

CLASSROOM TEACHER LEADERSHIP IN TOP- PERFORMING SECONDARY SCHOOLS

by

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Dissertation

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DECLARATION

I, Cornelius Johannes Christiaan Driescher (student number 04231880), hereby declare that this dissertation titled: ***Classroom teacher leadership in top-performing secondary schools***, is submitted in accordance with the requirements for the MAGISTER EDUCATIONIS (Education Leadership) degree at the University of Pretoria, is my own original work and has not previously been submitted to any other institution of higher learning. All sources cited or quoted in this research paper are indicated and acknowledged with a comprehensive list of references.



CJC DRIESCHER

1 NOVEMBER 2016

DEDICATION

I dedicate this research to my precious wife Marianne and lovely daughters, Marné and Nelhari, thank you for all the love, support and understanding throughout the past three years. Always remember that everything that I am and everything that I do is for and because of you.

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ABSTRACT

Classroom teacher leadership is a very broad concept that evolved over years and includes various concepts in the paradigm of education leadership (York-Barr & Duke, 2004: 255). Two concepts in the education leadership paradigm, which are closely related to and interlinked with classroom teacher leadership, are instructional leadership and distributive leadership. A new school of thought emphasises the importance of the classroom teacher as an instructional leader (Horgn & Loeb, 2010: 66). The only way that the classroom teacher can assume this required role as instructional leader is within a distributive leadership environment and therefore, distributive leadership is at the core of instructional leadership (Hoadley, Christie & Ward, 2009: 377). We can therefore conclude that classroom teacher leadership refers to classroom teachers who teach and lead (York-Barr & Duke, 2004: 267). Classroom teacher leadership is the type of quality leadership required to create effective schools.

In recent studies done in South African schools it was, however, clear that although research proposes that the classroom teacher should assume leadership roles within a distributive leadership environment, classroom teacher leadership has not yet realised in the schools studied. The gap in the literature is that it shows what should happen, it indicates that it is not happening in some South African schools but it does not indicate how it should happen.

This study aimed through a qualitative, case study design to investigate classroom teacher leadership in effective top-performing schools in the Pretoria area in the Gauteng province. Through semi-structured interviews the experiences of classroom teachers and their principals on classroom teacher leadership revealed that classroom teacher leadership is evident in these top-performing, secondary schools. Through their experiences various classroom teacher leadership practices could also be identified shedding light on how classroom teacher leadership can be implemented and promoted in order to create the quality leadership required for an effective school.

KEY TERMS

Classroom teacher, Contemporary, Distributive leadership, Instructional, leadership, Leadership, Parallel leadership, Secondary school, Shared leadership, Teacher leadership, Top-performing

LANGUAGE EDITOR



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25 October 2016

To whom it may concern

Mr Neels Driescher (s 04281880) has approached me to edit his dissertation. I confirm that I have attended to obvious grammatical errors and inconsistencies. Both the in-text referencing and the reference list were in accordance with the standard Harvard referencing system; it was only necessary to point out minor mistakes. I have, however, not changed the contents or the student's personal writing style.

Yours faithfully


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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ANA	Annual National Assessments
AASA	American Association of School Administrators
DBE	Department of Basic Education
EGD	Engineering Graphics and Design
GDE	Gauteng Department of Education
HOD	Head of Department
IQMS	Integrated Quality Management System
KZN	KwaZulu-Natal province
SATU	South African Teachers Union
SGB	School Governing Body
SMT	School Management Team

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Chapter 1: Introduction to the study

1.1 Introduction

“Teacher leadership is not yet institutionalised in the majority of these survey schools and the full potential of teacher leadership as a tool for school change has not been harnessed” (Grant, Gardner, Kajee, Moodley & Somaroo, 2010: 416). In this conclusion of their study on teacher leadership in schools in KwaZulu-Natal, Grant et al. (2010: 416) summarise a much wider problem in the South African education context. The problem that I am referring to here is that the leadership role of the classroom teacher is still not fully realised in most South African schools. Until the classroom teachers assume their rightful leadership roles we will not be able to have effective leadership in our schools and without effective leadership there cannot be effective schools (Bush, Kiggundu & Moorosi, 2011: 31).

To create effective schools in South Africa we need to improve our learner outcomes. To improve our learner outcomes instructional leadership has always been seen as the ideal leadership necessary for the improvement of teaching and learning in schools. According to King (2002: 62) instructional leadership refers to anything that leaders do to improve teaching and learning in their schools. The realisation however, has come that the effective implementation of instructional leadership cannot be done by one person alone (Lambert, 2002: 37). The idea that a single leader could fulfil the complex requirements of the instructional leadership role was questioned (Hallinger, Leithwood & Heck, 2010: 19). It was realised that for the effective implementation of instructional leadership different role players were required and that the leadership role should indeed be distributed between different people (Spillane, Halverson & Diamond, 2004: 21). Several core issues pressed for the development of a view of instructional leadership as a shared or distributed role in schools (Hallinger, Leithwood & Heck, 2010: 19). Distributive leadership is therefore at the core of instructional leadership (Hoadley, Christie & Ward, 2009: 377).

Therefore, in order to improve schools and learning outcomes we need quality leadership (Huber, 2004: 1). Research strongly suggests that the kind of quality leadership that is needed for this improvement is distributive leadership where leadership is shared by everyone in the school (Lambert, 2002: 37). This necessitates that the classroom teacher also assumes a leadership role within the school and that this leadership role should not be limited only to the classroom (Grant et al., 2010: 415). The focus of this study is classroom teacher leadership within a distributive leadership environment. It investigates the experiences and opinions of classroom teachers and their principals on the phenomenon of classroom teacher leadership in top-performing secondary schools in order to understand how classroom teacher leadership can be motivated and implemented in a school to create a more effective school.

1.2 Research problem and statement of purpose

1.2.1 Research problem

Research suggests that the kind of effective education leadership that is needed to improve learner outcomes is distributive leadership (Lambert, 2002: 38). Distributive leadership calls on everyone associated with schools – principals, teachers, school staff members, district personnel, parents, community members and students – to take responsibility for student achievement and to assume leadership roles in areas where they are competent and skilled (Neuman & Simmons, 2000: 10). In this regard Spillane (2009: 70) advises that we move away from the concept of a lonely heroic principal saving a school and move on to the concept of a distributive framework of leadership. Research clearly indicates that the classroom teacher should play a leadership role in effective schools and that this leadership role should not be limited to the classroom (Smylie & Denny, 1990: 237).

In his study Grant (2011: 77) provides evidence that distributive leadership is related to leadership effectiveness. He defines distributive leadership as an intentional effort to remove the principal from sole authority at the top of a hierarchy and distribute genuine power throughout the organisation (2011: 2). According to Grant (2011: 15–

22) true teacher leadership in classroom teacher involvement can be measured. He proposes the following four broad domains, namely setting the direction of the school; management of the instructional programme; the redesigning of the organisation, and the involvement of the classroom teacher in the development of people. The involvement of the classroom teacher in these identified areas will create a true distributive leadership model in a school. This model will develop the leadership capacity of the classroom teacher which will lead to quality leadership in a school (Grant, 2011: 2). Quality leadership in turn will lead to an effective school (Roberts & Roach, 2006: 38).

However, various studies conducted in the Western Cape (De Villiers & Pretorius, 2011: 586); in KwaZulu-Natal (Grant & Singh, 2009: 299) and in Gauteng (Naicker & Mestry, 2011: 102) indicate that although distributive leadership is seen as a necessity for effective schools and that classroom teachers are ready to assume the responsibility and accountability of teacher leadership, it is not practised in most South African schools. At most the classroom teacher's leadership capacity is restricted to their classrooms, focussing on teaching and learning and planning and organising within their own classrooms. There is no evidence of expanded leadership initiatives in improving their school as a whole by being involved in strategic planning, assisting with school management, evaluation of educational initiatives or leadership in the creation of professional learning communities (York-Barr & Duke, 2004: 255).

The research problem is thus identified as how to activate classroom teacher leadership in a distributive leadership environment in contemporary South African schools.

1.2.2 Purpose of the study

The purpose of my research is to investigate the extent to which the classroom teachers participate in leadership activities within a distributive leadership environment in contemporary, top-performing secondary schools. The study further aims to investigate and identify the leadership practices and experiences of classroom teachers in these selected top-performing, contemporary secondary schools in the

Pretoria area. Furthermore, the study aims to investigate and identify the leadership opportunities created for classroom teachers within these contemporary, top-performing secondary schools.

1.3 Research questions

From the above-mentioned research problem and statement of purpose the following primary and secondary research questions were formulated:

1.3.1 Primary research question

To what extent do classroom teachers assume leadership roles in contemporary, top-performing secondary schools?

From the primary research question two secondary research questions were developed:

1.3.2 Secondary research questions

- What leadership roles do classroom teachers assume in contemporary, top-performing, secondary schools?
- How do leaders of contemporary top-performing, secondary schools create opportunities to share leadership with classroom teachers?

1.4 Rationale

1.4.1 Personal rationale

Various studies completed in South African schools have shown that distributed leadership is not practised in these schools and although classroom teachers are ready to assume the responsibility and accountability of sharing leadership, their leadership capacity was limited to the classroom (De Villiers & Pretorius, 2011: 586; Grant & Singh; 2009: 299; Naicker & Mestry, 2011: 102). The distributive leadership model clearly suggests that all role players in a school, such as the principal, the

school management team (hereafter the SMT), the classroom teacher, the school governing body (hereafter the SGB) and the parents, participate in the decision-making processes, assume leadership roles and accept responsibility for decisions taken (Neuman & Simmons, 2000: 10). As a principal of a secondary school the researcher would especially like to get clarity on how classroom teacher leadership in a distributive leadership environment is viewed, experienced and implemented in contemporary, effective, successful, top-performing secondary schools. I am interested in understanding the roles that classroom teachers play in a distributive leadership environment since distributive leadership clearly implies that it is not simply a delegation of tasks to a classroom teacher. The classroom teacher should also assume leadership roles, be part of the decision-making process, take responsibility and develop a leadership capacity. This will enable the researcher to harness the full potential of teachers at his school and enable him to improve his own school leadership practices.

1.4.2 Practical rationale

The practical rationale is that the knowledge gained from this research may contribute to the existing framework of knowledge for the implementation of effective distributive leadership that is needed for school improvement in practice (Grant, 2011: 77). Underperforming schools will be able to use this information for the implementation of effective distributive leadership, which is the kind of quality leadership that will lead to school improvement (Bush, Kiggundu & Moorosi, 2011: 31).

1.4.3 Intellectual rationale

Literature on effective education leadership clearly points to a distributive leadership model as a model for quality education leadership for effective schools (Grant, 2011: 2). In this distributive model a classroom teacher without a leadership designation, should also take the responsibility for leading teaching and learning in schools (Spillane & Healey, 2010: 256). Research has also shown that classroom teachers are ready to assume certain leadership roles in their schools (Grant et al., 2010: 401). However, studies done in South African schools have shown that although literature

suggests that classroom teachers should play a leadership role in their schools and that the majority of classroom teachers are indeed ready for a more distributed, deep democratic leadership, the practice of classroom teacher leadership beyond the classroom is very limited (De Villiers & Pretorius, 2011: 586). The preliminary literature review confirms that distributive classroom teacher leadership is what should happen in schools. It also suggests that it is not typical in South African schools, but it does not indicate how classroom teacher leadership should be practised. The intellectual rationale for this study is that it will breach the gap that currently exists in the literature by giving us an indication of how classroom teacher leadership can be implemented in schools. This investigation into classroom teacher leadership, and how it is experienced and how it unfolds in contemporary, top-performing secondary schools will help us to understand the phenomenon of classroom teacher leadership practices. Therefore, this study can contribute to the existing knowledge by providing an indication of how classroom teachers may get involved in the proposed distributive leadership model where the classroom teacher also assumes leadership roles outside of the classroom (Spillane, 2009: 71).

1.5 Preliminary literature review

The literature studied on effective education leadership clearly points to a distributive leadership model as a model for quality education leadership and the creation of effective schools (Grant, 2011: 2). In this distributed model a classroom teacher, without a leadership designation, can take responsibility for leading teaching and learning in schools (Spillane & Healey, 2010: 256). It is quite evident that to improve teaching and learning in a failing education system is too broad a task for only the principal to fulfil. Spillane (2009: 70) advises that schools should move away from the concept of a lonely heroic principal saving a school and move on to the concept of a distributive framework of leadership. This way “the sleeping giant of teacher leadership can be awakened” and the full potential of classroom teacher leadership can be harnessed in creating effective, top-performing schools (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2001: 2).

Instructional leadership has always been seen as the ideal leadership model necessary for the improvement of teaching and learning in schools (King, 2002: 61), but the realisation has come that the effective implementation of instructional leadership cannot be done by one person alone. Distributive leadership should therefore be the core of instructional leadership (Hoadley, Christie & Ward, 2009: 377). In his study Grant (2011: 77) provides evidence that distributive leadership is related to instructional leadership effectiveness. During the 1990s researchers started to question the idea that a single leader could fulfil the complex requirements of the instructional leadership role (Hallinger, Leithwood & Heck, 2010: 19). Gronn (2008: 147) is of the opinion that “as principals’ responsibilities increase in quantity and complexity along with accountability demands for improved student achievement, some researchers argue that one person can no longer successfully lead a school; rather schools should be lead in a collaborative manner with school staff members in shared decision making through a distributive leadership model”.

The realisation was that for the effective implementation of instructional leadership different role players were required and that the leadership role should indeed be distributed between different people. Several core issues pressed for the development of a view of instructional leadership as a shared or distributed role in schools (Hallinger, Leithwood & Heck, 2010: 19). This emphasises the involvement of the classroom teacher in a distributive leadership model.

Distributive leadership is therefore at the core of instructional leadership; thus to address the issue of more effective leadership and management to improve teaching and learning in a failing education system necessitates a closer look at distributive leadership.

Distributive leadership is commonly described in literature as leadership shared by different role players within an organisation. This also assumes that accountability will be shared. Neuman and Simmons (2000: 10) state that “distributive leadership calls on everyone associated with schools – principals, teachers, school staff members,

district personnel, parents, community members and students, to take responsibility for student achievement and to assume leadership roles in areas where they are competent and skilled”.

According to Spillane (2005: 143) distributive leadership is often used interchangeably with “shared leadership”, “team leadership” and “democratic leadership”, and could involve two core aspects: principal plus and practice. The principal plus aspect of distributive leadership acknowledges that multiple individuals are involved in leading and managing schools (Spillane, 2009: 70). The second core aspect, practise is more about interaction between leaders and followers and is negated by the situation in which the interaction takes place. (Spillane, 2009: 70).

Considering these definitions, it is evident that distributive leadership implies that classroom teachers at the bottom of the hierarchy of our school structures should also be part of the decision-making process. This can only realise in a distributive environment where the opportunity is created for different role players to assume leadership roles; where the opportunity is created for both leaders and followers to influence each other and where traditional hierarchical structures are replaced with parallel structures giving followers the opportunity to share power and authority. This distributive environment will also be characterised by constant change, not only in relationships but also within the organization itself.

This poses the next question: If distributive leadership is a necessity for effective schools (as shown by research), is it evident in the failing South African education system? Are our classroom teachers involved in teacher leadership as required by the distributed leadership model?

Williams (2011: 190) in his literature review unpacks the theoretical underpinnings of the notion of distributive leadership, and then investigates the numerous and diverse factors that have prevented the actualisation of distributive leadership in South African schools. He mentions the following reasons why distributive leadership has not actualised in South African schools:

- the authoritarian ethos of pre-1994 still exists in the South African education system;
- school principals are not committed to democracy;
- classroom teachers are not willing to participate in the decision-making process;
- women still do not form part of the decision-making process due to the believe that women teach and men manage;
- school principals feel threatened that they will lose their status and influence,
- and lack of funding prevent leadership development (Williams, 2011: 193).

A quantitative research study (De Villiers & Pretorius, 2011: 583) with surveys to 283 educators, SMT members, principals and district officials in the Eden and Central Karoo Education District showed that the majority of classroom teachers are indeed ready for a more distributed deep democratic leadership practice in schools. The dilemma, however, was that in reality the actual practising of leadership beyond the classroom is limited (De Villiers & Pretorius, 2011: 586). It was found that school leaders and SMTs create an atmosphere where distributed leadership is hindered and that they should first be developed in democratic leadership practices before distributed leadership can be successfully implemented in South African schools (De Villiers & Pretorius, 2011: 586).

In their small-scale qualitative study in two KwaZulu-Natal primary schools Grant and Singh (2009: 299) found that teacher leadership in and around the classroom concerning issues like the curriculum and subjects (zones 1 and 2) were evident, but teacher leadership did not exist in whole-school development (zone 3). Leadership at this level was hierarchical through superior-subordinate relationships. This study was followed up and supported by a larger quantitative study with a survey in which 1 055 classroom teachers participated. This study found that while classroom teachers supported the notion of shared leadership and believed they were equipped to lead, their leadership was largely restricted to their classrooms (Grant et al., 2010: 401). The findings from the studies done in the Western Cape and KZN correlate with studies done in the Gauteng province of South Africa.

In the Gauteng province a mixed methods study was done where qualitative interviews were held in three Soweto schools (Naicker & Mestry, 2011: 102). This was followed up with a quantitative survey in 27 schools in which 300 classroom teachers participated. The qualitative study found that there was no evidence of distributive leadership in these schools. The quantitative study, however, revealed the early stages of a movement towards distributive leadership (Naicker & Mestry, 2011: 102; 103).

A follow-up qualitative study in Gauteng was also done in 2013 by Naicker and Mestry in three primary schools in Soweto. Interviews centred on the following themes: leadership styles; school climate; communication, and barriers to teacher leadership. The study indicated that leadership styles like autocratic and hierarchical leadership styles were still very evident in these schools and underlined the need for a shift to a distributive leadership style (Naicker & Mestry, 2013: 12).

Considering the studies cited it is evident that distributive leadership in South African schools is at most practised by classroom teachers in and around the classroom. This correlates with the studies done by Spillane (2009: 71) on distributive leadership indicating “that while principals reported taking responsibility for over three-quarters of all administrative activities in which they participated, they reported taking for just over half of instruction and curriculum activities”. Although the studies were limited to specific areas within South Africa, the results correlated with each other underlining the fact that these could be considered as representative.

The gap in the literature studied identified that the studies mostly focus on the necessity for distributive leadership in schools. Researchers emphasise the need for classroom teachers to assume leadership roles in their respective schools. Although the researchers suggest the involvement of the classroom teacher in a leadership role and classroom teachers indicated that they are ready to assume this leadership role, this is not practised in most South African schools. Researchers therefore emphasise what should happen, namely that distributed leadership should be implemented in

schools by school leadership thus creating a distributive environment within which classroom teachers can assume leadership roles in their schools (Grant, 2011; Gronn, 2008; Hallinger, Leithwood & Heck, 2010; Hoadley, Christie & Ward, 2009; Neuman & Simmons, 2000; Spillane, 2005 and 2009; Spillane & Healey, 2010). Researchers also indicate that in most South African schools distributed leadership is not implemented by school leadership thus limiting classroom teacher leadership to classroom activities such as planning, teaching and organising within the classroom. In this environment classroom teacher leadership does not realise outside of the classroom in activities such as strategic planning, whole school development etc. (De Villiers & Pretorius, 2011; Grant & Singh, 2009; Grant et al., 2010; Naicker & Mestry, 2011 and 2013; Williams, 2011). This then poses the question, how can distributed leadership be implemented in South African schools to create a distributive environment where classroom teacher leadership can truly realise not just in the classroom but also in leadership activities outside of the boundaries of the classroom in the school and community? This gap in the literature can be addressed by this research by indicating how distributive leadership can be implemented in schools creating a distributive environment within which the classroom teacher can assume leadership roles within his / her school as a whole and into the community.

1.6 Conceptual framework

The conceptual framework for this study is based on three key concepts, namely classroom teacher leadership; instructional leadership, and distributive leadership, and how these three concepts are interlinked with each other.

1.6.1 The concept of classroom teacher leadership

Classroom teacher leadership implies more than just leadership within a classroom. Muijs and Harris (2007: 113) conceptualise classroom teacher leadership as classroom teachers participating more in decision-making processes within a school and taking more initiative in school improvement. Grant (2011: 15) underlines this

when he reflects on true classroom teacher leadership and identifies four areas in a school where classroom teacher leaders should also lead:

- management of the instructional programme;
- developing people;
- redesigning the organisation,
- and setting the direction of the organisation.

Grant confirms this multi-levelled involvement of the classroom teacher leader when she identifies four levels – called “zones” – in which classroom teacher leadership can take place:

- classroom teacher leadership within the classroom;
- classroom teacher leadership outside of the classroom within a subject or extracurricular activity;
- classroom teacher leadership in whole-school development,
- and classroom teacher leadership outside the borders of the school (Grant, 2008: 93).

To understand the concept of classroom teacher leadership it must be realised that classroom teacher leadership involves more than just leadership practices confined to a classroom (Spillane, 2009: 71).

For the purpose of this study classroom teacher leadership refers to a post level one teacher initiating leadership activities not just in planning and organising teaching and learning within his / her classroom but also initiating leadership activities outside of the boundaries of his / her classroom in extra-curricular activities, in whole school development and in the community.

1.6.2 The concept of instructional leadership

Instructional leadership has always been regarded as the ideal leadership model necessary for the improvement of teaching and learning in schools (King, 2002: 61). The concept of instructional leadership has, however, changed dramatically over the past few years. The new thought on instructional leadership is that the hiring of quality teachers, the affective assignment of such teachers, the detainment of these teachers

and the provision of opportunities for teachers to develop can have a far greater impact on teaching and learning, and school improvement than one leader's involvement in teaching and learning (Horn & Loeb, 2010: 66).

For the purpose of this study instructional leadership refers to leadership activities focussed on improving teaching and learning. This leadership is not just limited to planning and organising a lesson for effective teaching and learning within the classroom. It also refers to leadership activities outside of the boundaries of the classroom in the school such as acquiring the best teachers, effectively using these teachers, developing these teachers and retaining these teachers. Instructional leadership can also stretch beyond the boundaries of the school into the community when professional learning communities are created and teaching and learning are improved through collaboration within the community.

1.6.3 The concept of distributive leadership

The idea that a single leader could fulfil the complex requirements of the instructional leadership role was increasingly questioned (Hallinger, Leithwood & Heck, 2010: 19). Consequently, it was realised that for the effective implementation of instructional leadership different role players were required and that the leadership role should indeed be distributed between different people, including the classroom teacher (Spillane, Halverson & Diamond, 2004: 21).

For the purpose of this study distributive leadership refers to a shared leadership. Leaders who are prepared to create an environment where power, authority and responsibility are shared by different role players within an organisation.

1.6.4 Linking the concepts

To truly understand the concept and role of classroom teacher leadership it must be realised that the three concepts of classroom teacher leadership, instructional leadership and distributive leadership are closely related and linked together in creating an effective top-performing school. Distributive leadership is at the core of

instructional leadership because the task of instructional leadership is too big for one person to fulfil (Hoadley, Christie & Ward, 2009: 377). Classroom teacher leadership will therefore also be at the core of instructional leadership because the classroom teacher also needs to fulfil a leadership role to implement effective instructional leadership. Due to the expertise of the classroom teacher in instruction, instructional leadership should begin with the classroom teacher (Pellicer & Anderson, 1995: 16). Woods, Bennet, Harvey and Wise (2004: 439) explain that distributive leadership and classroom teacher leadership are also closely linked together. Classroom teacher leadership cannot exist without a distributive leadership environment.

The following diagram portrays the conceptual framework for classroom teacher leadership and its influence on an effective top-performing school:

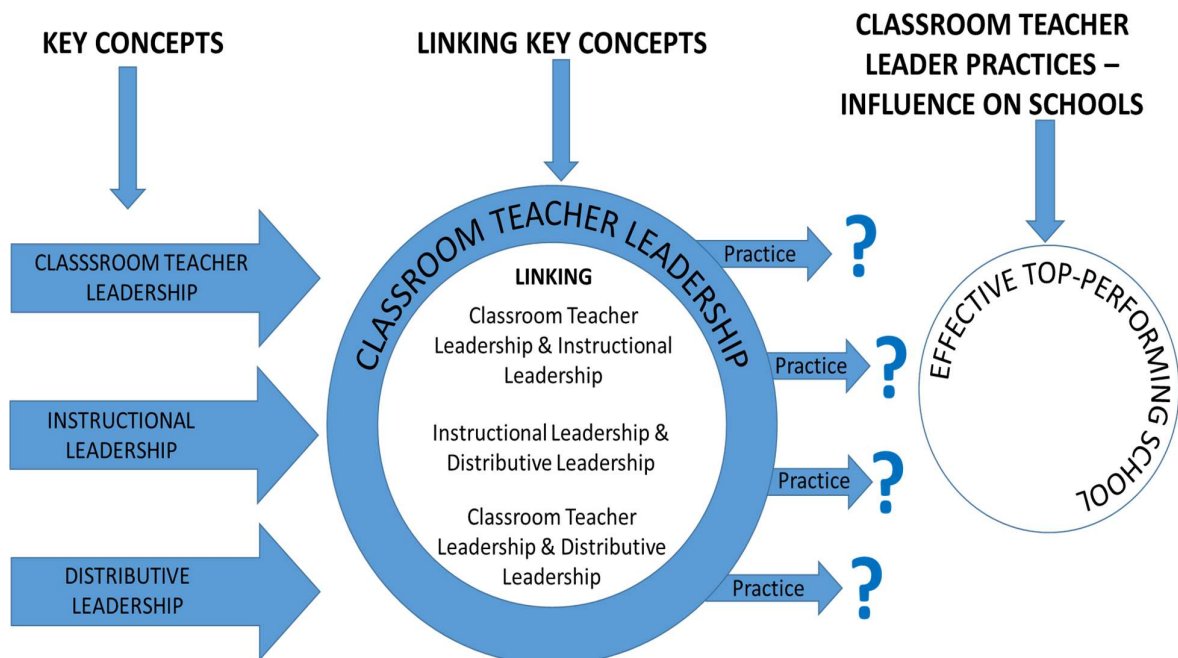


Figure 1.1 Conceptual framework for classroom teacher leadership and its influence on an effective, top-performing school

Source: Author's own compilation

1.7 Theoretical framework

Gunter (2005: 51) argues that central to this theory of classroom teacher leadership, researchers should also examine how leadership is distributed to the classroom teacher and what kind of leadership tasks is distributed to the classroom teacher. In this regard Grant (2008: 93) provides a model explaining the kind and level of leadership tasks that can be distributed to the classroom teacher leader, this model provided the theoretical framework which formed the basis of the methodology of this study in measuring classroom teacher leadership during data collection and analysis. This theoretical framework will be discussed in detail in chapter three.

1.8 Research design and methodology

The primary research question guided the methodology of data collection in this study. The focus of the study was on investigating the experiences of classroom teachers and their principals on classroom teacher leadership in top-performing secondary schools and this clearly identified the who, the what and the where of the investigation.

1.8.1 Methodology

In this study the interpretive paradigm was used when investigating the extent to which classroom teachers assume leadership roles in effective, top-performing secondary schools. The interpretive paradigm to research wants to investigate and understand the human experience (Cohen & Manion, 1994: 36). The purpose of the study is to interpret the perceptions, viewpoints and experiences of the classroom teachers and principals in effective, top-performing secondary schools on their experiences of classroom teacher leadership in a distributive leadership environment. The experiences of these classroom teachers enabled me to get a view of classroom teacher leadership practices in effective top-performing, secondary schools. I therefore relied upon the classroom teachers' views and experiences of classroom teacher leadership in a distributive leadership environment (Creswell, 2003: 8). I also

kept in mind that my own experiences and background in education could have an impact on my research (Mackenzie & Knipe, 2006: 193).

I used a qualitative approach in my research design to investigate the phenomenon of classroom teacher leadership in a distributive leadership environment in contemporary, top-performing secondary schools. In conducting this qualitative research, I have chosen a case study research design. A case study investigates a phenomenon within its real-life context – in this instance the phenomenon of classroom teacher leadership in the real-life context of contemporary, top-performing secondary schools. The advantages of this approach was that it gave me rich local understanding of the experiences of classroom teachers and their principals on the phenomenon of classroom teacher leadership. Furthermore, a case study gave me the opportunity to do in-depth research. I also got an understanding of how classroom teacher leadership works in practice. Working on a single site at a time gave me the opportunity to build a relationship of trust with the participants. The boundaries of my research were very specific and clear, being the classroom teachers and principals of contemporary, top-performing secondary schools.

1.8.2 Sampling

Purposive sampling has been used in selecting the research sites. I made use of critical case sampling because it is particularly useful in exploratory qualitative research. It was felt that a small number of participants will be decisive in explaining this phenomenon of classroom teacher leadership within a distributive leadership environment (Patton, 2001: 236).

I therefore chose two top-performing secondary schools in the Pretoria area as my research sites. Convenience sampling was used because both research sites are in the Pretoria area saving time and travelling costs and making it more accessible for the researcher.

Contemporary, top-performing secondary schools are schools that are recognised as current top-performing schools at a curricular as well as an extracurricular level. Curricular achievement was based on the Department of Basic Education's list of top-performing schools in the country (DBE, 2013: 3). At an extracurricular level achievement was based on the variety of extracurricular activities in which such a school participates as well as their results in interschool competitions and leagues. These top-performing schools were selected as research sites because the probability of classroom teacher leadership in these schools are very high. This is confirmed by Bush, Kiggundu & Moorosi (2011: 31) as well as Grant (2011: 77) when they state that classroom teacher leadership within a distributive leadership environment is quality leadership which will lead to a top-performing, quality school.

Using purposive criterion sampling I interviewed four selected classroom teachers with varying degrees of experience (1–3 years, 4–9 years, 10–15 years and 16 years plus). Participants with varying degrees of experience were selected because the experience of the participant will also influence the participant's perception of, and willingness to be a classroom teacher leader and it is suggested that teachers in their mid-career will most probably be classroom teacher leaders (York-Barr & Duke, 2004: 267). These classroom teachers were selected with the guidance of the school principal of each school. I also interviewed the principals of both these schools. The data received from the classroom teachers were then compared with that of the principals ensuring validity and reliability.

1.8.3 Data collection

The most common way of collecting data within qualitative research is face-to-face interviews. Therefore, I made use of face-to-face, semi-structured interviews that was recorded. These face-to-face interviews enabled the researcher to gain insight into the lived experiences of the participants in the study thus addressing the research topic (Maree, 2007: 296). These interviews revolved around pre-prepared questions on classroom teacher leadership in a distributive leadership environment based on the theoretical framework provided by Grant (2008: 93). The semi-structured interviews

gave me the opportunity to ask follow-up questions when new ideas come forward during the interviews. This was important because the research is exploratory, qualitative research on classroom teacher leadership in a distributive leadership environment.

1.8.4 Trustworthiness and reliability

During these interviews I tried to ensure that the data I collected were reliable and trustworthy. In the qualitative research design there are two broad validity threats, namely bias and reactivity. Bias refers to the ways in which data collection or analysis is distorted by the researcher's theory, values or preconceptions. Reactivity is trying to control the influence of the researcher. Trying to eliminate the influence of the researcher is impossible and the strategy to overcome these challenges is to understand it and to use it productively (Maxwell, 2009: 243).

I spent enough time at the research sites to ensure validity. I also made sure that I did not rush through interviews. This provided more complete data and it avoided premature theories. Rich data was detailed and varied enough to provide a full and revealing picture of what was going on.

Regarding respondent validation, frequent feedback from participants were obtained during the interviews to eliminate any misinterpretations. I was on the lookout for discrepancies in data. If any were found, it was reported and readers will be allowed to evaluate it and draw their own conclusions (Maxwell, 2009: 245). Participants had the opportunity to read through their transcribed interviews and report misinterpretations before the data were analysed.

To further ensure validity and reliability data from the different classroom teachers within the same school were compared with each other. Data from the classroom teachers were also compared with the data from the principals; the data from the classroom teachers and the principals from the different schools were also compared with each other.

1.8.5 Data interpretation and analysis

The data analyses were conducted simultaneously with the data collection process as suggested by Coffey and Atkinson (1996: 2). In the data analysis three main strategies were used, namely categorising strategies, connecting strategies, and memos and displays (Maxwell, 2009: 236). Starting with the categorising strategy the coded data was collected and arranged into categories that facilitated comparison between things in the same category and between categories (Strauss, 1987: 29). Priori coding was used to code data. “When dealing with priori coding the categories are established prior to the analysis based on some theory” (Stemler, 2001: 3). Using the theoretical framework of Grant’s model for classroom teacher leadership the categories were established prior to the analysis of the data (Grant, 2008: 93). The theoretical categories on instructional leadership, distributed leadership and teacher leadership represented the concepts of the researcher and created a formal organization and retrieval system of the data (Maxwell, 2009: 238). The researcher then used connecting-strategies where it was attempted to show the relationships among the different elements of the data collected by creating different themes. Frequent memos were written on the relationships and this made ideas and analyses visible and retrievable, concept maps were drawn to see the data analysis as a whole (Maxwell, 2009: 239).

There are four levels of teacher leadership, namely teacher leadership within the classroom; teacher leadership outside of the classroom within a subject or extracurricular activity; teacher leadership within whole-school development, and teacher leadership outside of the school into the community (Grant, 2008: 93). Each of these levels of leadership formed a category. The researcher looked for elements of instructional leadership, distributive leadership and teacher leadership in the data received and coded these different elements and then categorised them into one of these four categories. The next step was to compare data within each category and categories with each other creating different themes in each category. The researcher then connected these themes and draw relationships between them. The researcher also created a mind map of the four categories and themes within each category,

showing the relationship between them. This helped to constantly have an overview of the data and assisted him in the analysis thereof.

1.8.6 Ethical considerations

The researcher applied for permission from the Department of Basic Education (hereafter DBE) through the Gauteng provincial research office as well as ethical clearance from the University of Pretoria's Ethical Committee to conduct this research.

Voluntary participation in the proposed study was also an important consideration. The researcher was concerned that once the Gauteng Department of Education (hereafter the GDE) has given permission for the research to be done that a school might get the feeling that it is an instruction to be part of this research. This could also be interpreted by the classroom teachers that once the principal has agreed to the research that they do not have a choice but to participate in the research. To resolve this issue of voluntary participation I communicated it very clearly that participation in this research is voluntary and that any school or participant may withdraw from it at any stage or choose not to be part of it.

The next ethical consideration was informed consent. The researcher trusted that by communicating the purpose and advantages of the proposed research very clearly schools and participants would want to be part of this study. The researcher ensured that the consent form at least included the following information: brief description of the nature of the study; description of what participation will entail; a clear indication that participation is voluntary and that a participant can withdraw at any stage; a guarantee that all information will be confidential; a guarantee that responses will be kept anonymous; my name and contact details, and an undertaking to give detailed information on the study on completion (Leedy and Ormrod, 2001: 101 - 102).

It was also important that all participants felt safe in that both the classroom teacher as well as the principal did not feel that information they gave could later be used against them. It was important that the participants were made aware of the fact that

their schools were chosen because they were regarded as effective schools and that others could learn from them. It was important that the participants realised that they were not evaluated or being compared with other schools.

Privacy is a major ethical issue in research. Principals can be scared that their school's name can be mentioned in a negative way in reports. Classroom teachers could also be afraid of victimisation if they give negative information to the researcher; therefore, it was important that the participants clearly understood that there will be anonymity; that no person or school's name will be mentioned and that full confidentiality will be kept.

Trust was one of the major ethical issues in the research. The researcher could be seen as an outsider and understood that initially he will be treated with distrust. Taking time to clearly communicate the purpose of the research and getting to know the participants countered this distrust. The fact that the researcher is also a teacher/principal helped to bridge the ethical issue of trust. Making sure that the participants understood the research questions and that the researcher understood their responses also added to this relationship of trust that had to be established.

1.9 Working assumptions

Starting this study, the researcher assumed that classroom teacher leadership would be evident in these top-performing secondary schools because teacher leadership is seen as a requirement for an effective and successful school (Roberts & Roach, 2006: 38). The two top-performing schools were selected as research sites because the probability of classroom teacher leadership in these schools would be very high. Classroom teacher leadership within a distributive leadership environment is quality leadership that will lead to a top-performing, quality school (Bush, Kiggundu & Moorosi, 2011: 31; Grant, 2011: 77).

Due to his own experience as a principal of a secondary school it was assumed that the classroom teachers will be directly involved in zone three of classroom teacher leadership, that is the strategic planning and decision-making processes because both were contemporary, top-performing secondary schools (Grant, 2008: 93).

1.10 Significance of the study

This study aims to address the gap in the literature on classroom teacher leadership. It was identified that there is no indication or model on how classroom teacher leadership can be implemented in South African schools to become more effective. This study aimed to identify classroom teacher leadership practices in contemporary, top-performing secondary schools so that a framework/model of these practices can be provided, especially on how to develop classroom teacher leadership in schools and how to create opportunities for classroom teacher leadership. Thus, the study also aims to contribute to practice by providing a model for the development of classroom teacher leadership in ensuring effective, quality leadership in contemporary underperforming schools.

1.11 Limitations

The fact that only two research sites were used could limit the findings, validity and reliability of the study.

The researcher's own experience as principal of a secondary school could influence his own objectivity and also his understanding of the conceptual framework of the field of study therefore limiting the findings of the study.

The researcher anticipates that because he is a principal of a secondary school himself, classroom teacher participants can feel intimidated because they might know him.

Principals might feel that their own schools can be discredited by the information that are provided thus limiting the validity and reliability of the data as well as the findings of the study.

1.12 Organisation of the study

Chapter 1: Introduction to the study

In the first chapter an attempt was made to give an overview of the research by explaining the purpose of and rationale behind the study. A preliminary literature review proposes that the classroom teacher should assume the role of leader in a distributive leadership environment in order for schools to improve and be effective. Studies on classroom teacher leadership in South African schools, however, showed very little evidence of classroom teacher leadership in the schools studied. From this preliminary literature review conceptual and theoretical frameworks for the study were drawn and explained in this chapter. The research questions stem from the gap in the literature and questions on the extent of and practices of classroom teacher leaders were formulated. These questions guided the research and methodology, which were also briefly described in this chapter.

Chapter 2: Literature review

A thorough literature review in the second chapter assisted with the conceptualisation of classroom teacher leadership. Two other key concepts in understanding classroom teacher leadership, namely instructional leadership and distributive leadership, were also conceptualised and the link between the three concepts were explained using the literature. Thus a conceptual framework was built in this chapter to better understand the complexity of classroom teacher leadership in a distributive leadership environment. Literature investigating classroom teacher leadership in South African schools was also reviewed to get a picture of this phenomenon in South African schools. In this second chapter the gap in the literature was also highlighted: literature emphasises what should happen, and that it is not happening in South African schools but gives no indication of how it should be done. The literature review in Chapter 2

assisted me in designing a theoretical framework to measure classroom teacher leadership (Grant, 2008: 93) which were used during the collection and analyses of data in Chapter 3 and Chapter 4.

Chapter 3: Research design

In Chapter 3 the methodology of this study is discussed. Contemporary, top-performing secondary schools were chosen as research sites because the phenomenon of classroom teacher leadership was most likely to be visible in these schools. The approach, sampling and method of data collection are thoroughly explained in this chapter.

Chapter 4: Data analysis

This chapter describes how priori coding was used to analyse the collected data. Using the theoretical framework of Grant's model for classroom teacher leadership five categories were created prior to the analysis of the data. Using the theoretical framework and interviews 14 themes were developed from these categories. Using priori coding patterns could be identified which answered the primary and secondary research questions.

Chapter 5: Overview, findings and recommendations

In Chapter 5 the primary and secondary research questions are answered using the findings of the data analyses in Chapter 4. This chapter also takes a look at the possible limitations of the study; recommendations are made for further research and improvement of practice. Lastly, the significance of this study is explained in this chapter.

1.13 Conclusion

This chapter therefore gives an overview of the entire study explaining why it is done, explaining what was studied and also explaining how it was studied.

Chapter 2: Teacher leadership in schools

2.1 Introduction

This study necessitates a thorough analysis of key concepts in education leadership, namely teacher leadership, instructional leadership and distributive leadership. The link between these concepts also needs to be understood to truly understand the study. Therefore, in this review literature will be used to define these key concepts of teacher leadership, instructional leadership and distributive leadership and to link these concepts as part of education leadership to give more insight into the study.

2.2 Classroom teacher leadership

For the purposes of this study, classroom teacher will refer to a post level one teacher in an ordinary secondary school in the Pretoria region in South Africa.

Although much has been written about classroom teacher leadership over the past century there is no clear common definition of the concept (Leithwood & Duke, 1999: 45). This lack of a specific definition can be subscribed to the fact that it is a very broad concept that evolved over years, and includes various concepts and activities in the paradigm of education leadership (York-Barr & Duke, 2004: 255). Silva, Gimbert and Nolan (2000: 779) explain the development of this phenomenon of classroom teacher leadership as happening in three different phases, describing it as evolution in three waves:

- Phase one was when classroom teacher leadership was seen as teachers serving in formal roles as head of departments, union representatives, etc. The sole purpose of classroom teacher leadership during this phase was to strengthen school administration.
- Phase two was when the focus shifted to the instructional expertise of the classroom teacher and this was seen as classroom teacher leadership. During this

phase the classroom teacher leader was appointed as curriculum leader, mentor, etc. It was also in this phase that classroom teacher leadership was seen as leadership to improve teaching and learning.

- During the third phase classroom teacher leadership was viewed as classroom teachers developing a school culture of collaboration and lifelong learning.

Considering this development of the concept of classroom teacher leadership over years we can conclude that classroom teacher leadership refers to classroom teachers who both teach and lead (York-Barr & Duke, 2004: 267). Muijs and Harris (2007: 113) conceptualise classroom teacher leadership as classroom teachers participating more in decision-making processes within a school and taking more initiative in school improvement. Classroom teacher leaders are experienced, excellent classroom teachers whose leadership is accepted by their fellow classroom teachers by virtue of their instructional expertise (York-Barr & Duke, 2004: 267).

Classroom teacher leadership can refer to formal leadership positions such as heads of departments, members of school management teams and curriculum specialists or it can refer to informal leadership such as mentoring peers, guiding parents to support their children's learning, lead collaborative working groups between different schools with the aim to improve instructional practices and leading the building of a school vision and culture (York-Barr & Duke, 2004: 263). This view is supported by Childs-Bowen, Moller and Scrivner (2000: 28) when they conceptualise classroom teacher leadership as follows:

We believe teachers are leaders when they function in professional learning communities to affect student learning; contribute to school improvement; inspire excellence in practice; and empower stakeholders to participate in educational improvement.

Classroom teacher leadership can also be described as leadership that changes instructional practices in a school in such a way that it improves the school as a whole

thus shaping the lives of the children of that school so that it will ultimately contribute to the quality of community life (Crowther, Kaagen, Ferguson & Hann, 2002: xvii).

Lai and Cheung (2015: 675) identify several core facets of classroom teacher leadership. It can be

- role based, for example when a classroom teacher assumes a formal position such as head of a department
- community based, for example where the classroom teacher takes on an informal role as creator of a vision for improvement under students and colleagues
- transformational by changing teaching and learning practices and school culture to improve
- collaborative, for example by working together with colleagues, students and members for school improvement
- supportive of development through learner development and teacher development.

For the purpose of this study classroom teacher leadership refers to a post level one teacher initiating leadership activities not just in planning and organising teaching and learning within his / her classroom but also initiating leadership activities outside of the boundaries of his / her classroom in extra-curricular activities, in whole school development and in the community.

From these conceptualisations of classroom teacher leadership it is clear that classroom teacher leadership has its roots in instructional leadership and thus warrants a closer look at the next concept in this study and that is instructional leadership.

2.3 Instructional leadership

Instructional leadership has always been regarded as the ideal leadership model necessary for the improvement of teaching and learning in schools (King, 2002: 61). The focus of instructional leadership is everything that has to do with the improvement

of teaching and learning in schools and therefore this task was traditionally seen as the sole task of the principal. The American Association of School Administrators (AASA) (1992: 21) confirms this view: “This responsibility of the principal to ensure that effective teaching and learning takes place is, however, not new; it can be and was always regarded as his/her primary task.” Principals should be instructional leaders who are focused on the improvement of teaching and learning in their schools through strong leadership (Kruger, 2003: 206). The principal as instructional leader has certain roles and functions to fulfil this primary task of improving teaching and learning in his/her school.

Bipath and Mafuwane (2015: 172) have undertaken a study to indicate the effectiveness of the instructional leadership of principals. They have consequently identified four main roles that a principal as instructional leader should fulfil:

- To monitor and give feedback on teaching and learning in his/her school
- To set clear goals and have a clear and well-communicated vision shared by everybody in his/her school
- To be focused on teacher development
- To effectively and efficiently manage the curriculum and instruction in his/her school

Parker and Day (1997: 87) identify the following five functions of the principal as instructional leader:

- Collaborating with teachers to set a clear vision and goals for effective teaching and learning
- Managing the curriculum and instruction so that resources and time is used most effectively to promote teaching and learning in a school
- Supervising teaching through the development of teachers thus ensuring that teachers are teaching as effectively as possible
- Monitoring learner progress by using their results to support learners, teachers and parents

- Creating a climate within the school that is conducive to a culture of teaching and learning

Considering these identified roles and functions of the instructional leader it becomes evident that instructional leadership in a school is such an enormous task – most probably a task too big for any one person. The researcher therefore has to agree with the movement away from the traditional view of the principal as the sole instructional leader in a school. Spillane (2009: 70) advises that schools should move away from the concept of a “lonely heroic principal saving a school” and move on to the concept of a distributive framework of leadership. Considering the enormity of the task of instructional leadership there was more recently a movement away from the thought that the principal alone can be responsible for the instructional leadership within a school. The problem with the traditional view of the principal as instructional leader, who is seen as a leader totally involved in curriculum and instruction, works directly with teachers and is mostly present in the classroom, is that the task would just be too big. No one person can have such extensive knowledge and teaching experience in all the different subjects (Horn & Loeb, 2010: 66).

During the 1990s researchers questioned the idea that a single leader could fulfil the complex requirements of the instructional leadership role (Hallinger, Leithwood & Heck, 2010: 19). Gronn (2008: 147) comments:

As principals’ responsibilities increase in quantity and complexity along with accountability demands for improved student achievement, some researchers argue that one person can no longer successfully lead a school; rather schools should be lead in a collaborative manner with school staff members in shared decision making through a distributive leadership model.

The realisation was that for the effective implementation of instructional leadership different role players are required and that leadership roles should indeed be distributed between different people. In this regard Hallinger, Leithwood and Heck (2010: 19) state that a view is developing that instructional leadership is actually a

shared or distributed role in schools. Pellicer and Anderson (1995: 16) conceptualise instructional leadership as a transformation of teaching and learning in a school, which is supported by all stakeholders and that will ultimately lead to a sustained improvement in learner results.

The new thought on instructional leadership is that the hiring of quality teachers, the effective assignment of such teachers, the detainment of these teachers and the provision of opportunities for teachers to develop, can have a far greater impact on teaching and learning and school improvement than one leader's involvement in teaching and learning (Horgn & Loeb, 2010: 66). This school of thought emphasises the importance of the classroom teacher in instructional leadership and school improvement. Instructional leaders are now viewed as excellent teachers who use their skills to improve teaching and learning in schools (Horgn & Loeb, 2010: 66).

For the purpose of this study instructional leadership refers to leadership activities focussed on improving teaching and learning. This leadership is not just limited to planning and organising a lesson for effective teaching and learning within the classroom. It also refers to leadership activities outside of the boundaries of the classroom in the school such as acquiring the best teachers, effectively using these teachers, developing these teachers and detaining these teachers. Instructional leadership can also stretch beyond the boundaries of the school into the community when professional learning communities are created and teaching and learning are improved through collaboration within the community.

It is evident that the classroom teacher has an important role as an instructional leader, but also as being part of the distributive leadership model. The next section will focus on the concept of distributive leadership as a tool to entice teacher leadership.

2.4 Distributive leadership

Reviewing the literature on distributive leadership the following descriptions brought more clarity on the concept: distributive leadership is shared leadership; it is parallel

leadership; it is a social influence process, and it is transformational. A closer look needs to be taken at each of these descriptions to truly understand the concept of distributive leadership.

2.4.1 Distributive leadership as “shared leadership”

Distributive leadership is commonly described as leadership shared by different role players within an organisation (Hallinger, Leithwood & Heck, 2010: 19; Lambert, 2002: 37; Spillane, 2009: 70; Spillane, Halverson & Diamond, 2004: 21). This line of thought will also assume that responsibility and accountability will be shared by all role players within a school, including the classroom teacher. Neuman and Simmons (2000: 10) state as follows: “Distributive leadership calls on everyone associated with schools – principals, teachers, school staff members, district personnel, parents, community members and students to take responsibility for student achievement and to assume leadership roles in areas where they are competent and skilled”. According to Spillane (2005: 143) distributive leadership is often used interchangeably with “shared leadership”, “team leadership” and “democratic leadership”. Spillane (2009: 70) explains that the distributive leadership framework involves two core aspects: principal plus and practice. The principal plus aspect of distributive leadership acknowledges that multiple individuals are involved in leading and managing schools (2009: 70). School leadership should not be just centred on the principal of a school but be distributed between multiple leaders, which should include classroom teachers (Spillane, 2006: 15).

2.4.2 Distributive leadership as a “social influence process”

The fact that leadership in an organisation is shared between different role players will necessarily also have an influence on the relationships between the different role players within that organisation. Spillane (2009: 70) further explains this social influence process by explaining the second core aspect of distributive leadership and that is practice and it is about the interaction between leaders and followers and is negated by the situation in which the interaction takes place. This aspect will influence the traditional hierarchical structures through which leadership was traditionally

practised. The social relationship between leaders and followers will be affected by distributive leadership. The principal, members of the school management team and classroom teachers will now all act as leaders and decision makers to bring about school improvement (Harris & Muijs, 2005: 133). Yukl (1994: 3) refers to distributive leadership as a “social influence process” whereby people within an organisation influence each other, and this social influence builds the relationships within the organisation and influences the activities of the organisation.

2.4.3 Distributive leadership as “parallel leadership”

Instead of a top-down leadership of a leader at the top and followers at the bottom Crowther et al. (2002: 38) refer to the concept of “parallel leadership” where the principal takes leadership responsibility for the strategic leadership, that is leadership involving vision building, allocation of resources and networking, parallel to the teachers who take leadership responsibility for the improvement of teaching and learning within a school, thus breaking the traditional hierarchal leadership structure. Within distributive leadership there is not a hierarchal structure with one person in a formal leadership position at the top influencing the relationships and activities of the organisation. Naicker and Mestry (2013: 4) suggest that classroom teachers within the distributive leadership paradigm move away from their historic dependency and be prepared to share the leadership responsibility. Classroom teachers should also be prepared to take accountability (Naicker & Mestry: 2013: 12). These authors argue that the role of the principal within the distributive leadership paradigm should be to share power and authority, to share in the decision-making process and to create a culture of collaboration within a school. Harris and Lambert (2003: 45) add to these tasks of the principal by suggesting that the principal should be “a leader of leaders” by developing his/her teachers as leaders. Considering the above-mentioned definitions, it is evident that distributive leadership implies that the classroom teacher at the bottom of the hierarchy of school leadership should also be part of the decision-making process in schools. The distributive leadership model implies that a classroom teacher, without a leadership designation, takes responsibility for leading teaching and learning in schools (Spillane & Healey, 2010: 256).

2.4.4 Distributive leadership as transformational leadership

Distributive leadership will not only change the traditional relationships between leaders and followers but will also change the organisation as a whole. The literature reviewed on successful school leadership points to the fact that a distributive leadership model contributes to school improvement (Grant, 2011: 2). In his study Onorato (2013: 44) calls a principal working with his teachers “transformational leadership”, which he claims is needed to improve results beyond expectation in schools. Recent research shows the shortcomings of leadership being vested in one person and shows the advantages of a group of teachers leading teaching and learning both within the classroom as well as outside the classroom (Katzenmeyer & Moller, 2001: 17). It is evident from these studies that to improve teaching and learning in a school is too broad a task for only the principal to fulfil the classroom teacher should therefore also assume his / her rightful role and function in this regard. Katzenmeyer & Moller (2001: 2) underline that the moment this happens “*the sleeping giant of teacher leadership can be awakened*”.

For the purpose of this study distributive leadership refers to a shared leadership. Leaders who are prepared to create an environment where power, authority and responsibility are shared by different role players within an organisation.

2.5 Linking the concepts of classroom teacher leadership, instructional leadership and distributive leadership

It is evident in the conceptualisation of classroom teacher leadership, instructional leadership and distributive leadership that these concepts are closely related and inter-related with each other. A closer look needs to be taken at the interrelatedness of these concepts and how they are linked with each other for the benefit of this study.

2.5.1 Classroom teacher leadership and instructional leadership

Instructional leadership and classroom teacher leadership is closely related, and recent literature suggests that the instructional leadership role within a school should

indeed be assumed by the classroom teacher leader. The expertise and experience of the classroom teacher will determine the extent of classroom teacher leadership. Expertise and experience will also determine the readiness of the classroom teacher to assume a leadership role and also the acceptance of this leadership by colleagues (York-Barr and Duke, 2004: 267). York-Barr and Duke (2004: 261) suggest that expert classroom teachers assume the role of instructional leaders by leading colleagues in excellent teaching practices, and by being involved in the allocation of staff and resources to different subjects to improve teaching and learning within a school. Classroom teacher leadership is the ability of the classroom teacher to engage fellow classroom teachers in the experimentation and evaluation of new and improved teaching practices that will result in learner improvement (Wasley, 1991: 170). The classroom teacher should assume the role of instructional leader to improve teaching and learning within a school.

Due to the expertise of the classroom teacher in instruction, instructional leadership should begin with the classroom teacher rather than to begin and end with the principal (Pellicer & Anderson, 1995: 16). Instructional leadership is closely related to working with the classroom teacher (Bipath & Mafuwane, 2015: 173). This suggests a parallel leadership relationship between principal and classroom teacher regarding instructional leadership within a school. In this regard Kruger (2003: 211) states that there should be a movement away from the hierarchical approach on instructional leadership with a principal at the top giving orders to a more collaborative approach where instructional leadership responsibilities are shared with the classroom teacher.

When instructional leadership is shared by the principal and classroom teacher leaders teaching and learning within a school will improve. There is a strong correlation between effective and quality teaching and learning in a school and shared instructional leadership with senior teachers and classroom teacher leaders (Dimmock & Wildy, 1995: 319).

2.5.2 Instructional leadership and distributive leadership

King (2002: 61) identifies instructional leadership as the ideal leadership model necessary for the improvement of teaching and learning in schools. However, the practical realisation is that the effective implementation of instructional leadership cannot be done by one person alone. Distributed leadership should therefore be at the core of instructional leadership (Hoadley, Christie & Ward, 2009: 377). In his study Grant (2011: 77) also posits that distributed leadership is closely related to instructional leadership effectiveness.

Principals acknowledge that they do not have time for proper instructional leadership within their busy schedules and therefore have to delegate tasks like curriculum management and instructional supervision to heads of departments and subject heads (Kruger, 2003: 209). This shared leadership practice by delegating leadership to other role players within the school is closely linked to the leadership practices of the distributive leadership paradigm.

The distributive leadership practice of involving classroom teacher leaders in the decision-making process at an instructional leadership level of work allocation and time tabling not only develops the leadership capacity of classroom teachers but ensures their commitment to instructional decisions made, leading to a shared vision within the school and ultimately creates a positive school climate that will promote quality teaching and learning (Krug, 1992: 433). The development of leadership capacity, sharing in the decision-making process, creating a shared vision and creating a positive climate are all attributes of the distributive leadership paradigm, which in this case was initiated by shared instructional leadership.

Developing a shared vision between different stakeholders within a school creates a healthy culture and is an important attribute of the distributive leadership paradigm (Karpicke & Murphy, 1996: 27). This same shared vision is a requirement for instructional leadership within which clear and well communicated goals will determine

all instructional activities within the school (Haughey & MacElwain, 1992: 108). Thus a shared vision closely links the distributive and instructional leadership paradigms.

2.5.3 Classroom teacher leadership and distributive leadership

Woods, Bennet, Harvey and Wise (2004: 439) explain that distributive leadership and classroom teacher leadership are closely linked together. Distributive leadership is a much broader concept that refers to the distribution of leadership to more stakeholders than just the classroom teacher. Classroom teacher leadership, on the other hand, is a much narrower concept that focuses only on the leadership roles of the classroom teacher. This broader concept of distributive leadership includes the narrower concept of classroom teacher leadership and therefore the close link between the two concepts.

Within the distributive perspective leadership roles can be assumed by different people at different levels of an organisation (Leithwood, Day, Sammons, Harris & Hopkins, 2006: 47). This implies that the distributive leadership perspective creates the opportunity for every person within the organisation to assume a leadership role (Harris & Muijs, 2005: 28). Therefore, it can be reasoned that distributive leadership will create the opportunity for classroom teacher leadership to evolve within a school. De Villiers and Pretorius (2011: 575) declare: “Teacher leadership is one of the manifestations of distributive leadership”.

In their study on classroom teacher leadership Muijs and Harris (2007: 129) conclude that for classroom teacher leadership to evolve in a school a culture change to a distributive leadership needs to take place, where all staff will understand the different leadership activities and develop the need to take part in these leadership activities. Gronn (2000: 333) explains that when classroom teacher leadership evolves within a school, it will have the following implications for that school:

- The relationships in the school will change when the difference between followers and leaders become vaguer.

- The workload will be distributed between more people and leadership will not be vested in only one person anymore but will change continuously as new situations arise that require new expertise from a new leader.

These implications of classroom teacher leadership are all attributes of the distributive leadership paradigm, thus linking classroom teacher leadership with the creation of a distributive culture within a school.

Classroom teacher leadership has to be initiated by a principal who has taken a conscious decision to move to a more distributive leadership model (Muijs & Harris, 2007: 129). While a culture of a shared vision, goals and objectives is a necessity for a distributive leadership model, classroom teacher leadership will influence the culture (Muijs & Harris, 2007: 137). Harris (2003: 317) points out that distributive leadership will free classroom teachers from their historical dependency on strong hierarchal leaders and create a new culture in schools based on collaboration, development of the leadership capacity of classroom teachers and shared authority and responsibility.

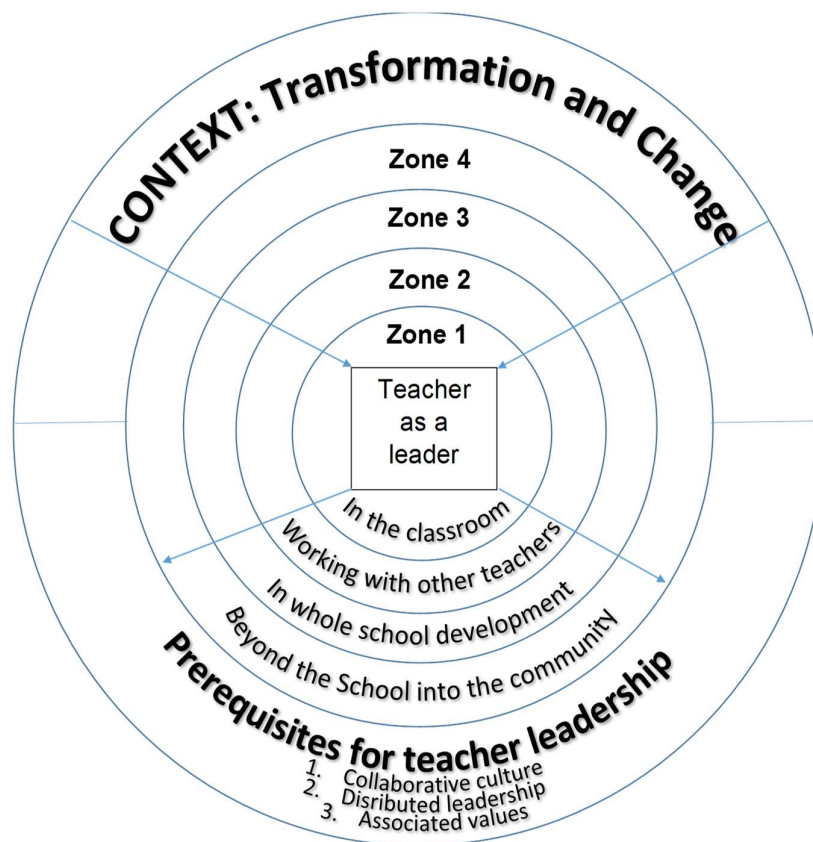
Thus the concepts of distributive leadership and classroom teacher leadership are closely linked and interdependent on each other. This implies that distributed leadership cannot exist without classroom teacher leadership and classroom teacher leadership cannot exist without a distributive leadership environment.

2.6 Measuring classroom teacher leadership

The next aspect that is addressed in this literature review is to determine how classroom teacher leadership can be measured within a school context. Questions like what do classroom teachers do and what do principals within the distributive leadership paradigm do to encourage classroom teacher leadership also need to be answered to truly understand how classroom teacher leadership evolves within a school.

Grant (2008: 93) provided the theoretical framework for measuring classroom teacher leadership in schools with her model for understanding teacher leadership. In this model she identifies four broad zones in which classroom teacher leadership can take place. This model then also indicates the prerequisites for the realisation of classroom teacher leadership. Classroom teacher leadership can only take place in a distributive leadership environment where there is collaboration, leadership is shared and values are shared, indicating what school leadership needs to do to encourage classroom teacher leadership.

The following model developed by Grant (2008: 93) indicates the zones and roles of teacher leadership and can be used to measure the level of classroom teacher leadership as well as the distributive environment in schools:



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

Figure 2.1 Grant's model for classroom teacher leadership indicating the different zones and roles of teacher leadership

Source: Grant (2008: 93)

In this model Grant identifies four levels or “zones” at which classroom teacher leadership can take place:

1. Classroom teacher leadership within the classroom where classroom teacher leadership is exerted when teaching and learning take place within the classroom
2. Classroom teacher leadership outside of the classroom within a subject or extracurricular activity, for example a discussion on a curriculum issue or collaboration to improve instruction
3. Classroom teacher leadership beyond a certain subject, for example involvement in strategic planning for whole-school development or decision making
4. Classroom teacher leadership beyond the school, for example leadership roles in the community and between neighbouring schools

The first level or zone is the lowest level of classroom teacher leadership and level 4 the highest level. Devaney (in Gehrke, 1991: 3-4) identifies six classroom teacher roles

within each of these levels or zones. The first role is that of the classroom teacher as a leader who continues to improve instructional practice, for example by obtaining knowledge. This role realises in the first zone of classroom teacher leadership according Grant (2008: 93). The second role refers to the classroom teacher as a leader who shares curriculum knowledge with colleagues. This role realises in both the second and fourth zones of classroom teacher leadership (Grant, 2008: 93). The second role realises in the second zone when curriculum knowledge is shared with colleagues within a school but also realises in zone four when curriculum knowledge is shared with colleagues from neighbouring schools in the community. The third role is that of the classroom teacher as a leader who supports, mentors and develops other classroom teachers. This role also realises in both the second and fourth zones of classroom teacher leadership (Grant, 2008: 93). The third role realises in zone two when the classroom teacher supports, mentors and develops other classroom teachers within the same school but moves to the higher level four when the support, mentoring and development is given to classroom teachers from other schools. The fourth role is that of the classroom teacher as a leader measuring the performance of other teachers. This role realises in the second zone of classroom teacher leadership (Grant, 2008: 93). The fifth role is that of the classroom teacher leading and organising performance reviews on the instructional practice of colleagues. This role realises in the third zone of classroom teacher leadership (Grant, 2008: 93). The sixth role is that of the classroom teacher as a leader participating in the decision-making process. This role realises in the third zone of classroom teacher leadership (Grant, 2008: 93). Harris and Lambert (2003: 44) make the following statement: “Teacher leaders are in the first place, expert teachers who spend the majority of their time in a classroom, but take on leadership roles at times when development and innovation is needed”. This statement summarises the six different roles of the classroom teacher leader.

Classroom teacher leadership therefore manifests itself in informal leadership practices such as mentoring colleagues in instructional problems; encouraging parents to participate in the teaching and learning of their children; collaborating with

colleagues in small learning communities to reflect on best instructional practices, and creating a vision for and culture of school improvement (York-Barr & Duke, 2004: 263).

This poses the question, what can distributive principals do to encourage a shared leadership with classroom teacher leaders? Classroom teacher leadership does not take away the leadership roles of the principal and school management team. Their leadership is important in encouraging classroom teacher leadership by creating a distributive and collaborative environment within which opportunities are created for classroom teacher leadership when they invite different classroom teachers to assume different leadership roles according to the strengths, expertise and talents of the classroom teacher (Grant, 2008: 89). Distributed leadership does not replace the leadership role of the principal in the school; as a matter of fact, this hierarchical form of leadership is required to provide the structure for distributive and classroom teacher leadership to evolve (Fullan, 2003: 22).

In this regard Gunter (2005: 51) argues that central to the theory of classroom teacher leadership, researchers should also examine how leadership is distributed to the classroom teacher and what kind of leadership tasks is distributed to the classroom teacher. Grant (2011: 16) gives more clarity in this regard in his study on distributive leadership. He identifies four core leadership functions that can be distributed to encourage classroom teacher leadership and lead to school improvement (Grant, 2011: 16-18):

- **The first function: setting the direction of the school.** When classroom teachers are allowed to assume a leading role in creating a vision for the school it creates a shared vision and ensures support for the mission and goals set for the school.
- **The second function: developing teachers.** When classroom teachers are allowed to assume a leading role in the decision making on development programmes they develop as leaders and as leaders they will also start to develop the classroom teachers around them.
- **The third function: redesigning the organisation.** When classroom teacher leaders are allowed to be part of the decision-making processes there will be more

commitment to decisions made. This collaborative decision-making-process will require time and trust. Trust will in turn lead to strong relationships and a culture of respect within the organisation (Grant et al. 2010: 404).

- **The fourth function: managing the instructional programme.** When classroom teachers are allowed to play a leading role in the selection of learning material, make decisions about the allocation of learning resources, assist others to improve their teaching practice and also lead instruction beyond the classroom within learning committees, it leads to a shared commitment to improve teaching and learning within a school (Grant, 2010: 22).

Muijs and Harris (2007: 111) list the following actions for the distributive principal who wants to encourage classroom teacher leadership in his/her school: create a culture of trust; create a culture of collaboration; create a shared vision of where the school needs to go; create clear line management structures, and there needs to be a focus on strong leadership development.

It is important to realise that classroom teacher leadership cannot be forced on classroom teachers through a hierarchical structure of delegation – it is about creating an environment which will encourage classroom teacher leadership. When classroom teacher leadership is measured within a school it is not just about measuring the leadership roles that classroom teachers assume within that school but also measuring the distributive actions that are taken by the principal to encourage classroom teacher leadership.

2.7 Measuring classroom teacher leadership in South African schools

Most studies done in South African schools on distributive leadership and the consequent evolving of classroom teacher leadership within a distributive environment have shown that there is little or no evidence of distributive leadership and that classroom teacher leadership is at most limited to the classroom.

Williams (2011: 191–196) in his theoretical literature review unpacks the theoretical underpinnings of the notion of distributed leadership and the possibilities that it holds for classroom teacher leadership. He then investigates the numerous and diverse factors that have prevented the actualisation of distributed leadership and classroom teacher leadership in South African schools. Lack of democracy in the South African education system, principals who are not committed to democracy, classroom teachers who are not willing to participate in the decision-making processes, women who are still excluded from education leadership and lack of resources, are listed by Williams as reasons why distributed leadership and classroom teacher leadership have not yet actualised in South African schools (Williams, 2011: 194–195).

The South African education system has not yet democratised and traditional hierarchical leadership practices still exist in South African schools (Department of Education, 2003). Classroom teachers are insecure and therefore not willing to assume leadership roles in their schools and policies emphasises the accountability of the principals, which makes them less willing to share their decision-making powers (Grant, 2006: 525).

The reasons why classroom teachers are not willing to participate in the leadership activities of their schools are because they are unsure of the value of their participation, and because they lack leadership skills, resulting in a lack of confidence to participate (Williams, 2011: 194). Classroom teacher leadership is therefore prevented due to a lack of leadership skills, which can be addressed by leadership development programmes.

Lack of resources, however, is preventing classroom teacher leadership development programmes. Nxesi (2001: 7) declares that there is no national plan for classroom teacher leadership development and is disappointed that no resources are made available to invest in the human resources of education. Leadership development programmes provided at provincial levels are inadequate because they are in the form of crash courses and are usually directed at principals who do not cascade their acquired knowledge back to classroom teachers (Williams, 2011: 195). Williams (2011: 195) recommends that classroom teachers should be empowered as leaders

with leadership development programmes so that they would be willing and confident to participate in leadership activities within a distributive leadership paradigm.

The literature review will now focus on studies done in different provinces in Southern Africa, and how the findings within the provinces of the Western Cape, KwaZulu-Natal and Gauteng correlate with each other to show that distributive leadership is not practised in most South African schools and that classroom teacher leadership is at most confined to the classroom.

2.7.1 Studies measuring classroom teacher leadership in the Western Cape

A quantitative research study with surveys to 283 teachers, SMT members, principals and district officials in the Eden and Central Karoo Education District showed that the majority of classroom teachers are indeed ready for a more distributed deep democratic leadership practice in schools (De Villiers & Pretorius, 2011: 583). The respondents identified classroom teacher leadership as knowing the importance of the teaching profession; standing up for learners including those learners who are disadvantaged; being part of policy making; being optimistic; mentoring new teachers; collaborating on instructional issues; playing an active role in decision making on acquiring instructional material, and allocation of instructional resources (De Villiers & Pretorius, 2011: 583). The classroom teacher leadership roles identified here are mostly limited to the classroom with very little leadership roles being identified beyond the classroom.

Furthermore, principals and members of school management teams represented 40% of the population; 32% of the population was veteran teachers; 19% of the respondents represented educators who belonged to the middle to novice experience group and 9% were district officials (De Villiers & Pretorius, 2011: 583). These results imply that the principals and members of school management teams who represented 40% of the respondents, acknowledged the need for classroom teacher leadership but did not create the distributive environment to cultivate classroom teacher leadership;

32% of the respondents acknowledged the need for classroom teacher leadership, which means they do not fulfil the role of classroom teacher leaders although they are in a perfect position to do so due to their experience.

According to De Villiers and Pretorius (2011: 586) the dilemma was that in reality the actual practise of leadership beyond the classroom was very limited. These authors found that school leaders and school management teams create an atmosphere where distributed leadership is either hindered or invited. It was suggested that the principals and members of School Management Teams “authorise” distributive leadership in their schools to create a distributive leadership culture within their schools where hierarchal structures are gradually removed in favour of a shared leadership of classroom teacher leadership (Grant & Singh, 2009: 299).

This study showed that although the majority of classroom teachers are ready to assume leadership roles within their schools, true shared leadership beyond the classroom is only possible within a distributive leadership environment which must first be created by school leaders.

2.7.2 Studies measuring classroom teacher leadership in KwaZulu-Natal

In their small-scale qualitative study Grant and Singh (2009: 292) chose two KwaZulu-Natal primary schools that “worked” because they assumed that classroom teacher leadership will be evident in these well-functioning schools. Christie, Butler and Potterton (2007: 5) describe schools that work as schools that have a school culture focused on a work ethic and there is an expectancy of achievement from all stakeholders. They interviewed the principal, deputy principal and a head of department (HOD) from each of these schools and followed it up with 30 questionnaires to classroom teachers in each school. They then held focus group interviews with five classroom teachers, who completed the questionnaires from each school (Grant & Singh, 2009: 292).

Grant and Singh (2009: 298) found that classroom teacher leadership concerning instruction was very evident; classroom teachers were acting as subject heads; acting as grade heads; were mentoring fellow educators; were evaluating the teaching practice of their peers, and were working collaboratively in teaching and learning committees. This again confirms the important role of the classroom teacher leader in the instructional leadership of a school and the fact that instructional leadership based on expertise should indeed be the start of classroom teacher leadership (Pellicer & Anderson, 1995: 16). In this study classroom teacher leadership was therefore very evident in zone one and zone two, and to a lesser extent in zone four (Grant, 2008: 93).

The study however indicated that classroom teacher leadership in the area of whole-school development and decision making was almost non-existent and was at most a delegation of management functions and administrative tasks to senior classroom teachers. (Grant & Singh, 2009: 299). The boundaries of leaders and followers were very clear in zone three and this is in direct contrast with what is required within the distributive leadership paradigm where the roles of leaders and followers should become blurred (Timperley, 2005: 410). In zone three there was therefore almost no evidence of classroom teacher leadership (Grant, 2008: 93). It was evident that zone one, zone two and to a lesser extent zone four were seen as the “domain” of the classroom teacher but zone three was seen as the “domain” of the principal and members of the school management team (Grant, 2008: 93).

Grant and Singh (2009: 289) found that in these schools, leadership was still practised in formal hierarchical structures and therefore classroom teacher leadership was still untapped in South African schools. They suggest that the implementation of a true democratic distributive leadership environment in South African schools should be approached in three steps:

- The first step should be an “authorised’ distribution of leadership where leadership tasks are delegated through the hierarchical structure to classroom teacher leaders. This should not be just a delegation of management and administrative

tasks but an opportunity for classroom teacher leadership to develop where classroom teachers are given authority, supported and empowered.

- The second step should be the movement to a “dispersed” distributive leadership paradigm where collective leadership is instituted and the boundaries of the hierarchical structure are gradually broken down.
- The third step will then be the implementation of true “democratic” distributive leadership where the vision of the school can be addressed and the organisation can be redesigned (Grant & Singh, 2009: 299).

The above-mentioned study was followed up by a large-scale quantitative study in the form of a survey in which 1 055 classroom teachers from 81 primary and secondary schools in KwaZulu-Natal participated (Grant, Gardner, Kajee, Moodley & Somaroo, 2010: 406). This study found that while classroom teachers supported the notion of shared leadership and believed they were equipped to lead, their leadership was largely restricted to their classrooms (Grant et al., 2010: 401). Classroom teacher leadership involvement in zone one was mainly focused on reflection on own teaching practice with the aim to improve (Grant et al., 2010: 413). Classroom teacher leadership in zone two dropped dramatically and leadership mainly focused on selection of learning and teaching material at a curricular level and involvement in sport activities at an extracurricular level. (Grant et al., 2010: 413). Half of the respondents never mentored peers on curriculum, never evaluated the teaching practice of peers and never led curriculum development (Grant et al., 2010: 413). Classroom teacher leadership in zone three was almost non-existent and focused mainly on decision making regarding school discipline (Grant et al., 2010: 413). Classroom teacher leadership in zone four was also almost non-existent and focused mainly on involvement in cluster meetings and extra-curricular activities like sport (Grant et al., 2010: 413).

Grant et al. (2010: 414) identify two main problems regarding the very limited impact of classroom teacher leadership in schools in KwaZulu-Natal, namely school context and the role of the school principal. School context refers to schools in KwaZulu-Natal

still being caught in the hierarchical structures of the past and distributive leadership is just a concept talked about but not truly understood or put into practice. The role of the principal refers to the fact that the distributive structures and culture necessary for classroom teacher leadership to evolve needs to be created by the principal but there is an unwillingness to do so due to a lack of trust (Grant et al., 2010: 415).

Grant et al. (2010: 416) make the following recommendations: debate on how to implement classroom teacher leadership in schools; classroom teacher leadership should become part of the undergraduate and postgraduate programmes, and calls on school leaders to take the risk and responsibility for the implementation of classroom teacher leadership.

2.7.3 Studies measuring classroom teacher leadership in Gauteng

Naicker and Mestry (2011: 99) used a mixed methods study to investigate the experiences of classroom teachers of distributive leadership in their schools in the Soweto region of the Gauteng province. This very interesting approach to the study consisted of a first phase of focus group interviews with classroom teachers from three differently graded schools in the Soweto region. The grading of the schools was done by the Whole School Evaluation Unit of the Gauteng Department of Education. The qualitative first phase was used to develop an instrument to be used during the second quantitative phase of the study. During the second quantitative phase a questionnaire was sent to 300 classroom teachers from 27 different schools (Naicker & Mestry, 2011: 102).

The qualitative study found that there was no evidence of distributive leadership in these schools. The quantitative study, however, revealed the early stages of a movement towards distributive leadership (Naicker & Mestry, 2011: 102–103).

Naicker and Mestry (2011: 105) recommend that the Gauteng Department of Education start training programmes in distributive leadership and that school

principals be trained in the implementation of distributive leadership in order to change the strong hierarchical structures that still exist in schools in the Soweto region of the Gauteng province (Naicker & Mestry, 2011: 105).

In 2013 Naicker and Mestry (2013: 1) did a follow-up qualitative study in three differently graded primary schools in the Soweto region of the Gauteng province. These schools were graded by the Whole School Evaluation Unit of the Gauteng Department of Education and the grading of the three primary schools varied between category one and category three schools, where category one refers to a school needing urgent attention, a category two school needing attention and a category three school is a school performing at an acceptable level. In-depth focus group interviews were held in each of the three primary schools. Each focus group consisted of 15 post level one teachers with a minimum of five years' experience (Naicker & Mestry, 2013: 5).

Interviews centred on the following themes: leadership styles; school climate; communication, and barriers to teacher leadership. The study indicated that traditional, autocratic and hierarchical leadership styles were still very evident in these schools and that they lacked democratic, distributive leadership (Naicker & Mestry, 2013: 6-7). From the study it was clear that there is no shared leadership in these schools, and that the principal and school management teams are hindering the development of classroom teacher leadership by overturning the decisions of classroom teacher committees (Naicker & Mestry, 2013: 7). There were very limited signs of collaborative or participative leadership practices evident in these schools (Naicker & Mestry, 2013: 9). The climate in these schools leads to poor relationships with no trust, very low teacher morale and poor job satisfaction (Naicker & Mestry, 2013: 8). Communication in these schools was ineffective with a lack of staff meetings, subject meetings, school governing body meetings and school committee meetings (Naicker & Mestry: 2013: 10). Several barriers to classroom teacher leadership were identified in these schools, including inadequate opportunities for leadership; teacher isolation in lesson planning; heavy workload of teachers; power relations between teachers and the school

management team members, and a lack of leadership skills development (Naicker & Mestry, 2013: 11). Naicker and Mestry (2013: 12) recommended that the Gauteng Department of Education should provide distributive leadership workshops for principals and classroom teachers; a shared accountability should be implemented in schools, and a collaborative leadership structure should be implemented to improve the school climate.

2.8 The gap in the literature

The gap in the literature reviewed is that the studies mostly focus on the necessity for distributive leadership in effective schools. Researchers emphasise the need for the classroom teacher to assume leadership roles in their respective schools. Although the researchers suggest the involvement of the classroom teacher in a leadership role and the classroom teachers indicated that they are ready to assume this leadership role, this is not practised in most South African schools. Researchers therefore emphasise what should happen, namely that distributed leadership should be implemented and classroom teachers should assume leadership roles in their schools (Grant, 2011; Gronn, 2008; Hallinger, Leithwood & Heck, 2010; Hoadley, Christie & Ward, 2009; Neuman & Simmons, 2000; Spillane, 2005; 2009; Spillane & Healey 2010;). Researchers also point out that in most South African schools distributed leadership is not implemented outside of the classroom (De Villiers & Pretorius, 2011; Grant et al., 2010; Grant & Singh, 2009; Naicker & Mestry, 2011; 2013; Williams, 2011). This then poses a question and a gap in the literature: how can the theory of distributive leadership and classroom teacher leadership be implemented in practice in South African schools? The gap can be addressed by this research on the experiences of classroom teacher leadership and distributive leadership in high-performing secondary schools. Classroom teacher leadership in a distributive leadership environment is a requirement for effective modern-day leadership and without effective leadership there cannot be an effective school (Bush, Kiggundu & Moorosi, 2011: 31). Therefore, there should be strong evidence of classroom teacher

leadership and a distributive leadership environment in these high-performing schools, which should be investigated.

2.9 Conclusion

In this literature review literature was used to conceptualise the key concepts in this study, namely classroom teacher leadership; instructional leadership and distributive leadership. It was found that these concepts were closely linked and interrelated during the conceptualisation. The literature review provided a solid conceptual framework for understanding the concept of classroom teacher leadership and showed the importance of classroom teacher leadership in quality leadership for school improvement.

The literature review also provided a theoretical framework for measuring classroom teacher leadership that will be used during the data collection and analysis phase of this study.

Various studies on classroom teacher leadership were done in schools in the Western Cape, KZN and Gauteng. These studies were also reviewed and it was found that classroom teacher leadership in practice in these South African schools studied was non-existent and at most limited to the classroom.

In this literature review the gap in the literature was identified in the fact that the literature explains the concept; it explains the importance of the concept; it shows that classroom teacher leadership is not visible in practice in some South African schools, but it does not give an indication of how classroom teacher leadership can be implemented in ineffective schools. This study will focus on breaching this gap in the literature by providing information on how classroom teacher leadership can be implemented in practice by studying the phenomenon of classroom teacher leadership in effective, top-performing schools.

Chapter 3: Methodology

3.1 Introduction

Creswell (2008:3) identifies three basic steps when doing research. The first step is to formulate a research question, the second step is to collect data to answer the mentioned research question and the third step is to use the collected data to present an answer to the research question. My research question relates to the experiences of classroom teacher leadership by classroom teachers and their principals in top-performing secondary schools. This chapter comprises a thorough discussion on how the data on classroom teacher leadership experiences and practices in contemporary, top-performing secondary schools were collected and analysed in order to present an answer to the posed research question.

3.2 Primary and secondary research questions

The following research questions were posed to investigate this phenomenon of classroom teacher leadership in top-performing secondary schools:

3.2.1 Primary research question

“To what extent do classroom teachers assume leadership roles in contemporary, top-performing secondary schools?”

From the primary research question two secondary research questions were developed:

3.2.2 Secondary research questions

- “What leadership roles do classroom teachers assume in contemporary, top-performing secondary schools?”
- “How do leaders of contemporary top-performing, secondary schools create opportunities to share leadership with classroom teachers?”

These research questions were posed to address the research aims of this study.

3.3 Research aims

The aim of the study was to investigate the extent to which classroom teachers participate in leadership activities within a distributive leadership environment in contemporary, top-performing secondary schools. The assumption was that classroom teacher leadership will be evident in these top-performing schools because teacher leadership is seen as a requirement for an effective and successful school (Roberts & Roach, 2006: 38).

The study also aimed to investigate and identify the leadership practices of classroom teachers in contemporary, top-performing secondary schools by investigating the experiences of classroom teacher leadership of classroom teachers and their principals in selected contemporary, top-performing secondary schools in the Pretoria area. These experiences and perceptions enabled us to better understand the practices of classroom teacher leadership in contemporary, top-performing secondary schools (Coolican, 1999: 450-451).

Thirdly the aim of this study was to investigate the leadership opportunities created for classroom teachers in contemporary, top-performing secondary schools by investigating the experiences of classroom teachers and their principals in contemporary, top-performing secondary schools. Through the interpretation of these perceptions, viewpoints and experiences of classroom teachers and their principals this aim of the study could be reached (Cohen & Manion, 1994: 36).

3.4 Conceptual framework

The conceptualisation of classroom teacher leadership formed an integral part of the data collection process of this study. Before data could be collected and a method for data collection could be established the concept of classroom teacher leadership, the

complexity of it as well as its influence on creating effective schools, needed to be understood. Therefore, the conceptual framework, provided by a thorough literature review, gave direction to the methodology of the data collection in this study. Questions based on the conceptual framework formed by the literature review needed to be formulated very carefully to form part of probing semi-structured interviews that will generate information rich data that will help to understand this complex phenomenon of classroom teacher leadership in contemporary, top-performing secondary schools (Yin, 2009: 3-4).

Figure 3.1 portrays the conceptual framework for classroom teacher leadership and its influence on effective top-performing schools.

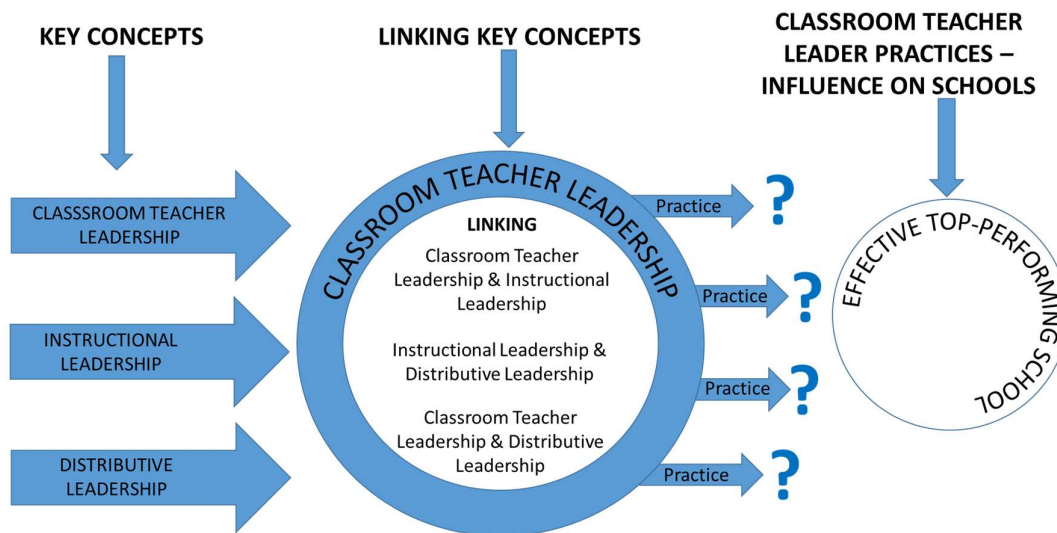


Figure 3.1 Conceptual framework for classroom teacher leadership and its influence on an effective, top-performing school. (Also see paragraph 1.6 in Chapter 1)

Source: Author’s own creation

The conceptual framework for this study was based on three key concepts, namely classroom teacher leadership, instructional leadership and distributive leadership, and how these three concepts were interlinked with each other to create effective, top-performing schools. This conceptual framework was used to give direction to the questions asked to participants during the semi-structured interviews.

The semi-structured interviews therefore started with a conceptualisation of the concept of classroom teacher leadership. The perception, understanding and experience of the concept of classroom teacher leadership of the participants formed the point of departure for the interview. During this phase of the interviews it quickly became clear that most of the participants felt that classroom teacher leadership starts with instructional leadership in the classroom and underlined the close connection between classroom teacher leadership and instructional leadership, and the fact that instructional leadership should begin with the classroom teacher (Pellicer & Anderson, 1995: 16).

Instructional leadership has always been viewed as the ideal leadership model necessary for the improvement of teaching and learning in schools (King, 2002: 61). Therefore, this close link between classroom teacher leadership and instructional leadership necessitated that the next part of the semi-structured interview focused on classroom teacher leadership within the classroom and within the subject.

The next key concept in this conceptual framework directing the semi-structured interviews was distributive leadership. Distributive leadership implies that the leadership role should indeed be distributed or shared between different role players, including the classroom teacher (Spillane, Halverson & Diamond, 2004: 21). The next part of the semi-structured interviews therefore focused on classroom teacher involvement in school development, school achievement, school change, strategic planning and decision making.

This conceptual framework gave direction to the semi-structured interviews as a data collection method focusing on the experiences of the classroom teachers and their principals, firstly on the conceptualisation of classroom teacher leadership, then on the classroom teacher as instructional leader and then focusing on the shared leadership experiences in a distributive leadership environment.

3.5 Theoretical framework

The theoretical framework for the study also contributed to the direction of the data collection process of the study. The model for classroom teacher leadership, indicating the zones and roles of teacher leadership, provided the theoretical framework to measure the level of leadership practised by classroom teachers in their schools (Grant, 2008: 93). The semi-structured interviews were guided by a pre-prepared list of questions, which were based on this theoretical framework of Grant's model for classroom teacher leadership (Grant, 2008: 93). Questions five and six in the pre-prepared list of questions measured classroom teacher leadership in zone one that is within the classroom and subject. Question seven in the pre-prepared list of questions measured classroom teacher leadership in zone two that is outside of the classroom at a curricular or extracurricular level. Questions eight, nine, ten, eleven and twelve in the pre-prepared list of questions for classroom teachers and questions eight, nine, ten and eleven in the pre-prepared list of questions for principals measured classroom teacher leadership in zone three that is in school development and decision making. Questions thirteen and fourteen in the pre-prepared list of questions for classroom teachers and questions twelve and thirteen in the pre-prepared list of questions for principals measured classroom teacher leadership in zone four. Zone four refers to the highest level of classroom teacher leadership and that is classroom teacher leadership outside the boundaries of the school between neighbouring schools and in the community.

Figure 3.2 portrays Grant's model for teacher leadership which guided the pre-prepared list of questions used during the semi-structured interviews.

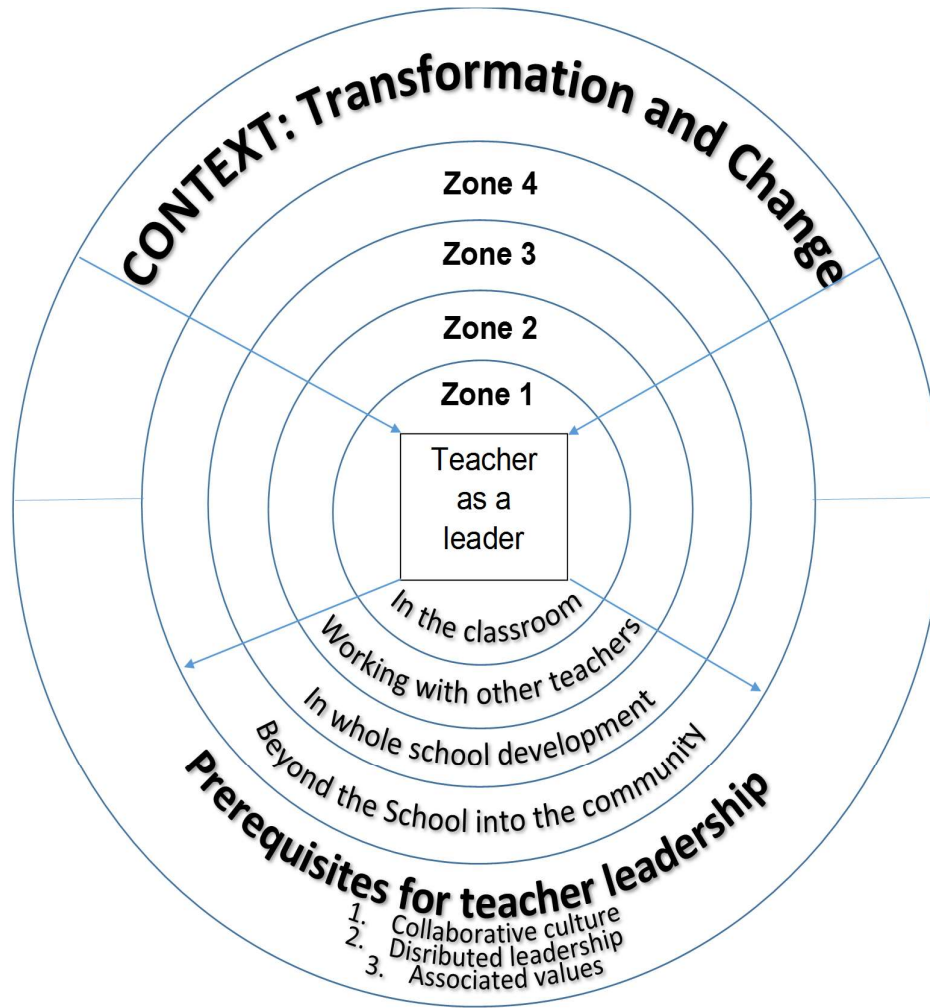


Figure 3.2 Grant's model for teacher leadership indicating the zones and roles of teacher leadership

(Also see paragraph 2.5 in Chapter 2)

Source: Grant (2008: 93)

3.6 Research design

A qualitative approach was used to investigate the phenomenon of classroom teacher leadership in a distributive leadership environment in contemporary, top-performing secondary schools. A qualitative approach was chosen above a quantitative approach because a qualitative approach has the advantage of giving a rich, deep understanding of the experiences and perceptions of both classroom teachers and their principals of classroom teacher leadership in contemporary, top-performing secondary schools (Coolican, 1999: 450 – 451). The choice of a qualitative approach with probing interviews was confirmed to be a good choice in the latter part of the data analysis when it became clear that a quantitative approach with shorter “yes” or “no” answers could have produced misleading data, for example participants would immediately reply “no” when asked if they participate in the decision-making process or in the strategic planning process but when probing in their experiences it was found that they indeed did play a role.

The collection of data on the extent to which classroom teachers assume leadership roles in contemporary, effective, top-performing secondary schools was approached through the interpretive paradigm. The interpretive paradigm wants to investigate and understand the human experience (Cohen & Manion, 1994: 36). This approach enabled the researcher to interpret the perceptions, viewpoints and experiences of both classroom teachers and their principals on the phenomenon of classroom teacher leadership in contemporary, top-performing secondary schools (Cohen & Manion, 1994: 36). Through these perceptions, viewpoints and experiences of the classroom teachers and their principals in top-performing secondary schools it was able to get a view of classroom teacher leadership and practices in top-performing secondary schools. In the collection of data, I therefore relied upon the classroom teachers and their principals’ perceptions, views and experiences of classroom teacher leadership in a distributive leadership environment (Creswell, 2003:8). I also kept in mind that my own experiences and background in education could have an impact on my research (Mackenzie & Knipe, 2006: 193).

In conducting this qualitative research, a case study research design was chosen. According to Yin (2009: 18) a case study investigates a contemporary phenomenon in depth and within its real-life context, and favours a qualitative research approach. Through this case study design it was aimed to investigate the phenomenon of classroom teacher leadership in the real-life context of contemporary, top-performing secondary schools. The advantages of this approach was that it gave me rich local understanding of the experiences of classroom teachers and their principals of the phenomenon of classroom teacher leadership in the real-life context of contemporary, top-performing secondary schools. Furthermore, doing a case study gave me the opportunity to do in-depth research. I got an understanding of how classroom teacher leadership functions in practice. I worked on a single site at a time and that gave me the opportunity to build a relationship of trust with the participants. The boundaries of the research were very specific and clear, being the classroom teachers and principals of contemporary, top-performing secondary schools in the Pretoria area.

3.7 Sampling

In selecting the research sites purposive sampling was used, specifically critical case sampling because it is particularly useful in exploratory qualitative research. It was reasoned that a small number of participants can be decisive in explaining this phenomenon of classroom teacher leadership within a distributive leadership environment (Patton, 2001: 236). Therefore, two top-performing secondary schools in the Pretoria area were chosen as research sites. Convenience sampling was used because both research sites were situated in the Pretoria area saving time and travelling costs, and making it more convenient and accessible for the researcher. Secondary schools were selected for the study because the Department of Basic Education uses Grade 12 results as an indicator of curricular performance, which made the identification of top-performing schools possible (DBE, 2013: 3). Contemporary, top-performing secondary schools are schools that are currently recognised as top-performing schools at a curricular as well as an extracurricular level. The curricular achievement was based on the Department of Basic Education's list of

top-performing schools in the country (DBE, 2013: 3). At an extracurricular level achievement was based on the variety of extracurricular activities in which such a school participates as well as their results in interschool competitions and leagues. These top-performing schools were selected as research sites because the classroom teacher leadership in these schools would probably be very high, as classroom teacher leadership within a distributive leadership environment is quality leadership, which will lead to a top-performing, quality school (Bush, Kiggundu & Moorosi, 2011: 31; Grant, 2011: 77).

Using purposive criterion sampling four classroom teachers, with varying degrees of experience (1–3 years, 4–9 years, 10–15 years and 16 years plus), from each school were selected to be interviewed, because qualitative research is characterised by a relatively small group of participants (Patton, 1990: 185). A small number of participants will also enable the researcher to explain this phenomenon of classroom teacher leadership within a distributive leadership environment (Patton, 1990: 236). Participants with varying degrees of experience were selected because the experience of the participant will also influence the participant's perception of, and willingness to be a classroom teacher leader and it is suggested that teachers in their mid-career will most probably be classroom teacher leaders (York-Barr & Duke, 2004: 267). The classroom teachers were selected with the assistance of the principals who provided a list of classroom teachers indicating the experience of each classroom teacher. The four classroom teachers were then randomly selected based on their experience. The classroom teachers were contacted and asked if they were willing to participate in the study. All selected classroom teachers indicated that they were willing to participate after the purpose and scope of the study were explained to them. Four female classroom teachers were selected from the one school, which was an all-girls school. Two male and two female classroom teachers were selected from the other school. Six female and two male classroom teachers were thus selected for the interviews. The principals were also interviewed of whom one was male and the other was female. This enabled the researcher to compare the data received from the classroom teachers with that of the principals ensuring more validity and reliability of the data.

3.8 Data collection

The most common way of collecting data within qualitative research is face-to-face interviews. Therefore, the data were collected through face-to-face, semi-structured, recorded interviews with the eight classroom teachers as well as the two principals. Some advantages of the face-to-face, semi-structured, recorded interviews are:

- It is an effective way of capturing the thoughts and experiences of the participant on the phenomenon being investigated (Rabionet, 2011: 563).
- The face-to-face interview gives extra information through social clues such as body language, voice intonation etc. (Opdenakker, 2006:1)
- The semi-structured interview relies on a pre-prepared list of questions which gives the interviewer more control over interview by ensuring that information relevant to the phenomenon investigated is extracted during the interview (Opdenakker, 2006: 3).
- Although the semi-structured interview relies on a list of pre-prepared questions it does have the added advantage that it gives the researcher the opportunity to do follow up questions when new ideas come forward during the interview (Rabionet, 2009: 204)
- Because the semi-structured interview is face-to-face there is no time delay for reflection between question and answer which provides more spontaneous and therefore reliable information (Opdenakker, 2006: 2).
- Because the semi-structured interview is tape recorded it provides more accurate and therefore more reliable information (Opdenakker, 2006:3).

Some disadvantages of the face-to-face, semi-structured, recorded interviews were also noted by the researcher and the researcher took steps to counteract these during the data collection process:

- The face-to-face, semi-structured interview relies heavily on the viewpoint of the participant on the phenomenon under investigation (Cresswell, 2003: 8). This can influence the reliability and trustworthiness of the information because of subjectivity. The researcher counteracted this disadvantage by using eight classroom teachers from two different secondary schools, the data from each

classroom teacher was compared with each other and also between the classroom teachers from the two different schools. Two interviews were also held with the two principals of the two schools and that data were again compared with each other and with the data of the different classroom teachers. Through this process of triangulation reliability of information was ensured (Creswell & Miller, 2000:126).

- The semi-structured interview can have the disadvantage that the interview can get side-tracked and in the end the relevant information needed to investigate the phenomenon in question is not extracted during the interview. The researcher counteracted this disadvantage by pre-preparing a list of questions focussed on investigating the phenomenon in question. During the interview field notes were made to ensure all these pre-prepared questions were answered (Opdenakker, 2006: 3).
- The fact that there is no time delay between question and answer during the face-to-face, semi-structured interview also has the disadvantage that the attention of the interviewer will be divided between listening to where the respondent wants to go with an answer and ensuring that all pre-prepared questions are answered (Wengraf, 2001: 194). This can lead to information being misinterpreted by the researcher. The researcher counteracted this disadvantage by getting frequent feedback from participants ensuring that he understood the information correctly and that there is no misinterpretation (Shenton, 2004: 67)
- The tape recorded face-to-face, semi-structured interview can also have a disadvantage that some information can be lost or misinterpreted due to bad recordings (Opdenakker, 2006: 3). This disadvantage was counteracted by the researcher with field notes that were made during the interviews. These field notes were later compared with the recordings to further ensure reliability.

These face-to-face interviews enabled the researcher to gain insight into the lived experiences of the participants in the study, thus addressing the research topic (Maree, 2007: 296). Through these interviews the participants provided rich

information on their lived experiences of classroom teacher leadership in their respective schools (Maree, 2007: 296). The interviews produced versions of the participants past, present and future actions, experiences, feelings and thoughts on classroom teacher leadership (Seale, Gobo, Gubrium & Silverman, 2004: 16). Both the principals preferred their offices as a venue for the interviews and all eight classroom teachers preferred a venue at their respective schools. At the one school the media centre and a classroom were used, and at the second school the conference centre was used. The participants felt at ease in their own well-known surroundings and this increased the response rate of the participants providing rich data (Leedy & Ormrod, 2001). One of the participants e-mailed the researcher the day after her interview and requested that more information be added to her answers, which was done. The interviews were held in Afrikaans for the convenience of the participants who were Afrikaans speaking. This made them feel more at ease, increased the response rate and also ensured a higher level of reliability and validity.

The semi-structured interviews were guided by a pre-prepared list of questions which were based on a conceptual framework after a thorough literature review and the theoretical framework of Grant's model for classroom teacher leadership (Grant, 2008: 93). The semi-structured interviews gave the researcher the opportunity to deviate from the pre-prepared list of questions when new ideas came forward during the interviews. This was important because the research is exploratory, qualitative research. Field notes were also made during the interviews. This field notes refer to notes of the researcher made during the interviews on the answers and reactions of the respondents during the interviews. These notes were later compared with the recordings of the interview to ensure reliability.

The format of the semi structured interviews was as follows:

- Background question to act as an "ice breaker" to try to get the participant at ease
- Explanation on what the interview is about
- Conceptualisation, the participants' understanding of the concept of classroom teacher leadership

- Perceptions, viewpoints and experiences of the participant of classroom teacher leadership in the different classroom teacher leadership zones in his/her school
- Confirmation that the participants' answers were interpreted correctly and making sure that the participant had nothing to add

Pre-prepared questionnaires also guided the interviews with the principals of the two contemporary, top-performing secondary schools. The duration of each interview was approximately one hour. The semi-structured interview was guided by these pre-prepared questions but not limited to it. The interview schedule was based on the theoretical framework of Grant's model for measuring classroom teacher leadership (Grant, 2008: 93) and can be viewed in APPENDIX 5 on page 138 of this dissertation.

3.9 Data interpretation and analysis

As suggested by Coffey and Atkinson (1996: 2) my data analysis was conducted simultaneously with the data collection process. The ten interviews were transcribed by listening to the audio-taped recordings over and over again, and converting it into text by using a word-processing program. The interviews were translated into English for the purposes of the study. To protect the identity of the schools and the participants every participant received his/her own code. The schools are referred to as school A and B. For example, the principal of school A is referred to as AP1 (school A, principal 1), first classroom teacher interviewed is referred to as ACT1 (school A, classroom teacher 1), etc.

The transcription was a very time-consuming process but provided an in-depth look into the data. A total of 92 pages of data were generated by the interviews. During the interviews and transcription, the researcher constantly made field notes. Each transcribed interview was viewed one at a time to make sure it was a true version. To further ensure reliability and validity each of the participants was sent a copy of his/her own transcribed interview to ensure that they are satisfied that it was a true version of the interview and that they were quoted correctly. All the participants were satisfied that the transcripts were a true version of their interviews.

In my data analysis I used three main strategies, namely categorising strategies, connecting strategies, and memos and displays (Maxwell, 2009: 236). Starting with the categorising strategy I coded the collected data and arranged it into categories that facilitated comparison between data in the same category and between categories (Strauss, 1987:29). In analysing the data priori coding was used. “When dealing with priori coding the categories are established prior to the analysis based on some theory” (Stemler, 2001: 3). Using the theoretical framework of Grant’s model for classroom teacher leadership the following five categories were established prior to the analysis of the data: Introduction: Conceptualisation of classroom teacher leadership; Zone 1: Classroom teacher leadership within the classroom; Zone 2: Classroom teacher leadership outside the classroom in curricular and extracurricular activities; Zone 3: Classroom teacher leadership in whole-school development, and Zone 4: Classroom teacher leadership outside the school and in the community (Grant, 2008: 93). This created a formal organisation and retrieval system (Maxwell, 2009: 238). Connecting strategies were used where I tried to show the relationships among the different elements of the data collected by creating different themes. The following 14 themes were developed, as set out in Table 3.1:

Table 3.1 Categories and themes

Categories	Themes
1. Conceptualisation of classroom teacher leadership	1.1 Understanding the concept 1.2 Importance of the concept
2. Zone 1: Classroom teacher leadership in the classroom	2.1 Classroom teacher leadership practices in obtaining knowledge 2.2 Classroom teacher leadership practices in sharing knowledge
3. Zone 2: Classroom teacher leadership outside the classroom	3.1 Curricular opportunities for classroom teacher leadership 3.2 Extracurricular opportunities for classroom teacher leadership

<p>4. Zone 3: Classroom teacher leadership in whole-school development</p>	<p>4.1 Classroom teacher leadership in school development 4.2 Classroom teacher leadership in school achievement 4.3 Classroom teacher leadership in school change 4.4 Classroom teacher leadership in strategic planning 4.5 Classroom teacher leadership in decision making</p>
<p>5. Zone 4: Classroom teacher leadership outside the school in the community</p>	<p>5.1 Classroom teacher as leader in curricular activities outside the school 5.2 Classroom teacher as leader in extracurricular activities outside the school 5.3 Classroom teacher as leader in community activities</p>

Source: Author's own creation

I wrote frequent memos on my ideas on the relationships in my collected data. The memos were based on the theoretical framework and helped me to organise the transcribed data and field notes. This made my ideas and analyses visible and retrievable (Maxwell, 2009: 239). As suggested by Maxwell (2009: 239) concept maps were also used see my data analysis as a whole. During the transcription of the interviews the data were syntactically coded using separations created by the interviewees like words, sentences or paragraphs (Stemler, 2001: 4). Consequently 445 different codes were identified and organised under the 14 themes and categories. Different colour codes were used to identify the coded data of each interviewee. Field notes and memos were also made on the data. The coded data, together with the field

notes and memos, were arranged under the different categories and themes on a wall map which helped me to keep the massive amount of data organised, keeping the bigger picture visible at all times and making information retrievable instantly (Maxwell, 2009: 239). During the final stage of the data analysis connecting strategies were employed to identify patterns and to develop subthemes (Maxwell, 2009: 336). Organised coded data with the same meaning or connotation were colour coded and used to develop subthemes. In this way 68 subthemes were created representing 57 different classroom teacher leadership practices and another seven subthemes representing seven different opportunities created for classroom teacher leadership in these schools.

3.10 Trustworthiness and reliability

During the interviews I ensured that the data I collected were reliable and trustworthy. In the qualitative research design there are two broad validity threats, namely bias and reactivity. Bias refers to the ways in which data collection or analysis is distorted by the researcher's theory, values or preconceptions. Reactivity is trying to control the influence of the researcher. Maxwell (2009: 243) postulates that it is impossible to totally eliminate the influence of the researcher. The strategy to overcome these challenges is to understand it and to use it productively.

I made sure that I had spent enough time at the research sites to ensure validity. I allocated an hour for each interview making sure that I did not rush through interviews. This provided more complete data and prevented premature theories. Rich data were detailed and varied enough to provide a full and revealing picture of what was going on. A total of 92 pages of transcribed information rich data were developed during the ten interviews.

Respondent validation was established through frequent feedback from participants during the interview. I made sure that I understood the answers and that there were no misinterpretations, by frequently repeating the answers of the respondents. I was

on the lookout for discrepancies in data, and when any were identified, it was clarified with the participant during the interview. Respondents also had the opportunity to read through their transcribed interviews when the researcher e-mailed to each participant his/her transcript. Respondents could report misinterpretations before the data were analysed.

To further ensure validity and reliability data from the different classroom teachers within the same school were compared with each other; data from the classroom teachers were also compared with the data from the principals, and the data from the classroom teachers and the principals from the different schools were also compared with each other.

3.11 Ethical considerations

The researcher applied for permission from the Department of Basic Education through the Gauteng provincial research office as well as ethical clearance from the University of Pretoria's Ethical Committee to conduct this research. Permission was granted from both institutions. Documentation in this regard is included as Appendix 2 and Appendix 3.

Voluntary participation in my research study was also an important consideration. I was concerned that once the Gauteng Department of Basic Education has given permission for the research to be done, a school might perceive it is an instruction to be part of this research. It could also be interpreted by the classroom teachers that once the principal has agreed to the research; they did not have a choice but to be part of the research. To resolve this issue of voluntary participation I communicated it very clearly that participation in this research is voluntary and that any participant could withdraw from it at any stage or choose not to be part of it. Letters of consent were signed by all participants before the interviews started (see Appendix 1).

The next ethical consideration was informed consent. I hoped that by communicating the purpose and advantages of my proposed research clearly, schools and

participants would want to be part of this study. I ensured that my letter of consent at least included the following information: brief description of the nature of the study; description of what participation will entail; a clear indication that participation is voluntary and that a participant can withdraw at any stage; a guarantee that all information will be confidential; a guarantee that responses will be kept anonymous; my name and contact details, and an offer to give detailed information on the study on completion (Leedy & Ormrod, 2001: 101–102). An appointment was made with each of the principals where the purpose and scope were explained in detail and it was made clear that participation would be voluntary. Letters containing this information were handed out during this interview (see Appendix 1).

It was also important that all participants felt safe. The classroom teachers as well as the principals should not feel that the information they give can later be used against them. This problem was also addressed by the clear communication to all participants that their school has been chosen because they are seen as a top-performing school and that others can learn from them. It was important that the participants realised that they were not evaluated or being compared with other schools. All participants were given the opportunity to choose the venue for the interview and all chose venues at their respective schools, which were familiar and known to them.

Privacy was also a major ethical issue in the research. Principals could be scared that their school's name could be mentioned in a negative way in reports. Classroom teachers could be afraid that their principals might victimise them if they gave negative information to the researcher; therefore, great care was taken to protect the anonymity of all participants and schools involved in the study.

Trust was one of the major ethical issues in my research. I would be seen as an outsider and understood that initially I would be treated with distrust. I took time to clearly communicate the purpose of the research and getting to know the participants to counter the distrust. I also made sure that the participants understood the research questions and also made sure that I understood their responses, which contributed to

a relationship of trust. The fact that the participants had the opportunity to go through their transcribed interviews also contributed in this regard.

3.12 Conclusion

This chapter described how the researcher used a qualitative, case study research design and semi-structured interviews to collect data to answer the posed research questions through the perceptions, points of view and lived experiences of the participants. The method of sampling in finding the correct research sites and participants to produce relevant data in answering the research questions was also discussed. It also described the methods on how the data collected from the participants were analysed in order to develop answers to the posed research questions. In the next chapter a closer look will be taken at the process of analysing the collected data to produce answers to the research questions.

Chapter 4: Data analysis and findings

4.1 Introduction

A qualitative design was chosen to investigate classroom teacher leadership in contemporary, top-performing secondary schools. This approach was chosen above a quantitative design because it has the advantage of giving a rich, deep understanding of the experiences and perceptions of both principals and classroom teachers of classroom teacher leadership in contemporary, top-performing secondary schools (Coolican, 1999: 450-451).

The data were approached through an interpretive paradigm, which enabled the researcher to interpret the perceptions, viewpoints and experiences of both classroom teachers and principals on the phenomenon of classroom teacher leadership in contemporary, top-performing secondary schools (Cohen & Manion, 1994: 36).

4.2 Analysis of the data

In analysing the data priori coding was used. “When dealing with priori coding the categories are established prior to the analysis based on some theory”, as explained by Stemler (2001: 3). Using the theoretical framework of Grant’s model for classroom teacher leadership the following five categories were established prior to the analysis of the data:

- **Introduction: Conceptualisation of classroom teacher leadership**
- **Zone 1: Classroom teacher leadership within the classroom**
- **Zone 2: Classroom teacher leadership outside the classroom in curricular and extracurricular activities**
- **Zone 3: Classroom teacher leadership in whole school development**
- **Zone 4: Classroom teacher leadership outside the school and in the community (Grant, 2008: 93).**

The theoretical framework and interviews developed the following 14 themes, as depicted in Table 4.1:

Table 4.1 Categories and themes

Categories	Themes
1. Conceptualisation of classroom teacher leadership	1.1 Understanding the concept 1.2 Importance of the concept
2. Zone 1: Classroom teacher leadership in the classroom	2.1 Classroom teacher leadership practices in obtaining knowledge 2.2 Classroom teacher leadership practices in sharing knowledge
3. Zone 2: Classroom teacher leadership outside the classroom	3.1 Curricular opportunities for classroom teacher leadership 3.2 Extracurricular opportunities for classroom teacher leadership
4. Zone 3: Classroom teacher leadership in whole-school development	4.1 Classroom teacher leadership in school development 4.2 Classroom teacher leadership in school achievement 4.3 Classroom teacher leadership in school change 4.4 Classroom teacher leadership in strategic planning 4.5 Classroom teacher leadership in decision making
5. Zone 4: Classroom teacher leadership outside the school in the community	5.1 Classroom teacher as leader in curricular activities outside the school 5.2 Classroom teacher as leader in extracurricular activities outside the school

	5.3 Classroom teacher as leader in community activities
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Source: Author's own compilation.

During the transcription of the interviews the data were syntactically coded using separations created by the interviewees like words, sentences or paragraphs (Stemler, 2001: 4). Different colour codes were used to indicate to which interviewee the coded data belonged. Field notes and memos were also made on the data. The coded data, together with the field notes and memos, were arranged under the different categories and themes on a wall map, which helped me to keep the massive amount of data organised; keeping the bigger picture visible at all times and making information retrievable instantly (Maxwell, 2009: 239). During the final stage of the data analysis connecting strategies were employed to develop subthemes and patterns (Maxwell, 2009: 336). Organised coded data with the same meaning or connotation were colour coded and used to develop these subthemes and patterns.

4.2.1 Category 1: Conceptualisation of classroom teacher leadership

4.2.1.1 Theme 1.1: Understanding the concept of classroom teacher leadership

The participants had different ideas on how they understood the concept of classroom teacher leadership. Seven sub themes were developed from the data under this theme:

- **classroom teacher as leader in the classroom,**
- **classroom teacher leaders manage discipline in the classroom,**
- **classroom teacher leaders take a lead in managing curriculum in their subjects,**
- **classroom teacher leaders take responsibility,**

- **classroom teacher leaders are always prepared,**
- **classroom teacher leaders lead teaching and learning in the class and**
- **classroom teacher leaders always set an example so that their learners will look up to them.**

This phenomenon of a lack of a specific definition for classroom teacher leadership is explained by York-Barr & Duke (2004: 255) when they refer to it as a very broad concept that evolved over years, and includes various concepts and activities in education leadership. All of the participants, however, saw classroom teacher leadership as activities limited to the classroom (as can be clearly seen in their conceptualisations).

Six of the ten participants saw the **management of discipline in the classroom as classroom teacher leadership**. Participant BP2: “To be able to manage the classroom or to be the leader there, there must be discipline.” Participant BCT6: “You must be able to keep discipline in your classroom as a leader.”

Five of the participants saw the concept of classroom teacher leadership as the **classroom teacher being the leader in the classroom**. Participant AP1 very uniquely describes classroom teacher leadership as: “there between your four walls you are the principal of your own little school.” Participant BP2 agrees with this point of view: “I always say, the classroom is the teacher’s school.” Participant ACT1 describes her understanding of classroom teacher leadership as: “I feel that the class is my small world and in there I am my leader.”

Four of the participants related classroom teacher leadership with preparation. Participant ACT2 felt that **classroom teacher leadership is seen in a well-prepared subject teacher**: “You have to prepare, there is new work you can’t rely on what you did last year.” Participant BCT8 takes preparation a step further when she does not only look at subject preparation but to be also prepared for different situations in the

classroom: “I also think preparation, I am not just talking about work, class preparation, preparation for situations thinking ahead.”

Four of the participants understood the concept of **classroom teacher leadership as the classroom teacher leading learning and teaching in the classroom**. Participant AP1 remarks in this regard: “So if we just talk inside the classroom it lies in this for me, the discipline, the management, the execution of learning and teaching that takes place there.” Participant ACT3 agrees that classroom teacher leadership is the instructional practice of leading teaching and learning in the classroom: “not just the disciplinary aspect of it but to lead the children to the concept that you want them to understand for that lesson, that day or that subject.”

Four of the participants understood **classroom teacher leadership as a classroom teacher setting an example for his/her learners**. Participant BCT7: “They have to see in you but there is an example for me, this is how I want to be one day. If you are not a leader, you will not be able to show that example to the children.” Participant BCT8 agrees with this conceptualisation: “I think at the end of the day you should really be an example.”

Three of the participants saw **classroom teacher leadership as being a subject expert by knowing curriculum and subject content**. Participant AP1 saw sound instructional practices as classroom teacher leadership: “I think there is an element or rather elements of leadership in how you manage your own curriculum.” Participant ACT2 agrees that you cannot be a leader if you do not have subject expertise: “You cannot assume the position if you are not an expert in your subject.”

Both principals moved away from the concept of instructional practices and saw **classroom teacher leadership as the ability to take responsibility**. Participant BP2 saw classroom teacher leadership as: “He must make the decisions, he must take the responsibility for the advantages and disadvantages.” Participant AP1 says:

“Unfortunately not all teachers accept that responsibility and that is often your teacher who struggles with discipline.”

In their conceptualisation of classroom teacher leadership most of the participants understood the concept of classroom teacher leadership as instructional practices and activities in the classroom. This relates to what Silva, Gimbert and Nolan (2000: 779) refer to as the second phase in the development of the concept of classroom teacher leadership where the instructional expertise of the classroom teacher was seen as classroom teacher leadership. As part of the conceptualisation of classroom teacher leadership it is not only important to know what the participants understand under the concept of classroom teacher leadership but also to investigate whether they think this phenomenon is important enough to play a role in improving our schools. The next theme therefore focussed on how the participants experience the importance of the phenomenon of classroom teacher leadership.

4.2.1.2 Theme 1.2: Importance of the concept of classroom teacher leadership

The respondents had very different ideas on why they think classroom teacher leadership is important. Three patterns emerged from this theme, creating subthemes. The respondents regard classroom teacher leadership as important because:

- **to be a classroom teacher is to be a leader,**
- **the classroom teacher needs to set an example to the learners** and
- **it creates the opportunity for classroom teachers to be leaders.**

Four respondents felt that **to be a classroom teacher is to be a leader**. Leadership, therefore, forms an integral part of the position of being a classroom teacher. Respondent ACT1 says: “I feel it is eight periods a day, just you and thirty children a day or something, do you understand, so you have to be a leader there.” Respondent BCT8 agrees: “So you are from the time that you walk into your own class until the time you go home a leader, nothing else.”

Three of the respondents felt that **classroom teacher leadership is important because the classroom teacher needs to set an example to his/her learners**. Respondent ACT3 feels that because children spend more time with their classroom teachers than with their parents, the classroom teacher needs to be a leader who can set an example to the learners in the classroom she comments in this regard: “Children need leaders who can set a good example to them”. Respondent BCT8 interestingly links experience with this ability of the classroom teacher leader to set an example to learners: “When it comes to an experienced person, they will see but this person knows what he is talking about, he has been through it.” This view is confirmed in the literature by York-Barr and Duke (2004: 267) when they refer to classroom teacher leaders as experienced, excellent classroom teachers whose leadership is accepted by virtue of their instructional expertise.

Both principals saw classroom teacher leadership as important because **it creates the opportunity for the classroom teacher to be a leader**. Respondent AP1 says: “For me it gives them the opportunity.” Respondent BP2 agrees: “The teacher must just get the opportunity to live out their own creativity and initiative in the process of being a leader in his class and that is why it is important.”

It is important to note that in the conceptualisation of the importance of classroom teacher leadership the respondents again immediately connected it to leadership activities in the classroom. It was clear that the classroom teachers all saw the start of classroom teacher leadership as beginning in the classroom, this correlates with Grant’s model on classroom teacher leadership that shows level 1 classroom teacher leadership as leadership in the classroom (Grant, 2008: 93). The next set of pre-prepared questions therefore focussed on the experiences and leadership practices in the classroom and subject.

4.2.2 Category 2: Zone 1: Classroom teacher leadership in the classroom

4.2.2.1 Theme 2.1: Classroom teacher leadership practices in obtaining knowledge

To be a true leader in your subject in the classroom requires instructional and subject knowledge. Instructional leadership should begin with the classroom teacher (Pellicer & Anderson, 1995: 16). It was evident in the data that all the participants were very focused on obtaining knowledge and excelled at this level of classroom teacher leadership irrespective of the level of experience. Classroom teacher leadership was evident in this zone in both secondary schools. The data also gave us a closer look into what the practices of both principals and classroom teachers were in ensuring that the classroom teachers in these schools were knowledge leaders in their subjects and classrooms. Patterns in the data developed nine subthemes or practices in this area of classroom teacher leadership:

- **Classroom teacher leaders obtain subject knowledge by networking with other schools and teachers.**
- **Classroom teacher leaders obtain subject knowledge through the use of media and technology.**
- **Attendance of cluster meetings contribute to the subject knowledge of the classroom teacher leader.**
- **Subject knowledge is obtained by attending training sessions and workshops.**
- **Classroom teacher leaders are encouraged by their principals to attend workshops and training sessions.**
- **Classroom teacher leaders read to stay informed and gain knowledge in their subjects.**
- **Classroom teacher leaders obtain knowledge by attending training opportunities provided by labour unions.**
- **Principals depend on their HOD's and Deputy principals to ensure that classroom teacher leaders stay informed in their subjects.**
- **Classroom teacher leaders obtain subject knowledge during grade 12 marking sessions.**

Two practices in ensuring obtainment of knowledge emerged strongly in the data: classroom teacher leadership in securing knowledge through **networking with other schools and teachers**, and classroom teacher leadership in securing knowledge through **the use of media and technology**.

Principal AP1 advises that her teachers network in teacher groups: “If you get in that grouping keep your eyes open and learn from the experienced person that sits there and do not be ashamed to share your stuff with them and ask.” Five of the classroom teachers believe in **networking as a method to obtain knowledge**. Participant BCT5 declares: “So we have quite a network of staff that talk with each other from other schools.” Participant ACT2 suggests that technology should be used in creating teacher networks: “Then on Facebook there are groups we have an Afrikaans home language and first additional language group on Facebook.”

Six of the participants agreed that the use of **media and technology is an effective method of ensuring that the classroom teacher is a knowledge leader** in his/her subject. Participant ACT2 declares: “I love technology, I will google, I will google until I have a hundred thousand new things.” Participant ACT4 uses technology for networking with other teachers: “In the social media, then they also share ideas, then you also get a new perspective.”

Both principals encourage their classroom teachers to attend cluster meetings to ensure that they obtain subject knowledge. Participant AP1 remarks: “It is one good thing of the department with their obsession with moderation is that schools form subject groups because they have to take their documents to each other. They have to share their stuff with each other.” The classroom teachers agree that **attending cluster meetings contribute to their subject knowledge** and are very positive about it. Participant ACT2 remarks: “I will attend every possible subject meeting or roadshow or every opportunity that there is” Participant BCT8: “In our district our facilitator helps us a great deal.” Participant BCT6 even sees the cluster meeting as an opportunity of

network building: “You just need to get to know the people but as you attend cluster meetings it gets easier and you get to know more people.”

Classroom teacher leaders obtain subject knowledge by attending training sessions and workshops and are encouraged by their principals. Principal AP1 states in this regard: “If something comes by which I think is a training opportunity then I would make it compulsory for them.” Principal BP2 sees it as his duty: “To encourage teachers to attend these and to support them.” Three of the classroom teacher participants felt that attending training sessions and workshops contributed to their subject knowledge. Participant BCT7 feels that he stays on top of developments in his subject: “Through workshops, departmental seminars, to attend it.”

Five participants felt that **classroom teacher leaders read to stay informed and obtain knowledge in their subjects.** Participant ACT3 says: “In my subject area it is reading up to address the theory aspect of it.” She does not limit her knowledge to subject content but even goes further by reading to stay abreast of educational issues: ACT3: “In terms of education development it is also reading up on education journals, articles that are written.”

Three participants felt that **classroom teacher leaders should attend training opportunities provided by labour unions.** When departmental workshops have shortcomings both principals encourage their classroom teachers to obtain subject knowledge by attending training opportunities presented by labour unions. Principal BP2 says: “Then also the attendance of training opportunities provided by labour unions where the department had shortcomings.” Participant ACT4 agrees that training opportunities by labour unions is an effective way of ensuring knowledge: “There are courses, for example the SATU presents courses and so on and then it is handy to do something like that.”

Principals depend a lot on their deputies and HODs to ensure classroom teachers are informed about their subjects. Participant AP1 says: “I depend on my

structure at my school where curriculum management is concerned a lot on my deputy principals and HODs.” Participant BCT6 indicates that she stays abreast of her subject by consulting her HOD: “I am somebody who always talk to my HOD and fellow teachers.”

Two participants indicated that **classroom teacher leaders obtain knowledge during Grade 12 marking sessions** and that is how they stay on top of their subjects ensuring that they are knowledge leaders in their subjects. Participant BCT5 remarks: “It is staff that are marking with me and you have these discussions with them as well as you hear what is working for them.”

These practices showed that classroom teachers in these schools went to great lengths to ensure that they are knowledgeable and experts in their subjects but true leadership will imply that an effort is made to share this knowledge with other classroom teachers therefore the next set of pre-prepared questions focussed on the sharing of knowledge and expertise with other classroom teachers within the same school.

4.2.2.2 Theme 2.2: Classroom teacher leadership practices in sharing knowledge

Classroom teacher leaders in top-performing secondary schools do not just seek to acquire new knowledge and expertise; they seek opportunities to share this newly acquired expertise with other classroom teachers with the aim to develop and support their colleagues. Bipath and Mafuwane (2015: 172) identify this practice as one of the main roles of an instructional leader. All interviewees indicated that they do share newly acquired information with their colleagues. The following practices were identified in these top-performing secondary schools:

- **Classroom teacher leaders use formal opportunities to share knowledge.**
- **Classroom teacher leaders use informal opportunities to share knowledge.**
- **Classroom teacher leaders use formal hierarchical structures to share knowledge.**

- **Classroom teacher leaders share information when networking with classroom teachers from other schools.**
- **Classroom teacher leaders use their knowledge and expertise to mentor and support their fellow classroom teachers.**
- **Classroom teacher leaders use technology to share information.**

Five of the participants **use formal opportunities to share information** like regularly held staff meetings, subject meetings and grade meetings. Principal BP2 remarks: “There would be staff meetings and then there would be subject meetings even in the grade meetings. There is opportunity for the teacher to share the new knowledge even the experience of the training or share hints.” Classroom teacher BCT5 confirms: “Yes we do have subject meetings together; further we do have departmental meetings as well and then we have meetings where you divide into your more specialised subjects where those teachers also have subject meetings together.” Even more formal opportunities are created in these schools with the purpose to develop, mentor, support and share knowledge. Participant ACT3 refers to the following practice in this regard: “For every cycle, that is six periods, you have one period that you and your colleagues meet and it is usually during that time that we will discuss those little things.”

Five of the participants also indicated that classroom teacher leaders do not just wait for formal opportunities to share information; **classroom teacher leaders use informal opportunities to share information** as well. Principal BP2 remarks: “There are also informal opportunities where teachers sit around a cup of coffee in the staff room and talk about these things.” This is confirmed by participant ACT1: “Yes, we do speak with each other the whole time.” Participant BCT5 agrees: “Especially in our subject area our staff is very close in passing; we will be talking about a certain theme and we will be sharing something if we found out something new.”

Three participants indicated how **formal hierarchical structures are used to share information** in these schools. Principal AP1 explains the flow of information through

hierarchical structures as follows: “Then they canalise it to their HODs, either to an individual or they could get the whole group together.” Participant ACT2 acknowledges that she works through her HOD when she has new information: “I will usually work through my head of department.” Participant BCT6 agrees: “Then our subject heads are always available so that we can discuss these types of things with them.”

The distributive principal creates even more opportunities for sharing information by breaking down the formal hierarchical barriers. Principal BP2 does not see management as exclusive. He remarks: “Management is not exclusive.” His school created a very interesting structure where a classroom teacher can have the opportunity to share information directly with the management of the school. Principal BP2 says: “If it really has an impact on the school as a whole, then we will handle it in the management meeting where that person will give his input in this meeting where all the managers are present.” Principal BP2 further remarks with regard to this practice: “Then she would be invited and given the opportunity to share this information. It does not happen regularly. In my time it only happened twice.

Three participants felt that **classroom teacher leaders share their expertise by mentoring and supporting colleagues**. Participant ACT1 shares information and expertise with an inexperienced colleague: “So yes, I do share a lot with her because she does not know.” Participant BCT8: “In our department we look after each other; we like to share.”

Three participants indicated that the practice of sharing information is not just limited to the boundaries of their own schools but that **classroom teacher leaders network with other schools to share information**. Participant ACT2 suggests in this regard: “Something I feel very strong about is interschool linking must be stronger. I think we should create bigger networks instead of seeing each other as competition.” Participant ACT2 continues: “Instead of seeing each other as competition we should rather pool; we have to pool our thoughts our experience, etc.” Participant BCT7 puts this suggestion into practice when he says: “It is a bit difficult because I am the only

person that teaches this subject, but then let's say, I will share it with people from the other schools." Participant BCT7 feels that cluster meetings are the ideal opportunity to network and share information: "Then we share these things at cluster meetings if you got something interesting."

Classroom teacher leaders use technology to share information. The use of technology to share information is also emphasised. Participant BCT8 says: "Our facilitator uses e-mails and WhatsApp groups to share information."

The next level of classroom teacher leadership is in zone 2 that is practices of classroom teacher leadership outside of the classroom and specific subject area and can be on a curricular level as well as an extra-curricular level.

4.2.3 Category 3: Zone 2: Classroom teacher leadership outside the classroom

4.2.3.1 Theme 3.1: Classroom teacher leadership opportunities in curricular activities

Classroom teacher leadership in this zone is measured in leadership activities outside of the classroom (Grant, 2008: 93). It was clear that most of the participants were involved in leadership activities in this area from assuming informal leadership roles themselves up to developing the leadership capacity of fellow classroom teachers, which is indicated as a function of instructional leadership (Parker & Day, 1997: 87). The practices identified in this zone in these top-performing secondary schools were:

- **Classroom teachers developing their own leadership capacity by assuming informal leadership roles.**
- **Classroom teacher leaders functioning as subject heads.**
- **Classroom teacher leaders functioning as grade coordinators.**
- **Classroom teacher leaders functioning as phase coordinators.**

- **Classroom teacher leaders developing the leadership capacity of fellow classroom teachers by mentoring and supporting them.**
- **Classroom teacher leaders developing their own leadership capacity by attending development workshops.**

Principals in both schools were very focused on and creative in creating leadership opportunities for their classroom teachers. **Informal positions such as subject heads, grade coordinators and phase coordinators were created.**

Principal AP1 says: “So what I did then was to create a place where there is a subject head.” Principal BP2 explains this process as follows: “The division can be within a subject, the economic and management sciences have three components, Economics, Business Studies and Accounting, and then you give opportunity by having a subject head over each component.” **Classroom teacher leaders in these schools use this opportunity to assume the informal leadership position of subject head**, as confirmed by participant ACT 1: “Especially in the Economic and Management Sciences because it is combined subjects, and like I say, a lot of the time the head of department is an Accounting specialist but they do not necessarily know about the Business Studies and the Economics and then the opportunity is created where you can do it.” It is not just in subjects with different components that this happens but also in single specialised subjects as confirmed by participant BCT7: “We have a Technical head of department and then everyone, like me, I am my own subject head and then in Civil Technology where there is more than one teacher there is a subject head, apart from the head of department, the same with the EGD.”

Principal AP1 explains the creation of the post of a grade coordinator as follows: “Let’s say Grade 9 is being taught by three people. There is a grade coordinator. It is a small step but it is a level of subject leadership.” **Classroom teacher leaders will then assume this informal leadership position of grade coordinator** in these schools as confirmed by participant BCT6: “Our subject is divided between five different

teachers and it is not a formal position or called anything but I am placed in a leadership position for the moderation of the other teachers' question papers.”

Principal AP1 explains how the post of a phase coordinator is created: “Then you can become a subject head where you take a phase where you are responsible, for example, for Grade 8 and 9 or 10, 11 and 12.” **Classroom teacher leaders will also assume the informal position of phase coordinators** as participant ACT3 confirms: “I do the subject planning for the Grade 8s and 9s.”

Seven of the participants confirmed that **classroom teacher leaders develop their own leadership capacity by assuming informal leadership roles**. Participant ACT3 confirms this: “You are held responsible for a part of your work and also get the opportunity to set up exercises or lead assessment or to lead memorandum discussions, so from that point of view as a young teacher I feel I learn a lot.” Participant BCT5 elaborates on the added leadership responsibility when one assumes the informal leadership role of subject head: “Suddenly where you always only had your subject and your grade, you now have as a subject head all the grades and all the different grades of difficulty for each question paper and information process, which you also have to monitor and give through and communicate.” Participant BCT6 confirms that this informal leadership role did indeed develop leadership capacity: “Which gave me the feeling that I was a leader with my colleagues, that is in the department.”

Five of the participants felt that they did not only develop their own leadership capacity by assuming these informal leadership roles as subject heads, grade heads and phase coordinators but also as **classroom teacher leaders also developed the leadership capacity of fellow classroom teachers by mentoring and supporting them**. Participant ACT4 confirms this practice: “Last year I worked with somebody who just started and I had to lead in lesson planning, writing and so on and then I could give her a lot of ideas and tell her about my bit of experience.” Participant ACT4 also added: “I mentored a final year student. I was totally responsible for him.”

Classroom teacher leaders develop their own leadership capacity by attending development workshops. In this regard participant ACT3 says: “You are also welcome to go and attend that and that also develops you as a teacher, not just in your subject area but it is leadership clinics.”

Various practices could be identified where classroom teachers assumed informal leadership roles on a curricular level. School leadership also promoted a distributed leadership environment by creating these informal leadership opportunities. On an extracurricular level even more practices came forward creating opportunities for the development of classroom teacher leadership.

4.2.3.2 Theme 3.2: Classroom teacher leadership opportunities in extracurricular activities

In both schools there were ample opportunities for classroom teachers to assume leadership roles in extracurricular activities. Four sub-themes or practices could be identified in this area:

- **Classroom teacher leaders were willing to be involved in extracurricular activities to add value to their schools.**
- **Classroom teacher leaders are acting as organisers and managers of extracurricular activities.**
- **Classroom teacher leaders assume informal leadership roles as grade heads on an extracurricular level.**
- **The classroom teacher leader uses extracurricular activities to build relationships with learners.**

Participant ACT2 remarks: “Our principal and the management create a lot of opportunities; they will quickly see someone has good ideas and they will create opportunities for you.” However, there needs to be a willingness from the side of the classroom teacher to get involved, participant ACT1 states in this regard: “There is a lot of opportunities. You must just be willing to do it.” The data clearly showed that the **classroom teacher leaders in these schools were willing to be involved in extracurricular activities to add value to their schools.** Participant ACT7 says:

“You will stagnate if you are not involved at an extracurricular level although a lot of people prefer not to do it.” All the classroom teacher participants were involved in various extracurricular activities. Participant ACT3: “I am involved in hockey as referee and I also coach a team”. Participant ACT2 is not involved in coaching but says: “I got the letters of recommendation now, just to be a bit more innovative and to approach it a bit differently”. Participant ACT2 furthermore remarks: “I enjoy it because then I feel I do something and I add value to the school.”

Classroom teacher leaders are organisers and managers of extracurricular activities. Principal AP1 remarks: “My swimming as well as netball organisers are post level 1 teachers.” To be an organiser or manager of an extracurricular activity also requires leadership skills, participant ACT5 says: “I am also the hockey organiser of the school. So in this regard there is also leadership that comes to the fore. That is the management of the entire hockey and all the arrangements, the administrative work, coordination with other coaches and schools.” Participant ACT4 agrees: “At the tennis I am a team manager, it is a small team but you have to learn how to make arrangements and to ensure everything is fine.” Participant ACT4 says: “I used my own initiative to organise a four-day subject tour to Mpumalanga for Grade 10 and 11 learners in my subject”. Participant ACT4 further states: “I, in my personal capacity, was responsible for the finances, the arrangements and welfare of the children before and during the tour.”

Classroom teacher leaders assume informal leadership roles as grade heads at an extracurricular level. Principal AP1 creates more extracurricular leadership opportunities for her classroom teachers: “I give people the opportunity to take over a whole grade, this grade resorts under them. As a grade head and those people receive a financial incentive also from the SGB through the nature of such position and they are considered as part of my management team.” Principal BP2 agrees: “Then you can create other opportunities for them with grade headship giving them exposure this way.” Participant ACT1 confirms this practice: “Because you are just a grade head, you can definitely focus just on that and that is just about the child and therefore it is actually important.”

The classroom teacher leader uses extracurricular activities to build relationships with learners. For participant ACT6 involvement in extracurricular activities is about more than coaching. She says: “It is important to me when you are building a relationship with the children, which I can also do with hockey.” Participant ACT6 explains: “It is a lot of responsibility to take on especially an A team; you must lead them and also be an example to them, but yes that is a lot of leadership that hockey.”

In zone 3 a much higher level of classroom teacher leadership is measured. On this level the classroom teacher is actively involved as a leader in the development of his / her school as a whole. Studies done showed that classroom teacher leadership on this level rarely exists (De Villiers & Pretorius, 2011; Grant et al., 2010; Grant & Singh, 2009; Naicker & Mestry, 2011; 2013; Williams, 2011). It was however clear during the analyses of this data that classroom teachers in these two schools were indeed involved in giving direction in the development of their schools.

4.2.4 Category 4: Zone 3: Classroom teacher leadership in whole-school development

4.2.4.1 Theme 4.1: Classroom teacher leadership in school development

During the analysis of the data six subthemes developed from this theme:

- **Classroom teacher leaders and their principals realise that they need to play a role in school development.**
- **Top-performing schools have systems in place to create the opportunity for classroom teacher leaders to get involved with school development.**
- **Classroom teacher leaders contribute to school development through their various curricular and extracurricular activities.**

- **Classroom teacher leaders contribute to school development when they touch the lives of their learners.**
- **Classroom teacher leaders have new ideas on how to develop their schools.**
- **Shortcomings in the process of getting classroom teachers involved in school development.**

It was clear that both **principals and classroom teachers realised that classroom teachers should be involved in the development of their schools.** Principal AP1 mentions: “I think one has to understand, and I mentioned it just now, that in a good functioning system everyone has to fulfil a role.” Participant BCT 6 agrees with principal AP1 and underlines the importance of the role of the classroom teacher in school development when she remarks: “Yes, I believe that everybody is part of the development of the school, teachers make or break a school.” Even the less experienced classroom teacher indicated that she had a role to play in the development of her school when participant ACT3 remarks: “I think all of us play a role; I think mine is still a bit small.”

It was also clear that both **schools have systems in place to promote classroom teacher leader involvement in school development.** Principal AP1 declares in this regard: “So I try and instil with my staff a feeling of buy-in, form part and do what you can and do what you must.” Principal BP2 also indicates that his school has a system in place when he says: “*Then when we do our planning for the next year then we give them a form where they have to indicate what strong points and weak points they experience in our school and what recommendations can they make.*” Classroom teacher ACT2 confirms: “We did tests to identify our strong and weak points and I think within that it would have been a good thing to apply everyone within his field.”

It was evident from the data that **classroom teacher leaders contribute to school development through their various curricular and extracurricular activities.** Principal BP2 realises the curricular involvement of the classroom teacher leader in school development: “Let’s start with IQMS where they do the personal growth plans,

there they get their first opportunity, but that will be mainly academic and classroom orientated.” Participant ACT2 refers to her extracurricular involvement in school development: “I had to help with the development of the website.” Participant ACT3 remarks: “I always try and promote a good image of the school there where I go.” Participant BCT7 summarises the importance of curricular and extracurricular involvement of the classroom teacher leader in school development, when he says: “The subject in the school will not grow if you do not work hard there, the sport in the school is not going to grow if you do not work hard there.”

The data also pointed out that it was not only the curricular and extracurricular activities of the classroom teacher leader that contributed to school development but also that **classroom teacher leaders contribute to school development when they touch the lives of their learners**. Classroom teacher BCT5 remarks in this regard: “The difference that you make in the lives of the children even if it is the smallest thing.” Participant ACT1 confirms: “Because it does make it more special for the children and that is important because a school can’t be without children who are happy.” Participant BCT6 agrees with the previous statement when she says: “I think if teachers, if we are happy in a school, it rubs off on the parents, it rubs off on the children, it goes everywhere.” Participant BCT5 explains the influence that classroom teacher leaders have on school development when impacting on the lives of their learners as follows: “So the feedback from former scholars makes you feel good that you made a difference somewhere and I helped children, which in that sense, also influenced the school.”

The data also showed that classroom teachers can be change leaders in school development because **classroom teacher leaders have new ideas on how to develop their schools**. Participant ACT4 remarks: “I think we should move on to a more technological orientated or computerised environment.” Participant ACT4 continues to say: “I wonder about other methods that may also achieve success. So I am curious about it.”

A very important aspect that surfaced in the data about classroom teacher involvement in school development is that there were some **shortcomings in the process of getting classroom teachers involved in school development**. Principal BP2 is very honest when he acknowledges: “This is a big shortcoming in our school. There is no time to meet with your staff because every afternoon, if there is not a cluster meeting, there is a sport thing; there is an activity; a personal issue.” Principal BP2 points out another shortcoming in the system of involving classroom teachers in school development when he points out: “Because of the size of our staff, 65 teachers, it makes it difficult to incorporate everybody’s needs in your planning.” Classroom teacher ACT2 confirms this when she says: “So I actually have a need for something like that, but I do not know where to say or communicate it.” Principal BP2 suggests the following solution to the problem: “What we are trying to do then is to downsize it so that at least they can give their input in their grades or in their subject groupings to get their input and to discuss it if a person then can’t get time for it.” This issue deserves a closer look when the data on classroom teacher leadership in strategic planning is later analysed.

In this theme six practices could be identified proofing that classroom teachers in these top-performing secondary schools were involved in the development of their schools and therefore ultimately also contribute to the achievement and performance of their schools. The next theme therefore focuses on the role of the classroom teacher leader in school achievement and performance.

4.2.4.2 Theme 4.2: Classroom teacher leadership in school achievement

This theme closely links to the previous theme because school achievement ultimately leads to school growth and development. In this regard Lai and Cheung (2015: 675) identify one of the core facets of classroom teacher leadership as being transformational, changing a school culture to improve. The following four subthemes could be identified in the data:

- **Classroom teacher leaders contribute to school achievement which fosters school growth and development.**
- **Classroom teacher leaders contribute to school achievement through their curricular activities.**
- **Classroom teacher leaders contribute to school achievement through their extracurricular activities.**
- **Classroom teacher leaders develop their learners, which ultimately contribute to school achievement, growth and development.**

Five of the participants agreed that **they all played a role in the achievements of their respective schools** and that this contributed to the growth and development of the school. Participant BCT8 comments: “I think every teacher, every single teacher did, administrative assistant, coach, because we build every day; we lay a few bricks every single day in this tower, this dream castle that we build. So yes, definitely.”

The participants indicated that **their curricular activities contributed to school achievement** and therefore to the growth and development of their respective schools. Participant ACT2 refers to her efforts in the coordination of the ANA tests: “So the Grade 9s did in, where are we now, 2016, 2015 in 2014 they had the highest ANA scores in the country and I was responsible.”

It is also **in their extracurricular activities that the classroom teacher leaders contribute to school achievement**, growth and development. Participant ACT2 says: “I started with debate and then they were third in the finals of the country.”

It is, however, **the focus of the classroom teacher leader on the development of their learners** that fosters a positive attitude towards their schools and ultimately contributes to the growth and development of their schools. Participant ACT2 remarks: “It isn’t for me about that final in the country. I will tell you, I had children in my debate team who never wanted to do oral.” Participant ACT2 continues in this regard: “The child’s mother spoke to me and said the value that, that contributed at that stage of

her child's life, you know she can now perform in public, she has self-confidence.” Participant BCT7 agrees: “If you look at the children who want to come to the school these days, it is the teacher who sets the example in the class and who succeeds in getting that end result that new children want to get in.”

It is important to note that the curricular and extracurricular achievements of the learner and school on its own means nothing if it does not contribute to the growth of the learner. It is these positive personal growth experiences drawn from school achievements that will ultimately form a positive community attitude towards a school and that will contribute to a school's growth and development.

Development implies that change is taking place therefore it is also necessary to investigate the role of these classroom teacher leaders as change agents in their respective schools.

4.2.4.3 Theme 4.3: Classroom teacher leadership in school change

Classroom teacher leaders are always looking for ways to improve their schools. Classroom teacher leadership can also be conceptualised as leadership that changes instructional practices in a school in such a way that it improves the school as a whole (Crowther, Kaagen, Ferguson & Hann, 2002: xvii).

Only one of the classroom teacher respondents indicated that he would not change anything in his school. Respondent BCT7 remarks: “This is my eleventh year and really the way in which the school is managed, the way that the school is driven, the way we do things just work. So I do not believe that I will change anything at this stage.”

Seven of the respondents were very clear on what they would like to change to improve their respective schools. These changes focused mostly on changes to improve instruction, for example respondent ACT3 remarks: “I will like to make the garden much more learner friendly for the Grade 8s, like updating our green house or

change the layout of the garden so that you can use it in your learning process.” Participant BCT6 proposes changes in infrastructure also to improve instruction: “I feel our school should build more classrooms, not just for us as teachers, but also for the children because you move around from one class to the next, then the children are late, but you cannot scold them because you are also late.”

It was clear from the data that irrespective of their experience, most of the classroom teachers had very clear ideas on what they would like to change to improve their schools. This then bring us to one of the key questions in this zone: Do these classroom teachers have structures available in their schools to put their ideas into practice? Is there an opportunity in these top-performing schools for classroom teachers to get their ideas adopted into a strategic plan or to influence decision making on their ideas?

4.2.4.4 Theme 4.4: Classroom teacher leadership in strategic planning

The data indicated that there was a strong indication of indirect involvement of classroom teacher leaders and even signs of direct classroom teacher leader involvement in the development of the strategic plan. The following subthemes developed from the data:

- **Classroom teacher leaders do have input in and their ideas are considered in the development of the strategic plan.**
- **Classroom teacher leaders do have a direct channel to the deputy principals or principal to put forward their ideas.**
- **Classroom teacher leaders do have an indirect involvement in the development of the strategic plan.**
- **There are some signs of direct classroom teacher leader involvement in the development of the strategic plan in these top-performing secondary schools.**

Six of the participants clearly indicated that classroom teacher leaders have no direct involvement in the development of the strategic plan of their schools. Principal AP1

declares: “I think that is perhaps still a bit of a void at our school, that we don’t necessarily include them directly. At this stage the way in which we include them is indirectly.” Principal BP2 explains why classroom teachers are not directly involved: “Unfortunately it is not practical, logistically possible to give each of them the opportunity, it is about time, money and costs.” Four of the classroom teachers confirmed that they have no direct involvement in the development of the strategic plan of their school. Participant ACT1, for example, confirms: “I do not know if I necessarily contribute to the development of that, understand, you sort of get it and that is the strategic plan, it is something that the top management of the school does.”

However, this does not mean that the classroom teacher leader has no opportunity to be involved in the development of the strategic plan of these top-performing secondary schools. From the data it was clear that although they were not physically present during the development of the plan, they have the opportunity to be indirectly involved because in these schools the **classroom teacher leaders do have input in and their ideas are considered in the development of the strategic plan**. Principal AP1 says in this regard: “We let them participate once again in the sense that if I go to a strategic session, either with both the groups or just the deputy principals or the management, I always allow the staff to give input.” Principal BP2 confirms the same practice in his school: “We get their input. Then from that we as management team go and develop the school’s needs in the development areas, that nine areas for development.” Three of the classroom teacher participants confirmed this practice and participant ACT1 confirms: “If it is an idea and they will not necessarily shoot it down, they will definitely listen and also think.”

Another advantage that the classroom teacher leader has in these schools to be involved with the development of the strategic plan is that in these schools the **classroom teacher leaders do have a direct channel to the deputy principals or principal to put forward their ideas**. Principal AP1 declares: “If it is a serious thing, then you come straight, you just make an appointment with me and come straight to me.” Principal BP2 confirms: “I do have a bit of an open-door policy, considering that,

if staff have something that bothers them or have a great idea, then the staff know they have the freedom to come and express it to us.” Three of the participants agree and participant ACT1, for example, confirms: “If a person has an idea, then you go and talk, I will, for example, go and discuss it with the deputy principal.”

The data confirm that in these top-performing secondary schools **classroom teacher leaders do have an indirect involvement in the development of the strategic plan**. Principal BP2 explains the process of this indirect involvement: “Then we go with the SGB to our planning session and that what they proposed or requested are discussed with the SGB and thereafter the strategic plan is developed.” Six of the classroom teacher participants agreed that they are indirectly involved in the development of the strategic plan. Participant ACT2 confirms: “The input to the deputy principals will end up in the strategic plan.” Participant BCT5 summarises the process of indirect involvement as follows: “I think on a smaller scale. If you have meetings or at a sport level your meetings, then those things are taken further by the heads of department and management of the school where they have further meetings that flow from the smaller meetings, which they then further discuss for the strategic plan.”

The data even indicated **some signs of direct classroom teacher leader involvement in the development of the strategic plan**. Principal AP1 indicated a practice of classroom teacher leader reflection when she says: “From last year I have adopted the habit that when the first term comes to an end towards the end, then I call everybody involved as organisers of various sports and we sit down and discuss things that worked and what did not work.” Participant BCT5 confirms direct involvement of classroom teacher leaders when he says: “Sometimes we do have the big staff meeting where we get together and discuss certain issues where we want to improve certain things and look at what you want to do over the next two or three years.” Classroom teacher participant BCT7 who is the staff representative on the SGB confirms direct involvement: “Yes, every year we have such a day or two-day seminar and then you do your yearly or three-year planning for the strategic plan for the school. It is quite interesting to be part of that.”

For the classroom teacher to be able to be a leader that bring about change through strategic planning necessitates that the classroom teacher also has the power and authority to influence decision making in their respective schools.

4.2.4.5 Theme 4.5: Classroom teacher leadership in decision making

As with the previous theme at first glance at the data, it was very clear that classroom teachers were not directly involved in decision making in these well-performing schools. Looking more closely at the data the researcher realised that the classroom teacher leader has an indirect influence on decision making through various channels. Five subthemes were developed from the data within this theme:

- **Classroom teachers are not directly involved in decision making in these schools.**
- **Classroom teacher leaders use indirect channels to influence decision making.**
- **Classroom teacher leaders use staff meetings as a forum to influence decision making.**
- **Classroom teacher leaders use the open-door policy of principals to influence decision making.**
- **Classroom teacher leaders do influence decision making in activities where they are directly involved.**

Principal AP1 immediately makes it clear that **classroom teachers are not directly involved in decision making** in her school when she remarks: “I think this is a weak point at our school. I think one can grant them more opportunity.” Principal AP1 explains the reason for this situation as follows: “One really wants to involve them but the extent of this school and its’ activities is of such nature that it is not always practically possible.” Principal BP2 confirms that the same situation in his school exists when he says: “In the end when the decision is made, except for the teacher representative on the SGB itself, they are not really involved with the decision itself.” Six of the classroom teacher participants also confirmed this and participant ACT2, for

example, declares: “Not formally, not like on a platform where we really must take you know certain, I will almost say important, decisions like you say strategic decisions.”

Participant ACT2 has an interesting perspective on this lack of involvement in decision making when she says: “I respect that because otherwise if everybody has a say then we will never take a decision.” Looking more closely at the data it was found that although there was no direct involvement in the decision-making process, there were various other channels through which the classroom teacher leader in these schools could influence the decision-making process. **Classroom teacher leaders use indirect channels to influence decision making.** The hierarchical structure in these schools is used as a forum by classroom teacher leaders to influence decision making. Principal AP1 describes this process: “The Deputies and I meet every single morning. The idea is perhaps if Deputy A had a meeting the previous afternoon with teacher X, then Deputy A comes to me the following morning and say there is a question or a comment or unhappiness or a thank you or whatever from that person.” Six of the classroom teacher participants describe the same indirect process of influencing decision making. Participant ACT1 remarks: “Grade 10 and 11 fall under a specific Head of Department; I mean Deputy Principal, so I mean I can also go to her.” This is also confirmed by participant BCT6: “That person will then take it to top management and explain our feelings on the issue.”

Another channel available to the classroom teacher to influence decision making in these schools is when **classroom teacher leaders use staff meetings as a forum to influence decision making.** Principal AP1 uses staff meetings to get input from her classroom teachers in the decision-making process. She says: “I would sometimes in the staff room ask opinions.” This is confirmed by three of the classroom teacher participants. Participant ACT2, for example, explains the process as follows: “Let us say there was decided to execute certain things and there are certain objections from us or we say this can’t really work like this, then the principal or deputy principal or the HOD will listen and will channel it.”

Another channel to influence the decision-making process in these schools is when **classroom teacher leaders use the open-door policy of principals to influence decision making**. Both principals declared during the interview that they have an open-door policy. Principal AP1 states in this regard: “If it is a serious thing, then you come straight, you just make an appointment with me and come straight to me.” This open-door policy is not just limited to a physical appointment with her. Principal AP1 gives another option to her classroom teachers: “They would often send me e-mails with suggestions, etc. It’s just a very convenient thing for me as I sit at night reading through these e-mails and I can then answer.” Participant BCT5 also refers to this method of indirectly influencing decision making when he says: “The nicest thing to me again is the open-door policy, so if there is something that you wish to discuss or something that you want to relay to somebody or something that you want to lay on the table, you can always go and talk with someone and from thereon it will be channelled in the right direction.”

Classroom teacher leaders do influence decision making in activities where they are directly involved. In both schools it was clear that classroom teachers are consulted in the decision-making process if they are directly involved in an activity. Principal BP2 comments in this regard: “The HOD will hand in a division of work after they have consulted with the classroom teachers on which subjects they prefer to teach to which grades.” Participant ACT1 says: “If things really influence you, then they will ask you and then you can say.” Participant BCT6 confirms: “If you are involved in that certain activity, I think the person in charge of that activity will consult with you and ask you, what do you think about this?”

The highest level of classroom teacher leadership is in zone 4 that is when the classroom teacher leader plays a leadership role outside the boundaries of his / her school in the community and neighbouring schools (Grant, 2008, 93).

4.2.5 Category 5: Zone 4: Classroom teacher leadership outside the school in the community

The data collected in this category indicated that classroom teacher leadership was evident in curricular as well as extracurricular school-related activities outside the boundaries of their own schools. It was, however, also evident in community-related activities that had no link to school activities.

4.2.5.1 Theme 5.1: Classroom teacher as leader in curricular activities outside the school

Six subthemes were developed from the data:

- **Classroom teacher leaders are involved in their clusters.**
- **Classroom teacher leaders are involved in the marking of Grade 12 examination papers.**
- **Classroom teacher leaders assist struggling neighbouring schools in their community.**
- **Classroom teacher leaders set district papers.**
- **Classroom teacher leaders act as moderators.**

The principals felt that classroom teachers do not get involved in curricular activities in the community, firstly because the structures are of such a nature that it does not afford classroom teacher leaders the opportunity to take the lead. Principal AP1 remarks in this regard: “I understand why they don’t do this because the structure that does exist out there is random structures that doesn’t always make it easy for them, for example it is a district that wants to push their work down on someone else.” Principal BP2 gives another reason why classroom teachers do not get involved in leadership roles outside of the school in the community: “There are a few who are not and do not want to. They give extra classes for their own pocket and they do not care about the rest of the world.”

The data provided nevertheless indicated that classroom teacher leaders in these schools were involved in various curricular activities outside the borders of their respective schools.

Classroom teacher leaders are involved in their clusters. Principal AP1 says: “At this stage it happens in single instances that my post level 1 teachers are involved in being cluster leaders.” This is confirmed by principal BP2: “There are a few very good teachers who through the district office play leadership roles in their subject areas, who are cluster leaders.” Classroom teacher BCT6 remarks about her involvement in cluster meetings: “In that cluster meeting you have to stand up and say what type of school have you got, how do you teach, etc. that makes you feel like a type of leader.” Classroom teacher participant BCT8 declares that it is not just about being a cluster leader, there are a lot of activities in the cluster meetings that demand leadership from the classroom teacher: “In the cluster meetings we also give input of things and processes, we are part of common tasks that are compiled, translation of it, moderation, a lot of us are used for further moderation.”

Apart from their involvement in cluster meetings **classroom teacher leaders are involved in the marking of Grade 12 examination papers** outside the borders of the school. Principal BP2 remarks that classroom teachers “are involved in the marking of Grade 12 papers, senior markers and chief markers and all that things.” Participant ACT1 confirms: “I mark question papers and set papers and I am senior marker at the marking.”

The data also indicated a very important role in zone 4 in that **classroom teacher leaders assist struggling neighbouring schools in their community.** Principal BP2 says: “Then also we have this new neighbouring school for whom I feel sorry because they do not have leaders, they have the principal and a few teachers; there is no middle management. Our teachers are more than prepared and they also do that to make contact with those teachers to ensure that they at least are up to date and on the right track with pacesetters, etc.” Participant ACT1 confirms that she helps their neighbouring school: “Our neighbouring school has two brand-new Business Studies teachers, so that HOD does phone me as well, so I also moderate their question papers.” Participant ACT1 also helps them with their teaching skills: “They will come once or twice a quarter and come and speak with me, and then I help them with how I teach the Business Studies, etc.”

Classroom teacher leaders set district papers. Classroom teacher leaders are also involved in common district examinations. In this regard participant ACT1 remarks: “I had for example set the Grade 11 paper of the district this year.

The data indicated another classroom teacher activity in zone four: **Classroom teacher leaders act as moderators.** Participant ACT1 mentions: “Oh yes, then I am also a teacher moderator and then it is all the schools that you have to do.” Participant BCT8 indicates involvement as moderator, not just in her district but also at a national level: “I have done it a few times, especially national moderation; a person learns a lot, especially you as a teacher.”

It is not just on a curricular level that the classroom teacher can play a leadership role outside the boundaries of his / her school. On an extracurricular level various opportunities also exist for classroom teacher leadership in the community as clearly indicated in the analyses of the data.

4.2.5.2 Theme 5.2: Classroom teacher as leader in extracurricular activities outside the school

Subthemes developed from the data on extracurricular involvement of classroom teacher leaders in zone 4:

- **Classroom teacher leaders act as union representatives.**
- **Classroom teacher leaders are involved in various sporting activities outside of the school.**

Principal AP1 feels there are no opportunities for classroom teacher leaders to be involved in extracurricular activities outside the school when she says: “I actually feel sorry for the young people of today or rather the entrants to the profession. There actually do not exist opportunities.”

The data however did show that classroom teachers are indeed acting as leaders in extracurricular activities outside the school.

Classroom teacher leaders act as union representatives. Principal AP1 refers to the opportunity that she had as a young teacher to become a union representative: *“I as a very, very young teacher had, for example, become a representative of the union in my staff room.”*

The data also indicated that **classroom teacher leaders are involved in various sporting activities outside of the school.** Participant ACT3 refers to her involvement in the old learners’ hockey club which falls outside the extracurricular programme of the school when she says: “The hockey club that the school started, the old learners club, I help a bit with the administration and so on.” Participant BCT7 refers to his involvement in the management of provincial cricket when he says: “I am on the “Northerns” Cricket Union management, chairman of the north zone.” Participant BCT6 makes an interesting argument that when she travels with her hockey team outside of her school borders, she acts as leader in the community when she says: “If you go somewhere with sport and you have to take your team with you, those people also see you as a leader.”

The data also indicated that classroom teacher leadership can also extend further than the curricular and extracurricular boundaries of a school as can be clearly seen in the next theme.

4.2.5.3 Theme 5.3: Classroom teacher as leader in community activities

Four subthemes were generated from the data under this theme:

- **Classroom teachers are involved in the churches in their communities.**
- **Classroom teacher leadership activities in the community do not clash with their school activities**
- **Classroom teachers are leaders within their families.**

- **Classroom teachers are leaders wherever they may find themselves, especially outside of the school.**

Classroom teachers are involved in the churches in their communities. Principal BP2 refers to classroom teacher leader involvement in zone four: “Then there are also individuals and I do not make it my own knowledge to know if teachers in their private capacity are involved in churches and other clubs and unions and play leadership roles there.” Participant ACT2 confirms her involvement in church activities when she remarks: “I was also involved with the newsletter of the church, outreach programmes, I was with the Bible school.”

Classroom teacher leadership activities in the community do not clash with their school activities. Principal BP2 does not have a problem with classroom teacher involvement in community activities, as long as it does not disrupt their duties at the school: “It is always nice and you would encourage it, it just should not be in conflict with the school.”

Participant BCT5 sees his role as head of his family as a leadership role outside of the school borders when he says: “I am a father and a husband, so there is definitely leadership involved there.” With this statement he makes an interesting point that **classroom teachers are leaders within their families.**

Another perspective on classroom teacher leadership came from participant BCT6: “So definitely it is not just in the school. I think even more so outside of the school context those things are placed more on you as a leader.” Participant BCT6 explains: “If you walk in a shopping centre, you feel everybody is looking up to you, you do not want to look funny, you do not want to walk in your slippers in a shopping centre, because you are a teacher.” Her argument thus is that **classroom teachers are leaders wherever they may find themselves especially outside of the school.**

4.3 Conclusion

Analysis of the data showed that these classroom teachers conceptualised their leadership as something that starts in the classroom. This conceptualisation remained their focus as we went through the different zones of teacher leadership, as identified by Grant (2008: 93). Although they saw their leadership as subject and classroom bound, it was clear from their activities that their leadership activities stretched beyond the limits of subject and classroom in these schools.

In zone one strong classroom teacher leadership practices could be identified in both the acquisition of knowledge and the sharing of knowledge. Through the experiences of these principals and classroom teachers seven leadership practices in the acquisition of knowledge could be identified and six leadership practices in the sharing of knowledge.

In zone two strong classroom teacher leadership could be identified in both curricular and extracurricular activities outside the classroom within the borders of the school. Through the experiences of the principals and classroom teachers six curricular leadership practices and four extracurricular leadership practices could be identified in these schools.

In zone three at first glance it seemed that classroom teachers played a very limited leadership role in the development of their schools. However, looking closer at the experiences of both principals and classroom teachers, it became clear that even though there was no direct involvement of classroom teachers in both strategic planning and decision making, there were informal, indirect structures available whereby the classroom teacher leader could contribute to the development of their schools. It was clear that these classroom teacher leaders know what they want to change to improve their schools and that they indeed did contribute in various ways to the development of their schools.

Various classroom teacher leadership practices were evident in zone four at curricular, extracurricular and community levels outside the borders of the school.

The conclusions derived from these findings will be discussed in detail in the next chapter.

Chapter 5: Conclusions and recommendations

5.1 Introduction

In this chapter an overview will be given on how the literature review was concluded, on how data were collected and what conclusions could be drawn from this data in order to answer the initial primary and secondary research questions of this study. The findings discussed in this chapter seeks to answer the primary research question: *“To what extent do classroom teachers assume leadership roles in contemporary, top-performing secondary schools?”* It also seeks to find answers to the secondary research questions: *“What leadership roles do classroom teachers assume in contemporary, top-performing secondary schools?”* and *“How do leaders of contemporary, top-performing secondary schools create opportunities to share leadership with classroom teachers?”*

The chapter then focuses on the limitations of this study and how they were overcome. The significance of the study will be discussed in so far as it addresses the identified gap in the literature as well as its contribution to debates on educational policy and practices. Lastly, opportunities for future studies on this topic and phenomenon will be suggested.

5.2 Overview

Although every chapter in this dissertation can be seen as a separate unit, all chapters work together to explain the phenomenon of classroom teacher leadership in contemporary, top-performing secondary schools.

In the first chapter an attempt was made to explain the purpose of and rationale behind the study. Research proposes that the classroom teacher should assume the role of leader in a distributive leadership environment in order for schools to improve and be effective. Research done on classroom teacher leadership in South African schools,

however, showed very little evidence of classroom teacher leadership in the schools studied. Literature suggests that classroom teacher leadership should be evident in contemporary, top-performing secondary schools since classroom teacher leadership is regarded as a requirement for an effective and successful school (Roberts & Roach, 2006: 38). In order for me to understand the practices of classroom teacher leaders it was necessary to identify top-performing secondary schools, and to investigate, firstly, to what extent classroom teacher leadership is evident in these schools, and secondly, if it is evident what practices of classroom teacher leadership were employed in these schools and how the opportunity for classroom teacher leadership is created within these schools. A methodology for the investigation into this phenomenon of classroom teacher leadership was therefore also suggested in Chapter 1.

In Chapter 2 a thorough literature review assisted with the conceptualisation of classroom teacher leadership. Two other key concepts in understanding classroom teacher leadership, namely instructional leadership and distributive leadership, were also conceptualised and the link between the three concepts were explained using literature. This enabled me to design a conceptual framework to better understand the complexity of classroom teacher leadership in a distributive leadership environment in Chapter 2. The literature review also assisted me in designing a theoretical framework to measure classroom teacher leadership (Grant, 2008: 93), which was used during the collection and analysis of data in Chapter 3 and Chapter 4. Finally, literature investigating classroom teacher leadership in South African schools was also reviewed to get a clearer picture of this phenomenon in South African schools.

In Chapter 3 the methodology of this study was discussed. A qualitative approach with a case study design was chosen to investigate the phenomenon of classroom teacher leadership in the real-life context of contemporary, top-performing secondary schools. The choice of the qualitative approach with probing interviews was confirmed to be a good choice in the latter part of the data analysis when it became clear that a quantitative approach with shorter “yes” or “no” answers could produce misleading data, for example participants would immediately reply “no” if asked if they participate

in, for example, the decision-making process or in the strategic planning process, but when probing in their experiences it was found that they indeed did play a role.

Using priori coding the collected data were analysed in Chapter 4. Based on the theoretical framework of Grant's model for classroom teacher leadership the following five categories were established prior to the analysis of the data:

- Introduction: Conceptualisation of classroom teacher leadership
- Zone 1: Classroom teacher leadership within the classroom
- Zone 2: Classroom teacher leadership outside the classroom in curricular and extra-curricular activities
- Zone 3: Classroom teacher leadership in whole-school development
- Zone 4: Classroom teacher leadership outside the school and in the community (Grant, 2008: 93).

The theoretical framework and interviews developed the following 14 themes: understanding the concept classroom teacher leadership; understanding the importance of the concept of classroom teacher leadership; classroom teacher leadership in obtaining knowledge; classroom teacher leadership practices in sharing knowledge; curricular opportunities for classroom teacher leadership extracurricular opportunities for classroom teacher leadership; classroom teachers as leaders in school development; classroom teachers as leaders in school achievement; classroom teachers as leaders in strategic planning; classroom teachers as leaders in change; classroom teachers as leaders in decision making; classroom teachers as leaders in curricular activities outside the school; classroom teachers as leaders in extracurricular activities outside the school, and classroom teachers as leaders in community activities. These fourteen themes were used to organise the data on the experiences and practices of classroom teacher leadership of both the classroom teachers and their principals in the two contemporary, top-performing secondary schools sampled.

In this chapter the secondary and primary research questions are answered. Based on the findings in Chapter 4 it is concluded that classroom teacher leadership was indeed evident in these sampled contemporary, top-performing secondary schools.

5.3 Conclusions on classroom teacher leadership in top-performing secondary schools

My conclusions were based on the interpretation of the perceptions, viewpoints and experiences of classroom teachers and their principals in the two sampled contemporary, top-performing secondary schools in the Pretoria area (Cohen & Manion, 1994: 36). This was measured against the theoretical framework provided by Grant (2008: 93) in my literature review. These findings were used to answer the secondary research questions, and these answers ultimately answered the primary research question.

5.3.1 Secondary research questions

5.3.1.1 “What leadership roles do classroom teachers assume in contemporary, top-performing secondary schools?”

Using the analysed data in Chapter 4 to answer this first secondary question, the following leadership roles and practices by classroom teachers were identified in the two sampled contemporary, top-performing secondary schools:

During the introduction when classroom teacher leadership was conceptualised the following leadership roles and practices were identified:

- Classroom teachers are the leaders in their classrooms.
- Classroom teachers manage discipline in their classrooms.
- Classroom teacher leaders take responsibility.
- Classroom teachers are curriculum leaders in their different subjects.
- Classroom teacher leaders lead teaching and learning in the classroom

- Classroom teacher leaders set an example to their learners.

These leadership roles and practices were mainly focused on zone one – the classroom. It can therefore be concluded that in their conceptualisation of classroom teacher leadership most of the interviewed classroom teachers believed that their leadership role should start in the classroom.

ZONE ONE

It was found that in zone one, the classroom teacher as leader in obtaining knowledge, that various leadership roles and practices could be identified from the data:

- Classroom teacher leaders attend training opportunities provided by their labour unions.
- Classroom teacher leaders attend district cluster meetings and departmental meetings.
- Classroom teacher leaders network in groups.
- Classroom teacher leaders attend workshops and training sessions.
- Classroom teacher leaders use technology and media to stay informed.
- Classroom teacher leaders read a lot to obtain knowledge.
- Classroom teacher leaders use Grade 12 marking sessions to stay informed.

From these practices it can be concluded that there was strong classroom teacher leadership involvement in zone one in the two sampled schools.

Classroom teacher leaders, however, do not just obtain knowledge and keep it to themselves – they are prepared to share this knowledge with others.

The following leadership roles and practices in zone one focused on classroom teacher leadership practices of sharing knowledge and were found to be applied by these classroom teachers:

- They use formal opportunities like staff, subject and grade meetings to share information.
- Classroom teachers use informal opportunities during breaks over a cup of tea in the staff room to share knowledge.
- Formal hierarchical structures are used by classroom teachers to share information.
- Classroom teacher leaders use their expertise to mentor and support colleagues.
- Classroom teachers share information by networking with other schools.
- Classroom teacher leaders use technology to share information.

It can therefore be concluded from these various practices of knowledge sharing that classroom teacher leadership in this area was also very strong in the two sampled schools. The sharing of information and knowledge already crosses the boundary into zone two especially when knowledge is shared in an effort to mentor or support colleagues.

ZONE TWO

Zone two focusses on classroom teacher leadership roles and practices outside the classroom in curricular and extracurricular activities. The findings pointed to the following leadership practices and roles practised by these classroom teachers:

- Classroom teachers lead as subject heads.
- Classroom teachers lead as grade coordinators.
- Classroom teachers lead as phase coordinators.
- Classroom teachers develop their leadership capacity in assuming informal leadership roles.
- Classroom teachers develop the leadership capacity of fellow classroom teachers by mentoring and supporting them.
- Classroom teacher leaders develop their leadership capacity by attending development workshops.

At an extracurricular level outside the classroom the following leadership roles and practices could be identified:

- Classroom teachers assume informal leadership roles as grade heads.
- Classroom teachers are willing to get involved in extracurricular activities at their schools.
- Classroom teachers use extracurricular activities to build relationships with learners.
- Classroom teachers lead as managers and organisers of extracurricular activities.

From these leadership roles and practices it can be concluded that classroom teacher leadership was also very evident in zone two.

ZONE THREE

In zone three, whole-school development, the following leadership roles and practices by classroom teachers could be identified:

- Classroom teachers contribute to school development through their various curricular and extracurricular activities.
- Classroom teachers contribute to school development by touching the lives of their learners.
- Classroom teachers have new ideas on how to develop their schools.
- Classroom teachers contribute to school achievement, which in turn fosters school growth and development.
- Classroom teachers contribute to school achievement through their curricular activities.
- Classroom teachers contribute to school achievement through their extracurricular activities.
- Classroom teachers develop their learners, which ultimately contribute to school achievement, growth and development.
- Classroom teachers know what they would like to change to improve their schools.

- Classroom teachers do have input in and their ideas are considered in the development of the strategic plan.
- Classroom teachers do have a direct channel to the deputies and principals of their schools to put forward their ideas.
- Classroom teachers do have an indirect involvement in the development of their school's strategic plan; there are even some signs of direct classroom teacher involvement in developing the school's strategic plan.
- Classroom teachers use indirect channels to influence decision making in their schools.
- Classroom teachers use staff meetings as a forum to influence decision making.
- Classroom teachers use the open-door policy of principals to influence decision making.
- Classroom teachers influence decision making in activities in which they are directly involved.

Through these roles and practices of classroom teacher leadership it can be concluded that classroom teachers in the sampled schools did not necessarily have a direct influence on decision making and strategic planning in their schools but definitely have indirect channels available to play a significant role in the decision-making processes and strategic planning in their schools. Through various activities and practices the classroom teacher does indeed play an integral role in the development of these two sampled contemporary, top-performing secondary schools.

ZONE FOUR

In zone four, outside the borders of the school between neighbouring schools and in the community, the following leadership roles and practices could be identified:

- Classroom teachers are involved in cluster meetings.
- Classroom teachers mark Grade 12 papers.
- Classroom teachers assist struggling neighbouring schools.
- Classroom teachers set district papers.

- Classroom teachers act as moderators.
- Classroom teachers act as union representatives.
- Classroom teachers are involved in the coaching and management of provincial teams.
- Classroom teachers are involved in their churches.
- Classroom teachers take on the role of leader within their families.
- Classroom teachers act as leaders wherever they might find themselves outside of the borders of their schools.

From these identified roles and practices it can be concluded that classroom teachers from the two sampled contemporary, top-performing secondary schools do indeed also play a significant leadership role in this zone.

5.3.1.2 “How do leaders of contemporary, top-performing secondary schools create opportunities to share leadership with classroom teachers?”

This secondary research question was answered by the findings in the data analysis in terms of leadership opportunities provided in these schools. The following leadership opportunities could be identified in these schools:

- At a curricular level: informal leadership positions are created for classroom teacher leaders like subject heads, grade coordinators and phase coordinators.
- At an extracurricular level: classroom teachers have the opportunity to assume leadership roles as managers and organisers of extracurricular activities.

Principals of these schools realise the need for classroom teachers to be involved in school development and create systems to get classroom teachers involved in school development. An open-door policy by the principal and deputy principals creates a direct channel for classroom teachers to give input in the strategic plan and also create the opportunity for classroom teachers to influence the decision-making process in both these schools. Input into the strategic plan can also be made indirectly through

middle management like heads of department, grade heads and organisers of extracurricular activities, and classroom teachers can also influence the decision-making process in both these schools in a similar way.

Through these practices it can be concluded that both the sampled schools were very focused on creating opportunities for classroom teacher leadership, thus creating a distributive leadership environment.

5.3.2 Primary research question: “To what extent do classroom teachers assume leadership roles in contemporary, top-performing secondary schools?”

The two secondary research questions paved the way in answering the primary research question. The answer to the primary research question is positively that classroom teachers do indeed assume leadership roles to a very large extent in contemporary, top-performing secondary schools. Using the findings in Chapter 4, 57 different leadership practices by classroom teachers could be identified at the two sampled schools. Measuring these practices against the theoretical framework provided by Grant (2008: 93), 13 different leadership practices could be identified in zone one (the classroom), ten different leadership practices could be identified in zone two outside the classroom in curricular and extracurricular activities. Although certain shortcomings could be identified in zone three outside the classroom in whole-school development, a total of 17 different leadership practices could be identified in this zone. In zone four between neighbouring schools and the community ten different leadership activities could be identified. During the introduction with the focus on the conceptualisation and importance of classroom teacher leadership, another seven different leadership practices by classroom teachers were identified.

Grant (2011: 15) claims that true teacher leadership can be measured in classroom teacher involvement in four broad domains, namely setting the direction of the school; management of the instructional programme; redesigning the organisation, and involvement of the classroom teacher in the development of people. Measured against

these criteria true classroom teacher leadership was indeed evident in both the sampled contemporary, top-performing secondary schools.

5.4 Conclusion about working assumption

Starting this study, I assumed that classroom teacher leadership would be evident in these contemporary, top-performing secondary schools because teacher leadership is seen as a requirement for an effective and successful school (Roberts & Roach, 2006: 38). The study did prove my working assumption to be correct as it was clear that classroom teacher leadership was evident in both these schools throughout all the zones of classroom teacher leadership, as identified by Grant (2008: 93).

Due to my own experience as a principal of a secondary school I assumed that classroom teachers would be directly involved in the strategic planning and decision-making processes of both these schools. This working assumption was proven to be incorrect because there was no evidence of direct classroom teacher involvement in neither strategic planning nor decision making.

My conclusion was that classroom teacher leadership was evident throughout all the zones of classroom teacher leadership as identified by Grant (2008: 93) and although there were certain shortcomings in zone three of direct classroom teacher involvement in strategic planning and decision making, structures and systems were in place in both these schools that allowed indirect classroom teacher involvement in both areas.

5.5 Limitations of the study

The fact that only two research sites were used can limit the findings of the study. However, the fact that both research sites were rated in the top ten schools in Gauteng by the Department of Basic Education (DBE, 2013: 3) does increase the validity of the findings.

Validity and reliability were further increased by the fact that a total of 92 pages of information rich data were generated in ten interviews with participants from both research sites providing sufficient information to substantiate the findings of the study.

Information given by the classroom teacher participants with varying degrees of experience could be cross-checked with each other within the same school; it could also be cross-checked between the two different schools, and the information given by the classroom teacher participants could also be cross-checked with that of the principals. This process of triangulation also increased the validity and reliability of the information on which the findings were based (Erlandson, Harris, Skipper & Allen, 1993).

The researcher's experience as principal of a secondary school could influence my objectivity and also my understanding of the conceptual framework of the field of study, therefore limiting the findings of the study. However, I ensured that my conceptual framework was completely based on a thorough literature review on the field of study and based my data collection strongly on the theoretical framework provided by Grant (2008: 93); thus ensuring validity and reliability of the data and in the end the findings of the study.

I anticipated that because I am a principal of a secondary school myself, classroom teacher participants would feel intimidated because they might know me or that the principals might feel that their own schools can be discredited by the information that were provided, thus limiting the validity and reliability of the data as well as the findings of the study. A thorough explanation of the purpose of the study, my position as a researcher, their voluntary participation and the fact that total anonymity would be kept before each interview resolved these possible limitations and I found, on the contrary, that the interviews were very relaxed and the participants, both classroom teachers and principals, were very sincere and shared a lot of information, providing me with 92 pages of information rich data that contributed to reliable and valid findings in this study.

The participants as a matter of fact were so relaxed during the interviews that sometimes they got side tracked, which could also limit the reliability and validity of the data and findings of the study. A pre-prepared list of questions based on the theoretical framework ensured that participants stayed focused on the field of study and thus provided relevant and reliable information during the semi-structured interviews.

5.6 Significance of the study

Literature emphasises the need for classroom teacher leadership in a distributive leadership environment as a prerequisite for an effective school (Grant, 2011; Gronn, 2008; Hallinger, Leithwood & Heck, 2010; Hoadley, Christie & Ward 2009; Neuman & Simmons, 2000; Spillane 2005, 2009; Spillane & Healy, 2010). Literature on classroom teacher leadership in South African schools furthermore indicates that classroom teacher leadership is very limited and rarely extends beyond the classroom in South African schools (De Villiers & Pretorius, 2011; Grant et al., 2010; Grant & Singh, 2009; Naicker & Mestry, 2011, 2013; Williams, 2011).

The gap identified in the literature is that there is no indication or model on how classroom teacher leadership can be implemented in South African schools to become more effective. The significance of this study is that it addresses this gap by identifying 57 different classroom teacher leadership practices in top-performing schools. It also identifies various practices that create opportunities for classroom teacher leadership. These practices can be used as a model to promote classroom teacher leadership in underperforming schools.

5.7 Recommendations for future research

This study also holds the potential for future research. The following possibilities for future research could be explored:

- An expansion of this study to more top-performing schools and also to other provinces can bring forward even more valuable information on the practices and implementation of classroom teacher leadership in schools.
- This study focused primarily on the classroom teacher and the principal. An exploration into the role of middle management in developing classroom teacher leadership can also make a valuable contribution to the field of study.
- The possibility of the development of formal training programmes on distributive leadership and classroom teacher leadership practices by the Department of Basic Education can be explored. This can really unleash the potential of classroom teacher leadership in developing effective schools.

5.8 Recommendation for improvement of practice

During the study it became evident that classroom teachers did not have a direct input in the strategic planning of these schools, nor did they have a direct influence on decision making. It is recommended that the indirect structures that currently exist be developed into structures giving the classroom teachers the opportunity to more directly influence these areas so that the full potential of classroom teacher leadership can be realised in zone three.

In the data there are some signs that middle management in schools is an obstacle to the development of classroom teacher leadership. Training programmes for middle management on distributive leadership and classroom teacher leadership can give a better understanding of these concepts and thus create an environment conducive to the development of classroom teacher leadership.

5.9 Concluding remarks

This study was a valuable learning experience for the researcher giving insight into the experiences of classroom teacher leaders and principals in contemporary, top-performing secondary schools. The knowledge gained from this study fully answered

the primary and secondary research questions posed and addressed the existing gap in the literature, thus contributing to the existing knowledge in the field of study as well as future education policy debates.

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ADDENDA

APPENDIX 1: ETHICAL CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE



UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA
Faculty of Education

RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE

CLEARANCE NUMBER: EM 15/10/05

DEGREE AND PROJECT

MEd

Classroom teacher leadership in top-performing secondary schools

INVESTIGATORS

Cornelius Johannes Christiaan Driescher

DEPARTMENT

Education Management and Policy Studies

APPROVAL TO COMMENCE STUDY

20 May 2016

DATE OF CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE

26 October 2016

Please note:

For Master's application, Ethics Clearance is valid for 2 years
For PhD application, Ethics Clearance is valid for 3 years

CHAIRPERSON OF ETHICS COMMITTEE: Prof Liesel Ebersöhn

CC

Bronwynne Swarts
Rika Joubert

This Ethics Clearance Certificate is issued subject to the following conditions:

1. A signed personal declaration of responsibility
2. If the research question changes significantly so as to alter the nature of the study, a new application of ethical clearance must be submitted
3. It remains the student's responsibility to ensure that all the necessary forms for informed consent are kept for future queries

Please quote the clearance number in all enquiries

APPENDIX 2: INVITATION AND INFORMED CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH PROJECT



Faculty of Education

Department of Education Management and Policy Studies
University of Pretoria

9 May 2016

Attention:

Ms. M Jordaan
AHNP
Bond street
Clydesdale
District Tshwane South (D)

RE: REQUEST FOR INFORMED CONSENT TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN EDUCATION LEADERSHIP AT YOUR SCHOOL

As a MED student of the University of Pretoria, I envisage conducting research at your school. My study title is: **Classroom teachers as leaders in contemporary, top-performing, secondary schools**. The study aims to investigate teacher leadership in contemporary, top-performing, secondary schools. The findings of this study could provide a framework for quality leadership which will lead to school improvement.

The research method will entail the following:

1. An individual, face to face, semi-structured, audio taped interview of an hour with you the principal in your office at a date and time convenient to you.
2. Four individual, face to face semi-structured, audio taped interviews of an hour long each with four classroom teachers from your school. These classroom teachers must have varying degrees of teaching experience that is: one classroom teacher with one to three years' teaching experience, one classroom teacher with four to nine years' teaching experience, one classroom teacher with ten to fifteen years' teaching experience and one classroom teacher with more than sixteen years' teaching experience. These interviews will be set at a date, time and place convenient to each individual classroom teacher.
3. These interviews will be held after school hours as not to interfere with curriculum delivery.

The information gathered will be kept private and confidential, and under no circumstances will the participant be wilfully placed at risk. Strict confidentiality and anonymity will be kept and under no circumstances will the name of the school or a person at the school be mentioned in this study. Each participant will receive a transcript of his / her own interview to ensure that information was correctly conveyed and that the identity of the participant was safeguarded. A copy of the final dissertation will be sent to the school should you wish to access the information. The findings of the study may be presented at conferences or in published papers, but names and other identifying characteristics will never be used.

Please note that **all data collected with public funding may be made available in an open**

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www.up.ac.za

Faculty of Education
Fakulteit Opvoedkunde
Lefapha la Thuto

repository for public and scientific use. Also note that participation in this study is purely voluntary and should you wish to withdraw at any time you may do so without any fear of penalty.

For any further information regarding this research or issues that you may wish to clarify, please contact

Supervisor: Professor Rika Joubert (PhD)
Director: Intrauniversity Centre for Education Law and Policy (CELP)
Rika.Joubert@up.ac.za

Researcher: Mr CJC Driescher
082 561 6690
hoof@pnhs.co.za

CONSENT

I have read this consent form and I fully understand the information regarding this study. I am willing to participate in this study.

PARTICIPANT NAME (Print)

[Redacted]

PARTICIPANT SIGNATURE

[Redacted]



DATE 14/06/2016

NAME OF PERSON CONDUCTING CONSENT (print)

Mr. CJC DRIESCHER

SIGNATURE OF PERSON CONDUCTING CONSENT

[Handwritten signature]

DATE 14/6/2016



UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA

Faculty of Education

Department of Education Management and Policy Studies
University of Pretoria

9 May 2016

Attention: Classroom teacher

AMMP
Bond street
Clydesdale
District Tshwane South (D*)

RE: REQUEST FOR INFORMED CONSENT

As a MED student of the University of Pretoria, I envisage conducting research at your school. My study title is: **Classroom teachers as leaders in contemporary, top-performing, secondary schools**. The study aims to investigate teacher leadership in a top-performing, contemporary, secondary school. The findings of this study could provide a framework for quality leadership which will lead to school improvement.

The research method will entail four individual, face to face semi-structured, audio taped interviews of an hour long each with four classroom teachers at your school. These classroom teachers must have varying degrees of teaching experience that is: one classroom teacher with one to three years' teaching experience, one classroom teacher with four to nine years' teaching experience, one classroom teacher with ten to fifteen years' teaching experience and one classroom teacher with more than sixteen years' teaching experience. These interviews will be set at a date, time and place convenient to each individual classroom teacher. These interviews will be held after school hours as not to interfere with curriculum delivery.

The information gathered will be kept private and confidential, and under no circumstances will the participant be wilfully placed at risk. Strict confidentiality and anonymity will be kept and under no circumstances will the name of the school or a person at the school be mentioned in this study. Each participant will receive a transcript of his / her own interview to ensure that information was correctly conveyed and that the identity of the participant was safeguarded. A copy of the final dissertation will be send to the school should you wish to access the information. The findings of the study may be presented at conferences or in published papers, but names and other identifying characteristics will never be used.

Please note that **all data collected with public funding may be made available in an open repository for public and scientific use**. Also note that **participation in this study is purely voluntary and should you wish to withdraw at any time you may do so without any fear of penalty**.

For any further information regarding this research or issues that you may wish to clarify, please

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Lefapha la Thuto

contact:

Supervisor: Professor Rika Joubert (PhD)
Director: Interuniversity Centre for Education Law and Policy (CELP)
Rika.Joubert@up.ac.za

Researcher: Mr CJC Driescher
082 561 6690
hoof@pnhs.co.za

CONSENT

I have read this consent form and I fully understand the information regarding this study. I am willing to participate in this study.

PARTICIPANT NAME (Print)

PARTICIPANT SIGNATURE

DATE 14/06/2016

NAME OF PERSON CONDUCTING CONSENT (print)

MR CJC DRIESCHER

SIGNATURE OF PERSON CONDUCTING CONSENT

DATE 14/6/2016

APPENDIX 3: GDE RESEARCH APPROVAL LETTER

For administrative use only:
Reference no: D2016 / 333
enquiries: Diane Bunting 011 843 6503



GAUTENG PROVINCE
EDUCATION
REPUBLIC OF SOUTH AFRICA

GDE RESEARCH APPROVAL LETTER

Date:	13 November 2015
Validity of Research Approval:	8 February 2016 to 30 September 2016
Name of Researcher:	Driescher C.J.C.
Address of Researcher:	P.O. Box 17861; Pretoria- North; 0116
Telephone / Fax Number/s:	012 546 6590; 082 561 6690; 012 546 9463
Email address:	hoof@phns.co.za
Research Topic:	Classroom teachers as leaders in contemporary, top-performing, secondary schools
Number and type of schools:	TWO Secondary Schools
District/s/HO	Tshwane North and Tshwane South

Re: Approval in Respect of Request to Conduct Research

This letter serves to indicate that approval is hereby granted to the above-mentioned researcher to proceed with research in respect of the study indicated above. The onus rests with the researcher to negotiate appropriate and relevant time schedules with the school/s and/or offices involved. A separate copy of this letter must be presented to the Principal, SGB and the relevant District/Head Office Senior Manager confirming that permission has been granted for the research to be conducted. However participation is VOLUNTARY.

The following conditions apply to GDE research. The researcher has agreed to and may proceed with the above study subject to the conditions listed below being met. Approval may be withdrawn should any of the conditions listed below be flouted:

CONDITIONS FOR CONDUCTING RESEARCH IN GDE

1. The District/Head Office Senior Manager/s concerned, the Principal/s and the chairperson/s of the School Governing Body (SGB) must be presented with a copy of this letter.
2. The Researcher will make every effort to obtain the goodwill and co-operation of the GDE District officials, principals, SGBs, teachers, parents and learners involved. Participation is voluntary and additional remuneration will not be paid;

Makhado
2015/11/13

Making education a societal priority

Office of the Director: Knowledge Management and Research


9th Floor, 111 Commissioner Street, Johannesburg, 2001
P.O. Box 7710, Johannesburg, 2000 Tel: (011) 355 0506
Email: David.Makhado@gauteng.gov.za
Website: www.education.gpg.gov.za

Classroom teacher leadership in top-performing secondary schools

3. Research may only be conducted after school hours so that the normal school programme is not interrupted. The Principal and/or Director must be consulted about an appropriate time when the researcher/s may carry out their research at the sites that they manage.
4. Research may only commence from the second week of February and must be concluded by the end of the THIRD quarter of the academic year. If incomplete, an amended Research Approval letter may be requested to conduct research in the following year.
5. Items 6 and 7 will not apply to any research effort being undertaken on behalf of the GDE. Such research will have been commissioned and be paid for by the Gauteng Department of Education.
6. It is the researcher's responsibility to obtain written consent from the SGB/s; principal/s, educator/s, parents and learners, as applicable, before commencing with research.
7. The researcher is responsible for supplying and utilizing his/her own research resources, such as stationery, photocopies, transport, faxes and telephones and should not depend on the goodwill of the institution/s, staff and/or the office/s visited for supplying such resources.
8. The names of the GDE officials, schools, principals, parents, teachers and learners that participate in the study may not appear in the research title, report or summary.
9. On completion of the study the researcher must supply the Director: Education Research and Knowledge Management, with electronic copies of the Research Report, Thesis, Dissertation as well as a Research Summary (on the GDE Summary template).
10. The researcher may be expected to provide short presentations on the purpose, findings and recommendations of his/her research to both GDE officials and the schools concerned;
11. Should the researcher have been involved with research at a school and/or a district/head office level, the Director/s and school/s concerned must also be supplied with a brief summary of the purpose, findings and recommendations of the research study.

The Gauteng Department of Education wishes you well in this important undertaking and looks forward to examining the findings of your research study.

Kind regards


.....

Dr David Makhado

Director: Education Research and Knowledge Management

DATE: 2015 / 11 / 13
.....

Office of the Director: Knowledge Management and Research

9th Floor, 111 Commissioner Street, Johannesburg, 2001
P.O. Box 7710, Johannesburg, 2000 Tel: (011) 355 0506
Email: David.Makhado@gauteng.gov.za
Website: www.education.gpp.gov.za

APPENDIX 4: UP RESEARCH APPROVAL LETTER



Ethics Committee
20 May 2016

Dear Mr Driescher,

REFERENCE: EM 15/10/05

Your application was considered by the Faculty of Education Ethics Committee and the final decision of the Ethics Committee is:

Your application is approved.

This letter serves as notification that you may continue with your fieldwork. Should any changes to the study occur after approval was given, it is your responsibility to notify the Ethics Committee immediately.

Please note that you have to fulfil the conditions specified in this letter from the Faculty of Education Research Ethics Committee. The conditions include;

- 1) *The ethics approval is conditional on the research being conducted as stipulated by the details of all documents submitted to the Committee. In the event that a further need arises to change who the investigators are, the methods or any other aspect, such changes must be submitted as an Amendment (Section E) for approval by the Committee.*
 - *Any amendments to this approved protocol need to be submitted to the Ethics Committee for review prior to data collection. Non-compliance implies that the Committee's approval is null and void.*
 - *Final data collection protocols and supporting evidence (e.g.: questionnaires, interview schedules, observation schedules) have to be submitted to the Ethics Committee before they are used for data collection.*
- 2) *The researcher should please note that this decision covers the entire research process, until completion of the study report, and not only the days that data will be collected.*
- 3) *Should your research be conducted in schools, please note that you have to submit proof of how you adhered to the Department of Basic Education (DBE) policy for research.*
- 4) *The Ethics Committee of the Faculty of Education does not accept any liability for research misconduct, of whatsoever nature, committed by the researcher(s) in the implementation of the approved protocol.*

Please note that this is **not a clearance certificate**.

Upon completion of your research you need to submit the following documentation to the Ethics Committee:

- **Integrated Declarations Form (Form D08),**
- **Initial Ethics Approval letter and,**
- **Approval of Title.**

*On receipt of the above-mentioned documents you will be issued a clearance certificate. Please quote the reference number: **EM 15/10/05** in any communication with the Ethics Committee.*

Best wishes,



Prof Liesel Ebersöhn
Chair: Ethics Committee
Faculty of Education

APPENDIX 5: INTERVIEW SCHEDULE



Faculty of Education

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

DATE	TIME	SCHOOL	PARTICIPANT
14 JUNE 2016	08H00 – 09H00	A	AP1 (PRINCIPAL 1)
14 JUNE 2016	09H00 – 10H00	A	ACT1 (CLASSROOM TEACHER 1)
14 JUNE 2016	10H00 – 11H00	A	ACT2 (CLASSROOM TEACHER 2)
14 JUNE 2016	11H00 – 12H00	A	ACT3 (CLASSROOM TEACHER 3)
14 JUNE 2016	12H00 – 13H00	A	ACT4 (CLASSROOM TEACHER 4)
22 JUNE 2016	11H00 – 12H00	B	BP1 (PRINCIPAL 2)
22 JUNE 2016	12H00 – 13H00	B	BCT5 (CLASSROOM TEACHER 5)
22 JUNE 2016	13H00 – 14H00	B	BCT6 (CLASSROOM TEACHER 6)
22 JUNE 2016	14H00 – 15H00	B	BCT7 (CLASSROOM TEACHER 7)
22 JUNE 2016	15H00 – 16H00	B	BCT8 (CLASSROOM TEACHER 8)

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE: PRINCIPALS:

Background

1. Short explanation of the aim, scope, purpose, possible consequences, benefits and method of data collection by the researcher to the respondent.
2. The respondent is asked to give a short history of his / her teaching career up to now.

Understanding the concepts of classroom teacher- and distributive leadership

3. Explain your understanding of the concepts:
 - (a) classroom teacher leadership and
 - (b) distributive leadership
4. Do you think it is important for a classroom teacher to assume leadership roles within your school? Explain.

Measuring classroom teacher leadership in zone one (Grant, 2006: 93)

5. Explain how you would ensure that your classroom teachers stay on top of the newest developments and teaching techniques in their subjects.
6. Discuss the structures that you have in place to ensure that newly acquired information and teaching techniques are shared between your staff.

Measuring classroom teacher leadership in zone two (Grant, 2008: 93)

7. Discuss the opportunities that classroom teachers at your school have to assume leadership roles outside of their classrooms:
 - (a) Within their subjects.
 - (b) Within their departments.
 - (c) On an extra-curricular level.

Measuring classroom teacher leadership in zone three (Grant, 2008: 93)

8. Discuss how classroom teachers are involved in the development of your school.
9. Discuss how you involve classroom teachers in the development of your school's strategic plan.
10. Discuss how you involve classroom teachers in the decision-making processes of your school.
11. Explain how you develop the leadership capacity of classroom teachers at your school.

Measuring classroom teacher leadership in zone four (Grant, 2008: 93)

12. Discuss how classroom teachers at your school assume leadership roles outside of your school for example in your community and between neighbouring schools.

Conclusion

13. Is there anything that you would like to add on any of the answers that you have given?

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE: CLASSROOM TEACHERS:

Background

1. Short explanation of the aim, scope, purpose, possible consequences, benefits and method of data collection by the researcher to the respondent.
2. The respondent is asked to give a short history of his / her teaching career up to now.

Understanding the concept of classroom teacher leadership

3. Explain your understanding of the concept of classroom teacher leadership.
4. Do you think it is important for a classroom teacher to be a leader? Explain your answer.

Measuring classroom teacher leadership in zone one (Grant, 2008: 93)

5. Discuss how you make sure that you stay on top of the newest developments and teaching techniques in your subject.

6. Give examples on how you will share newly acquired information and teaching techniques in your subject with fellow colleagues in your school.

Measuring classroom teacher leadership in zone two (Grant, 2008: 93)

7. Discuss the leadership roles that you assume within your school outside the classroom in the following areas:
 - (a) Within your subject.
 - (b) Within your department.
 - (c) On an extra-curricular level.

Measuring classroom teacher leadership in zone three (Grant, 2008: 93)

8. Discuss your role in the development of your school.
9. Discuss how you are involved in the development of your schools' strategic plan.
10. Do you feel you get enough opportunities to be involved in the decision-making processes at your school? Explain.
11. Do you feel you play an active role in the achievements of your school? Explain.
12. Given the opportunity is there anything that you would like to change in your school to improve it even more? Explain.

Measuring classroom teacher leadership in zone four (Grant, 2008: 93)

13. Explain how you assume leadership roles outside of your school for example in your community and between neighbouring schools.

Conclusion

14. Is there anything that you would like to add on any of the answers that you have given?