Chapter

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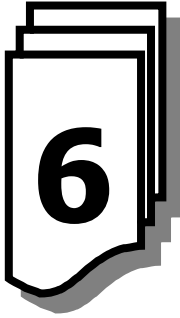
BETWEEN THEORY AND RESEARCH: SYNTHESIS, SIGNIFICANCE AND IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

6.1 Introduction

In Chapters Four and Five the findings pertaining to the content and the context of education management development programmes (EMDPs) and the school principals' perceptions of the practical relevance of these programmes, were presented. In this Chapter I focus on the theoretical significance of the findings in these chapters. Using an interpretative narrative, I critically analyse the key findings against theoretical postulations outlined in the research literature with a view to offering possible explanations for the perceptions of EMDP providers and those of school principals *vis-à-vis* EMDPs in KwaZulu-Natal.

Emanating from the data in this study, I also present five key principles about educational change and education management development programmes, which I believe provide important insights about the conditions under which change is possible for these programmes to be effective. The second part of the chapter entails a discussion of the

implications of the findings for the future design of professional development programmes for school leaders, and for policy and practice regarding the national strategies of the Department of Education. The chapter concludes with a presentation of the recommendations for future research.

6.2 Revisiting Chapter Four: The theoretical significance of the findings

One of the critical findings of this study is that EMDPs in KZN are, for the most part, not based on systematic *needs assessment and analysis* processes. Those providers who claimed to engage in some needs assessment and analysis in designing their programmes, were in fact only indirectly doing so — and not in any systematic and concerted manner. The significance of this finding relates to Fullan (1991:144)'s argument that,

> An understanding of what reality is *from the point of view of people* within the role is an essential starting point for constructing a practical theory of the meaning and results of change attempts (Emphasis in the original).

Notwithstanding Nieuwenhuis' (2010a, 2010b) valid and compelling arguments (presented in Chapter, section 1.6 of this study) problematising training needs assessment, assessing needs is a critical element of professional development programmes such as EMDPs. The problem of a lack of needs assessment and analysis is that EMDP providers are likely to provide school principals with knowledge and understanding as defined by the providers (academics) as opposed to providing the school leaders and managers with skills necessary to solve organisational problems as defined by these school leaders and managers (Monks and Walsh, 2001).

Using the change framework presented in Chapter 1 of this study, I would argue that the problem of a lack of involvement of school principals in the assessment of their needs is that:

> The extent to which proposals for change are defined according to only one person's or one group's [e.g., EMDP providers'] reality is the extent to which they will encounter problems in implementation (Fullan, 1999: 36).

Buckner (1997) has rightly argued that no development effort in the provision of systematic on-going professional development for school administrators (school managers) will be successful unless it is part of an overall plan for long-term growth that begins with a needs assessment. However, one cannot be naïve about needs assessment and analysis and neglect the fact that school principals needs are constantly changing as they have to respond to new challenges within their schools (Gunraj and Rutherford, 1999). This is more the case in changing contexts such as the one in which South African school principals presently work. It is therefore critical that ongoing needs assessment and analysis processes are a central part of any professional development programme for school principals (*Ibid.*).

The business literature is rich in research studies that have asserted the importance of focusing on an analysis of the needs of the beneficiaries of professional development programmes (Saffel, 1980; Tagliaferri, 1990; Tustin, 2001; Gupta, 2007 – to name but a few). The field of education is not without instructive lessons. Caldwell *et al.* (2003) report on the different stages in England's National Professional Qualification for Headteachers (NPQH), one of which entails candidates attending an assessment centre where they undergo needs assessment and have to produce an action plan for their professional development. An action plan resulting from such a process would, I would argue, achieve a

number of things including acting as a critical tool for continuous professional development in the long term.

Again, if one looks at national initiatives such as the Headteachers' Leadership and Management Programme (HEADLAMP) in the United Kingdom, clearly there are lessons that could be learnt in the development of a national programme for school principals in South Africa, while paying critical attention to contextual factors. One of the interesting aspects of the HEADLAMP scheme is that headteachers or school principals are offered a grant from which 20 percent can be used on the assessment of professional development needs, and the subsequent training programme has to address those needs (Gunraj and Rutherford, 1999).

In the HEADLAMP programme, the training programme has to focus on the needs that have been identified by the school principal "that fall within a range of leadership and management tasks and abilities, set within the broader context of leadership, that is clearly specified by the TTA [Teacher Training Agency]" (Gunraj and Rutherford, 1999: 145). What this implies is that while school principals are given an opportunity to be actively involved in the process of identifying their needs, the training programme is designed in such a manner that it caters for the fulfilment of these needs within the broad set guidelines. In this way, a healthy balance is struck between the needs of school principals and the programmatic (HEADLAMP) objectives.

The problem of a lack of systematic needs assessment and analysis strategy ties with the problem of a lack of policy framework from which EMDPs in KZN (or in the country in general) are operating. At one level, these programmes are not based on any systematic needs assessment and analysis processes; and on the other level, they are not operating

within any national policy framework[49]. This twin problem results in a situation where providers can provide professional development programmes based on what they see as important, without much in the form of a national guiding framework. In the end, some EMDP providers have programmes that are of sub-standard quality.

Notwithstanding the fact that some of the providers in the present study indicated that they were guided by the policy imperatives of the time, this situation (lack of a guiding policy framework) is indeed problematic. One can take comfort, though, from the fact that plans are presently underway and at an advanced stage for the introduction of a national programme (ACE: School Leadership). This programme will eventually be the main prerequisite for any individual planning to be a school principal in South Africa. The pilot study for the implementation of the programme began in 2007, while it was envisaged that the actual programme will be implemented in all provinces in the year 2009.

The ACE: School Leadership programme is seen as part of the development of the South African National Qualification for Principals (SANQP). According to Kunene and Prew (2005), this qualification will be aimed at serving principals, newly appointed principals and future aspirant principals (such as deputy principals and heads of departments). Three of the most inventive aspects of this proposed qualification are worth mentioning:

- The assessment which will be largely through site-based assessment, aimed at testing the candidate's ability to transfer what has been learned into practical action in the school.
- The use of universities in partnership with the NGOs — or employing retired or serving principals as assessors — as primary service delivery agents. This will bring in a strong mentoring aspect.

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[49] Although there have been a number of initiatives emanating from the national Education Ministry – from the Task Team on Education Management Development (1996), the Draft Policy Framework on EMD in 2000 (Department of Education, 2000a) to the South African National Qualification for Principals (2005) – no concrete policy framework has emanated from these initiatives in SA.

- Linking the achievement of a qualification with a proven practical competence.
(Adapted from Kunene and Prew, 2005: 2).

Needless to say, the implementation of the SANQP will radically change the nature and practice of EMD in South Africa.

The key finding with regards to the *aims and objectives of EMDPs in KZN* is that 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 a clearly enunciated set of principles/assumptions/core values from which they were driven.

More than twenty years ago in a review of in-service education programmes, Fullan indicated that there was a "profound lack of any conceptual basis in the planning and implementing of in-service programs that would ensure their effectiveness" (Fullan, 1979: 3, cited in Fullan, 1991: 316). A few years ago, Huber (2004: 98) highlighted the importance of clear and explicitly stated definition of aims, using the core purpose of 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. According to Huber (2004), explicitly stating the programmatic aims that school leaders must achieve is critical in the process of developing these leaders. He argues that until recently, programmes were not necessarily developed with explicit goals or objectives—something that EMDPs in KZN seem to be still suffering from.

Other scholars have also emphasized the need for EMDPs to have a clear vision that drives programmatic decisions and provides school leaders with opportunities to link the knowledge base with field-based experiences (Jackson and Kelley, 2002).

The key finding regarding the *recruitment and selection of candidates* is that, except for Masters' programmes at two universities, all programmes reviewed in this study seem to lack a rigorous strategy for the recruitment and selection of candidates; moreover, self-selection seems to be the only selection 'method.' The problem with this kind of selection, as highlighted by Murphy (1992: 80) is that, "training outcomes depend [largely] on the mix of program experiences and *the quality of entering students*" (my emphasis). Furthermore, according to Murphy (1992), 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.

The emergence of alternative preparation programmes, particularly in the United States of America, has seen a great emphasis being placed on rigorous screening methods in the recruitment of prospective candidates. According to Teitel (2006), screening systems in these programmes are normally based on nominations (as opposed to self selection that characterises traditional training programmes), paper screening, telephonic interviews, role plays and formal presentations, amongst others. Furthermore, these alternative programmes tend to have a vision of the kind of candidate that they would like to have – for instance, according to Teitel (2006), many alternative programmes see their mission as recruiting and developing change agents. In other words, the faculty members see themselves as "working on school reform and social justice agendas through leadership training" (Teitel, 2006: 501).

The key finding with regards to the *environments for which EMDPs equip school principals to deal with*, is that it would seem that, to a large extent, the leadership and management programmes in KZN were geared towards responding to the imperatives of the time (for example, a focus on change management, conflict management, school

governance, and so on). However, data emanating from interviews with school principals reveal a number of major gaps that the school principals perceive EMDPs to have failed to address. I would argue that this could be a problem of a lack of systematic needs assessment and analysis, as already alluded to.

Regarding *the contents of EMDPs in KZN* universities, although the modules offered were comprehensive and covered a wide spectrum of themes that are critical for the understanding of leadership, management and governance issues in education, these programmes were found wanting with regards to certain critical aspects of managing schools in SA — such as education law, financial management, moral and ethical leadership, and so on.

Also, although the programmes made a deliberate effort to focus on post-apartheid conditions with which teachers and school managers have to deal, for the most part they seem to be heavily influenced by USA/UK literature. As argued in Chapter Four, the dearth of South African and African literature in the EMD programmes offered in KZN invariably leads to an absence of South African and African perspectives in leadership and management discourses in these programmes. Although some efforts are made to contextualise the overseas literature, the lack of South African and African viewpoints presents a distorted view of what it means to lead and manage schools effectively. In her inaugural lecture presented a few years ago, Nkomo (2006) also decries what she calls the invisibility of Africa in texts and materials that are used for modules dealing with leadership and management in South Africa.

For me, the fact that in our focus on leadership perspectives from abroad we hardly engage with perspectives from the Asian, East European, South American and African

countries, limits our knowledge and understanding of leadership. As Southworth (2004) has correctly argued, leadership ought to be seen as pluralistic, with a need to fine tune it to the circumstances in which leaders operate.

The importance of context in the field of educational leadership and management has been highlighted by numerous scholars. Recently, Wong (2006); Ribbins and Zhang (2006), presented case studies of China to illustrate the importance contextual influences on educational leadership and management in China. Other scholars have argued that "the school leader's role has to be seen in relationship to the broad cultural and educational contexts in which the school is operating" (Huber, 2004: xvii). While scholars such as Bryant (2003) have eloquently shown, in the case of Native American communities, how many assumptions of most Western leadership thinking can be called into question within the Native American context.

The key finding in relation to *content application in organisational settings* is that it would seem that all the programmes reviewed in this study placed a critical emphasis on the applicability of knowledge in practical contexts. This practical application of knowledge found expression in the form of the interrogation of current policies in relation to organisational (school) practice. In the international study of practices of school leadership development in fifteen countries, Huber (2004: 90) pointed to the fact that in the programmes that were studied, there was a "shift away from purely practice-driven or from purely theory-driven learning towards practice-with-reflection-oriented learning." It would seem that providers in KwaZulu-Natal have responded positively to the need for experience-oriented and application-oriented learning in the design and delivery of their programmes. The fact that all the programmes in the present study place a premium on the

use of case studies, for example, points to a positive development indeed in so far as EMDPs are concerned in KZN.

Regarding *field-based learning experiences*, the key finding in this study is that EMDPs in KZN were found wanting due to the fact that — except for only one programme — they did not offer field-based learning experiences for the participants in the form of internship programmes. Even in the case of the exceptional programme, the field-based learning experiences were limited in terms of application due to their optional nature.

Field-based learning experiences are, according to a number of scholars, a critical component in the professional development of school leaders. Jackson and Kelley (2002) have argued that field-based experiences provide core learning experiences in professional development programmes to enable future leaders to observe, participate in and dissect important cognitive processes associated with addressing problems in the leadership and management of schools. Williams *et al.* (2004) contend that educational leadership students need to spend significant time in authentic school contexts working alongside mentor principals in order to be adequately equipped for complex leadership roles. These authors argue that school leadership internships with a strong mentoring component can help to bridge the gap between leadership theory that is presented in academic coursework and practice as it occurs in the field.

Daresh and Barnett (1993) have also emphasised the importance of leadership and management programmes to include more opportunities for clinical approaches to learning as part of the normal ongoing activities of professional development. This, according to these authors, is based on the assumption that a period of 'learning by doing' before a person moves into a professional role for the first time, is still a valid one. According to

McKerrow (1998), practical experiences such as internship programmes serve as introductions to the real world of the principalship. She posits that they allow the student to translate theory into practice and to learn by doing.

Leithwood and Steinbach (1995) echo McKerrow's sentiments in suggesting that effective leadership and management development programmes are programmes which provide authentic experiences and foster real-life problem-solving skills in practical settings. According to Teitel (2006), it is important to ensure that principal interns do not just shadow a principal but have real leadership responsibilities for authentic work. Gray (2001) also indicates that interns should not just turn into an extra pair of hands, but should be given opportunities to acquire new knowledge and skills. She suggests that the school principal together with the intern (and I would add the University supervisor) should agree on the skills and knowledge that the intern should possess once the internship is completed.

Teitel (2006) further cites an example of an internship programme where interns conclude the programme by sharing their completed school design plans with the communities where they are based, with a view to implementing these plans as part of school or district improvement. Without a doubt, EMDPs in South Africa can derive critical lessons from such programmes.

The key finding concerning the *modes of delivery of EMDPs in KZN* is that similar to their counterparts elsewhere, in all the programmes reviewed in this study, classes were conducted mostly in the evenings and on weekends. This, according to Murphy (1992: 143), results in students who come to their studies "worn-out, distracted, and harried." Furthermore, these students complete their professional development programmes without ever forming a professional relationship with a lecturer/professor or student colleague. I

would argue that the relationship between the students undertaking leadership and management development and lecturers/professors who teach in these programmes need to be one of lecturers/professors as mentors — "…mentors [who] provide [students] with the kind of ongoing support and advice which characterized the traditional apprenticeship in which an individual who aspired to become a professional worked under a qualified practitioner…" (Nicholson, 2003: 11). A close working relationship with student colleagues on the other hand — particularly within a cohort structure — may enhance camaraderie and shared learning, and provide a more collegial and supportive, less fragmented learning experience (Hart and Pounder, 1999).

Another key finding regarding the modes of delivery of EMDPs in KZN is that one of the most positive aspects of EMDPs in KZN is the use of seminar-based approaches and the wide use of case studies in the professional development of school managers. Admirable as these teaching strategies are, I would recommend that other innovative teaching and learning methods that ought to be utilised in the professional development of school leaders and managers should include some of the strategies and methods that were identified by Huber (2004: xiii) and his colleagues in their recent study of fifteen countries, namely:

- ❖ Lectures and plenary sessions,
- ❖ Reflective writing,
- ❖ Group work,
- ❖ Role playing, and
- ❖ Simulation exercises.

New ways of learning include such strategies as:

- ❖ Collegial learning,
- ❖ Learning communities,
- ❖ Problem-based learning, and
- ❖ Internship as well as mentoring (exemplifying learning in the workplace).

Nicholson (2003) has argued that there is a need in leadership and management development programmes for a transition from incremental programmes, wherein students move in a linear fashion through a prescribed sequence of courses, an internship and a final examination, to programmes which are more holistic in nature, combining coursework with field-based experiences and relying on self-assessment.

With regards to *university lecturing staff* issues, beyond the finding relating to staff shortages, one of the most critical findings in the present study was that the large majority of university lecturing staff who provide leadership and management development programmes in KZN have not benefited from management experiences in the capacity of a school principal. This results in a situation where we have individuals offering leadership and management development who have no practical experience of what it means to be a principal – let alone what it means to be a principal under the current challenging contexts in South African schools.

Sarason (1996) has written about the problem of having most of the people engaged in efforts aimed at changing and improving schools who are not indigenous to the schools, but from the university. According to Sarason (1996: 3), many of the acknowledged leaders of change efforts "seemed massively insensitive to the culture of schools."

> Their efforts resulted largely in failure and that was in part due, and sometimes it was totally due, to ignorance about the distinctive, tradition-based axioms, values, and outlook of school personnel (Sarason, 1996: 3).

Could this argument by Sarason provide some insights about the problem of university lecturing staff who provide leadership and management development programmes without having benefited from experiences of being a school principal?

Monks and Walsh (2001), writing about Ireland's postgraduate programmes in business education, have argued that business schools generally comprise of career academics whose major focus is research, mainly for the purposes of attaining promotion through academic journal publications. According to these authors,

> Such academics may never have set foot into the world of business and may show very little interest in its activities… their primary allegiance is to their academic discipline (Monks and Walsh, 2001: 149).

The world of education leadership and management development is no different. Teitel (2006) cites statistics which indicate that in the university leadership development programmes reviewed by researchers in the USA, only 2% of faculty members had served as superintendents and 6% had served as principals. The findings of the present study also corroborates the above mentioned statistics — out of the seven university lecturing staff interviewed from the three universities in KZN, only one had previously been a school principal.

The issue is not merely the fact that the vast majority of those who provide education leadership and management development have not set foot in the world of the principalship, it is also about the assertions of EMDP critics who have argued along the lines that, "[T]he typical course of study for the principalship has little to do with the job of being a principal" (Levine, 2005: 38).

I would argue that this lack of school management experience on the part of university lecturing staff who offer EMDPs provides part of the explanation regarding the constant complaints by school principals who have undertaken professional development programmes that these programmes are devoid from the realities that they (school

principals) confront on a daily basis. Monks and Walsh (2001: 150) make a similar statement when they argue that career academics:

> …organise curricular around research-based knowledge rather than practitioner-based categories and techniques so that the classification of problems and phenomena becomes distant from that current in daily practice.

Indeed, one of the most common refrains from graduates of education management development programmes is the preponderance of theory to the detriment of practical knowledge. In the current study some school principals also complained about the fact that the programmes they had undergone were "too theoretical." These findings correspond with the results of previous studies conducted by various researchers, recent amongst which are studies by Nicholson (2002), Huber and West (2002), and West *et al.* (2000). In Nicholson's study (2002: 8), school principals expressed discontent with curricula which they considered "more theoretical than practical." Huber and West (2002) on the other hand have argued that school leaders seem to have a strong preference for what they describe as 'practical training' and that theory is not always valued by practitioners. Based on their research, West *et al.*, (2000) posit that school leaders find it much easier to generalise from their experience and repeat effective behaviours when they have a conceptual framework underpinning the decisions that they are making. According to these scholars, theory and practice need one another and need to be developed in tandem. This view is supported by Bush and Glover (2005: 237) who have further argued that, "A judicious blend of theory, research and participants' experience… provides the best prospect of successful leadership development in education."

6.3 Revisiting Chapter Five: The theoretical significance of the findings

In Chapter Five of this study the focus was on the degree to which school principals perceive the education management development programmes (EMDPs) that they have undertaken to be effective or not, together with the reasons behind their perceptions.

The key findings in relation to the *changes in the leadership and management of schools pre- and post-1994* are that whereas there has always been general knowledge that major changes have taken place in education, there has been very little empirical evidence detailing how those affected by these changes — particularly from the management and leadership point of view — have conceptualised and dealt with these changes.

The recognition of the various aspects related to the change in the manner that post-1994 South African schools ought to be led and managed is very significant in various ways. Judging by the views of and the examples given by the participants in the study, it seems that a majority of the school principals who have undergone education management development programmes have been able to attain at least more than one of the dimensions that are critical in the implementation of a new programme or policy, as highlighted by Fullan (1991). These dimensions are i) the use of new materials or technology (in the case of school principals this could refer to innovative ideas for change emanating from professional development courses), ii) new approaches (e.g., shared or democratic leadership and governance), and iii) alteration of beliefs (e.g., a paradigm shift which sees parents and the broader community as an intricate part of the school).

However, despite the existence of these principals who have been able to attain some of these dimensions — principals that I referred to as "progressive and transformative" principals, there were also school principals who, despite their exposure to EMDPs, seem to

be unable (and perhaps unwilling) to incorporate into their practices, the changes brought about by the new education dispensation. At times the views of these principals alluded to a sense of nostalgia with the past where the past provided principals with power and authority that they were able to exercise without much questioning or opposition. At other times, these principals' views seemed to point to a general problem of a sense of loss of power and the difficulties of engaging in shared leadership and shared decision making.

The seeming resistance to change should not come as a surprise when one considers Fullan (1991: 38)'s argument that "real change involves changes in conception and role behaviour, which is why it is so difficult to achieve." Other possible explanations about the difficulties on the part of the afore-mentioned school principals to change could also be found in Fullan (1991: xiv)'s postulation that, "It isn't that people resist change as much as they don't know how to cope with it." The need to resist change is compounded by the fact that the professional development that is provided hardly prepares individuals who have to implement change, for the complexities of educational change. As Fullan (1998: 218) later argued, in the training of teachers and principals "…virtually no time, resources, and other supports are built into learning of new roles… *once the change has been initiated*" (emphasis in the original).

Continuous professional development support is one area that is conspicuous by its absence in the development of school principals in South Africa. The training workshops that are provided by the PDE, as has been indicated, are fraught with numerous problems which seem to make them an ineffective tool for continuous professional development of school principals.

According to Fullan (1991), many principals are diffident about their change leadership roles because they do not feel prepared or clear about how to carry it out. The development of understandings of the complexity of change can help principals, for example, to come to terms with the feelings of anxiety that they are likely to experience in having to share power with other stakeholders. They can be assisted to understand that "…all real change involves loss, anxiety, and struggle" (Fullan, 1991: 31) and that failure to recognize this phenomenon as natural and inevitable can mean that important aspects of change are either ignored or totally misinterpreted.

Research on teachers' classroom practices has indicated that when faced with challenging curriculum or pedagogical reforms that they have to implement, teachers normally resort to the traditional practices—the known and familiar ways of doing things (Stoffels, 2004). With regards to school principals, in their research of school leaders' practices, Bolman and Deal (1991) found that school principals usually pursued the familiar course even when they were faced with abundant indications that change was required.

Regarding the *vexing challenges with which school principals have to contend*, basically four major challenges were highlighted by the participants in this study, namely the challenges of managing in a context of limited resources, the challenges of dealing with SGBs, the challenges of policy implementation and policy overload, and the challenges encountered by female principals. There were, however, exceptions — in other words, instances where some principals did not experience, for example, SGBs as a challenge, but rather had good working relationships with their SGBs.

Notwithstanding the exceptions, I would argue that when viewed collectively, the above-mentioned challenges had to do with the broad challenge of dealing with change and the changed circumstances that school principals had to operate in, in the new dispensation

in South Africa. To a large extent, the challenges were a manifestation of the dynamics of change.

In his discussions of leadership for change, Fullan (1997) has argued that school principals who are immersed in leadership for change would approach the challenges of change differently. He provides an example of School Councils (equivalent approximately to SGBs) and posits that a leader for change,

> …would recognize the emergence of School Councils as part of a systemic shift in the relationship between the communities and schools that is both inevitable and that contains the seeds of a necessary realignment with the family and other social agencies (Fullan, 1997: 130-131).

Armed with this perspective on change, the school principals would be likely to deal with the challenges in more positive and creative ways rather than see them as major stumbling blocks.

At another level, the findings in this study reveal that school principals have encountered major challenges regarding working with SGBs. The lack of skills, resultant from the lack of training of school governors, seems to be the common outcry in all the arguments raised by school principals regarding the challenges of working with SGBs. Previous studies by various scholars and organisations (Bush *et al.*, 2004; Centre for Education Policy Development, 2003; Department of Education Ministerial Review Committee, 2004) have also pointed to the problem of a lack of training or inadequate training in instances where training is provided. What these studies have not adequately addressed though, is the type of training that ought to be provided not only for the SGBs, but particularly for the SGB chairpersons.

If one goes by the views of the school principals in this study, the quality of the leadership of the SGB chairperson goes a long way towards ensuring a smooth relationship

between the school principal and the SGB — which consequently contributes to a smooth running school. It would therefore seem logical that, given the critical leadership role ascribed to the SGB chairperson, a specialised kind of training should be provided to the chairperson of the SGB.

Notwithstanding the findings of previous studies regarding a lack of skills/training of school governors, caution should be exercised in providing this argument as the major explanation for the problems that school principals have expressed regarding their workings with parents in the school governing bodies. Prew (2004b), presents a different and an interesting perspective on the whole issue of a lack of skills on the part of SGBs. He argues that it is easy to say the SGBs lack skills, but could we be defining those skills within a narrow Western perspective? To further reinforce his argument, he uses the following example:

> If I run a Spaza shop do I not have financial skills? If I manage my family on less than R1000 a month, surely I have well-honed financial skills, which are very appropriate to the particular needs of our under-resourced schools? (Prew, 2004b: 7).

We should also take note of what scholars such as Michelle Fine (1993) and Seymour Sarason (1995) have posited in their respective works. Writing about her work on parental involvement, Fine (*Ibid.*) has described principals as unwilling to share power with parents, while Sarason (1995) has argued that principals tend to ignore or minimise parental input. It is therefore important not to consider arguments advanced by school principals about the lack of skills on the part of the parents on the SGB, uncritically. It is also important to ensure that these arguments are not used as a pretext for the exclusion of the parental component of the SGBs in school governance matters.

What seems to be the most overarching theme in interviews with school principals in this study regarding SGBs is that the development and sustainability of good working relationships between the principal and the SGB (particularly the parent component of the SGB) is a critical element for effective school management and governance — as Fullan (2001b) has argued, the key to successful change is the improvement in relationships between and amongst all stakeholders. In her study of leading change in schools in difficult circumstances, Harris (2006: 17) came to the conclusion that one of the critical messages about leading change in schools in difficulty was that, "By *investing in the quality of relationships* within the school… all of the principals generated high levels of commitment, energy and effort from those within and outside the school" (my emphasis). This perspective (importance of relationships) also confirms conclusions reached by previous studies focused on SGBs (Heystek, 2006; Masango, 2002; Poo, 2005).

The development of good working relationships with SGBs has an added advantage of galvanising the parents of the learners to support and work closely with the school in which their children are enrolled, for the benefit of both the school and the learners. There is evidence that the involvement of parents in the activities of the school does enhance school success. In their study, Young *et al.* (1999) present various research results which have provided empirical evidence documenting the benefits of parental involvement in relation to increased student achievement, motivation as well as a decrease in drop-out rates. According to these scholars, the school principal plays a critical role in developing and sustaining parent and community involvement in the school, and therefore there is a need to properly equip the principals with the skills and knowledge necessary for the fulfilment of this role, particularly given the fact that there are many different models of parental involvement.

Regarding the question of the *relevance of EMDPs in relation to principalship roles*, one of the critical aspects that was highlighted by school principals was the fact that the EMDPs had provided them with opportunities to share and learn from diverse experiences of other principals. Furthermore, sharing and learning from other's experiences culminated in the development of critical networks that were sustained beyond lecture/seminar rooms.

This finding is significant because, as Fullan (1991) has argued, most professional development programmes which may contain valuable ideas do not provide opportunities or support structures for the implementation of these ideas. As he put it,

> If the individual attempts to put the ideas into practice, there is no convenient source of help or sharing when problems are encountered (Fullan, 1991: 316).

Authors writing about professional development models have emphasised the importance of professional development avenues to provide school principals with opportunities to share information among a network of peers (Matsui, 1999) to also provide collegial opportunities to learn which are linked directly to solving authentic problems (Mann, n.d.). In the case of the EMDPs discussed in the current study, school principals utilised the networks they had developed in lectures as support structures for the challenges in their practices. Barnett and Mueller (1989) report on the findings of their study where principals reported both short- and long-term effects of a programme (Peer-Assisted Leadership Programme) whereby principals continued to meet in problem-solving groups beyond the programme. Also, in a study conducted by Garvin (1995), principals reported that they found the experience of being in contact with other colleagues as part of a collaborative learning and problem solving processes, quite valuable.

It does seem, therefore, that one of the benefits that school leaders derive from attending leadership and management development programmes, is the opportunity to share with and learn from the experiences of others — as also highlighted by school principals in the present study. Previous studies (Kagey and Martin, 1982, for example) have also highlighted the fact that school principals tended to underestimate the extent to which professional development programmes they attended helped to provide them with a opportunities for processing ideas and actions, and for sharing and learning from the experiences of others. The implications for EMDPs are immense, one of which is that there is a need to design programmes that provide adequate opportunities for collegial and collaborative learning. This means creating learning experiences that promote and support critical engagement among programme participants (school principals) in the form of presentations, discussions and debates, and the use of small group learning methods such as project teams and peer exchanges.

Even the assessment strategies would require a fundamental change. At one level, it means developing curricular which are aligned with the practical and authentic challenges that are found in schools; at another level it implies assigning programme participants assessment tasks aimed at providing possible solutions to those challenges. Unfortunately, most leadership and management development programmes usually prescribe assignments which are devoid from the practical realities found in schools and, according to Monks and Walsh (2001), expect the participants to complete examinations. These authors argue that what is required is a reflexive approach to assessment which demands value judgement and wisdom — and, I would add, the applicability of the knowledge learned. In fact, I would take these authors' idea further and suggest that the space needs to be created for these value judgements and wisdom to be shared with other principals — say, in a form of

seminar presentations where ideas are interrogated by all school principals and critically evaluated for their intellectual currency and practicability.

It would seem that the use of the cohort programmes in which students go through the programme with the same group of peers, can provide a meaningful laboratory for developing collaborative skills (Lashway, 2002) and assist school principals to share with and learn from the experiences of others. Amongst a variety of the benefits of cohorts that have been highlighted by the research literature, is the development of professional networks (Murphy, 1993; Hill, 1995; Leithwood *et al.*, 1995). I would argue that these professional networks would, amongst other things, go a long way towards dealing with the problem of professional isolation that school principals are said to 'suffer' from. Barnett *et al.* (2000) cite numerous studies which count isolation reduction and the development of a sense of belonging and social bonding, as being some of the factors from the cohort structure which have a positive effect on EMDP participants.

One of the interesting issues that was raised by school principals during interviews was the fact that EMDPs had provided them with opportunities to socialise with other school principals, and therefore break the cycle of professional isolation alluded to above. As with the issue of sharing with and learning from the experiences of others, it would seem to me that one of the implications for leadership and management development programmes is that these programmes have to make a conscious effort to help principals to form critical networks that would go beyond meeting in class or seminar rooms. Instructive lessons can be learnt from programmes such as the Leadership Initiative for Tomorrow's Schools (LIFTS) programme at the State University of New York at Buffalo, which also uses a cohort system in its training of school leaders (Jacobson, 1998; Jacobson *et al.*, 1998).

In relation to the question of whether *school principals feel adequately equipped to deal with the post-1994 conditions and whether they feel adequately equipped to manage change in their schools*, some principals indicated that they felt that they were adequately prepared by EMDP but, a majority of principals felt that they were <u>not</u> adequately prepared. The major areas that were cited by these principals related to the problem of outdated learning materials, the lack of training on legal matters and on financial management, and a difficulty of dealing with multicultural contexts—particularly for the former "Indian" schools.

The possible reason why principals felt that the learning materials were outdated was because they had been through the programme at the University of Port Shepstone prior to its restructuring to accommodate current topics and latest learning materials. I would argue that the possible reason why principals cited legal and financial management training as areas where they felt inadequately prepared could be linked to the general changes in the country post-1994. Scholars such as Jansen (2001b) have argued that the post apartheid state in SA has produced "a flurry" of education policies since the demise of the apartheid system. These policies contain legal requirements that educators, particularly school leaders, have to interpret effectively and implement. Therefore an understanding of this legal environment is not only critical but also necessary for school leaders to function effectively.

Regarding financial management training, the shift towards self-managing schools — particularly the push for schools to attain Section 21 status alluded to in Chapter Four of this study — also necessitates a thorough understanding of how to manage finances effectively and efficiently. It could be argued that it is from this basis (the shift towards self-managing schools) that school principals may have felt that they were inadequately equipped in so far as financial management skills are concerned.

Pertaining to difficulties of working in multicultural contexts — particularly for "Indian" principals, as indicated in Chapter Four — although in almost all of the programmes reviewed in this study there was a tacit acknowledgement of the need for the development of school principals for post-apartheid contexts, there was no clear and deliberate focus on multicultural education. Therefore mainly "Indian" principals indicated that they felt inadequately equipped to function in post-1994 multicultural environments that they found themselves in. This finding confirms the findings of a recent study by Gardiner and Enomoto (2006) which indicated, amongst other things, that multicultural preparation was lacking for the principals who formed the sample of their study.

Beyond the basic concerns raised by mainly "Indian" school principals about understanding children from diverse background (cultural awareness), there is a need to raise critical questions about what multiculturalism means and how it manifest itself in fundamental aspects of teaching and learning in schools. In their recent book, Connerley and Pedersen (2005) interrogate the implications of leading in culturally diverse environments and present the reader with knowledge and skills necessary for effective leadership in such environments. One of the strengths of their book is that it transcends cultural awareness commonly found in discourses about multiculturalism, and provides training on the knowledge and skills for leaders leading in culturally diverse environments.

However, we have to be mindful of the numerous critiques of multicultural education that have been presented by various scholars over the years. Critical theorists such as Nieto (2003: 1) have, for instance, cautioned against the use of multiculturalism "…in simplistic ways that fail to address the tremendous inequities that exist in our schools."

Nieto (2003: 1) convincingly argues that,

> …to adopt a multicultural basal reader is far easier than to guarantee that all children will learn to read; to plan an assembly program of ethnic music is easier than to provide music instruction for all students; and to train teachers in a few behaviors in cultural awareness or curriculum inclusion is easier than to address widespread student disengagement in learning.

According to Nieto (*Ibid.*), although these activities may be valuable in terms of creating cultural awareness, they fail to confront the deep-seated inequalities that exist in schools. What Nieto (2003) alludes to is a need to ensure that multicultural education that is infused into the leadership and management development programmes addresses the fundamental and critical issues pertaining to diversity in schools[50]. For me, what seems to be pertinent in recent discussions of leading in multicultural settings is the connection between affirming diversity and student achievement. Bennett (2001) refers to this type of multicultural leadership as that which enables principals to address diversity within a school setting through affirming cultural pluralism and educational equity.

In connection with whether school principals felt adequately equipped to manage change in their schools, about fifty six percent of the principals in this study expressed the view that EMDPs had indeed assisted them to manage change in their schools effectively. Notwithstanding the problem associated with self-reporting — in other words, the lack of independent confirmation by those who work with the principals, such as teachers, as a way of triangulation — this is a significant finding. I would venture to argue that there is a great possibility that these principals who reported that the EMDPs had assisted them to manage change effectively are likely to be the principals that I refer to in this study as the

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[50] In an earlier compelling critique of multicultural education, Nieto (1995) concludes by arguing, *inter alia*, that educators must be involved in their own re-education and transformation, including challenging their attitudes, knowledge and practices.

"progressive and transformative principals." And therefore it would come as no surprise that they would express such positive feelings.

The findings regarding *EMDPs and the practical experiences or field-based learning opportunities* have already been extensively dealt with in revisiting the findings of Chapter Four and will therefore not be dealt with in this section.

With regards to *school principals' greatest professional needs*, principals' needs ranged from financial management and multicultural training (both of which have already been discussed) to information communication technology/computer literacy and school development planning. The fact that there were principals who had been through EMDPs but still indicated that they were computer illiterate, is a serious indictment on the EMDPs in KZN. However, one can take comfort from the fact that the new Advanced Certificate in Education (ACE: School Leadership) — which is currently in the pilot phase, with plans for its institutionalisation in 2009 — has a special focus on computer skills with a practical module called "Basic Computer Literacy for School Management" which includes the development of information communication technology skills.

One of the greatest areas of need that school principals expressed was also the need for curriculum management development. Tied to this need is the need for "instructional leadership" that principals also expressed. Several recent studies have been conducted within the South African context with an emphasis on the importance of the instructional leadership role of the school principal (Kwinda, 2002; Mamabolo, 2002; Mbatha, 2004; Mthombeni, 2004; Paine, 2002). What is common amongst these studies apart from the fact that they were all conducted as part of higher education qualifications, is the fact that all

placed an emphasis on the instructional role of the principal and its effects on the student academic achievement.

Based on the research that he and his colleagues have conducted, Hopkins (undated) has argued that instructional leadership ought to be focused on two skill clusters, namely, strategies for effective teaching and learning and the conditions that support implementation, in particular staff development and planning. He concludes by positing that if we are serious about raising the levels of student achievement and learning in our schools, then we need leadership styles that promote, celebrate and enhance the importance of teaching and learning and staff development — in other words, we need instructional leadership.

Moving from the basic promise that the purpose of leadership is to improve teaching and learning, Lashway (2002) suggests that EMDPs can develop instructional leaders through case studies and problem-based learning which offer life-like simulations that can hone principals' thinking about complex instructional matters. He goes further to suggest that extended field-based experiences in the form of internships can provide principals with critical experiences in making changes in field settings.

The notion of instructional leadership is not without problems, though, particularly in the context of current thinking about leadership which recognises the importance of teacher leadership (Grant, 2006; Muijs and Harris, 2007) and distributed leadership (Harris *et al.* 2007; Spillane and Sherer, 2004; Spillane *et al.*, 2004) in present-day schools. MacNeill *et al.* (2003) have argued that the effectiveness of schools in educating students is not only dependent on the leadership of the principal but on a multi-level leadership. Citing various authors, MacNeill *et al.* (2003) observe that a more realistic model of instructional

leadership needs to acknowledge that within schools there are multiple layers of instructional leadership, not just that ascribed to principals. Stewart (2006) concurs with this view when he argues that one of the problems with instructional leadership is that in many schools the principal may in fact not be the educational expert, but rather other teachers may possess expertise in critical pedagogical matters.

MacNeill *et al.* (2003), therefore, propose pedagogic leadership as an alternative to instructional leadership. Their argument is that pedagogy concerns enabling the learning and intellectual growth of students in contrast to instruction that treats students as the object of curriculum implementation. According to these authors, among other things, pedagogy recognises the cultural and societal aspects of what is learned and why it is learned — which, for me is quite a powerful conceptual lens through which one can look at schools as critical socialising entities. Without a doubt, this conception of leadership (pedagogic leadership) has major implications about how we ought to develop school leaders for their roles in school.

Pertaining to *the role of training workshops*, the findings related mainly to the criticism that school principals levelled against training workshops and the potential that they saw these training workshops having for the development of principals. Amongst the major concerns expressed by school principals were aspects related to a lack of a systematic approach, a lack of coordination and the brevity of the training period.

The views of school principals regarding problems with training workshops confirm the findings of Fullan's review of in-service education programmes conducted thirty years ago. Citing his 1979 review, Fullan (1991) mentions, amongst others, the reasons for failure which include the fact that training topics are frequently selected by people other than

those for whom the in-service is intended. Related to than is mention that in-service programmes rarely address the individual needs and concerns of the participants. Interesting enough, both reasons expressed by Fullan (1991) also pertain to some of the problems of EMDPs in KZN discussed in the present study.

According to Huber and West (2002), in the development of professional development programmes for school principals internationally, there is a general movement away from unconnected 'single shot' training events, towards more carefully planned and altogether more coherent programmes offered over a sustained period of time. These authors argue that the development of school leaders requires deliberately planned and systematically implemented programmes.

The final part of the findings in Chapter Five relates to *the role of experiences beyond EMDPs in the effectiveness of school principals.* From the interviews with school principals, it would seem that the experiences beyond EMDPs are regarded as critical by school principals, in the effective leadership and management of school, given the fact that a number of school principals made several references to these experiences.

Generally in education, there have been many studies which have explored factors that affect student achievement ranging from home and family background, community involvement, to school climate, the teacher and various teaching strategies (Hattie, 2003). These studies have alerted us to the fact that student achievement is not merely determined by the teaching and learning that takes place in the school, but by factors outside the school as well. With regards to organisations and how they are managed and led, according to Levin and Riffel (2000: 179), how people act in organisations is affected by a "multitude of factors both inside and outside the organization, including individual dispositions, training,

roles…" and so on. This means that the extent to which school principals are effective in their management and leadership of schools may be determined by a myriad of factors including but not limited to professional development.

In relation to leadership and management development, one can argue that the relationship between principal development and principal practices is not "clear cut and simple" (Gunraj and Rutherford (1999). It is not always easy to determine which factors have contributed to a principal's behaviour changes in so far as professional development and factors outside professional development are concerned. As Gunraj and Rutherford (1999: 150) have argued, "All the processes of change involved in becoming a more successful school [principal] are dynamic and take place over a period of time." Reiterating the arguments of scholars such as Fullan (1999) and Jansen (2001a), Gunraj and Rutherford (1999) further argue that the processes of change involved in becoming a successful school principal are not linear, but rather iterative or repetitious.

There have been several studies which have explored the influences of factors other than the leadership and management development programmes for school principals in so far as their (principals') effectiveness is concerned (Pashiardis and Ribbins, 2003; Wong and Ng, 2003; Chew *et al.*, 2003). Pashiardis and Ribbins' study (2003), for instance, looked into the influences of parents, other family members, peer groups, local community and spouses in the 'making' of secondary school principals in Cyprus. Coincidentally, school principals in the present study also made mention of the afore-mentioned factors (except for peer groups) as being responsible for shaping them as principals and for being responsible for their effectiveness in managing and leading schools.

The fact that school principals in this study put a lot of emphasis on their experiences outside of EMDPs as having contributed immensely in shaping them as leaders, means that we have to pay attention to these experiences and find ways of incorporating these experiences in the professional development of school principals. In other words, ways need to be found to enhance these experiences in a manner that they make positive contributions towards the development of school principals as effective leaders. How, in practice this is done, should be a matter of 'deep and extending' engagement amongst those who offer EMDPs and those who have graduated from EMDPs.

6.4   Key principles about educational change/education management development programmes

From the data emerging out of this study there are a number of principles that one can extrapolate about educational change in general and education management development programmes in particular. Some of these principles are:

☑   that educational change must be built on a sound understanding of client needs in order to ensure that the professional development provided is relevant to the objective;

☑   that the content and context of education management development programmes determine the extent to which educational change is likely to be occur or not;

☑   that the relevance of an education management development programme is dependent, to a large extent, on the quality of the participants' experiences, rigorous selection procedures and the quality of the providers;

☑   that in order for educational change to occur, those who provide professional development ought to be change agents who possess the necessary experiences in leading and managing schools; and

☑   that education management development programmes require a recognition and a commitment to change on the part of the recipients in order for "real" change to occur at the school level.

6.5 Recommendations

It would seem from the vast research literature on leadership and management development programmes that the features of programmes that contribute to leadership development include primarily: cohort experiences, programme cohesiveness and dominant themes tied to vision, reflective practice, instructional strategies such as problem-based learning, project-based learning, and internship. In designing leadership and management development programmes in KZN or broadly in South Africa, there is a need to pay attention to these aspects while taking into consideration the South African and African context in which we live in. As Leithwood *et al.* (1999: 4) have eloquently argued, "outstanding leadership is exquisitely sensitive to the context in which it is exercised."

Related to all these aspects above is the critical issue of needs assessment and analysis. Mechanisms ought to be found for effective identification and analysis of the needs of school principals, followed by designing programmes aimed at fulfilling those needs. As alluded to in this chapter, the process of needs assessment and analysis ought to be a continuous process which is built into the programme structures, with opportunities for constant review.

The selection of candidates into programmes for the development of school principals needs to be reviewed in such a manner that selection is based on leadership potential as opposed to self-selection or merely being available to enrol into a programme — as is currently the case in the majority of the programmes.

There is a need to give serious thought and consideration to the involvement of what Bush and Glover (2005) refer to as "experienced consultant heads" — in other words, experienced heads or school principals with a proven record of success who are used in the

professional development of school principals in consultancy capacity. According to these scholars, school leaders are usually highly experienced educators and therefore it makes sense to draw on their experiences in devising, implementing and assessing leadership programmes. As Fullan (1991: 341) has put it, "We need people who are *equally* at home in universities and schools" (emphasis in the original).

Beyond a need to consider using experienced school principals in the development of school managers and leaders — as suggested by some principals in this study — these experienced school principals can also be used as mentors. A mentorship programme where inexperienced school principals are matched with experienced principals who have a proven record of success as school principals, should be given serious consideration. These mentors should receive adequate training for their mentorship roles.[51]

Leadership and management development programmes need to be designed in such a way that they take into consideration and provide specialised professional development for the different career stages of the diverse participants, namely, aspiring, new, and experienced principals. The ACE: School Leadership programme needs to be made a prerequisite for aspiring principals and also be used as a pre-service professional development programme. Other programmes or qualifications which cater for the other career stages need to be developed, building on what the BEd (Honours) and Masters' programmes in educational leadership and management currently offer.

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[51] Lessons should be drawn from the ACE: School Leadership pilot programmes which are using mentorship systems. The research component of the piloted programmes should be used to inform future leadership and management development design and practice.

The role of service providers other than universities needs to be carefully considered and clearly defined, particularly in relation to other service providers such as universities. This is mainly in the context of the envisaged South African National Qualification for Principals which, according to Prew (2004c), will preferably be provided in collaboration with NGOs and other service providers who are able to conduct site-based assessments. This is in line with global trends where more and more the professional development of school managers and leaders is no longer seen as the sole prerogative of HEIs such as universities.

In line with the recommendations of the Task Team on Education Management Development (1996) which, *inter alia*, recommended the establishment of a National Institute for Education Management Development fifteen years ago, measures need to be taken towards the accomplishment of this important goal. If a national institute is such a tall order, then at least provincial institutes ought to be considered. Important lessons can be drawn from institutions such as the National College for School Leadership in the UK or the National Institute of Education in Singapore.

Training workshops need to be well coordinated and their standards of provision frequently evaluated to ensure that the quality of delivery is of high standards. I would recommend that avenues for continuous professional development be made available for school principals. Currently training workshops, to some extent, play this role. Along with the coordination of the training workshops, the continuous development of school leaders and managers could be undertaken under the auspices of the provincial Education Management Development Institutes suggested above.

There were also a number of issues that were highlighted by the participants in this study during the interviews, which I believe policy makers and designers/providers of

EMDPs ought to take note of in their development of these programmes. As pointed out earlier in this chapter, school principals in this study cherished the opportunities to share with and learn from the experiences of others. One of the implications for EMDPs is that they need to be structured in such a manner that they provide adequate opportunities for collegial and collaborative learning. As alluded to, this means creating learning experiences that promote and support critical engagement among programme participants (school leaders) in the form of class presentations, discussions and debates, and the use of small group learning methods such as project teams and peer exchanges.

Assessment strategies also need to be structured in such a manner that they enhance opportunities for school principals to share their experiences in dealing with the challenges of school. This implies, for example, that assignments that are given principals need to reflect the kind of challenges that they deal with in their daily lives and have practical value in their application of theory. I would go so far as suggesting that avenues need to be created whereby school principals can share with each other and with other schools in their district, their assignment tasks, with a view to extrapolating critical lessons for leadership and management practice. Schools of Education could, as added measures, compile the best assignments which have practical value, in an in-house publication that would be accessible to other principals within and outside the programme.

One of the most glaring problems with current EMDPs not only in KZN but in the country in general, is the lack of a policy framework that governs the philosophical underpinning of EMDPs, their nature, content, and delivery systems. Indeed, seven years ago, while outlining plans for redesigning of the education management systems, Prew (2004c: 11) acknowledged that there were "no national standards or structures for the training accreditation or recognition of school managers." He further went on to indicate

that this was "an omission as education managers are critical to the effective working of the school and district." Prew (2004c) noted that training of school managers and leaders need to become more formalised and standardized across the country and provided according to nationally agreed upon norms and standards.

Given the importance of the role of the SGB chairperson that was highlighted by school principals in this study, there is a need to explore the provision of training opportunities (short courses, perhaps) where the school principals and the SGB chairpersons are trained side-by-side. In this way both the school principals and the SGB chairpersons would develop a good understanding of each other's roles and responsibilities, and how they both contribute to effectively running schools. As one of the participants in the current study put it, "The smooth running of the school is a combined effort between governance and management" (Interview with Dr. McGregor, 12/03/2002).

One of the vexing questions regarding the professional development of school principals is concerned with the question of whether leadership and management development ought to focus on school management teams or on individual principals. From the individual interviews with the different stakeholders in Chapter Four, one of the issues that was raised by the Director in the national Department of Education, was that there is a need for professional development which is focused on school management teams as opposed to individual principals of schools. According to Huber (2004: xii), different training programmes that their study of fifteen countries focused on, were experimenting with "the alternative of imparting competences to individual school leaders versus strengthening leadership competences of leadership teams and promoting school development." I would argue that within the South African context we need to move more

towards the professional development of the whole SMT, in line with the arguments presented by various scholars about the importance of distributed leadership in schools.

The model that is currently used by some of the providers of the ACE: School Leadership pilot programme whereby the school principals are developed together with their SMT members, should be further experimented with in the development of school principals in SA. Again, the findings of the research component of the ACE: School Leadership pilot programme should be used to inform future EMDP design and practice.

The inclusion of a focus on ethical and moral leadership in EMDPs needs to be given a priority in the design and development of EMDPs in SA. This, I would argue, will assist school principals to deal effectively with ethical and moral challenges brought about by the changed conditions in schools.

Given the problem of a lack of principalship experience on the part of those who provide EMDPs generally in SA, I would recommend that there needs to be close working relationships between schools, Schools of Education and school districts. Those relationships should allow for situations where, for example, university lecturers spend their sabbatical leave working in schools and school principals are given opportunities to get exposure to the latest research findings and thinking on how to lead and manage schools effectively. During their time in universities, these school principals could be used as co-facilitators in the EMDPs, sharing their knowledge and skills with EMDP participants.

As a form of continuous professional development, I would argue that EMDP providers ought to work very closely with structures such as Principals Forum or Principals Associations. Where these structures do not exist, school principals who are part

of an EMDP cohort group should be assisted by EMDP providers to form such structures. As argued in Chapter Five of this study, amongst other things, these principals' structures can go a long way towards assisting school principals to form important networks that would provide spring boards against which ideas can be tested and collaborative learning engendered.

6.6   Implications for further research

There is a need for a large scale, national study that would "audit" all the professional development opportunities that are available for school leaders/managers in the country in order to "provide a systematic review of the current practices of school leadership development" (Huber, 2004: xi) in South Africa. Related to such a study is a need for a thorough analysis and comprehensive review of the content of EMDPs not just in KZN, but generally in the country as a whole. This research should tap into the considerable work in the form of the programmatic reviews conducted by the Higher Education Quality Council (HEQC), in order to provide us with a complete picture of the state of art regarding leadership and management development in South Africa.

There is a need for research which is focused on principals' effectiveness as perceived by teachers who work with these school principals. In as much as it is important to get "voices from the field" (school principals who have undertaken EMDPs), I would argue that hearing the voices of the school teachers who work with these school principals would contribute immensely to our knowledge and understanding of the relevance of EMDPs to school management practice. These teachers, I would further argue, are well-placed to

provide important insights about the principals' practices following leadership and management development.

Research is also needed to look into the question of which option(s) contributes better to effective schools: the development of school principals alone or with other members of the school community such as school management teams (SMTs). This research is needed in order to inform policy and practice about the ideal framework in the professional development of school leaders and managers.

Finally, there is a need for research which explores the influences of experiences outside EMDPs in so far as principal effectiveness is concerned. The findings of such research should be used to inform the future design and development of EMDPs.

6.7   Conclusion

It should be said that as a collective, leadership and management development programmes in KZN have made major attempts to provide school principals with some form of knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary for the leadership and management of schools. As one of the major avenues through which the majority of those school principals who have taken it upon themselves to empower themselves, have had opportunities for leadership and management development, EMDPs have bridged the major gap between some form of professional development and no development at all — a situation where school principals enter the principalship without any formal training whatsoever.

Despite the problems with EMDPs in KZN — such as the seeming disjuncture between what EMDPs offer and school principals' professional needs — there were

numerous instances during interviews where principals expressed their satisfaction with the EMD programmes that they had attended. This is significant because it implies that, although there are some problematic areas in so far as EMDPs in KZN are concerned, in some respects these programmes have been a success in the professional development of school principals.

There are, however, troubling observations about EMDPs as they are currently constructed and delivered in KZN. For instance, despite numerous studies having highlighted the importance of needs assessment and analysis in the professional development of school leaders and managers, EMDPs in KZN seem to be designed and implemented without paying attention to this critical element — the assessment and analysis of the needs of the participants. This aspect is related to the fact that EMDPs in KZN do not seem to be directed by any set of principles, assumptions or core values which drive their operation. This is worsened by a lack of a national policy framework for the professional development of school leaders and managers. The fact that all the programmes reviewed in this study did not have explicit processes for the assessment and analysis of participants' needs (or a set of principles, assumptions and core values) is indeed quite worrying.

Finally, one of this study's contributions to our knowledge is in presenting "thick descriptions" of the voices of school principals regarding how the changes that have taken place in South Africa have affected them as school leaders and managers — particularly in relation to dealing with the various stakeholders in the schools. As previously highlighted in this study, whereas there has always been general knowledge (and even anecdotal evidence) that major changes have taken place in education, there has been very little

empirical evidence detailing how those affected by these changes — particularly from a management point of view — have conceptualised and dealt with these changes.