into professional learning communities is simply not possible. On the other hand where conditions of distributed teacher leadership do exist the possibilities of positive impact are endless. Teacher leadership must create an identity of participation, expectation and legitimate practice. Without this leadership, individuals would be unable to derive understanding of their work from the communities of practice in which they carry it out. Communities of practice lead to strong measurable, sustainable improvements that assist in creating a strong professional ethic

2.4   Conclusion

This literature review has attempted to illuminate the value and promise of teacher leadership and its potential to "offer a new professionalism based upon mutual trust, recognition empowerment and support" (Muijs and Harris, 2003, p. 445). Evidence from the literature is that leadership today is beginning to look very different from the traditional hierarchical conceptions that slots individuals into different, limited subordinate or super-ordinate functions. (Darling-Hammond *et al.*, (1995). The literature has highlighted how different leadership practices can be and have illuminated the possibilities for organisational transformation. What is painfully apparent is that, "the evolution from policy into effective leadership is developmental" (Harris and Lambert, (2003b, p.39).

In addition whilst covering an expansive area, the literature reviewed only made fleeting reference to the issue of compensation for leadership tasks taken up by teachers. In the context of poor remuneration across the globe, teachers who take on extra tasks almost always expect that remuneration should follow. Whether

compensation would encourage greater distribution of leadership tasks needs further research. Existing literature has an overwhelming focus on the development of teacher leadership in developed countries like the United States of America and Britain, there is however not enough research in developing countries and countries in transition like South Africa. We further need to explore the positive impact that professional unionism can have on improving learning outcomes and promoting the distribution of leadership.

Further, a clear expression of a South African teacher professional identity is largely absent, opening a gap for further research. It is evident from the literature that formal and informal distribution of leadership are experienced differently and accepted differently. A comparison of the experiences of formal leaders compared to informal leaders would be a valuable research topic for further research to enhance our understanding of the mechanisms of distributed leadership. A gap exists in so far as further research into the development and sustainability of distributed leadership and professional practices in counties such as South Africa, faced with its macro policy changes, powerful unions, a dispirited teacher corps and prevailing hierarchically leadership cultures.

In reviewing some of the growing list of literature on teacher leadership I have focussed at first on an attempt to define teacher leadership and professionalism and the relationship between them. Secondly I have looked at the factors that promote leadership and professionalism. Finally I explored the factors inhibiting leadership and professionalism.

<center>**CHAPTER THREE**</center>

<center>**RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY**</center>

3.1   Introduction

This chapter deals with the inter-related concepts of methodology and methods in educational research. Cohen, Manion & Morrison (2007) define methods as the procedures used in the process of data gathering, whilst methodology describes the approaches to kinds of paradigms of research. Cohen et al. (2007), citing Kaplan further state that methodology helps us to understand the process of inquiry. Research methods are thus the tools we use to find a solution to our research problems, whilst methodology aims at the use of the correct procedures to find these solutions. Methodology thus assists in research methods being conducted properly.

The purpose of my study was to ascertain what it means for teachers to be recognised as professionals. In this chapter I explain the research methods and methodology employed by myself to answer my research questions. To achieve this I will at first discuss the aims and objectives of my study and highlight my core and subsidiary research questions. Then I will briefly look at the context of the school and profile my participants. Next I will deal with matters relating to access to the school, including ethical considerations and matters related to my positionality. Thereafter I will discuss factors that influenced my sampling and the methodology employed. I will then take a closer look at the interpretive paradigm and case study methodology. Next I will look at the data collection methods I employed giving a brief overview of each one. This will be followed by a description of the data analysis I employed. Thereafter I will look at issues of trustworthiness and crystalisation followed by a discussion on the limitations of my study after which I will conclude the chapter.

3.2   Aims and Objectives of The Study

For research to be purposive it needs a clear focus. Jansen (2007, p. 13) suggests that a clear research question is the best way of formulating the purpose of your study and focussing your effort when you collect your data. The aim of my study was to determine how teachers could lead schools better to ensure that they are professional places of teaching and learning. Herewith I aimed to make a small contribution to the

knowledge about leadership and professionalism and in particular any relationship that might exist between the two.

My study attempted to record and describes the prevailing leadership attitude and engagement in by teachers within the school to ascertain if teacher leaders saw themselves as professionals and if this view influenced their behaviour as teachers and leaders. In addition I wished to ascertain if a professional disposition and behaviour improved the quality of learning and teaching. In response to my main aim, which was to determine how teachers could lead schools better, to ensure that they are professional places of teaching and learning, I facilitated a careful sampling process which I will discuss in greater detail later in this chapter. Through these carefully selected teacher leaders I set out to determine their views on professionalism on professional leadership its relationship to the quality of teaching and learning as well as the factors that enhanced or inhibited professionalism in their school. I turn now to the issue of the context of the school in which my case study was located.

3.3   Context of the Study

The study was conducted in an urban primary school located on the fringe of the central business district in a light industrial area of Pietermaritzburg. The school offers classes from Grade R to grade seven and has thirty one class units. Under the apartheid regime the school was designated for 'coloured' children and was established in 1952. In 1963 the school was forced to relocate to its current location following the enactment of the reviled and notorious Group Areas Act. Its previous location was proclaimed an 'Indian area'. This ex House of Representatives school is a landmark in the area and consists of thirty one classrooms, an administration block, a fully functional and stocked library, a modern computer room, a hall, a large staff room and kitchen. Separate ablution facilities exist for the senior primary and junior primary pupils.

The staff complement consists of thirty four teachers, thirty two of whom are state paid, seven general assistants, one of whom is state paid and two secretaries of which one is state paid. The School Management Team (SMT) comprises a principal, two deputy principals and four heads of department. The school offers tuition through the medium of English with isiZulu as the first additional language.

The demographics of the learners has changed dramatically over the years and is currently comprised of 98% Black learners, 2% Coloured learners. The staff demographics have also changed and currently comprise 69% Coloureds, 15% Blacks, 12 % Indians and 5% Whites. Besides the standard curriculum offerings which follow the National Curriculum Statement official curriculum, the school has a functional extra mural sport programme and computer lessons for all children.

The 110 year old building that houses the school demands a programme of renovations and maintenance. The support for this lies entirely within the school, with the Department of Education (DOE) playing no role at all. Relentless fundraising has enabled the school/ SMT and School Governing Body (SGB) to regularly maintain the school as well as upgrade facilities. In the past fifteen years, sixteen classrooms, a hall a new ablution facility, two sports fields a new staffroom and kitchen have been built.

The pupil population, by and large commute to school as there is no residential area surrounding the school. The learner drop-out rate is negligible, about four out of one thousand one hundred and fifty pupils. The success of the school, its popularity, (it turns away +- 400 pupils per annum) can be attributed to its sound educational programme, the culture of care, its low school fees, its accessibility, the functional SGB and the exceptional rapport that has been cultivated with its parents. The parents enthusiastically support school initiatives with even its budget meeting recording more than five hundred parents in attendance. The SMT adopts a strict business-like approach to school matters like financial accountability, absenteeism (both teachers and pupils), teaching (the job), time on task and task on time. Teachers respond with a high degree of collegiality and embrace their roles as teachers, leaders and as professionals. Little inter-union tensions exist among the teachers even though two very different unions are supported. The school bustles with activity and participates in numerous programmes exposing the pupils and teachers to many activities beyond the boundaries of the school. Discipline and control is evident in many simple things. The pupils are always impeccably dressed in school and physical education uniforms, late coming is minimal, disciplinary cases are few, the school is clean and tidy and an air of learning activity exists.

3.4   Access to the School

From the outset I viewed the access to my research site, the participants and even the area of jurisdiction of the DOE as a privilege. Cohen *et al*. (2007, p. 55) support the view that access is not an expected right but a privilege. In addition, researchers need to "demonstrate that they are worthy as researchers and human beings of being accorded to the facilities to carry out their investigations". In contrast, Bassey (1999) suggests that access in a democratic society is a right researchers should expect. He qualifies this 'right' as being subject to certain responsibilities which then complements the views of Cohen *et al.* (2007). General goodwill, respect and co-operation were key considerations in securing access as my research was to be conducted over a period spanning almost six months.

The first stage of access involved gaining official permission to undertake the research from the KwaZulu Natal Department of Education (KZNDOE). Permission was sought and granted for the project. A letter of permission was issued by the KZNDOE. Permission to engage in the study at my school was largely superfluous as I held the position of principal at the time. The impact of my positionality will be discussed in greater depth later in the chapter. A formal letter was, however, tabled to the school SMT and SGB seeking this permission. The participants were recruited and given assurances about confidentiality, anonymity as well as the right of withdrawal. This was to ensure that participants understood the process and could give their informed consent. The prescripts of the university were adhered to carefully in this respect. I wish to note at this stage that participants were not necessarily queuing up to join in. In fact some participants took some time to convince. The fact that the school has been a research site for four masters' students and at least eight honours and one doctoral student in recent years, whilst creating awareness of the value of research, also created an awareness of the time demands and thus inadvertently made folk reluctant to join in. I furthermore ensured that my participants were abundantly familiar with the scope and reasons for my research and the value of their honest input. This I reinforced with a letter detailing my research and association with the university as well as details of my supervisor. This created an air of acceptability, support and eagerness. This resonates with the views of Lee as cited by Cohen *et al*. (2007) that social access crucially depends on establishing interpersonal trust. The culture of trust that prevailed at the school allowed me access into the honest,

forthright views of the participants. Issues of access are interrelated to issues of ethics. It is to this crucial issue that I now turn.

3.4.1   Ethical Issues

In pursuit of greater understanding and searching for new knowledge as a researcher I had an absolute responsibility to be honest, open and to protect the participants in my research. Babbie (1992, p. 464) suggest that "social research often though not always represents an intrusion into people's lives". Mindful of this admonition I attempted to minimise intrusion by planning conveniently around the schedules of my participants. Over and above reassuring and guaranteeing participants of confidentiality, anonymity and sensitivity in dealing with information shared, I recognised that my research had the potential to force participants to face aspects of themselves that they normally did not consider, as pointed out by Babbie (1992). This demanded recognition at first and sensitivity when participants had the 'aha' moments. This went a long way to demonstrating non-maleficence i.e. doing no harm.

At all times I checked with the participants that they understood sufficiently well the purposes, processes and intended outcomes of the research. (Cohen *et al,* 2007).This, Shenton (2004) suggests allows participants to give reasoned judgement to the act of participation i.e. truly informed consent. In the final analysis I have undertaken to show the participants the final product of my research to further reassure them that I adhered to the ethical roadmap that all good researchers are expected to follow. I believe that with this approach I was able to gain the trust and support of my research participants. My own position as principal of the school was one of the issues that were uppermost in my mind throughout the research process. I now focus briefly on the issue of positionality.

3.4.2   Positionality

I have intentionally located this discussion within the access/ethical issues as opposed to limitations as it posed more of an ethical question to me even though I recognised that it could be a limiting factor as well. This view resonates with Hopkins' (2007) assertion that, "it (positionality) is therefore also an ethical consideration that requires reflection throughout the research process". From the outset I was painfully aware that the project decision to do research in our own schools would be a challenge,

given my position as principal of the school. My concerns lay in the fact that my position could, if not properly handled, compromise the quality of my research in particular the quality of responses from my participants.

My greatest challenge was to deflect attention away from my position as principal and focus attention on my role as researcher and secondly to have my motives as researcher seen as honest and honourable. The additional challenge was reconciling the two roles of researcher and principal. To address and overcome these challenges I adopted a reflexive approach, recognising that I as researcher was part of the social world that I was researching (Cohen *et al,* 2007 citing Hammersley and Atkinson, as well as Rule and John, 2011). This reflexive approach demanded that I carefully considered the effects of the research on my participants and on myself as researcher. I continually reflected on whether the participant responses were exposing them and attempted to reassure them whenever they felt unsure. My own reactions to their honest responses were guarded so as not to show any biases or change in my interactions with them, an issue highlighted by Cohen *et al* (2007). What became apparent was that I could not divorce my own self from the research situation and I accepted that the participants would behave in a particular way in my presence, as predicted by Cohen *et al* (2007). Hopkins (2007, p. 387) citing Jackson suggests that the "politics of position can only be examined reflexively". Being aware of the ways in which my position could impact on the research was the best tool to combat any negative effect. Hence I took the advice of Hopkins (2007, p. 388) "To be considerate of both similarities and differences between myself and the research participants".

My own personality and the free expression culture cultivated within the school over time militated against the negative effects of my position. The expression of contradictions by the participants between their practices and what we state about how the school operates is one example where my reflexivity was severely challenged. Clinging to a belief that my own views did not hold precedence over those of the participants won the day. I believe that ultimately I was able to achieve a healthy balance between my own epistemology and reflexivity whilst being true to the ethical code of good researchers. The benefits of being acquainted with the researcher shone through the participants who displayed openness, confidence and a clear belief in their right to express themselves honestly. Apart from some early hesitation the participants were clearly a credit to the research. The point of connection, informed by our

knowledge of one another and the points of difference which emerged during the research process set the scene for an exciting research project. Our own understanding and interpretation of situations resulted in what Hopkins (2007, p. 388) describes as "the multiple intersecting ways in which our various positionalities and identities are revealed, negotiated and managed in the research is crucial to the conduct of ethical research." In a word my positionality was going to be difficult but manageable.

3.5   Sampling

Various factors determined the sampling technique that I adopted. At first the research format led to a decision that for convenience and cost issues the school that I teach in would be the research site. Cohen *et al.* (2007) agree that access is a key issue, which is what informed the decision. They further however caution that access must be both permitted and practicable.

To choose my participants I used a purposive convenient approach which Cohen et al (2007, p. 114) suggests "is a feature of qualitative research". I was thus able to handpick the participants on the basis of my view that they typically represented certain characteristics which would add value to my research. The sample was thus chosen to represent members of the SMT, the junior primary and the senior primary phases, whom I believed were teacher leaders or showed promise of leadership. According to Cohen *et al.* (2007, p. 15) purposive sampling is used, "to access knowledgeable people with expertise".

My choice of five teacher leaders as my case proved to be adequate. All five were women leaders as the school management has 86% female members and the staff complement is comprised of 89% female members. Rule and John (2011) concur that for case study research purposive sampling is most appropriate for its deliberate selection of suitable participants.

3.6   Methodology

3.6.1   Locating my Research in the Qualitative Approach

The overall design and methodology of this research was informed by my broadly identified purpose. My intention was to determine 'how' teachers can lead schools better to ensure that they are professional places of learning and teaching. My

research was ideally premised on a qualitative research approach within the interpretive paradigm. Ivankova, Creswell and Clark (2007, p. 254) citing Creswell explain that "qualitative research is an inquiry process of understanding, where the researcher develops a complex holistic picture and conducts the study in a natural setting". Understanding, in a natural setting refers to what Babbie and Mouton (2003, p. 53) call "the insider perspective on social action". The researcher is thus integral to the research process and shares importance with the participants. This emic perspective is what defines the qualitative approach.

In addition, as opposed to explaining and predicting human behaviour, this qualitative study sought to get in-depth 'thick descriptions' and understandings of my participants actions and the events they were involved in and their views. Briggs and Coleman (2007) suggest that the research topic is embedded in the holistic picture of the research situation. The suitability of the qualitative approach to my research is underscored by Miles and Huberman (1994) who recognise the following strengths to the approach.

- Qualitative data focuses on naturally occurring phenomena. They gave us a strong handle on what 'real' life is about
- Qualitative data is characterised by their richness with strong potential for revealing complexity- such data provides thick descriptions.
- Qualitative data with the emphasis on peoples lived experiences are well suited for locating the meanings people place on the events, processes and structures of their lives and for connecting these meanings to the social world around them. (p. 255)

Ivankova et al. (2007, p.15), citing Creswell add that qualitative samples are small, purposively selected from individuals with the most experience with the studied phenomena. My study furthermore fitted neatly within the interpretive paradigm on which I will now focus.

3.6.2 The Interpretive Paradigm

The purpose of my study, which was to seek understanding which dictated that my study would be located in the interpretivist paradigm. In addition, my own concerns for the subjects, my colleagues who agreed to participate in the study, are also an

indication, according to Cohen *et al.* that this study should be located in the interpretive paradigm.

Qualitative research is often suggested as being based on the interpretive paradigm according to Nieuwenhuis (2007, p.58) who further argues that "such assertions although useful do not give sufficient acknowledgement to the diversity of approaches within qualitative research." According to Nieuwenhuis (2007, p. 58) "Interpretive studies attempt to understand phenomena through the meanings that people assign them". It is to this epistemological view that I align myself, and it has been the point of departure of my study. Nieuwenhuis (2007) suggest that the interpretive perspective is based on the following assumptions:

- Human life can only be understood from within.
- Social life is a distinctly human product.
- The human mind is the purposive source of meaning.
- Human behaviour is affected by knowledge of the social world.
- The social world does not exist independently of human knowledge. (p. 59)

People's behaviour is thus context dependent and much can be learnt from observing them. This pertains to my own study.

3.7   Case Study Research

This research uses a case study methodology, in which my case is the five teacher leaders within my school. My unit of analysis is the individual teacher leaders that make up the case. Cohen *et al* (2007, p.253) citing Nisbet and Watt define a case study as "a specific instance that is frequently designed to illustrate a more general principle". Scholz and Tietje (2002, p.1) suggest that "a case is considered from a specified perspective and with a special interest". Adding to these definitions are the views of Yin cited in Bassey (1999, p. 26) that case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within a real life context." My own study measures up to the given definitions in its empirical nature in which my data is collected by observation and direct experience accounts of 'contemporary phenomena'; teaching is a lived everyday experience - 'a real life context'; teaching happens every day in varying contexts with my special interest being the answer to my research questions.

Bassey (1999) further describes a case as being "a bounded system". The case is given within which issues are indicated, discovered or studied so that a tolerably full case is possible. This fullness is what Cohen et al (2007, p. 254) citing Geetz defines as "thick descriptions." Platt (2006, p. 275) suggests that no matter the variation between authors there is broad consensus "... of a case as bounded system with an understanding that it will be a single case studied intensively."

I explored the real life context of the five teacher leaders in my case with the intention to understand their lived experience and hear their opinions as well as to allow the context of the school to reveal how teachers can lead schools better to ensure that they are professional places of learning and teaching. From this I gleaned thick, full, detailed descriptions of experiences, views and contexts. My case was thus conducted within a localised boundary of space and time, (Briggs and Coleman, 2007).

Yin (1994) distinguishes between three forms of case study, namely exploratory, explanatory and descriptive. I aligned myself with the descriptive case study as I wanted to fully cover the depth and scope of my case within a specific context. This account intended to illuminate the issue of teacher professionalism and leadership and their dual impact on teaching and learning. With my stated purpose being to *understand*, I thus did not expect to generate any new theoretical insights into teacher leadership or teacher professionalism or their impact on teaching and learning. My emphasis on description meant that I did not look for cause – effect relationships in my study. My case study could thus be described as an embedded case study.

The embeddedness of my case study stems from the fact that I involved more than one unit or object of analysis and did not limit myself to qualitative analysis alone. (Scholtz and Tietje, 2002). This embedded design allowed me to use both quantitative and qualitative data. In addition I made use of multiple sources of information, which employed direct participant observation, semi-structured interviews and document analysis. These techniques will be discussed in greater detail later in this chapter. Case study design has many features which give it strength and a few which are listed as weaknesses. It is to these that I now briefly turn.

3.7.1 Strengths and Weaknesses of Case Study

Case study methodology like all research methodologies has perceived strengths and weaknesses. Scholtz and Tietje (2002) are among a number of authors that have highlighted that the case study approach is still viewed with scepticism particularly as a research methodology. Of the weaknesses I encountered is that case studies are not objective. Much hinges on the quality of the researcher, the methods, quality of analysis and even the overall intention. In addition, Babbie and Mouton (2003) point to the volume of data generated and the challenge of organising the data, which I can personally attest to. Bassey (1999) p.23 calls them difficult to organise, (Cohen *et al* (2007) p. 256 citing Nisbet and Watt further suggests that the results may not be easily generalisable; they are not easily open to cross-checking, hence they may be selective, biased, personal and subjective; and are also prone to observer bias despite attempts at reflexivity. I have chosen to highlight only those weaknesses that I felt directly impacted on my study to a greater or lesser degree. I believe, however, that the strengths outweighed the weaknesses.

One of the most obvious strengths of case study methodology is "its ability to probe deeply and analyse intensively the multi-farious phenomena" according to Bassey (2007). He suggests that most writers agree that being there where the action is and observing first hand" is one of the greatest strengths". Cohen et al. (2007, p. 256) citing Nisbet and Watt suggest that the results generated are more easily understood by a wider audience and speak for themselves. They are able to catch unique data that would otherwise be lost by larger scale studies. Further they are strong on reality; and can be undertaken by a single researcher. This uniqueness made using this methodology especially exciting.

3.8 Data Collection Plan

In this section I present the data collection techniques I employed to gather data to answer to my research questions. Bassey (1999) citing Yin suggests that Case Study research relies on multiple sources of evidence. He further suggests that the major methods of data collection in case studies are observing, reading documents and questioning, but adds that case study research has no specific methods of data collection unique to it. For my study I chose to use a survey of the entire teaching staff of the school, individual interviews, a focus group interview, and observations of

participants in my case as well as document analysis. I will now briefly look at each of the data collection techniques that I employed

3.8.1 Questionnaires

The questionnaire (survey) I used was designed by a group of students engaged in the masters' research project. I had a fair amount of input into its structure, design and content. The questionnaire was administered to all 32 teachers and had four distinct sections. Section A sought to elicit biographical information from the respondents in my school.

The purpose of the rest of the survey was threefold. It sought to explore the variability of participant's perceptions of teacher leadership as well as their understanding of professionalism. It highlighted significant issues that could be investigated later and even raised during the interview. Thirdly, it gave respondents the opportunity of unfettered free expression on limited issues. This gave other insight into how respondents viewed leadership and professionalism. The survey complied with what Silverman (2010) suggests is the most common purpose, i.e. to obtain factual information, attitudinal information or a mixture of both.

The statements in the survey covered views on leadership and professionalism drawn both from literature and from the SACE code of teacher conduct as well as the experiences of the researchers. The survey sought to verify whether those areas identified coincided with the participant's experiences and views and to what degree. Participants indicated the extent to which they agreed with the statements on a four point Likert scale, ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The Likert scale is according to Babbie and Mouton (2003) the standard formalised procedure in surveys. The SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) was used to make various inferences from the data from the questionnaire. This data will be presented in chapter four.

The questionnaire was administered at a staff meeting after prior arrangements had been made with the staff. After explaining the process and reinforcing the guarantees of anonymity, confidentiality and right to withdraw, all staff present agreed to participate. The questionnaire was not my primary source of data but gave useful

information that I used to verify broader views on professionalism and teacher leadership.

3.8.2   Observation Schedule

As I was a member of staff I was regarded as a participant observer. The observation period spanned the latter weeks of 2010 and the first term in 2011. At this stage I wish to point out that during the first term I was no longer officially at school or in the position of principal. I need to point out that I had been seconded to the teacher union NAPTOSA for the year to assist in interaction with the DOE on curriculum matters. This meant that my role at school was purely advisory when the acting principal needed guidance. I did, however, spend many hours at school as this was also the hand-over period to my deputy principal. Babbie and Mouton (2003, p. 293) suggest that participant observation is the process where the researcher is both a member of the group being studied and the researcher doing the study." This suggests that the participant observer collects data by participating in the daily life of those being studied.

To avoid being over-intrusive I decided to observe the five teacher leaders in the setting of a staff meeting/briefing and a professional development workshop. I attempted more casual observation but as this became too obvious I abandoned it. This is in keeping with the advice of Neuman (2000) about being sensitive to the context and participants being observed. During these observations I recorded both my empirical observations as well as my interpretations of them. My observations also included my casual chatting, sometimes in groups to my participants.

The purpose of using this data collection technique was to observe the participants in their natural setting. This enabled me to see if my participants were engaged in any leadership activities, formally or informally. I was able to observe how they carried themselves as professionals in their interaction with colleagues, as well as their conduct around learners. I observed if their leadership contributed to a more socially just environment, i.e. whether they were contributing to transformation and empowerment? I further observed their role as union members and its impact on their leadership and professionalism in the school. The triangulation value of these observations was substantial but will be discussed later in this chapter.

3.8.3   Semi-structured Individual Interviews

The semi-structured individual interviews which I conducted in February 2011 were conducted on different days with each of the five teacher leaders.   The interview questions were designed to comprise even questions broadly related to our research questions. Cohen *et al* (2007, p. 351) suggests the interviews can be the principal means of gathering information. This was so with my study. The interviews were my primary source of data collection.   In the planning I was aware that the interviews were not only a verbal interaction but were what Cohen *et al.* (2007, p. 349) describes as, "a flexible tool for data collection, enabling multi-sensory channels to be used: verbal, non-verbal, spoken and heard". I was thus very careful to try to note the other subtle signals which were given during the interview. Because of my familiarity with the respondents I was particularly conscious of the admonishment of Dyers cited in Cohen *et al.* (2007, p.349) 'that an interview is not an ordinary everyday conversation". Before beginning a schedule was planned with the convenience of the respondents in mind. They were reminded of the purpose of the research and their rights as willing participants. All of them were asked again about their comfort at being recorded. None objected or even had slight hesitation about being recorded.

The semi-structured nature of the questions allowed me as the interviewer to modify the sequence, change the wording, explain the questions and add clarifying questions. The purpose of using this methodology was, as Kvale cited in Cohen et al. (2007) suggests,

- To engage understand and interpret the key features of the life-worlds of the participants
- To use natural language to understand qualitative knowledge
- Elicit descriptions of specific situations actions, views rather than generalities.
- Focus on specific ideas and themes. (p. 355)

With this I hoped to gather 'thick descriptions'.

I was struck by a few limitations which I strove to overcome. At first there was an initial hesitancy, which, by encouragement gave way to spontaneity. Secondly, the respondents tried to sound 'correct' because of the presence of the tape recorder. A slight deviation from the questions with more general conversation soon pushed the

recorder into the background. A few respondents also spoke on the periphery of the questions and in generalities. After some additional probing, most of this was redirected. I caught myself at various occasions deliberately keeping my own views and biases in check to allow a free flow of respondent views to emerge. My own inexperience as a researcher was greatly tested. I am confident, however, that the data gathered was valid and trustworthy.

3.8.4   Focus Group Interview

In setting up the focus group interviews with the five teacher leaders I was aware that they had some disparate views on the topics. I was hoping to utilise these differences as well as have participants building on each others responses to get detailed, rich data. I further aimed to introduce the research topics then allow the participants to take ownership and run the conversation. Throughout the session I was careful to guide the group away from vague generalities and speak about their own experiences no matter how different they were. My interventions were carefully managed so as not to change the focus group into a group interview. The group dynamics as suggested by Nieuwenhuis (2007) were certainly an integral part of the procedure and its success.

I conducted one session of my focus group interviews at the end of February 2011. The questions were designed to complement the individual interview questions and survey questions that in turn were all designed to elicit responses that cast more light on our research questions. Nieuwenhuis (2007, p. 90) suggests that focus group interviews are based on an assumption that "group interactions widen the range of responses, activating forgotten details of experiences, releasing inhibitions that may otherwise discourage participants from disclosing information". Cohen *et al.* (2007, p. 376) share this view that "it is through the interaction of a group that data emerges".

Some obvious limitations such as dominant speakers showed themselves early. At least one respondent had to be coaxed into participation and another had to be asked to give the others a chance to respond. The session resulted in almost four hours being spent on the focus group interview, which in hindsight was very long, but all the participants were present and even at the end appeared very enthusiastic about their

contributions. In the final analysis the focus group interviews allowed me to gain a range of diverse views and responses not previously aired as suggested by Rule and John (2011).

3.9   Issues of Credibility, Trustworthiness and Crystalisation of the Data

I wish in this section to briefly examine issues in my study that relate to validity, reliability, credibility, trustworthiness and crystalisation.

Crystalisation is the validating of results by using multiple methods of data analysis according to Maree and Van der Westhuizen (2007). The term crystalisation is used in preference to triangulation by some authors who argue that crystalisation in qualitative research is about the different views that one sees, depending on one's own position. (Maree and Van der Westhuizen, 2007). They furthermore suggest that crystalisation provides us with deepened understanding of the topic. Rule and John (2011, p.109) in a complementary view, state that "crystalisation points to the multi-faceted nature of reality where additional sources and methods show up additional facets, rather than a true position such as in triangulation". Maree and Van der Westhuizen (2007) citing Richardson contend that in a qualitative research study one should not triangulate but crystallise.

To enhance the internal validity of my qualitative study I followed closely the advice of Merriam, cited in Maree and Van der Westhuizen (2007). At first I used several methods of data collection as well as sources of data. After completing the interviews I gave them back to the respondents to check for correctness and verification. The observations and other data collection methods spanned almost six months. Lastly I attempted to show no bias as the researcher although I believe one can never completely 'see' oneself in these situations.

It is generally accepted according to Maree and Van der Westhuizen (2007) that if one engages in multiple methods of data collection such as surveys, interviews, focus groups, observations and document analysis such as I have done, it will lead to trustworthiness, credibility, confirmability and dependability of the data. These are key criteria of trustworthiness. Shenton (2003, p. 72) suggest that "confirmability is the qualitative investigator's comparable concern to objectivity". He further suggests

that one must take extra steps to ensure that as far as possible the works findings are the result of the experiences and ideas of the participants.

I believe that notwithstanding my own limitations as a novice researcher, the weight of my own opinions and my positionality I upheld the demands of good research in presenting credible, trustworthy, confirmable data, accounts and outcomes.

3.10 Data Analysis

My use of the multi-method approach to data collection in my study resulted in a large amount of data from the survey, interviews, focus groups and observations. I adopted a discourse analysis approach to analyse the data although I sometimes felt as though I was also engaged in content and thematic analysis. My own uncertainty can be ascribed to me being a novice researcher. Cohen *et al.* (2007, p.461) suggests that qualitative data analysis involves "organising, accounting for, explaining the data, making sense of data…" Discourse analysis in addition requires, according to Cohen *et al.* (2007, p. 390) "a careful reading and interpretation of textual material with interpretation being supported by the linguistic evidence". To achieve this I revisited the transcribed interviews and focus group data several times before embarking on a process of analysis. To maintain the accuracy of the data I chose to transcribe the data myself from the electronic recordings. The integrity of my data was further enhanced by the verbatim transcriptions which according to Rule and John (2011, p.79) is important, given that the form or structure of language is as important as the content in discourse analysis. In revisiting the data I paid close attention not just to what was being said, but how it was being said, following the advice of Rule and John (2011).

I proceeded to identify discourse themes and utilised a system of coding from which a variety of patterns and broad areas and themes emerged, following the guidance as outlined by Cohen *et al.* (2007). I attempted various ways of organising the data but ultimately found that organising the data in themes related to my research questions gave me a sufficient indication of my participant's views on the core issues of my research. Cohen *et al* (2007, p. 468) suggests that organising the data by research question is useful in that it draws together the relevant data for the exact issue and preserves the coherence of the material". They further suggest that this method enables patterns, relationships, comparisons and qualifications across data types to be explored conveniently and clearly.

The themes that emerged revealed how strongly the participants felt about issues such as the status of teaching as a profession, whilst having divergent views on the issues such as the role they play as teacher leaders in creating a more just place of learning and teaching or the role of management and leadership. These I intend reporting on with the use of direct quotes, because using the direct words of the participants would be "more illuminating and direct" according to Cohen *et al* (2007, p. 462).

The data gleaned from my secondary sources viz. the survey and observations were used to enhance, confirm and fill in the gaps where they existed in my primary data. Throughout the analysis and interpretation process I used a reflexive approach to gain the most from the data. I fully subscribe to the view that I, as researcher cannot separate myself from the research situation. By recognising and acknowledging myself in and my influence on the research I could then be aware of my own biases and limit them. My attempt at reflexivity aided the credibility of my research as suggested by Macmillan and Schumacher (2002). Being aware of my participant-practitioner-researcher role was almost emancipatory.

3.11   Limitations

I had attempted to tackle this research fully aware of some limitations, and was thus able to side-step and overcome them. At first my role as principal, i.e. my positionality as mentioned before, had a clear impact on my study. Using my own school, whilst having many advantages did leave me with moments of unease especially when I questioned whether the accounts by some participants was really their honest view or if it was somewhat muted. Furthermore, teachers react to principals in a certain way notwithstanding my own view that I had a good working relationship with the participants. My own reflexive approach and continued reassurance to the participants had a stabilising effect on this limitation.

Secondly, the choice of the fourth and first terms, whilst ideal for observing certain behaviours was terribly inconvenient for the participants and even for me as a part time student. These are undoubtedly the busiest terms. I sensed that I was at times intruding and got a whiff of irritation at times. My participants were, however, always polite and punctual. I attempted to limit the inconvenience but it was at times simply

not possible. Using my own school was at such times a definite advantage as I knew the heartbeat of the school.

Thirdly my choice of five female participants did rob me of a male perspective which in my reflection I was acutely aware of. I tried to convince myself that with the vast majority of teachers in the school and management being female that I had made the right choice. Finally despite my attempts at reflexivity, problems of bias, subjectivity, selectivity have I am sure subtly slipped in.

3.12 Conclusion

The wealth of data I gathered on views of leadership and professionalism and what is understood by professionalism left me with more questions than answers. The absolute view that my participants expressed on being professional set against observations and information gathered was at times perplexing but at most times refreshing. In short I learnt much more than I thought I would from the study. By using the multi-method approach to gathering data aided in greatly enriching the data but also positively exposed me to the different methodologies. I could unfortunately not use all the data gathered but it certainly did contribute to a fuller picture of my case study.

This chapter attempted to describe the methods, methodology and design of my research study. The study took the form of a qualitative case study which was set in the interpretive paradigm.

The next chapter focuses on the analysis of my data and the presentation of the findings of my research.

CHAPTER 4

PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

4.1. Introduction

The aim of this research was to explore the phenomenon of leaders as professionals and what meaning and value teachers attached to this professionalism in leadership. In this chapter I present the data and its interpretation to reveal themes and ultimately the findings that emerged from this survey questionnaire (SQ), the semi-structured interviews (SSII) with my five participants, the focus group interview (FG) and observations (OS) of my participants. I deliberately chose to use a predetermined analytical frame of issues that crossed the individuals in my data set, following the guidance of Cohen, Manion & Morrison (2007).

I interpreted the data, systematically with a constant eye on my research questions, which I reiterate here as a reminder to the reader.

> How can teachers lead schools better to ensure that they are professional places of teaching and learning?

> How is professionalism understood by teachers?

> What are the factors that enhance/inhibit teacher professionalism in   schools?

This qualitative case study thus focussed on the phenomena of leaders, professionals and teachers. To aid my analysis I used the lens of Teacher Leadership. One of the key issues of the research was to explore the perception of the impact of professionalism on teaching and leadership. I will therefore argue in this chapter that professionalism is the cornerstone for improving teaching, learning and leadership. I will locate my argument within a conceptual framework of teacher leadership as defined by Katzenmeyer and Moller (2001), and Muijs and Harris (2003) together with the distributed leadership theory as defined by Gronn (2000) and Gunter (2005) together with the conceptual framework of professionalism, following Sachs (1999) and Collay (2006). I will argue that latent professionalism does exist in schools and that teacher leadership as an emerging trend must be complemented with a resurgence of a professional ethos to promote an improvement in learning, teaching and indeed leadership. In the context of the study teachers included all levels of teachers in the

school with no distinction being made between those in formal leadership positions and those who are not. The concepts and key themes that emerged from my study were related to the enactment of teacher leadership and professionalism. The following key themes that emerged from my study include:

- Teachers views of themselves as leaders
- The leadership conundrum
  - Embracing the concept leadership
  - Taking ownership of leadership
  - The contextual position of leadership
  - To incentivise or not? - that is the question
- Teachers perceptions of professionalism
  - Formal Training
- The impact of professionalism on teaching and learning
- Conduct as an indicator of professionalism
- Barriers to Teacher leadership
  - Management and leadership as barriers- the power dynamic
  - Teachers as barriers to leadership: confidence in and confidence to
  - Workload and time constraints
- Factors enhancing teacher leadership
  - The role of the principal and SMT
- Barriers to professionalism
  - The role of teacher unions
- Factors enhancing teacher professionalism
  - Building a culture of learning and teaching
  - Leaders- a building block to teacher professionalism

I used the following abbreviations as a key to the following data sets.

The survey questionnaire (SQ)

The semi-structured individual interviews (SSII)

The focus group interview (FG)

The observation schedule (OS)

I now give a brief profile of the research site and the five participants who agreed to be part of my study and constituted my case.

4.2   **Location (site) of the Study.**

The study was conducted in an urban primary school located on the fringe of the central business district in a light industrial area in Pietermaritzburg. The school offers classes from Grade R to grade seven and has thirty one class units. Under the apartheid regime the school was designated for 'Coloured' children and was established in 1952. In 1963 the school was forced to relocate to its current location following the enactment of the reviled and notorious Group Areas Act. Its previous location was proclaimed an 'Indian area'. This ex House of Representatives school is a landmark in the area and consists of thirty one classrooms, an administration block, a fully functional and stocked library, a modern computer room, a hall, a large staff room and kitchen. Separate ablution facilities exist for the senior primary and junior primary pupils.

At the time of the study, the staff complement consisted of thirty four teachers, thirty two of whom were state paid, seven general assistants, one of whom was state paid and two secretaries of whom one was state paid. The School Management Team (SMT) comprised a principal, two deputy principals and four heads of department. The school offered tuition through the medium of English with isiZulu as the first additional language.

The demographics of the learners have changed dramatically over the years and is currently comprised of 98% Black learners, 2% Coloured learners. The staff demographics have also changed and currently comprise 69% Coloureds, 15% Blacks, 12 % Indians and 5% Whites. Besides the standard curriculum offerings which follow the National Curriculum Statement official curriculum, the school had a functional extra mural sport programme and computer lessons for all children.

4.3. Profile of the Teacher Leaders

4.3.1. Teacher Leader A – The Collaborator TLA)

At the time of the study TLA was a married woman with three grown children and over twenty-five years teaching experience. At least ten of these were in a formal leadership position as of head of department (HOD) at another school. To relocate to Pietermaritzburg she gave up her HOD position, and is now a post level one teacher. Having served on both sides of the formal management and leadership divide gave her a unique insight especially into the 'staffroom' debates and post meeting analysis. Her unique position endowed her with great insight and coupled with naturally high work ethic and loyalty to the cause of a better school, resulted in her thrust to co-operate, however not blindly but for the greater good. Having experienced leadership in another school broadened her perspective on many issues. She had a strong sense of right and wrong, with a conviction to express her opinion. She showed a strong sense of leadership which came naturally, coupled with a lived professionalism rather than a theoretical one. She indicated during the SSII (p.5) *"... I haven't actually considered the word professional, for me I think it's a way of life ... that's how teachers should carry themselves ... we have a code ...."*

Her professionalism is lived out in her behaviour, her sense of duty and responsibility, her culture of care and accountability. She believed that critical collaboration improved performance.

TLA displayed exceptional leadership skills undoubtedly honed by her years in formal leadership. In a short space of time she had taken the reins to initiate a new fundraising model in her grade; however this was done carefully as she is aware that her own background could intimidate the incumbents. Her leadership included the classroom where, in her grade and phase cluster, she prominently demonstrated new teaching techniques and has embraced her role on the sports field. Although a self-confessed believer in a culture of collaboration she more ideally fits a description of critical collaborator. She never hesitated to raise concerns, to suggest alternative approaches or simply point out another dimension.

In her class, she was an exemplary teacher, who believed that her teaching time is sacred. She furthermore protected her teaching turf and fought off any attempt to

erode her time on task. This sets an enviable example to her peers. It is most probably this ethos that has helped create a teaching/learning environment in her grade which is the envy of all other grades. She has initiated a daily fifteen minute grade pow-wow to reinforce the culture of co-operation, joint decision making and responsibility as well as a culture of sharing. To define her as an asset does not fully do justice to her contribution as professional, as leader and as teacher.

4.3.2. Teacher Leader B (TLB) the Visionary

At the time of the interview TLB was a married mother of three children. She had been teaching for twenty-five years and had been a member of the School Management Team (SMT) for the past twelve years. She displayed an exemplary work ethic but her greatest strength was in her visionary leadership which showed itself in her ability to be a team player. She had the ability to initiate ideas but more importantly to take her team along with her. The air of trust she had created had to do with her thorough knowledge of curriculum matters which was invaluable to her and her team as an instructional leader. She did not necessarily describe herself as a visionary but was more comfortable to be known as a team player. TLB was known to be outspoken, to be fair and to demand fairness (noticed during OS) she did not hesitate to correct a perceived wrong often chastising an individual who erred. Her manner was however, always respectful, quiet and firm. This demeanour endeared her to staff as they felt comfortable that she was correcting with care, not to demean or harm. She described herself as a professional.

As a professional she embraced the notion that teachers must be professional but hastened to add in the SSII (p.1) that "*it is about how you carry yourself and being okay with going the extra mile.*" She linked her professionalism with her care for the child, "*being professional is about the things you do, being diplomatic, teaching to make our children better people, not simply doing a job.*"

TLB displayed exceptional leadership skills as demonstrated in the various activities she was engaged in. This had led directly to her being appointed as acting principal during the secondment of the incumbent. As acting principal and SMT member she had on countless occasions to take the initiative to lead her colleagues. She supported, corrected, steered, advised and played along as the situation demanded, reinforcing the view that she could be described as a visionary leader. She had an

undiluted view of where the teachers and school should go and was willing to champion the course as indicated in the SSII (p.2), *"I initiated the idea of a cross-phase HOD straddling the junior and intermediate phases to address the grade 4 fall-off problem. I then offered to take on this role and managed to make a difference."* She believed that her critics could see her as too focussed on the task. She indicated in the SSII (p.3), *"Only the quality of teaching and learning matters"*. As a team player she always defended her team decisions as being in the interest of the child/school. She had succeeded in leading without fear or favour.

In her teaching role she embraced the team working model insisting that her group/phase meet often to share ideas. Her initiatives had led directly to the phase transition between grades 3 and 4 being eased. Although a member of the SMT and needing to ensure that there was implementation of various decisions, she had at many occasions initiated and stepped out of the formal leadership role to be a teacher leader according to her in the SSII. This was also noticed during the OS. In the SSI she suggested that her most striking teacher leadership attribute had to be her willingness to roll up her sleeves and get her hands dirty, not only speaking about issues but doing them herself. The transverse HOD straddling JP and SP was cited as one such example; another was when she taught sample lessons to her group to demonstrate the issue of phonics. She invited a critique of her methods and lesson and readily accepted suggestions. She believed that *"encouragement, recognition and building confidence"* were the cornerstones of visionary leadership (SSII, P.2).

4.3.3. Teacher Leader C (TLC) the Passionate Innovator

TLC was certainly one of the more passionate teachers I had encountered in many years of teaching. Her passion for the job was noticeable to all who encountered her. She was a single mom of two young children. Her role as a single parent had certainly enthused her about the important role of the teacher. She was often heard to say, *"We are here to work, so let's show that we know that."* She embraced her role as a class teacher and later her role as HOD with equal passion. She enthusiastically joined the children on field trips, participating in all activities with gusto, making her well liked by the learners. Her closeness to the learners had not diminished her enthusiasm for discipline. She was able to instil a quiet discipline into all her learners. Her flair for the arts and dance made her a central cog in many school

activities. Her loyalty to the children, the team and the school is part of what she defined as her professional ethic. In her SSII (p.11) she states *"I believe I am a professional. It is more than being a teacher, it is how you dress, carry yourself, how you care for the children..."*

As a professional TLC suggested during her SSII (p.11) that *"our code of behaviour, which dictates how we interact and present ourselves, sets us apart, makes us professional*." This is however, only part of what defined her. She was insistent that *"your standard must constantly improve,* during the FG and SSII (p11). TLC is renowned for carrying herself in a dignified, respectable, respectful; manner and was always well coiffured. She believed that professionals must look the part. She classified herself as no different from the more lauded professionals such as doctors and lawyers. She embraced excellence on everything she did and categorically stated, in the SSII (p.11) that *"slap-dash is not a professional standard."* This was clearly visible in the quality of her work, her learners' work, the art exhibition and even woodwork which she did. Her passion stretched as far as volunteering to repair furniture, departing from the socialised female roles to ensure that her children sit at decent desks.

TLC has set by with her demeanour a standard for leadership. She was defined by the example she set. In class she demonstrated (OS) that discipline can be brought to even the most robust urban class, without resorting to physical threats or outside agency reliance, the so-called "I will send you to the office syndrome." TLC has become the standard by which new inductees to the profession measure themselves in the school and which her other peers aspire to. Her leadership stretches far beyond the immediate classroom as she is an instructional leader who takes her charge of leading in the curriculum literally.

She had taken on the roles of convening the arts and culture and technology exhibition and the mathematics subject committee over a number of years. The quality of work and standard of exhibition she expected and even demanded of her peers is exceeded only by the example she sets with her own class work and exhibits. It is in this area that her role as innovator and her passion for bringing out the best in herself and others truly shows. With Mathematics education, given so much attention especially because of the poor national results TLC was given the task to head this subject

committee as she was recognised as a driver of excellence and an innovator. TLC has in the recent past earned her B.Ed Hons. degree further underscoring her passion for her job.

TLC is an appointed HOD but is currently acting as one of the deputy principals. She embraces new challenges easily and puts a positive spin on what others may find daunting. She stated in the SSII (p.12), "*I have had the opportunity to co-ordinate two learning areas, lead educators, preside over disciplinary meetings, plan and co-ordinate extra-mural activities, and simply lead. I really liked this.*" Her role as teacher defines her purpose. "*We must do our jobs or leave. We can't afford to have teachers who do not want to teach.*" (p.12). TLC embodies a young vibrant, passionate professional who embraces innovation and change.

4.3.4. Teacher Leader D (TLD) the Resilient Rights Child

TLD tells a story of hardship and fighting to survive on the fringes of society. Her remarkable journey to qualify as a teacher is testimony to her resilience. TLD was a single mother of three children. She had eight years teaching experience and had become known as one who will challenge the status quo if she felt that her 'rights' were being infringed upon. During the OS of the staff meeting this was very apparent. This fighter image is testimony to her own fight to survive, to get to school, to improve her own conditions, rise out of the informal settlement to her current status. She is currently a fully qualified teacher and had a recent stint as an acting HOD. Her resilience and ability to stand up for her rights makes her formidable. She has continued to improve her qualifications and recently completed an Advanced Certificate in Education. In interviewing her one gets the sense that her fight is not over, maybe because she sees so many challenges, maybe because that is what she knows best, survival. In her SSII (p.16) she stated almost forcefully, "*I have spoken out and voiced my opinion and influenced things positively. I have to stand up for myself.*"

TLD embraced the view that teachers are professionals, supporting the view with a statement in her SSII (p.14) that "*teachers are educated, knowledgeable, have formal methodology, thus no different to other professionals like doctors or lawyers.*" The passion TLD displays for the profession speaks of her own struggle to become a professional, citing examples of teachers that she encountered on her journey, "*I*

remember my biology teacher, Mrs X, who was always smart, always prepared, enthusiastic and encouraging." (SSII, p.14) Herein she identifies with characteristics of a professional. TLD did however, not embrace the same view of professionalism that the other participants did, questioning in the FG (p.3) why a professional had to constantly be called to account, *"after all if I am a professional I must be trusted to do the right thing, I don't always want to be checked up on."*

TLD claims to show greater leadership in class than throughout the school. She stated in the SSII (p.14) *"Yes I am a teacher leader, especially in my class, less so in the rest of the school."* This is contradicted by the examples of leadership that she mentions in the SSII (p.14). Her bold intervention in what she describes as 'the black clique' where she dissuaded the few black teachers from clustering together is a case in point, *"I pointed out to them that they were misleading themselves about what was happening in the school. Their fear of the new environment made them suspicious."* TLD could clearly use her own mixed background to address a potentially explosive racial issue without fear of being called racist. This is the boldness which typifies so much of what she does. Her leadership in social justice matters stands out. She made constant reference to teachers not using their voice and to parents whom she believed should be afforded more rights in the school. In the SSII (p.16) commenting on her contribution to changing the school she said, *"I have spoken out and voiced my opinion. You must not accept things when you are feeling pushed or uncomfortable."* She added in the FG (p.7), *"Questioning must not be confused with opposing"* Balancing her personal views and the practicalities of the school were obviously not too important. What was important to her was that unhappiness about an issue was of little value unless you had the conviction to speak out about it. These views were inevitably carried over into the classroom.

TLD is a post level one teacher who has had the opportunity to act as an HOD for a limited period. She has readily availed herself for various committees and this year convened the Art Exhibition Committee. She is seen as a versatile teacher having taught in both the junior and senior primary phases. Her teaching is defined by her resourcefulness. *"When I had to be a floating teacher I encouraged all those without a class base to use the many overhead projectors that are no longer popular. It made my life easier"* (SSII, p.14). She is a strong advocate of a rights culture which she effectively instils in her learners through her human and social science lessons. Some

of her peers however find this constant thrust abrasive. She is however, well informed and clearly an asset to the school. Demonstrating this she added in the SSII (p.14) *"I stand up for my colleagues and they know that I do my work and produce results. When a group was unhappy I even offered to accompany them to the office"*.

4.3.5. **Teacher Leaders E (TLE) The Benevolent Builder**

This foundation phase specialist is almost typecast into her role as a grade 1 teacher. Her benevolent disposition, characterised by an ethic of care, consideration, kindness and humaneness makes of her the teacher every parent would want their children to be taught by. This mother of two grown children is married and had been teaching for twenty-four years. She has been located at this school for three years. Her benevolence is not limited to her charges but spills over to include her colleagues and the parent community. No task is ever too menial or too great to attempt. She readily embraced the opportunity to be part of positive change but is equally ready to correct, to guide, to be corrected and to follow. She comes from a long line of teachers and models herself on her mother who is a retired teacher of distinction.

Reflecting on her professionalism she had no doubt that she is professional but laments that value systems have changed and that not all teachers embrace the same values. *"It is sad to listen to some chats in the staffroom which makes you ask quietly what you are doing here. Some people openly declare that they do not subscribe to even the most basic rules like punctuality"* (SSII, p.17). TLE is in a word 'consumed' by her professionalism. She lived it, eats it, breathed it and is defined by it. She declared in the SSII (p.17), *"If as a teacher I cannot be a professional too then there is no worth being here. I believe you must lead by example as a professional."*

TLE was one of the social development co-ordinators at the school and was thus involved as a leader and initiator in many projects. *"My personality allows me to act as a catalyst without taking the limelight. This allows me to initiate a lot of things then quietly work in the background"* (SSII, p.17). She was easily accepted in a leadership role by her peers, possibly because she did not present a threat. *"I prefer informal leadership as 'it comes with the territory"* (SSII, p.18). These views are evident in her everyday teaching and classroom interaction.

TLE was a post level one teacher who claimed to have no ambitions for promotion. She embraced the team leadership approach and was thus a leading beacon in her grade with sharing ideas, initiating discussions on curriculum matters and organising staff development. She treated her teaching time as special and refused to deviate from her programme, *"because it will confuse my grade 1's"* (FG, p.6). This is an example worth emulating especially for the new teacher who had as yet not learnt the importance of routine to the young child. She could easily be defined as an asset but more than that she is the cornerstone of her grade and phase.

With a focus on the research questions I will now look at various themes that emerged from the data which I collected. I turn now to exploring how teachers viewed themselves as leaders.

4.4   Teacher Views of Themselves as Leaders

Teacher leadership is a concept known to most teachers. The participants all showed a grasp of the concept, though there were some inflectional differences. The group made clear distinctions between informal teacher leadership and formal teacher leadership possibly because most of them had been engaged in post graduate study. This resonated with Gunter's (2005) theory of authorised, dispersed and democratic forms of distributed leadership. Within the data on teacher leadership I had gathered, I have elected to focus on a few themes that emerged. The first theme I deal with is one which I choose to call the (teacher) leadership conundrum. Within this theme I will explore the following sub-themes; Embracing the concept leadership; Taking ownership of leadership; The contextual position of leadership; Leadership incentives – to incentivise or not.

4.4.1.   The Leadership Conundrum

The data I gathered highlighted the big question mark that hangs over leadership in schools. To lead or not to lead seems to be the question. Whilst there is undoubtedly leadership, it is clear that the impact of the hierarchical leadership and management era still lingers strongly in the collective memory of staff and in particular in the participants. This is evident in the views of TLB in the FG (p.7), *"Sometimes you should not question when instructed to do something, do it for the children."* In contrast, TLD with a firm voice responded, *"We mustn't confuse the right to question*

with being anti-anything" (p.7). This contrast could be directly linked to the age and experience differences as TLD has no teaching experience in the previous hierarchical dispensation. With most of them having a large number of years teaching experience they are products of such a hierarchical system and furthermore could have been part of its enforcement as young teachers. I turn now to how the participants gave meaning to the concept leadership.

4.4.1.1. *Embracing the Concept Leadership*

All five participants as well as the majority of staff who participated in the SQ, from their responses had a similar understanding of what leadership meant to them. Surprisingly 17% of the teachers felt that teachers should not take on a leadership role at school. All five participants however, had strong views on their own and others leadership roles. TLB was most outspoken and suggested in the SSII (p.2) that, *"... it is about making a difference, making our society a better place to live in."* This compared favourably with the view of Harris (2004) who argued that there is a relationship between teacher leadership and school improvement.

TLA, TLB, TLC and TLD all associated leadership with initiative and being a catalyst for something positive. TLA suggested in the SSII (p.6), *"I motivated and initiated for the parents to be involved"* and TLB (SSII, p.2), *"I take the initiative and lead because I am a leader,"* leaving little doubt where she places herself as a mover within the establishment. In the SSII (p.10) as well, TLC was equally forthright about her role, *"I am not afraid to co-ordinate, initiate and derive new ideas. This is my role as a leader."* TLE speaks to, *"being a catalyst and initiating in social development"* (SSII, P.17). These views and especially the '*initiating and guiding'* role is also suggested by Lieberman and Miller (2004) and Timperley (2005) who suggests that when leadership has scholarship as its foundation it is more about expertise, credibility and influence than about power, authority and control. This resonance with international literature clearly illustrates an understanding of the new meaning of leadership and a clear embrace of it which by extension suggests a distancing from the hierarchical authorisation view of the past. I

move now to analysing the personalisation, the taking ownership of leadership by the participants.

4.4.1.2. *Taking Ownership of Leadership*

This age of leadership guruism has had at least one positive outcome. Virtually all these gurus emphasise that leadership is about more than the individual. Returning to my focus on how teachers can lead schools better, 'leading better' suggests among other things owning the leadership process after understanding and embracing it. Day and Harris (2002) refer to the development of people, setting directions, organizing and building relationships to name a few, as ways of owning the leadership momentum.

TLB displays in various ways how she engaged with the Day and Harris (2002) criterion of building and maintaining relationships. In the SSII (p.3) she refers to *"being diplomatic with staff, with parents and even with the learners so that it teaches us all to be better people,"* and further *"we must work together as a group to achieve the outcomes."* She thus clearly recognises the value of relationships in owning leadership. TLC is even more forthright in the SSII (p.13) when she declares that *"we need to be less hierarchical and more inclusive."* Thus emphasising what she sees as the stumbling block to good relationships. Her identifying of the problem suggests that she is embracing the opposite as the solution to leadership ownership. Both TLC and TLD spoke passionately in the FG and SSII about *'recognising people'* and themselves as leaders recognising the value of building positive human relations (p.13).

All five respondents at various times indicated how they embraced their own leadership by developing others, TLA refers in the SSII (p.6) to various times when, *"I motivated, encouraged and initiated a lot of things and even got parents involved."* And at another occasion, *"I have encouraged the staffroom debate to look at things for another perspective; I did manage to get a few people to nod their heads"* (p.9). This positive, subtle intervention is the quietest way of developing people without them even knowing, they are becoming more critical thinkers. TLD in her SSII made reference to a racial issue in which she used the trust relationship she had built to dispel tension

and encourage a different thinking rather than adopting a belief that there was a "*conspiracy against the black teachers. Their unhappiness fed on their isolation, which was self induced, and kept them away from other more balanced views and debates.*" All five participants indicated in both the FG and the SSII that at some stage or another they became engaged in organising and giving direction thus indicating how they took ownership of the leadership challenge.

It is in the realm of organising and giving direction that the five respondents showed how they daily engaged with leading. TLC made reference to organising curriculum workshops and debates, assisting teachers in curricular matters, co-ordinating learning areas, excursions, fundraising, planning and duty distribution. These functions were common to all respondents to some degree, with TLE in her SSII (p.17) placing a greater emphasis on her organisational role in the smaller group of her grade rather than the wider school context. "*I am most comfortable in the junior primary where I am an expert and here I share my expertise and advise and organise, such as demonstrating to my grade 1 teachers how to use the interactive whiteboard in a grade 1 class.*" She suggested that it is in this area where she takes the initiative. TLE further acknowledged that her other strength was in the social development of the staff. Whilst she underplayed this task, it is vital in the school to have a united collegial staff. "*I do not like the limelight, but do lead in our social development and interaction programme*" (SSII, p.17). In the FG (p.6), she expressed herself more forthrightly, "*I think leadership is part of the job,*" thus indicating her own situation as the benevolent builder, where she quietly constructs. Giving direction to staff meant different things to the different respondents; some clearly aligned it to the development of people, which it indeed was. Others like TLD saw this in the light of interventions to change the course of events, in the SSII (p.16) she stated "*I have spoken out and voiced my opinion about things and influenced things positively.*" TLE in the SSII (p.12) simply stated "*I lead when the need arises.*" Whilst TLB also in the SSII (p.2) suggested that "*I take the lead when others need direction especially in those situations where everybody is looking at each other for direction.*"

These assertions of the five Teacher Leaders find resonance in the views of Greenlee (2002, p.45) that "teachers leaders have the ability to encourage colleagues to change, to do things they wouldn't ordinarily consider, without the influence of a leader."

From the above responses it is thus reasonable to conclude that the five teacher leaders across the various data sets took ownership of leading in varied ways and to varying degrees with those teacher leaders in promotion posts having more opportunities and actualising more possibilities as they were automatically presented to them. It is to this sub-theme of the contextual position of leadership that I now move.

4.4.1.3. *The Contextual Position of Leadership.*

As had become evident in the foregoing discussion on leadership, all five participants across all the data sets viewed themselves as part of the leadership of the school. There were however, apparent differences depending on the position occupied by the teacher leader. Spillane (2004, p.6) contends that "the literature on leadership has focussed mostly on those in formal leadership positions." It is thus not surprising that the five respondents all first focussed on a formal leadership view but as the interviews progressed they embraced a wider view on leadership. Of the five teacher leaders in my case, two occupy formal leadership positions, another was in a formal leadership position but no longer is and the other two have experience in formal leadership but were not occupying those positions any longer.

TLE constantly referred to her position as a classroom based teacher and highlighted her leadership as emanating from this position of expertise. She went as far as distancing herself from the trappings of formal leadership, in her SSII (p.18). *"I prefer the more informal leadership roles. One is more acceptable to the teachers."* When probed on this she reflected on the change she picked up amongst her colleagues, and how different they were with her when she acted as a head of department, *"I found it very difficult even my friends treated me differently"* (p.17). TLD also aligned herself with being an informal leader although by contrast she did not believe that she was viewed differently when she took up the position of acting HOD. In fact I got the

impression that she distinctly enjoyed the stint. In her SSII (p.14) she asserted that, *"It was good to see things from the other side."* TLD cited a few examples where she intervened and showed leadership spontaneously. *"The management was unaware of the drama that was happening. Before they knew about it we had assisted in resolving it"* (SSII, p.14). It is however, TLA who served as a formal HOD for a long period and was now a post level one teacher who in our interaction in the SSII made constant reference to viewing things from both sides, highlighting how context changes ones view of things. She reflected,

> *"I am so glad I can look at issues from three sides, where I am, where I was and the position I was in."* She went on to illustrate, *"People complain about petty things and sometimes succeed in making a lot of people unhappy, I then tell them about my previous school and how I viewed things as an HOD, ... often they are horrified about the stories I tell of the realities out there."* (p.9)

In her current context TLA was able to easily show leadership without fear of being labelled as she has no formal leadership ambitions.

TLB and TLC are in formal leadership positions and are expected to perform certain functions. The judgement of whether they are leaders lies in whether they lead beyond the tasks delegated by management to various teachers. TLB suggested in the SSII (p.2) that *"I always encourage, correct, give an example, whether I am in class, in the staffroom or on the veranda, leadership has no time or place."* She however, does acknowledge that her position enables her to more easily take on a leadership role. TLC, also an appointed HOD spoke animatedly about leading in the context of her curriculum expertise in both the SSII (p.2) and FG. *"I like to share what I know, both with my team and with other teachers in passing."* She too was tasked with formal leadership responsibilities, but insisted that leading informally took up more of her time. She suggested in the FG (p.3), *"Opportunities to lead are always there, if your eyes are opened and your ear is to the ground. It makes the formal leadership tasks easier."*

What was thus evident is that context plays a role in determining how and when you lead but for the committed teacher leader the opportunity is always there. Darling, Hammond, Bullmaster and Cobb (1995) suggest that teacher leaders have opportunities to learn, engage, and collaborate in a multitude of opportunities. The contextual position of leadership is not a limitation to leading as illustrated by the various respondents. This is echoed by Darling et al. (1995, p.69) "... leadership roles are being defined in terms of function rather than title as teachers begin to incorporate various leadership roles that are fundamentally transforming teaching." The dilemma facing schools like the one in which the research was conducted was how to encourage or incentivise leadership take-up. It is to this vexing issue that I now turn.

4.4.1.4.   *To Incentivise Or Not? That Is The Question.*

Without a shred of hesitation every one of the five participants strongly felt that leaders had to be incentivised. This resonated with the views of educators who responded to the SQ. 75% of respondents supported the view that teachers who lead should be remunerated. TLB and TLA, whilst supporting incentives were quick to balance their support with concerns about implantation. TLB suggested in the SSII (p.3)," *Yes it's a good idea but there are disadvantages."* TLA supported this, "*Where do you draw the line? Can everyone be incentivised? That is my concern* (*SSI, p.7)".* TLD on the other hand was categoric, (SSII, p.15) "*Yes we must pay people because they are doing extra work."* When probed however the participants in the SSII added conditions, making a distinction between formal and informal leadership. TLA suggested, "*It will be very difficult to pay someone every time they lead, but we must acknowledge them*" (SSII, p.7). TLB, TLC, TLD and TLE all agreed that recognition, acknowledgement and thanks are as important as financial rewards. TLC was more cautious in the SSII (p.12), "*We must however, be consistent.*" TLE quickly pointed out that disadvantages may in fact outweigh advantages of incentives to leaders.

In the FG the responses were very similar but for TLD who now dug in her heels insisting that all leadership cannot be incentivised, "*if you go beyond the call of duty you should be remunerated.*" Whilst still supporting the idea of

acknowledgement, the respondents were now recognising the difficulties of remuneration but were all ready to concede that *'formal leaders'* according to TLB (p.4) and TLE and *'positional leaders'* (p.4) according to TLC should be paid. TLA explored the time-off possibility especially if one had given up one's Saturday, which was vehemently opposed by TLE (p.5), *"I disagree. Nobody goes out every Saturday. You cannot recognise the occasional day."*

There was no accord about the application of an incentive model but all agreed that there is room for exploring possibilities. In this regard TLC (p.4) suggested, *"Incentives will create a form of drive to perform. We must explore the possibilities."* TLE (p.5), whilst supporting the view of TLC gave an additional view, *"if you are the type of person that can take on roles without the expectation of a reward, getting a reward then would be very meaningful. Incentives then can be used as a catalyst for leadership."* The constant question of how to empower and sustain leadership development was debated and contested. I now look at the views of the participants on this issue.

4.4.1.5. *Empowering Teacher Leadership Development*

There was broad unanimity that the school and SMT had created various opportunities for the development of teacher leadership. TLB stated in the SSII (p.2), *"I have been given opportunities to convene committees, act as HOD and even in the post of Deputy Principal."* TLC added (SSII, p.11), *"My leadership experience took a giant leap forward when I was, as a post level one teacher expected to convene the art exhibition and the arts and culture subject committee."* These appeared to be more formal leadership opportunities, however TLE and TLA also in the FG (p.3) raised the issue of being encouraged to *"initiate things and motivate different methods, especially in the foundation phase."*

TLC, whilst acknowledging various leadership opportunities lamented in the FG (p.4), *"we need to be less hierarchical and more inclusive. Most leadership initiation is encouraged from the top. Too little comes from below."* TLD concurred stating, *"we call for input and ideas, but too little is forthcoming. We then move on, instead of analysing the lack of input"* (p.4). TLE supported this view, *"I think we have become too comfortable, and*

complain in clusters as though we were ignored" (p.5). She suggested that staff needed to be challenged more instead of slumping into a complaint mode.

TLE suggested in the FG that leadership development must come from the staff.

> "*I certainly put a positive spin on things and refuse to be part of whole complaining clique.*" "*I have always tried to encourage my peers to take a leading role and have personally motivated a few people to improve themselves,*" TLB in the SSII (p.5).

> "*When staff suggested an English programme, timetables were changed; when staff wanted different fundraising emphasis it happened*" suggested TLC in the FG, "*this is the power of the staff, they do not use it often enough*" (p.5).

There were thus, clearly different things happening at the school. For one the SMT was empowering people; at the same time there was a strong feeling that too much came from the top resulting in the teachers shying away. Thirdly the participants were taking the initiative to encourage leadership but there was a sense of helplessness which TLD summarised in the FG (p.2) as such "*the rapid rate of development and change at the school is somehow de-motivating people.*" In the FG (p.2), TLB and TLC agreed with her, "*The pace leaves some behind.*" TLE chided the group, "Y*ou have not been in other schools where little to nothing ever happens*" (p.2).

There was evidently a gap in the cycle of growing teacher leadership and empowering teachers to assume roles of leadership naturally. In summary, my findings across the data sets confirm that the five participants at most times viewed themselves as leaders, embracing the roles that came with such an acceptance but more importantly they acted on the leadership challenge albeit differently, informed by their personal contexts and personalities. They are strong role models, motivating, challenging and changing the course of events, transforming teaching, guiding and being team players.

I now come to the second theme that emerged from my data. Professionalism resounded in various ways and presented itself in various themes in the data gathered. I have chosen to focus on three sub-themes around professionalism. At first Teachers

perceptions of professionalism; secondly the impact of professionalism on teaching and learning; and thirdly, conduct as an indicator of professionalism.

4.4.2. Teachers' Perceptions of Professionalism

Across all the data sets, the various respondents all had strong opinions about what professionalism meant to them. The five participants of my case all saw themselves as professionals and teaching as a profession. TLC during her SSII (p.11) was adamant, "*it is a calling, and not everyone can be a teacher.*" In a similar view, TLD (p.14) suggested, "*I am no less a professional than a doctor or lawyer.*" In the FG (p.1) however TLB was less inclusive, "*not all teachers can claim to be professional it is much more than just a qualification.*" This spurred the group into a frenzied debate on what characteristics made one a professional, with all conceding that it could not only be about being qualified.

4.4.2.1. *Formal Training*

The aspect of a formal qualification weighed heavily in the participants' assessment of professionalism with TLA in the SSII (p.5) suggesting, "*We've gone out and studied, we've got a signed certificate.*" TLC (p.11) concurred, "*We have acquired formal knowledge*" TLD also stressed the centrality of formal education. This she used again in a comparison with other professions. TLE however differed when she stated in the FG (p.1), "*we are all formally trained here, but are we all professionals?*" "*I feel*" she continued, "*it is about much more, it is about how you feel, how you behave, how you see yourself in relation to others.*" The views shared by the participants suggested an implied link between the formal education and the acquisition of professional values. This view was consistent with Hoyle's (1982, p.162) contention that "the period of education and training also involves the process of socialisation into professional values." Thovinen (2008, p.2) reflecting on the success of the Finnish education system highlights that; "Finnish teachers are highly educated with a minimum masters degree at entrance level". Although this is clearly only one of the factors contributing to the Finnish success story it does underscore the importance of formal training.

TLB makes reference to "*continued growth, by improving skills and becoming an even better teacher*" in the SSII (p.1). TLC on the other hand suggested "*we have studied and keep training to keep up to date and build our knowledge*" (SSII, p.11) Hoyle (1982) refers to this as "the process of professionalization." This process of continued professional development had great value to the participants who saw it as one of the hallmarks of being a professional. To this end TLE in her SSII (p.17) declared, "*you cannot stop learning as a professional even in small ways otherwise you stagnate.*" Hoyle's (1998) position concurs with this: "with professional development the teacher continues to develop the knowledge and skills required for effective professional practice". I now turn to my next theme which will look at the influence professionalism has had on teaching and learning.

4.4.3. The Influence of Professionalism on Teaching and Learning.

If professionalism and more professional development lead to an improvement of skills, by extension the competence of the teacher should improve. Hoyle's (1998) contention as stated above supports this view. TLB suggested in the SSII (P.2) that, "*as a professional teacher you would automatically look at the areas where you are lacking and try to build on them, improve yourself, for yourself and the children.*" The issue of competence and effective teaching constantly arose with all the participants. TLC in the SSII (P.11) called it "*knowing what you are doing in class.*" This she linked to "*good classroom management of the curriculum.*" TLC (P.11) made a link between this and being professional, "*your teaching, your work has to be presented in a professional manner,*" she continued to add. TLD in addition in the SSII (P.14) referred to "*being prepared*". This is a colloquialism for having prepared lessons and appropriate work before embarking on teaching or entering a class. TLB in the SSII (p.2) talked about, "*making sure you are delivering in the classroom, extending the knowledge of the learners and teaching the curriculum.*" She went on to add also in the SSII (p.2), "*our teaching must develop the whole child you can't do this without knowing the curriculum and methodology.*" TLC added in the same vein in her SSII (p.11), "*Being a professional is working constantly, being consumed by your job and never letting your learners down.*" These participants have made a deliberate link between professionalism and the quality of teaching and learning. The impact of professionalism on teaching and learning in the South African context almost inevitably drags the teacher unions into the discussion. Because four of the

participants belonged to the same union the debate and views may have been one sided, but were nevertheless passionate.

TLA declared very strongly in the SSII (p.8), "*We (NAPTOSA) see professionalism differently to others.*" She continued "*I left them (SADTU) because I feel it is unprofessional to rob children of teaching and learning time.*" TLB and TLE echoed similar sentiments in the SSII. TLE also a former SADTU member was equally categoric in the FG (p.5), "*If I neglect my grade 1's, how can I call myself professional?*" *We have such a literacy and numeracy crisis already; it is immoral to neglect your teaching duties.*" By contrast TLD was less critical in the FG (p.5) declaring that, "*the cause of the strike was just, we all benefited and some of you were not striking but had no children to teach. Is that not also unprofessional?*" The views of the four participants find resonance in Heysteck and Lethoko's (2001, p. 225) view that, "For SADTU teachers working conditions are more important than the teachers' professional status." The issues of conduct of teachers elicited some very strong views. I now look at conduct as an indicator of professionalism.

4.4.4. Conduct as an Indicator of Professionalism

All five of the participants made reference to some form of conduct in making determinations about their and other's professionalism. In South Africa all teachers must be registered with the South African Council for Educators (SACE) and subscribe to its Code of Professional Ethics. Many teachers, whilst belonging to SACE are hardly aware of the content of the Code of Professional Ethics. Many, as in the case of the five participants, subscribe to many of the principles of the code even though they may not know that these are contained therein. TLA in describing why she is a professional proclaimed, "*We have a code ... that governs us*" (SSII, p.5) TLC added (SSII, p.11), "*we have a code of behaviour which sets you apart, this dictates how you interact with other teachers, your seniors, parents and learners.*" This is a clear indication of the value the group attached to conduct. TLE (SSII, p.17) was equally adamant that professionalism is "*how you carry yourself, how you talk about and to other teachers, the respect you show towards your colleagues and the children.*" TLE (SSII, p.18) showed a much stronger leaning towards the importance of teacher conduct stating that, "*you must not condone wrong, stand up and go*

against wrong group thinking." A number of participants made reference to what they called 'ethical behaviour'.

TLC in the SSII (p.12) reflecting on ethical behaviour was categoric, "*As teachers our behaviour must reflect the type of society we want.*" In the FG (p.2), TLE seized on the thought of presentation, "*we must dress the part, present our views in a particular manner, show respect and act respectably.*" All the other participants agreed but did lament that some teachers are bringing the profession into disrepute. In the response to the SQ all the respondents answered the ethically based questions positively with more than 80% of respondents supporting ethical conduct and distancing themselves from behaviour that could be construed as ethically questionable. There was a strong assertion that the unions did not always act ethically or in a way that supported the ethical conduct of teachers. TLE stated in the FG (p.6), "*I do not believe that teachers intimidating colleagues, hanging on school gates, preventing teachers from teaching is ethical behaviour.*"

TLD in the FG (p.6) took a different slant to conduct and suggested that, "*we must be supportive of each other, and we must encourage and build to make the others better.*" This attitude towards each other is an often overlooked value in conduct. The themes under professionalism have indicated the strong views held by the participants and indeed also the respondents to matters related to teacher professionalism. There is a genuine belief that greater professionalism will lead to an all round improvement in the school. My observation of the participants during a staff meeting in which many people were actively involved is that there too were genuine expressions of concern for the professional issues on the staff. In the (OS, P.1) TLB reminded staff "*Please ensure that the duties are carried out diligently otherwise it pressurises someone else.*" *To this a teacher responded "Yes we must all play our part and expose those who let the side down.*" I move now to a discussion on the barriers to teacher leadership and professionalism.

4.4.5. Barriers to Teacher Leadership.

4.4.5.1 *Management and Leadership Barriers – The Power Dynamic.*

Gehrke (1998, p.39) states that "the evolution into effective leadership is developmental." The data revealed that there were managerial and leadership stumbling blocks to the full realisation of teacher leadership. This had often to do with the perceived or real power balance in the school. "*We (the SMT) need to be less hierarchical and more inclusive*" (TLC) in the SSII. This described a view from within the SMT. TLB suggested a little more subtly (my positionality as the Principal of the school might have impacted on her giving a more direct response,) "*We (management) can improve on how we relate to staff. A number of staff are new and want to see more openness*" and again, "there *is a clash in the way things are done, and we can improve on this ...*" TLA also expressed disquiet in the FG that, "*the teacher's voice is not loud enough and from where I am standing one or two things could change.*"

The power dynamic in the school and the balance between what Muijs and Harris (2007, p.120) describe as "the problem of letting go" and the need to fulfil the bureaucratic demands of the DOE are not fully balanced, presenting a serious barrier to teacher leadership. Or perhaps is it closer to the view of Greenlee (2002, p.48) who suggests, "The frustration and dissatisfaction of many teachers is rooted in their lack of understanding of how the school functions beyond the classroom." I now turn to a discussion on teachers as a barrier to leadership - Issues of confidence in and confidence to.

4.4.5.2. *Teachers as a Barrier to Leadership: Confidence In and Confidence To:*

Micro politics within the school is an important determinant of whether some show confidence in another assuming leadership or not. These micro-politics are often informed by union affiliation, perceived closeness to authority or one of a myriad other issues. Harris (2004) citing Barth reminds us that "research has shown that colleagues can be hostile to teacher leaders." This is borne out by the view of TLE in the SSII (p.18), "*it is very difficult for me to approach a teacher and correct them, some are too easily offended.*" TLE suggests, "Yes*, it's a difficult place to be. Some do not like even helpful suggestions; they respond that they do not like to be told what*

to do." TLC expressed another experience in the FG (p.6), "*I think teachers are comfortable turning a blind eye, preferring not to show leadership and in so doing they remain acceptable*". This contrasted with the view expressed by TLA in the FG (p.6), "*in this school teachers are far more accountable than where I was. They co-operate. I have found that I can correct someone without causing offence.*" Thus the data suggests that on both counts, confidence to lead, and confidence in teachers leading is not at the levels it should be. The data was not extensive enough to probe the deeper reasons for this, but on a comparative scale the participants did not lack confidence to lead but certainly doubted others confidence in them to do so. I briefly turn now to workload and time constraints as a barrier to leadership.

4.4.5.3.   *Workload and time constraints*

The school has a strong culture of time on task and task on time. TLB stated in the SSII (p.2) that "*we get the job done, but ... it is a challenging place to be.*" She continued, "*...although there may at times be grumbles people do get the job done.*" TLC in the SSII (p.11) suggested that, "this *is an extremely busy school; we hardly have time for anything else.*" Whilst not specifically referring to leadership, the sentiment can easily be extended to the take up of leadership. TLD in the SSII (p.15) stated in her view of the work and time crunch that, "*leadership comes with management and administrative functions which is a lot more work.*" Supporting the idea of overload TLA responded in the FG (p.4) "*is that not the reason, why certain people avoid certain codes of sport, this is time consuming and a lot more work*? TLE (p.4) raised a different dimension when she cautioned that "*people must know who is doing what and who is answerable to whom.*" Overload could in fact lead to what Hart (1995, p.12) refers to as "role ambiguity and role conflict," as suggested by TLE.

The problem of workload and time as barriers experienced by the participants resonated with the views of Katzenmeyer and Moller (2001) who stated that, "time demands and increased workload make it difficult for some teacher leaders to remain full time in the classroom and also to take on extensive leadership roles." In the context of the research site being typically short of manpower, the solution to time and workload demands to create space for leadership development was not too

obvious. However within these constraints leadership take up is happening albeit on a limited scale.

4.4.6. Factors enhancing teacher leadership

According to Gehrke (1998) and Harris and Lambert (2003) head teachers have a key role to play in encouraging teachers to be leaders, helping them to develop leadership skills and creating the space for them to get positive feedback and growth. I now look at the role of the principal and SMT in developing teacher leadership.

4.4.6.1. *The Role of the Principal and SMT*

Spillane (2004, p.15) suggests the use of six strategies to promote reflection on teacher leadership, "making suggestions, giving feedback, modelling, using inquiry, soliciting advice and opinion and giving praise." Using these six strategies as a litmus test I attempted to gauge from the participants if any of these activities were practiced. TLB responded in the SSII (p.3) by saying "*I have received encouragement and been recognised for my work and now I do so too as an SMT member to my other colleagues*." TLA in similar vein in the SSII (p.9) suggested "*Those words of support and encouragement boosted my self confidence. In group discussions it really helps* me to acknowledge people".

TLC reflecting on being developed and developing leaders, suggested in the FG (p.5), "*I have always received guidance from the SMT and the principal whenever I was leading a project or task. One must ask for advice when one needs it.*" Her feeling of contentment with the support is echoed by 93% of the respondents to the SQ who believed that teachers who took on leadership roles needed to be supported. TLC continued that, "*When the SMT felt you should be calling a meeting they would instruct you to do so.*" This indicates a different level of support, one that intervenes to prevent something from happening or facilitates something else to happen. TLD also reflected on being encouraged whilst performing tasks and in turn encouraging others.

TLE suggested in the FG (p.6) that, "*often your team is asked to give their opinion. I do not think it is encouraged enough. I do however,*" she continued, "*always test the waters of opinion before I proceed.*" TLC concurred in the FG (p.6) "*that it is disheartening and even irritating when people refuse to participate when the opportunity arises, then proceed to white- ant.*" TLA in the FG (p.6) cautioned, "*Sometimes people over- guide. My HOD almost smothered me with her guidance, but then she was being helpful.*"

TLD reminded the FG (p.3), that "*we are free to bring new ideas, the staff wanted more attention in the D-classes, and we then had the time table changed.*" This was supported by TLC, "*yes we even started the learning area committees, after these were suggested by the principal.*" TLE (p.3) concurred, "*We are certainly encouraged to use experimental methods.*" This underlined that there was indeed a measure of the principal and SMT creating the environment for teacher leadership to grow. The extent of the measure is debatable because of some conflict in the data. Only 33% of the staff surveyed felt that they were involved in meaningful decisions. This contrasted sharply with the 75% in the same survey who indicated that they were encouraged to take initiative. 50% of the same sample indicated/believed that the majority of teachers take up leadership positions. The other fifty percent did not hold that view. There were thus many opportunities created by the SMT and principal to enhance teacher leadership, but in the view of some staff, it was not enough. Barth (1998) reminds us that for teacher leadership to grow and sustain itself "it is important for the principal (and SMT) to relinquish decision making authority to the teachers.

An attempt to do this is evident in the creation of learning area committees, which straddle the entire school and which were initiated by the principal and SMT. The smaller units are modelled as communities of practice as suggested by Lave and Wenger (1998). TLC observes in the FG (p.4) "*new ways of doing things is evident in our learning area committees. In the more relaxed smaller groups people feel freer to express themselves and many ideas are exchanged. There is a culture of involvement and participation.*" TLD in the FG (p.4) nodded her head slowly, "*yes the school does accept new ways of doing things but we should do more.*" There was a general murmur of agreement.

To conclude, many opportunities existed in the school for teacher leadership, encouraged, created, supported, modelled by the SMT and principal, but as had been observed, there is potentially much more untapped opportunity that could be harnessed.

4.4.7. Barriers to Professionalism

The notion of teacher professionalism is, according to SACE (2006, p 1) "contested and is contestable." This statement from the SACE position paper on the state of the teacher professionalism in South Africa accurately defines the debate in South African schools. The question can be asked, 'whose professionalism'? Diametrically opposite behaviour, conduct, etc. are claimed by opposing unions to be professional. During our most recent teacher (public servants strike) in 2010 Unions accused each other's membership of unprofessional behaviour on the one side, for being on strike, intimidating colleagues and denying children the right to education, and on the other hand for attending school, pretending things were normal when many classes were half empty and eventually sharing in the fruits earned by the strike. The resultant anger, bitterness and unresolved issues further polarised teachers on the opposite sides of the divide.

4.4.7.1. *The role of the teacher unions*

In many schools unions play an important role in defining the culture of the school. At the site where the study was conducted teachers mainly belong to NAPTOSA (80%). Two of the participants were previously members of SADTU. In expressing the differences between the unions, TLC in the FG (p.5) suggested "*maybe we see professionalism differently to others, I cannot imagine our teachers doing what we saw them doing.*" In the FG (p.5) TLD added, "*The behaviour was unacceptable.*" TLA lamented in addition, "*Such behaviour has become a trademark of a strike. Part of being a professional is how others see you. After the strike respect for us had declined.*"

This was supported by TLB (p.6), "*their behaviour impinged on my professionalism. The community is judging me because of their behaviour.*" This form of lamentation was supported by the all the participants with issues of behaviour, poor conduct, bad language, intimidation being raised as the behaviour they wished not to be associated with.

TLE, further added in the SSII (p.6), that her choice to change unions had to do with professional considerations, "*I could not reconcile with abandoning my grade 1's to attend union meetings during school hours*". The issue of what constituted duty, what professionalism and to whom you owed greater loyalty was also the subject of some debate in the FG. TLB (p.5) declared after some interaction, "*the unions don't employ us, the DOE does.*" TLE added, "*My children come first.*" Clearly lines of loyalty were drawn. TLC added, "*The unions, with their differences made me feel vulnerable. They certainly caused tensions on our staff but fortunately not for long. I am unhappy with the unions*".

Whilst unions play very positive roles their record on issues of professionalism is somewhat questionable. One must however note that the majority of the participant belonged to one union and that I as the researcher is known to be a senior member of a union.

4.4.8. Factors Enhancing Teacher Professionalism.

Ample evidence in the data exists that there are many factors present in the research site and amongst the participants that could constitute factors that enhanced teacher professionalism. I will now turn my attention to the creation of a culture of learning and teaching.

4.4.8.1. *Building a culture of learning and teaching*

Creating a culture of learning and teaching must be one of the most basic requirements of any school. It is, so to speak a school's core business. Such a culture would make an invaluable contribution to a professionalism ethos. Responding to the SQ 80% of respondents believed that such an ethos did exist at the research site. TLE remarked in the SSII (p.17), "*when I came here the culture of punctuality, school attendance and respect for colleagues struck me,*" indicating that she believed those were factors that enhanced the professional ethos of the school. TLD added (p.14),

"*our conduct with one another and the children builds respect and support.*" The FG in contemplating whether the school was a professional place of teaching and learning heard about teachers, from TLC (p.2) "*they are punctual, they are prepared, we are intervening in the learning of the children, and we are succeeding, not in everything but in many things. I believe we are a moving school.*" TLD contributed to this view (p.2), "*parents recognise the change in their children, the impact we are having and they are our greatest advertisers.* TLE made a point about the environment of care. It can thus be concluded that a culture of learning and teaching is promoted and was being developed continually at the school. Timperley (2008, p. 22) suggests that "schools do not thrive on visions alone. Leaders must ensure that professional learning opportunities are well managed and organised and that conditions are in place for extended engagement and professional learning." The focus of my analysis now turns to the role of leaders as an enhancing factor.

4.4.8.2. *Leaders – A Building Block to Teacher Professionalism*

The point of the importance of leaders as a factor that enhances learning and teaching has already been made. By the same token leaders can either create an atmosphere of professionalism or destroy it. The fact that a perceived culture of learning and teaching exists at the school, suggests that a certain code of professionalism is being adhered to. It would not be stretching the point to suggest that such could not exist without the direct influence of the school leadership. TLD suggests in the FG (p.2) that, "we *are motivated by different people including the management to do the things we do*." TLB adds (p.2), "*Without a strict adherence to the code of respect, accountability and responsibility built over years by successive leaders, we would not have a culture of learning and teaching.*"

TLD again suggested that, "*Management have initiated many changes that have kept us ahead of the pack, but sometimes also left some behind*" (FG, p.2). Focussing on the role of management and as leaders and champions of change, TLB concurred (p.3) "*I agree with TLD, we are moving and changing fast. We are taking most teachers with us. This makes us more ready for external changes; we must take even the resistors with us.*" TLE added, "*My experience elsewhere informs my opinion, here there are so many programmes, so many interventions for both teachers and learners, it should be impossible not to find your niche. The HOD's here are very active*" (FG,

p.3) TLA concurred with this sentiment. In my observations I could not help but notice the influence of the school management and other leaders on the activities.

To conclude, many factors mentioned under other discussions enhanced teacher professionalism, viz. an ethical culture, a code of conduct, knowledge of legislation, a sense of duty and responsibility, collegiality, active leadership, public trust, various organisational conditions, opportunities etc to name but a few.

4.5.   Conclusion

The SACE Code of Professional Ethics provides a powerful basis for the establishment of a framework to develop a teacher corps with a strong professional ethic. Add to this to various policy documents such as the Norms and Standards for Education (2000) which provide the framework for the development of greater teacher leadership, and it can safely be concluded that there are no legal obstacles to the development of a core of professional teacher leaders.

As we have seen in the case study however, there are a myriad of factors that hinder the actualisation of ideals. From the case study school the full transition to inclusive teacher leadership has yet not happened even though there are many promising practices in so far as professionalism is concerned, however, the overwhelming view is that there is a strong professional ethos in the school.

The ensuing chapter summarises these findings, offers some concluding remarks on professionalism and teacher leadership and presents a few suggestions for future research.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1. Introduction:

This chapter summarises the main findings of my research project. At first, I will briefly discuss teacher leadership and professionalism, the understanding of the concepts and how their relationship influences teaching and learning followed by the factors that hindered or promoted them in the context of my case study school. Thereafter I will examine the research process and then conclude with some recommendations for future research.

My study was focussed on exploring the relationship between leadership and professionalism and the influence it would have on teaching and learning. The study suggests that teachers generally view themselves as professionals. Both TLB and TLC declare in the SSII (p.1), "*Yes I am a professional.*" TLA also in the SSII (p.5) adds, "*I have studied and am a specialist, to do my job you have to be qualified.*" All the teachers were furthermore categoric that they could lead, that they had skills. Those in post level one positions had convened committees, chaired discussion groups, voluntarily corrected behaviour and taken the lead. Those like TLB and TLC who occupied formal leadership positions also indicated how they had seized the opportunity to lead beyond the delegated leadership which Gunter (2005) describes as authorised leadership.

The teachers saw a clear link between their professionalism and being a 'good' teacher and were equally clear that professional leadership is 'good leadership'. TLE in the SSII (p.17) intimated, "*...because of how we carry ourselves, our conduct, we also know that we must be at our job when the time demands.*" The issue of time on task and task on time was reiterated by all participants several times. My observation did, however, not corroborate the zeal. That they were at the jobs was true, however TLD did not always get there on time, resulting in her having some difficulty with noisy classes. TLE and TLA as foundation phase teachers were almost neurotic about their time. TLC and TLB because of their positions were 'watched' by the others and were always at the appointed posts. There were some tensions around duty and strong feelings about ensuring that one is at one's appointed post. Interestingly, teachers

always 'fell in' when someone was late or could not get to a duty point. This resonates with the findings of Christie, Butler & Potterton, (2007) reporting on the Ministerial report on schools that work reported that teachers always helped out because of dedication, commitment and work ethic.

5.2   Summary of the Findings

5.2.1.   Teacher Leadership

(*It's our school we must make things work*)

The sense of ownership inherent in this statement by TLC, during the SSII (p.13) encapsulates in a sentence the strong view of the need for all teachers to lead. The deep sense of what Christie, Butler and Potterton (2007, p. 57) refer to as the "custodial and reciprocal responsibility among teachers" is evident in the statement and sincerity of voice in which it was said in the SSII. TLA's assertion in the SSII (p.6) that "*I motivated and initiated for parents to be involved*," described in great detail the extent to which the ability, the desire and the actioning of leadership went. This assertion of TLA and TLC translates further into a deep commitment to the children in their care, "*It is about the children*" (TLB in SSII, p.2) and TLE. "*You must be there to teach the children in every sense of the word.*" These statements links leadership to the quality of teaching and commitment to the task. This is in keeping with the views of Harris and Lambert (2003, p. 43) that "Teacher Leadership is primarily concerned with developing high quality teaching and learning in schools."

The participants did not separate the concepts of leadership and quality teaching and learning, but rather saw the one informing and mandating the other. This building and maintaining relationships (Day and Harris, 2002) included to a greater measure the peers and colleagues. TLB in her SSII (p.3) stressed the imperative, "*We must work together as a group to achieve the outcomes*". Above recognising the value of relationships, TLB also recognises what Katzenmeyer and Moller (2001, p. 5) suggest is "contributing to a community of teachers, learners and leaders and influences others to improved educational practice". It is thus more than relationships and decentralised decision making, it includes mobilising others positively. This is supported by TLA's assertion in the SSII (p.9) that "*I have encouraged the staffroom debate*...." as well as

TLC and TLD during their SSII's (p.15) that is about '*recognising people*'. This notion of building relationships through positive interactive leadership permeates all the Individual Interviews and the FG discussions and resounds with the views of Muijs and Harris (2005, p. 15) that "leadership is not simply a role or function but rather a dynamic between individuals within an organisation".

The importance of collegiality was underscored by TLB in the SSII (p.3), who stressed "*we have to be considerate of people*" and again, "*we must accommodate differences,*" and on another occasion, "*we must be considerate of each other's needs, personalities, challenges and shortcomings and support one another.*" Similar sentiments about supporting each other were expressed in the FG by all the other participants. This collegial approach has created the space for greater leadership expression and contributed to improving classroom practice, similar to what is suggested by Muijs and Harris (2003, p. 444) in citing Little, that "where teachers learn from one another through peer coaching, mentoring and mutual reflection the possibility of generating teacher leadership are significantly enhanced".

TLD demonstrates the broader view of leadership when she tackles the thorny issue of race relations in her demonstration of leadership. This bold, informal leadership often goes by unnoticed but is advocating for and demonstrating an alternative way of thinking that re-enforces the notion of positive interaction. TLD was clear, "I *challenged them to step closer and hear the debates from the other side*" (SSII, p.4). Leadership is thus about developing others whilst developing your own skills. It is a commitment to care enough to want to lead. This care showed itself in various ways especially in organising and giving direction.

All five participants in their responses in the SSII, the FG and the OS demonstrate in many varied ways their abilities to organise and direct. Whilst TLC in the SSII (p.11) made reference to "*organising curriculum workshops and debates, assisting teachers in curriculum matters, co-ordinating learning areas, fundraising, planning, duty distribution,*" these and others like mentoring, guiding, advising were common to all respondents to varying degrees. These roles, either delegated or informally assumed, defined the participants as teacher leaders. This concurs with the views of Harris and Lambert (2003, p.44) that "Teacher leadership is primarily assisting colleagues to explore and try new ideas then offering critical constructive feedback to

ensure that teaching and learning are achieved". Teacher leadership as a classroom based activity, primarily impacting on the class and the quality of teaching was highlighted especially by TLA, TLD and TLE who were all classroom based.

TLE especially highlighted her preference in the SSII (p.17) for informal leadership emanating from her strength as a classroom based teacher. "*I prefer more informal leadership roles. I am an expert in my area. One is more acceptable to the teachers (as an expert)*". This is supported by the finding of Harris (2004, p. 15) who claims that "evidence suggests that where teachers share good practice and learn together the possibility of securing better quality teaching is increased." TLA (who had previously occupied an HOD position strongly concurred in the FG (p.3) with the idea that expert opinion and leadership from the classroom is more easily shared "*since they (the grade) know that you are speaking from proven experience and accept your judgement.*" TLA (p.3) furthermore insists that she has no formal leadership ambitions, "*I've been there and now I am enjoying being on the other side*".

What the participants have succeeded in demonstrating is that they can positively influence the learning and teaching environment by being participative, team players, leaders in their own areas, leaders throughout the school, formal and informal leaders. Their leading has furthermore a positive impact on learning and teaching. I now move to the influence professionalism has had on leadership and the quality of learning and teaching.

5.2.2. Teacher Professionalism

The participants in the study all saw themselves as professionals. The respondents to the survey agreed that teaching is a profession and 93% agreed that collegiality is a character trait common to professionals. TLD, in her SSII (p.14) and in the FG was emphatic, "*I am no less a professional than a doctor*," but did concede in the FG that a qualification did not make one a professional. All participants agreed in the FG that not all teachers could be considered to be professional. This is an important distinction since this group identified that some teachers were bringing the profession into disrepute. Certification and being qualified weighed heavily in the participants' assessment of what constituted a professional. TLA in the SSII (p.5) suggested, "*We have gone out and studied*". This was supported by TLC and TLD who both asserted in the SSII that they had formal knowledge and qualifications. It was, however, TLB

who struck a chord in the FG (p.1) when she included a list of criteria together with formal education that made one a professional, she added: *"It's about much more, it's about how you feel, how you behave, how you see yourself in relation to others"*. (Hoyle (1982, p. 162) suggests that. "... It involves the process of socialisation into professional values." What was clear was that formal training gave the participants a certain status above those who were not formally educated. This, Hoyle (1982, p. 161) suggests, "... is used by individuals as a token of their own self-esteem." The participants all shared the view that conduct is a determinant of professionalism. I now briefly highlight some of the most important views.

TLA, in the SSII (p.5) declared, *"...we have a code ... that governs us"*. By extension this sets them apart from those that don't. TLC in the SSII (p.11) concurred, that conduct makes us different. *"We have a code of behaviour, which dictates how you interact with other teachers, learners, parents"*. TLC (p.11) called it, *"how you carry yourself"*. Little tolerance was displayed for poor conduct with TLE in the SSII (p.18) stating, *"You must not condone wrong, stand up and go against the group thinking"*. This concurred with the respondents in the SQ where 80% agreed that conduct was a determinant of professionalism. The participants took a dim view of the behaviour of striking teachers as declared by TLE in her SSII, *"I do not believe that teachers, intimidating, hanging on gates, preventing teachers from teaching is ethical behaviour"*. (Making reference to SADTU members behaviour during the 2010 strike) Conduct and discipline, they believed, had a direct bearing on teaching and learning. The participants, in different ways felt that their professionalism had a direct impact on teaching and learning.

The question about whether teacher professionalism improves the culture of learning and teaching is almost rhetorical for the participants. They see the answer as self evident even though literature on the subject is not always so emphatic. TLB in her SSII (p.2) suggested, *"As a professional teacher you would automatically look at areas where you are lacking, build on them, and improve yourself, for yourself and the children"*. The inclusion of the children suggests that teacher leaders are never doing anything only for themselves; the greater purpose is improving the quality of learning and teaching. TLC and TLD in their SSII (p.11) made reference to *"knowing what you are doing in class,"* and (p.14) *"being prepared."* This suggested a strong view that leaders must be knowledgeable and must prepare their lessons to be

effective, good teachers. TLC in SSII (p.11) added "*your work must be presented in a professional manner*," directly linking work quality with professionalism. 96% of the respondents to the SQ felt that professionalism is linked to ongoing professional development, which corroborates the views of TLB on continuing professional development as a criterion for professionalism and teaching effectiveness. In the SSII (p.2), TLB adds, "*we must develop the whole child, you can't do this without knowing the curriculum and methodology*," thereby further emphasising the importance of quality learning and teaching. It is thus clear that the participants see professionalism as inclusive of quality teaching and continuing professional development resulting in quality learning. Heystek and Lethoko (2001, p. 223) suggest that, "If teaching is a profession in the true sense of the word, teachers will reflect characteristics of a professional person and that will link directly to the traits of a positive culture of learning and teaching." This is the sense in which the participants linked their professionalism to their commitment to quality learning and teaching.

The respondents, in reflecting on the impact that the unions had on their professionalism and on learning and teaching, were scathing about what they saw as unprofessionalism. TLE in FG (p.6), a former SADTU member declared, "*If I neglect my grade 1's, how can I call myself professional*?" This was echoed by TLB as well. 75% of respondents to the SQ suggested that their union influence does not clash with their professional values. This view could be informed by the fact that 80% of the respondents were members of one union. In their research, Heystek and Lethoko (2001) found that all teacher unions in South Africa responded that their teachers/members were professional. This finding contrasts with the views held by the participants that suggested that at times, such as during the recent strikes, the behaviour of teachers was not always professional. Professionalism at the research site was an unstated policy but was not universally understood but was certainly enthusiastically embraced. I turn now to a brief discussion on barriers to teacher leadership.

5.3.   Barriers to Teacher Leadership

There are many factors found in the research site that could be seen as promoting and others as inhibiting teacher leadership and professionalism. I turn now to briefly look at these promoting and inhibiting factors. The data revealed that there were a multitude of barriers to the full realisation of teacher leadership. Issues of power and the balance of power came to the fore as a barrier. TLC, a member of the SMT suggested in the SSII (p.13), "*We (the SMT) need to be less hierarchical and more inclusive.*" The statement reveals a real concern but also an admission. In the haste to get things done it is easy to slip up and ignore the '*voices*'. Christie (2010, p. 698) states that "the shift to school based management, sharpened the notion of principals as managers, requiring them to run schools as organisations ... neglecting leadership." Muijs and Harris (2007, p. 120) describe this barrier as "the problem of letting go and balancing the bureaucratic demands of the DOE." TLA in the FG (p.6) framed her concern as "*the teachers voice is not heard enough.*" The power dynamic and the resultant bureaucracy were thus identified as barriers.

In addition the confidence in leaders and the confidence to lead were identified by the participants as real barriers with TLA exclaiming in the FG (p.6), "*Some do not like even helpful suggestions. They do not like being told what to do.*" TLC suggested in the FG (p.7) that "*teachers are comfortable turning a blind eye,*" making reference to not having the confidence to lead. Harris (2004) citing Barth reminds us that research has shown that teachers can be hostile to teacher leaders. This resonates with the account given by TLE about her experience in formal leadership.

Teachers further highlighted issues of workload and time as barriers preventing more people from taking on the leadership challenge. TLC in the SSII (p.11) stated that, "*... this is an extremely busy school; we hardly have time for anything else,*" highlighting the workload and time crunch as barriers to widening the leadership pool. This further suggests that leadership development could play second fiddle to the other programmes of the school. TLD concurred with TLC in her SSII (p.15) also stating, "*Leadership comes with management and administrative functions, which is a lot more work,*" further underscoring that workloads and time are stumbling blocks. Gunter (2005, p. 40) describes this situation as, "the contradictory situation that teachers find themselves in regarding how work is and should be organised." Barth

(1988, p. 41) places the responsibility to mitigate the negative effects of taking up leadership on the shoulders of the principal, suggesting that, "unless the principal provides a safety net, not many teachers will aspire to walk the high wire, and there will be no community of leaders." This is where the real challenge for the principal and management lie, to be innovative and prioritise the really important things that will take the school forward like leadership development. I now move to the factors that enhanced the taking up of leadership at the school.

5.3.1. Factors Enhancing Teacher Leadership

Both TLB and TLA in their SSII suggested that they had received recognition and encouragement from both SMT and other colleagues for work done. Harris and Lambert (2003, p. 45) suggest that requirements for generating and sustaining Teacher Leadership are empowerment and encouragement of teachers ..." TLC, reflecting on empowerment by the SMT declared, "I have always received advice from the SMT and principal whenever I was leading a project or task" (p.12) This was echoed by 90% of the respondents to the SQ who indicated that people leading were given support.

The bringing and sharing of new ideas was encouraged and accepted according to TLD in the FG. TLE (p.3) concurred, *"Yes, we are certainly encouraged to use experimental methods."* An environment of acceptance and respect for ideas is thus being created, 75% of the surveyed teachers concurred with this sentiment. Barth (1988, p. 40) stressed the importance of the principal "letting go, relinquishing so that the latent creative powers of teachers can be released." The measure to which this occurred is debateable although all participants cited their own positive examples. 50% of the respondents in the SQ indicated that they did not have sufficient opportunity for leadership. TLD in the FG (p.7), conceded, *"Yes, we should do more"*.

Evidence of feedback, modelling, soliciting and giving advice, giving praise, demonstrating, was given by the participants, indicating a number of factors that enhanced teacher leadership. The only question was whether the inhibiting factors weighed more heavily than the enhancing factors. The data shows that enhancing factors outweighed the inhibiting factors, but that there was much work that could be done. I now move the factors that enhanced or hindered teacher professionalism.

5.4. Barriers to Professionalism

The data gathered reveals a few factors that could be seen as barriers to the practice of teacher professionalism. At first the participants revealed their anxiety about the role of teacher unions, in particular SADTU. Reflections on the strikes of 2007 and 2010 revealed sentiments such as, "*their behaviour lets us all down*" TLD in the FG (p.6), "*we see professionalism differently to them, I cannot imagine of teachers doing what we saw them doing,*" according to TLC in the FG. What was clear was that the unions did not always provide the professional example this group expected of them. They seem however not be aware of the view of SADTU that professionalism is secondary to the issues that make teaching a very difficult profession to be engaged in, in South Africa. According to Heystek and Lethoko (2001, p. 225) "Not until teachers working conditions, salaries, facilities in schools and a proper functioning DOE are satisfactory, then they can talk about professionalism." With these conditions far from being met it would appear that professionalism is unlikely to enjoy much attention at this time.

The data also revealed among the participants that teacher behaviour both from the SMT and the post level 1 teachers did at times erode the feeling of professionalism. TLD suggested in the FG (p.3), "*We sometimes call teachers to order at assembly e.g., teachers please stand with your classes. This correction is uncomfortable.*" To this TLB (p.3) responded, "*Not being on duty at the required time is what is unprofessional. You must not create a situation for correction then feel unhappy about being corrected.*" TLC added that how views on differences were expressed were not always professional. It is thus clear that notwithstanding the broad view that a culture of professionalism exists the challenges of the unions, of individual behaviour and action, militated against professionalism. I now move to factors that enhanced teacher professionalism.

5.4.1. Factor enhancing Professionalism

The data revealed that the school with its culture of learning and teaching, punctuality, accountability, respect for parents, teachers and pupils to name a few and teachers with their adherence to a code of conduct, professional work ethic, commitment to teaching and learning, collegiality and commitment to professional development exhibited what could be described as a culture of teacher

professionalism. At first there was an indication of an adherence to a code of conduct, "*we have a code that governs us,*" TLA and TLC in the SSII, (p. 11), "*we adhere to a code of behaviour.*" This '*code*' for the participants includes issues such as conduct, dress, duty, care for children, and care for each other, collegiality, trust in the judgement of others, respect for those who lead, differing in a manner that is still respectful. TLC in her SSII (p.11) declared, *"We have a code which sets us apart, that dictates how we interact with other teachers, your seniors, parents and learners. We have a professional standard of work"*. These issues encapsulated for them the factors present at the school and amongst their peers that created a professional ethos in the school. This has contributed in no small measure to a culture of learning and teaching. Because of the adherence to time on task, what TLE in her SSII (p.17) describes as "*the culture of punctuality, school attendance and respect for colleagues",* there certainly is thus a greater commitment to the task of teaching. Furthermore the culture of care for the well-being of the children, for their learning constantly arose during the SSII (p.11). TLC suggested, and "*... we are intervening in the lives of our children.*" This is the 'professional learning' that Timperley (2008, p. 22) refers to.

In addition, the value of good leadership as a building block of professionalism was highlighted. The data suggests that the leadership of the school has had an important influence on the culture of learning and teaching and the professional ethos that is reported to permeate the school. TLE in the FG declared,

> "*I always reflect on my previous experience at another school, here we are so much more professional, we care more, we try more, we have a culture of being at school and teaching, we even have an extra mural programme. For me this is a professional culture*". TLD suggested, "*We are motivated by the school leadership to do the things we do*." (p.2).

TLB concurred in the FG, "we are moving fast *and taking most teachers with us*." TLB added, "*We are always ahead of the others, it's not a race, but because of our leadership we are not lagging behind*." I now move to a brief reflection on recommendations for future practice in the case study school.

5.5. Recommendations for Future Practice

In the case study school there is a need to balance the urgency to develop leadership and the leadership aspirations of teachers with the bureaucratic demands of the DOE which in a measure prevents the principal and SMT 'letting go' as suggested by Barth (1988). That the leadership style still has elements of the top down approach is apparent, with TLC suggesting in the SSII, (p. 13), "*Teachers do voice their opinion, but more teachers on the ground must get involved. We need to be less hierarchical and more inclusive*", but evidence shows that teacher leadership already present and the overwhelmingly positive disposition of the staff towards teacher leadership sets the scene for a range of exciting possibilities which the principal and SMT must act on.

Furthermore teachers must seize their rightful place. Schools such as the case study school will not, in the foreseeable future, be able to create more time for leadership, as they simply do not have the means. The school, teachers and SMT alike will have to be far more inventive in creating that critical space for leadership development and enactment. The understanding, that leadership is not the preserve of a few needs to become embedded in the psyche of every teacher.

Whilst the school portrays a professional ethos and the teachers weigh heavily towards professional enactment, there is room to bring more teachers on board. The sense of professionalism is at times narrow which creates room for matters as simple as a debate on their own professionalism. The assumed ethos must be more openly talked about and not assumed. TLC in her SSII, (p.13) suggests, "*the informal discussions have assisted in more ways than some realise to encourage participation. I think we must do more of this*".

With its already well established culture of learning and teaching, the school needs to combine this with leadership and professionalism to create a greater ownership of the destiny of the school, of each child and of every teacher. Accountability, dependability and the authoritative, yet democratic establishment of a culture of learning and teaching needs to happen. The seeds for this are already there but there are some cracks that must be filled.

In the final analysis the principal and SMT must balance the structural authority bestowed by management and principalship with the legitimising influence of authority that comes with leadership. I move now to my recommendations for future research.

5.6.   Recommendations for Future Research

In navigating my way through the flood of literature on teacher leadership and professionalism, the one area where research seems a little neglected is on the questions of the impact of leadership and professionalism on learning and teaching in schools in transition. I argue that the average South African school is faced with a barrage of challenges, where the quality of learning and teaching stands out above the rest. Determining a link between successful schools, leaderful schools and professional workplaces is neglected and creates a space for further study.

Furthermore, the impact of policy on real transformation in areas such as leadership and the culture of learning and teaching need to be explored further. My study, conducted on a small scale could be replicated on a much wider scale with the specific intention to understand why even now researchers like Christie (2010) still view the majority of our schools as dysfunctional. Moreover, there is the question whether professionalism and leadership enactment would have a positive impact on these schools. Much has been researched on teacher leadership, but more needs to be done with the context of functional schools. Here the exercising of teacher leadership is sometimes neglected either because teachers see the system as working with no reason to fix what isn't broken or because the scope is not created because the need does not seem to arise.

Continued research on teacher professionalism in the context of our South African schools is needed. Firstly to determine why the title is apparently more important than the action and secondly to explore whether schools with a professional ethos are indeed more successful than those that do not. A gap exists in which calls for further research into the development and sustainability of teacher leadership and professional practices in South Africa, faced as it is with macro policy changes; powerful unions; a dispirited teacher corps, and prevailing hierarchical leadership cultures.

5.7   Conclusion

The demands placed on the average South African teacher are possibly a little different from those in some first world countries, but the essence is the same. The drudgery of an uninspiring job wears even the most enthusiastic teacher down. It is the rare specimen that, faced with all the challenges of an urbanised environment, techno-savvy children, low wages, and appalling working conditions and to crown it all an environment that places little value on your abilities, remains positive, works hard and achieves the impossible. If this is what teachers are called upon to do, little wonder so many don't quite succeed. However it is in exactly these dire circumstances that one must be exhorted to seize the opportunity to lead, to be professional without any guarantee of success, having only faith in the knowledge that it is the right thing to do. After all is said and done leadership and professionalism are simply acts of faith.

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TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRE

LEADERS AS PROFESSIONALS: WHAT DO WE MEAN?

INSTRUCTIONS FOR QUESTIONAIRE

- 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 and professionalism in your school.

- Thank you for taking the time to assist me in this research project.

TEACHER QUESTIONNAIRE

Please place a CROSS(X) in the appropriate box for each of the items below.

A: Biographical Information

1 Gender:

Male		Female	

2 Race:

African		Coloured		Indian		White	

3 Age:

Below 20		21-30		31-40		41-50		51 +	

4 Your formal qualification:

M3 and below		M3-M4		M5 and above	

5 Nature of employment:

Permanent		Temporary		SGB	

6 Years of teaching experience:

0-5 years		6-10 years		11-15 years		16 years +	

7 Member of a union:

Yes		No	

8 If yes, which union do you belong to:

SADTU		NAPTOSA		NATU		SAOU	

B: School Information:

9 Learner enrolment:

1-299		300-599		600+	

10 School type:

Primary		Secondary		Combined	

11 Funding status:

Section 20		Section 21		Private	

12 Annual School Fees:

R0		R1-R499		R500-R999		R1000-R1499		R1500 +	

13	Number of teachers, including management, in your school:							
	1-9		10-19		20-29		30-39		40+	

C: **Teacher Leadership and Professionalism Survey**

Instructions: Place a CROSS (X) in the column that most closely describes your opinion on the role of leadership in your school.

Scale: 4=strongly agree, 3=agree, 2=disagree, 1=strongly disagree

	I believe:	4	3	2	1
14	That teaching is a profession.				
15	All teachers should take on a leadership role in their school.				
16	All teachers should be able to bring about change.				
17	My school promotes discussions on HIV and AIDS.				
18	That teachers are professional if they work well with others (collegial).				
19	That teachers are professional if they are punctual.				
20	That teachers are professional if they promote the image of the profession.				
21	The majority of teachers in my school take up leadership roles.				
22	That only people in formal positions of authority should lead.				
23	That teachers are professional if they are loyal to their school.				
24	That teachers are professional if they respect the dignity and beliefs of learners.				
26	That unions develop teachers professionally.				
27	That teachers are professional if they refrain from any form of improper contact with learners.				
28	That teachers are professional if they refrain from undermining the status and authority of their colleagues.				
29	The majority of teachers in my school are part of the important decision-making processes.				
30	Teachers are encouraged to take initiative in my school.				
31	That teachers are professional if they respect the choices of their colleagues.				
32	That teachers are professional if they promote the ongoing development of the teaching profession.				
33	That unions develop leadership in teachers.				
34	My school has a professional ethos.				
35	That teachers are professional if they refrain from discussing confidential matters with unauthorised persons.				
36	That teachers are professional if they promote gender equality and recognize the opposite gender as equal.				
37	My union's influence clashes with my professional values.				

38	That teachers are professional if they have a manner that is respectful to the values, customs and norms of the community.							
39	That teachers are professional if they use appropriate language and behaviour in their interaction with colleagues.							
40	That men are better able to lead than women.							
41	Teachers should be supported when taking on leadership roles.							
42	That teachers who lead should be remunerated (paid).							
43	That teachers should receive non-financial recognition for leadership.							

D: Open-ended questions:
       Please write a response to the questions in the space provided below

44   To lead our school better, we need to:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Any comments:

APPENDIX TWO

OBSERVATION SCHEDULE

<u>Purpose and Focus of the Observation:</u>

We wish to learn more about teacher leadership and its link to professionalism and unionisation as it is experienced in our schools by recording our observations in the template provided and by reflecting how this phenomenon is " … socially constructed in terms of power , communication lines , discourse and language" (Nieuwenhuis, 2007, p. 84).

<u>Guiding questions:</u>

Core Question: How can teachers lead schools better to ensure that they are professional places of teaching and learning?

Subsidiary Questions:

1. How is professionalism understood by teachers?
2. What factors promote or inhibit teacher leadership and teacher professionalism in schools?

<u>Situations to be observed during the 8 week observation cycle:</u>

1. staff briefing every two weeks (4 briefing observations in the 8 week cycle)
2. A trans- sect (walk around the school)
3. 1 staff meeting (minimum)
4. 1 staff development session
5. Grade/phase/learning area/subject meeting (minimum of 2)

Key focus points to bear in mind during observation process:

1. We are aiming to see if teachers are engaged in any forms of teacher leadership either formally and informally. Grant's (2008) teacher leadership model (Appendix Five) will be used to assist in this regard.

2. We wish to observe how teachers carry themselves as professionals in their interactions with their colleagues (levels of collegiality amongst post level one teachers and in relation to SMT members). Criteria, developed from the SACE policy and code of ethics documents, will be developed to assist in this observation process.

3. We wish to observe how teachers conduct themselves in relation to their learners.

4. Is the teacher's leadership derived from the formal position they hold or from other factors (such as age, experience, expertise, skills. etc.)?

5. Is the leadership of teachers in the school contributing to a socially just environment (are they fair, inclusive, empowering and transformative)?

6. Are teacher leaders taking up their agency role? (willingness to innovate and change)

7. Observe the teacher's role as union members.

8. Observe how union membership and influence impacts on teachers and their leadership in the school. Can teachers engage in dialogue about union matters and actively apply this to their ability to lead? How does this engagement impact on the school?

APPENDIX THREE

INDIVIDUAL INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

1. Do you think teaching is a profession? Explain.
2. Why did you choose teaching as a career?
3. Do you consider yourself a teacher leader? Why do you hold this view? Please talk about some of the leadership opportunities you have had. Were these self initiated or SMT initiated.
4. What is your personal view on teachers being offered incentives (financial and other) to enact leadership? Advantages/ disadvantages.
5. Are there situations where you experience a clash between your professional and your union identities? Talk a little about this. How do you balance the possible tensions that may arise?
6. How can you use your power as a professional to transform your school into a socially just space for teaching and learning?

APPENDIX FOUR

FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

1. What do you understand 'professionalism' to mean?
2. Would you consider our school to be a professional place of teaching and learning?
   Why do you say so?
3. How can teachers use their power as professionals to transform their schools into more socially just places of teaching and learning?
4. What is the group's view on teachers given incentives to perform leadership duties in their schools?
5. Do you believe that unions provide adequate information and support to help teachers develop professionally?

APPENDIX FIVE

UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL

September 2010

ETHICAL CLEARANCE APPLICATION FORM

(HUMAN AND SOCIAL SCIENCES)

PLEASE NOTE THAT THE FORM MUST BE COMPLETED IN TYPED SCRIPT. HANDWRITTEN APPLICATIONS WILL NOT BE CONSIDERED

SECTION 1: PERSONAL DETAILS

1.1   **Full Name & Surname of Applicant :** Carolyn (Callie) Grant

1.2   Title (Ms/ Mr/ Mrs/ Dr/ Professor etc) :   Dr

1.3   Applicants gender   :   Female

1.4   Applicants Race (African/

          Coloured/Indian/White/Other)   :   White

1.3   Student Number   (where applicable)   :   N/A

          Staff Number (where applicable)   :   24502

1.4   School   :   School of Education and Development

1.5   Faculty   :   Education

1.6   Campus   :   Pietermaritzburg

1.7   Existing Qualifications   :   HDE (Edgewood College) BA (UNISA) BED (UND) MED

                                                   (UNP) PhD (UKZN)

1.8   Proposed Qualification for Project   :   Specialisation research project involving staff, B. Ed Honours as
          well

(In the case of research of degree purposes)

as Masters Education Leadership, Management and Policy (ELMP)

students

2.   Contact Details

Tel. No.   :   033-2606185

Cell. No.   :   0844003347

e-mail   :   grantc@ukzn.ac.za

Postal address (in the case of students

and external applicants)   :   Room 42ª School of Education and Development, PMB campus,   UKZN

3.   SUPERVISOR/ PROJECT LEADER DETAILS

NAME	TELEPHONE NO.	EMAIL	DEPARTMENT / INSTITUTION	QUALIFIC ATIONS
3.1 Callie Grant (Project leader)	033-2606185	grantc@ukzn.ac.za	Education, UKZN	PhD
3.2 Irene Muzvidziwa	033-2606095	muzvidziwai@ukzn.ac.za	Education, UKZN	PhD
3.3 Neil Avery	033-2605291	averyn@ukzn.ac.za	Education, UKZN	M Ed
3.4 Pete Jugmohan	033-2606046	jugmohanp@ukzn.ac.za	Education, UKZN	M A

SECTION 2: PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Please do *not* provide your full research proposal here: what is required is a short project description of not more than two pages that gives, under the following headings, a brief overview spelling out the background to the study, the key questions to be addressed, the participants (or subjects) and research site, including a full description of the sample, and the research approach/ methods

Preamble

I am applying for ethical clearance to lead an ELMP group research project in the Faculty of Education, UKZN. The project aims to explore issues of professionalism and professional development as they relate to the leadership of teachers[1]. The project is contextualised against the backdrop of the recent strike action in the schooling sector in 2010. The group project could potentially involve four sub-groups of ELMP students on the Pietermaritzburg campus:

- the 2011 ELMP Independent Research students
- the Master of Education course work ELMP students in their second year of study in 2011
- the new full thesis Master of Education students that we accept in 2011
- PhD students who are interested in this area of study

The project will begin in January 2011 and it is envisaged that it could continue for a three year period.

2.1 Project title

Leaders as professionals: what does this mean for teachers?

2.2 Location of the study (where will the study be conducted)

---

[1] Here I use the term teacher to include post level one teachers as well as teachers who are members of the School Management Team

The study will have a range of sites as determined by the students registered for the qualifications as listed in the preamble. It is envisaged that:

- the 2011 ELMP Independent Research group will explore the research questions in relation to teachers at their own schools or at a school of their choice (to be determined in 2011).

- the Master of Education ELMP course work group (2010 – 2011) will carry out their research in their own schools which include, but are not limited to:

  o Forest Hill Primary
  o Ridge Junior Primary
  o Haythorne Secondary
  o Eastwood Secondary
  o Berg Street Primary
  o Dowdle Primary
  o Ramatha Road Primary
  o Regina Primary
  o Langsyde School

- the new intake of full thesis Master of Education (ELMP) students as well as the new PhD students will be invited to join this project and will be urged to contextualise their research within the ACE – SL programme at UKZN. It is envisaged, therefore, that they will conduct their research in a sample of schools of students who are either registered for the ACE – SL or who have recently completed the ACE – SL. Should none of these students be interested in this project, this aspect will be taken up by the ELMP lecturers themselves.

2.3 Objectives of and need for the study

(Set out the major objectives and the theoretical approach of the research, indicating

briefly, why you believe the study is needed.)

The area of teacher leadership within a distributed leadership framing has been an ongoing area of research interest in the Education leadership, management and policy specialisation on the Pietermaritzburg campus over the last five years (see for example Grant, 2006; Singh, 2007; Khumalo, 2008; Pillay, 2009; Nene, 2010).

Building on this research, and against the backdrop of the recent teacher strikes, this study seeks to explore the leadership of teachers but particularly in relation to issues of professionalism and to their professional development role (Zimpher, 1988; Katzenmeyer and Moller, 2001). We are therefore interested to find out what professional development experiences, both formal and informal, teacher leaders are involved in and how these professional development experiences are enabled or constrained by their union association.

2.4 Questions to be answered in the research

(Set out the critical questions which you intend to answer by undertaking this research.)

Core question:

How can teachers lead schools better to ensure that they are professional places of teaching and learning?

Subsidiary Questions

1. How is professionalism understood by teachers and how does this professionalism contribute to transforming schools into socially just spaces of teaching and learning?
2. Do teachers readily embrace their change agent role and what incentives are used in schools to encourage teachers to operate as leaders and professionals?
3. How do teacher unions enhance or inhibit the development of teacher leadership and professionalism in schools?

2.5 Research approach/ methods

(This section should explain how you will go about answering the critical questions which you have identified under 2.4 above. Set out the approach within which you will work, and indicate in step-by-step point form the methods you will use in this research in order to answer the critical questions).

The project is conceptualised within the interpretive paradigm and will adopt a range of approaches and methods, determined by the research questions in the first instance and, in the second instance, by the nature of

the student group embarking on the research and the requirements of the qualification for which they are registered (listed in the preamble). These approaches and methods may include:

In the case of the Honours Independent Research 2011 project

- a survey, using questionnaires, *(Appendix One)* of a range of school teachers in a variety of KZN schools (the choice of school will be determined by the IR students themselves when they register for the module in 2011)

In the case of the Master of Education ELMP course work group (2010 – 2011)

- a multi-case study in the nine schools listed in Section 2.2 above. Duration of data collection process: 1st term of 2011. Methods to collect data will include, possibly in the following sequence:
    - a questionnaire to all teachers in the school *(Appendix One)*
    - observation of a staff briefing session using an observation schedule *(Appendix Two)*
    - in-depth individual interviews with each of the primary participants *(Appendix Three)*
    - observation of grade/phase/learning area/subject meeting *(Appendix Two)*
    - sourcing and analysing of documents, for example
        - school minutes
        - school policies on professional development
        - provincial leadership training materials
        - provincial professional development circulars
        - national Task Team Report on Education Management Development (1996)
        - South African Council of Educators policies and documents
        - Union professional development policies
        - Union leadership development policies
    - observation of a second staff briefing session *(Appendix Two)*
    - observation of a staff meeting *(Appendix Two)*
    - trans-sect walk around the school *(Appendix Two)*
    - observation of a staff development session *(Appendix Two)*
    - observation of second grade/phase/learning area/subject meeting *(Appendix Two)*
    - focus group interview(s) with primary participants *(Appendix Four)*

In the case of the new intake of M. Ed full thesis students and PhD students in 2011, the project will be contextualised within the ACE – SL programme at UKZN

- a broad survey, using questionnaires, *(Appendix One)* of the school leaders registered for (and/or who have completed) the ACE –SL

- in-depth case studies of a range of schools, selected because they are the schools which are led and managed by school leaders who are either registered for or who have completed the ACE –SL. Methods to collect data will include a teacher questionnaire *(Appendix One)*, individual *(Appendix Three)*and focus group interviews *(Appendix Four)*, observation *(Appendix Two)* as well as document analysis (as listed directly above).

For a study that involves surveys, please append a provisional copy of the questionnaire to be used. The questionnaire should show how informed consent is to be achieved as well as indicate to respondents that they may withdraw their participation at any time, should they so wish.

2.6 Proposed work plan

Set out your intended plan of work for the research, indicating important target dates necessary to meet your

proposed deadline.

STEPS	DATES
Develop research proposal	October 2010
Ethical Clearance application	November 2010
Pilot instruments	November 2010
Collect data	February – June 2011
Data analysis	May – September 2011
Write up research reports / dissertations	October – November 2011
Submit research reports / dissertations	December 2011

This process may continue into 2012 and 2013 as the Med full thesis and PhD students start to collect their data and begin to write up their chapters.

SECTION 3: ETHICAL ISSUES

The UKZN Research Ethics Policy applies to all members of staff, graduate and undergraduate students who are involved in research on or off the campuses of University of KwaZulu-Natal. In addition, any person not affiliated with UKZN who wishes to conduct research with UKZN students and / or staff is bound by the same ethics framework. Each member of the University community is responsible for implementing this Policy in relation to scholarly work with which she or he is associated and to avoid any activity which might be considered to be in violation of this Policy.

All students and members of staff must familiarize themselves with AND sign an undertaking to comply with the University's "Code of Conduct for Research".

QUESTION 3.1

Does your study cover research involving:	YES	NO
Children		No
Persons who are intellectually or mentally impaired		No
Persons who have experienced traumatic or stressful life circumstances		No
Persons who are HIV positive		No
Persons highly dependent on medical care		No
Persons in dependent or unequal relationships		No
Persons in captivity		No
Persons living in particularly vulnerable life circumstances		No

If "Yes", indicate what measures you will take to protect the autonomy of respondents and (where indicated) to prevent social stigmatisation and/or secondary victimisation of respondents. If you

QUESTION 3.2

Will data collection involve any of the following:	YES	NO
Access to confidential information without prior consent of participants		No
Participants being required to commit an act which might diminish self-respect or cause them to experience shame, embarrassment, or regret		No
Participants being exposed to questions which may be experienced as stressful or upsetting, or to procedures which may have unpleasant or harmful side effects		No
The use of stimuli, tasks or procedures which may be experienced as stressful, noxious, or unpleasant		No
Any form of deception		No

If "Yes", explain and justify. Explain, too, what steps you will take to minimise the potential stress/harm.

QUESTION 3.3

Will any of the following instruments be used for purposes of data collection:	YES	NO
Questionnaire (Appendix One)	Yes	
Survey schedule	Yes	
Interview schedules (Appendices Three and Four)	Yes	

Psychometric test		No
Other/ equivalent assessment instrument	Yes	
Observation schedule (Appendix Two)		

If "Yes", attach copy of research instrument. If data collection involves the use of a psychometric test or equivalent assessment instrument, you are required to provide evidence here that the measure is likely to provide a valid, reliable, and unbiased estimate of the construct being measured. If data collection involves interviews and/or focus groups, please provide a list of the topics to be covered/

QUESTION 3.4

Will the autonomy of participants be protected through the use of an informed consent form, which specifies (in language that respondents will understand):	YES	NO
The nature and purpose/s of the research	Yes	
The identity and institutional association of the researcher and supervisor/project leader and their contact details	Yes	
The fact that participation is voluntary That responses will be treated in a confidential manner	Yes	
Any limits on confidentiality which may apply	Yes	
That anonymity will be ensured where appropriate (e.g. coded/ disguised names of participants/ respondents/ institutions)	Yes	

The fact that participants are free to withdraw from the research at any time without any negative or undesirable consequences to themselves	Yes	
The nature and limits of any benefits participants may receive as a result of their participation in the research	Yes	
Is a copy of the informed consent form attached? (See Appendices Six, Seven and Eight)	Yes	

If not, this needs to be explained and justified, also the measures to be adopted to ensure that the respondents fully understand the

QUESTION 3.5

Specify what efforts been made or will be made to obtain informed permission for the research from appropriate authorities and gate-keepers (including caretakers or legal guardians in the case of minor children)?

Letters of consent will be sent to all participants (See Appendices Six, Seven and Eight) and permission will be requested from the Department of Education. The correct channels for ethical clearance as stipulated by UKZN will be followed.

QUESTION 3.6

STORAGE AND DISPOSAL OF RESEARCH DATA: **Please note that the research data should be kept for a period of at least five years in a secure location by arrangement with your supervisor.**
How will the research data be disposed of? Please provide specific information, eg shredding of documents incineration of videos, cassettes, etc. The data will be kept by me, the project leader, in my office Room 42A, Faculty of Education, Pietermaritzburg Campus, UKZN. After 5 years documents will be shredded and cassettes incinerated.

QUESTION 3.7

In the subsequent dissemination of your research findings – in the form of the finished thesis, oral presentations, publication etc. – how will anonymity/ confidentiality be protected? Ethical issues which will be taken into consideration are: consent from the participants, the respondents will be made aware that they are able to withdraw at any given time if they so wish should they feel threatened or uncomfortable in any way. The school principals will be ensured that the school names will be protected as well as the identities of all the participants in the research. Consent letters will be completed by all participants. Permission from the Department of Education to do the research will be obtained. Ethical clearance from UKZN will also be sought. Literature in the literature review will be acknowledged and properly referenced.

QUESTION 3.8

Is this research supported by funding that is likely to inform or impact in any way on the design, outcome and dissemination of the research?	YES	NO
		X

If yes, this needs to be explained and justified.

QUESTION 3.9

Has any organization/company participating in the research or funding the project, imposed any conditions to the research?   YES/NO
No

If yes, please indicate what the conditions are.
N/A

SECTION 4: FORMALISATION OF THE APPLICATION

APPLICANT

I have familiarised myself with the University's Code of Conduct for Research and undertake to comply with it. The information supplied above is correct to the best of my knowledge.
NB: PLEASE ENSURE THAT THE ATTACHED CHECK SHEET IS COMPLETED
.... **SIGNATURE OF APPLICANT**   **DATE**

SUPERVISOR/HEAD OF SCHOOL

NB: PLEASE ENSURE THAT THE APPLICANT HAS COMPLETED THE ATTACHED CHECK SHEET AND THAT **THE FORM IS FORWARDED TO YOUR FACULTY RESEARCH COMMITTEE FOR FURTHER ATTENTION**
DATE: ....   **SIGNATURE OF SUPERVISOR/ PROJECT LEADER :_____**

RECOMMENDATION OF FACULTY RESEARCH COMMITTEE/HIGHER DEGREES COMMITTEE

The application is (please tick):

	Approved *
	Recommended and referred to the Human and Social Sciences Ethics Committee for further consideration
	Not Approved, referred back for revision and resubmission

* Senate has delegated powers to Faculty Committee to:

- Approve Undergraduate and Honours projects

- Approve Masters projects (if the required capacity exists within the faculty)

NAME OF CHAIRPERSON:
_____SIGNATURE:_____

DATE ....

RECOMMENDATION OF UNIVERSITY RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (HUMAN AND SOCIAL SCIENCES)

NAME OF CHAIRPERSON:_____SIGNATURE_____

DATE…..

UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL

RESEARCH OFFICE

HUMAN AND SOCIAL SCIENCES ETHICAL CLEARANCE APPLICATIOM FORM

CHECK SHEET FOR APPLICATION

PLEASE TICK

1. Form has been fully completed and all questions have been answered	Y
2. Questionnaire attached (where applicable)	Y
3. Informed consent document attached (where applicable)	Y
4. Approval from relevant authorities obtained (and attached) where research involves the utilization of space, data and/or facilities at other institutions/organisations	In process
5. Signature of Supervisor / project leader	Y
6. Application forwarded to Faculty Research Committee for recommendation and transmission to the Research Office	Y

APPENDIX SIX

UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL

Faculty of Education

University of KwaZulu-Natal

Private Bag X01

Scottsville

3209

The Principal

....

Dear ....

I am currently a student at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg. I am presently engaged in a group research project which aims to explore teacher leadership and its relation to issues of professionalism 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 transforming 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 as it relates to issues of professionalism in your school, and work particularly with five 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.

The project leader Dr Callie Grant 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. I can be contacted on 033 3876262 or on my cell at 0795086228. Please feel free to contact me or the project leader at any time should you have any queries or questions you would like answered.

Please feel free to contact me at any time should you have any queries or questions you would like answered.

Yours sincerely

Dr Callie Grant

Project Leader

Mr Basil Manuel

Masters Student

UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU-NATAL

Faculty of Education

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 for my school to be a research school in this project.

Signature of Principal   Date

....

APPENDIX SEVEN

University of KwaZulu-Natal

Faculty of Education

<u>Declaration</u>

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

....

APPENDIX EIGHT

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 and its relation to professionalism in schools. My name is Basil Manuel and I am currently a student at the University of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg. I am presently leading a group research project which aims to explore teacher leadership as it relates to issues of professionalism 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 transforming 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 as it relates to issues of professionalism 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 question:

How can teachers lead schools better to ensure that they are professional places of teaching and learning?

Subsidiary Questions

4. How can teachers lead schools better to ensure that they are professional places of teaching and learning?
5. How is professionalism understood by teachers?
6. What are the factors that enhance/ inhibit teacher professionalism in schools?

I am seeking five 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.

Our project leader 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. I can be contacted on 033 3876262 or on my cell at 0795086228. Please feel free to contact me or the project leader at any time should you have any queries or questions you would like answered.

Yours sincerely

Mr B L Manuel