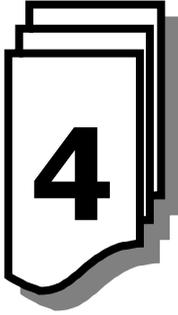


# Chapter



---

## THE CONTENT AND CONTEXT OF EMDPs IN KWAZULU-NATAL: A CONTENT ANALYSIS

### 4.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to describe and analyse the content and contexts of education management development programmes (EMDPs) that are offered in the province of KwaZulu-Natal's (KZN) three universities.

In terms of the content of the EMDPs, the sub-question that is addressed in this chapter is the following:

- a) *What is the nature of EMDPs in South Africa, particularly in the province of KwaZulu-Natal?*

And in terms of the context of EMDPs, the following sub-question is being addressed:

- b) *With what types of environments are EMDPs equipping principals to deal?*

In an attempt to address these two sub-questions regarding the content and context of EMDPs in KZN, I will focus on, *inter alia*, the way that these programmes are structured, their professed objectives/aims, and the extent to which these programmes pay attention to

some of the critical issues raised in the research literature as being critical for the successful professional development of school managers or principals.

The interviews with the providers were conducted with the respective Heads of the Departments and one university lecturing staff member teaching in the programme or who had been involved in the development of the programme<sup>31</sup>. What is of interest to note is that all the university lecturing staff participants had either studied overseas (mainly in the USA and the UK) or had close links with colleagues at overseas universities<sup>32</sup>. To a large extent, these participants' overseas training and close working relationships with overseas institutions influenced their pedagogical and epistemological orientations and these influences found expression, *inter alia*, in the design of the different education management development programmes that they developed.

In terms of document analysis, the documents that I focused on were mainly Course Outlines, Module Handbooks, Faculty Prospectuses, Faculty Guides, and Templates Guidelines for Internal Approval of Modules at the respective universities, and information available on respective departments of educational management/leadership websites. A number of policy documents and reports from both the provincial and the national Departments of Education (alluded to in Chapter Three) also served as critical sources of data, particularly in terms of providing the contextual background within which the EMDPs are offered in the province of KZN.

---

<sup>31</sup> Over and above the interview with the Head of Department of Montclair University, Prof. Qwabe, transcripts of an earlier interview (1998) dealing with similar matters as the concerns of my study, were made available by Prof. Qwabe. Therefore, I also draw on this data in this chapter.

<sup>32</sup> For example, Dr. Kutumile and Mr. Cebekhulu did their post-graduate studies in the USA; Mr. Bopape studied in the UK; Ms. Jiyane and Professors Qwabe, Battersby and Ndebele had close links with universities in the UK.

I should mention at this stage that the programmes that are reviewed in this chapter are programmes offered between the years 1996 and 2002. The significance of beginning with the year 1996 is that it could be argued that two years after the dawn of the new dispensation in South Africa, EMDPs should have been responding to the new imperatives on the ground. It is also worth mentioning that substantial attention is placed on the programme content of EMDPs based on the understanding that it is this discussion of the content of EMDPs that can then be juxtaposed with the views of school managers regarding the effectiveness of these programmes.

Chapter Four begins with an introduction to the chapter — reflecting on the statement of purpose and reiterating the research questions that the chapter attempts to address — and provides a brief discussion of the data collection strategies.

Following the introduction to the Chapter, I then attempt to respond to the questions on the extent to which needs analyses are a feature of EMDPs in KZN; what the providers put forward as the aims and objectives of their programmes (coupled with what the key role-players in the national and provincial departments would like these programmes to focus on); how the candidates are recruited and selected into the programmes; the environments for which EMDPs equip school principals; a bird's eye view of the content of the EMDPs in KZN; the extent to which these programmes have practical applicability to the environments in which principals operate, in other words, the extent of content application in organisational settings; the extent to which participants in EMDPs have opportunities for field-based learning experiences; modes of delivery of EMDPs; and a brief focus on university lecturing staff. Finally, the chapter ends with a synthesis of the revelations

emanating from the data presented in the different themes, detailing the stakeholders' understandings of EMDPs in KZN.

## **4.2 Needs assessment and analysis**

I agree with Gunraj and Rutherford (1999) (citing Ford, 1996 and Foreman, 1996) who have argued that ongoing needs assessment and analysis should be a part of any professional development programme for headteachers or school principals. I agree with the argument despite the pitfall that such analyses might contain, as clearly illustrated by Nieuwenhuis (2010a, 2010b) cited in Chapter 1 of the present study. Steyn (2005) argues that participants in professional development programmes should participate in, amongst others, setting goals, priorities and processes. Salazar (2007) cites Buckley (1985: 30) who argued a few decades ago that “[I]t is very useful to discuss with participants not only ‘what’ they wish to learn during training, but also ‘how’ they would wish to learn it.” It is therefore, for this reason that in reviewing EMDPs offered in KZN universities, I begin by focusing on the following question: To what extent are these programmes based on any form of needs assessment and analysis?

Based on the individual interviews with university lecturing staff, I got a general sense that there was very little in terms of a systematic approach geared towards thoroughly assessing and analysing the needs of principals in such a manner that the programmes that the universities offered were derived from and geared towards addressing the needs and the challenges faced by schools/school principals. In other words, there was a lack of what Huber (2004: 98) calls an “orientation towards the actual needs of the participants.” It seems that for the most part these programmes were put together on the

basis of what the university lecturers/professors saw as necessary and important. As Monks and Walsh (2001: 148) have argued, based on their evaluation of management education programmes in Ireland:

The choice of subjects taught on any management education programme is not necessarily based on any objective assessment of what managers might need to know. It is much more likely to be based on the skills and knowledge available within the business schools in which most postgraduate education takes place.

There were exceptions, though. It should be mentioned that there were indications from some of the university lecturing staff interviewed that they (lecturers/professors) were making an attempt to undertake some kind of needs assessment. Prof. Ndebele, for example, indicated that she had designed the programme at Montclair University South Campus (MUSC),

...based on our *observed needs* and based on our *interaction with principals and schools*... Based on all those factors, our observed needs and based on our interaction with schools, and of course our reading on what is useful in terms of management, leadership and administration, we then design programmes (My emphasis) (Interview with Prof. Ndebele, 20/03/2002).

I would argue that interacting with principals and schools and observing the needs cannot be said to constitute what could be considered a “proper” needs analysis; and this observation and interaction with potential programme recipients cannot be used as a basis for designing programmes aimed at addressing the perceived needs<sup>33</sup>. In fact, I would argue that what Prof. Ndebele indicated falls short of a systematic approach towards addressing an important aspect in designing leadership and management development programmes. What Prof. Ndebele indicated later on in the interview — that she had undertaken a needs

---

<sup>33</sup> Refer to the work of Nieuwenhuis (2010a, 2010b) cited in Chapter 1 of the present study, section 1.6 (Conceptual Framework).

analysis exercise in a form of surveys — would, in my mind, come closer towards a systematic approach. As she indicated:

Two years ago I started something that I thought I would do regularly, but I haven't. And that was to conduct surveys with principals bi-annually to determine their needs administratively and to get their suggestions as to the kind of programmes they would like. Then I thought we would marry our experience and observations with that up-to-date indication of perceived needs (Interview with Prof. Ndebele, 20/03/2002).

Unfortunately, according to Prof. Ndebele, she was not able to sustain this process, mainly due to “resource shortages” in the form of time, money and staff. According to her, if the resources were available,

...we would be updating programmes based on emerging needs, perhaps yearly or at least bi-annually (Interview with Prof. Ndebele, 20/03/2002).

On the other hand, Mr. Cebekhulu indicated that the education management and leadership curriculum at the University of Port Shepstone (UPS) post-1994 was informed by the identified needs of school managers, discerned from debates in the media, from the local research literature, and in discussions with departmental officials. As he put it during the interview:

When we designed the curriculum, the shift moving away from practically focusing on the needs of schools was very critical in a sense that it was divided, the curriculum development was divided into categories but the school specific leadership was actually based on a wide range of research on effective schools that had been conducted and we were building on the recommendations of—there was a study conducted by Jonathan [Jansen, one of the most prolific writers and researchers on education issues in South Africa] on effective schools and we were building on the observations and recommendations of that study to respond through curriculum to the imperatives of that time (Interview with Mr. Cebekhulu, 14/01/2003).

Mr. Cebekhulu further indicated that fifty percent of the curriculum was responding to the imperatives of the time:

So, we shaped the modules around constant imperatives of the time (Interview with Mr. Cebekhulu, 14/01/2003).

To further illustrate how the programme at the UPS responded to the imperatives of the time, Mr. Cebekhulu offered the following example:

If this year the focus is on improving on Matric [Grade 12] results by ensuring that we build mentorship programmes and academic development programmes, we would build that component and research into an existing module. So, we shape the module around constant imperatives, so the teacher who graduates or the principal who graduates with a qualification in 1998 is totally different from a principal who graduates with the same qualification from the same department at the same University in 2002 because the focus has been determined by the imperatives of the time (Interview with Mr. Cebekhulu, 14/01/2003).

What is of interest is that although fifty percent of the curriculum at the UPS was designed in response to the postulations of school effectiveness research, at no point were the needs of the principals solicited and used as the basis for the construction of the programme. Even the discussions with the departmental officials that Mr. Cebekhulu referred to were mainly informal in nature and not held with the specific aim of discerning what the needs for school managers were.

In fact, the situation at the University of Port Shepstone and Montclair University's South Campus was not dissimilar to the situation at Montclair University's North Campus (MUNC) in so far as needs assessment and analysis is concerned. Although MUNC's Prof. Qwabe acknowledged that before a programme is designed, there must be what he called a "situation analysis — what exactly do people need to learn, what are their needs" (Interview

with Prof. Qwabe, 19/03/2002), the programme offered by his Department was not based on the needs identified by school principals. As he put it,

The needs are there in a sense because, first of all, the functions of different role functionaries are known. And secondly, you have had at the national level development of certain documents which guide the process of appraisal. And the appraisal system is based on certain task areas which individuals are responsible for. And so the training has to go along those lines (Interview with Prof. Qwabe, 19/03/2002).

Prof. Qwabe further used the example of the Developmental Appraisal System<sup>34</sup> which, according to him, has set tasks that school managers have to perform and indicated that, “those set tasks will serve as a basis for training as a matter of fact” (Interview with Prof. Qwabe, 19/03/2002).

Admirable as the development of needs from the policy guidelines might be, the fact that this process is not based on the needs as identified by the participants/potential participants in the programme — the school principals — is problematic. Important as it may be to develop and design a programme from the policy imperatives, I would argue that a much better approach would be to strike a balance between policy imperatives and the needs expressed by the practitioners (school principals) on the ground.

While acknowledging the importance of needs assessment and analysis in designing education management development programmes, Prof. Battersby of UMSC made what I considered to be an intriguing comment when he indicated that:

University courses should not slavishly follow needs (Interview with Prof. Battersby, 22/03/2002).

---

<sup>34</sup> In a nutshell, the Developmental Appraisal System (DAS) is an appraisal system aimed at facilitating the “personal and professional development of educators in order to improve the quality of teaching practice and education management” (ELRC Policy Handbook for Educators, 2003: 260). DAS focuses on the following ongoing processes: reflective practice, self appraisal, peer appraisal, collaboration and interaction with panels (*Ibid.*).

In fact, earlier during the interview Prof. Battersby had clearly indicated that:

We don't do anything in terms of meeting short-term needs of principals (Interview with Prof. Battersby, 22/03/2002).

His argument was that the relevance of what they, as a Department, do is related to the needs of people — attested to by the high number of applications received each year. I would argue that some kind of needs assessment or analysis would be critically important in order to develop and design a professional development or training programme that is at least responding to what the beneficiaries regard as important. Measures undertaken in programmes such as HEADLAMP in the UK — referred to later in the last chapter of this study — provide important lessons and indications of what is possible regarding the assessment and analysis of professional development and training needs.

The lack of a systematic needs assessment and analysis is not peculiar to educational organisations — not that this should be of any comfort in education. In a study of government, private and joint venture organisations conducted in Kuwait (Abdalla and Al-Homoud, 1995), it was found that 96 percent of all these organisations had no specific practices or procedures for determining training development and educational needs of their managerial personnel.

### **4.3 Aims and objectives of EMDPs in KZN**

More than a decade ago, Murphy (1992: 84) decried the absence of a collective vision about the purposes informing training experiences for school leaders. Twelve years later, based on the international study of leadership and management development programmes in fifteen countries, Huber (2004: 98) highlighted the importance of clear and explicitly stated

definition of aims, using the core purpose of a school as a focus. This means, amongst other things, that professional development programmes should be driven by a set of assumptions or core values that underpin their contents and modes of delivery. Below I will look at what the different programmes at the different universities in KZN put forward as their major goals or objectives.

According to the Head of the Department and Masters Programme Coordinator at the University of Port Shepstone, Mr. Cebekhulu, the education management and leadership (EML) programme was driven by the question of:

...what does every manager need to know, anyway, whether you are in education or you are in any organisation running any civil organisation, or you're in the private sector (Interview with Mr. Cebekhulu, 14/01/2003).

The aim of the programme, therefore, was to provide school principals with "...the tools, expertise and competencies to be general managers anywhere" (*Ibid*). To that end, Mr. Cebekhulu indicated that the critical areas that the programme focused upon were *strategic planning, human resource management, labour relations, financial management, organisational behaviour and effective schools*. There was also a focus on *school governance*, reflecting the new era of school governing bodies in the education system. The rationale behind the latter focus (school governance) was based on the understanding that,

...if principals were well enlightened with issues of school governance as playing a critical role in governing bodies they'd be able to influence decisions and maybe also provide systemic orientations and capacity building for some of the parents who were not fortunate enough to have an understanding of management systems and governance systems, but are respected and trusted by the parent stakeholder component of a school governance to represent them (Interview with Mr. Cebekhulu, 14/01/2003).

In a nutshell, Mr. Cebekhulu summarised the objectives of the programme that his Department was providing as moving,

...from policy and then policy analysis and interpretation, and then focusing on the imperatives of management, which are very generic in nature, and then zooming into specifics concerning management of schools—managing of education at the level of schools, and then moving into self-development of school managers (Interview with Mr. Cebekhulu, 14/01/2003).

So, clearly the aims of the EML programme at the UPS were quite broad indeed, focusing on a variety of areas of concern and a number of programmatic objectives.

Prof. Ndebele of Montclair University's Department of \_\_\_\_\_, on the other hand, put forward a number of objectives that her Department's programme was designed to achieve:

...to enable participants, students, to engage with theoretical frameworks which may assist them in practice. But also which may assist them in understanding conceptualisation of various components of management. For us, one of the aims is to inform our theory; when we update our programmes, part of the input comes from the classes, from our interaction with the students. To enable them to inform their practice, two, to enable them to deepen their conceptual understanding of theory and even their expertise in theory, and three, to inform our theoretical paradigms through engaging with the practitioners, because that's what they are really, they are practitioners (Interview with Prof. Ndebele, 20/03/2002).

The intersection between theory and practice attendant in Prof Ndebele's understanding of her Department's objectives, is of interest. What can be discerned from her statement is that the Department of \_\_\_\_\_'s programme was aimed at assisting school principals to understand the theoretical aspects of leadership and management/administration in such a manner that this understanding impacts on their practice.

In the transcript of an earlier interview (Dube, 1998: 2—3), Prof. Qwabe, from the same institution (Montclair University), highlighted four broad priority areas for education management development in KZN that his Department was trying to fulfil:

- i) the need to create a participative management culture,
- ii) the need to build capacities of governance structures,
- iii) determining and clarifying roles of managers and training them for management and performance improvement, and
- iv) the need to change focus of people involved in management positions from that of stabilising agents to that of change agents.

Clearly, all of these priority areas were based on the changed conditions prevalent in the country in general, and in the education sector in particular, precipitated by the dawn of the new dispensation in 1994. The need to create a participative management culture, for example, emanates from the pre-1994 conditions that existed in most schools where this culture (participative management culture) was largely non-existent.

A similar point can be made about the principles underlying the development of leadership and management development programme at Montclair University: the principles were based on the changed conditions in the schools and in the country.

According to the transcript of the interview conducted by Dube (1998: 3—4), the three principles underlying the development of the programme at Montclair University that Prof. Qwabe outlined were that:

- i) management should be for transformation – an ideological framework that has been adopted nationally,
- ii) management development should be guided by the concept of facilitative teaching and learning – causing the core function of the education system, teaching and learning, to take place effectively,
- iii) management development should be guided by the need to enhance participation in decision making among all people involved in the education enterprise – decision making and participation are of primary importance in training for management.

In terms of principle i), Prof. Qwabe elucidated that:

...unless management [development] has something to do with transformation and changing the *gestalt* [whole shape] of our education enterprise and making it relevant to the democratic culture... then it is not going on the right track (Dube, 1998: 4).

This is an important objective, particularly given the larger transformation project that the country embarked upon following many years of colonialism and apartheid.

With regards to principle ii), Prof. Qwabe mentioned another critical element of professional development programmes, that is,

...unless management has impact on facilitating teaching and learning [in schools], it is not doing the right business (Dube, 1998: 4).

This aspect of training development programmes relates to the role of school principals as instructional leaders in order to ensure that conducive conditions exist for effective teaching and learning. As will be seen below, the Director in the DoE also alluded to the instructional leadership role, with the major difference that for him this role should not be played by the principal alone, but also by the other members of the school management team (SMT). I return to this aspect later.

Pertaining to principle iii), Prof. Qwabe posited that:

Management development is meant to enable people to acquire this understanding that directing the education processes is a corporate responsibility for all people involved, be they parents, be they learners, be they educators, be they education officers, they are all involved in their sphere of competence to cause education to take place, that is, to cause teaching and learning to take place (Dube, 1998: 4).

What Prof. Qwabe was talking about has been referred to by scholars such as Barth (1990), as the notion of “community of leaders.” What is attractive about Prof Qwabe’s postulation is that in this instance he seems to combine the idea of community of leaders — which is

closely linked to the notion of distributed leadership — with instructional leadership. This is indeed an interesting notion in terms of the kind of objectives that training development programmes ought to pursue. In fact, all this raises critical and interesting debates regarding the question of which is the best approach in the development of school principals that leads to effective schools—training them (principals) alone or together with other critical role players (SMT members and SGB members)? I return to this question in the final chapter of this study.

Finally, the Masters programme in the Department of \_\_\_\_\_  
at the University of Melmoth South Campus had the following broad aims:

- i) to enable students to study, critique, and gain insights into topical management, leadership and governance theories in education as to equip them to grow in research and practice in the field, and
  - ii) to locate education management, leadership and governance within current South African policy documents which are relevant to education.
- (Department of \_\_\_\_\_ Prospectus, 2002/2003: 6).

It is of interest to note that the University of Melmoth South Campus programme is the only programme whose objectives include a focus on “research and practice.” Although other education management development programmes reviewed in this study did include research as part of their programmes, UMSC has it as part of its objectives.

In terms of the views of the departmental stakeholders (provincial and national Departments of Education) in relation to the objectives of the leadership and management development programmes, as alluded to earlier, Mr. Bruce Shaw the Director in the national DoE was of the opinion that these programmes ought to focus on school management teams and not necessarily school principals. This is important because it implies that the national Department is moving in the direction of shared leadership or what other scholars have called “distributed leadership” (Spillane *et al.*, 2004; Harris, 2004),

as opposed to the focus on the principal as the only central figure in school leadership and management.

As Mr. Shaw put it:

The principle we are working on is that when you have an individual driving something, [when] they are away, eh, if your whole management is structured around the principal playing the only critical role in the school, the school stops functioning for two days [when the principal is away]. And that's what happens, and teachers go off because if the principal is not there, there's no reason for them to hang around. Certainly there's no reason to teach even if they hang around. So there are major management issues—one of the things is obviously trying to *spread management within the school* so that there's a group of HODs and deputy principal and principal and even the senior teachers who feel that it's their responsibility to play some sort of role in management (My emphasis) (Interview with Mr. Shaw, 8/03/2002).

Mr. Shaw's idea of having leadership and management development programmes focus on the whole school management team as opposed to solely the school principals was shared by Dr. McGregor of the provincial Department of Education (KZNDEC). Dr McGregor took the idea further when he argued that:

We need not only to empower all members of the management team [school management team – SMT], but also to empower SGBs [school governing bodies]. You cannot separate the two, governance and management.... The smooth running of the school is a combined effort (Interview with Dr. McGregor, 12/03/2002).

The general ideas expressed by departmental stakeholders, Mr. Shaw and Dr. McGregor, are supported by researchers such as Gunraj and Rutherford (1999: 144), who have argued that one of the critical factors in relation to the question of what successful headteachers or school principals do, is “the ability to work collaboratively with others to achieve... goals.”

The issue of distributed leadership again featured prominently during one of the conference presentations by a senior official of the national Department of Education who expressed the Department's vision as that of:

...programmes of training with *transformational and instructional leadership* focus for critical management levels in the system, e.g., HODs [Hheads of Departments], principals... (my emphasis) (Prew, 2004a).

Clearly, this conceptualisation of school management has major implications in terms of how leadership and management development programmes are constructed, and the kind of objectives that ought to be pursued. Interesting enough, there were some notable areas of convergence, for example, around the issue of EMDPs being designed to pursue a transformational agenda — as articulated by Prof. Qwabe and by Mr. Shaw from the national Department of Education.

Another area where, interestingly, four<sup>35</sup> of the seven providers (university lecturing staff) expressed a similar idea regarding what they saw their education management development programmes as attempting to achieve, was in terms of the need to develop school managers who are reflective practitioners. As one of the university lecturing staff members put it:

Our programme is designed in such a manner that principals are constantly required to think back to their working contexts, in other words, way to reflect critically on their work... (Interview with Mr. Bopape, 21/03/2002).

This sentiment was also echoed by Ms. Jiyane who indicated that all the tasks in their principal development programme,

...call for reflection. We want essays to be applied to practice (Interview with Ms. Jiyane, 20/03/2002).

---

<sup>35</sup> These were Mr. Cebekhulu, Prof. Qwabe, Ms. Jiyane and Mr. Bopape.

To conclude this section, although some general aims and objectives can be discerned from the postulations of the different university lecturing staff interviewed for this study, I would argue that almost all of these programmes lacked a clear set of principles which could be regarded as the main drivers for their development and execution.

What is notable is that there are some areas of convergence between what the providers (university lecturing staff) see as critical objectives of their programmes and the departmental officials' thinking (for example, the notion of community of leaders/distributed leadership; and the idea that EMDPs should pursue a transformational agenda).

There were, however, also areas where differences could be discerned, for example, with regards to developing the principal as the main actor in school improvement as opposed to the development of the different stakeholders who are important key players in effecting school development and effective school leadership and management.

#### **4.4 Recruitment and selection of candidates**

One of the critical issues identified by Murphy (1992) more than a decade ago, and recently by the Southern Regional Education Board (SREB) (2002) in their review of EMDPs in the USA, is the issue of recruitment and selection of candidates for these programmes. According to Murphy (1992), the lack of sound recruitment strategies may be one of the most serious problems in as far as EMDPs are concerned. Murphy (1992: 80) rightly argues that the reason why this is an important aspect is that “training outcomes depend [largely] on the mix of program experiences and *the quality of entering students*” (my emphasis).

Therefore a lack of rigour at entry reflects a lack of clear criteria for training or a clear vision of what candidates and graduates will look like.

As in the programmes reviewed by Murphy and the SREB in the USA, self-selection seems to be the only way of selection in the programmes in the KZN universities and in SA in general. This form of selection is even worse when no interviews are conducted and there are no explicit criteria (except perhaps for the University of Melmoth South Campus (UMSC) programme which required candidates to be practising school managers) for selection. Students are accepted not on the basis of leadership potential or being practising school leaders, but merely on the basis of their interest to register in the programme and add a degree next to their name. Although the University of Melmoth North Campus (UMNC) Masters Guidebook (2002/2003: 9) clearly stated that “[A]dmission is not automatic”, it only went as far as indicating that an acceptable record of academic and or professional work will form the basis for the selection:

Normally this means that you have a First class or good Upper second pass in your Honours level qualification.

In fact, all the programmes under review — except the Masters’ programmes at the UPS and at UMNC — seem to lack a rigorous strategy for the recruitment and selection of candidates. In other words, there is no systematic strategy to attract the most capable candidates, and, as noted earlier, this is important since the quality of the programme depends largely on the quality of the candidates and their (candidates’) level and nature of engagement during seminars.

At UMNC selection interviews were conducted to select the best candidates. Of about a hundred students who applied yearly, only fifteen were accepted. And at UPS,

according to Mr. Cebekhulu, Head of the \_\_\_\_\_ Department, selection interviews were conducted with the potential candidates on the basis of the strength of the candidates' curriculum vitae. Moreover, they were given case studies which they had to analyse and formulate their responses, in order to judge the candidates' academic readiness and analytical skills. However, even though the programme at the UPS had a selection strategy, there was no concerted strategy for the recruitment of candidates with leadership potential — perhaps due to the fact that both the BEd (Honours) and the MEd programmes in educational leadership and management had the highest number of students seeking admission to the programme.

#### **4.5 The environments for which EMDPs equips principals**

One of the questions that I asked the university lecturing staff during individual interviews was what they perceived to be the kind of challenges that principals have to contend with in schools, particularly given the changed conditions in the country. The idea behind this question was to get an indication of whether university lecturing staff who teach in and have designed EMDPs, have a sense of the kind of environments in which their clients operate. Furthermore, the question was asked with a view to ascertaining the extent to which the perceptions of university lecturing staff influenced the design/content of the EMDPs at these institutions in any way. In other words, was the design and development of EMDPs geared towards developing school managers to effectively deal with the challenging environments in which they work?

From the interview data it was clear that the university lecturing staff had a good sense of the environments in which school principals have to operate, and the kind of

challenges with which they have to grapple. This observation can be illustrated by the comments of one of the participants, Prof. Ndebele, who indicated that,

Change management is one of the huge challenges. There are all sorts of stresses as a result of change. Conflict management, and of course stability in education – and remember we’ve introduced so many pieces of legislation, and in some cases we may have gone against some functional theories of change management: we have introduced so many changes within the same time, without enough support and little resources. So, people haven’t quite internalised the changes and they are at the resistance stage and principals are affected because they work through people. (Interview with Prof. Ndebele, 20/03/2002).

Managing change and dealing with resistance to change are indeed some of the vexing challenges with which school managers found themselves having to deal, particularly given the changes brought about by the new dispensation in the country. The changes have also brought with them a certain measure of conflict; so being able to manage conflict effectively is also critical in school managers’ functioning.

On the other hand, in the transcript of an earlier interview (Dube, 1998: 12), Prof. Qwabe moved from the premise that the professional development of school principal needs

...to create that culture of acknowledgement that the new system of education presents challenges to which people have not had adequate experience or exposure.

The acknowledgement that the new conditions existing in schools have rendered many school managers inadequately prepared for the new roles that they are supposed to play is an important starting point in terms of understanding the environments in which school managers or principals have to operate.

In the same interview cited above (Dube, 1998: 2—3), Prof. Qwabe further indicated that for him,

...one of the challenges facing education managers generally is professionalising their activities and taking EMD [Education Management Development] as one of the means of professional development that we need to make a difference. And we can benefit a lot from the insights provided by EMD.... We must make a difference. We must prove that we have been worth the trouble of transformation and change of government, change of service and creation of new structures.

This implies that for Prof. Qwabe, one of the critical areas that the development of school principals needed to address was to equip them with the necessary skills to understand the professional roles that they have to play, and be able to deal with the new conditions existing in the country, brought about by the changes that had taken place post-1994.

As already indicated, according to Mr. Cebekhulu, the programmes at the University of Port Shepstone were also geared towards helping school principals deal with the whole spectra of change, and the curriculum was designed in such a way that it was “responding to the pressures school managers experienced at the time” (Interview with Mr. Cebekhulu, 14/01/2003). In other words, the programme at UPS was designed in a manner that was responding to the imperatives of the time. As will be seen later in this chapter, each group of students that registered at UPS each year was exposed to a different study focus dictated by what was topical and pertinent during that particular year.

One of the critical areas to which all the programmes reviewed in this study paid particular attention, was the development of school managers regarding school governance issues. School governing bodies (SGBs) are a post-1994 phenomenon, brought about by the need to include all the role players — particularly parents and the community — in the

decision making processes of the school (shared decision making). SGBs also came about as a way of democratising school governance and management. Therefore, it became necessary, post-1994, to include school governance aspects in the professional development of school principals. As Mr. Cebekhulu put it during the interview, the idea behind a focus on school governance was based on

...extending the whole management of schools... into stakeholder involvement in decision making. [Therefore this was based on] extending the understanding of policies, the national policies, on school governance (Interview with Mr. Cebekhulu, 14/01/2003).

#### **4.6 Content of EMDPs in KZN**

One of the observations that I made with regards to the contents of the leadership and management development programmes in KZN was that they seem to have been influenced by programmes in the UK and the USA. As indicated earlier in this chapter, all the university lecturing staff interviewed for this study had either studied at overseas institutions or had close working relationships with overseas universities. It is interesting to note, for example, that the Masters degree programme offered at the University of Melmoth, as well as the programme at Montclair University seem to have been heavily influenced by their counterparts in the UK and the USA respectively. As the Coordinator and Head of the Department at UMSC, Prof. Battersby, indicated in terms of designing the MEd programme:

In the early nineties I took stock of what we were doing and it seemed to me to be wanting in many ways.... I got in touch with the people at the Education Management Development Unit in Leicester University [UK]... I entered into an informal relationship which then became more formalized... and we worked together, they worked to help me to restructure our degree... (Interview with Prof. Battersby, 22/03/2002).

According to Prof. Battersby, the MEd programme they developed,

...addressed the main areas of educational management, but paid attention to the emerging context in South Africa as opposed to being dependent almost completely on overseas literature (Interview with Prof. Battersby, 22/03/2002).

However, as will be argued later, a critical look at the prescribed and recommended readings of these universities programmes, tells a different story.

Montclair University Head of the \_\_\_\_\_ Department, Prof. Qwabe, also indicated that in terms of designing the programme,

I actually went to the United Kingdom and studied programmes they [were] offering and came back to design our Masters programme (Interview with Prof. Qwabe, 18/03/2002).

Although Mr. Cebekhulu of the University of Port Shepstone \_\_\_\_\_ Department indicated that he was very sceptical of what he called “benchmarking from overseas”, as already mentioned in the introduction to this chapter, he had studied in the USA and the programme in whose designing he played a major role reflected this USA influence. Dr. Kutumile’s Masters in educational administration programme (University of Melmoth North Campus) is also reflective of his training in the USA.

What is worthy of note is that there are remarkable similarities between some of the modules offered at the University of Melmoth South Campus and Montclair University — perhaps owing to the fact that the curriculum designers of both universities (Professors Battersby and Qwabe) had consulted colleges in or studied programmes in the UK.

For instance, the curriculum for the module called “Leadership and Strategic Management” at both departments was identical, covering themes such as “Total Quality

Management’, ‘Development Planning’, ‘Effectiveness, Improvement and Quality’, to mention but a few. The same applies to the module called “Human Resource Management” (referred to as “The Management of Human Resources in Education” at the University of Melmoth South Campus’ Department).

In terms of the literature that is prescribed in these different programmes, most of the prescribed and recommended books and articles in modules offered at the universities in KZN programmes under review were from the USA, UK, Australia, etc., except for a limited number of South African works. For instance, a look at three of the four Masters Core Modules in Education Management offered at the UMSC, demonstrates this. Out of a total of 126 prescribed and recommended books and articles in these modules, only 25 were either written by South African (or African) authors or written from the South African context — this included materials such as educational policies authored by the national Department of Education. To further illustrate the point, in one of the modules — “Leadership and Strategic Management” — all nine readings on the theme ‘Total Quality Management in Education’, emanate from outside of South Africa and Africa, and mainly deal with situations outside SA.

This is not merely a numbers game. It is a much larger issue which has got to do with a lack of inclusion of South African (and African) perspectives in discourses about management/leadership or organisational issues. While this should be understood within a proper context of the infancy of educational management/leadership as a field of study in SA and therefore a dearth of literature written by and for the South African context, this situation sometimes leads to pedagogical approaches that are detached from the conditions

under which school managers in South Africa operate. As McLennan and Thurlow (2003: 12) have postulated,

The school management paradigm [used in SA] is directly influenced by British and American literature on school effectiveness and improving educational quality. This literature is used, with little adaptation, in South African education management courses....

One should hasten to mention, however, that although most of the literature used in these modules emanate from outside SA, it would seem that a deliberate effort is made, in some modules/courses, to contextualise the discourses to relevant South African conditions during the seminar sessions (that is, if the module descriptions are anything to go by). It is, however, not clear as to what the extent this is wide spread in the programmes for developing school managers in KZN.

Although a number of modules reviewed in these programmes covered important and relevant themes/areas/topics, there were some instances where they failed to make a direct link — if the descriptions in the course outlines/booklets are to be trusted — with current South African realities. For instance, although the University of Melmoth South Campus Masters module titled “The Management of Human Resources in Education” examined ‘Appraisal’ as one of its themes and covered a number of critical elements regarding appraisal, there was no reference made to South Africa’s own Developmental Appraisal System (DAS).

Specifically with regards to the modules offered in the EMDPs in these departments, one should indicate that a number of the modules offered were quite comprehensive and covered a wide spectrum of themes that are critical to the understanding of leadership and management issues. For instance, to return to the “Leadership and Strategic Management”

module at the University of Melmoth North Campus, this module covers the following themes:

- ❖ Management in Educational Organizations
- ❖ Theory and Practice in Educational Management
- ❖ Effectiveness, Improvement and Quality
- ❖ Total Quality Management (TQM)
- ❖ Leadership in Educational Management
- ❖ Culture, Structure and Roles
- ❖ Strategic Management
- ❖ Development Planning.

The description of what is covered in each theme is quite comprehensive, giving one an indication that not only has such a course been well researched, but its design and content have also been well thought out.

Another example is the module on the “Discourses in Educational Management and Leadership” at the University of Port Shepstone. This module is also not just well described — including the methodology thereof, namely, the use of case studies — but it also illustrates the wide ranging nature of topics and issues covered in these modules. The following themes are explored in this module:

- ❖ Managing Education in a Social Transition: The Politics of Bureaucracy
- ❖ Dealing with Diversity in the Shadow of Apartheid
- ❖ Explaining the Absence of a Culture of Teaching and Learning: New Approaches
- ❖ Making Teachers Invisible: Class Size and Teacher Rationalisation
- ❖ Implementing Curriculum: Policy and Management Perspectives on C2005 [Curriculum 2005<sup>36</sup>]
- ❖ Appraising Teachers: Dilemmas and Opportunities
- ❖ Financing Education: How the Budget is Determined, and with what Consequences
- ❖ Governing Schools: Research on School Governing Bodies
- ❖ Changing Schools: Innovations in the Field of Practice
- ❖ Assessing Students: The Matriculation Debate.

---

<sup>36</sup> Introduced into the South African education system in 1997, Curriculum 2005 was a national curriculum policy which advocated an Outcomes Based Education (OBE) approach to teaching and learning in South African schools. Outcomes in this case refer to “the contextually demonstrated end products of the learning process” (ELRC Handbook for Educators, 2003: 49). In 2002, Curriculum 2005 was replaced by a revised National Curriculum Statement, with the aim of streamlining and strengthening Curriculum 2005, while affirming the commitment to OBE.

What is clearly evident about this (and other) module(s) reviewed in this study, is that it deals directly with the issues that are not only pertinent to the post-apartheid conditions in schools with which educators, including school managers, have to contend, but it is also relevant and topical issues. For instance, concerns regarding Curriculum 2005 and teacher rationalisation and redeployment — to mention just but two examples — are issues which were at the heart of educational discourse between 1998 and 2002.

To a large extent, the module can be said to reflect an attempt to align the curriculum to the perceived needs of principals as they deal with the post-apartheid conditions in their schools. This gives credence to Mr. Cebekhulu's arguments that the curriculum at the University of Port Shepstone's \_\_\_\_\_ Department was responsive to the imperatives of the time.

One of the modules that was offered in all three universities, albeit in different variations, is the module on “Human Resource Management (HRM)” or “Human Resource Management in Education.<sup>37</sup>” It should be noted that pre-1994 EMDPs at these universities did not offer this module in their programmes. This was an area that was not considered critical for educators or school managers. Among other things, the importance of HRM in education is underscored by the fact that it is critical to pay attention to the ‘human side’ of organisational management in order to ensure the effective management of organisations such as schools. As the University of Port Shepstone's \_\_\_\_\_

Department Course Description posits:

Problems besieging and threatening organisations today do not emanate from the world of things, but from the world of humans

---

<sup>37</sup> At the University of Melmoth North Campus, HRM is offered as a topic in one of the broad modules in the Masters programme, called “Fundamentals of Educational Administration.”

(Human Resource Management in Education Course Description, UPS  
Department, undated).

---

Furthermore, HRM in education, particularly in the context of KZN, is made even more crucial by the problems related to staff selection and filling of posts — problems which have led to major disputes concerning a number of promotion posts. This is also related to the constant refrain regarding the lack of training and the necessary knowledge, skills and expertise on the part of those who conduct interviews for staff selection, particularly at the school level.

Another module of critical importance that was offered in all three universities in KZN is a module on curriculum/pedagogical matters. According to Christopher Mazzeo (cited in the Southern Regional Education Board [SREB], 2002), the job of today's principal is simple to describe. It is to drive the instructional improvement agenda within a school. Mazzeo goes further to mention that “the problem is that many educational leadership programmes around the country [i.e., in the USA] don't prepare school leaders for this specific task — and don't know how to prepare them” (SREB, 2002: 1). Although the extent of the success in the professional development of school managers for their roles as curriculum/instructional leaders is not clear, it is encouraging to note that almost all of the programmes in the KZN universities have included this important aspect in their professional development programmes for school managers.<sup>38</sup> A closer look at these modules indicates that — except for the module offered at Montclair University called “Managing Curriculum” — they have made an attempt to deal with current areas of

---

<sup>38</sup> University of Melmoth North Campus Masters programme—which it should be mentioned had a strong research focus—did not have a curriculum/pedagogical focus. There is, however, an MEd that is offered with a specialization in Curriculum Studies and a general BEd (Honours) that offers a module on Curriculum Studies.

concern, particularly in the form of Curriculum 2005, an Outcomes Based Education (OBE) approach introduced by the national Department of Education in 1997.

Of the programmes reviewed in this study, only two offered modules in “Education and Law” — in the University of Port Shepstone Masters programme and in the University of Melmoth North Campus BEd (Honours) programme, a programme not necessarily designed for school managers, but for practising teachers as part of their career development. At Montclair University the module was offered as part of a certificate programme — Educational Leadership Certificate. It is worth noting that although a module called “Education and the Law” was part of the EML programme, it was only offered twice (co-facilitated with an Advocate of the High Court) during the period under review.

It can be argued that Education and Law is quite a critical area, particularly given the legal context under which South African schools have to operate. This legal environment is brought about by the new policies and legislation aimed at correcting the injustices of the past. Most of this legislation, for example, the South African Schools Act (Act 84 of 1996), has, among other things, moved schools closer to being self-managing organisations. Therefore, a lack of critical focus on issues of education and law could be viewed as a serious deficiency.

Another area where these programmes were found wanting — particularly by the school principals during the interviews — was a lack of focus on “School Finance” or “Financial Management.” Of the programmes reviewed, the University of Melmoth South Campus was the only university that had a focus on financial management issues, with a

stand-alone, operational Masters level module called “Management of Finance and External Relations.” At the North Campus of University of Melmoth “Financial Resource Management” was offered as part of one of the themes in a broad Masters programme module called “Fundamentals of Educational Administration.” At Montclair University, “Financial Resource Management was offered as part of a module in the Masters programme called “School Governance and Management.” Although the University of Port Shepstone had a BEd (Honours) module called “School Finance”, this module, according to Mr. Cebekhulu the Head of the Department, was never offered at all because no student registered for it. As he put it, “They shied away from it” (Interview with Mr. Cebekhulu, 14/01/2003).

Again, the importance of such a focus on financial management is underscored by the fact that more and more schools in South Africa are called upon to deal with and manage finances efficiently, given the fact that they have been endowed with powers to raise funds through school fees and other means such as fund-raising activities. Moreover, there seem to be a move towards having schools become self-managing, through the adoption of Section 21 status<sup>39</sup> — a theme covered by the “Management of Finance and External Relations” module at the University of Melmoth South Campus.

It is worth mentioning that the issue of self-managing schools is one that the Director at the national Department of Education, Mr. Shaw, was quite passionate about. As he put it,

Something I’m very dedicated to because I wanna see it working, and it is—I find the whole idea of self-managing schools fascinating ... I’m

---

<sup>39</sup> Section 21 schools are, according to the South African Schools Act (Act 84 of 1996), schools that have been granted full powers and authority to control their finances in areas such as the purchase of textbooks, educational materials or equipment for the school, maintenance and improvement of school property, buildings and grounds, payment for services to the school, etc.

pushing in a number of provinces for the schools to start demanding Section 21 [status] (Interview with Mr. Shaw, 8/03/2002).

Relating self-managing schools to the issue of the development of school managers, Mr. Shaw posited that,

...what we are saying then is that the training of principals [should be] predicated by the need to get principals ready for running their own schools as semi-businesses, if you like, but certainly in a way that they are managing a budget of a quarter of a million Rands [R25 000.00] or more (Interview with Mr. Shaw, 8/03/2002).

Although the programmes reviewed in this study dealt with issues regarding the management of change — one of the critical areas in the post-1994 context — one can argue that given the transformation within the education system, conflict would most probably manifest itself in the day-to-day operations of organisations such as schools; and therefore being armed with the necessary tools of managing conflict is not only important but also critical for ensuring the effective running of schools. Furthermore, as will be seen in the next chapter, the fact that a substantial number (58%) of school principals who participated in this study cited conflict management as one of the skills in which they required professional development bears testimony to the critical importance of this area of study.

#### **4.7 Content application in organisational settings**

During the course of its work, the Task Team on Education Management Development (TTEMD) conducted an Audit of Needs and Resources of the provincial education departments. According to the report of the TTEMD, “the Audit showed that many managers feel that numerous programmes currently offered are too academic and not sufficiently practical for their needs” (Department of Education, 1996: 24). During

interviews, this notion was echoed by the Director in the provincial Department of Education, Dr. McGregor, who indicated that,

BEd and MEd [qualifications] should be linked with their [principals'] practice – they should not be something devoid from what is happening in schools (Interview with Dr. McGregor, 12/03/2002).

The Director in the national Department of Education, on the other hand, put it much stronger when he argued that,

We need to force Schools [of Education] to build in a practical component into their courses. Then we can have an impact on principals' practices (Interview with Mr. Shaw, 8/03/2002).

It is important to note that some of the university departments had recently begun responding to these concerns in the design and delivery of their programmes. With regard to the programmes reviewed for this study, some programmes such as the Masters programme at the University of Port Shepstone, seem to have made attempts to strike a balance between academic rigours and addressing the practicalities on the ground. For instance, in one of the modules offered in the Masters programme, “Effective Schools: Theory, Research and Practice”, students were not only equipped to engage critically with the theories of school organisation and effectiveness, and with the literature and debates around the politics of the school effectiveness movement, but they were also required to practically engage with the subject through the application of the theoretical knowledge in the study of selected schools. In other words, they were also required to spend some time in these schools studying and problematising those aspects of effectiveness identified in the literature and found in these selected schools. I would argue that this is not only an innovative way of bridging the theory — practice gap, but it is also a way of arming students with the necessary research and analytical skills.

Prof. Ndebele of Montclair University, North Campus (MUNC) indicated that in their professional development of school principals they make every effort to:

...contextualise every module within the policies and the legislation in the country (Interview with Prof. Ndebele, 20/03/2002).

To illustrate the point, she used the following example:

We take for instance issues such as, just to give an example, an issue like human resource development in management. The nature of the course offering in the country would be significantly different from the way they would offer it in another country because we look at policies that have an impact within the South African context. We use not only theory in offering the programme, [but] we bring the experiences of students to start with, which are localized. But also, the various pieces of legislation which relate to human resource development and management within the country, are a part of our literature (Interview with Prof. Ndebele, 20/03/2002).

A good example of the application of knowledge to the practical conditions existing in schools was provided by Mr. Cebekhulu:

...one module was actually Human Resources Management in Education with fifty percent of it, after dealing with the generic principles of human resources management, looking at the process of rationalisation [and redeployment of educators], which was an analysis of all policy documents that have ever come from the [national] Department [of Education] and taking case studies of schools that have been negatively affected by the rationalisation [and redeployment] process and assisting school managers [to] interpret these policies and analyze the case studies and see which were the best alternatives which should have been observed (Interview with Mr. Cebekhulu, 14/01/2003).

The rationalisation and redeployment of educators policy (1995) was one of the most controversial and highly contested policies of the DoE. Focusing on this policy, particularly during the period when schools were grappling with its implementation, constitutes, in my opinion, the best way of applying theoretical content to organisational settings.

The MEd programme at the University of Melmoth North Campus also had an emphasis on the ‘practicality of knowledge.’ For instance, in its ‘Statement of exit level outcomes that students should be able to demonstrate on completion of the programme’, one of the outcomes is to,

...demonstrate an *ability to apply knowledge* and understanding of management/leadership concepts and approaches in *practical situations* (My emphasis) (Template for Internal Approval of Programmes at the University of \_\_\_\_\_, 2003: 2).

This focus is also expressed in the ‘Statement of assessment criteria’:

Students will be assessed on their knowledge and understanding of key concepts in educational management, their *ability to apply* their *knowledge* and understanding in *practical contexts*. They will also be expected to demonstrate a familiarity with major sources within the literature and be able to *apply* this by engaging critically with key issues in management policy and practice, with particular reference to the South African context (My emphasis) (University of \_\_\_\_\_ MEd Course Outline, 2003: 4).

According to Prof. Qwabe of Montclair University South Campus, the nature of their programmes was such that they were able to combine academic development with professional relevance. As he put it,

...we touch on things [school managers] have to learn and things they see and what they experience on a daily basis (Interview with Prof. Qwabe, 18/03/2002).

Later during the interview Prof. Qwabe also referred to the use of case studies as an illustration of the practical application of knowledge:

We actually do a lot of case studies.... Even in the way we ask questions, at times we want the individual to reflect on his or her situation and describe them in relation to what he or she has learnt, drawing illustrations from previous experience. In that way we want to strengthen that relationship between the world of learning and the world of work. We believe very much in the theory of practice and practice theory being based on experience that an individual brings in,

and theory of practice being based on content that an individual is exposed to, in learning. So we emphasize the importance of relating the experiences that an individual has out there and the learning that the individual acquires (Interview with Prof. Qwabe, 18/03/2002).

Still on the subject of the use of case studies, Ms. Jiyane from the UMSC, indicated that,

[in our programmes] there's a lot of case study work which is involved... we want people to see that what we teach is related to what they do. They might say, 'Ah, that's exactly what we are experiencing' and that kind of reinforcement highlights the need for relevance of what a person learns (Interview with Ms. Jiyane, 20/03/2002).

Mr. Cebekhulu of the University of Port Shepstone also made reference to the use of case studies in their programmes, indicating that:

...what we did we were, actually with the case studies, looking at the cases that exist, we were using the press very much, we were looking at controversial cases which we thought would provoke critical think, um, if managers were to be very objective. And then we would make arrangements with those schools, if it was a school, or send a group of students as researchers in that area, make arrangement, and actually make them conduct the analysis inside the school getting perspectives of everybody and they write a report and collect all the materials and they come and present the report in class... (Interview with Mr. Cebekhulu, 14/01/2003).

Most of the modules offered in KZN universities profess a focus not only on practical application of knowledge, but also in relation to the school managers' working context. For example, the University of Melmoth South Campus "Management of Human Resources in Education" module aims to

...enable students to link theory and practice of human resource management to the context of their *own schools/place of work* (My emphasis) (Management of Human Resources in Education Module Study Guide, n.d: 4).

While at the same University's North Campus, the "Managing Educational Change" module has as one of its purposes to:

...examine the nature of educational change and contribution of research and theory ... particularly at the *local level*... (My emphasis) (Template for the Internal Approval of Modules at the University of \_\_\_\_\_, undated, p.1).

And in terms of learning outcomes, students are supposed to:

...apply theoretical perspectives and insights from research to *own contexts*... (My emphasis) (Template for the Internal Approval of Modules at the University of \_\_\_\_\_, undated, p.1).

On the other hand, the module offered at BEd Honours level at Montclair University South Campus, "Educational Management", aims, *inter alia*,

...to enable the students to *apply* this understanding [of the roles, responsibilities and duties of educational managers/leaders] in the practice of managing educational organisations... [and] to stimulate debate and critical analysis on the theories and practice of educational management and leadership, especially in the *context of the South African education system* (My emphasis) (University of \_\_\_\_\_ BEd (Honours) Programme Prospectus, n.d.: 2).

There were, however, cases where the practical application of knowledge was not the central concern. For example, regarding the Masters programme at the University of Melmoth North Campus, Prof. Battersby indicated that:

None of the modules is hands-on, especially for principals, they are academically grounded modules <sup>40</sup> (Interview with Prof. Battersby, 22/03/2002).

However, Prof. Battersby indicated that in writing their dissertations students are required to focus on studies which relate theory to practice, preferably in their organisations.

---

<sup>40</sup> It should be noted that Prof. Battersby had earlier in the interview indicated that his Department does offer a hands-on, practical course for school managers in the form of the Further Diploma in Education (FDE), which was later converted into an Advanced Certificate in Education (ACE: Education Management).

#### 4.8 Field-based learning experiences

One of the major criticisms that have been levelled against EMDPs relates to their weaknesses with regard to clinical experiences or field-based learning experiences provided to aspiring and practising school managers. This is despite observations by scholars (Griffiths, 1999; McKerrow, 1998; Murphy, 1992) that field-based learning experiences could be the most critical part of leadership development. Furthermore, these learning experiences may serve as introductions to the real world of the principal, and may allow the student to translate theory into practice and to learn by doing (McKerrow, 1998). Clearly, therefore, any professional development programme for school managers that is found lacking in this respect can be said to have serious deficiencies and limitations.

Unfortunately, of all the programmes reviewed in the province of KZN, only one had a field-based learning experience in the form of an internship component — and that was the University of Port Shepstone Masters in Educational Management and Leadership programme.<sup>41</sup> The internship programme seems to have been well thought out and well enunciated on paper, with clear timelines, a contract that the organisation and the student had to enter into, and different reports and an assignment that the student had to present. One can argue that its conceptualisation seems to have responded to some of the criticism of clinical or field-based learning experiences discussed in the literature on leadership and management development programmes.

However, although this internship looked impressive on paper, it would seem that it was not as successful with regard to its effective operationalisation — particularly if one

---

<sup>41</sup> Interesting enough, Montclair University did have an internship programme for their Masters in Educational Psychology, but none for Educational Management. This internship programme in MED (Psychology) had the minimum requirements of forty hours per week for twelve months.

considers the number of students who undertook the internship programme (three during the tenure of Mr. Cebekhulu — 1997 to 2000 — which is the only time that it was put into practice). This was mainly due to its voluntary nature, and therefore principals who had graduated from the University of Port Shepstone indicated that they had not benefited from such field-based experiences. I return to the discussion of the field-based learning experiences in the EMDPs in KZN universities, in the theoretical synthesis chapter (Chapter 6).

Needless to say, the fact that only one university programme — and even that was not as successful in its implementation — had a field-based learning experience points to one of the major deficiencies of EMDPs in KZN universities reviewed in this study. This may shed light in terms of other problems and deficiencies discernible in these programmes and which are discussed further in the theoretical synthesis chapter.

#### **4.9 Modes of delivery of EMDPs**

One of the major criticisms of leadership and management development programmes relates to their delivery modes. Writing more than a decade ago, Murphy (1992), pointed to the fundamental problem of part-time study, which he argued, characterises most leadership and management development programmes. Murphy (1992) posited that the delivery system most commonly employed — part time study in the evenings or on weekends — results in students who come to their studies “worn-out, distracted, and harried” (Mann, 1975: 143, cited by Murphy, 1992).

In all the programmes reviewed in this study, classes were conducted mostly in the evenings and on weekends. Moreover, students undertook their studies on a part-time

basis. It should, however, be mentioned that at University of Melmoth students are advised that they will be expected to make arrangements to take leave from their workplace, if necessary. Furthermore, it is interesting to note that in the programme description provided in the University's web pages advice is given that,

While students may register on either a full-time or part-time basis, the intensive nature of the research means that full-time study is advisable. (Available at: <http://www.edu.ac.za/setd/masterof.htm> Accessed on 22 February 2003)

In as much as the reasons behind evening and weekend study are understandable given the fact that most students who have undertaken these programmes are full-time educators who cannot afford to study full-time, it does not gainsay from the problems associated with this kind of study, alluded to by Murphy (1992) more than a decade ago.

One of the positive aspects of EMDPs in KZN is the fact that in all the programmes reviewed for this study, the imparting of knowledge was mainly done through seminar-based sessions. In all the universities whose programmes I reviewed heavy emphasis was placed on the use of case studies as teaching and learning tools.

## **4.10 Emerging themes**

### **4.10.1 A brief focus on university lecturing staff**

Although the issue of university lecturing staff who provide principal development was not one of the issues that I set out to investigate in this study, it became one of the most important aspects regarding the context of EMDPs during interviews with EMDP providers. In this section I would like to focus on two critical issues, namely, human

resources or staffing issues and on the importance of school management experience on the part of those who provide leadership and management development for school principals.

In an international study of training and development programmes in fifteen countries, Huber (2004: 98) highlights the importance of “suitable recruitment of teams of highly qualified trainers with appropriate backgrounds.” Teitel (2006: 503) also emphasises the importance of selecting, training and employing “a diverse set of talented and experienced faculty members and mentors.”

In the case of KwaZulu-Natal university departments of educational management/leadership, human resource or staffing issues seem to be one of the major problems. For example, despite the University of Port Shepstone educational management and leadership programme being one of the heavily subscribed programmes in the Faculty of Education in terms of student enrolments, it only had two full-time university lecturing staff whose specialisation was in this field of leadership and management. The situation at the University of Melmoth South Campus was not dissimilar to the University of Port Shepstone situation — there were also only two full-time university lecturing staff<sup>42</sup>, while the Melmoth University North Campus had only one full-time university lecturing staff whose temporal departure (on a two years’ leave) from the Department resulted in the programme being put on hold and his students being transferred to staff in the South Campus. Montclair University’s \_\_\_\_\_ Department was also not absolved from this problem. As the Head of Department on its South Campus indicated,

...we are limited with respect to staffing. We need experienced people to offer EMD [Education Management Development] ... [and] many of our staff members still have Honours degrees or BEd degrees. They

---

<sup>42</sup> One of these individuals, Prof. Battersby, was responsible for teaching all of the core modules for the MED programme – with some assistance by two colleagues in two of these modules.

are not able to offer courses beyond the level of first degree (Interview with Prof. Qwabe, 18/03/2002).

Clearly in such circumstances the development of support strategies in adventures such as team teaching, become almost impossible. All these factors discussed above illustrate the extent to which there seem to be a lack of prioritisation of staffing issues despite high demands in these programmes. It also points to the general shortage of individuals specialised in education leadership and management in the country.

One of the frequently expressed criticisms of the university culture is that university lecturers who teach in programmes for the development of principals do not have (adequate) experience in the management of school. According to Sarason (1996: 141):

...unless a principal has had long experience in teaching and managing children in a classroom, he or she cannot appreciate or understand the goals and problems of a teacher and, therefore, cannot be of much help; in fact, he or she would create more problems than solve.

I would argue that if this holds true for school principals, then the same argument can be advanced with regard to those who provide principal development programmes. That is, that in order for university lecturers to provide the kind of education management development programmes that are suited to the needs of school principals and schools in general, they must have a thorough understanding — by virtue of having spent time managing schools — of the conditions and the complex dynamics under which school principals operate.

Most (but not all) university lecturing staff who provide principal development programmes not only in KZN but in other provinces as well, have *not* benefited from any experience whereby they themselves have managed schools as principals. Granted, they may have the necessary knowledge gleaned from years of conducting research and studying

school systems and (supposedly) the understanding of, for example, what effective schools look like and how schools should be managed effectively and efficiently, but they do not possess the “lived experiences” of what it means to manage a school—let alone what this means under the challenging conditions that presently exist in South Africa. Although all my interviewees had worked in schools in one capacity or another (as teachers/heads of departments/deputy principals), of the seven university lecturing staff participants in this study, only one had been a school principal.

As indicated above, this situation of a lack of management experience is not prevalent only in KZN universities. For instance, at one of the universities where I have worked as a lecturer in one of the largest departments that offered professional development programmes to school principals and other SMT members, out of a staff complement of thirteen full-time members, only two had been school principals; of the two staff members who had been school principals, only one of them had been a principal in the not so distant past. This example, which I would argue is reflective of the situation in a number of Education Management/Leadership Departments in the country, illustrates just how serious the situation is and begins to offer some explanations regarding problems with EMDPs generally in SA.

#### **4.11 Summary of the key findings**

In this section of this Chapter I provide a summary of the key findings pertaining to the content and context of EMDPs in KwaZulu-Natal. The theoretical significance of these findings is provided in the final Chapter of the thesis.

With regards to the *needs assessment and analysis*, there seem to be little that is done in EMDPs in terms of a systematic approach geared towards thoroughly assessing and analyzing the needs of principals in such a manner that the programmes that the universities offer are derived from and geared towards addressing the needs and the challenges faced by schools/school principals. Although some form of needs assessment and analysis — mostly indirect in nature — could be discerned from the different programmes, for the most part, there was a lack of systematic and deliberate strategies for assessing the needs of school principals.

Pertaining to the *aims and objectives of EMDPs* in KZN, although some guiding principles can be inferred from the departmental documents and the assertions of the university lecturing staff, the programmes reviewed in this study did not seem to have clearly enunciated set of principles/assumptions/core values from which they were driven.

In relation to *recruitment and selection of candidates*, all the programmes reviewed in this study — except for the Masters programme at two institutions — seem to lack a rigorous strategy for the recruitment and selection of candidates; self-selection seems to be the only selection ‘method.’ Students are accepted into the programmes not on the basis of leadership potential or because they are practising school managers, but merely on the basis of availability and interest.

From the data emanating from university lecturing staff interviews, it would seem that university lecturing staff at the different institutions in KZN had a good sense of the *environments for which school principals* needed to be *developed to deal with* and the kind of challenges that they (school principals) were grappling with.

In relation to the *content of EMDPs*, these programmes seem to have a large USA/UK influence due mainly to the close working relationships with and the post-graduate training of the designers of the programmes. There was a dearth of South African literature in all the principal development programmes offered in KZN. However, based on the Module or Course Descriptions, it would seem that a deliberate effort is made in some modules to contextualise the discussions around South African concerns.

Regarding *content application in organisational settings*, the data seem to point to the fact that the programmes reviewed in this study placed a critical focus on the practical application of knowledge. This practical application of knowledge found expression in the form of the interrogation of current policies in relation to organisational (school) practice.

Pertaining to *field-based learning experiences*, EMDPs in KZN were found to be weak. Only one programme provided field-based learning experiences for its participants in the form of an internship programme. However, this internship programme was not successful in terms of its operationalisation.

Concerning the *modes of delivery*, similar to their counterparts elsewhere, in all the programmes reviewed in KZN, classes were conducted mostly in the evenings and on weekends. However, one of the positive aspects of EMDPs in KZN with regards to the modes of delivery is the use of seminar-based approaches and the wide use of case studies in the development of school leaders.

*Staffing issues* seem to be one of the major problems in all the programmes in KZN. There were major staff shortages in all the programmes reviewed for this study. Staff shortages seem to point to a general shortage of individuals who are specialised in the field

of education leadership and management/administration generally in KZN. Perhaps the most critical finding with regards to university lecturing staff who provide education management development programmes, is the fact that a majority of them have not benefited from any school management and leadership experience. Although all had worked in schools in one capacity or another, of the seven university lecturing staff participants in this study, only one had been a school principal.

Finally, despite all the criticisms levelled against the EMDPs in KZN universities, it should be mentioned that as a collective, these programmes have made great efforts to improve more especially their contents and align them with the perceived needs on the ground. Generally speaking, one can argue that these programmes seem to have responded to the challenges presented by post-apartheid conditions under which school principals in SA operate. However, as to whether the recipients of these programmes — school principals — share that view, will be explored in the next chapter. In other words, the extent to which school principals feel that these programmes have been successful to adequately respond to schools' and school principals' needs, will be the subject of the next Chapter.