

IMPROVING ORGANISATIONAL LEARNING

AT KHULA MLAMBO PRIMARY SCHOOL:

A PRACTITIONER RESEARCH PERSPECTIVE

BY

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Creating this document has been a personal journey of discovery, in the course of which I met many guides to help me along the way. I was made conscious in the process of learning that whatever is accomplished and achieved in life is the sum total of the contributions of all the people, situations and circumstances that have been encountered along the way. This dissertation is evidence of that reality.

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation is a report of a qualitative study of learning on a very small scale through practice and research in education at Khula Mlambo Primary School in South Africa. I took a narrative self-study approach to research, exploring my lived experience of learning as a practitioner researcher in my field of practise with the aim of establishing and improving organisational learning in the school. The dissertation traces the development of my key research question and it follows the research design. I have represented the data in a narrative self- study research approach and have engaged with the data I generated from my experience of learning from the questionnaire I administered.

Through this dissertation I hope to contribute to the continuous process of development, learning and exploration of alternative forms of data representation in education and leadership. The conceptualisation of my learning research experience as a learning engagement offers an alternative way of looking at research in leadership in the field of education. The dissertation also raises the issue of the influence of continuous learning which seeks to explore and value the leader in the context of lived relational leadership experience.

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CHAPTER 1

OPENING

1.1. Introduction

This dissertation qualitatively reports on my personal experience as a practitioner researcher and a learner in the field of leadership. In this chapter I construct and express the development of the key research question which directs this study. I will briefly outline my research proposal and then formulate the final topic that I have developed for this study with the help of my advisor. I will identify in this chapter the research aim and will also declare my personal stance towards this study. The problem to be investigated, the focus of the study and the motivation for the study will be articulated. I will also indicate the research setting, describe the participants where the limitations and constraints of the study. I will then conclude by outlining the structure of the entire dissertation.

1.2. Development of the key research question

Poor performance and under-achieving is a common complaint from various stakeholders at Khula Mlambo Primary School. Since the inception of the new dispensation in 1994 with its remarkable changes in education, Khula Mlambo primary school is still confronted with serious problems. The steps considered by the South African government to re-build South Africa through reformation, alterations and policy interventions initiatives seem not to have been effective to bring changes to learning at Khula Mlambo Primary School. There is an increasing tendency towards low morale and ineffective practices that are used by both learners and educators. There is a growing atmosphere of exhaustion and the inconsistent attendance by both learners and educators in this school. Christ, et al. (2003, p. 330) alerts us of the fact that beyond the contracts that educators enter into with the employer, there are intrinsic motivators which are not directly addressed in the contracts. These involve attitudes and behaviours of educators which appear to contribute much towards poor performance because these aspects are not tackled by either the management of the school or the educators themselves. More flexible and diverse approaches are required if schools are to grow and develop professionally.

I have observed and am fully convinced that educators in our school continuously use pedagogical methods and teaching strategies that are based on how they were taught when they were at school, forgetting that schools operate in a complex, ambiguous and non-linear organisational environment. These strategies are outdated and no longer applicable in schools as learning organisations today. Bamburg and Andrew (1990, p. 175) invites school leaders to formulate organisational objectives to influence school effectiveness by using a variety of operational measures which they call 'goal

setting'. Under such conditions analysts and researchers are right when they say that educators appear weary and wary, stressed and depressed, alienated and bitter as the result of the disappearance of the culture of teaching learning. I also agree with Scharmer (2009, p. 5) when he says that we need to suspend habitual patterns that do more damage than good to the real potential of our organisations. This suspension will lead to the emergence of new patterns of behaviour; thus creating a space for new outcomes which represents an opportunity to improve. To promote and improve continuous learning in schools, Rimanoczy and Turner (2008) say that we need to implement action reflection learning principles which are grouped into various categories around one theme which they term -"the Learning Coach"- indicating clearly in each category what is expected to be done, directing, inspiring, listening and encouraging employees to do their best, and engaging them in decision-making processes in the school. Fullan (1991:47) asserts that teachers must learn if learners are to succeed and learners must learn if society is to succeed. Davidoff and Lazarus (2002, p. 7) says that we ultimately need to create an enabling environment at schools which will support educators in a lifelong process of personal and professional development, by providing a place which is exciting and challenging, enabling potential talents to be externalised and developed.

Creating an enabling environment implies teaching and learning strategies that are robust and vigorous to the way work is developing, and above all imparting knowledge and skills that will develop positive behaviours that are vital for problem solving as we interact (Fullan 2001, p. 7) This will, in turn, create a supportive environment in which learners can learn and develop their own potential for the benefit of the society. Hassan (2006, p. 2) indicates that we all have insights into our purpose and vocation but the challenge is that many individuals do not have clear insights into their personal goals and objectives. Moreover the environment also creates so much noise that we often fail to heed these insights. The outcry over the state of education reminded me of my father's words of encouragement when I was promoted to the post of Principal of Khula Mlambo Primary School in 1988 when he said: The success of your leadership will be determined by what the people will say about what you have produced at the school". He said that my customers will only be satisfied with my performance if my work improves for the better year after year, and he emphasized that people who succeed in achieving good results keep themselves abreast of new developments in order to improve their skills and that such people face challenges as opportunities for continuous learning so that they can make a difference. Such thoughts confirmed for me that management was not my sole function in the school. I needed also to develop the ability to motivate and inspire people to accomplish the shared mission (Leonard, 2003, p.5) of our school. I then felt moved by the situation in our school and decided to develop myself so that I would be able to improve my performance as an individual and also to develop the staff I am working with for the

benefit of the school as a whole. Our challenge therefore is to learn to be innovative and creative if we want to improve organisational learning in our school. The question therefore is how can we access valuable and relevant insights that let us become a medium for advancing new innovations? How can we cultivate within ourselves those capabilities and the right conditions that we need for continuous learning to take place in our school? This study will explore what set of skills and strategies we can use to improve organisational learning at Khula Mlambo Primary School.

1.3. My research proposal

Being convinced that I need to do something about the situation in my school, I then seized the opportunity to apply and register for the masters' degree. The circular that was issued by the department of education inviting candidates to study this degree stated clearly that invitations were meant for office based educators only. It was stated in the circular that after completing the degree successful candidates will develop and improve performance in their organisations. I took the courage and applied and fortunately my application was successful. I wanted to see change and improvement in our school. The tendency to shift the blame on to other people was evident at the school and I surmised that poor performance was a result of these educators who do not want to work. I wanted to correct their behaviour hence my research question as I formulated it initially was: "Improving Organisational Behaviour at Khula Mlambo Primary School". What I wanted to do was to encourage the staff to learn so that, ultimately they would change their attitude and behaviour.

1.4. Refined proposal

I submitted my proposal, it was accepted but it came with the feedback that I had to rethink my topic because as a practitioner researcher I am among the people who are being researched while I am also learning. I found that this study forced me to be introspective which helped to me to identify my own shortcomings. And as a transformational mechanism, the study indicated to me that I had to transform from being a manager to becoming a transformational leader who could facilitate change in the school. I realized that by growing myself and by developing my leadership abilities, this would be the best way to bring about change and transformation in our school. I had to transform so that I could lead the transformation in others. As a practitioner researcher I realized that I would, simultaneously be taking the role of a manager, the responsibility of a transformational leader as well as a masters' research learner. With the assistance of my supervisor I then realized that this could be achieved through continuous learning throughout the entire school community. I needed to study the system as a whole so that I could understand my potential contribution better and also where I needed to improve. Jackson (2000, p. 376)) states that organisational learning only takes place in critical systems thinking because critical systems thinking brings about those circumstances

in which all individuals can realise their potential. In this study I will follow an interpretive approach conducting the research within the qualitative paradigm. The critical systems approach would assist me in finding ways of improving the situation in our school because it acknowledges interconnectivity, enabling us to capture the complexities, richness and diversity of the attitudes and behaviour of the people as we describe what is going on in our daily lives, hence the topic: 'Improving Organisational Learning at Khula Mlambo Primary school'. I then formulated three questions for my research

- What are the critical success factors for organisational learning that we can try to acquire so that learning can improve in our school?
- What strategies can be identified and implemented to develop and improve organisational learning in our school?
- What is the role of leadership in developing and improving organisational learning in our school?

1.5. Aim of the research

It was for many years my objective to do a masters degree for my own academic growth; in fact my dream is to be a professor one day. The first attempt to do masters was in 2006 when I completed my B.ed. Honours with the then Rand Afrikaanse Universiteit now called the University of Johannesburg. Due to financial constraints and family challenges I had to drop further studies. The outcry and complains from Khula Mlambo Primary School community revived my desire to study further so that I could grow to meet the challenge of effecting change in the situation in our school and to develop the entire school. I also learned that communities have shifted away from being organised on the basis of the logic of order, centralisation and hierarchy. Today the emphasis is on the de-centralised non-hierarchical logic of self-organisation, which allows for more effective adaptation to the ever changing environment (Escobar 2003, p.351).

In the process of this research, I was led to explore ways and means of handling such complex situations and their interactions. The study on improving organisational learning at Khula Mlambo Primary School will also assist us, I believe, as a school collectively to identify areas of need for development, to clarify ambiguities involved in carrying out our duties in the school, and how the new approach will meet the demands and the needs of the school and for the people whose lives affect and are affected by the school. The study will also assist us in gaining information and acquiring new skills and strategies of handling complexity and initiating change successfully and improve the prevailing attitude in the school so that it can become a learning organisation. This will

benefit our learners as well because they will also be encouraged to learn how to learn and how to develop as critical thinkers. In the complex environment schools operate in, learners need to be engaged in critical thinking in their learning journey. Information gathered in this study will be used as reference material that will be stored at the school. Educators as well as leaders from other schools in the community may also be assisted by being able to access the information gathered in this study if they also wish to initiate and implement continuous learning and change in their schools and to develop as learning organisations. Improving learning organisations may not only be a problem for Khula Mlambo Primary school only and the community of Mbuzini, the entire circuit at Lubombo, and other circuits in the whole region can utilize the information gathered in this study to develop and improve schools towards becoming learning organisations. So this research is meant for anybody who is committed to improving organisational learning in their organisation, especially in schools. This study therefore indicates that my role has changed from being a school principal only to that of managerial leader. I know that the fundamentals of management as a school principal are that of planning, organising, leading and controlling, and focusing mainly on getting things done through other people. This research clearly shows that my role now has changed from management to leading in terms of directing, motivating staff, and resolving problems (Pettinger 2000, p. 5) to that of a transactional leader (Fosket and Lumby 2003, p. 88), as I will be following policies and guidelines in leading and directing the school; to that of a transformational leader (Fosket and Lumby 2003, p.187) as I will be exploring and responding to challenges of the unknown complex environment of the school; and to that of instructional leadership (Fosket and Lumby 2003, p. 189) as my main focus above all others will now be on improving teaching and learning in the school.

1.6. The stance of this research

The title of this dissertation is "*Improving organisational learning at Khula Mlambo Primary School at Lubombo Circuit: A Practitioner Perspective*". This topic lends itself to a post modern systems approach. Post modern systems approach is about making things happen in a complex situation. The approach is linked to intended changes in the culture of the organization. It hopes to claim the space for lost voices, encouraging diversity, creativity and spontaneity (Jackson 2000, p. 336). This approach can be liberating, I believe, but only in the local context and only on the basis of the choices made, for which the facilitator and those involved must take responsibility. Because I am not the only person who can contribute towards improving organisational learning in the school, I will follow an interpretative method because it allows me to take account of the views of other people and, I as a practitioner researcher, will act as an agent of change. This research will be based on soft systems methodology (Stacey 2007, p. 136), following a narrative approach, as I will be considering

different perspectives and views from various sources for the achievement of a common goal; which is improving organisational learning in our school.

To study my contextualized, interactive learning in this research I will be concentrating on those features that are critical factors of organisational learning. Study in this stance will involve explaining things that make some schools and organisations different from others. The focus will mainly be on things that make for successful organisations that perform and achieve, so that we can identify and learn strategies and techniques that could be suitable for, and applicable to, our situation so that, as a school, we can learn and improve. Having noticed that the success of organisations depends on leadership, I will also focus in the literature review on the role that leadership plays in improving and maintaining organisational learning in schools. My aim is to look critically into literature on leadership since it appears that my role is changing from that of ordinary school manager to that of being a transactional and transformational leader. Moloi (2002, p. 3) says that effectiveness and success in a school is the result of leadership's commitment to initiate changes in the organisation, by staying aware of, and interacting with, the environment all the time. This will assist in determining areas of change and development required. However, change brings uncertainties which can be scary as you are inevitably thrust into the unknown for a while. Sharma (2010, p. 36) points out that as you transcend from where you were, to a deeper level of understanding, the wilderness of the unknown reveals your limiting beliefs, your great fears, and confront your uncertainties. Success is obtained gradually through the enactment of small acts of discipline that pile up eventually to produce positive behaviour beyond anticipation. So the notion of organisational learning is an important application of systems thinking that builds on individual, team and organisational capacities to bring about change and transformation in schools.

Another important challenge I faced was to investigate and identify personal and professional strategies to develop ourselves as a school. As a practitioner researcher I needed to determine how I could assist educators to undertake continuous learning principles. What skills, attitudes, characteristics should I display in order to motivate and inspire stakeholders to be continuous learners in the school, and what strategies should leadership implement to empower educators and learners to become effective and successful in their life long learning?

The main focus of this study was, as stated above, to improve organisational learning at Khula Mlambo Primary School. As I engaged myself as a practitioner researcher in this activity, I saw myself as a transformational learner, as my role changed from ordinary manager to leader. I had to pay attention to those aspects of transactional and transformational leadership, looking into what was expected of me in my new role. I also had to focus on strategies that other researchers had

identified and which I could utilize to assist me in improving learning in the school. There were many opportunities that came with the curriculum and the work expectations in schools. The focus was also on personal as well as professional development strategies that we need to adopt and implement so that we can grow through learning and improving in our performance as individuals and as a school. This is based on social learning theory where interpretations of the efficacy and actions of other people is studied and information is gathered and utilized with the aim of altering and improving learning in the school.

Primary schools lay the foundation of learning for all their young pupils. Teaching and learning at this level of education should be as effective as possible because if the learners can not get the correct foundation from primary school, they will encounter challenges which will be very difficult to solve as they proceed with their education. Effective teaching and learning is motivated and encouraged in a learning organisation. Globler (2006, p. 236) says that much has been said about the learning organisation since the 1990s. He mentions certain characteristics that learning organisations have and further presents a model consisting of stages that are followed when creating a learning organisation. The ineffectiveness of schools is often revealed when the learners reach grade 12, and it then becomes obvious that much has not been done in establishing schools as learning organisations.

DuBrin (2007, p. 347) also provides a framework of a learning organisation which, if followed, would seem to make things easy for organisations to establish themselves as learning organisations but when you look into the way schools are performing this does not seem to be happening. Improving organisational learning is a concern for many stakeholders in education including the Department of Education as well. When we analyse the results, trying to find the cause of these bad results, it appears that our learners are promoted from one grade to the next without having achieved the requirements of the previous grades, especially comprehensive reading and writing.

In an attempt to address the need to improve organisational learning at Khula Mlambo Primary School, the study began by addressing the critical factors of organisational learning. My focus, as stated above, on the changing role that I had to play as a leader from general school management principal to that of being a transactional as well as a transformational leader. I then conducted a search into the relevant literature to identify what strategies learning organisations have employed in their institutions and so that I could select what was relevant to our school to facilitate change. It was also important to identify areas of self-development. In this study I also looked into what personal as well as professional development strategies I can use to develop myself as a person and also to develop my colleagues.

Organizational learning I believe is achieved when all stakeholders are involved. I put emphasis on the role I had to play in facilitating continuous learning at Khula Mlambo. I needed the skill of working with the individual, the skill of working with teams and the skill of collaborating individual and teams to work towards organizational achievement. The intention of this study was to explore strategies and techniques that can be initiated, implemented and adopted in order to improve and establish continuous learning at Khula Mlambo Primary school. The study also examined, informed and enhanced my own practice and contributed to the development and the transformation of the school in toto.

1.7. Objectives of the study

The manner in which work is executed and the quality of the learners that we produce at Khula Mlambo Primary School, indicates that organisational learning must be improved. Edahiro and Oda (2010, p. 1) stress that, if we want to grow something, we must make efforts for that growth. Because my main aim through this study is organisational growth, I wanted to motivate and encourage every staff member and learner in the school to dedicate themselves to, commit to and engage in organisational learning. By dedication in this study I mean that people should devote themselves by applying their time, attention and self entirely to teaching and learning. Committing themselves mean that people will bind themselves to doing their work and will not compromise it. Dedication and commitment, I hope will drive the desire to be creative and want to explore more. In such a situation people can be motivated to look for more opportunities of growth and development within the organization.

A further objective then would be to encourage educators to improve their qualifications, acquire new skills and techniques for their teaching practice. The environment in which schools are operating is so turbulent and uncertain that teaching and learning methods that educators learned when they trained at the colleges are no longer adequate to cope with the demand that learning requires. Educators need new skills and techniques on an on-going basis and at the same time, they also need empowerment so that they are able to perform.

Another objective then would be to explore what leadership and management at Khula Mlambo Primary School does, and should do, to promote and support organisational learning. How could they then be equipped with the means to devise those strategies and techniques that will assist in initiating learning?

1.8. Research setting and participants

The field work for my study was taken at Khula Mlambo Primary School, which falls under the Lubombo Circuit in Mpumalanga Province South Africa. The study was confined to a questionnaire that was developed around three critical factors that are essential for organisational transformation in the school, and general observations of educators at Khula Mlambo Primary School only. Most educators that are employed in the school are local people from the school community and are predominantly females. Information that may assist the school in improving organisational learning might not be appropriate for them. Other neighbouring school might have genuine information and techniques that they may have discovered that may assist their schools but, because they are not part of this research, the information will remain with them and the skill or technique will not be shared with Khula Mlambo. The study might also have been limited by the fact that the administering of questionnaires was difficult for me, because some of the educators might not have been willing to give the information to me. Some might have exaggerated the information in an attempt to impress me whereas others might simply have been afraid to tell the truth. This study was conducted among educators only. Some information that can assist the school to become an effective learning organisation might lie with the learners, the parents or the other stakeholders in the Department of Education. Because research was conducted in the school where I was working, subjectivity and reflexivity would affect and influence the outcome of the study. Other limitations of the study related to how the data is interpreted and how the results were analysed. There was limited time to sit with educators responding to the questionnaire since it was administered in the afternoons and, some might not have done justice to the questions because they were hurrying for transport to go home. The fact also has to be faced that I was doing practitioner research but that I had not trained and I had no experience in dealing with this kind of inquiry. I might not in consequence, have been able to utilize the adequate degree of skill in gathering information. As a result some of the information may not have been discovered. The participants who contributed to my study were the 18 educators that were employed in our school, 15 of the participants were females and only 3 were males. 17 of them were post level one educators, so that they should have been well placed to meet the challenge of the management questions in the questionnaire. A reasonably sophisticated response was anticipated as two participants were HODs and one was a deputy principal.

1.9. Outline of the rest of the thesis

Literature revealed that Organisational learning is important for a school to establish because in a learning organization leaders aspire to improve employee's learning and expand their ability to

understand and manage the organization. In a learning organization employees develop their competence to continuously adapt to change. In a learning organisation all members cooperate and participate and resolve work related issues (DuBrin 2007, Jones and Gareth 2009 and Robins and Decenzo 2004) together. In a learning organization you become more trained at generating information, obtaining information, imparting knowledge and also at modifying behaviour to reveal new insights. Such benefits moved me to research this topic so that I could establish Khula Mlambo as a learning organization. In this chapter I have stated the problem to be researched and have stated the research question. I have indicated that the study has limitations and that apart from the limitations mentioned the study had a limited study population making it impossible to generate general outcomes. In the next chapter, chapter 2, a reflexive study will be described outlining what practitioner research involves. I also outline what I learned as a practitioner researcher. I also indicate how I see our school improving as a result of my learning. In chapter 3, I present literature review on what organisational learning is all about, how I can develop my school into a learning organisation and what role I should play as a leader, to develop our school into a learning organisation. In chapter 4 I will be indicating how, as a practitioner researcher, I am going to put the information I obtained from the literature review into practice as we develop our school into a learning organisation. I will in chapter 5 summarise the learning I obtained and also indicate how the learning contributes to improving organisational learning at Khula Mlambo Primary School.

CHAPTER 2

A NARRATIVE SELF-STUDY RESEARCH PROCESS

2.1. Introduction

In this section I discuss the narrative self-study research process through which I conducted the study of my learning experience as a research practitioner. I consider, in particular, enhancing trustworthiness, looking outward, working with researcher and participant roles and relationships, generating and gathering research data, representing and making meaning from significant data and lastly conceptualising my learning researching experience.

2.2. Enhancing trustworthiness and looking outward

I am aware that a narrative self-study approach has its limitations and that academics (Mitchel, Werber and Scanlon 2005) have offered critiques of this as a methodology of inquiry. In addressing the credibility of this dissertation I have tried to present a true picture of how organisational learning is being improved at Khula Mlambo Primary school. I have tried as much as I could to provide adequate attribute of the perspective of the questionnaire I administered so that readers who may wish to use this document can decide whether or not the findings can understandably be applied to other circumstances (Shenton 2004, p. 63). This research is of a small-scale qualitative inquiry into lived experience evolving within and in response to a unique contingent and shifting situation at Khula Mlambo Primary School. The methodological soundness of this research can not be tested by being replicated by other researchers. Even if the attempt were to be made, it is unlikely that identical conclusions would be drawn. Furthermore in practitioner research the researcher is part of the course. In this study I was the subject. Learning and the understandings that were gained in this study were bound by my own particular viewpoints, my observations, and my own interpretations. There is also a possibility that I might not have looked beyond the subject sufficiently to make connections with broader and deeper learning issues that are interacting with learning.

This study cannot be taken as reliable and objective as scientific experiments are seen to be. I also did not assume that what I learned from my study would be universal and definitive. But I hope that this study will provide credible resources that others might use to generate ideas, strategies, or questions for their own inquiries and practices. In this dissertation I endeavour to be frank, honest, and self reflexive about the detail of my research, to substantiate observations I made during the study and to illustrate how my research decisions have been prepared in taking due cognisance of the work of other scholars and researchers. I also aim to connect my observations, decisions and understandings to wider educational contexts and issues. Though I intend to be as frank and as self-

reflexive as possible, it is inevitable that the account of my research process will entail some self-censorship, and that it will be limited by my specific vantage points. However I have committed myself to share some of the challenges, the difficulties, uncertainties, the victories and the joy of attempting to discover new an innovative approach.

2.3. Working within both researcher and participant roles

In this study I position myself as an experienced school leader and also academic researcher. My learning during the research process was the object of my study and my contingent and my evolving learner researcher self was the subject of my study. In this dissertation my attempt was to bring to light and to examine my interconnecting roles and position my research process. It is very important for practitioner researchers to be mindful that the manner in which they conceive and enact their roles will influence the research process. That is why I strive to be as open and as self-reflexive as possible about my roles as I conduct this research.

The aim that I had when I embarked on practitioner research was to bring about improvement in organisational learning in my school, focusing on my own career development and the development of my colleagues so that together we are able to improve organisational learning in our school, and also to help any other person who might need help in terms of development and improvement. My study was also based on the principles of action research because I have realised that there is a need for justice and democracy in our school, the right of all people to speak and to be heard (McNiff 2002, p. 1) I gave extra attention to learning so that I might improve the quality of the work that I render. In order to succeed in effecting change in my institution I involved the educators I was working with so that, as active participants, they were able express valuable ideas on how best we could improve (Fox, Martin and Green 2007, p. 133) I learnt that if I improve the way I practice, there is a great possibility to inspire and influence colleagues at my work place (McNiff 2002, p.2). Participants in my research were educators at Khula Mlambo Primary School only. I introduced myself to them as a masters' student but also an experienced researcher. Guided by my supervisor, I also explained that I would be researching my own learning while interacting with them through their participation and their responses to the questionnaire. I devoted myself to my own self-study with candidness, awareness and reflexivity to portray my learning experience. This meant that as a practitioner I was an active learner together with the participants I was interacting with in this study.

I explained to the educators that I would always regard them as research participants and I encouraged them to make comments in the questionnaire where they saw it necessary to comment. As a principal and leader of the school and also as the one that will be assessing their responses, but I assured them that even if they were critical of me in the comments, this would not affect their

relationship with me in any way. I explained to them that they could rethink and revise their decisions to participate at any time during or after the administration of the questionnaire or during the time when I write my thesis. All the educators at Khula Mlambo Primary School to date have not withdrawn their participation.

There are a number of advantages that are gained in researching your own area of practise in terms of language which, for the sake of this research, would refer to the prior knowledge of the implications in the use of language that respondents used in their comments in the questionnaire, feelings of empathy which emanate from my in-depth understanding of the participants and that I am a fellow member of staff in the institution being studied. I might face ethical problems in terms of loyalties both as a researcher and a member of the institution. Participants may be reluctant to divulge information and to place this on record in spite of the fact that we might previously have discussed the information in private. At the same time my position in the institution was not necessarily unchallenged. I am aware that I may have overlooked matters of importance and taken for granted assumptions about the situation I was studying.

2.4. Generating and gathering research data

At first it was difficult for me to decide how to collect information that might respond to the question. To compose this dissertation I used a variety of field texts that were generated through and because of my research process; my learning researching journal, the research outline, and the analysis of participants’ responses and comments to the questionnaire. The table below is an outline of when these field texts were collected. I also give more information about this data collection process in the subsequent section.

Table2 - 1: Data Collection

Type of field text	Gathered during
My learning and researching journal	2008 - 2012
The research outline	2008 - 2012
Participants’ responses to the questionnaire	2011
Literature review	2008 - 2012
Course work study	2008 - 2009

Using a variety of methods to generate and gather research data is considered to be an essential element in the methodology of self- study (Denzin and Lincoln 2003, p. 450), because the simultaneous use of a combination of qualitative methods offers chances of getting a wider range of valuable ideas about the subject that is being investigated. Lyons and LaBoskey (2002) emphasise how researchers often draw on using a variety of sources in research and this indicates that

researchers can use data obtained from these sources to confirm and illuminate aspects of a study. Because this was a narrative inquiry that I was engaged in, I used a variety of sources and provided qualitative methods that helped me to engender and collect field texts that relate to diverse aspects of researchers' and participants' experiences in research (Clandinin and Connelly 2000).

I also acknowledge the influence I had on the field texts that provided the data for my dissertation. My learning and research journal and the research outline were authored by me. Some material has emerged from the informal observations that I made as a result of interacting with the staff. My instigation to do good work, the participants' responses and comments on the questionnaire, assisted me much in generating material for this dissertation. I tried to preserve the original tone and the messages I got from the responses of educators to the questionnaire when drawing on these texts to construct this dissertation. I also tried to maintain correct English Language usage at an Academic English level to facilitate accurate communication to both an academic and a general readership.

Multifaceted positioning is a primary trait of self-study research and I used this in this study. In this dissertation I was both the researcher author who was constructing the dissertation and the primary research subject. I understand that by doing practitioner research I am practising and at the same time I am investigating the practice that I am doing. I have adopted the role of learner and participant rather than the role of one who controls the change process (Fox, Martin and Green 2007, p. 77). I am also the main mechanism for gathering and analysing data, responding to the circumstance by maximising opportunities for collecting significant information. This implies that an enormous tolerance of ambiguity is needed in practitioner research. One needs to be highly intuitive and be a good communicator who will empathise with respondents and establish good rapport (Merriam 1998, p. 22 – 23). I will also attempt to explain how my previous experience impacted on the study, how new ideas emerged and the effect of my relationship with others. My learning has happened in the context of relationships with the key individuals that I encountered as a school principal. I therefore consider it essential to weigh the field texts that I have produced against the contributions they have made with their participation in the research. My aim here is not to use these contributions to study the participants, but rather to study my learning in relation to them. In the section below I give more details on the field texts I used.

2.4.1. My learning and researching journal

As we had to undertake course work for this masters' degree, my supervisor advised me to keep a study journal where I would record the experience of my learning and researching. Journaling is a method employed by researchers who adopt self-study or narrative learning approaches to inquiry

(Clandinin and Connelly 2000). I developed a journal that I used to record my experiences of learning through this research study. In this journal I recorded introspective conversations with myself about my thoughts feelings and experiences. There are notes on meetings and presentations that I attended (some of these meetings were group discussion meetings with fellow students, some with our lecturers and supervisors and some were work-related meetings and workshops). In this document you will also find, scribbled observations and notes made about happenings in the school and also in neighbouring schools, especially those that are successful compared to Khula Mlambo Primary School. Of great personal value were the retrospective notes on my own leadership practice in the school, reflections on conversations with others, memos and lists of things to remember to do and to explore further, versions of my thesis title, research questions, and research aims, and the outline of the chapters of my thesis. My journal also became a repository for noting the anxiety, self-doubt and the frustrations that I experienced at times during the course of my learning.

I was not familiar with working with a journal but, I carried this with me almost all the time when I was doing anything related to my study so that I could make entries wherever I thought of something new, or soon after a significant event had taken place. However I did sometimes find it very difficult to make an entry, because I was in the learning process of using a journal. I continued to make entries in my journal from observations that I made and also of learning that emerged from developmental meetings, seminars and workshops that I happened to attend at work, as part of the Department's empowering programme. I consider my journal a very rich and valuable source of my learning for this study and it has become a reference for my future professional and academic work. However I understand that it was not the sole source of reference on my learning and narrative self-study research process. The scope of my journal only covers the observations, memories of happenings and decisions I made about the significance of events and the interpretations I made as well as the frames I had in my mind about things during this study. Of equal value to the study was the questionnaire.

2.4.2. The Research Outline

The questionnaire that I designed for educators of Khula Mlambo Primary School served as a field text for this dissertation. The purpose of collecting data using the questionnaire was to establish the status quo of the Khula Mlambo Primary School is in, in terms of seeing the need for development. The comments and the statements that educators included in their responses to the questionnaire highlighted many things that educators were not satisfied with. The questionnaire provided a vehicle through which educators could express their views with regard to how they felt improvements could be effected so that our school could move towards becoming a learning organisation. As I analysed

the responses of educators and read their comments, thoughts and ideas came to me and I wrote these in my journal. These I used to write the memoranda I included in my research report in chapter four.

2.4.3 Participants' responses to the questionnaire

Educators' responses to the questionnaire and the comments that they made offered a valuable source of data and the stories that they told (Denzin and Lincoln 2003, p.540) enabled me to take a narrative stance in the research. This material contributed significantly to the dissertation. I asked educators to make comments and to add notes where they felt it was necessary. I promised to respect their dignity and privacy and that the information they provided would remain strictly confidential. I assured them that participation in this research exercise would not make them objects of my study. I also attempted to make it clear to the educators that they were not compelled to participate in the study.

2.4.4. Course work study

My goal was to see our school progressing, achieving good results and always improving. I then realized that the situation at work was a living contradiction of my goal. I wanted to remedy this situation but I was afraid of failure. McNiff (2002, p.1) motivated me when she said that the basic principle of action research is that when your first try fails, you don't stop and rationalise why you were failing, but you try out new strategies until you succeed. I was then thrilled to engage in this kind of research so that I could find ways to overcome these limitations and to take effective remedial action. As learning unfolded and having realized that practitioner research is about developing and improving my own practice in my own work place, this knowledge enriched my mind and changed my thinking and at the same time deepened the personal theories I was developing. As I engaged with literature on practitioner research my eyes and mind were opened to some of the possibilities I had not explored in my leadership and management. This task became the foundation of my MA dissertation. My practical understanding became the point of departure and the intention of the work.

The aim when I embarked on practitioner research was to bring about improvement in organisational learning in my school. By focusing on my own career development I hoped also order to assist the people that I was working with so that together we might be able to improve organisational learning in our school. Others might also benefit from this study. I have learnt that if I improve the way I practice, there is a good chance that this will have a positive influence on the situation in my work place (McNiff 2002, p.2). Development and improvement implies change, and

Dadds (2006, p 3) alerts us to the fact that professional change becomes evident the minute we start interrogating and reflecting on our own practices. Jackson (2000, p. 81); Fox, Martin and Green (2007, p. 46) and Stacey (2007, p. 222) remark that organisations, including schools (Moloi 2002, p. 28) should be seen as complex messy systems that are forever changing which offer a continuous cyclic opportunity for learning and change (Senge 1990).

I learned and I was assured, as we did course work that our school like all other organisations operates in a complex messy environment that is forever changing and this implies that continuous learning has to take place to keep up with the change. The environment presents constant challenges which are experienced everyday in every sphere of life. Consequently we need constantly to evaluate what we are doing and constantly to equip our selves with new knowledge, information and skills so that we are able to cope with the turbulent situation presented by the environment we are operating in.

The course assignments that we undertook and the learning that took place during this period enabled me to acquire more information on learning organisations and their development. Issues of interacting with people and taking into consideration their views and opinions were emphasised by Senge (2001, p. 4) when he says that learning organisations are places for conversations. One exercise that taught me a great deal involved learning to deal with fear. Our university lecturer introduced us to an imaginary walk in the forest doing the co-sensing exercise. According to Scharmer (2009, p. 18) co-sensing deals with going to the places of most potential, observe and see deeply, sharply and collectively. By this exercise our lecture was demonstrating to us that after initiating a common future intention, we need to form a prototyping action team that will go the journey of sensing, discovering and learning by doing and overcome fear of implementing what has been discovered. Scharmer (2009) terms this activity the 'letting go' and 'the letting come' principle. We visualised encountering fearful situations and I learnt that a situation may be frightening, but if you give yourself courage you overcome the fear and you can achieve your goals.

In another exercise we role played a leadership experience at three levels; the high, the middle and the low classes. In this exercise I learnt that people want a leader who performs, a leader who cares about them and the leader who is always committed to his/her work. There were enormous challenges in the high and the middle classes such that the imaginary company among the high class group ended up expelling the manager because there was no performance. I learned through this exercise that as a leader in the complex environment you have to be flexible, consultative, visionary and skilful enough to deal with challenges. I also learned that in order to be successful I would have to be responsible for inculcating, values, habits, and attitudes hidden in the school curriculum. It

was also confirmed to me that a school's efficiency in encouraging learning is the main reason for the existence of a school, and that it depends on the values, commitment and the decisions that are taken by the leader. It was stressed to me through this exercise that there are certain dynamics that are critical within each organisation which leadership should be careful and aware of if they want to improve continuous organisational learning in their organisations. I focussed most on the aspects that touch on leadership because part of my aim in doing this course was self- development.

One of the dynamics in school effectiveness is the character of the leader. This applies to the manner in which the leader conducts him /herself a given situation. Leaders who cooperate and consult are often more successful than those who impose their wishes on followers. When leaders consult, they are able to reflect on the new ideas and opinions that are raised by the people they consulted (Wang 2011, p. 3), and then they are in a better position to figure out further opportunities. Leaders should not be afraid to ask someone for ideas and opinions even though he is of lower rank, nor should they take those ideas and opinions and put them forward as their own. I realised, through this class exercise that followers are attracted to the leader who holds the same or a similar set of values to their own. Followers are attracted to a leader who displays a positive attitude. I realised with this issue that the more I, as a principal of the school complain about the Department having not done things the more educators will also do the same. Moloï (2002, p. 52) says that as a principal my leadership should be built on sound and shared values and I should attempt to build a mutual professional culture in the school that focuses on innovative learning and teaching practices. In that way we may then be able to do quality work and, develop and improve as a learning organisation. The exercise taught me that followers are attracted to a leader who projects tolerable principles of behaviour and conduct, and to the leader who will always strive to make followers feel that they are part of the organisation. The activity also emphasised the issue of the leader creating a conducive atmosphere where the resources, facilities and equipment to get the job done are always readily available to all.

I therefore realised that a leader needs to constantly develop their skill if organisational learning is to be improved. I tabulated in my journal the skills that needed to be developed together with the actions that I would need to take to develop them.

Table 2: Leadership skills required for developing successful learning organisations

Skill required	What I will do to develop the skill
Learning from experience	After reflecting enough on the situation at my school, I realised that I had to let go of the practices of the past(

	Scharmer 2000, p. 5) in order to learn and, to develop and improve the way I practice. Letting go implies not to hold on to practices that I can regress to when it is convenient to do so.
Listening	I need to demonstrate that I have the ability to listen attentively so that I can actively interpret the message that is sent to me even the non verbal messages.
Build effective relationships with followers	I will try always to be available for them by demonstrating a high degree of knowledge and guidance when they meet challenges in dealing with complex tasks. I will always try to be a good negotiator and communicator, i.e. trying to be as clear as possible in defining what is expected from each individual educator. I will try by all means to influence and inspire educators without imposing my authority over them.
Building high performance teams	I will inculcate the spirit of dependence on one another; the spirit of sharing and uplifting one another in times of need.
Building technical competence	I must learn always to establish how my work contributes generally to teaching and learning. I must be an expert in my job. Because a final destination is never reached in a learning organisation (Stacey 2007, Jackson 2000) I will always seek for opportunities that will broaden my expertise and knowledge.
Set goals and targets for yourself	I must always set targets and goals so that they can be a motivator for me to work towards. However the targets and the goals that I set for myself must be challenging but yet attainable. I must be determined and my goals must elicit my full commitment.
Strive for results	I must adopt a result- oriented spirit and must try to work towards realising my vision. Every task that we undertake must be focused on the results that we want to achieve as a school.
Coaching and mentoring	My team always needs development. I will always make myself available in times of need. I will continuously equip myself with knowledge and information so that I can help

	and direct educators to develop in the areas where we detect the need for development. I will continuously monitor their progress and always give guidance.
Planning for development	We will develop, keep and implement a school development and improvement plan which we will continuously review and up-date to open up opportunities for innovations and continuous learning
Managing performance	I will, on a quarterly basis review my performance as an individual person, the performance of individual educators as well and the performance of the learners. We will analyse results, evaluate programmes and constantly amend them so that we always learn and grow and improve where we are lacking
Creative thinking and problem solving	I must teach and develop problem solving and then apply it so that it can be inculcated. As this is practiced educators will be learning and acquiring new knowledge and skills hence it will be learning on the job

2.4.5 Literature review

I focussed my study on the three basic research questions that also informed the design of the research questionnaire. Among the factors that I found in literature which I felt would immediately yield results in my plan for improving organisational learning was that of operational planning. I learned that I must clarify and define goals, establish strategies to achieve the goals and design plans to implement and coordinate activities so that people talents are developed for the benefit of the entire school (Bush et.al. 1999, Fosket and Lumby 2003, Fullan 2001, Globler et.al 2006, Jones and George 2009, Robbin and Decenzo 2004). I realised that implementing such a plan will require understanding of what the school is trying to accomplish. The plan will foster good time management because now that expected standards and targets which people must meet have been defined they will be striving to meet deadlines and to achieve the set goals at expected standards.

On the issue of the development of a learning organisation, literature revealed that a new vision and mission for the school must be created involving all stake holders (Flood 1999, p. 24) because it will provide us with the motivation for learning and it will help us to create a common identity (Moloi 2002, p. 48) that will bind the people and show the direction where the school is heading. I learnt

that the way to broaden learning in an organisation is to approach it from a systemic approach which is the science of wholeness and its proof is in the acts of learning and not in vague wishes (Roper Petit and Eade 2003, p. 102). I learnt that schools like other organisations are integrated wholes, whose learning can be adaptive, generative or transformational. Such organisations facilitate learning in the process of work. I learned that I have to master the skill of influencing others positively so that I can influence educators to want to learn. I need to create opportunities that will engage educators in learning activities including exploring and experimenting.

With regards to the role of leadership I learned from literature the review that there is a very big difference between management and leadership, though both functions are to be performed simultaneously (Globler 2006). I realised that in my practice most of the time I was busy managing and not leading. My focus was directed only on others, on making them do what is required. I started to see that my duty was not so much to be a manager only- but that I also needed to be a leader at the same time. Management involves being concerned with running the school through controlling and monitoring the staff and students through the implementation of rules and regulations and also allocating resources according to the strategic direction. I saw my role shifting and changing focus from being manager to becoming a leader. In leadership the main emphasis is on being transactional, transformational and being a servant (Andrew Harris and Cameron, Bush 2003, Caldwell Bishoff and Karri 2002, Smith 2004 and Spendlove, 2007).

With leadership I see the school driven through a vision that is shared by all. I see people being guided by rules and regulations, interacting with one another and working together towards realising a shared vision. In leadership I saw my duties being to provide inspiration and vision to the school, to facilitate and enhance the quality of learning, to support educators and to create a climate in which commitment is high. Because I want to make a lifelong lasting positive impact on the lives of the educators' learners and parents at Khula Mlambo Primary School I commit and bind myself to live by the laws of leadership which were identified by Maxwell (1998) in his research. In these laws Maxwell outlines that a leader must be capable to establish his level of efficiency, and that he can inspire others, he believes that leadership develops as a result of learning daily it is a process. Maxwell says that a leader is a planner who is trusted by his/her people and when the leader speaks people listen because respect him/her. The leader accepts opinions from his/her followers, and his/her followers like him/her and is more connected to him/her. He/she empowers them and they learn from him/her. Because people trust their leader, they buy into him/her and his/her the vision. The leader never gives up, he/she is always optimistic and always finds a way for the team to win,

and thereafter celebrate victory. They prioritise their activities and sacrifice whatever it takes, they want to leave a 'legacy' when they are no more.

2.5. Representing and making meaning of data

My decisions on what makes certain data noteworthy for my study or not together with how to depict and make meaning of this data developed through my research process. My thinking was influenced and broadened by the experience of learning I had through the conducting of the questionnaire, my interaction with my supervisor, my engagement with my field texts my reading and finally in actually writing this material. Prior to this research exercise I did not learn much from attended these developmental meetings or seminars. I would sit there instead of learning. I always found myself moaning about what the Department of Education is doing and complaining that the situation in schools was not conducive to learning and development. However since I engaged in this study I always find myself evaluating and making sense of the information and the strategies of improvement that are discussed and I deliberately look for opportunities to implement these to improve learning in my school. My attitude has changed. Now I concentrate on the information that will be useful to me. When I get out off the meeting I concentrate on how I can convince and influence my colleagues at work to buy into this so that together we bring quality to our teaching and learning since it is the most important issue in education.

I developed a narrative self-study approach (which I will outline in chapter four) to represent and make meaning of the data I gathered. This material consists of the narrative pieces of writings that participants added as comments in their questionnaires. I represent and engage with data derived from my field texts and generated through my research. My intention was to give an account of my learning through the informal observations that I made in conducting the questionnaire. I see the account of his approach as a medium through which I and my reader enter into the complexity of the experience of my learning and I present it for ongoing questioning and sense making. The collected report served as a means of and presenting my views and perceptions and of finding a personal and professional voice. I am aware that my presentation of research data has emerged from my learning research experience and that it both facilitates and has an impact in the meanings that might emerge from that experience. I am also conscious that the dissertation is partial in that some other person might have interpreted my data in an entirely different way way.

I have organised my collected report into four sections. The first three sections contain portrayals that I created from educator responses to the questionnaire following the research design and I have given at the end of each set of the portrayals my reflective thoughts of the messages that I find in

them. Each of the three sections presents two forms of data; there are educator statements and also educator reflective comments drawn from the responses they made in the questionnaire and to the letters that I wrote to some respondents as I reflected on their responses. The fourth section is the memoranda that I formulated from the reflections and the interpretation and the implications of the statements and the comments educators made in their questionnaire responses.

2.5.1. Narrative portrayals based on my collected report

The narrative portrayals trace and show how learning and development emerged. My aim is also to clarify the link between how my learning research and my questionnaire design developed, and how the experience of my learning took place. Each section begins with the explanatory note which states my intention in selecting those portrayals and it then gives my reflective interpretation of those statements. In composing the portrayals I used data that I found in the field texts n.l.; my learning researching journal, the course work and assignments, discussions with fellow students, discussions in developmental meetings at work and some informal observations that I made during the period of my learning experience. I developed the idea of making reflections by using dialogue as a way of meditation and for creating shared meaning (Banathy and Jenlink 2005, p. 180 - 184). When composing these statements and the reflective comments of the educators I imagined myself being in a meeting with the respondents where we were sharing and discussing our ideas. My intention was to stimulate further thinking about various aspects of improving organisational learning at Khula Mlambo Primary School. The reflections that I give at the end of each set of statements or reflective comments convey how I deliberated on significant issues that I became aware of as I interacted with the responses to the questionnaire. I chose extracts that caught my attention because of the messages that I developed from the interpretations that I made. With the extracts I was highlighting the content and the ideas that they conveyed and also the intellectual and emotional responses that they evoked (Richardson, 2003). I also wanted to depict certain events and experiences from the inside, as a particular person that has lived in it. These experiences and events are recounted from my perspective.

As I engaged in dialogue as meditation with my research process, I wrote letters to two respondents of the questionnaire even though I did not send the letters to them because I did not know who they were. Their comments reminded me of frustrations I had in teaching at the school where I started to teach where there was no support or inclusion in any decision that was taken there. In one of the letters I was acknowledging the contribution that the educator made to my thinking through the comment. In the second letter I was thanking them for alerting me to important things that will improve organisational learning, and also requesting them to be part of our strategic meeting of

finding and a discussion on implementing ways of improving our learning in the school. This I thought and believed would assist me in becoming a visionary and transformational leader to sell the information, ideas and knowledge and also to employ the skills that I have acquired throughout this research process.

2.5.2. Memoranda.

In the fourth section I present narrative pieces of memoranda that I developed out of ideas of what to do now, with the aspects that emerge from my engagement with the respondents to the questionnaire. The aim and purpose of undertaking this study was and is to improve organisational learning at Khula Mlambo Primary School so that quality teaching and learning is continuously rendered. I then wrote the memoranda focussing on the learning and the self - preparation that I had to go through so that I was be able as a leader to lead and manage the school successfully and make our shared goals a reality. By reading the work of authors who adopt self-study as a methodology for educational research I was reminded that my learning was taking place in a contingent, ever changing situation (Clandin, Pushor and Orr 2007, p. 22). The memoranda will be my tools for further dialogue meditation that will inform my deliberations and decision making now and in the near future. My intention with the memoranda was to identify areas that needed immediate development and transformation in me to enable me to lead, inspire, encourage and motivate educators to work towards quality teaching in the school. As I wrote these memoranda I also wanted to extend their usefulness beyond my own learning, I therefore focussed my writing on ideas and questions that might be interesting and challenging to others as well.

2.6. Conceptualising my learning researching experience

In taking a narrative self-study approach to education, I have learnt from the work of scholars and I am therefore aware that taking a narrative research study requires me not only to present and explore my experience of learning but also to conceptualise my learning experience. I also understand that as I conceptualise my learning experience I am making it an accessible guide that can and will assist me when I engage in new learning and research as I wish to pursue to a doctoral degree hereafter. I also know that through conceptualising my learning experience I can move outward from my masters' degree and enter into public conversations with researchers in education who may wish to conduct research on improving organisational learning in their own institutions and schools (Eisner, 1993). I have therefore developed this conceptualisation of my learning researching experience that I present and examine in my narrative self study research approach in chapter four. I have presented the conceptualisation of my learning research experience in chapter five, following Fox, Martin and Green's statement (2007, p. 79) that practitioner research is a significant and

legitimate form of social change. I have adopted a critical stance towards my research, guided by the fact that there is no single truth about practice and that, there may be many truths held by individual practitioners and shared within groups. My collected report in chapter four depicts a social process of living that I have come to conceptualise as educative engagement. I believe the conceptualisation of my learning researching experience in chapter five serves as an eye opener through which I and others who might engage with my work can also see things differently. Seeing things differently can bring to light possibilities for moving in different directions and for exploring new ways of doing things.

2.7. Summary

In this chapter I have tried to explicate my narrative self-study research learning process. I explained in this chapter important aspects of my research study. I explained how trustworthiness is enhanced and how this study can be of help to me in my future learning and research and to other people who may engage in similar study and who might find it valuable. I explained the roles I played in this research study and that of the participants as well. I have explained how I gathered and generated data. I indicated that I used data that I recorded in my research journal as my main source of data. I gave the research outline indicating the aim and the purpose of engaging in this study. I also indicated how I learned from participants' responses to the questionnaire. I explained what and how learning took place during course work study and also what information was obtained from the literature review. I have also conceptualised my learning research experience to make it an accessible guide for further learning and also to be used as a reference by other researchers who might find it worthwhile. I have shown how I interacted with other researchers work on such educative learning.

I have shown in this chapter that doing this study was a very complex and challenging experience which involved relationships with other people. It was also complex and challenging in relation to my own understanding of how I could facilitate, represent and create logic of my learning experience as a practitioner researcher. I also indicated the complexities and challenges of the ethical and practical aspects that you encounter as you research your own place of work. The chapter also reveals how I tried to remain focussed on my intention in undertaking this study. I tried as much as I could not to exploit or to undervalue the participants in this study research. In the next chapter I look more closely at links between my narrative self study research learning approaches as I discuss the design of my research study.

CHAPTER THREE

MY EXPERIENCE OF LEARNING FROM THE LITERATURE REVIEW ABOUT ORGANISATIONAL LEARNING AND RESEARCH DESIGN

3.1. Introduction

The key research question that directs my study for this thesis is; how can I as a leader improve organisational learning at Khula Mlambo Primary School putting into practice the theory that I have learned and developed? Schools today operate in the midst of unprecedented changes in education, caused by both the information and the technological era, yet there are still many schools that function in ways that are no longer suitable (Bamburg, 1990, p. 177) and the situation at Khula Mlambo Primary School seems to fall among the latter category because the performance here is not acceptable. I was inspired to transform and develop as an individual so that transformation and development could be facilitated in my school through improvement in our performance. I engaged in a literature study looking for ideas, information and skills that other leaders have applied in their organisations to improve their performance in their schools so that we can also apply them for improvement in my school. Education has changed from providing learners with basic skills and facts that would prepare them to work in an industrial manufactural community. What this does is to deny them the opportunity of using their initiative and creativeness. Furthermore it does not provide skills for accessing information to enable them to work in good harmony with those around them or to utilize creative thinking skills that are needed in building up the economy. I am fully convinced that we will only be successful at Khula Mlambo Primary School in this turbulent complex and uncertain environment as we accept the challenge and the demand of a fundamental reassessment of the importance of learning and of the transferable skills this new environment is demanding from us.

Best results and success will be achieved at Khula Mlambo primary School if both educators and learners commit themselves to personal learning and professional development. Sarason (1990) and Kosnik et. al. (2005) stress that the main goal for establishing learning schools is to create those conditions that make students want to learn about themselves and others and the universe through their constant search for new ways of improving (Fullan 2001, p. 60). Sharma (2010, p. 50) advises that it is impossible to build success on a foundation of excuses, and says that great people construct monuments with the stones their critics throw at them. Higson (2003) emphasises that educators develop new skills and capabilities and always develop and improve their teaching and learning methods to enable learners to learn. Davidoff (2002, p. 7) adds that succeeding to function in a complex turbulent situation requires an enabling environment which supports a lifelong process of

personal growth and professional development, creating an environment where learners can learn and develop their own potential for the benefit of the society as a whole. This indicates therefore that we need to establish a learning culture at Khula Mlambo primary School, where everybody is committed and engaged in learning, growing and developing each person's leadership talent throughout the organisation. This will result in a high quality teacher force (Bush 1999, p.103). I was therefore encouraged to engage myself in promoting continuing development for educators and in making it a first priority in our school development programme (Bush 1999, p. 102), because continuing development to improve teaching and learning is central to my research study. Educators need to have opportunities to update their subject knowledge, teaching skills and to gain new skills throughout their careers through the exchange of knowledge and methods of performances with others at work and through having access to the most relevant successful research work of others. I have learned that challenges that are facing schools and education can be dealt with successfully if I have the right leadership qualities and authority so that I can motivate and mould enthusiastic teachers who are ready to teach, taking politics out of basic education, i.e. getting them to stop complaining and to debate fragmented policy (Fullan 1991, p. 22). In short the need is to transform ineffectual educators into experts who will be looking for strategies that will make the policies work for them. I should be able to manage and marshal innovations, individual talents, imagination, spirit, intelligence and creativity and merge these with those of the school so that an intelligent organisation which is a flux of fundamental transformation (Jackson 2000, p. 29) is created. I have realized that transformation is a requirement at Khula Mlambo Primary School, and it happens successfully where leadership can enable and direct change rather than control and imposing this upon people (Plowan et. al., 2007 p.244).

3.2. Critical success factors for improving organisational learning

Gadiesh (2005, p. 49) says that the environment that is fluid and complex; where speed and adaptability can improve or break the organisation, requires that these organisations make effective decisions, and that these decisions are executed timeously if high performance is to be achieved. These organisations need corporate governance and leadership so that they can develop a value based governance that will be appropriate in a variety of challenging situations and circumstances (Werhane 2007, p. 465). This situation needs skilled leaders with a vision that the organisation will want to support (Leonard 2003, p. 4) In the context of education Moloi (2002, p. 2) says that a learning organisation is made up of educators who are committed to personal development and growth, who act as advocates of learning for the organisation by addressing the perceived challenges that arise from the environment and by amending mistakes that are evident in the approach which they are implementing. They should learn from both formal as well as informal

observations that they undertake in the organisation. Schools as systems have a learning mechanism built into them; they are engaged in selecting goals, choosing how to achieve them, overcoming obstacles on the way, and evaluating the outcomes of their work, so they learn in the process of work in trying to achieve valued goals (Sessa 200, p. 5). As I reflected on what was happening at Khula Mlambo Primary School, I discovered that things were not done this way. The only thing that you could hear were complaints about the Department that was not training them enough, despite all the workshops the Department is organising and the support it is rendering through curriculum implementers. There was also moaning about a lot of paperwork that the new curriculum is demanding from educators. There was no room created for corrections of errors that might have resulted through implementation or for overcoming of obstacles that might have been experienced along the way. No learning was taking place.

A learning organisation is not an individual effort. Learning in such an organisation is built upon group learning or team work (Moloi 2002, p.6), and this is dependent on individual learning (Sessa 2006, p.5). People are not inherently equipped to work in groups; members need to learn to be a group, thus moving from a collective of individuals to a cohesive unit focused on the same goals and the understanding of methods to achieving those organisational goals. So in a learning organisation people do not stop learning; they continue to improve their capabilities and ability to achieve the outcomes they have planned. They nurture their creative patterns of thinking, set their aspirations collectively free and continue to learn how to learn together (Sessa 2006, p. 6; Moloi 2002, p. 76). The question that came to mind as I learned about this was: How do people learn? Delors (1998) speaks about four pillars around which education must be organized, namely; 'learning to know', which assumes learning to learn must come first, where people must concentrate, think, comprehend and remember what they have learnt; 'learning to do', which calls for learning to put what is learnt into practice; 'learning to live together' which demands participation and co-operation with other people in all human activities and 'learning to be', thus enabling every person to solve their own problems, make his own decisions and shoulder his own responsibilities (Delors 1998, p. 86). I then realized that I have an obligation as leader of Khula Mlambo Primary School to ensure that all educators have acquired the skill to seize every learning opportunity that emerges in life, so that they can add to their information, capabilities and behaviour in order to adapt to unpredictable changes in a complex and interdependent environment to develop the school into a learning organisation. I also realized that we cannot succeed in achieving our goal if we seclude ourselves from the environment we are operating in. Interdependency means that a school as a learning organisation is capable of outstanding performance through collaborative practices within its internal as well as the external environment. This indicated to me that total transformation was

needed at Khula Mlambo Primary School, which means that establishing a learning organisation will involve a significant transformational and self-renewing strategy and a vision of excellence for a school because it creates an atmosphere which will allow people to acquire skills, positive attitudes, and knowledge which will be of great value. While individual learning styles for each member of staff would be accommodated, a most innovative and successful strategy would draw its strengths and vitality from adaptable, committed and interdependent team players (Moloi 2002, p. 56) at all levels in the school. In such an established learning organisation, learning will be a continuous process of growth and improvement through constant interaction, because every educator in the school will be aware of the need for continuous learning and will need to interact with the environment all the time. If educators at Khula Mlambo primary School can master the skill of sharing information and ideas, they will be able to develop and improve performance because they will be learn from the experience of other people. There is no perfection and stability that is reached in a learning organisation due to ever changing circumstances as schools are exposed to new demands from the authorities, increased school control and changing life patterns of learners. These changes mean that we need to undergo a dramatic shift in the way we interact with the environment and we must develop an understanding of ourselves through reflective practice and experiential learning. This will assist us to identify our positive as well as our negative feedback loops questioning our mental models which are going to drive us to what Stacey (2007, p. 898) calls 'double loop learning' and develop us into continuous learners. Interactions between such loops tend to produce unexpected and often counterintuitive outcomes, but it makes it possible for us to identify leverage points where opportunities for learning will be created (Stacey 2007, p. 94), thus calling everybody to lifelong learning because new skills, techniques and information will be required at the same time as developing experts in innovative and creative thinking.

I am aware that changes and innovations in knowledge and the knowledge economy will pose a number of challenges for people; however learning organisations are structured in such a way that if people can work together peacefully, assisting one another towards a set goal can succeed (Pettinger 2000, p. 137). I then realized that I have a duty to harness the collective effort of those inside and outside Khula Mlambo Primary School in order to transform the school into a learning organisation. The quest to build a learning organisation is driven by the desire to satisfy the customers who consist of learners and their parents, community, society and the nation as a whole. This was not the case in our school. To succeed in meeting this demand, we have to transform our practices and learn continuously to assess our skills and our learning capabilities, and take leadership development of all employees very seriously. We have to commit ourselves to accelerating the advancement of our qualifications as employees through active support and we need to learn how

to access opportunities. We must develop as we lead. Teacher education must drive and be driven by new conceptions of teaching as a skilled, morally committed learning profession and that in order to achieve growth we should; practice reflection in, on and about action, seek variety, redefine our role to extend beyond the classroom, and balance work and life (Bush, 1999). I am convinced that with such dedication and commitment the school can grow and develop into a learning organisation.

I have learned from literature that successful learning organisations reward performance and use flexible structures to motivate and inspire educators always to strive for the best (Moloi 2002, p. 5). These organisations build an arsenal to operate in unfamiliar environments and set challenging goals where practical decision-making processes are taken in consultation with all stakeholders in the school to allow learning to take place. In this way staff members perceive goals as attainable, they dedicate and commit themselves and do their utmost towards the attainment of these goals and when good work is done, their effort is recognized, appreciated, and therefore rewarded formally or informally. Where work done is not satisfactory members of staff are motivated, encouraged and supported to do better. I have seen and realized that this might be one of the barriers towards learning in our school because nobody ever tried to recognize and appreciate an achievement from colleagues especially where educators went out on their own to develop and upgrade themselves professionally.

A learning organisation is characterized by the frequent use of cross-functional work teams which gives people an opportunity to discover knowledge out of the best practices of team mates and encourages a culture of continuous feedback and disclosure that indicates areas that will be affected in the future. The organisation is able to deal proactively, then with the anticipated change (Moloi 2002, p. 25) and devise means and strategies to deal with the change before any damage can be encountered. These are things that rarely take place at Khula Mlambo Primary School. It was very rare to find people talking and discussing issues of work. As learning took place I then realized that real learning cannot take place here because people do not know what they are supposed to learn because they do not challenge anything. They only complain and lament over the amount of work they have on their shoulders. I have learned that in a learning organisation people are working together as a unity, in teams, and they trust one another. They externalize their thoughts and critically scrutinize one another and then together they exchange shared thoughts regarding that which might hinder the learning process (Stacey 2007, p. 91) and in so doing they become a forward thinking community. Every situation is unique to each learning organisation, there's nothing certain, predictable or linear; it is impossible therefore to conclude that issues will be addressed in a similar way to the manner in which such issues were addressed in the past. Continuous research and

learning is the order of the day in learning organisations and continuous interaction with the team is needed for the people in the organisation to share ideas and exchange information developing one another so that they can to grow in such complex and turbulent systems (Stacey 2007, 91). Creativity and innovation are essential to learning organisations. In such organisations learning becomes natural (Mikulastik 2006, p. 1). People learn joyfully and playfully while they are working. There is flexibility in the learning organisation. This is the character that Khula Mlambo Primary School needs. I must instil in the educators the spirit of willingness. Educators must have a desire to succeed. As a principal of the school, must display this character because I have observed that people do not take too much of what you say, but they are more likely to learn from what you do.

I then revisited the mission statement of our school and I saw that in this we declare that we want our learners to achieve high standards through the education that we will be offering, standards that they can implement in their future learning and development. We want our learners to feel safe and happy and we want our schools to promote the values which will develop learners into acceptable citizens who will be valuable and reliable and be of service to the community. We have to have the courage to admit that we sometimes find ourselves being diverted from these values. I then started to look for the obstacles that make us as a school fail to live according to our mission statement. The admirable qualities mentioned that relate to successful schools were not found in our school. I further researched the literature to find out what other researchers say about things that hinder progress in organisations so that we could identify those that affect our school and look for strategies to address them. From the study of literature I found that the quality of the teachers that are employed by the school, bad teaching in the school, lack of concern about the performance of each child, lack of high expectations set for every child, the quality of the principal, lack of strong leadership, how teaching time is spent in the school, lack of the possibility for teachers to learn from one another, lack of system to ensure that every learner is provided with high quality instruction and also to ensure that everybody within the school remain focused on the standards and on the need for improvement. When comparing this information with our school I discovered that this is exactly what is dragging learning down in our school. There is hardly any meeting at Khula Mlambo Primary School where educators meet regularly in phase, grade, learning area groups or as staff to discuss best practices and curriculum. It became abundantly clear to me that we need change to improve the way we of relate to each other if we want change and transformation (Fullan 2001, p. 4) at Khula Mlambo Primary School. I support and fully agree with Cornner (2004, p. 18) when he says that 'organisations', including schools are basically produced from peoples dedication and earnest commitment to the work so that they can achieve what they desire. Such schools therefore a prosperous fountain of learning'.

There are many doubts and fears that come to mind as one thinks of putting into practice the theory of being a learning organisation because people who want to embrace continuous learning, and truly see the need for it are not in for an easy time. Continuous learning is risky for both the individual and the organisation at large. There are many frustrations that come with learning because first of all the individual person need to admit that he or she does not know something (Sessa 2006, p. 1), and then a step is needed to and develop the motive to want to learn in order to change the state of not knowing. Learning for change brings along its frustrations to the learner because it implies that you need to stop doing what you have been doing and start on something different. There's also a fear that you might find yourself stumbling trying something new and you might fail and people are not comfortable with failure so they resolve to stay in 'the comfort zone' even if there are no good results obtained there as long as they are not going to struggle, stress about anything and possibly fail in the end. I then realized that Khula Mlambo Primary School really needs employees, including myself, who are developed to think critically, and to question the status quo (Sessa 2006, p.1) of the school. They need to come up with better ways of seeing and viewing the school to enable it to change its practices. We need to develop a new character and culture that is hungry for continuous learning and development.

3.3. Strategies to improve organisational learning

Having realized that Khula Mlambo Primary School needs complete transformation and that people in the organisation must be developed to become critical thinkers so that they can be creative, I interrogated the literature further to find out what other learning organisations do to equip employees to develop such critical minds. Individuals at Khula Mlambo Primary School are not equipped to handle the complexity, ambiguity, and fluidity (Sessa 2006, p. 2) that is expected as per the vision and mission of the school. People are neither inspired nor motivated; they look frustrated and they do not have the courage to be involved in school activities towards achieving the school's goals. It is true policy and regulations from the Department of Education must be implemented and followed. However the problem I have realized is that the belief that people must be controlled by management and the carrot and stick motivational philosophy, including centralized decision making processes (Covey 2005,) that are taking place in the school is no longer acceptable.

Elkington and Hartigan (2008) in the introduction of his book "*The power of unreasonable people*"- mentions several reasons why people can be taken to be unreasonable if they behave in the manner that is regarded by management as unacceptable. It became evident to me that some resistance and negative attitudes from members which can lead to the school becoming dysfunctional results from management failing to attend to their legitimate concerns. Elkinton and Hartigan (2008, p. 4) advise

that these unreasonable behaviours can be taken as sources of power, and challenges management to boost the attractiveness, by allowing people to identify and attack an “unsatisfactory equilibrium.” This is the state where the organisation celebrates that it has reached its destination.

In a learning organisation you don't arrive at a destination, through dialogue as a mediator the leader is always looking for more opportunities for innovations and creativity. Through tough and honest dialogue a leader will be able to find and implement the ripple effect, uncover assumptions, make hidden agendas visible, equalise power relationships, propels people to take action, rebuild trust where it is low, challenges arrogance, brings back respect and dissolve stereotypes (Gerzon 2006, p. 182 – 183). In short this will be the intentional culture of the school which emerges as a result of mastering Senge's five disciplines of learning. There are many strategies that literature reveals that one can utilize to improve organisational learning in our school but I see implementing them without having mastered the five disciplines essential to learning as articulated by Senge (1990, p. 67) would be futile. He says that we must undergo a shift of mind because complexity can undermine confidence and responsibility if we do not shift our thinking and treat our school as a living system that has integrity we will not be able to change. I will first comment on these aspects then come to the other strategies that other researchers find relevant for establishing and improving organisational learning in the school.

With these five disciplines (Senge 1990, p.67) we may be able to do away with the delusion that organisations are separate entities which must be controlled and manipulated like machines. In terms of this study, systems thinking provide us with a valuable approach that will assist us to perceive complex structures such as ours. It will enable us to discern high leverage from low leverage change. By seeing the complete structure we learn how to promote the well being of the school, as it structures our way of thinking. Systems thinking explore things as wholes, including that which is unpredictable. It can accommodate various types of information some of which is profoundly interdependent, and therefore challenging to the norm and it promotes steady persistent change. Systems thinking methodology reveal that structures which govern the behaviour of the organisation seem to form patterns. Though events may appear to be dissimilar in one situation or context, they can all be seen as interrelated in a way. We will not succeed in building our school into a learning organisation if we do not let go of our tendency to negate wholes by dissecting them into parts, yet we still expect to put the parts back together to recreate the original living whole (Flood 1999, p.14). Our school as a system has integrity and its character depends on the whole, so systems thinking theory is a relevant theory to use in the study of improving organisational learning at Khula Mlambo Primary School.

It is affirmed in systems thinking that challenges which are prevailing in the organisation are creating opportunities of learning for that organisation. Individuals in that organisation must be taught to treat challenges in that way so that solutions to address such challenges can be found in managing relationships (Jackson 2000, p. 1) among people working in the organisation and between the people and their environment. We remain however, with a challenge to develop proficiency within the school as a system. Senge (1994, p.6) calls this discipline 'personal mastery' and explains that it continually clarifies and deepens our wish to direct our energies. It also assists us to develop patience, so that we can see our mission accomplished and our vision come true. Senge (1994, p .6) clarifies 'personal mastery' as an essential cornerstone and the spiritual foundation of the learning organisation. However we are warned that personal mastery is something that cannot be forced on people (Flood, 1999, p. 21), it is a potential organisational strategy the importance of which must be taught and clearly explained to people so that it can lead people to do positive things towards achieving personal vision, endowing people with purpose. Through discussions and dialogue a covenant between people (Moloi 2002, p.73; Flood 1999, p. 21) is established that can assist people to shape how their strategies might be implemented. I am fully convinced that through learning we will be enabled to work with and not against the deteriorating condition in our school and it will also enable us to address the loopholes in our aspirations. It will also, hopefully develop in us creative enthusiasm which will create in us a deeper sense of responsibility towards our work and we may be able to learn faster (Flood 1999, p. 20).

In an organisation like a school we are working with people and research has revealed that manipulating and controlling people as if they are entities does not work any more in the complex and unpredictable environment of today. Senge (1994, p. 60) warns that people are not entities to be treated as such; people have mental models which he defines as deeply held assumptions, generalizations or even pictures which are deeply fixed in our minds and they direct our understanding and the manner in which we take action. What matters more with mental models is that they invisibly define our relationship with each other and the world around us. If we do not master and understand our own mental models and also understand that those that we are interacting with also have their own mental models and together we must learn to listen to appreciate one another, or else our mental models will hold back learning by restricting possible ways of conceptualizing things, thus undermining systemic thinking by limiting the vision of what we can see and do (Flood 1999, P. 22). If we succeed in mastering the discipline of mental models we shall have succeeded in training people to appreciate that mental models do indeed occupy their minds and shape their actions. The issue is not that mental models are right or wrong but; people need to discover what their perceptions are at that moment, and learn to create positive patterns of

behaviour out of those images and learn to manage them. This implies that we need to learn to listen to our thoughts and also to other people's thoughts. We need to analyse them all and come up with a decision that will be acceptable to all (Flood 1999, 23).

Appreciating that people have mental models and if we can succeed in developing skills in defining our assumptions regarding these models, this will make it possible for us to see things together and agree on what must be done and the actions which have to be taken together as an organisation. Establishing what we want to do together is an important stepping stone towards building a learning organisation. Because this vision is created as a result of contributions from all the people participating in the organisation, people may be committed to it and they may support it because they are well acquainted with it. Where people feel that they are part of the organisation they can be encouraged to share their commitment. In turn this sense of commitment can be channelled by statute leadership towards continuous learning which is called 'generative learning' because it is at this level of learning that transformation occurs (Stacey 2007, p. 93). Senge (1990, p. 206) warns that we need to practice shared vision so that we can be able to unearth shared images which we have for the future. This will encourage us to develop real commitment and involvement, which will result to the creation of a common identity (Moloi 2002, p. 48) with activities that they do not understand. As we learn to control our mental models, as leaders we learn to acknowledge and appreciate views and ideas of others. We have to do away with the habit of trying to force people to follow your vision which they do not even understand because it is not clearly communicated to them. There is no strict ruling that a vision should always come from leadership, shared vision may be generated from the top or may bubble upwards (Flood 1999, p. 24). In fact shared vision provides a platform for the opinions and ideas of all stake holders.

A learning school is not created in isolation, though individual learning is essential to organisational learning. The time for schools to compete with one another without assisting one another has passed away. Thinking in a learning organisation is about collaboration and commitment, sharing ideas and networking which puts educators at their ease because they get the opportunity to become more aware of patterns of personal and organisational development (Moloi 2002, p. 80). When we allow opinions from all stakeholders to influence decision making in our school, we will be developing and promoting team learning (Flood 1999, p.24) so that we can succeed in dealing with the learning disabilities that hinder learning in our school. When team learning is fully developed it will assist our school to win individuals over to utilize their energies towards achieving the goals which they have set for themselves to achieve. When people have established a common route to follow, it is likely that they will adhere to it as a team and their achievement will redound well on all

members of that team. This teaches us that we need to have good communication in our school where a balance between dialogue and discussion is created. Though there are forces at work that may prevent discussion and dialogue, these are necessary counterparts that we need to engage with in a quest for consensus. In dialog team members explore complex issues creatively; they should listen to each other with deep regard and they should suspend their own views, thus putting personal mastery and mental models into practice to better hear the views and opinions of others (Sessa 2006, p. 9). When we allow views to be presented and defended in discussion, we allow the team the opportunity to select the best idea that will strengthen the decisions that will be taken. This process should enable us to see the need to renew continually, to redirect our school and its structures and to utilise our inherent capabilities to serve the needs of our school (Moloi 2002, p. 57).

From the discussion of the five disciplines it is clear that each of them deals with how people think, what they really want and how they relate to each other and how they can learn together. Though they are explained individually for the sake of learning, they build on and reinforce each other. So if you want to build a learning organisation, it is critically important that you harness your will and personal motivation to engage with these five disciplines, since they are natural and interwoven. Once these disciplines are mastered, we may be able to deal with the obstacles that hinder learning in our school through implementing other strategies that will make success is possible.

In this and the following paragraphs I discuss other strategies that I see as relevant for improving organisational learning at Khula Mlambo Primary School. One of the strategies I find very valuable is evaluation. When we do systemic or whole school evaluation we get both positive and negative feedback loops which drive organisational learning as people may change their mental models, their mindsets, and their frames of reference for the better(Stacey 2007, 90). Interactions between such loops tend to produce unexpected and often counterintuitive outcomes where perfect control is not possible. However, it is possible to identify leverage points where control may be exerted. As we do this we are engaging in continuous learning, through the development of communities of practice and double loop learning strategies which will aid complex situations because we will be bringing change to our mental models, especially mental models that are directly concerned with changing power relationships. Questioning our mental models allows us to share our ingrained assumptions and beliefs about learning and, make it easier for us to explore and talk about them without being defensive, thus managing them (Flood 1999, p. 22). Changes in environmental conditions challenge the fit between the organisation and its environment. This opens opportunities for learning because recovery, change or evolution will be factors that will have to be addressed. This implies that

adjustments will have to be made, old system patterns and ways of practices will have to be done away with, or radically transformed and new approaches will have to be formulated (MaValle 2002, p. 215). Creating a learning organisation is a duty of the principal because this individual should be a catalyst for change (Dearlove and Coomber 2005, p. 55). Conducting continuous system's audits is very important for the establishment and improvement of continuous organisational learning.

An enormous amount of work must be done to transform Khula Mlambo Primary School into a learning organisation. We need thorough strategic planning as an important part of the renewal and reshaping process of our school so that we can remain vibrant and relevant in the rapidly changing environment. Educators should be engaged in activities and decision-making processes which promote the positive culture of the school and its ethos. Plans to encourage and motivate teachers should be made available, rather than them being preoccupied in unnecessary duties that come with projects that the schools has dreamed up for teachers over the years. In a learning organisation, educators will be supporting and monitoring the progress of all learners so that they can identify and act where progress is inadequate (Ashley 2006, p. 9). The main goal for our school engaging itself in whole-school evaluation and systemic audit was to enable the school to create those conditions that focus on generative learning that will make learners want to learn about self and others and, where the overarching purpose of schooling and its governance is to support the goal for the school to improve and to maximize performance to reach excellence (Moloi 2002, p. 35). It is possible that we can transform our schools into viable institutions of learning; therefore it is crucial that we create a desire to learn; like celebrating learner achievement and by developing and keeping the school achievement profile in order to motivate stakeholders, and where we can live together and find basic security, where it is possible to recognise and value that which is unique in the other and see it as a contribution towards growth and development (Yaniz 2011, P. 1). We need to know what motivates people and groups, how they identify their priorities and how we can develop our teaching and learning programmes in a manner that clearly reflects the school's core culture.

Developing the right core culture which is healthy and unifying (Ashley 2006, p. 4; Schiller 2001, p. 2) and it is another strategy that is very important for improving organisational learning because efforts to improve standards can then be put in place. When educators have mastered the five disciplines of learning as mentioned by Senge, a high level of commitment prevails where educators set standards and targets for their achievements and strive to deliver and dedicate themselves to satisfy the needs of every individual learner in the school. Such culture serves as a snapshot of how people at that moment in time are expected to behave in order to fit in to the group, taking into consideration discipline as part of the ethos of education. Because this culture is shaped by the

interaction of many elements, including the environment with its enormous changes; it can not be a fixed culture. Among the most influential are; leadership styles, organisational vision; a powerful vision of building a culture of trust, an intentional school culture where an educator lacking in any aspect of his profession will seek expertise and support from other colleagues developing systems of view that promote greater 'interdependent thinking', 'collaborative behaviour' and 'relational trust'(Elbot 2008, p. 1), mission and values, organisational structures and systems such as appraisal rewards, and decision-making. These factors imply consistency, critical thinking and constant change. Continuous learning becomes then a requirement for the establishment and maintenance of a healthy learning culture in a school. A full range of interventions including those designed to transform individuals and teams should be employed through work place learning as a means of developing local talent like coaching and mentoring, making work part of learning and learning part of work if we want to achieve a high degree of organisational change. However Lenghel (2008 P. 2) warns that no change will be possible, regardless of the level of intervention in the entire school, if adjustments to the cultural level of the school where accentuated orientation is induced are not made. Van der Zowven (2008, p. 1) maintains that large-scale interventions is an approach which all stakeholders can engage themselves in as a collective process of change and learning. This requires full commitment from all of us, and our focus should be on creating an environment for learning and continuing openness to new ideas where learning is facilitated for the individual, the team, the organisation and the society. Individual learning may assist educators to grow on a technical, professional and interpersonal level in order to reach the highest level of competency; team learning could foster the collaborative undertaking of tasks, and motivate educators to learn how to improve their education together; organisational learning could enable the school to develop from inside and to continue making progress within a highly competitive environment; and societal learning if successful will create a community of learners who are prepared to support the efforts of educators to effect change in the school, thus fostering lifelong learning at all four levels Moloji (2002, p. 15). A healthy culture will be built if we in addition to the skills that we teach encourage spirit of creativity and flexibility. What we would like to create in our schools is an enabling environment; which supports educators in a lifelong process of potential and professional development. Development is a process that has no end. Educators don't stop learning to become better educators once they have received their initial training, learning occurs throughout their teaching career.

A further strategy that I find very relevant in our school situation is empowerment through effective delegation and job enrichment. Empowerment develops top management and leadership into good listeners by allowing suggestions and proposals from lower levels to be heard. Learning in such organisations is creative and fast because people do not wait for their boss to tell them what to do

should they come across a challenging situation. In dealing with challenges, Flood (1999, p. 10) says these employees become sources of excellence in the way in which they deal with the challenging situation, through enhancing their capabilities and abilities and in implementing them by looking ahead; foreseeing what they want to achieve and in communicating their thoughts clearly and effectively. Effective delegation on the one hand implies that work should be delegated with authority to the person concerned and management should assist in supporting and not doing the job when it is delegated. However responsibility and accountability remains with the delegator whenever work is delegated. The delegator should be assured that delegation is accepted, because research reveals that an intervention will only succeed if the interior condition of the intervener supports it (Scharmer 2009, p. 7). By the interior condition I mean here that the person is fully inspired to buy –in the ideas of learning for change. Good and sound communication is essential and this is a two- way process; a downward and upward movement of communication is involved. Job enrichment on the other hand, means giving to lower management a duty that is supposed to be done at top management with full responsibility and authority to take charge. As I have mentioned, such strategies must be employed at Khula Mlambo Primary School and, we have to master the five disciplines of learning so that we can establish a high level of trust in our school.

3.4. The function of leadership in the development of learning organisations

Organisational learning is mainly concerned with how to build, foster, and maintain the process of learning in organisations based on single and double-loop learning and on learning from past experience. This situation requires leaders rather than managers. This implies a shift from the management function to a transformational leadership function where a leader creates a compelling narrative about the vision and the mission of the organisation, and who is also able, through persuasion and by setting a good personal example to change the thoughts the feelings and the behaviour of those he/she leads (Gardner 2007, p. 7). We need to drop all the approaches (Scharmer 2009, p. 36) of the past and attend to situations with fresh eyes abandoning our accustomed ways of reacting and operating. I have discovered from literature that developing a learning organisation requires democratic decision-making processes where stakeholder involvement is crucial and this requires a different kind of leadership in order to be able to lead and promote continuous learning in a school.

There are various opinions from various authors about the kind of leadership that encourages and promotes continuous learning in a school. I have learned that leadership in this turbulent environment means that you have multi-functional roles to play; you are a planner, a teacher and a steward because your function is to build the schools by creating opportunities for people to expand

their capacity so that they can understand complex challenges, make their visions clearer, and improve the manner in which they think (Moloi 2002, p. 96). As a teacher-leader in a learning organisation I have to foster learning for everyone, and that is the main function of a learning organisation today. Literature reveals that in this complex environment leaders cannot lead alone, they need to duplicate themselves among the members of their staff through, delegation, empowerment and post enrichment (Akinsolu 2005, p. 65). The three strategies are related in their execution but they do not imply exactly the same thing. Post enrichment refers to a vertical expansion of work which was previously done by people at higher management level and is now done by the person who carries out the task. Delegation is the work that leaders entrust others including the making of decisions for which they would take some responsibility. However, the leader still carries the final accountability and responsibility for that delegated task. He/she will therefore monitor the task assuming responsibility while allowing a measure of autonomy, hence then delegation is called a two-way power sharing process. In a school empowerment means shifting the focus of control from the principal to the educators, giving them the opportunity to make decisions they will be responsible for. However what is common with the three strategies is that they do not change into a completely *laissez faire* organisation. The principal should not resign his/her involvement in the team; he/she needs to encourage, enthuse, motivate, support and coordinate all work processes in the school, allowing equal participation at all levels so that staff members can learn from each other simultaneously (Akinsolu 2005, p. 66). I then realized that I needed self-development in this regard. To do this I learnt that I must respect the creation of ideas and knowledge from others so that together we are able to generate a capacity for our school to face its many challenges. Being inspired to lead for increased and continuous learning, I had to learn to inspire people I work with, listen to them and encourage them to be their best. I had to ensure that I capture their hearts, minds and souls (Goffee 2005, p. 36). I needed to acknowledge what colleagues are saying and doing and if I revealed my weaknesses I needed to do so selectively. I also needed to rely on my understanding to select the appropriate timing and the reason for my actions. Managing educators with deep empathy while revealing our differences will, I believe, make me excel in leadership. This is easier said than done. I have realized that this requires time on my side as the leader to talk, guide and listen, where persistence and perseverance will allow the team to develop a more mature, independent and efficient profile that will support the reach of targets and perspectives beyond expectation, because synergy will prevail between personal and institutional interests. What I find more challenging is that these challenges, in addition to creating demanding conditions for their daily handling, should be lived out and as a leader I have become a proponent of the proposed alternatives (Sciotti 2011, p. 2). The preparedness of the principal to create alternative

ways of working, learning and living; building new capabilities and in leading the way by example, regardless of his or her position or authority (Senge 1994) is one of the contributing factors of excellence in schools. Therefore leaders must remove barriers to learning by establishing opportunities for creative thinking, reducing habitual stereotyping and providing space for searching and finding further alternatives thus developing the creative potential among members of staff. All these expectations means that total transformation must start with me and it must start now. I must stop doubting the capacity of the people. I must develop trust in them and empower them.

When educators are so empowered and engaged in the commitment towards school goals, research has revealed that (Moloi 2002, p. 24) their self concepts will be developed, their career will evolve they will begin to know their talents skill and areas of competence. Together with their leaders they will know the needs and values that drive their motives towards organisational goals. Such educators shall have established a career anchor which they can not give up even in the face of difficult circumstances. In such difficult situations educators will eagerly face them with courage, taking charge of them as challenges and opportunities that contribute to school success (Schein 1990, p. 20). This information clearly indicated to me that in a learning organisation leadership follows a very different path from traditional ways of leading. In a learning organisation leaders are established at all levels, allowing learning and information to flow in all directions, saving time and energy that is wasted in a situation where all communication is monitored and strict control is imposed by senior management. I have learned that leadership in a learning organisation is something that you do with the people. I fully understand that I need to change and shift the interpersonal perspective of the traditional practice I am operating in so that I can motivate people to take accountability and change their own attitudes and behaviour (Gauthier 2007, p. 1). Instead of deciding, telling and controlling, I must also accept to be led and learn from the people that are under my leadership. I have to take a humble position and give people an opportunity to be heard. As a leader- learner I must always lead with questions, accepting with humility the fact that I am in possession of ready made responses. Asking questions will, in consequence, lead to the best possible insights because we are all learners in the process. I have to learn to stay engaged in dialogue and debate, not coercion, so that together we can arrive at the best possible solutions. I must conduct an investigation of the school without attaching blame in order to establish a climate where trust is maintained and truth may.

I therefore have a challenge to inspire educators at Khula Mlambo Primary School and to make them able to sense their individual innate worth that I could use to make them willing to strive for greatness. I must develop the organisational spirit which is embedded in the shared vision of the

school. I must be disciplined and create in me the heart to sustain high trust relationships and practice creative problem solving through focusing on the essential goals, translating these into specified actions that will hold each one of us accountable all the time (Covey 2005, p.8) so that Khula Mlambo Primary School can move from effectiveness to greatness. However this does not open the school to a laissez-faire type of management and leadership. We are still guided by the policies of the Department of Education. I have to clarify decision making processes and relinquish control of them when it is advantageous and must act quickly and decisively when that is needed.

I have also realized that I need to develop in me new characteristics of leadership which I am convinced will assist me in establishing good relations with the people I am working with in the school. I have to develop into an 'agile' leader who understands and can carry out the new kind of leadership stance. I must learn to adapt, set up, push or step back and let others lead, depending on the situation. I must develop in me a clear sense of personal identity, learn not to panic in crisis situations and develop in me a high tolerance for ambiguity. I have to be genuine, empathetic caring and willing to listen to others. I must have integrity and act with honesty creating trust between myself and the people I am leading so that they are able to follow and learn over time. I must always be visible and available because the closer the view of the leader the more likely it is that this will determine the trust that the people will have in that leader (Covey 2005, p. 5). Turning schools into learning organisations, implies drastic change as has been mentioned several times. It is true that the possession of certain traits is not guaranteed to be enough to leading organisations to success because there are always situational circumstances that must be considered (Robbins and Decenzo 2004, p. 319) This teaches me that I must learn to use a variety of leadership approaches depending on the situation at hand. What other approaches is there those that could be suitable for a principal as he/she starts turning the school into a learning organisation? I have learned from the Ohio state university studies (Robbins and Decenzo 2004, p. 313) that learning can be improved in a school if the leader clearly understands and identifies his/her role and establishes the roles of employees and communicate that clearly so that set and targeted goals can be achieved. In addition the leader has to establish and maintain good job relations inspired by instilling trust, respect for educators' opinions and taking care of how they feel. From the Fiedler, Hersey and Blanchard and Vroom and Yetton theories (Stacey 2007, p. 64) I have learned that good performance is achieved when the style of the leader is appropriate for the particular people he/she is leading. The situation must also be conducive enough for the recommended activities to take place. The path-goal model of leadership therefore states that the leadership style that is selected depends on the demands of the environment and the personalities of the people that are being led. Hersey and Blanchard's situational theory says that the style that the leader chooses depends on the readiness of the

followers, their will and their ability to do the job (Robbins and Decenzo 2004, p. 319). However I view all the theories mentioned above as adding to the characters and the kind of behaviour that I should develop and practice for organisational learning to take place. I see these leadership theories addressing the issue of a leader establishing good communication and relationships in the school so that it will be possible for collaboration to take place because people will be willing to cooperate. This implies that I should take care, listening attentively to the concerns of the people and their needs for development. I have to inspire them to see and realize the need to change their perceptions of issues by helping them to look at the problems in different ways that excite, arouse and motivate them to pursue continuous learning and development.

Transforming a school into a learning organisation means that as much as you are transactional you need to be transformational as well. The two complements each other. When a leader utilizes a transformational approach, employee effort and performance goes above what would be achieved where only a transactional approach is applied. Kouzes and Posner (2001, p. 4) say that for leaders to be able to develop continuous learning in their organisations they need continually to; search for opportunities to change the undesirable state of their organisations, experimenting and taking risks as they look for innovative ways of changing the organisations. Enabling others to act as they foster collaboration and build spirited teams while striving to establish an atmosphere that is conducive to all will motivate and make them feel stronger, capable and powerful. As a leader you pave the way by identifying and defining measures of expected performance and achievement and then the leader must provide an example by leading the way so that others may follow you. You need to unravel bureaucracy and put up signposts creating opportunities for victories and encourage by recognizing contributions that individuals make by celebrating accomplishments. If you can make people feel like heroes (Kouzes and Posner 2001, p. 4), they won't want to disappoint you in the future, they will always want to learn more and win all the time. Quite simply, leaders must learn to lead.

I then wondered how I was going to master all these characteristics and found (Covey 2005, p. 3 - 8) who came up with eight habits that can assist the leader to move an organisation from effectiveness to greatness. Leaders must first discover their voice, through the three gifts that each person is born with; namely, the freedom to choose which allows us to let go of the past (Scharmer 2009, p.401) and choose responses that will bring forth growth and happiness, natural laws or principles which dictate the consequences of the past and; the gift of 'the four intelligences' which comprises of mentality, the physique, emotions and the spirit (Scharmer 2009). After discovering what must be done, leaders then express their individual voices through developing their ideas into a vision; their physical energy into discipline and their emotional energy into passion. As a leader you become the

servant of the people and your interaction with them must inspire them to find their voices as well. I find the eight habits very valuable because they prepare and direct you towards making rightful decisions and taking appropriate actions. I felt it very important for my self development to be acquainted with them. I must learn and practice to learn to choose when and how to use my voice of influence before I can choose to respond to a situation. I see this habit developing in my thinking and this saves me from making immature and rash decisions that could lead to resistance to change and unnecessary, destructive conflicts in the school. I must always look for the best thing I can do under the circumstances. I must also consider the relevance of the task within the jurisdiction of my practice. This is the first habit and it is teaching me to learn to act appropriately. The second habit is the voice of trustworthiness (Covey 2005, p. 5) which I must learn to develop in my character because trust is the key to the establishment of good relationships and serves to unite people in the school. The third habit is the voice and speed of trust. Research has revealed that in an organisation where there is no trust, no matter how effective and clear the communication may be, people will always look for ambiguities and implications in what is being communicated. When high trust is established, communication is instantaneous and errors and faults are taken as such, forgiven and forgotten. I must therefore ensure trust in the school through making regular 'deposits and withdrawals into the bank of emotions' (Covey 2005, p. 5). The fourth habit is for possible alternative to deeply entrenched sense of pride in being in position of power and my expectation that everyone else should conform. Success in moving the school from effectiveness to greatness comes as I develop the ability to be vulnerable, flexible and open to other influences, and establish the courage to search and operate in the unknown. This challenges me to develop myself and practice empathetic listening until the other people feel trust. When trust is fully developed and is lived in the school, the school will be able to speak and have one voice. Having one voice in an organisation challenges the leader to path finding where order has to be created from the diverse personalities without demanding it (Covey 2005, p. 6). This implies that as a leader there is nothing that I should impose on educators. We need to reach consensus, draw conclusions and make agreements that will be binding on all. People will honour these agreements because they attach value to them and own them. The sixth habit is the voice and discipline in execution. Many projects have been initiated have failed in our school and I have always wondered why. The seventh habit gives a solution. People must first be aligned and then practice alignment so that they can be able to execute their values and strategies (Covey 2005, p. 6). First of all we have to know the results that we want to achieve and identify best practices and learn from them so that we can achieve our goal. Continuous learning will be fully developed if we develop and create an environment that will allow us to produce quality on a continuous basis, being enthusiastic about the work to be done as we

focus on doing efficient work, moving at the right pace and liaising effectively with all stakeholders. People, when fully aligned must be empowered and this is the seventh habit, the empowering voice (Covey 2005, p. 7). As a leading manager I must learn to distribute the power of control among members of staff but not forgetting that I am not distributing my duty of accountability. Empowerment is the means of creating agreements that satisfy all parties about what is expected of them addresses the vision and the mission of the institution. Empowerment will be evident in the organization when people have trust in one another and are able to identify and find their talent, and this is possible` when the leader is committed to work with team members. True empowerment invests 'self-control' and 'self-management' within and among all people in the organisation. Its advantage is that it implies a kind of appraisal where your progress is evaluated by the best qualified person who is you, instead of you receiving a lecture by the boss (Covey 2005, p. 7). All the habits Covey mentions are telling me that I must be intelligent enough to use my voice wisely to serve others, if I want to move Khula Mlambo Primary School from effectiveness to greatness. This is the eighth habit and it allows us to establish and exercise 'the right of freedom to choose'. Wisdom begins when leadership admits how little they know and how much they need from others. The eighth habit of leadership helps me to develop into a critical thinker through acquiring the skill of continuously looking for the talents of other people, and by communicating my own insights so clearly that people come appreciate the insights as their own.

Kouzes and Posner (2001, p. 56) describe three opportunities of learning how to lead. One can learn by doing i.e. you have to do the activity more than once so that you will develop and acquire the skills to lead and in that way you are learning important leadership lessons that come from the failures and successes of the practices you are indulging in. The second opportunity comes with the realisation that one can learn from other people who are an excellent source of guidance. Learning from them can help you to become a better leader. The third opportunity comes from learning that can take place in the classroom or learning on your own where formal training can improve your chances of success (Kouzes and Posner 2001, p. 57). Research reveals that highly respected leaders are continuously providing unconditional support to strong and capable members, delegating responsibility and authority and recognizing the potential of the members to succeed, and constantly listening to and involving them in organisational planning and decision making. These leaders spend at least fifty hours annually on personal and professional development. For each practice that they want to improve they commit to participate in at least one formal workshop or seminar, or consider the possibility of a self-directed training course (Kouzes, and Posner 2001, p.1). I then realized that regular meetings should be conducted in our schools in order to look and identifying areas of success and opportunities for progress and support where it is needed. We really

need to 'let go' which means that people must do away with practices of the past which hinder growth and development and invite opportunities for new developments to 'let come' which is the ability to allow the new developments to grow (Scharmer 2009, p. 279). Practice and research has revealed that leadership is for everyone in the organisation if the organisation wants to learn, grow, succeed and improve. I just need to infuse leadership in everything that I do. Sharma (2010, p. 59 - 190) mentions four conversations of the 'Lead without a title philosophy' which he learnt from his mentor and says that leadership is for everyone and a person does not need a title to lead, only an 'Image' which requires, innovation, mastery, authenticity guts and ethics. The second conversation says that Turbulent Times Build Great leaders and you only need a 'Spark' which comprises of the capability to speak with candor, to prioritise, to perceive adversity as breeding opportunities, the ability to respond to opportunities rather than reacting to them and the ability to give Kudos to every one. In the third conversation Sharma says that a leader must establish deep relationships with the staff so that he/she can be a strong leader, you just have to be 'Human' which comprises being helpful, understanding, and possessing the ability to mingle, to amuse and to nurture. In the fourth conversation he says you must become a great person in order to become a great leader so you need to "Shine" which comprises seeing things clearly, having a healthy mind being healthy and be enthusiastic. All what is said above indicate the kind of behaviour and the new way of practice that I must develop so that I can improve organisational learning in our school. I realize that now is the time for total transformation, which calls for industriousness, humility, courage and gratitude. I need to come out of my comfort zone because change begins once we leave the comfort zones and develop new attitudes, I have to engage in humbling experiences so that I may develop a servant's heart. So transformation must start now, no more 'why' questions but 'what to do' questions to drive to a successful learning organisation. One more critical ingredient for continuous learning and self-improvement is desire. It is very good that one can make an internal check to make sure that I am truly inspired to become a better leader than what I am today, but I have to want to learn so that I can improve my ability to lead and to improve organisational learning at Khula Mlambo primary School. I find Otto Scharmer's Theory U relevant for me as I apply the knowledge and the information I obtained in this study to improve organisational learning at my school.

3.5. Summary

In this chapter I claimed in the introduction that schools as organisations operate in an environment that is complex and that they need to transform to create an environment that is enabling, so that people can always develop and improve. I have discovered what learning organisations are and what is expected of them from the features and characteristics of learning organisations. I have also learned about some hindrances to learning and have tried to identify some strategies for dealing

with them in our school so that organisational learning develops and is sustainable. I have also covered the role that I personally as the leader of the school should play in developing a learning organisation. I have gained a great deal of information and I have realized that transformation should start with me so that I can influence the whole school to follow me by example. I have also seen that the approach that will make me succeed in transforming my self and the school is through Otto Scharmer's theory U (2009). The following chapter I indicate the experience of the learning and the findings I obtained when I observed and administered the questionnaire. I gathered information about the status of the school as an organisation and the individual person in relation to the school and leadership, in order to identify the areas of development so that we can prioritise where we should begin transforming the school.

CHAPTER 4

MY EXPERIENCE OF LEARNING THROUGH INTERACTING WITH THE RESPONSES OF EDUCATORS TO THE QUESTIONNAIRE

4.1. Introduction

The central research question that provides momentum for my dissertation concerns applying the theory of learning, that I have developed as being a leader in my institution and a practitioner-researcher, so that I can improve organisational learning at my school. Having undertaken literature review of works on my topic I became convinced that organisational learning at Khula Mlambo Primary School depended on the leader of the school for its development and sustainability. Most of the information I came across when doing the literature review was familiar to me. However I had never put this to the test. I realised that fears and uncertainty about the future was deeply entrenched in me. Highly motivated by Covey's 7 habits of highly effective people, it became clear to me that I need to develop a new level of thinking. I needed to let go of the past and empower myself for the future through identifying the sources of the fears and the uncertainties I have about the future and deal with them. Yes I am fully convinced that the state of affairs is not acceptable at Khula Mlambo Primary School, but now I want to establish where exactly in leadership and management the problem lies so that I can be able to know where to start doing things the correct way. With my focus embedded in development, management and leadership, I then designed and conducted a questionnaire in the school which I divided into three sections. The first section was based on school development strategies, the second section on critical success factors and the third section was based on leadership factors that would lead the school towards development and continuous learning. In this chapter I am engaging with the third question which I developed from my key research question. I am examining my experience of learning through looking at the contributions that I make as leader and manager of the school towards developing and promoting continuous learning in the school. I am using a self narrative study research approach to give an account of my experience on how my interactive engagement with the responses of educators on the questionnaire contributed towards development and growth in our school and how it enhanced the progress of my learning. Respondents were requested to make some notes on the questionnaire document where they felt that they needed to give detailed information with regards to the questions they answered. This chapter contains narrative portrayals of responses that the respondents provided as they answered the questionnaire. I have included here portrayals that illustrate noteworthy instances, educator's responses and my thoughts and my experience of learning from the given responses for each section as I interacted with them. I learned the art of

interacting with peoples' thoughts form Pithouse K.J. (2007). To preserve confidentiality, educators did not write their names on the questionnaire. I attempt to articulate what I learnt through interacting with the portrayals. I introduce each section by a short explanatory note on how the ideas that informed my research design process were affirmed, challenged and extended through learning in this process.

4.2. Portrayals of learning

4.2.1. Section 1

Narrative portrayals of learning in Development Strategies

4.2.1.1. Explanatory notes

My intention in this section of the questionnaire was to give educators at Khula Mlambo Primary School an opportunity to do their own self-study and also to introduce the notion of an introspection of oneself concerning one's individual development and also to find out if educators were ready to accept and undergo any developmental programme that the school must develop and put in place to capacitate them. I hoped that self study would assist in dealing with educator attitudes towards developmental programmes and to motivate and encourage educators towards developing themselves. As they filled in the questionnaire they added some statements and remarks revealing their feelings about what they were doing. I then took these statements and remarks and converted them into portrayals of learning. These portrayals draw attention to some queries and concerns that educators have raised in this questionnaire at the end of each section as they were verbally requested to do so, if need be. The comments made by these educators are divided into two categories. There are those that are mere statements or utterances but if not well understood and addressed they can impede progress in the school towards learning and growing because they may carry negative and disappointing implications. The other comments are reflections that educators have provided after completing each section. Not all educators have comments; some only completed the questionnaire without any comment given.

4.2.1.2. Educator Statements

Why waste your time on this because you won't get paid out of it?

This thing is wasting our time, we want to go. Transport is leaving outside. Are you going to take us home one by one?

After doing it, who is going to say thank you and well done?

The training I got at college was good enough for me to make a good teacher.

Who has the qualification to do that, we are all employees here?

4.2.1.3. Messages and comments

As I read these statements I felt my stomach shaking and cold sweat around my face and that my whole body was shaking. These statements were discouraging; however I refused to lose my focus towards the exhilaration of the process of improving organisational learning in my institution. I felt eager to proceed with what I have already chosen into a mission and I did not need to have another position to do that. What was attainable was comfort with myself and satisfaction with my work. I had to be optimistic. Being optimistic means that I must stay focussed on the mission that I want to accomplish as I move forward towards accomplishing it. I then prioritised my steps of development. I needed to start with motivating educators and make them realise and see that the need to develop themselves other than thinking that they need development because they are going to be compensated

financially or otherwise is very important. I realised that I was facing a difficult challenge, but I was encouraged by the fact that nothing will be achieved if nothing is done. I therefore had to clear away all inhibitions that came my way, including fears and doubts, follow what is right or real and move in the direction of my goal. I was enthused by my desire to be a successful leader and I knew that the people who utter such statements are also the school's greatest asset so I have to demonstrate this belief in word, behaviour, and the relationship that I have to establish with these people. I felt my spirit moving towards mobilizing these educators around the mission of the school. I ministered to myself as I fought the war that was aroused by these statements within me that; I am a leader I have to be confident and go ahead of these people and show them direction. I had to humble myself, be patient and treat them fairly; though I felt the fear of not succeeding; but I was determined. I had to ensure that learning is taking place and that the state of affairs at my institution is developed and improved. I had to be realistic with my goal and speak it out so that people may know where the school is and where it is heading to. I indicated in chapter three that at the heart most strategies sometimes involve mystery, but the fear of the unknown will not stop me now. I took it upon myself that it is an abiding responsibility to interpret this mystery and ensure that institutional changes that are necessary for achieving the goals of the school are produced. I was enthusiastically encouraged and moved towards doing things the right way and by also increasing innovations in the school through creativity training in the organisation's basic dimensions of work environment (Lappierre J, & Giroux V.P., 2003.) I learnt to deal with fear and I overcame it. I saw myself rising up, boldly giving direction to my colleagues as that was expected from me.

4.2.1.4. Educator's Reflective Comments

After doing this exercise in this section I feel that I need to develop myself because that will be of benefit to me and will help me improve my performance at work. I will be happy about that. As from now on I will cooperate and attend all developmental programmes initiated in the school. I also feel that I need to indicate the areas of development that I need. Development is a need and it is of good benefit.

This exercise made me realise that I need continuous development for my personal growth and for my school. I'll begin to be more conscious about my work and commit myself to effective teaching and learning to render quality education to my learners.

I felt very guilty when I think of the time I exhausted doing things that could not benefit the school. I feel very sad about the time I wasted boycotting developmental programs in the school and even dodging departmental workshops and cheating when I said that I attended. I realise that if I was cooperative I should have developed some expertise in some areas of my job. Now I'll grab every opportunity I come across so that I will be able to learn more.

As I did this exercise, I learnt that development is not meant only for money. Learning assists you in updating yourself with new information and knowledge and also helps you to upgrade your skills and techniques so that you are able to perform and execute your duties better and correctly so as to achieve good results. Good performance and good results will make me confident and satisfied in the work that I do.

Though it is management's responsibility to see to it that educators are developed, yes I agree but I also see it as my responsibility as an individual to see to it that I get developed. This exercise brought an opportunity to me to do self-study about my own development and performance in the school. Yes there is no cooperation in the implementation of some of the programmes in the school, especially the programme IQMS, but some of the developmental programmes mentioned in this questionnaire do not even exist in the school and they could be of great advantage if they can be introduced and implemented. School development is a need, being not just to this management function denies us an opportunity to learn and develop expertise in the work that we are doing in schools as educators. I now feel encouraged and more motivated even to encourage fellow educators to challenge the status quo in our school so that we can improve our performance as individuals for the benefit of the entire school.

4.2.1.5. Messages and Comments

These reflexive comments from educators indicated to me that educators have long been frustrated and that they did not have a platform to raise their frustrations, this exercise gave them the opportunity to tell me that I was not doing enough in terms of guiding, motivating and supporting

them towards doing their job. As much as the educators were developing their own self awareness I was also developing mine. These responses assisted me to discover ineffective approaches with deeply embedded habits that are totally incongruent with the things I personally value. I have deferred to circumstances and allowed pressing problems and immediate concerns to bury what mattered most. I also felt guilty when one of the educators commented that I should not have deferred to circumstances when other educators did not cooperate with the development strategies that we wanted to implement in the school. I should have looked for strategies to motivate them rather than stopping the workshops. Revived by the comments of these educators who need my immediate attention in terms of their development and the development of the school in particular, I have taken a stand now to let go of the past (Scharmer 2009, p. 84), to use my imagination and creativity to change the critical comments in to new scripts that are more relevant, which are corresponding well with the beliefs and the rules that give meaning to what we value. I have taken a resolution now to begin each day with those good values I ignored in my mind so that when opportunities for development through challenges emerge I am able to make my decisions based on those values. I realised that I need from here onwards to develop and to live by a personal mission statement that will make me develop my school. I will try as much as I can to do away with the repetitive habits of old practice that hinder the expansion of my capabilities. This will succeed because the comments educators have made challenge me to stand up. I agreed to myself that this exercise was my mirror where I subjected myself so that I can see the character that is developing within me, so that I can confirm who I am. As the mirror has given that feedback to me, now it is upon myself to stop doing the things that make me what I am rather than what I want to become. I confirmed this to myself that this is the right time for me to rehabilitate myself. I learned to consult for the good and to stand firm in challenging circumstances.

4.2.2. Section 2

Section 2: Narrative portrayals regarding critical success factors of successful learning organisations

4.2.2.1. Explanatory Notes

I have learned about various successful strategies that successful schools and other successful organisations apply to their organisations and continuously improve their performance. I have learned about some of these strategies in workshops and some we shared in informal discussions with colleagues from other schools. The strategies that these schools have employed have

determined critical factors of being called a successful organisation. With this section of the questionnaire I wanted to determine, establish and know what matters in the school or what factors have the greatest impact on pupil performance in our school if they can be applied. I wanted to ascertain if there is anything that we do as a school that can rate us as a successful school or is there any successful factor that can relate to our school so that I can be able to draw, develop our school development plan to improve organisational learning in our school which will also result in good performance of the school and then become one of these successful schools.

4.2.2.2. Educator Statements

How do you put high expectations and targets because learners perform according to their own pace not yours?

It is the duty of the principal and management in the school to analyse work, why should we bother our-selves with that?

We know our work we do not need people to police around us

How do you involve parents because these people are illiterate? Parents around here are not learned, don't you know?

4.2.2.3. Messages and Comments

Like in section 1 the statements provided by these educators are negative. If you take them raw as they are, they can also lead you towards deferring to circumstances. But I think now and I feel that I have generated an approach of not giving in to negative circumstances in my heart and mind. I want to do things differently and I want to do what is right and good. The message I get from these

statements is that educators are fed up with the situation and the condition in our school. When people are annoyed and angry they utter statements that they do not mean. I also learned from these statements that we are no where in terms of success so it is upon my shoulders to drive the school towards its mission and vision. These statements have also indicated areas where the opportunity to start building the school as a learning organisation lie. I have learned to believe in myself. Now that I have mastered myself, my next responsibility is to establish good relationships so that people can have confidence in me. I know this is not easy as I say but I have to. These statements indicate to me that this questionnaire was a means to look back and a survey to determine where we we've been, where we are in relation to where we are going. Negativity in these statements is again boosting the income that I have to add "to my emotional bank account through courtesy, kindness, honesty" and then keep myself committed; then I know that I shall have built a reserve, and the trust towards me will increase and I can call upon that trust many times when I need it. I therefore take these statements as a wake up call from these educators to say, understand us as individuals, attend to our pleas no matter how small they may appear to be, keep your commitment towards us, clarify your expectations, be honest with us and let us sincerely know when you make a withdrawal. These statements remind me of one I read from one of the history books a long time ago while I was at high school. It was about the bullet that was without hesitation shot back at the general by the badly wounded soldier. This refers to those generals who stayed way back in the army and let others do the fighting and dying. These statements are those bullets telling me that I need to take up arms together with the soldiers and fight not for the dying but for the recovery and survival of the school. As I digested what these statements mean to me, information that builds on my character and my duty was being reinforced. The way and the direction that I had to follow after this interview was confirmed in me, I have an obligation to help these educators develop, pursue their excellence and grow profitably so that we can improve performance in our school and achieve our goals as stated in our vision, and excel in providing quality education. I have to help these people see the need to change, they must feel that they need to act positively so as they are hit with the reality of the situation of our school. Performance oriented and value driven I felt the need to empower these people and create a sense of urgency so that they can start preaching to each other, "the gospel of transformation and change." Step by step I have started drafting a plan of action towards implementing the strategies that will assist us to improve organisational learning in our school. I learnt and mastered the skill of attentive listening which enables you to pick up the real message that is sent to you through negative responses that you get from colleagues. I learnt to take problems and opposition as challenges that lead to opportunities of development and learning that will bring positive change to the school.

4.2.2.4. Educator's Reflective Comments

I know my work is not up to satisfaction because my learners are underperforming. I really want to change this situation. I set goals and get myself fully prepared with a positive attitude for the task before me and hope that I will do it but I don't. After some few days I get discouraged. I just can't keep a promise I make to myself. I need help.

I want to teach my children the value of learning so that they can work hard and get excellent achievement. But to get them to do anything I have to supervise every step. Why can't these learners do their work without being reminded?

There is so much to do in this school. I feel pressured every day. I have tried many different planning systems and many of them are failing. I am puzzled whether what I do here will ever change anything. I know I have a forceful personality and I can inspire people to contribute to assist levitate the situation but I feel uncomfortable here. I do not know what other people really might think and say of me about the inputs I have.

I see the strategies we are asked about very useful if they can ever be implemented in our school. I realised doing this section that in all you do you need to have some sort of policy that will serve as your guide and direct you. I think it's high time that such policies be developed and implemented in our school. I see them as very important tools to remedy the situation we are in at the present moment and I hope they will lead and help us to change and solve present problems in our school.

When engaging with this section I realised that it is not the first time I learn about them but I never tried any of them in the school because I thought that the principal must do it and that it will not help us with anything other than wasting our time. This exercise revived my thinking and change my way of doing things. Now I realise that with such guidelines and policies we will be able to quality work which we will be proud of.

Though it seems as if this job is for school managers but it helped me to do a self study about myself. I inwardly checked how my teaching is guided and planned without these activities done. I wish we are finished by now so that we can start discussing these policies and come up with our own to

direct our working. Having a guiding plan will assist us to know exactly what we are supposed to do and I think and believe that the analysis of work will be telling us what goes right and what goes wrong in our teaching. In this way our performance will improve. We will be able to improve the quality of our work as well. I think all these are interesting and important questions

4.2.2.5. Messages and Comments

In this section again statements that bear with them negativity are very few, the majority of the comments that educators put forth indicate clearly that these people are also tired with the situation and they want to fix things. What gives me more courage is that there is still hope and trust that the leader is their superior and they want to be led. They are also willing to contribute to strategies and techniques that can help the school perform better. I take this then as an opportunity to me, now that I have established myself, and have realised that there are educators who are now ready to move I must strive to work towards bringing those that still lack motivation on board. I said to myself I will master this because I have learned about motivational strategies when I did literature review in chapter three. This is time for me to put into practice what I learned. I was convinced that I can not succeed if I have to do this alone (Fulmer 1995, p. 9); extra ordinary achievement doesn't occur without the active involvement and support of the people you are working with (Goffee and Gareth 2005, p.36). I need those extra set of skills and abilities that can be learned from the other people. I therefore need to build a guiding team and begin to apply the principles of creative cooperation to establish synergy so that our communication should be synergistic in order to bring every one on board. Now that we communicate synergistically we will be able to develop the creative vision and mission statement for our school. I convinced myself that I now have an opportunity to build strong positive influences on staff motivation, commitment and working conditions which will lead to enhanced practices. I need to develop staff capabilities and capacities through professional development and team working in addressing these challenges. This situation emphasises in me that I need to instil to every educator and learner that all pupils can achieve and then exercise strong leadership and ensures that there are systems in place that emphasise on the importance of standards and the need for improvement, and also to make sure that educators and learners remain focussed on what is expected of them and develop in them the desire to improve continuously.

4.2.3. Section 3

Section 3: Narrative portrayals of leadership factors that would lead the school to organisational learning

4.2.3.1. Explanatory Notes

In fact as I prepared this section of the questionnaire there were things that were ascertained in my mind from literature studies that I have done and from conclusions of observations that I made, that they were not done correctly and some were totally not tried in our school. With this section of the questionnaire I wanted to find out from the people I lead how much is the leadership of the school contributing towards the school's poor performance, to identify areas that need development on the part of the leader and to invite, involve and engage as much as possible the people I am working with, in a joint process of change, learning and development, so that together we deal with the challenging issues in teaching and learning in the school. This information will help me build up my own plan of self development which I will implement in order to improve in the way I operate and function, and thus improve organisational learning in the school.

4.2.3.2. Educator Statements

How can you say negative things about your boss even if they are there? I have a sense of insecurity with this section

It requires courage and bravery to say the truth about your boss. The boss is always right no matter what.

Answering this section was very challenging to me. I felt nervous. I was not comfortable with the responses I had to give. My boss is superior

4.2.3.3. Messages and Comments

The message that is sent to me in these statements is that they are revealing to me the kind of the leader I am and the kind of the relationship between me and the educators was not good. I also have received the message that there are more opinions and inputs in the minds of these educators that if they were given an opportunity to voice them and take into consideration what they have can lead

us much into the solution of the challenging issues of poor performance in our school. The message I am receiving here is that educators have no trust in me; they are not certain what will happen to them if they said wrong things about 'their boss'. I also felt a sweat on my nose and some uneasiness in my stomach when I thought of a kind of a person I am as revealed in the messages I get from the utterances, I felt lost in the dust with no dignity. Though it is often said that making a come back with dignity is not easy, but I realised I have to. I felt the anger in me about myself that for such a very long time I did not do any good and justice to myself, my work and to the people I am leading. A little voice whispered to my ears in the midst of that dreaming in my mind and confirmed to me that no one is responsible for me, the energy that I have is not to belittle but to uplift, not to devastate but to rebuild, no to misguide but to light the way so that all people can stand on higher ground. I therefore realised that time for making judgements is gone; I need to open my ears to further revelations, listen and pay attention and treasure every insight that is shown so that I can discover more good surprises that can help me rebuild myself and the institution. Enthusiasm was aroused in me and I started there and then to draw the implementation of my own self development. I felt that no one can do this for me except myself. I know this is great work, but I have to get going and do the work it takes to sustain the most powerful engine I feel rising in me. I know there are no short cuts, no secrets or magic patches to success, but work must be done and I must develop a willing heart in me and also to all employees in the school.

4.2.3.4. Educator's Reflective Responses

I find this section opening an opportunity for me to voice out and share my opinions and ideas about things that leadership should consider doing so that our school can be functional. Should management consider what we are saying in our comments and responses, our school can rise from nothingness to greatness.

I think this section is giving us an opportunity to tell leadership in our school that as educators we are not powerless entities and spectators who are waiting to see our school sinking in the ocean. I suggest an immediate meeting after this where we are going to sit and develop the policies, strategies and the techniques which we are asked about in this questionnaire and which we never saw them applied in our school.

Oh what a good designed questionnaire! Oh what the clever policies and strategies for school improvement! Can't we please develop and design these policies and implement them in our

school? Oh what a good performing school with such wonderful leadership? Oh please where can we get such a directional leader?

This exercise is revealing to us a lot of valuable tools, strategies and techniques that if they can be made available to our school and implemented, can take our school very far. What do you think about this “BOSS?”

4.2.3.5. Messages and comments from reflective statements

Like in the first part of this section where I dealt with educator statements, the same message comes back, that there is no good work that is seen in leadership that will establish sustainable effects in the life of the school. I see myself in the messages as a stumbling block in the effectiveness of the school. In fact as I designed the questionnaire, one of the aims was to find out the stance of the educators towards change and to identify where we start in the midst of all the chaos that is in our school. In the messages I receive from this statement the starting point is the principal leader. I am using the plural “we” because I have learned from the literature review and also from the implications of the messages here that I can not bring change alone or rather impose change to the people. People must see the need and also be willing to change. The message that I get from these reflections is that the questionnaire triggered and fired the bullets of knowledge, skills and strategies that educators knew and had but they were not given the opportunity to externalise them and assure the leader that should he allow them to put into practise the information they have, the school can move. These educators are visionary, they are crying for a ground to demonstrate their abilities and capabilities. As I meditated on these statements, I was reminded of the kind of a leader that I have to transform into. Educators in this school need a servant and not an instructor. They know what to do, they have strategies to apply, but they do not have somebody to lead the way. The main message that I get here says to me; ‘rise up principal, wake up from your sleep; we need your service and your inspiration here.’

4.3. Memoranda and Letters.

As I read the comments educators included as part of further information given in the questionnaire, I found various messages that highlighted to me some skills, information and knowledge that I needed so that organisational learning could be improved in our school. I responded to these by writing memoranda of skills and knowledge that I had to acquire and also by writing letters even

though I didn't send the letters to the recipients because I did not know who they were in the first place, and that we agreed that the information they will give in the questionnaire will remain confidential. I learned the skill of engaging in a conversation with data and responded to it like Kathleen Pithouse describes it in her thesis on narrative self- study (Pithouse 2007). I found most of the interpretations of the messages I obtained from responses on the questionnaire being directed to me, personally as a leader who has contributed much to the state of the affairs of the school as it appeared. The responses were lamentations for help and some were wake up calls for action to take place. I was ascertained of the implications that the nature of the school environment has brought. I realised that I am entering into a transactional contract with my post. This implied that I redefine my career progress and success in the school through personally managing it and engage in lifelong learning. I had to learn to learn, learn to be creative enough in solving problems and also be technological literate so that I can apply appropriate technology to get the job done in a fast and accurate manner. I need to re-instil trust in my people and become an inspirational leader. I then developed the following memoranda of the things that I learnt and dealt with within me equipping myself so that I am able to face the challenges of the tensions that will result as we introduce and apply the knowledge and the skills I have learnt in order to improve organisational learning in the school.

4.3.1 Memoranda

Skilful and constructive ways of working with emotions

Some of the comments that educators added in their questionnaires were harsh and provoking, raising tension and emotions that could destroy the school further if one does not use the management competencies that are needed to deal with them. My major aim in engaging in practitioner research was to see to it that organisational learning at Khula Mlambo Primary School is improved. The turbulence and the uncertainties of the complex environments of schools create such tensions and raise emotions especially where change is needed. I then realised that I need the eight emotional intelligence competencies Auerbach (2008, p. 1 -2) is talking about. These competencies can be developed. I agree as I was one of those school principals that had a tendency to blame teachers, learners, their parents as well as the Department for poor results in their schools, and yet there is no evidence of any step taken by the principal to deal with the situation he/she maintains is not right. Yes, poor relationships among staff members make it difficult if not impossible for effective teams to be established in schools, but this can be corrected. As a principal and leader of the school I have realised that we need policies that will focus on measures that will direct the school towards

determining 'high expectations'. These measures need to be clearly communicated so that they will assist the school to change its attitude and facilitate the creation of an ethos of good practice. I have realised that total transformation is called for at Khula Mlambo Primary School so that we can overcome the situation of producing poor results but transformation has to begin with me. I learned to deal with my emotions first so that I could be able to manage and influence other people's emotions.

Without self- awareness and accurate self-assessment I will not be able to establish sound relationships with the employees because I will not learn to admit mistakes and accept realistic criticism. Such a competency will make me realise my strengths and my limitations so that I am able to accept help even if it comes from my subordinates. I have to take the initiative. Lacking this competency will make me a reactive leader rather than being a proactive one. I will fail to seize strategic opportunities because there will be no advance plans. In the period of great uncertainty and turbulence sound decision- making ability is demanded. In a learning organisation as a leader I must indicate my ability to make choices, to take full responsibility for and to be committed to applying the decision without compromising. I must also demonstrate enough empathy in times of uncertainty and confusion. Because if I don't, teachers will regard me as an indifferent and uncaring person. This will raise tension in the work place and teachers will be less cooperative and less communicative. I then equipped myself with adequate communication skills so that this does not hamper me during turbulent times. I also developed a high level of influence and confidence to convey the right impression to the people I am leading which was evident in the way people were so motivated as we began to address imminent challenges. I also managed to develop my ability to adapt to changing situations as the turbulent environment may demand. I still need though, to master the ability of self-management fully so that I can avoid reacting impulsively to stressful situations or get overly stressed, angry or upset when faced with rapidly challenged situations.

Reviving the morale of the teachers

When the spirits of the teachers in a school are good teachers begin to trust themselves, one another and their teaching practice motivates and encourages their learners and they improve their performance and get wonderful results. I was convinced when analysing teacher responses that some of the educator morale was very low. I learnt from literature that effective leadership has a positive effect upon morale, I then realised that I have a responsibility to revive teacher morale. Raising

teacher morale to me implied that I had to develop and re-instil trust in the teachers I am leading, so that I am able to create a positive and enduring impact on the personal as well as the professional lives of the educators. I must communicate hope and optimism through the support, motivation and the courage I will inspire in them. I knew and understood it that this calls for change in the way I operated, and that this was not going to be an easy task but for the development and the improvement of learning in the school; I have to pursue this. The result of raising teacher morale will be to enhance their commitment to demonstrate their hope and optimism for the future which will enable them to find joy and satisfaction in their careers. This will demonstrate the ability of pastoral care and of a servant. Being of help to the people requires me to commit myself to the task of assisting teachers to find success and satisfaction in their work. I understand that such commitment demands persistence and perseverance because it carries with it the challenge of a significant investment of time and energy and that I will undertake this without any additional financial compensation. I was also aware that I will only succeed raising teacher morale if I accept my teachers as developing people and professionals without judging them. The challenges that teachers face, I must view as challenges that I must help to overcome in my effort to deliver meaningful support. I realised this was not simply support but instructional support, coaching teachers to improve their performance wherever their skill level needs to be enhanced. I also have to take cognisance of the fact that I will be dealing with different people who are unique, so I have to learn and master and adjust my responses based on the observations that I shall have made of each individual teacher in order to meet their unique needs. In the process I must not forget that I am also a learner who will also be learning from colleagues. What will help me succeed is always to communicate the belief that I have that a person who is willing can overcome present challenges and accomplish marvellous things in the future. I must, as a way of motivation and encouragement, acknowledge my own difficulties and confusions and explain how I overcome these, in a genuine and caring way that will instil trust in the teachers, thus raising their morale.

I also found myself developing into a resource person. I learned to use the mentoring technique which assisted me in servicing the people. I managed to create an environment that began to allow teachers and learners to learn, succeed and grow even in complex and challenging situations. I also learned to develop programmes that will promote and provide effective training and support for teachers, and to establish the norms of collegiality, collaboration and continuous professional development. This became a means of providing a vehicle of mentoring and induction, and also increasing the knowledge base and general awareness of practices of teaching and learning as a norm for the school.

Improving and promoting collaboration and communication

Communication is the only means that links the segmented structure of the organisation. Communication takes many forms in all organisations and in every sector of that organisation. For things to go smooth, transparency and accessibility of information must be the norm. Allowing educators to develop expertise in their fields of practise rather than claiming that expert work is only obtained from people in higher position will assist in the process of involving teachers in distributed leadership which they will develop by working together. This will be ensuring maximum utilisation of human capacity in our school.

Work cannot be delegated when it is not communicated. Communication is the basic process by which we are able to carry out our function. It is therefore critical to work towards unclogging communication channels in all directions. Collaborative teams must be encouraged in the school, where educators can be involved in peer assessment and evaluation, assisting one another with challenges they experience so that continuous monitoring is maintained and continuous improvement is achieved. Communication works well in a good environment; my duty is therefore to create the organisational culture that influences communication. In an organisation where communication flows in all directions people's performance is enhanced. It becomes easier for the people to get feedback so that they are able to know whether the message has been received and understood or it may need further clarification. As a manager one must therefore, practice participatory communication to become a good communicator. I will facilitate a process in which we keep on reflecting through discussions, listening, trying to understand and creating a learning organisation. Participatory communication also means respecting and using indigenous communication systems like folk media and traditional media. These media provide a reflection of the values and the school view of the educators. Folk media refers to the performing arts, for example story – telling, puppetry, folk drama, folk dance, plays, rituals, mime and games. I perceive these being more relevant to the classroom. I will encourage educators to utilise them in class to facilitate the process of reflection among learners. This can also assist us in developing critical thinking un our learners. Traditional media refers to indigenous modes of communication such as meeting places. This media will allow us to engage in productive dialogue and discussions on how to improve teaching and learning in our school.

Advanced information technology has influenced the quantity and the quality of communication in the work place. Good communication using technology in the work place is essential for increasing

efficiency. Improving quality hinges on effective communication that increases responsiveness and innovativeness. We need then to allow technology to influence our communication for speedy growth but, I must ensure that information is not garbled and inaccurately presented. It will assist us in making information easily and swiftly accessible. Information will move fast and people will not struggle for information, thus saving us time. At times formal communication channels are more difficult to follow, that is why it is very important to allow informal communication channels to supplement the formal channels in our school. I need to open lines of communication to all employees at work. As I delegate work I must ensure that I send messages that are clear and complete, through a medium that is appropriate. I must also listen and pay attention to what employees are saying, acknowledge and utilise this if it is appropriate.

Open and effective communication will assisted us to articulate the vision of the school that we generated out of ideas that were contributed by all members. I was able to develop a very strong team spirit. Members of this team started to work collaboratively so towards the attainment of their vision, they want to see the vision becoming real.

Servicing the people

I realised as I did the portrayals of learning that my approach towards my duties needed complete transformation. I realised that I must be of service to the people, they need continuous development for their performance to improve continuously. Quality teaching and learning is the most important issue at Khula Mlambo primary School and we need to develop, maintain and sustain it. It is the commitments that I make and engage myself in that will improve quality learning in our school. I realised I need to focus more on the importance of setting goals for development and improvement. I need to devise ways and means of ensuring that teachers and learners remain focused on these goals. I thought of what I could do to ensure that teachers are supported. I must establish a strong belief in the school community that every person can be an achiever. Together we must develop teams that will have a strong sense of ownership of the changes that we have to make. The teachers need to be empowered so that they can develop and become experts in their areas of operation. I therefore had to develop certain characteristics that will help me to be of to the people. I realised I had to involve educators at our school in identifying problems and in solving them. I need to develop in the school a culture that will facilitate school improvement and change. I realised that organisational learning will be improved if the quality of the educators is improved, the quality of education offered in the school

will be improved, curriculum implementation will be improved and teaching and learning will be improved.

In improving the quality of educators I must establish norms of continuous adult learning to heighten competence and effectiveness I must, allow for experimentation and must remain open to new ideas. I must identify and develop potential education leaders; encourage ongoing professional growth and self-fulfilment of educators; build a collaborative work culture and promote team spirit through developing improved attitudes towards education and develop within educators' skills of self-assessment, goal- setting for improvement and coping skills to keep abreast of change and innovation. In improving the quality of education I must improve the quality of interactions and relationships to improve team effectiveness, the professional work climate by creating clarity, integration and commitment to goals at all levels. I must also have the courage to eliminate dysfunctional structures and practices. To improve curriculum implementation I must clarify content knowledge in the curriculum in order to increase and up-date this content knowledge in subject areas. I need to provide models of what successful implementation looks like and coach educators for technical support and implementation problems. Finally in improving teaching and learning I must develop individual educator's strengths in order to improve their technical skills in teaching, build competence and develop collaborative structures and supportive relationships.

4.3.2. Letters to respondents

As I reflected on the comments and the statements the participants made, and pushed now by the desire to want to work now that I realise I have mastered some skills that can make us rise up and move, I responded to what they had said. Even though I did not know who they were but I felt that there is some learning and transformation which raised insights on attitudes, knowledge and skills that I personally needed to attend to so that I could, as a leader, develop and improve organisational learning. In the first letter I acknowledge the messages that I have received and motivate educators to rebuild their trust, raise their morale and recommit to good work. In the second letter I realised that educators have been frustrated for a long time by the poor service and performance that is evident in our school. We need to plan for the improvement of our school now. These letters as I wrote were reinforcing the stand that I took that I am now standing up to do what is right and needed by my colleagues for our own development and that of the school. I was putting into practice what I learnt.

The two letters I wrote are:

Response letter 1. Acknowledging the messages in the questionnaire, the negative statements and motivating educators towards a new commitment.

Dear educators

It takes courage for a person to externalise his/her frustrations to his/her boss. I take this opportunity to thank you for the courage that you took to let me see the kind of a leader I am, and the frustrations that it exerted on you as we worked. I am very grateful for your eagerness because that has opened an opportunity for me to learn. I am taking this time to apologise for the inconvenience my behaviour has caused the school and now I take this time again to wake up and amend what has been broken. I have learned that I have not been of service to you; I have learned that you no longer have trust in me. I have realised that I have created fear in some of you, hostility and insecurity in others. I am aware just how much damage has been caused to you and to the school.

I am quite certain that with your help we will succeed. I have seen the potential that you have and I am fully convinced that strategies and techniques that can take our school to a higher level you already have in mind. Come let us adjust our behaviours and communication so that we address the challenges that face us. Come let us acknowledge our widely different attitudes and take on a new responsibility and adopt a positive disposition towards our duties so that we are able to make our dream about the future of our school real. Together let us let go of all the practices of the past, let us stand together and hold each ones' hands and rebuild our school.

The responses that you have given indicates to me that you are tired of living in the situation that we are at, you need to move into a changed vibrant situation that will always talk to your growth and development. Its long time that you have been dreaming dreams that have not been realised, that is evident in your utterances. You are the ones that have the power to determine what your future is and you are the same person that will make it real. Come let us use this opportunity to acquire our work experience and work on our skills now. We need to establish together a collaborative culture where all of us will participate in decision making and vision sharing. Together we will be able to develop a set of values that will assist us in developing this collaborative culture and together we will lead our school towards lifelong learning and improvement.

Regards

Luphoko T.A.

Response letter 2. Inviting educators to school improvement planning

Dear educators

Thank you for your responses and your request for development of policies and programmes for development and improvement in the school. This needs planning. School improvement planning is not a duty that the principal can do alone seated in the office. School improvement planning is an inclusive process that aims at developing strategies that will help us to develop. Such planning will help us to manage change and to determine the direction that we will take for our development. This planning embraces all forms of planning that we will undertake. We need operational planning where we shall be looking at the scheduling of the programmes and events on a day to day basis; we need to do tactical planning of how we are going to distribute the resources to areas where they are needed so that the goals of the school can be achieved. We also need to do strategic planning where we will be planning for longer- term goals and objectives to determine the direction in which the school should move.

This activity can not be performed by a single person; it involves all role players in the school. I therefore kindly invite your participation in this exercise so that we can come up with a plan that will be suitable for all of us. As we plan we also have to realise that our duty is not a once off event, we need to review and evaluate our planning process at regular intervals, so that a new planning phase should be at a level higher than the preceding one. This shows that school improvement is a constantly upward spiral movement which makes ongoing organisational learning possible. On this note I therefore invite you to become involved in school improvement planning with me. Your ideas and your opinions are the most important contributions that we need now as building blocks for our plan. Your positive contributions and your participation indicate and direct a clear path towards growth and achievement for all of us.

When we have planned accurately and commit ourselves to implement our plan successfully, the quality of education in our school will improve; we will also be developed as experts in the areas we with which are operating. Continuous evaluation of our plans will make us continuous developers and we shall be learning every day. Come lets join hands and build our school, you have the power and the responsibility to reconstruct this school

Regards

Luphoko T.A.

4.4. Summary

This chapter centres on my lived learning experience as a principal leader of Khula Mlambo Primary School through the questionnaire which I developed and divided into three sections which I think are very important in establishing and sustaining learning in an organisation. I have explored the responses that the educators gave and I found more important messages in the comments they have made in each section. I have also shown how my learning and the motivation to let go of the past and start working towards the improvement of organisational learning has developed and has been reinforced through the analysis and the interpretation of the messages that were sent to me through these responses.

This exercise in this chapter revealed to me that leadership in a school is a social process which can be successful when other social processes of continuous learning and continuous research are applied. The exercise also revealed loopholes and areas of development that are needed in our school through the contributions that were made by the employees who participated in the questionnaire. It also highlighted the extent to which learning was enhanced in me. It also emphasised the importance of human relationships and emotions in learning. I also drew attention to the importance of remaining aware of how social patterns of power and privilege can affect relationships and emotions. I have gained more information and insights from interacting with the response of educators in this questionnaire; I now attempt to build on these insights in the next chapter and to develop a conceptualisation of my masters learning researching experience.

CHAPTER 5

CONCEPTUALISING MY SELF-STUDY EXPERIENCE OF LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT AS A PRACTITIONER RESEARCHER

5.1. Introduction

I explained in the opening chapter of this dissertation how I undertook to inquire about my own experiences and practices as a school principal. This experiential inquiry contributed a great deal to my development as a school principal and leader and gave me direction. I realized immediately after engaging in this exercise that I was inactive. I was revived and further regained interest and confidence for further learning and research. I am convinced that my involvement in this experiential inquiry has been worthwhile for me; I became interested in exploring its educative potential as a form of learning.

I developed my own 'working theory' that experiential inquiry is learning engagement, looking at the situation and the state of our school in terms of successful learning and performance, I attempted to organize and present my thinking clearly about the possible educational value of experiential inquiry. I anticipated that this form of experiential inquiry will offer me opportunities for constructive learning experiences. I was also convinced that such learning experience will be evident from interactions with fellow students in our group discussions and individual meetings, in the participation of educators in verbal conversations in our informal discussions, in their participation in the completion of the questionnaire and in the comments they give. I then formulated my central research question underpinning my study trying to understand and looking forward to learning as a researcher through practicalising my opinion of the educative potential of experiential inquiry. I then positioned myself as a subject of my study and my learning during this masters' research. I then designed three key questions as a part of my engagement with my key research question.

As the first step in my research process, I put into practice my theory of the educative potential of experiential inquiry. I discussed how I strived to develop a course design that would be conducive to the development of my experiential inquiry (See chapter three of this dissertation). In chapter 4 I focused on my lived experiences of learning through the administration of the questionnaire and my engagement with the responses that I received from educators. In this chapter I give an account of my experience as a practitioner researcher using the framework of a narrative self- study research report. In this report I engage with data that were generated through the research questionnaire.

I will now attempt to respond to the question on how to conceptualise my learning as a practitioner researcher to provide stimulus and direction for my future educational work and to enter into a discussion regarding organisational learning. Conceptualization of my learning experience will guide me to new learning and researching as I try to improve organisational learning in our school (Eisner 1993, p. 10). I understand through engagement with literature (Mouton and Marais 1990, p. 25) that conceptualization is contingent upon context, relationships and situations therefore what I present in this chapter is not fixed; it is however, partial and provisional, and therefore open to change.

I commence this chapter by looking back at the educational ideas and experiences that informed my masters' learning researching experience. I then move to conceptualise this experience as a learning engagement that I became aware of through my narrative self- study report. I also consider how this conceptualization will help to clarify some of my educational ideas. Finally in this chapter I look at how I can make use of what I learnt through my study to enter into public conversations about improving continuous learning in a school

5.2. Positioning my learning researching experience

I did two honours degrees prior to registering for this masters' degree. In both degrees my interest was in management, one as a librarian and the other in education management. I think this is where the skill of learning experience through research began. The learning experience I engaged in when I designed my research in chapter 3 and the inquiry into my own lived experience which I presented in chapter four also spurred on my desire to learn through research. Learning concepts which fed into my masters' research process mainly included ideas about every educator in a school being engaged in the action research processes on a daily basis; leading, implementing and managing curriculum; managing in complex and turbulent environments; effecting and managing change. Conceptualization therefore indicated to me that I may not be able to use the same approach to dealing with every situation as each situation is unique even though it might resemble the one that preceded it (Mouton and Marais 1990, p.25). This also clearly indicated to me a shift in the duties and the responsibilities of the manager of the school. Further interest to engage in learning through research was reinforced by insights that I gained as I engaged with literature about leading and managing in turbulent and complex environments (Escobar 2003; Levy 200; Moloji 2003; Jackson 2000; Smith 2005; Stacey 2007). I realized that total transformation is the means that can save the situation. The turbulence of the environment globally also affects everyone and everybody who is to survive through responding to these challenges, conforming to the demands of change and transformation (Arterburn and Stoop 2006, p. 109). In my learning experience with regard to these challenges I learned that accepting the responsibility of being a servant leader means that even

though the position that I hold in the school is the highest of all, I must allow myself and be pleased to take the stance of not being a boss of the people but be a leader. This took the stress off not performing well and also took the edge off the negative responses I got from some of the statements made by educators in the questionnaire. I invited educators in our school to changed attitudes and to show a willingness to do better and. I had to let go (Arternburn and Stoop 2006, p. 87) of my traditional style of management and control which were inherited from my two honours degrees. In order to transformation I had to think differently and do things in a different and new way. Prior to this research I had a referral tendency when work had to be done. I was used to be responding to the demands of the Department when submissions were to be made to the circuit. I would always address the people I am working with on behalf of the circuit. I would always say the circuit wants us to do this and that. There was nothing that came from me as an initiative or innovation. I did not invite any opinions from the educators in the school as to how we should go about improving our working practices. I just told the people what the circuit wanted us do and therefore every-body had to conform and cooperate. I realised that I personally needed constant change and transformation on a day-to-day basis

I engaged with ideas on inquiry-based learning that I encountered in the literature dealing with successful schools and looked into the factors that characterize them, developing strategies towards establishing organisational learning and leadership that could lead to the establishment and maintenance of continuous learning in the school. I also thought about transformative learning potential in engaging with the people I am working with so that together we can collectively generate data that will assist us in developing our school into a learning organisation. I was particularly interested in self study research into the development and improvement of learning organisations, with an emphasis on the role that leadership has to play. Interacting with me about this narrative study contributed to my decision to adopt a self-study approach towards this research.

5.3. Conceptualising my learning researching experience

In the first chapter I described how I developed my key research question. I explained how the research proposal developed and became refined. I indicated the aim of the study and declared my stance and the objectives of this research study. I also indicated the research setting and provided the outline of the whole research.

In the second chapter I described narrative self-study research process of my experience as a practitioner researcher in the field of education. I gave a reflective explanation of what I had learned

about practitioner research, indicating and paying attention to what is taking place in practitioner research and establishing how to enhance the trustworthiness of the study. In chapter 6 I will reflect on the experience I had as I worked as a practitioner-researcher i.e. putting theory into practice and participant roles and relationships that were established. I will reflect on the experience I had in generating and gathering research data and information, my experience of making meaning from significant data and on conceptualizing my learning and development experience as a practitioner researcher.

I find the narrative self-study research report in chapter 4 invigorating each time I read it. Chapter 4 has become a store-house for me of ideas, discoveries, possibilities and connections to what I am attempting to achieve and more. I am also intrigued and sometimes become uncomfortable with the recognition of how little I know. The research report describes and inspires a social way of life that I have conceptualised as an 'educative engagement'. In view a social process of living arises out of human experience and interaction that is complex, contingent upon numerous variables and changeable. It is difficult for me to give a fixed definition or to draw a set of criteria which can be utilized to classify or measure educative engagement in leading-learning and research. However my learning-researching experience in assisted me in discerning the following procedures of learning by which I can recognise educative engagement as a social process of living. In this chapter I therefore attempt to bring clarity to and elaborate on what I found learning to be in this study (Mouton 2001, p. 175).

The collection of data in chapter 4 revealed that I and the participants of the questionnaire are beginning to look more closely at our practices, the context, our viewpoints and our experiences. The report shows how we became aware of and how we started to pay attention to things we ignored, some we disregarded, or avoided thinking about or abandoned to implement. Also through working with the narrative portrayals that I constructed, noteworthy aspects and achievable implications of my experience of leading were alerted. I discovered from the portrayals of learning I have constructed that the leadership style I practiced in the school was not accommodative; members of staff were not consulted or considered. Decisions about and for them were taken and imposed upon them for implementation without their involvement. This is what I got from their comments. I was also made more conscious of the significance good communication; of consultation together with collaboration have for the school. I realised that these must be promoted. As I read the portrayals again and again, re-engaging with 6 memoranda and 2 letters; I depicted several ways of learning. 'Noticing' becomes a process of learning within a social context.

This report prompted me and the participants of the questionnaire into thinking of new ways to address a variety of issues that are significant for our own context and practices. These issues include among others personal as well as organisational development and continuous learning, motivation, consultation, curriculum management and leadership. The memoranda in the report also reveal how I have begun to interrogate and think more deeply about improving organisational learning in the school and also the implications and challenges of putting into practice what I learned. The kind of learning that is demonstrated here is 'experience-centred and interactive'. 'Rethinking' then is another procedure of the social process of learning. As I proceeded with the research I found myself becoming introspective regarding how I managed and led the school towards becoming a learning organisation. As I indicated in chapter two I carried my journal along as I attended any management workshop or meeting that I was supposed to attend. My thinking in the meeting changed from being a passive listener because in every meeting I was engaged in interactive listening and I was interested in what I had to do to change, make better or initiate and develop in our school so that it can develop into a learning school.

A third procedure of learning is 'reviewing'. I understand reviewing as a way of looking at an issue from another viewpoint or from someone else's perspective. As the research process proceeded I found myself reviewing processes and procedures in our school, getting rid of those that are no longer applicable, amending those that needed amendments and adding new ones that were needed for the development of our school. The process made us realise the importance of implementing programmes and policies that were meant for our development which we overlooked before I engaged in this study. The report record shows how I and the participants gained new perspectives on a number of different experiences, issues and contexts as we reviewed the manner in which we conducted ourselves. Furthermore the report highlights what engagement activities can assist in improving organisational learning and that self study is part of the learning. The report prompted participants to reconsider their experiences and practices from different points of view. Each time I look into the report, I review my memories and opinions of the experience of learning in the light of what the narrative portrayals suggest were the participants' perception of that experience and work on them in a way that set up opportunities for further development and study.

A fourth procedure I find in the process of learning is 'innovation'. Using the term innovation here does not imply that something new only is created. To me innovating in addition to creating or developing an insight that is new for you, involves the acquisition of a sense of ownership that is developed in you. I was also prompted in this research to look into strategies that would encourage educators to take ownership of the school and its development. I needed to raise awareness of the

fact that our practice in the school reflects the kind of people we are. I realised that no one wanted to be associated with a bad name. This motivated the educators to change their attitudes and you could observe that every body wanted change and improvement. This emphasised the need to involve educators through consultations and engagements in the activities of the school and in the development and amendment of policies so that educators could support such amendments. Everybody in the school started to experience the sense development and improvement in his or her area of practice. As I moved around the school observing the vibrant movement that has now been generated in our school, I lamented the time that I wasted at the school doing nothing. Now you can observe the number of projects and programmes that educators are conducting and you can perceive the enthusiasm and the excitement in both learners and educators because a conducive and creative climate of teaching and learning in the school is being introduced. Chapter 4 shows clearly how I and the participants were involved in bringing into being developmental ideas, strategies and understandings to bring about change in our school. The memoranda show the process of constructing portrayals to represent aspects of learning which inspired me to continue to originate questions and ideas about learning and means of improving continuous learning at Khula Mlambo Primary School. As a result I now regard the report in chapter four as a resource that stimulates the ongoing process of development of new thoughts and queries whenever I and others re-engage with it.

A fifth procedure in the process of learning I found was 'envisaging'. In this procedure the report shows how I and the participants envision how things could be different within our professional and social contexts. The report indicated clearly that our imagination as we began to think in terms of change and improvement opened up an opportunity to sharing possibilities and for us to make choices and take actions together towards brightening the future of the school. Through working with the report I realized that our choices are constrained by the situations, the relationships and capacities that are depicted from the portrayals. As I interrogated them envisioning the future school that I see, the connotations that I attached to those uttered statements, especially the negative ones, instead of frightening me, inspired me and made me realise how we can make some good choices and take positive actions within and in response to those constraints and change the status quo in our school. This became evident in the cooperation and the enthusiasm I observed and witnessed from educators as we started implementing some of the strategies and knowledge that I gained in the process of the research. The support that I received from the members of staff as we planned some projects and programmes for improving our practice in the school and the way they contributed to our discussions in our general meetings indicated that the people have now a different view of the school; one with a brighter future. Engaging people in the activities of our

school yielded many good results that, if I had not committed myself to this, transformation would never been achieved. One of the results of envisioning was the development of our school logo and the emblem which was designed by one of the educators in the school to express his ideas about the future school that we wanted to develop. Before educators were involved in decision making in the school, such opinions and innovations were not seen. Our school now has a living vision and mission which is enshrined in the motto that appears below the emblem: *“THROUGH EDUCATION WE GROW”*. The motto is articulated by every one in the school after every gathering in our meetings, our morning briefings and assembly with learners as a reminder to all of us about our purpose and mission in the school. This motivates all of us to always want to do our work effectively so because now we want to live our purpose.

Another procedure for learning is called ‘puzzling’. I understand this procedure as openness to uncertainty and the acknowledgement that learning is an unfinished process and is a daily phenomenon. I was puzzled by the responses and comments made by respondents in the questionnaire. I didn’t realise that people had the potential that I now see in them before I engaged them in our discussions in meetings on how to address issues at stake in our school. I was also amazed by the way people were so excited at the prospect of changing the status quo of the school and the clever ideas they contributed towards the improvement of our school. The research report indicated to me how the feedback of the participants in the questionnaire gave a feeling of not knowing, which raised within me a feeling of anxiety, emptiness, confusion and insecurity. Nevertheless I appreciated the learning potential of not knowing and this strengthened my desire to proceed with learning. Thanks be to God I was not finished. This research report drew my attention to opportunities for learning from and with the participants and to avenues of ongoing inquiry and attempts to improve organisational learning at the school. The memoranda in the report confirm that the process of learning will continue long after I have finished the dissertation, hence continuous learning can be sustained.

A further procedure of learning is ‘caring’. The report indicated that people and issues in the school are to be looked after and cared for. People need support, encouragement, trust, understanding and recognition in their life if job satisfaction and employee sustenance and maintenance, in order to create a positive healthy and accommodative climate in the school, are to be obtained. The literature study revealed to me that people cannot be manipulated and operated as machines; they cannot be treated as empty entities that must act and do as instructed. They have critical thinking minds that carry valuable and important ideas and opinions that can build the school. Motivation and a change of attitude are the result of the relationship that is established in the school through

the way people relate and interact with one another. I learned from the literature study that money that people get as compensation for the work that they are doing is sometimes not enough to motivate people towards work because even those that do not perform get their salaries. But the appreciation which is carried in the little phrase 'thank you' when good work is done, no matter how small a gesture this may be, plays a very important role in motivating people towards doing better than before. That motivation goes to the heart and activates the mind towards positive thinking and raises the enthusiasm to always want to do better because one feels appreciated, and recognised. Positive attitudes are groomed and the atmosphere of the school becomes warm. Trust and understanding among educators in our school is being strengthened. This is evident from the support and the commitment I observe in the school. The report also shows that participants think about ways of enhancing their care for the people in their profession and context. The report also draws attention to participants discovering, sharing and exploring learning issues that they care about. From the observations I made the caring attitude that emerged in our school was also spread to learners. Educators began to be concerned about the welfare of the learners as this had a very great influence in the learning and the performance of these learners and had never, formerly been taken into consideration. Some, now that they have developed a caring heart accepted the call of the '*loco parentis*' duty of the educators beyond expectation. A number of educators adopted orphaned and vulnerable learners for whom they buy uniforms and provide for their other needs and this has made a tremendous change in the lives of these learners including their performance at school. Working with the learning portrayals made it possible for me to further areas of interest and concern which I highlighted in the memoranda in chapter four. I feel that the participants will make a good team and I have developed a strong sense of them as individual valuable beings that have made, and whom I trust will continue to contribute positively towards improving organisational learning at Khula Mlambo Primary School. Learning portrayals in the report reminded me of the importance of approaching and consulting people in future learning and researching with respect and consideration, so that they can support and develop as well a willing heart to learn.

5.4. Looking at instructional issues in my learning research.

I stated in the beginning chapter that undertaking this self-study research and the reason for choosing this topic emerged from recognizing the poor performance at school. I realised that one of the ways to deal with poor performance was by improving organisational learning. I also indicated in chapter one that I will be exploring among other things ways and methods of teaching and learning, the experiences of people working at the school and their interaction; the end result of which is helping all the people in our school to learn to become continuous learners, and in that way improve

performance in our school as well. I shall have not done justice to my study if I leave out instructional issues in my learning research.

This dissertation is supported by an instructional view as being 'relational' and 'experiential' and an understanding of learning and researching as 'interconnecting' and 'symbiotic' processes. By conceptualising my researching experience as a learning engagement, I believe that I am presenting and making available reference resource material which I and others who might engage with it and find it valuable, can look again to inform instruction or teaching and research in education. My conceptualization of a learning engagement also helped me to gain further clarity in the way I think and in what I am thinking. I consider instruction and research in my conceptualization, and I see learning and researching as modes of human interaction and that it is imperative to pay attention to the quality of lived experiences in the course of that interaction. I have learned that I can be effective in developing organisational learning in the school if I fully utilize the primary sources of intellectual intelligence which are the people I am working with and their capabilities. Kakabadse and Kakabadse (2005, p. 59) warn that leadership is not just about the top of the organisational hierarchy but a responsibility to multiple agendas negotiating paths through a multiplicity of issues and circumstances. Faced with the challenges of such turbulence in the environment which makes it very complex, the school needs a new approach which is a dynamic process of generating a cultural and a collective intelligence that will enhance continuous collaborative learning (Joette, William and Doane 2007, p. 297), development and change in our school. Organisational change and development will succeed if we look at both the dynamics of the functions that make up the school complex but also take into consideration the dynamics of the system itself. You need those extra minds of the other people in the system to assist in identifying those dynamics because when you operate in isolation you will not succeed, because you may not be able to see everything that is happening in every corner of the organisation. This shows that people undertaking a research learning exercise will discover many valuable opinions and ideas through interacting with people and acting on those discoveries. After realizing the issues that revolve around instruction in this research and the importance of involving other people and establishing a good relationship with them, I came up with the following question so that it can assist me in acting this new understanding by initiating new learning and research. The question is: How do I interact with and relate to the people I am working with in the school? Embedded in this question is the style of leadership that I applied and the consequences of leading people following that style, including the decision-making processes that are followed in our school. This question assisted me to remember that human beings, their relationships and experiences are at the heart of learning; and that it is my responsibility to pay careful attention to the quality of these relationships. The question also reminds me of my

responsibility to be self-reflexive and to pay attentive care to the manner in which I interact with other people. This question may also be useful to others who are involved in learning and research.

5.5. Entering into public conversations.

This is a study where I explored my learning path and my learning. I have clarified my thinking about learning and research through this narrative self- study research. Through the enthusiasm that I generated as the research exercise unfolded, I realised that I wish to move outward from my study to become involved in public conversations about learning and research in the field of leadership to improve our institutions through the establishment and the improvement of organisational learning in schools. I am not aware of any course in the Department of Education which is designed to train school leaders or principals. Most of the principals that hold this position today do not have any academic or professional qualification that make them suitable for the positions including myself, other relevant qualifications are considered when employing principals. In my view, this situation affords more exciting opportunities to explore and share a range of understandings, approaches and experiences. As practitioners in the field of leadership in education we have a responsibility to pay attention to our own learning in our own practice and in the research that stimulates our public conversation. If we want to achieve a high degree of improvement, development and change in our schools we need to employ a variety of interventions which will include transformation of individuals and culture. We need to generate systems in our schools that will be capable of implementing the school's mission and objectives of being problem-solving in a collective process of creating new innovations. Leadership in schools today needs to focus on building systems that generate collective intelligence and continuously facilitate new learning and change. As a result new organisational forms through cooperation from all stakeholders could be created. I think that such inquiries and conversations can be strengthened by a shared recognition of need so that intellectual and practical learning from various people can be brought together. Such additional research that explores how experienced and inexperienced school leaders learn about leading and improving organisational learning in their schools could also extend the growing body of work. It could be very profitable to the profession if school principals who are interested in studying and promoting organisational learning in their schools can create dedicated spaces within which to hold public research conversations to offer support and inspiration for individual and collegial attempts. Possible spaces for conversations about developing and researching could include a variety of strategies such as discussion forums, news letters, seminars, conferences and many other strategies one may think of. It would be imperative for such conversations to include both experienced and inexperienced school principals.

5.6. Summary

In this chapter I have shown how I move my masters study forward and outward to provide direction for my future learning and to begin to enter into public conversation in the education community. I have developed a conceptualization of my learning-searching experience as a social process in learning engagement. I have identified and discussed what I termed procedures of social learning that I have become aware of when I was engaging with the writing of the report in chapter 4. The conceptualization has allowed me to recognize human beings and their relationships and experience as a means of learning and searching. From there on I developed questions which guided my future research work. I have also outlined my desire to become involved in public conversations about learning and researching aiming of improving organisational learning in schools. In chapter 6 which is the concluding chapter, I give a reflective reading of my study and also consider the educative worth of this study.

CHAPTER 6

A REFLECTIVE REVIEW OF THE STUDY

6.1. Introduction

I took a narrative self-study stance towards research and learning to explore my living experience with the aim of improving organisational learning in my institution. I focused on learning and researching as interrelated and symbiotic processes which are important towards achieving my goal. I have also considered the human experiences, their relationships and emotions that are very crucial to the smooth running and the living of these processes.

Here I outlay a reflective reading of the study of my experience as a practitioner- researcher in my institution of work being a leader there. I highlight and discuss narrative paths of learning that emerged as I proceeded with this study. I consider how each path might open up for me further opportunities of learning and research as a practitioner researcher, thus improving and sustaining continuous learning at our school. I will also reflect on the educative worth of this study taking into consideration the aim of this research as spelled out in chapter one and in the conclusion. I look into the working theory which stimulated and guided my research and review my thinking with regard to what I have learnt.

Prior to my engagement in this research study one could not find any element of proper management in my school, let alone the functions of monitoring, evaluation and moderation, which were never tempted. Our school was managed in a complete *laissez faire* manner with no proper direction; every one did as he or she pleases. I lacked the courage and the motivation to learn and to equip myself with the skills and the information to lead our school. Instead of being resourceful to the educators, I was the one who would always refer them to their colleagues should there be any information that they wanted from me that I did not know. I couldn't take or make any sound decisions even simple ones. I always referred and directed teachers to the circuit office where I thought decisions of Khula Mlambo primary school were taken. I learned a lot through my engagement in this study and I have acquired many skills which I did not have before. My position as a fellow learner in this research study offered me an opportunity to observe fellow educators and discovered areas of development which then placed an obligation in me to take the responsibility to guide educators and to facilitate learning in the school.

I am therefore concluding this chapter by giving a reflection of my personal growth and development which I obtained through my engagement in this study. I will not forget the challenges I came across during the process of this study and the positive contribution they made in my life and

my work in particular. I will also reflect on organisational growth and development looking to the worthiness of the study and the benefit to the school as an organisation from this study.

6.2. A reflective reading of the study

The central research question that provided direction for this study concerned my role in developing and improving learning among all people at Khula Mlambo Primary School. Doing this kind of study required that I begin with identifying and knowing the values of our school, which implies therefore that I cannot question or inquire into my work without considering the values of the school and those values that are embedded in my thinking. Learning and development are the most important things that I always want to achieve in life. I indicated in chapter one that this study explored how we operate and practice at Khula Mlambo Primary School, how other institutions are functioning and what we should do in order to ensure that learning takes place in our school. The three main questions I developed aided me much in the exploration of my experience as a practitioner-researcher. In the process of my research and learning I realized along the way that doing research as you practice is a means of developing and improving you in your own field of practice. You gain the knowledge, information and skills that enrich you and transform your thinking and you become critical and creative in your thought. In this way personal theories that you have generated are deepened, strengthened and affirmed. Now that I reflect on this study, I will be reviewing the preceding chapters and showing the paths of learning I saw emerging as I continued with my research.

The first path that I saw emerging was opened up by the realisation that learning and research are experiential, emergent, changeable and a continuous process. Such a situation calls for attention to uncertainties in learning and researching and also opens up opportunities for further learning, discovery, development and growth. When I was asked by my lecturers to identify a problem that was affecting me in my work situation to do research on, the issue of organisational learning came to my mind; in fact it came as a wish to improve organisational behaviour because I thought it was the behaviour of the educators that was to be corrected which resulted in poor performance in our school. As I engaged with literature in chapter three and with the assistance of my supervisor, I had to rework my topic and it was finally refined to address the issue of organisational learning. This was a time of planning and discovery for me and I gained generative experience which stimulated new thinking on how I would go on with my research study.

I also learned that, in most instances in our practices and daily lives we do not understand what authority means and we turn authority upside down so that it represents the opposite of what genuine authority is. After applying the principles of true authority in our school, I realised that true

authority promoted real freedom and opens the door to real possibilities instead of controlling people by lording it over them. True authority according to Munroe (2011, p. 102) does not humble people but makes people humble themselves and it promotes the desire to serve others. Real authority ignites the personal potential within each person while bringing protection and life instead of domination and death or stagnation (Munroe 2011, p.12). As I observed the condition in our school implementing some of the information I have gathered in the process of this study it became evident to me that if people are given the opportunity to practice their authority in the domains of their practice, they no longer speak in reference to others instead they become creative and innovative. They develop trust in you and you will not seek them to follow you, they will be inspired by your practice and follow you. Allowing people to dominate in their domains of authority by empowering them to empower others is a strategy that will assist the school in creating drivers of growth and development, making an investment in social development and giving us total freedom within the boundaries of our personal domain (Munroe 2011 p. 263).

Chapter 2 shows how I continued reflecting on my experiences and also on how feedback from the participants challenged my thinking and practice and prompted me to rethink and adjust aspects of my practices which I included in the memorandum that is included in chapter four. In chapter two I also put emphasis on how my thinking about how to carry out my research kept on developing through interaction with the texts that were generated during the study.

Chapter three explains the design process of my study. In this chapter, designing the questionnaire in such a way as to divide it into three categories was an ongoing learning experience for me. Evolving ideas about how I could put what I have learnt through research into practice are conveyed. It is also indicated in this chapter what values, ideas, interest and concerns are clarified; hence this chapter became connected to my past and future. The experience of reviewing my course design helped me to become aware of improvements that I can make when engaged in course design in the future.

Chapter four reflected my engagement with the participants of the questionnaire through their responses and revealed many loopholes and gaps in our practices that were to be closed. The chapter revealed also the character of the leadership that is practised and invitations to change and transformation were presented as major needs that needed immediate attention. The chapter also presents memoranda on areas that needed immediate transformation and this also served as a plan of action for the improvement of the status of the school. The chapter reveals that learning was directed by the narrative self-study report as a means of giving an account of my learning experience.

Through the study of my experience as a practitioner researcher, I have gained information and insight into learning and researching and I now understand that these processes are lifelong daily learning activities. This gave me confidence to acknowledge and engage with the shocks and frustrations that I will encounter in future research practices. I need to accept negative things people are saying about me and correct them. This made me learn how to accept other people's uncertainties and mistakes in learning and research. The study I undertook as a practitioner-researcher awakened my observations and thinking which made me utilise the capabilities that I had and which because of the lack of commitment and dedication to my work, were never practised in my leadership and management tasks. I now accept that I am not always an expert coming to spell out to my colleagues how to change, but to take this study as a learning exercise where the solution of the problem that we have identified will come from the different opinions and views that people will bring forth. Because participants in the research are involved in the process they will take ownership of the research findings and decisions that will come out of the analysis of the findings and thus it will be much easier for people to implement decisions taken.

I have also learned in this study that the processes of learning and researching carry with them social and emotional issues. These aspects are illustrated in the narrative self-study report I presented in chapter four. The report demonstrated how participants revealed their emotions which then opened up an opportunity to learn to work and manage my own emotions first so that I can manage the emotions of other people. I was much more aware of the significance of acknowledging and engaging with emotions in learning. The report revealed that I had not planned for the anticipated emotional complexity of using the questionnaire. The report also reveals the unexpected emotional impact that the learning researching experience had on me, and how I learned to acknowledge and engage with my own emotions. In terms of the social dimension involved in learning and researching, the report demonstrates how participants contributed to my learning through their participation and through the invitations to work together that is revealed in their comments as presented in the report.

Through this study I became aware of how human interaction facilitates and enhances learning and research. I also became aware that I must be responsible for acknowledging and valuing contributions to my thinking and my practice also to people who hold less power than I do and that I have an obligation to pay attention to and to give self-reflexive care to people through shared experiences, relationships and emotions that arise during the process of learning and researching. I will use these understandings in future to guide and evaluate my learning and research. I also wish to share my insights with others as a means of adding voice to those in the field of leadership.

I further learned that learning and researching are processes of interconnectedness and interaction. They carry a dynamic synergy between them and everyone engaged in learning and research in a school situation whether a learner or educator can generate significant ideas, knowledge, questions and practices. To illustrate, one of the comments from participants invited me to a meeting where we could sit down and develop the policies and the strategies for improving organisational learning in our school. I wrote a memorandum about what I shall do immediately I am finish engaging with the responses. I then acted on what is in the memorandum. I called for a meeting and as I continued writing my research we were able to develop a shared vision and mission of our school and other valuable policies that we are implementing and change and improvement is evident in the results and the life that is glowing in the faces of all.

Chapter four shows how my research had a direct impact on learning especially on my side because the intention of engaging in practitioner research and the reason for selecting that topic was aimed at identifying areas of development and development strategies that would be suitable in bringing back the culture of teaching and learning at Khula Mlambo Primary School and establishing and maintaining a culture of ongoing learning in order to bring improvement in performance and change. Organisations should be treated as completely different from what they were in the past. They should be regarded as complicated and complex and they have become systems that are always changing and unpredictable. The chapter also shows that a number of participants have become more conscious of the value of encouragement and in making learners aware of their need to learn how to be better learners. This encouraged, motivated and gave me confidence that the use of approaches that strengthen, and make possible interconnections and interactions in learning and research will equip educators, and learners with creative thinking skills and they will become innovative and lifelong learners. I find synergy in learning and research and in future I would love to explore further possible synergies in learning and research. I also wish to contribute to public conversations that engage critically and creatively with research and learning especially in education.

6.3. The educative worth of the study

The main objective that drove me to engage myself in this type of research exercise was to look for ways and means to help me make our school a better school and to develop it into an organisation where learning is taking place continuously for every one in the school to grow and improve in performance. I wanted to put more focus on developing my own career and to equip myself as fully as possible with knowledge and skills that can enable me to assist colleagues at work so that we are all geared towards developing a culture of lifelong learning for every one, and also to assist other people who may find the information and the strategies that we have employed in our school also

helpful for them in their own institutions. Applying and implementing some practices I learned as I continued with research proved to me that as I improve the way I do things in the school here, I exert great influence on and provide motivation to educators because they are all engaging themselves now in changing their attitudes and unacceptable practices. They are trying the best they can to do good work. I hope that this dissertation will provide an accessible and meaningful resource for further research and that it will make a contribution in the field of education.

The dissertation I am writing is my sole effort; however the work of Pithouse (2007) which I used as an exemplar assisted me greatly in organising and presenting data. It represents a very small scale qualitative study since it was sited at Khula Mlambo Primary School only and it only addresses issues that are happening there. What I gained is only directly applicable to my work place. The report in chapter four also allowed me to bring into the study the voice of the participants and it demonstrated various instances of how I learned.

Conceptualising my learning research experience as an educative engagement is another contribution; I was able to identify procedures that I realised had emerged during the course of my engagement with the report in chapter four which suggest a new way of looking at learning and research in education. I see this dissertation offering another way through which others in the education research community can look again at their own practices and see opportunities for growth. This dissertation highlights the complexity and the evolving challenges that affect leadership, decision-making and action, and the extent to which individual practice on a daily basis is informed and re-formed by what they experience, the social interactions and patterns they are exposed to and in interpretations they make of the situation. In this dissertation I have also demonstrated how critical and creative inquiry into the self can enhance learning and change, making a qualitative difference to human experience in education. This dissertation deals with significant educational and learning issues that can point to avenues for exploration and growth.

I have learnt through this study to differentiate between power and authority. I was one of those people who misinterpreted authority and thought that it was similar to power, its function being that of controlling people Munroe (2011, p. 40) He highlights that we do not own authority; it is given out of trust. It is not about having total control by lording it over others nor is it used to humble people, instead; it waits for people to humble themselves. Munroe mentions many benefits of operating within the domain of your authority; therefore we need to develop more authority than power. It is a key to fulfilment and effective living, the means to proper functioning in life and the guarantor of success. As a law of maximum performance, the means of powerful and positive influence on others it operates under the principles of order, maximum productivity, protection,

preservation, safety, promotion, freedom, identity and reality. It provides instruction, advice or counsel to build others up. Munroe (2011, p.34) advises that we need authority more than power because as it creates an environment for dreaming, discovering and refining talents, it gives us confidence and leads us to greatness if we truly understand it and submit to it.

6.4. Personal Professional Growth and Development

The study of improving organisational learning at my school made a tremendous change in my behaviour. I saw myself entering a development and improvement process in my career. Before I engaged in this research study I did not bother myself much about what was happening in the school, I was not operating in my domain of authority. Munroe (2011, p.173) says that you prosper and work with joy when you operate in your domain of authority. Life in the school was so complicated and confusing and I always felt irritated. From the study I managed to discover myself then began to build up love for work. I started to care deeply for the people and especially the children in the school. I started developing my own personal vision about the school and I engaged myself in a great deal of reading so that I could equip myself and become well informed about educational matters so that I was up to date. I wondered about the purpose of schooling, the educational success of the school and the needs of both learners and teachers in order to succeed, every moment I was the school. I saw myself as being of good service to the people as I started striving to get the best out of the people by setting my-self up as an example and as a means of motivation and as an example of integrity.

I learnt the art of self-evaluation and I developed the courage to take responsibility by attending to the things that I was not doing and those that I was not doing right and developing strategies to overcome them and to monitor my progress. The programme motivated me to pursue continuous learning which enabled me to acquire a number of skills and revised some others which I neglected. I saw myself succeeding in mastering the ability to work effectively with the teachers as team members and co workers and together we succeeded in creating our shared vision. Together we devised strategies to achieve our shared goals. I saw myself becoming inspirational and succeeded in developing and implementing a number of plans that are improving our school. I am now able to set realistic and attainable goals with my subordinates and stakeholders, and I have opened up the channels of communication where we are able to make and take shared decisions. I have seen myself through this study succeeding in taking a negative situation and transforming positively for the benefit of change in our school.

As a leader my primary responsibility is to get results through and with the help of other people. The study of Senge's disciplines of learning assisted me in developing the skill of empathetic

communication. I have indicated in the report that I am now able to see things from the other person's perspective (Globler, Schenck and Du Toit, 2003, p. 154). I agree with Funnel and Lee (2007, p. 146) when they say that communication is a considerable aspect of teaching and learning because during the course of this study I saw myself managing to create an atmosphere where both educators and learners began to talk to each other about themselves and their achievements, plans, goals and targets are now set and implantation and action and management plans are in place to ensure that work is being done appropriately by every one. This vibrant movement of the school indicated to me that every one felt comfortable, appreciated and accepted. This also indicated to me that people now have trust in me and this I must sustain.

I learned and developed many skills in the process of this study, even though there is still a lot to improve on and to learn. I learned the skill of communication and collaboration, creative thinking and problem solving, management of emotions, policy development, physical and human resources management and many more. However there is one skill that stands out as an exceptional and now I enjoy employing it. When we started the course one of our lectures explained to us things that we shall need; things that will assist us as we continued with our study. One of the things he asked us to concentrate on, which made me almost quit the class was on technological literacy. He explained that we had to be computer literate and on top of that be connected to internet because we will be required to do our work on computer and submit our work electronically. At that time I did not even know how to open or close the computer. I relied on people but I realised that paying money for people to type my work is time consuming, and you don't finish the work in the time you planned to do it in. You have to wait for the person you want to assist you with your work and he/she will do this in his/her own time. I am so happy today that I now have my own computer and I am connected and I do things on my own and I enjoy it. This competency also assisted me greatly in the development of my work at the school.

As a person is growing in the knowledge, skill and understanding, though I have still a long way to go, I do see some good leadership qualities developing in me and my way of dealing with things has changed. I have begun to make a difference in our school. I am being straight forward with people and they have begun to trust me. I am focusing on the core business of the school encouraging vision and bringing core values to the life of the school. I have learned to be flexible, and to be of service to people trying as much as I can to understand their needs and to acknowledge their contributions. I see myself having developed into a 'good mentor' who is devoted to help educators in the school succeed and find satisfaction and pleasure in the work they do (Rowley 1999, p. 20). You could now hardly hear statements such as: 'The circuit want us do this in this way'. The people's

creative thinking and innovation is now considered. I am encouraging and assisting teamwork, maximising their strength through job enrichment. Prior to this study I used to lock myself in the office trying to do everything on my own and could not meet any due date because work could not be finished in time. Through job enrichment I feel relieved, stress is minimised and targets are met. Educators feel secure in their jobs and talk of relocation is no longer heard. People seem to have acquired job satisfaction.

I have learnt that if I want to be a successful leader, I must play down my weaknesses by taking up the challenges and do what I have never done before. Successful leaders play from their strengths by being resourceful, practical and opportunistic. I have learnt that true and successful learning is not about teachings, projects, assignments and tests but that it is about continuous reflection about and assessing of your own practice and improvement.

6.5. Organisational Growth and Development

Since I engaged in this study, Khula Mlambo Primary School has made important improvements in organisational learning in the school. Teachers have started to realise and know what matters in the school so that they can improve performance continuously. I have started to observe that teachers in the school are now maximising teaching time. They do not want you to interrupt their lessons and they come to school prepared each day. They have set for themselves and the school high standards and targets of achievement for the whole school and their individual subjects which they teach. I have also seen that they now monitor the performance of the learners they teach on a monthly basis. They have planned and implement recovery programmes that they set for the time they feel was lost and they usually remain in the afternoons to provide appropriate individual support to those learners who seem to have learning difficulties. Gone is the time where you used to find that the school will close with only a few educators left when the majority of them are gone already leaving learners behind. Such practice is diminishing though there are still some recalcitrant individuals but we hope they will join their colleagues soon.

Through this research study, the vocabulary in the language that is spoken in the school has changed. Educators in the school are now concerned with what they must do to assist the learners. They are no more asking what the time is now because they want to go or where the principal is so that they can dodge work. They meet regularly in phases, grades and learning areas or subject groups to discuss how they can assist one another to improve their practices. I am fully convinced that all educators are now driven by the belief that every learner in the school that is in their hands can learn and achieve. These educators have developed among themselves strong supportive teams

carrying the vision and the mission of the school and together they want to see it realised so that a better and more successful school is possible.

I have seen the school becoming a well organised and disciplined school. The school governing body also began to change their attitude towards policing the principal and educators because they are misappropriating school funds. The school governing body now supports the school and together with the principal have developed various school policies and put in place management plans that will guide the functioning of the school. Every effort is made to do away with challenges and requests from whoever which disrupt teaching time or require teachers to be away from school and classrooms during teaching time. Educators have also requested and agreed that we change the manner in which we start schooling every day. They have made it an obligation that educators come to school at least thirty minutes before a lesson commences and as a result of that there is hardly an educator that arrives behind time to school. It happens only on very rare occasions. This has also improved the punctuality of the learners because immediately they see educators coming to school they start flocking in before the bell rings. We are improving a great deal in time management.

I have observed as I am busy with this study that educators in the school are now aware of the need to develop themselves professionally. They are now fully engaged with the Departmental staff developmental program IQMS which they have neglected for years. You often receive requests from educators' developmental support groups asking you to assist them with a certain area of development that gives them a challenge. Sometimes you find reports that they will be meeting in the afternoons or visiting one another to observe each other teaching in the classes without disrupting the teaching and learning time. With the help of these development educators further asked us to review the manner in which the school was organised, managed and led. They now advise the school management team about who can teach best in what learning area and to which grades. After reshuffling the staff we also witnessed improvement in the performance of the learners in those learning areas.

Khula Mlambo Primary School has indeed developed and improved. The school has developed an open mind; they allow a variety of options and are becoming very critical in their thinking so that they can accomplish their set goals. They want to be professional and knowledgeable about everything that matters in their jobs. They are beginning to be open to learning. They are developing inquiring minds and professionalism. Their aggressive attitudes have changed tremendously, they consult one another and reach agreements, they have become self disciplined. Generally the school is accomplishing the commitments and the requirements they need for improving organisational learning in the school.

This study has offered itself as a dynamic process for generating the evolution of a cultural and a collective intelligence in the school but we still require some further adjustments so that we can be able as a collective to understand how to identify our own problems and their causes at an earlier stage, so that we can develop solutions and implement them. We also need to put more emphasis on the process and the promotion of trust and quality relationships so that we can be able to work together and develop and sustain a strong team that will support one another. Everybody in the school has to become a facilitator so that we are able to create a learning environment and sustain individual development through continuous learning and face challenges brought about by the emerging complexity of the environment. With this study a new vision of social interaction which is creating the path for our school to become an adjustable learning organisation capable of succeeding and growing has been established. I am fully convinced that the power of building the story of the future is my responsibility. I am assured by this study that collaborative planning, problem solving and creativity are key skills that I must not part with and should continuously develop in myself on an ongoing basis so that I can see the story of the future that I have envisaged for our school becoming a reality.

6.6. Summary

Learning is part of my life, I like to learn and read and I enjoy writing examinations and passing. The desire to be called Prof. Lumphoko one day has been revived as this learning proceeds and I am going to pursue it. Though this partially contributed to my decision to register for this course, the main insight that I had now was perpetuated by the value I attached to undertaking an educative inquiry into my own educational experiences and practices so that I can contribute to bringing back the culture of teaching and learning not necessarily in my own school only, though it had to be a starting point but also to the community of South Africa at large. My involvement in this experiential inquiry was worthwhile for me. I have explored its educative potential as a form of learning and I found it worthwhile. It offered me and the participants' opportunities for positive learning experiences. I chose the narrative self study stance because I anticipated that it would be conducive to the development process of experiential inquiry. Through this study I see myself having achieved my set goal. I have gained confidence in me as an indication of personal growth and can now stand as a leader and show direction. I also gained confidence in the educative value of giving educators opportunities and encouragement to undertake inquiry into their own experiences and practices. I am aware of the procedural, ethical and emotional complexities and the high level of time support and demand of this approach. This study made me realise that good quality education and learning demand intelligence, commitment and time. It also requires careful and self- reflective attention to human experiences, relationships, and emotions because they are present in every learning activity.

I thank God for the contributions this study has made to my life and profession as an individual. I have learned; I have acquired information; I have developed and mastered skills. What impresses me most is that though I have not fully achieved my goal; a difference has been made. There is great change and improvement in performance at Khula Mlambo Primary School and, the organisation has certainly benefitted. Though there is still a lot more to be done but I see the school in the next five years having fully developed into a learning organisation.

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12 May 2011

Ms TA Lumphoko (208514793)
Leadership Centre
Faculty of Management Studies
Westville Campus

Dear Ms Lumphoko

PROTOCOL REFERENCE NUMBER: HSS/0191/011M
PROJECT TITLE: Improving Organisational Learning at Khula Mlambo Primary School: A Practitioner Perspective

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

Any alteration/s to the approved research protocol i.e. Questionnaire/Interview Schedule, Informed Consent Form, Title of the Project, Location of the Study, Research Approach and Methods must be reviewed and approved through the amendment /modification prior to its implementation. In case you have further queries, please quote the above reference number.

PLEASE NOTE: Research data should be securely stored in the school/department for a period of 5 years.

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

Yours faithfully

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

cc. Supervisor: Prof K Pillay
cc. Mrs C Haddon

