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EXPLORING THE ROLE OF PRINCIPALS IN SUPPORTING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN SCHOOL-BASED PROFESSIONAL LEARNING COMMUNITIES

BY

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DECLARATION

I, Thembinkosi Wellington Nene, declare that:

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my late sister Lindeni F. Sokhela, who once said to me, "whatever you want to do my brother, do it, for as long it will make you happy at the end". She paved my way to be educated and become a good teacher. May her soul rest in peace.

To my wife Thembelihle, and my children, Samkelo, Seluleko, Usiphile and Akhona, their love, support and understanding in this journey is much appreciated.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

CPTD	Continuous Professional Teacher Development
DH	Departmental Head
DoE	Department of Education
DP	Deputy Principal
DTDC	District Teacher Development Centres
IQMS	Integrated Quality Management Systems
KZN	KwaZulu-Natal
NICPD	National Institute for Curriculum and Professional Development
PD	Professional Development
PLC	Professional Learning Communities
PTDI	Provincial Teacher Development Institutes
SMT	School Management Team

ABSTRACT

Principals have a very crucial role to play in professional development of teachers in school-based professional learning communities. This task demands that principals understand what professional development is and what role they need to play to support the teachers at their schools. The aim of this study was to explore the extent to which principals support professional development and the role of principals in supporting teacher professional development in school-based professional learning communities.

This is a case study of four school principals from uMgungundlovu and uMzinyathi districts This study draws on Desimone's (2011) conceptual framework, a primer on effective professional development, which identify five core features of effective professional development and Price's (2012) principal-teacher interactions. Convenience sampling was used to select the participants of the study. Semi-structured interviews and document analysis were used to gather data and thematic analysis was used to analyse the data.

The findings of the study revealed that principals had an understanding of teacher professional development. The study showed that principals played a key role in supporting teacher professional development in schools. This has been implemented through the promotion of teamwork, collaboration and mentoring within their schools. Principals identified some factors that enabled them to support professional development in schools, such as motivated teachers, implementation of Jika Imfundo, regular class visits, involvement of teachers in decision making and regular developmental meetings. However, the principals also shared some challenges that hindered then in supporting teacher professional development. These challenges included a high teacher workload and a lack of time for professional development activities. Hence, findings also revealed that principals had strategies in place to overcome some of the challenges that hindered them.

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CHAPTER ONE
INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

This chapter introduces this study which aims to explore the role of principals in supporting professional development in school-based professional learning communities. To begin, this chapter presents the focus and the purpose of the study. I then explain the rationale and objectives of the study. I further present the research questions for the study and provide a brief review of the related literature and the conceptual framework, methodological approach and the overview of the dissertation.

This study aims to understand how principals promote teacher professional development in their school-based professional learning communities (PLCs). Principals play a significant and multi-faceted role in setting the direction for their schools. One of their roles is to provide support and the professional development (PD) of teachers. Darling-Hammond, Chung Wei, Andree, Richardson and Orphanus (2009) claim that PD is likely to be more effective if it is an integral part of a larger school reform effort than just an isolated activity, and has nothing linked to other programmes that are taking place within the school. Guskey (2002) claims that PD can happen where there is a broad-based support for professional development and everyone is involved from all levels in a school.

Professional learning communities offer opportunities for enlightening the teaching and learning practices, and developing strong professional development practices. Learning in communities is a collaborative process that facilitates improved practice to address the problems. Therefore, this study aims to examine the role and the extent to which principals support professional development in school-based professional learning communities.

1.2 Focus and purpose of the study

This study focuses on principals and professional development in school-based PLCs. It is a small scale study as it encompasses only four schools which are ranked as quintile 2 and located in rural areas. The purpose of this study is to explore the role of principals in supporting teacher professional development in their school-based PLCs.

1.3 Background and Rationale

Guskey (2002) maintains that professional development is a primary vehicle that tries to bring about the needed change within a school. It is a tool through with which teaching is enhanced and thus improves student achievement (Petrie & McGee, 2012). According to Bedford and Rossow (2017), professional learning communities serve as innovative ways of meeting the professional development needs of a school. Watson (2014) asserts that PLCs at most schools provide opportunities for teachers to participate in professional development which in turn improves students' learning. He further claims that learning in a community emphasises collaborative learning and development of mutual trust and shared values.

Davis, Darling-Hammond, Lapointe and Meyerson (2005) claim that one of the roles of principals is to empower teachers to do their jobs efficiently, by offering academic support to advance their work and deliver models of practice and support. Price (2012) argues that principals are influential over the organisational climate of the school where they are able to foster cooperative and open environments where staff members are encouraged to give input.

However, in my 14 years of experience as a teacher in different high schools, I observed the stagnant role of some principals in promoting school-based professional learning communities. I have also noticed that some principals do not encourage and support teacher professional development or provide opportunities for school-based PLCs to be fully utilised. According to Tschannen-Moran (2009), some principals certainly use bureaucratic structures, hierarchy of authority and written rules and policies to deal with the size and complexity of their school resources and tasks. He further claims that an over-dependence on these components by some principals may interfere with the school's agility and hence, be counterproductive to the mission of continuous teacher professional development within the school-based PLC.

Opfer and Pedder (2011) argue that the essentiality of improving schools, increasing teacher excellence and enhancing student learning has led to a deep concern for teacher professional development as an important way of achieving these goals. They further claim that the problem is rooted in failing to consider that learning is attached to professional lives and working conditions.

1.4   Research questions

The aim of this study is to explore the role of principals in supporting professional development in school-based professional learning communities

This study will be guided by the following research questions:

1. To what extent do principals support professional development in school-based professional learning communities?

2. What factors enable or hinder principals to support professional development in school-based professional learning communities?

These questions will help me generate data to examine the extent to which school principals support professional development in their schools. It will also enhance understanding of factors that promote or hinder the principal's support of teacher development.

1.5   Literature review

The literature review of this study will define and describe concepts under three key themes of the study, which are teacher professional development, professional learning communities and the roles of principals in promoting teacher professional development.

1.5.1 Teacher professional development

According to Luft and Hewson (2014), professional development (PD) can be regarded as an on-going learning experience of the teacher that is initiated even before entering the classroom and endures until the end of the teacher's career in education. Hennesdottir, Irby, Novello and Shillingstad (2012) contend that PD is not a separate episode, as it is something that must occur all the time. Correspondingly, Hadar and Brody (2011) claim that effective professional development takes into consideration the personal and work related issues as teachers move along career paths from novice to expert. Petrie and McGee (2012) argue that professional development is seen as a vital vehicle through which to improve teaching and hence, improve learners' achievement. According to Villegas-Reimers (2003), professional development is perceived as a long term process as it recognises the fact that teachers learn over a period of time.

1.5.2 Professional learning communities

According to Hairon and Dimmock (2012), professional learning communities refer to a group of people or societies whereby people repeatedly develop their capacity to produce the results they aspire to and of which new knowledge and forms of thinking are cultivated. Similarly, Brodie (2013) claims that professional learning communities often refer to teachers critically cross-examining their practice in on-going processes and insightful and cooperative ways' in order to stimulate and enhance students' learning. This implies that PLCs are a platform where knowledge and expertise are developed continuously. Doolittle, Sudeck and Rattigan (2008) argue that when a learning community is developed, educational change can be successfully achieved. PLCs have become an innovative way to meet the professional development needs of the teachers and it has emerged as a mechanism to address the challenges of the teachers (Bedford & Rossow, 2017). In the same way, Hadar and Brody (2012) suggest that professional development of teachers is increasingly important in promoting and advancing educational practice.

1.5.3 Role of principals in profession development

According to Bredson and Johansson (2000), the school principal is a crucial player who provides leadership in staff development through their encouragement, support and their ability to influence others. Similarly, Davis, Darling-Hammond, Lapointe and Meyerson (2005) claim that one of the key roles of principals, is to empower teachers to do their job efficiently, by offering academic support to advance their work and deliver models of practice and support. However, Witten (2017) argues that when principals are confronted with many problems at their schools, they tend to concentrate on school's organisational functions in order to buffer teachers and institute rigid managerial structures that habitually do not encourage collaborative work in a school-based PLC.

1.6 Methodological approach

This study adopted a qualitative methodological approach since it aims at obtaining a detailed understanding and empirical evidence from participants' perspective. I believe that a qualitative methodological approach is most suitable for this study since it helps to gather rich and descriptive data from principals' perspectives. Semi-structured interviews and

document analysis were used to collect data for the study, which assisted me as the researcher to gather detailed and rich information from the participants.

1.6.1   Research design

This study used a case study research design. A case study is an organised in-depth study of a specific case in its setting (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014). In the same way, Zainal (2007) asserts that a case study technique assists the researcher with closely examining the data in a specific context. The case in this study is comprised of four schools whereby the principals of these four schools will be participants of the study and will be the source of information from their schools. Zainal (2007) claims that case studies are categorised into three different types, which are exploratory, descriptive and explanatory. In my research study, I adopted an exploratory case study because the purpose of this study is to explore the role of principals in supporting professional development in school-based PLCs and also to examine the factors that hinder or enable them to support teacher professional development in school-based PLCs.

1.6.2   Sampling

Convenience sampling was used to select participants for this study. Convenience sampling refers to selecting a sample which is convenient for the researcher to reach when collecting data (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014). Convenience sampling is sometimes known as opportunity sampling. Cohen and Manion (2011) argue that convenience sampling encompasses selecting the nearest individuals to serve as participants of the study. This study uses a convenience sample of four neighbouring schools, whereby their principals will be participants of the study. Even though the selected schools are from two different districts, they were convenient since they are from the same geographical area and it was easy for me as the researcher to reach them.

1.7   Overview of the dissertation

Chapter One focuses on the purpose of the study, the background and rationale, and outlines the research questions. The chapter includes a brief review of the literature related to the teacher professional development and a description of the methodological approach used in the study. Chapter One concludes with an overview of chapters one to five.

Chapter Two presents an in-depth literature review of the concepts pertaining to teacher professional development, professional learning communities and the role of principals in promoting professional development. These key concepts are examined in line with scholarly debates. Chapter Two concludes with an outline of the conceptual framework that underpins this study, drawing on Desimone's framework of teacher professional development and Price's principal-teacher interactions.

Chapter Three discusses the methodological approach of the study. It elaborates on the interpretive paradigm that underpins the study and describes the case study research design of the study including the data generation methods. The sampling procedures and sample size are also discussed and explained. The method of data analysis and ethical considerations, validity and trustworthiness are also discussed in this chapter.

Chapter Four presents and reports on the results obtained from the data analysis. Results are presented according to the research questions outlined for this study. This chapter includes the interpretation of the data and an explanation of the findings of the study, using Desimone's framework of teacher professional development and Price's principal-teacher interactions as the conceptual framework for analysis. .

Chapter Five presents the summary of the findings, recommendations for further research as well as the conclusions of the study.

1.8   Chapter summary

In this chapter, I explained the focus and purpose of the study. I then discussed the rationale of the study and elaborated on key issues relevant to the study. The research questions which assisted in gathering the data were presented. A brief review of the literature related to the study, the conceptual frameworks guiding data analysis as well as the methodological approach used in the study were discussed. The chapter concludes with an overview of the chapters in this dissertation.

CHAPTER TWO
LITERATURE REVIEW AND CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

2.1   Introduction

This chapter will focuses on the review of literature relating to professional development (PD), professional learning communities and the roles of principals in an effort to support PD. The chapter firstly describes teacher professional development, outlining the views of various scholars on the concept of PD. Secondly, it explains the different models of PD which include training, mentoring, the deficit model, action research, the cascade model, a community of practice and the standard based model. It further discusses different strategies for teacher professional development. Moreover the chapter explains the notion of professional learning communities including their core features. In addition, the roles of school principals that help promote teacher professional development are discussed. To conclude, the chapter elaborates on the conceptual framework drawing on Desimone's framework of teacher professional development and Price's framework of principal-teacher interactions.

The aim of this chapter is to review literature of other scholars about the concept of teacher professional development, and to lay a foundation for the study as well as to identify the gaps that exist in the literature. The literature reviewed in this chapter is generated from different articles, dissertations and various books of scholars. Literature is presented and discussed in relation to three key issues, which are teacher professional development, professional learning communities and roles of school principals in promoting teacher development.

2.2   Teacher professional development

Guskey (2002) argues that professional development is an important component that stimulates change. Petrie and McGee (2012) assert that in PD teachers are stimulated to be active learners who are in pursuit of continuous development in their knowledge, understandings and skills to support their development as on-going learners. Correspondingly, Hadar and Brody (2011) claim that professional development results from concentrating on a common subject of teachers' professional practice. King (2016) contends that globally most teachers participate in professional development to improve their professional learning that will result in innovative practices and change. King (2016, p.574)

defines PD "as the growth of teacher expertise leading to a change in practice that results in improved student outcome". In the same way, Xu (2016) claims that PD is a way of supporting teachers so they can improve their teaching practices. On the other hand, Soine and Lumpe (as cited in Rice, 2017) defines "teacher professional development as opportunities to learn from and about classroom practice, regardless of the format". According to Kang, Cha and Ha (2013) PD refers to the practice and undertakings intended to enhance teachers' knowledge and understanding of the practice and the learning outcomes of students.

Villegas-Reimers (2003) contends that professional development is considered as a cooperative process. This implies that for the teacher to develop professionally there is a need for continuous interaction among teachers and other stakeholders like administrators and parents. In the same way, Hadar and Brody (2010) maintain that learning and knowledge are enhanced through social interaction. They further argue that the on-going discourse during group interaction and group reflection builds an environment that fosters deep learning and a climate which involves teachers maintaining their professional growth. Likewise, Rigelman and Ruben (2012) claim that learning transpires through community interaction, and communication and reflection hence, they believe that this happens irrespective of the age of the teacher.

Herselman and Botha (2014) argue that professional development has a very broad meaning as it incorporates training and learning that includes formal and informal means of assisting teachers not only to learn new skills, but also to cultivate new understandings into pedagogy and their practices, and explore new or advanced understandings of the content and resources. On the other hand, Hadar and Brody (2012) assert that professional development refers to an involvement in a course to advance teaching, and also includes changes in current practice. Correspondingly, Little (2006) contends that the subject-related expansion programs have the influence of rigorous professional development that develops teachers' understanding, hence changes teaching practices and stimulates student learning. Furthermore, she mentions that these programs will help teachers convert basic subject knowledge into pedagogical content knowledge. However, Grossman (1990) argues that previous researchers have only partially focused on the profession knowledge base of teachers and the content of professional education. Kang, Cha and Ha (2013) assert that in the past, PD usually referred to workshops and courses provided by the colleges. However, involving teachers in PD is a way to engage

them in their own learning and entails cautious planning, especially when teachers learn through different modes of professional development (Rice, 2017).

2.3 Models of professional development

Schlager and Fusco (2003) argue that PD programs encompass a group of teachers involved in a pre-arranged, organised set of interventions to achieve specific learning objectives. Borko (2004) claims that intensive professional development programs can help teachers to increase their knowledge and change their practice for the better. Kennedy (2005) as well as Engelbrecht and Ankiewicz (2015) describe and compare different models of continuous professional development by explaining some key characteristics.

2.3.1 Training model

Training is commonly known as the most used model for teacher PD and is used to support skills-based learning (Kennedy, 2005). Darling-Hammond and McLaughlin (1995) argue that training should emphasise the appropriateness of teaching and the evaluation process should not focus on transmission skills but on teacher collaboration. Day and Sachs (2004) claim that in-service education and training remains the chief means of obtaining development and seems to be cost-effective and accessible to most teachers.

2.3.2 Coaching or mentoring

This is a one-on-one liaison that is created between two teachers, a novice and experienced teacher with the aim of supporting the novice teacher in improving their skills and competencies (Kennedy, 2005). Similarly, Shank (2005, p.73) describes mentoring in education "as a one-on-one relationship between a highly competent, experienced (the mentor) and a novice teacher (the mentee)". According to Rhodes and Beneicke (2002), the practise of coaching to support teachers is regarded as a positive model by teachers with the prospect of enhancing teacher practices. Hobson, Ashby, Malderez, and Tomlinson (2009) assert that mentoring is essential and one of the most effective methods of supporting the professional development of novice teachers.

2.3.3   Deficit model

This model was introduced to address observed shortcomings in teacher performance (Kennedy, 2005). Kennedy (2005) further elaborate that the primary cause of the poor teacher performance may stem from the poor practice of organisational management. Therefore, Witten (2017) argues that instructional leadership is one important leadership tactic that revolves around supporting teacher professional development, building and managing a cooperative school ethos and implementing that encourage discourses about teaching and learning within a school.

2.3.4   Cascade model

Kennedy (2005) describes the cascade model as a model that encompasses teachers attending a training event or workshop and disseminating knowledge and information gained from other colleagues when they come back. However, this view advocates a cognitive view of teacher learning as it involves knowledge acquired in one setting to be transferred to teachers in a different setting (Kelly, 2006). Engelbrecht and Ankiewicz (2015) claim that this model is linking centralised continuous professional teacher development (CPTD) and a school-based CPTD whereby, teachers from different schools are trained in a central venue then go back to their schools. In this case, the information is disseminated through that training.

2.3.5   Community of practice model

According to Hodkinson and Hodkinson (2004) a community of practice assists experienced teachers with their learning as part of their on-going work practice. Wenger (as cited in Kennedy, 2005) asserts that individuals are members of different communities of practice, and that learning in these communities encompasses three important elements: mutual engagement, understanding and tuning, and developing a set of practices and styles. Wenger (2006) contends that communities of practice are used by the people who participate in a practice of cooperative learning in a collective field of human enterprise. Preece (2014) argues that members of the communities of practice can meet frequently however, that does not imply that participants are forced to meet face to face but can network with other communities not related to their own community of practice.

2.3.6   Action research model

Bertram and Christiansen (2014, p.44) explain that "action research entails research done by researchers on their own practice". Similarly, Hopkins (2002) describes action research as action arranged by enquiry, a personal effort at understanding while involved in a process of enhancement and transformation. Macintyre (2000) defines action research as an investigation of a problem through self-evaluation of a current practice with the aim of improving that practice. Action research can also be explained as a study of social circumstances including participants being researchers with the aim of increasing the quality of their actions in that situation and this can be perceived by the participants understanding the situation (Kennedy, 2005).

2.4   Strategies for teacher professional development

Professional development is a combination of personal and professional activities that teachers undergo through in their life-time as teachers (Maskit, 2011). According to Day and Gu (2007), professional development must be self-motivated and self-regulated. Some countries have employed trends and strategies to ensure that the professional development of teachers in their countries bear fruits and yield positive results (Darling-Hammond, Chung Wei, Andree, Richardson, and Orphunus, 2009).

2.4.1   Time allocation for professional learning

According to Darling-Hammond, Chung Wei, Andree, Richardson, and Orphunus (2009) allocation of time for PD activities within the given working time is an important element in supporting and encouraging teachers to participate in PD. In the same way, Desimone (2011) argues that PD activities should be allocated time that will be enough to ensure effectiveness. Kennedy (2005) claims that one of the models of PD, which is coaching, requires that professional learning takes place within the school amongst teachers themselves. This supports the idea that PD should be structured within work time.

2.4.2   Sound mentoring and induction programmes

A well-planned and administered induction and mentoring program is the foundation for a strong professional relationship in any school between novice and experienced teachers (Darling-Hammond et al., 2009). Kennedy (2005) maintains that mentoring encompasses a

more justifiable relationship amongst the novice and experienced teachers which allows the teachers involved to converse the possibilities, beliefs and knowledge in a less hierarchical fashion. Moreover, Cohen (1995) affirms that the partnership approach in a mentoring program should be understood as an improvement rather than the narrowing of a principle of teacher professional development. This implies that a student-centred approach should be at the centre of the teacher learning. In addition, Rhodes and Beneicke (2002) assert that the emphasis for PD is the importance of teachers learning with and from other teachers and the provision of support by the school to improve teacher practice through PD as well as the use of a school as a PLC.

2.4.3 Involvement of teachers in school decision-making

In most developed countries, teachers are actively involved in the curriculum and assessment development since they are the ones who experience PD (Darling-Hammond et al., 2009) Correspondingly, the Department of Basic Education and Higher Education and Training (2011) provides for the establishment of the National Institute for Curriculum and Professional Development (NICPD) that comprises of expert teacher educators, excellent practicing teachers and subject advisors that develop a system for teachers to ascertain and address teachers' developmental desires. This takes place through teacher networks as clusters that will enable teachers to work together on problems they encounter in their practice and that will promote individual development as well as group development (Jita & Mokhele, 2014).

2.4.4 Government support for additional professional development

According to Darling-Hammond et al. (2009) besides the normal working time that accommodates the normal professional collaboration for teachers, most countries in the West put more resources into supporting professional development of their teachers gathering expertise outside the school. Similarly, the Department of Basic Education and Higher Education and Training (2011) makes provision for the establishment of provincial teacher development institutes (PTDIs), district teacher development centres (DTDCs) and a bursary funding scheme known as the Funza Lushaka bursary scheme. These were introduced to strengthen the support for teacher development by the state.

Darling-Hammond et al. (2009) outline four trends and strategies for professional development, however this study mainly focused on three: time allocation for professional learning, mentoring and induction program, and the involvement of teachers in the decision making as these are at the helm of the school and its management.

2.5   Professional learning communities

DuFour, Richard and Robert (as cited in Hoaglund & Birkenfield, 2014, p.524) define a professional learning community as "educators committed to working collaboratively in on-going processes of collective inquiry and action research to achieve better results for the students they serve". Correspondingly, Owen (2014) defines a PLC as a small cluster of teachers who decide to work together as a team to support one another to enhance student learning whereby the members of a community share and reflect on their experiences and practices. Buttram and Farley-Ripple (2016) assert that PLCs help by being an instrument that transforms the ethos of the school and hence, supports the instructional development of a school.

Brodie (2013) maintains that a PLC implies that the focus is not only on individual teacher learning but on collective professional learning. Likewise, Rigelman and Ruben (2012) argue that learning transpires through the social interaction, communication and reflection regardless of age. Similarly, Hadar and Brody (2010) contend that learning is an individual effort that is embedded in a socio-cultural element, therefore instead of concentrating on a self-contained practitioner, whose professional learning is developing from regular work, the emphasis is on professional development within a group of teachers in a work setting. Buttram and Farley-Ripple (2016) claim that most of the schools' functionality and its success is embedded in this view of cooperative action, through shared routine to achieve its objectives.

Doolittle et al. (2008) maintain that teachers in underperforming schools have a tendency to work in isolation from one another rather than as colleagues in a PLC. Watson (2014) contends that professional learning communities involve inclusion, whether a PLC is viewed as a community of professionals learning or as a community in which professional learning takes place. Brodie (2013) asserts that the content of learning and the approach that members of a PLC use to engage in learning are essential features of a PLC.

According to Doolittle et al. (2008), in a school learning community, teachers enhance their effectiveness so that learners benefit through the five key elements of a PLC, that is, supportive, shared leadership, collective leadership, shared values and vision, and shared personal practice. Vescio et al. (2008) suggest a clear and consistent focus on student learning as an additional characteristic of a PLC. Doolittle et al. (2008) further claim that through these organisational components a school learning community extends to a college of education. In the same way, Vescio et al. (2008) claim that there must be shared values and norms developed with regard to teacher learning in professional learning communities. Kruse, Louis and Bryk (as cited in Gray & Summers, 2015, p.61) highlight structural conditions that are crucial "to the development of a PLC, including: openness to improvement, trust and respect, access to expertise, supportive leadership, and socialisation".

Rigelman and Ruben (2012) attest that in their design of a professional learning model, teachers were involved in teamwork on multiple levels to ensure sharing of information and collaboration amongst teachers. According to Brodie and Borko (2016), collaboration is understood as a voluntary and favourable commitment between teachers and groups engaged in educational institutions with the intention of sharing knowledge and resources to solve educational problems to achieve common goals. Vescio, Ross and Adams (2008) claim that PLCs are based on two assumptions, that is knowledge is situated in the day to day lived experiences of teachers and best understood through critical reflection with others who share the same experience. Secondly, it is assumed that energetically engaging teachers in PLCs will enhance their professional knowledge and hence, improve student learning. Similarly, Lieberman (2000) affirms that having a professional learning community distinguishes those teachers who functioned collaboratively to change the culture of their classrooms from those who tried new ideas in disjointed ways and who blamed students for their incapacity to learn.

2.6   Role of principals in profession development

It is the role of the principal to ensure that there is a positive educational outcome (Garner & Forbes, 2013). However, Buttram and Farley-Ripple (2016) argue that principals play a crucial part in either assisting or hampering a school in realizing achievement. Gray and Summers (2015) maintain that the school principal is responsible for creating supportive school organizations through strategies, procedures, and shared decision-making so that a PLC can be established and sustained on a continuous basis. Similarly, Bredeson and

Johansson (2000) assert that the school principal is responsible for creating and ensuring an effective school learning environment. In addition, Wahlstrom and Louis (2008) contend that the school principal can advance an atmosphere of compassion and trust as well as provide individual support to assist teachers in enhancing their teaching practices.

According to Birkerland and Feiman-Nemser (2012), the enduring success of thorough mentoring depends on a school manager's endeavours to incorporate it into a school's culture and systems. Bredeson and Johansson (2000) claim that successful teacher professional development in a school can be influenced by the school principal. Even though teachers themselves are in charge of their own PD, the school principal has to inspire and "support teacher learning not to be the gatekeepers or governors of teacher professional development" (Bredeson & Johansson, 2000, p. 390). Clifford, Behrostock-Sherratt and Fetters (2012) argue that a school principal is a key role player who influences the school conditions which include the strength of professional communities and professional support to the teachers.

Wahlostrom and Louis (2008) claim that there is a great need for a principal to use shared leadership and trust as a tool that will expand the decision making arenas in a school and that will help improve instruction. Principals do not have content knowledge of all disciplines, however, teachers will cooperate if they are involved in decision making. Bredeson and Johansson (2000) identified the following four roles of principals that will help them to influence teacher learning and hence, professional development of their teachers: stewards, models, supporter and instructional leaders.

2.6.1 Principals as stewards

According to Dipaola and Wather-Thomas (2003), principals are stewards who skilfully engage teachers in developmental activities that will enhance their practices. Correspondingly, Bredeson and Johansson (2000) maintain that school principals should recognize the links between teacher professional development, student learning and school excellence. Foley (2001) argues that principals as stewards are responsible for encouraging teachers to participate in developmental activities that will improve their teaching practices. Thus, if a principal believes that teacher learning is an essential part of the school development, then the school principal will ensure that the purpose is communicated to all teachers and all other stakeholders (Bredeson & Johansson, 2000).

Dipaola and Wather-Thomas (2003) further argue that principals are stewards and coaches in the building of a school culture of teacher development. Crow, Hausman and Scribner (2005) argue that, principals as stewards need to ensure that they communicate the importance of professional development in order to achieve the objectives of the school as well as the desires of the teachers for professional growth. Correspondingly, Kochan, Bredeson and Riehl (2005) argue that principals as stewards need to continuously recognize the links that exist amongst the principals and teacher professional development and the school as a whole.

2.6.2   Principals as models

A school principal has a significant influence on practices and beliefs of the teachers within the school as they serve as models for life-long learning (Bredeson & Johansson, 2000). According to the Employment of Educators Act (76 of 1998), one of the responsibilities of principals is to offer professional advice and support the work and performance of teachers within the school. Therefore, the principal as a teacher should emulate and promote life-long learning as it is one of the seven roles of the educator. For a principal to be a model, the principal must instil their beliefs about the importance of continuous development (Kochan, Bredeson & Riehl, 2005). Crow, Hausman and Scribner (2005) argue that an oriented principal sees their position beyond managing work and influencing behaviour and believes that their responsibility is to tap into the intrinsic motivation of others to instil a culture of the life-long learning.

2.6.3   Principals as experts

Principals are not specialists; however, they need to have the basic knowledge and skills that will help them perform special educational tasks (Diapola & Wather-Thomas, 2003). Similarly, Bredson and Johansson (2000) argue that principals need specific knowledge and skills that will help them develop human resources within the school to ensure quality provision of teaching and learning. The Employment of Educators Act (76 of 1998) states that it is the duty of the principal to develop training programs which are school-based to help capacitate teachers, especially those that are inexperienced in the field. As an expert the principal has to set a trend so that cooperation and participation of teachers in school activities will be achieved (Khan & Khan, 2014). Kochan, Bredeson and Riehl (2005) argue

that a principal that pursues knowledge through PD will acquire the knowledge and skills that will enable them to understand and predict situations with regard to developmental needs of their teachers.

2.6.4 Principals as instructional leaders

Instructional leadership is described as an integration of the tasks that seek to help teachers develop in their teacher practices (Blasé & Blasé, 1999). According to Marks and Printy (2003), instructional leadership suggests that the school principal is the main source of educational expertise. Bredson and Johansson (2000) claim that instructional leadership has a positive influence on teacher PD, through the use of various activities that encourage teacher learning. They further argue that principals provide support by restoring a positive attitude at all times about learning and professional development opportunities as teachers experience stress as a result of educational changes. Likewise, Vanassche and Kelchermans (2016, p. 8) attest that "professional development implies being confronted with and is in turn, affected by vulnerability as a structural condition of the profession". Witten (2017) concurs that instructional leaders support teacher growth by allocating resources that will help enable instructional practice. Wahlostrom and Louis (2008) contend that principals should also create a sense of trust so that teachers will be willing to talk about instructional issues. Given that a principal cannot be an expert in all areas, he/she will thus be required to delegate some responsibilities with other teachers within a school.

According to Crow, Hausman and Scribner (2005), a successful principal is able to foster relations amongst the teachers that will promote professional interaction between the teachers in a school. The work of a principal is now more complex that only focusing on leaner achievement (Dipaola & Wather-Thomas, 2003). Today, principals play a very crucial role of shaping affective leadership that will enable them as principals to provide opportunities for growth in their schools (Marks & Printy, 2003). Crow et al. (2005) argue that principals have to influence teacher relations to foster effective cooperation amongst the teachers.

2.6.5 Principals as supporters

Bredson and Johansson (2000, p. 394) claim that "Providing support for teacher learning and growth is also a vital role for school principals". This may happen through the provision of

financial support when teachers are required to attend workshops and conferences. In the same vein, Davis, Darling-Hammond, Lapointe and Meyerson (2005) argue that a school principal should help develop teachers enabling them to grow in their teaching practice. Kochan, Bredeson and Riehl (2005) argue that it is the role of the principal to make sure that enough resources are in place to support PD of their teachers within schools. This will demand that a principal be innovative in allocating enough time for teachers to learn in a school-based PLC. In the same vein, Khan and Khan (2014) argue that principals should not only manage of teachers but also ensure that there are available resources for teachers to enhance their work in the classroom, and that they are provided with these resources on time. Crow et al. (2005) argue that a principal as a PD architect, should model an anticipated a particular behaviour. They further elaborate that through this modelling, they should emulate what it means to interact and collaborate and reflect that principals do not only show support for certain behaviour but also how to enact such behaviour.

The literature discussed above helped me as a researcher to understand the roles of principals and the work of PLCs. It also assisted me to identify the gaps and shortcomings of the principals during data analysis since the aim of the study is to explore the role of principals in supporting professional development in school-based PLCs.

2.7   Conceptual framework

This study draws on Desimone's (2011) conceptual framework of teacher professional development and Price's (2012) outline of principal-teacher interactions and their affective relationships. According to Desimone (2011), professional development is a dynamic concept that has five core features which should be present in any professional development program. These core features of professional development are content focus, active learning, coherence, duration and collective participation. Desimone (2011) further mentions that one must be able to measure whether professional development produces the anticipated outcomes.

One of the features that Desimone (2011) recommends is content focus which stipulates that PD must mainly focus on the subject content and how teachers are going to teach this subject content to learners. The second feature of PD that Desimone (2011) mentions is active learning, which implies that teachers must be given an opportunity to be involved by

observing and be given feedback. This implies the active participation from all parties which are teachers and students. Desimone (2011) further claims that what teachers learn in a professional development activity must be in line with other professional development, their knowledge and beliefs, the school and the mission of the department of education and its policies. She describes this feature as coherence of the learning activities. She further claims that professional development activities should be spread over time and it must have a minimum number of contact time hours specified to ensure the effectiveness of PD activity. Lastly, Desimone (2011) argues that a group of teachers that are teaching the same grade or from the same school should collaboratively engage in professional development activities to build a professional learning community. Therefore, Desimone (2011) proposed four steps to be followed to ensure that professional development results in the desired outcomes. Figure 3.1 below shows the summary of the four steps according to Desimone (2011).
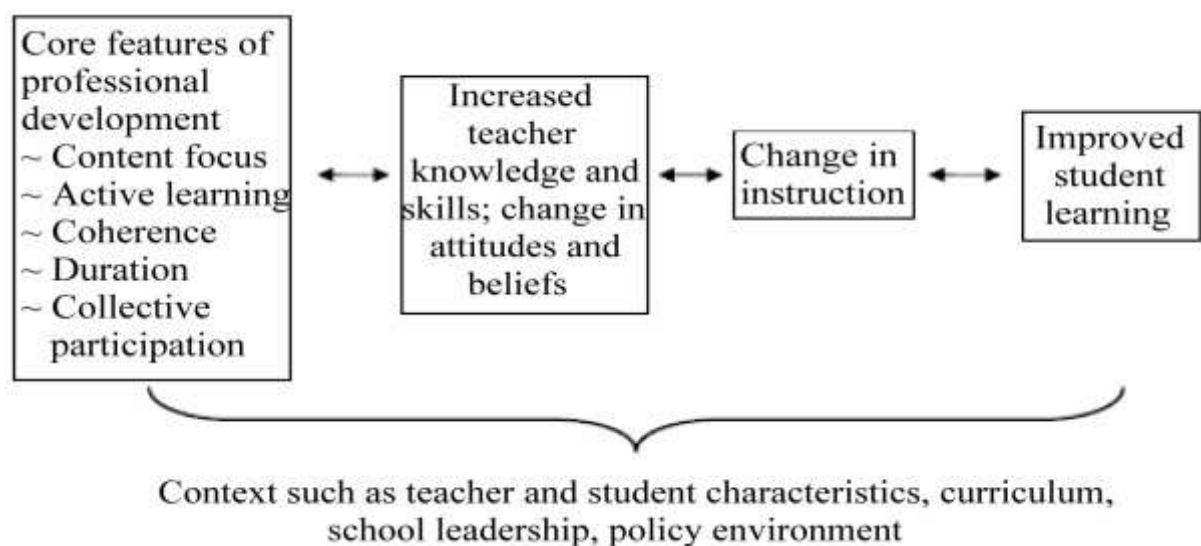
Figure 2.1: showing 4 steps of PD (Desimone, 2009)

However, since this study focused on professional development of teachers and not on improved student learning, I decided to adjust the fourth step to suit the study that will be conducted. Desimone's framework was used to analyse the first research question: To what extent do principals support professional development in school-based professional learning communities?
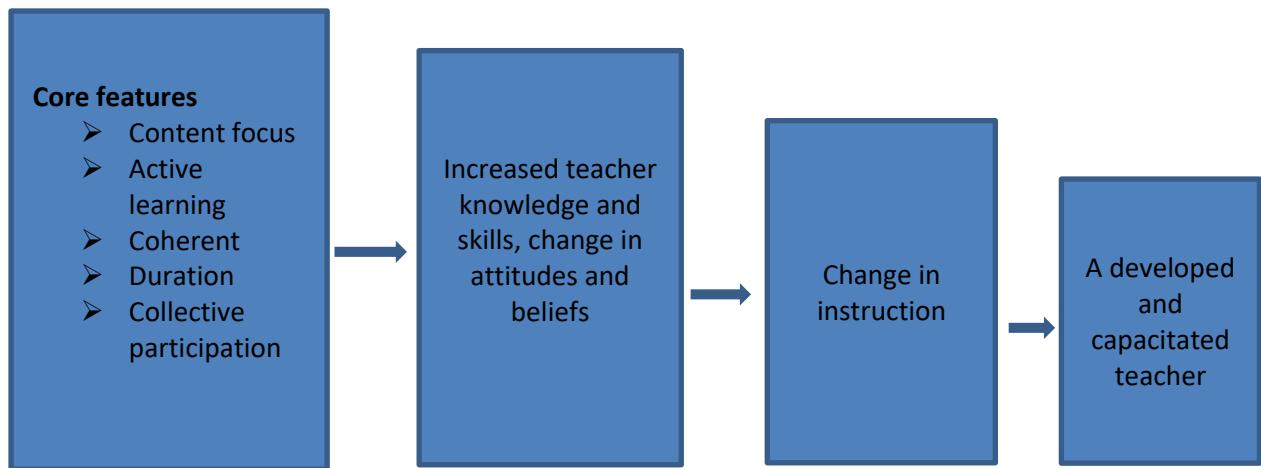
Figure 2.2 showing adjusted steps to suit the study

According to Desimone (2009), this model allows for testing the theory of teacher change and that of instruction. These two theories are referring to the fact that professional development changes teacher knowledge, beliefs and practices and suggests that changed practices will influence teacher performance and content delivery.

The second conceptual framework that I used in this study is Price's (2012) outline of principal-teacher interactions and their affective relationships. This conceptual framework assisted me to analyse the second research question: What factors enable or hinder principals to support professional development in school-based professional learning communities? Price (2012) argues that the principal's attitude towards teachers creates or breaks an atmosphere of learning. Price (2012) further describes a conceptual model of the principal-teacher relationship process that affects principal and teacher attitudes.

According to Price (2012), one of the factors that influence the principal-teacher relationship is proximal relationship outcomes, which imply sharing decision making and frequent interaction with teachers to get a sense of their developmental needs. It is further argued that the effect of principals on a school's climate is stronger than the effect of instruction. Price (2012) suggests that the frequency of interaction and degree of power sharing between principals and teachers affect subordinate teacher attitudes.

Price (2012) contends that satisfaction, cohesion and commitment are some of the elements that influence the relationship between the principal and the teachers, which in turn will help the principal to promote professional development within a school. Furthermore, Price (2012)

argues that the amount of independence in school decisions affects teacher fulfilment and cohesion levels but not commitment. This may lead to the teachers being not cooperative to professional development programmes that are planned from within the school. Moreover, Price (2012) claims that the frequency of interactions and the level at which power is being shared between the principal and teachers affect subordinates' attitudes. This implies that if there is good interaction between them, then relations will be good and would enable the principal to provide support for professional development programmes.

2.8   Chapter summary

In this chapter, I have discussed various concepts relating to teacher professional development. I explained the different models of PD and described different strategies for teacher PD. I also described and discussed professional learning communities including their characteristics. I explained the key roles of school principals in supporting PD. The conceptual framework drawing on Desimone's (2011) framework of teacher professional development and Price's (2012) outline of principal-teacher interactions and their affective relationships underpinning this study was also discussed. The next chapter presents the data and discusses the results and findings.

CHAPTER 3
RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The aim of this study was to explore the role of school principals in supporting teacher professional development in a school-based professional learning community. This chapter describes the theoretical orientation and the research design and methodology of this study. To begin, I explain the research paradigm, focussing on the characteristics and key features of the ontological and epistemological underpinnings of the interpretive research paradigm. Next, I outline the qualitative methodological approach of the study. Thereafter, I describe the case study research design. I also discuss the methods of data generation namely, semi-structured interviews and document analysis. In addition, I discuss the suitability of the qualitative methodological approach, interpretive paradigm, case study research design, and data generation methods for the study and hence, evaluate its strengths and its weaknesses. I further allude to the ethical considerations of the study and the issues of trustworthiness of the study focusing on credibility, dependability, transferability and confirmability. To conclude, I explain the role of the researcher throughout the study as well as possible strengths and limitations of this study.

3.2 Interpretive research paradigm

According to Whyuni (2012, p.69), "A research paradigm is a set of fundamental assumptions and beliefs as to how the world is perceived". Thomas Kuhn (as cited in Maxwell, 2008, p.224), defines a paradigm as "a set of very general philosophical assumptions about the nature of the world (ontology) and how we can understand it (epistemology)". In addition Mhlanga (2014) claims that interpretive researchers try to get into a person's condition and to understand from within for them to appreciate a person's world view.

The paradigm that was used in this research study is the interpretive paradigm. An interpretive paradigm is sometimes referred to as constructivism and these concepts were used synonymously in my discussion. According to Scotland (2012), an interpretive approach produces awareness and understandings of the behaviour and clarifies actions of participants' viewpoints. Lopez and Willis (2004) claim that the interpretive paradigm expresses the

notion that people's truths are habitually inclined to the domain where they belong. The reason for choosing the interpretive paradigm was because teacher professional development can be studied by understanding participants' views of the case that is being studied and through the recognition of their context and experiences' influence on the study (Mackenzie & Knipe, 2006). Likewise, Ponterotto (2005) attests that interpretivists support a reality that is established within a social and historical context.

This study is subject to people's behaviour as individuals and as a group (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014). Lopez and Willis (2004) contend that the meaning that the researcher obtains from an interpretive research paradigm is a composite of the meaning expressed by both participants and the researcher within the focus of the study. Ponterotto (2005) argues that in this paradigm, the researcher follows a hermeneutical approach that maintains that the meaning is hidden and it must be brought out through an interaction between the researcher and the participants, and this feature makes it a unique way of viewing the world.

According to Ponterotto (2005), interpretivists believe that there are many truths and constructed realities; hence, that truth is subjective to the context and the circumstances. Cohen and Manion (as cited by Mackenzie & Knipe, 2006) claim that truth or reality is socially constructed as conclusions can be made by understanding the patterns of meanings that are generated. Therefore, Ponterotto (2005) argues that the interaction between the researcher and the participants is pivotal to data gathering and analysing the lived experiences of the participants. The reason for choosing the interpretive paradigm is because I wanted to gain insights and understanding of the role of school principals in supporting and promoting teacher professional development in schools.

3.3   Qualitative methodological approach

According to Creswell (2014), there are three advanced research methodologies commonly used in research, namely, qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods. This study used a qualitative methodological approach which is based on the ontological assumption that reality is subjective and can be backed by individuals' perspectives. Ponterotto (2005) states that qualitative methodology refers to the comprehensive course of experimental methods aimed at describing and interpreting the understandings and practices of research participants in a setting of a specific context. In the same way, Creswell (2014) maintains that in qualitative

methodology, researchers gather information from the field of the location where participants are involved in the phenomenon under study. Correspondingly, Shange (2014) explains that her study used qualitative methodology since it intends to get a detailed understanding from participants. She further states that qualitative research tries to gather rich eloquent data in respect of a given context with the intention of understanding the case that is being studied.

Krauss (2005) contends that the potential of qualitative data to yield significant results allows it to be an exceptional and prevailing epistemological instrument for understanding the results of a study. In most cases qualitative researchers are directed by certain notions and perceptions concerning the subject that will be examined (Linda, 1994).

Qualitative research is constructed on the relativistic, constructivist ontology that suggests that there is no impartial truth (Krauss, 2005). She further claims that the purpose of the qualitative approach is to explain particular features of an occurrence with the idea of describing the focus of the study. According to Mack, Woodsong, MacQuee, Guest and Namey (2005) one of the key features of qualitative research is the ability to give a complex word-based description of how people (as individuals or group) experience a given research phenomenon under study.

Mack et al. (2005) argue that there are three commonly used methods of data generation of the qualitative methodological approach which are participant observation, in-depth interviews and focus groups. They further state that these methods generate data in the form of field notes, audio recordings, videos recording and transcripts, whereby a transcript refers to a written document that reflects what was said in an interview or a lesson which at times includes explanations of a certain body language. Similarly, Choy (2014) maintains that qualitative methodology uses a variety of data gathering and analysis methods which uses purposive sampling, semi-structured and open ended questions during interviews.

Johnson and Christensen (as cited in Macu, 2013) claim that qualitative research is centred on qualitative data and it tends to follow a descriptive style of systematic methods. Mack et al. (2005) contend that some of the benefits of qualitative methods in empirical research are the use of open-ended questions and probing which will allow participants the opportunity to answer in a way that they will feel comfortable, instead of forcing them to choose from given questions provided by the researcher. Hence, Choy (2014) asserts that qualitative methods

will generate soft data that is presented in terms of words, written sentences and pictures and so forth when compared to other methodologies. In most cases, qualitative studies usually rely on interpretive or critical paradigmatic stances (Choy, 2014).

Some of the benefits of qualitative research include an exploration of the understandings of similar and diverse groups of people in order to identify and unpack different perceptions in a given community (Choy, 2014). In addition, Creswell (2014) contends that researchers themselves are key instruments of the research as they gather data themselves through document review, observing behavioural patterns, or interviewing the participants, hence the researcher may get first-hand information when observation is used. On the other hand, Choy (2014) argues that the qualitative approach to cultural assessment enables the researcher to get more information regarding the underlying values, assumptions and beliefs of participants by probing and open ended inquiry.

Despite the advantages discussed above, qualitative research cannot remain without limitations. Choy (2014) argues that a main disadvantage of qualitative research is inclined with cultural analysis as the process is time consuming and some crucial aspects maybe ignored. He further argues that qualitative data cannot be objectively verifiable as it can be influenced by participants' feelings about the issue being studied. Because of the open ended inquiry, participants have more impact on the content of the data that is gathered (Choy, 2014).

3.4   Case study research design

There are various types of research designs that can be used when conducting a research study. According to Tichapondwa (2013), the concept case study is usually understood as being synonymous with qualitative methodology. This study has adopted a case study research design. A case study is an organized in-depth study of a specific case in its setting (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014). In the same way, Zainal (2007) asserts that a case study assists the researcher with closely examining the data in a specific context. A case study is a specific occurrence that is commonly considered to illustrate a more general principle (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2011). Bertram and Christiansen, (2014) further argue that a case study is mostly used by researchers in the interpretive paradigm. According to Zainal (2007, p. 1), a case study "allows the exploration and understanding of complex issues".

Thus, Zainal (2007) claims that case studies explore and investigate contemporary real-life occurrence through comprehensive contextual analysis of a limited number of occasions or conditions, and their relationships.

Cohen et al. (2011, p 256) claim that "case studies present research or evaluation data in a more publicly accessible form than other kinds of research reports". According to Zainal (2007), case studies are categorised into three types, which are exploratory, descriptive and explanatory. In my research study, I have chosen an exploratory case study. An exploratory case study is used to explore a situation where there is no single outcome (Baxter & Jack, 2008). In the same way, Runeson and Host (2008) argue that an exploratory case study seeks to discover what is happening, understand new issues and generate new notions. This is because the purpose of the study is to explore the role of principals in supporting professional development in school-based PLCs and hence, examining the factors that hinder or enable them to support teacher professional development in school based PLCs. This research study has been conducted with the objective of increasing the knowledge about principals' understanding of their role in supporting school-based teacher professional development. This was a case study of four school principals from two different districts. The four principals were chosen because they were teaching in schools that are from the same geographic area and are likely to experience similar challenges. Participants were principals from both primary and secondary schools in order to get rich data from different perspectives of their context.

Like any other research design, the case study has its positives and negatives. One of the advantages of the case study is that the examination of the data is usually conducted in a context of its use (Zainal, 2007). However, Zainal (2007) also argues that one of the criticisms of a case study is that of dependency on a single case which makes it very difficult to generalise the findings of the study at the end. Similarly, Bertram and Christiansen (2014) also argue that if the case study is instrumental, the researcher needs to consider which findings can or cannot be transferred to other settings.

3.5 Convenience sampling

Sampling encompasses making choices about which people and settings will be included in the study (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014). Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007) argue that the

success of any study does not only depend on the appropriate methodology but also on the suitable sampling strategy used by the researcher. This study used convenience sampling to select four schools and purposive sampling to select the four principals.

Convenience sampling means selecting a sample which is convenient for the researcher to reach when collecting data (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014) and is sometimes known as opportunity sampling. Cohen et al. (2011) argue that convenience sampling encompasses selecting the nearest individuals to serve as participants of the study. This study used convenience sampling to select four neighbouring schools. Even though the selected schools are from two different districts, they are convenient since they are from the same geographical area and it was easy for me to reach them.

Purposive sampling implies that the researcher makes a specific choice of who will be the participants in the study (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014). Similarly, Cohen et al. (2007) contend that purposive sampling is a component of qualitative research whereby the researcher decides to choose specific people to be included in the sample based on their characteristics or particular features they possess. Cohen et al. (2007) further argue that in most cases, purposive sampling is used to access knowledgeable people who have specific knowledge of a particular issue. Therefore, purposive sampling was used to select only the principals in these four chosen schools and was done intentionally to gather information on the role principals play in supporting their teachers' professional development in school-based PLCs.

The sample size of the study involves four schools selected from two different districts; uMgungundlovu and uMzinyathi districts. Four principals from these schools were invited to be participants of the study. The chosen schools vary in sizes as school A has 26 teachers, school B has 23 teachers, school C has 5 teachers, and school D has 5 teachers. I have chosen schools of different sizes so that I will gather rich data from schools that are different in size and in context.

The four schools were neighbouring schools that were from two districts, three schools from uMgungundlovu district and the other school was from uMzinyathi district. These schools were chosen because they were close to one another and I could easily reach them anytime I wished to. The selected schools included both primary and secondary schools from rural

areas. Even though the selected schools were from two different districts, they were convenient since they were from the same geographical area and it was easy for me to reach them.

The four selected schools were from rural areas and three of them belong in quintile 2 and one belongs in quintile 1 category. Most of the teachers working in these schools were from other places from cities. Three schools were secondary schools and one was a primary school. All four schools are poorly resourced schools although they all have electricity. Two of the selected schools had enrolments of more than 700 learners each. However, the other two schools had low enrolment numbers of less than 100 learners for each school. In these two small schools each teacher was teaching more two subjects.

3.6   Data generation methods

The data was collected using both semi-structured interviews and document analysis.

3.6.1 Semi-structured interviews

An interview is a flexible instrument used for gathering data allowing multi-sensory channels to be used: verbal, non-verbal and heard (Cohen et al., 2011). Harrell and Bradley (2009, p.6) state that "interviews are discussions, usually one-on-one between an interviewer and an individual, meant to gather information on a specific set of topics". They further mention that this type of data generation can be done in person or over the phone. Moreover, Cohen et al. (2011) contend that semi-structured interviews are a qualitative method of inquiry that uses a pre-determined set of open-ended questions with the opportunity for the interviewer to explore certain aspects further.

Myende (2016) argues that semi-structured interviews are seen by most researchers as a valuable instrument of data generation as they assist the researcher in gathering more and rich information from the participants. This is because semi-structured interviews contain key questions that will describe areas that need to be explored (Gill, Stewart, Treasure & Chadwick, 2008). Gill et al. (2008) further argue that semi-structured interviews permit the interviewer or interviewee to diverge in order to gather or give more in-depth information. It is a flexible tool used to gather data (Cohen et al., 2011). Semi-structured interviews were

used with the principals of four schools regarding the extent to which they support professional development in their schools (Refer to appendix D). This assisted me as the researcher to gather in-depth rich information from the participants.

Qualitative methods of data generation are flexible in such a way that they allow greater freedom and adaptation of the interface amongst the researcher and participants (Mack et al., 2005). Mhlanga (2014) recommends that participants be interviewed separately for the researcher to understand the participants' perspective in their setting. That would allow a relaxed dialogue between the researcher and the participant which results in rich data being generated (Myende, 2016). Cohen et al. (2011) explain that one of the purposes of an interview is its potential to transfer pure information if the researcher is able to build a rapport and the interviewee is sincere and motivated.

The semi-structured interviews were recorded using a digital recorder with consent from each participant. This was done to ensure that the transcript of the interview was genuine. Recording the interview allowed me as a researcher to have enough time to listen to the audio-recording when analysing the data. The recording of semi-structured interviews was also undertaken to assist the researcher in identifying any gaps in the answers of the participants and to make follow-up interviews at a later stage during the data analysis. The interview session with each participant ranged between fifty to ninety minutes. However follow-up interviews we conducted telephonically and for each participant it lasted not more than fifteen minutes.

3.6.2 Document analysis

Document analysis was also used to gather data. According to Bowen (2009, p. 27), "document analysis is a systematic procedure for reviewing or evaluating documents…". Cohen et al. (2011) argue that document analysis can help the researcher get into the inaccessible subject. Bowen (2009) further argues that document review requires that data gathered from documents be scrutinized and be understood to discover meaning and develop pragmatic knowledge. According to Cohen et al. (2011) documents are more reliable if they are not written for the purpose of research. The following documents were reviewed as part of document analysis. They were minutes of schools' staff development meetings, minutes of staff development sessions and staff development policies of the schools. These policies gave

an in-depth understanding of what is expected to be happening related to teacher professional development at school level and hence, the role of the school principal as the headmaster of the school. Minutes of the staff development meetings helped gather information about what is actually happening regarding teacher professional development in these schools and the role played by the principal in championing teacher professional development in their schools. Documents that were collected from the schools were also analysed. The documents that were used are minutes of staff development meetings, departmental meeting minutes and subject meeting minutes. These documents were analysed several times to obtain an in-depth understanding and make sense of their contents.

3.7   Data analysis

The data collected through semi-structured interviews were arranged according to themes and research questions. The responses of the participants were grouped and arranged under the research questions. Thematic analysis was used to analyse the data. Fereday and Muir-Cochrane (2006) state that thematic analysis is a grouping of themes that emerged as being a common description of the situation that emerges. In the same way, Braun and Clarke (2012) argue that thematic analysis focuses on arranging insights and understandings into patterns of particular behaviour. Responses were classified according to themes that were formulated by the researcher. This allowed the researcher to record similar responses under the same theme. The themes were guided by the research questions. The transcribed data was coded and arranged into groups of similar meanings and insights (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006). These themes were then analysed against the conceptual framework and literature of the empirical studies that were discussed in Chapter Two. Data from minutes and policies, like transcribed data from interviews, it was arranged according to similar meanings to form themes. This data was also analysed against the conceptual framework of this study.

3.8   Ethical considerations for the study

Ethical considerations imply doing what is right by respecting the rights of others in search of information during a research study (Cohen et al., 2011). Confidentiality and the rights of the participants are respected. Autonomy of all participants has been respected as they were given an informed consent form to sign.

Consent means that participants agree to be part of the research study (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014). For this study, participants were given informed consent forms to sign and agree to be part of the study. The purpose and data generation methods for the study were clearly explained to all participants. Bertram and Christiansen (2014) further mention that participants participate voluntarily in the study and are free to withdraw at any time should they wish to do so. This was ensured as it was clearly indicated in the consent forms that were signed by the participants.

Confidentiality and anonymity were considered as all participants were given pseudonyms and names of the schools were changed to avoid identifying real names of participants and the schools involved.

The researcher followed and complied with the ethical requirements of the University of KwaZulu-Natal and applied to the Research Ethics Committee for ethical approval for this study. Ethical approval was granted (Refer to Appendix B). An application was also made to the KZN Department of Education (DoE) for permission to conduct the research study in the schools. The KZN DoE granted permission to conduct this research study at selected schools (Refer to Appendix A).

3.9   Limitations of the study

The sample size of the study comprised of only four principals from two districts of uMgungundlovu and uMzinyathi, therefore the findings of the study cannot be generalised in all settings. Results of the study cannot represent of all principals from the two districts.

3.10   Trustworthiness

Bertram and Christiansen (2014) contend that trustworthiness refers to the extent to which the data collected and findings reflect reality and the relevant experiences of the participants. The recordings that were made during semi-structured interviews ensured that the transcripts of the data were more accurate than it would be if it was jotted down. The use of triangulation, which means collecting data using different tools namely, semi-structured interviews and document analysis enhanced the trustworthiness of the data. According to Bertram and Christiansen (2014), the following four aspects need to be considered to ensure trustworthiness: confirmability, dependability, credibility and transferability.

Confirmability: This implies that the data and findings can be confirmed by others as a true reflection and measure of quality. Therefore, during analysis and interpretation of the data, it was done explicitly to avoid any influence and interference of the researcher. The researcher ensured that there was transparency in the research process as the transcription of the interviews was given back to the participants for verification.

Dependability: This refers to the variation of the results of the study that may occur (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014). The researcher must engage participants in an open-ended inquiry to ensure that the data gathered is rich and reliable (Taylor & Medina, 2013). The interviews that were conducted were semi-structured and the researcher probed where necessary to explore more information and the follow-up interviews were conducted when the need was identified.

Credibility: This refers to the essential criterion used to measure the quality of the study under qualitative research (Golafshani, 2003). Taylor and Medina (2013) assert that the researcher must ensure that the interpretation of the data is what the participants were actually trying to communicate during the interviews. Correspondingly, Bertram and Christiansen (2014) claim that it is the responsibility of the researcher to check the raw data with the participants to ensure that transcripts are a true reflection of what the participants said. In this study participants were given time to view the transcripts of their interview to verify the correctness of the interpretation by the researcher.

Transferability: This means that the research findings could be achieved in a different situation with a similar case (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014). Taylor and Medina (2013) argue that there must be enough description made to ensure that the reader can compare their context with that of the researcher. However in a qualitative study data cannot be always generalised as the perspectives may only be relevant to one context.

3.11   The role of the researcher

As a researcher I was not a participant in this study. This helped me not to influence the behaviour of the participants and their responses. This supports the view of Baxter and Jack (2008) that a case study design is mostly used because it is not easy for the researcher to manipulate the behaviour of the participants. My role as the researcher was only to generate

and analyse the data that was collected from the participants which in this case, were principals. Principals from neighbouring schools from a different circuit were selected. Although I tried not to influence the responses of the participants, but the fact that they knew me as their subordinate in local school might have impacted in their responses which may affects the trustworthiness of the data.

3.12   Chapter summary

In this chapter, I described the research design and methodology. I discussed the interpretive research paradigm adopted in this study and described the qualitative methodological approach, focusing on their characteristics and suitability for this study. Next, I explained the case study research design used in this study and discussed some of its features. I then explained the convenience and purposive sampling methods used to select the schools and the participants for this study. I also discussed the data generation methods that were used in this qualitative study namely, semi-structured interviews and document analysis. Lastly, I described the ethical issues considered for this study and the factors that needed to be considered to ensure the trustworthiness of the study. The next chapter presents the data and discusses the data analysis and the findings that emerged.

CHAPTER FOUR
PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

4.1   Introduction

This chapter outlines and presents the data of the study that was gathered through semi-structured interviews and document analysis. The semi-structured interviews were conducted with four principals since one of the participants decided to withdraw from the study. To begin, the profile of the four participants is presented. The data from the semi-structured interview transcripts was reviewed a number of times to get a clear understanding of what the participants were saying. The documents and minutes were also scrutinized to make sense of them. Data is presented according to themes. I will then analyse the results of the data collected during the research process.

Direct quotes of the participants were used to ensure that statements of the participants were supported. Quotes from documents analysed and participants' responses are written in italics. To begin this chapter, I presented brief profiles of the principals of the four schools that were selected in the sample.

4.2   Brief profiles of the participants

Participants of this study are the four principals from the neighbouring schools which are part of the sample. Biographical data of each participant includes principal's background information such as age, gender, experience and their qualifications.

4.2.1   Mr Mosidi

Mr Mosidi is 56 years old and is the principal of a primary school. He started teaching in 1988 at the College of Education and has 30 years of experience as a teacher. He was then seconded as a deputy principal to a primary school in a rural area. He got promoted as a principal in 2013 and has 5 years' experience as a principal. He holds a Master's degree in Education and at the time of this study, he was doing his PhD in education. He also completed the Advanced Certificate in Education specialising in management.

4.2.2 Mr Mavundla

Mr Mavundla is a principal of a high school. He is 57 years old and has a total of 32 years of teaching experience. He started teaching in 1986 and got promoted to a principal in 1997. He has been the principal for 21 years at the same school. His qualifications include a Secondary Teachers Diploma (STD), a Bachelor of Arts degree and a Bachelor of Education degree. With regard to teacher development, he explained:

> *I have attended so many teacher developmental seminars, workshops, SMT training, there are so many to count. The list is endless. So it depends on what the departments requires us to be doing, so there are so many training and workshops I attended. Some are two days, one day or three days it all depends.*

4.2.3 Mrs Nxasane

Mrs Nxasane is a 45 year old teacher in a high school. She has 14 years of experience as she started teaching in 2005. She got promoted as a departmental head in 2016 and promoted to a principal a year later, thus she has 1 year experience as a principal. Her qualifications include a Senior Primary Teachers Diploma (SPTD), Higher Diploma in Education (HDE) and the B. Ed Honours. She said, "*I have been trained and workshopped in curriculum management, financial management and leadership skills".*

4.2.4 Mr Hlengani

Mr Hlengani is a 59 year old principal at a high school. Mr Hlengani started teaching in 1984 as an unqualified teacher at a high school. He became a qualified teacher in 1989. He got promoted to be the principal in 1999 and he has been the principal of three different schools since 1999. His has 19 years' experience as a principal. He explained:

> *I started as a qualified teacher in 1989. In 1995 I was seconded to another school to be a deputy principal there, I served a period of 4 years. In 1999 I was promoted to be the principal in another school in a primary school. I was not motivated to work in a primary environment so I was lucky again and in 2002 I was seconded to be a principal in a high school. In 2005, I then moved to the current school as a principal. So as I mentioned that I have 19 years' experience as a principal.*

He did his Secondary Teacher's diploma (STD) at Eshowe College of Education. He then furthered his studies part time studying a Higher Diploma in Education (HDE). He adds:

In terms of my development as a teacher, let me take it back, when I was working as an unlicensed teacher in 1984, I was teaching mathematics at that time, So there was a time you would be sent to a workshop for 2 weeks, Then it was nice and interesting, but by the time you come back your learners you find them stacked. Then the new dispensation came with these short workshops one day workshop.

Table 4.1: The profile summary of the participants who took part in the study

Principal's name (Pseudonym)	Gender	Age	School name (Pseudonym)	Total years of service	Experience as a principal (years)
Mr Mosidi	Male	56	Falaza Primary	30	5
Mr Mavundla	Male	57	Tholisu High	32	21
Mr Hlengani	Male	59	Mandleni High	34	19
Mrs Nxasane	Female	45	Gaza High	14	1

Table 4.1 above presents a summary of the biographical details of the participants of the study. Two of the participants have been the principals for more than 15 years and the other two have less than 6 years of experience as principals.

The participants' responses were categorised according to themes that emerged while analysing the data. The following themes emerged:

1. Principal as a steering wheel of professional development
2. Teamwork and collaboration
3. Mentoring and supervision
4. Factors supporting teacher professional development
5. Factors hindering teacher professional development

4.3   The Principal as a steering wheel of professional development

All four principals expressed the same view of teacher professional development as an on-going concern. Mr Hlengani described teacher professional development as a skill of getting teachers to a high competency level. The data generated from participants showed that principals have an understanding of teacher professional development as the life journey of a teacher with the aim of improving the performance of their learners.

Mr Hlengani explained teacher professional development as, "*To me, teacher professional development is an art of empowering teachers to be competent enough to face the teaching profession challenges*"

According to Mr Mavundla, "*professional development means that as teachers, we need to be well trained and be informed about teaching and educational issues to be able to deliver as we are expected*". He further mentioned that one of the roles of a teacher is being a life-long learner, and elaborated that teacher development is a journey and a process not a once off activity. This resonates with the Department of Education (2007) policy which stipulates that teachers will have to undergo an on-going personal and professional development in broader educational matters.

Similarly, Mrs Nxasane mentioned that teachers need to be well trained and well informed about educational issues. She said:

> *Professional development means activities that are done within the school to support improve the quality of a teacher, so in short professional development is whereby the principal or the SMT develop teachers in various aspects within a school, for example curriculum delivering, classroom management and how to manage punishment.*

Mr Mosidi shared a similar understanding of professional development as the other principals. He said, "*Professional development is the enhancement of the abilities of a teacher to be better off in terms of skills and competences*".

Based on the understanding of teacher professional development the data collected reveals that principals do play a significant role in supporting teacher development. Mr Mavundla, when asked about his role as a principal, said:

> *I provide the necessary material to the staff that will keep them updated about the business of teaching and learning, that involves making sure that circulars are communicated to all staff members, especially those that invites teachers to workshops and seminars.*

He also mentioned that as the principal, he liaises with the Teaching and Learning Support (TLS) department by inviting subject advisors to come and assist in developing teachers within the school-based learning community. He said:

> *The principal is the engine that provides support for teacher learning and development; that is why I regard the principal as a steering wheel of professional development within a school.*

Likewise, Mrs Nxasane mentioned that as the principal, she networks with other schools and invites the experienced teachers to come and provide support to her novice teachers. She said:

> *As a principal, it is my duty to ensure that when a teacher indicates that he or she is having a problem in a particular learning area so that I network with other schools to come and provide support or invite subject advisors as indicated above. In these days, we have what we call lead teachers who are very helpful when it comes into networking.*

In the same way, Mr Mosidi alluded that the formulation of subject committees assist in a way that capacity building is established through discussions that are taking place during subject meetings. When asked to elaborate how, he said: "*the staff themselves as a community is able to develop one another*" He further claimed that people make a strong contribution when working as a team, and added "*What I can say is that everything we do, is developed in the form of a team*".

On the other hand, Mr Mavundla mentioned that as the principal, he liaises with the subject advisors to come and provide support to his teachers. He shared: "*By creating that platform whereby specialists from the departments are invited to assist teachers within a school, I take it as a step in the development of my teachers*". In addition, he mentioned that they have staff

developmental sessions within the school whereby they as the SMT, capacitate the teachers within the school on various aspects pertaining to teaching and learning.

Mr Mavundla mentioned that they make use of the IQMS as a key component of teacher professional development within the school. He explained: "*I myself as a principal, I ensure the effectiveness of the IQMS, whereby teachers have their own developmental support groups having nominated by themselves*". He also mentioned that "*Periods for teachers to be visited in class for support by developmental support groups are featured in the time-table*". Hence, the IQMS is monitored through the provision of time and it is featured in the timetable as it is a continuous development program. In the same way, the staff meeting minutes of Tholisu Secondary below shows that IQMS is being discussed and a schedule for developmental support group is in place. "*It has been agreed that class visits by the DSG should commence as early as term 1 so that support will be given early and progress be monitored in term two onwards*" [02/02/2017].

Correspondingly, Mr Mosidi stated that they focus on ensuring the implementation of the IQMS in their PLC, as it helps teachers support one another. He said:

> *We mainly focus on this internal program of teacher development which is IQMS, it is a good development program that is taking place within the school rather that the workshop or something from outside the school.*

Mr Mavundla further stated that he encouraged teachers to participate in teacher development in various ways, and shared:

> *Even for these workshops organised by the department, like 'Just in time' workshops, and orientation workshops at the beginning of the year, I ensure that my teachers don't miss such opportunities because I believe that's where knowledge is acquired especially content wise.*

He said that he believed that these workshops are equally important i equipping teachers with necessary content knowledge, especially the JIT workshops since at the beginning of each term, subject teachers from different districts meet in one venue to capacitate one another on the content for that particular term.

Correspondingly, in the staff meeting, minutes of Tholisu School, the principal encouraged teachers to attend JIT workshops.

> *The principal reminded teachers who were invited to a JIT workshop to ensure that they do attend as it will assist them in terms of content knowledge, He further emphasised that teachers must respect workshops as they are equally important as part of their duty* [18/04/2016]

The principals also mentioned the formation of subject committees as an element of development in a school based PLC. Mr Mosidi revealed that subjects committees play a key role in capacity building of teachers within the school. He stated that:

> *Subjects committees are an important component within the school because they ensure that teachers are well vested with knowledge they need, when they have discussions about different subjects, goes up to an extent of pedagogical and content knowledge, developing one another professionally in a way that they equip one another*

Mr Mosidi further stated that, usually, meetings start from the grade level, developing to a phase level and then to a school as a whole. Similarly, Mr Hlengani mentioned that he advised teachers to formulate subject committees and encouraged teachers to meet and discuss issues that pertain to their subjects. He further motivated teachers of the same subject to work together.

Mr Mavundla suggested that the establishment of school functional committees such as subject committees enable the support of one by another by claiming:

> *The significance of subject committees lead by subject head is very vital for our teachers to keep abreast with what is expected of them as teachers. Therefore, teachers of the same subjects cluster together and have monthly meetings concerning their subjects where approaches and techniques are discussed.*

Mrs Nxasane also mentioned that collaboration assisted them as a small school with a limited number of teachers. She explained that although they do not have subject committees per se, departmental meetings are where issues of development are discussed. She said, *"We do not*

have separate meetings for separate subjects because of the small number of teachers, so we hold meetings as one group since there are five teachers".

The results reveal that subject committee meetings are regarded as very helpful in developing teachers within the school. Three principals, Mr Mavundla, Mr Mosidi, and Mr Hlengani, mentioned the significance of teachers formulating subject committees within the school so that they would be able to discuss and share information. These principals suggested that subject committees capacitate teachers through discussions that are taking place during meetings.

During interviews all four principals attested that they encouraged teachers to attend the workshops organised by the Department of Education where most information regarding their subjects was obtained. The importance of attending these workshops was that teachers came back and shared the information they gained from the workshop. Mrs Nxasane claimed:

> *I ensure that I create a platform for information sharing when someone has attended a workshop because even myself as a principal, when I come back from the meeting or workshop, I give feedback and share information to ensure that everyone is updated about educational issues.*

When reviewing the minutes of staff meeting (feedback from DHs' curriculum management workshop Tholisu Secondary), it shows that teachers attended workshops. The minutes that were written on the 18/03/2015 showed that information sharing occurred by the teachers who attended the curriculum management workshop. The main focus was on teaching and assessment at the GET phase. "*The principal added that it was necessary for teachers to be up to date with their work and encouraged teachers to work together as a team*" [18/03/2015].

In the same way, minutes of Falaza Primary on the 05/08/2016 showed a discussion that was led by the senior teacher on preparation, assessment of tasks and the implementation of leisure reading. This was an information sharing meeting since the report was based on the workshop that they previously attended.

One of the things that principals mentioned as a key factor in the development of teachers was the motivation of teachers to actively participate in their own development. Two of the

principals, Mr Mosidi and Mr Mavundla, mentioned that it is a principal's duty to motivate teachers within the school on various aspects besides just professional development.

Mr Mosidi explained that during meetings and updates, the staff always mentioned the importance of teachers being involved in personal development. He further explained that it could be done through enrolling in tertiary institutions for honour's, master's or even PhD degrees. He said:

> *In all the meetings I hold with my teachers, I don't miss out to mention the side of teachers' own development as an important element. It is my responsibility to motivate them to engage themselves in developmental activities. I even refer to myself that at my age, I am still developing myself as I am currently enrolled for my PhD at UKZN as we speak.*

Similarly, Mr Mavundla mentioned that as principals they have a duty to motivate the teachers at their schools. He explained that teachers should also take responsibility for their own development despite the programs offered by the school or the principal. He said:

> *Teachers are responsible for their development, as one of the roles of the teacher stipulates that teacher is a lifelong learner. Therefore I always motivate teachers to enrol in tertiary institutions to keep abreast with new developments and changes in our profession. Like I said earlier on concerning workshops by the department, I encourage them to attend such developmental workshops*

When asked what he meant about the teacher as a life-long learner, Mr Mavundla mentioned that according to the government gazette, teachers should engage in on-going personal and professional development related to their field.

Mr Hlengani explained that the teaching profession requires teachers to develop and adapt to be flexible and be able to face the challenges of a changing world, so teachers need to take steps towards their own development. He said:

> *Every beginning of the year, we analyse learners' results so that teachers will be able reflect on their work and review their teaching strategies. If there is a need, I as a principal will encourage and recommend the teacher to engage in*

a formal or informal development through enrolling in tertiary institution or engage in research.

This is supported by the minutes of a staff meeting of Mandleni High school which reads:

The principal then encouraged teachers to keep on empowering themselves through distance learning and to utilise opportunities brought by the department where bursaries are provided and further their studies (12/02/2015).

The results above based on responses and explanations by the participants are in line with the conceptual framework by Desimone's (2011) who attests that professional development is getting involved in an improvement process of a teacher with a broader view to improve their performance. The results show that when principals are supporting teacher professional development, they know exactly what they are focusing on based on the data collected. The conceptual framework discussed in chapter 2 as adjusted from Desimone (2009), states that a teacher practices change as a result of development which in the end, will enhance teacher performance. The results also correspond with one of the features of effective development by Desimone (2011), who puts forward that a group of teachers who are teaching the same subject should engage in group professional development in order to assist one another. The results resonate with Desimone's (2011) conceptual framework claiming that teacher development is achieved through collective participation, which stimulates active learning thus improving teacher performance.

Similarly, Bredson and Johansson (2000) argue that principals are a key component in a school that provide strong leadership in teacher professional development through the provision of support and their influential advocacy. So there is a similarity between the results of this study with views of Bredson and Johansson (2000) as results reveal that a principal is the steering wheel of professional development. In the same way, I have discussed that principals are regarded as stewards who are able to engage teachers in activities that will help improve their practices in Chapter Two (Bredson & Johansson, 2000).

It has been noted in Chapter Two that one of the roles of the principal is to be a motivator. Findings above show that principals in schools do play a meaningful role in motivating

teachers within their PLCs and encouraging full participation in professional developmental activities either personally or within the PLC. This supports Khan and Khan (2014) who argue that the principal's duty is not only to manage the teachers but also to train them and share the experiences with them to empower them. This is in line with one of the core features of professional development by Desimone (2011), who claims that teachers should have opportunities to get involved and be active participants during the development process. Results show that teachers are actively participating in staff meetings and they have opinions and raise issues during discussions.

Villegas-Reimers (2003) argues one of the most effective methods of PD is the in-service teacher training which includes workshops, seminars and staff developmental meetings. However, she further points out that some researchers criticise this kind of PD as it may be completely different from what the teachers really need.

The principals demonstrate the understanding of teacher professional development as an on-going activity. Results show that principals understood their roles as school managers in supporting teacher professional development in their schools and principals promote the formation of working subject committees as a means of interaction for teachers to sit and develop one another. Minutes of subject committee meetings and staff meetings demonstrate that the committees were functional and discussion of relevant aspects occurred. The study also showed that principals' understood that teacher PD incorporates many aspects including content, pedagogical knowledge, classroom management, etc. Principals responded that they understand their role as intermediaries between their teachers and other stakeholders like subject advisors and expert teachers from other schools. Results show that principals encourage teachers to participate in developmental workshops organised by the department of education such as Just in Time (JIT) and orientation workshops

4.4 Teamwork and collaboration

Three principals, Mr Mavundla, Mr Mosidi and Mrs Nxasane, agreed that encouraging team teaching within a school allowed teachers to interact often to discuss content. Mr Mosidi mentioned that teachers were no longer afraid of one another when seeking assistance because they interacted now and then about the things concerning their practice. He added,

"*The subject committees are the components that play a key role in ensuring that teachers are well vested with content and pedagogical knowledge*".

Mr Mavundla shared that they had a program of developmental meetings within the school that was in place to ensure that teachers had time to engage in teacher professional development activities. He further mentioned that: "*Provision of time for teachers to meet as subject teachers or as a department enables development to be viable within the school*".

Mrs Nxasane revealed that teacher professional development usually was achieved or occurred when the teacher interacted with other teachers who were either teaching the same grade, the same subject or people from the same profession. She further explained that as a principal she knows her teachers' strengths and weaknesses and she identifies those who are experienced and more competent to help develop novice teachers. She said that:

> *I always encourage and promote that when there is someone within the school who can provide assistance in terms of professional development he or she does that to help and equip other teachers.*

Correspondingly, Mr Mosidi mentioned that the staff as a community is able to develop one another through sharing of information and ideas. He said:

> *We make a strong contribution towards the development of one another by allowing interaction amongst ourselves as teachers, either teaching the same subject or teaching in the same grade, and also as well as teaching in the same school because there are other common and general aspects of development for all teachers irrespective of the subjects or grades*

It has been noted from all the principals that they do follow up monitoring in ensuring that collaboration and teamwork does occur in their school based PLCs. During an interview session, Mr Mosidi alluded that as a principal, he monitors the progress of the subject committees to determine if the committees are functional. He further stated, "*As a principal I don't sit at the back and just watch, but I do a close monitoring to see what we agreed upon as staff does happen*.

Principals also revealed that they supported teacher professional development through the use of networking when they were unable to offer direct support themselves. Although all four

principals mentioned the issue of networking and subject advisors as the main focal point, but some different people like experienced teachers and lead teachers within the school were identified as being a very helpful during networking.

Mrs Nxasane alluded that networking assisted them a lot as a school as their school did not have a departmental head and most of the teachers in her staff were novice teachers with less than three years teaching experience. She stated:

> *As a principal, it is my duty to ensure that when a teacher indicates that he or she is having a problem in a particular learning area so that I network with other teachers from neighbouring schools to come and provide support.*

Mr Mavundla also mentioned that they sometimes invited the subject advisors from the Teaching and Learning Support (TLS) to come and provide support to the teachers within the school. He said, "*I liaise with the TLS department and invite subject advisors to come and assist in developing teachers in their respective subjects*"

Similarly, Mrs Nxasane explained that sometimes she even requested assistance from the lead teachers from the neighbouring schools. "*In these days, we have what we call lead teachers who are very helpful when it comes into networking*"

Desimone's (2011) conceptual framework attests that professional development should focus on the five core features of development, which are content focus, active learning, coherence, duration and active participation. This corresponds with the results of the study that teachers are actively involved in learning through the networking and collaboration. The main focal point of the teachers' development is content and pedagogical knowledge and hence, that occur through the collective participation of teachers teaching the same subject either from the same school or from the neighbouring schools. Desimone (2011) contends that collective participation means that "a group of teachers from the same grade, subject or school should participate in professional development activities together to build an interactive learning community" (p. 29). Similarly, in this study, active learning took place since subject advisors were invited to come and develop teachers in schools and teachers learnt from one another through collaboration.

Fox and Wilson (2009) claims that networking is mostly found within departments where teachers share ideas and knowledge as a group. Results showed that principals promoted networking from inside and outside the school because they believed it could yield positive results of teachers' development in their schools. Similarly, Villegas-Reimers (2003) claims that there are so many successful projects whereby the creation of networking to support teachers' PD has been implemented. Villegas-Reimers (2003) further argues that teacher networks get teachers together to address challenges they encounter in their teaching practices.

Accordingly, results in this study showed that principals supported collaboration of teachers at their schools through the monitoring of the work of subject committees and departmental heads. Principals believed that subject committees were the steering engine for teamwork and collaboration. Watson (2014) argues that collaboration among teachers stimulates development as teachers receive support from each other. Findings of this study support Watson's view about collaboration. In the same way, Villegas-Reimers (2003) argues that PD for teachers will happen because of collaboration of teachers from different institutions. She further explains that cooperative and collegial development can be implemented through professional dialogues to discuss professional issues of personal interest.

In the same vein, results in this study show that principals encouraged and supported team teaching amongst teachers within their school as a method of developing one another. The study revealed that developmental meetings were featured in the management plan although they were not held frequently, every term one meeting was held. This was done to facilitate collaboration amongst teachers. Results showed that principals were able to utilise their teachers based on their strengths of supporting one another. The study also highlighted that principals encouraged networking with the expert teachers from the neighbouring schools and creating partnerships with those teachers for information sharing purposes.

4.5   Mentoring and monitoring

Principals' responses showed that mentoring is one of the key roles they play in ensuring professional development in their PLCs. Mr Mavundla stated that he was a mentor by virtue of powers he has as a principal, therefore, it was his duty to mentor teachers at his school. He said:

> *It is in our policy that newly appointed educators should be supported by experienced educators within the school before they are put at the deep end of the sea. So as a principal, it is my duty to ensure that such programs are being implemented and are effective to help support new teachers. There all appointed mentors have got their programs of mentoring that are quarterly monitored by the principal and the deputy principal to check if there is progress in terms of teacher development*

He further stated that his role as a principal is to monitor that the mentor and the mentee meet and meeting to discuss the progress of the new teacher in adapting to the school. He said:

> *In the program that is developed, I want to see the schedule of the meetings between the two parties the mentor and the mentee. I also want to see a summary of the things they discussed so that I will be able to monitor the progress at my level as a principal.*

Mr Mosidi also pointed out that the mentoring program is a crucial component in professional development of the teachers especially the. He elaborated further that all teachers need mentoring irrespective of their teaching experience because in the field of education there are always new developments. He said:

> *Mentoring is meant to ensure that teachers are supported at all times when they come across some challenges, especially those who are new in the system. In general, I can say even those with years of experience, they still need mentoring because of the ever changing system in our country. So as a manager, I must ensure that such programs are implemented in our school and are controlled to serve their intended purpose.*

All four principals asserted that it was crucial for principals to monitor the progress of all activities happening at school. They all agreed that monitoring is the duty of every principal supported by the SMT members. Macu (2013) argues that monitoring is checking if all that has been planned is happening and reminding others while controlling the progress.

Mr Mosidi further stated in his response that as a principal, he monitored that all the activities that were proposed and agreed upon in the planning phase of the school were implemented. He said that:

> *It is my responsibility to check if our resolutions are implemented and to monitor their effectiveness so that our goals and objectives are achieved. So, all I am trying to say is, activities like departmental meetings, class visits by departmental heads, mentoring program, collaboration, etc. are all happening as planned and evaluate such programmes if there are efficient.*

Results from the document analysis of Falaza primary school showed that monitoring did take place within the school. In the minutes of the staff meeting held on 10/05/2017, it recorded a discussion about the progress of some development activities where the principal was giving feedback about his observation:

> *The principal acknowledged the work of the subject heads for their efforts by ensuring that subjects meetings are held as per management plan. The principal further emphasized that the matters discussed in these meetings should mostly be of curriculum because such meetings are meant for that (10/05/2017).*

Mr Mavundla shared a similar view about monitoring as a vital component at school. He suggested that monitoring was a collective responsibility of the SMT as a whole. He said:

> *Monitoring is not a one man's job, but all of us as SMT members, we are duty bound to do our parts as we are allocated duties at our levels. Though, the principal is the overseer of them all as the school manager. At the end of every year we seat in a planning meeting where we plan the activities of the following year. Amongst the things we plan are staff developmental meetings, departmental meetings, internal workshops, subject committees and many more. So as the principal, I have to see to it that these activities are implemented and are effective. Then monitoring becomes my key task as the principal and hence to supervise the responsible personnel for each and every activity to be fully responsible.*

In the same vein, Mr Hlengani stated that monitoring was the work of every manager. He said:

> *Monitoring is the duty of every manager. It is my duty as the manager to monitor teachers within my school. Making sure that developmental activities are taking place and are beneficial to the teachers as well as the school as a*

whole. So it's a top down approach, as I monitor departmental heads, the departmental heads do the same to the teachers in their departments. However, mine as a principal overlaps because I don't only rely on the DHs report but I do monitor teachers' progress as well, so it is the matter of accountability.

Correspondingly, Mrs Nxasane also pointed out the importance of monitoring and supervising staff. She said:

A school is a place that needs teachers to be developed as they are in contact with learners in terms of teaching and learning, so as a principal I do monitor that such development programs are developed and implemented. It is my duty to ensure that there is progress of such developmental activities so that outcomes which are better and competent teachers are achieved.

Looking at the responses of the two principals who mentioned the issue of mentoring, it suggests that there is an understanding of the roles they should play as principals. It also shows that there are steps taken by principals in ensuring that professional developmental activities take place at their school-based PLCs. According to Macu (2013), mentoring establishes a foundation for teacher development in schools and creates opportunities for experienced teachers to share knowledge with the novice teachers. Shank (2005) in models of PD, suggests that mentoring is the liaison between the mentor and the mentee with the aim of supporting the novice teacher. The above scholars' views on mentoring correlate with findings about mentoring.

Principals believed that monitoring programs and activities that take place at schools was a crucial factor in supporting professional development. Results show that mentoring and monitoring programs that support development are the key roles of the principal. So principals as agents of professional development in schools must ensure that they monitor developmental activities. Desimone (2011) claims that active learning occurs when teachers are given the opportunity to be involved by observing, getting feedback and making presentations. Similarly, during mentoring and monitoring interactions amongst parties involved, they incorporate active learning which is one of the features of professional development. This shows that principals play a significant role in promoting teacher professional development in their schools.

Results of this study are in line with the claims of Rhodes and Beneicke (2002) who argue that mentoring teachers is a positive model that promotes and improves teachers' practices as was discussed in Chapter Two. Correspondingly, Villegas-Reimers (2003) argues that during the mentoring process an experienced teacher provides the novice teacher with the support, guidance, feedback and a network of colleagues who share resources. This is similar to what principals stated above. In the same way it corresponds with Hobsons et al. (2009) who attest that mentoring is an important element that supports professional development for teachers.

Results show that principals regard mentoring as a key mode of teacher PD in schools. Results reveal that mentoring programs were formulated and monitored by the principals and the SMT members. The study shows that principals also view monitoring and supervision as an essential aspect in promoting teacher development. Evidence from staff minutes of the sample schools show that discussions of developmental activities take place in staff meetings and feedback is given to teachers about the progress.

4.6   Factors supporting teacher professional development

The study revealed various enabling factors that support professional development in school-based PLCs. A discussion of these enabling factors that help school principals to support professional development follows.

4.6.1 Committed and motivated teachers

Mr Mosidi claimed that if teachers were committed and motivated towards their work, it would be easy for them to accept initiatives and proposals that supported their development as teachers. Mr Mosidi added that committed teachers adhered to the objectives of the school and were very cooperative with regards to their work as teachers. He said, *"My teachers are the ones who initiate ideas of working as a team, and my duty as a principal is to create space for them to exercise their initiative as teachers"*.

Mr Mavundla stated that teachers were not even afraid to seek assistance from outside if they had that drive from within themselves. He explained: *"When teachers are committed and*

motivated they have that sense of ownership for everything they do, without being pushed by the manager".

Mrs Nxasane shared the same view about committed and motivated teachers as people who were cooperative which made it is easy to work with them. She said:

> *I believe that my teachers are a small and manageable number which makes it a priority for them to be committed, they are cooperative in everything we do as a team. They bring in brilliant ideas concerning the development of our staff members*

This was supported in the staff meeting minutes of her school (Gaza Secondary) as it appeared that in most cases, teachers were the ones who initiated ideas of team teaching and developing one another. One of the teachers reported that the principal invited her subject advisor to come and provide support since her results were not good from the previous year.

4.6.2 Class visits

Class visits are vital and very helpful for both teachers and the SMT, as they are an important in supporting teachers in the classroom. Three of four principals pointed out that class visits were a crucial component that enabled them to provide the necessary support needed by teachers. Mr Mosidi responded: "*The report from class visits is an important tool that I can use to provide the support that deemed to be needed be the teacher*". Mr Mavundla said:

> *It may be very difficult to try to support the teacher having not diagnosed the problem, that's where class visits becomes a key for me as a principal. Though class visits are often done by departmental heads and subject heads but their reports help me act according.*

Mr Hlengani also mentioned the importance of class visits as an important factor. He stated that they gave a guide on what aspect a teacher needed development in. He said:

> *This makes me able to utilise my people effectively because I get to know their strengths and weaknesses so that those who have strengths assist those people who are struggling, making them lead teachers within our school-based PLC.*

On the other hand, Mrs Nxasane responded, "*Though class visits may be helpful but as a small school it is very difficult for me to do class visits because of the load I have as I am also*

having subjects to teach as well as management activities". She claimed that since there is no departmental head in her school it is very difficult to administer certain protocols in her school. However, she agreed that class visits could be an important activity in determining teacher needs in terms of development.

4.6.3 Implementation of Jika Imfundo and one-on-one meetings

The implementation of Jika Imfundo came as a solution to many principals who had been struggling to support their teachers in their school-based PLCs. This was also found in this study. Mr Mosidi acknowledged he received guidance on how to provide the necessary support to his teachers. He said:

> *Jika Imfundo has taught me a lot, especially on what kind of support that I*
> *need to offer my teachers. The tools developed to monitor Jika Imfundo makes*
> *it easier for us as principal to even understand what is happening in the*
> *classroom.*

Correspondingly, the minutes of Falaza Primary from the staff meetings show the discussion of how this Jika Imfundo is going to assist them as principals to monitor and track teachers' work in a very easy way:

> *The principals explained the process of tracking teachers' work through the*
> *use of the tools that are designed specifically for Jika Imfundo program. He*
> *also mentioned how these tools made their work so easy* [03/03/2018].

Mrs Nxasane shared a similar view about the contribution of Jika Imfundo in enabling her as a principal to support the development of her teachers in their PLC. She said that she had no clue on how to track progress with their work which made it difficult for her to come up with an appropriate intervention program to support them. This is what she said:

> *With Jika Imfundo, I am now able to detect where exactly the teacher is*
> *having a problem, with this tracking system and "what's working and what's*
> *not working" tools assist me to address the exact problem of the teacher,*
> *rather than coming with so many general turn around strategies that will not*
> *help at the end.*

In the same way, the minutes of the staff meeting of Gaza Secondary revealed that Jika Imfundo helps the principal to offer the necessary support towards teachers who are having

problems with content coverage. "*The principal explained that this should not be taken as a burden but it will enable her as a principal to give support as early as the problem is identified*" [18/042018].

Similarly, Mr Mavundla mentioned that since the introduction of Jika Imfundo in their schools, it has served as a catalyst for them as SMTs to support teachers' development. He said, "*Jika Imfundo enforces us as principals to be actively involved in what is happening in the classroom, it allows us to play our part of providing support to teachers in whatever challenges they come across in their work*".

The results showed that principals viewed Jika Imfundo monitoring tools as a solution that addressed their shortcomings of supporting their teachers' professional development. This suggests that Jika Imfundo simplified the role of principals and clarified them with regards to the support they offered to their teachers.

Three principals, Mr Mosidi, Mr Mavundla and Mr Hlengani shared the same view about one-on-one sessions as one of the factors that enabled them to support professional development in their school-based PLCs. They believed that having regular one-on-one sessions within the school enabled them to trace the progress and the effectiveness of professional development activities that took place within the school.

Mr Mosidi described the one-on-one meeting as a session where the supervisor meets with the individual subordinate to evaluate the progress of the activities they were supposed to have completed. He explained:

> *One-on-one meeting is a session whereby, I as a principal meeting with my deputy principal discussion the progress of the things that are taking place within the school, It's where we review and track if we are still focusing on our objectives as a school, same thing applies with the deputy principal meeting the departmental heads one-on-one and departmental heads do alike with their teachers.*

Similarly, Mr Mavundla also shared similar views about the one-on-one meeting. He said:

> *I find it very helpful when we engage on one-on-one session with my teachers because that's where I am able to identify gaps and areas of development that*

are needed by teachers. Teachers develop trust to say everything, even their
weaknesses and their limitations in a private space.

In the same way, Mr Hlengani highlighted the positive impact of one-on-one sessions with teachers as an enabling factor to diagnose the area of development and hence, provide necessary support needed by that particular teacher.

Mrs Nxasane on the other hand, revealed that one-on-one sessions sometimes made teachers afraid to express their feelings to the principal as they may be seen as incompetent teachers. She therefore didn't see them as a positive factor. However, she mentioned that she only used the one-on-one meeting to give feedback to teachers after she had checked their work. She said:

> *Teachers become so nervous when are being called to meet the principal or*
> *the supervisor in the office because they think that they have done something*
> *wrong, and they are reluctant to cough out challenges that will put their level*
> *of competence at stake.*

4.6.4 Sharing decision making with the teachers

Decision making in a school is assumed to be the duty of the principal and the SMT. However, during the interviews with the principals, findings revealed the importance of involving level one teachers in decision making. Sharing decision making with teachers may seem to be unnecessary and a waste of time but the study showed the positive impact of involving teachers at lower levels in the decision making within a school. All principals shared the same feelings about involving teachers in decision making motivates them and makes them cooperative.

Mr Mosidi stated that when teachers are involved in decision making they have a sense of ownership of the things that are happening within the school. He said, "*Teachers really like it and feel very much important and honoured when they have a say in the decisions taken in their school".* The study showed that teachers cooperated and became active participants in programs of professional development if they were involved in its planning and their opinions were considered.

Mr Mavundla concurred that engaging teachers in the decision making was a way of indirectly influencing them to cooperate in the activities of the school. Mr Mavundla said:

> *Most teachers are very reluctant to develop themselves and they mention so many things as their stumbling blocks but if they are part of the whole plan they commit themselves to it. Therefore, that helps me as a principal to play my part of supporting them developing.*

He further mentioned that it was very difficult to support teachers who were not cooperative.

Mrs Nxasane stated that as the principal of a small school, automatically she is forced to involve all teachers in the decision making as it is a small school with only 6 teachers. She said:

> *I have noticed that involving teachers in the decision making enables the implementation of the decisions taken to be effective. So this applies when we plan and implementing professional development activities within the school, teachers respond positively and cooperate.*

This suggests that when teachers were part of the decisions made within the school, they dedicated themselves to the activities taking place within the school, thus enabling the principal to provide the necessary support needed by teachers.

The involvement of teachers in the decision making was also noted in minutes of the staff meeting of Gaza Secondary. In their first meeting in 2016, for analysis of the previous year's results, teachers were asked to suggest strategies to be used to improve the results of the senior certificate for 2016. Teachers proposed developmental activities that would assist them in improving their teaching practices while the principal committed herself to give full support of all developmental activities suggested by the teachers. The minutes read as follows:

> *Teachers proposed the following strategies to be used to help them improve the results:*
>
> - *Teachers from school X will be invited to come and be lead teachers so that they will capacitate local teachers.*

- *As teachers we will share our techniques and approaches to help develop one another within the school.*
- *IQMS must be implemented for its intended purpose rather than for scoring teachers for increment purposes.*

(Minutes, Gaza high school, 19/01/2016)

According to Price (2012), teachers that are involved in the decision making in a school tend to have a positive attitude; hence, they participate in the activities taking place within the school. Findings show that teachers are motivated to participate in professional development activities when they are given an opportunity to have a say in its planning.

4.6.5 Frequency of interaction amongst teachers

Participants shared that another element that assisted principals' efforts to support teachers was frequent interaction of the staff members.

Mr Hlengani explained that he developed a policy that all teachers gathered and had breakfast together during the break time. He said: *"This is done to strengthen our human relations as a team, and it allows us to bond and develop a sense of trust and promote mutual cohesion among the teachers"*. In the same view, Mr Mosidi agreed that when teachers interacted more often, it reduced distrust and promoted satisfaction amongst the teachers. He said "*When teachers have developed friendship and trust, it is easy for me to utilise them according to their skills to assist one another"*.

Mr Hlengani and Mr Mosidi strongly emphasised frequent interactions of teachers and their emotions demonstrated that they believed this was very important. However, Mr Mavundla and Mrs Nxasane did not mention frequent teacher interactions. Findings show that frequent interaction of teachers within the PLC either formal or informal, assisted principals with utilising the teachers to help develop others. These interactions happened in the form of formal meetings of the staff, departmental meetings, informal gatherings in a staff room during break time and informal verbal communications that happened amongst the teachers.

Although principals mentioned five different factors they perceive helped them support teacher PD in their schools, Price's (2012) conceptual framework corresponds with the two of

principles identified by the principals. The two factors are sharing decision making with other teachers and frequency of the interaction amongst teachers. According to Price (2012), the degree of power sharing allowed by the principal determines the extent to which their teachers become passionately involved in activities taking place within the school, including developmental activities and curriculum related issues.

Price (2012) further elaborate, that the frequency of cooperative professional interchange replicates the extent of joint principal and teacher professional development activities that occur within the school. She further claims that sharing of powers by the principal and teachers at the ground level has a direct influence on the effect of cooperative professional interactions between principals and teachers. However, the other three factors identified by the principals were not mentioned by Price. Those factors include (a) implementation of Jika Imfundo and one-on-one meetings, (b) class visits and (c) committed and motivated teachers.

The principals suggested that committed and motivated teachers participate willingly in developmental activities within the school. Results also reveal that cooperation is achieved if teachers commit themselves in their work. The principals mentioned that regular class visits enables them as principals to determine areas of development and provide necessary support needed by the teachers. Results show that class visits can be done by departmental or subject heads and report back to the principal for support. The principals also stated that implementation of Jika Imfundo enables them to track teachers' work and one-on-one meetings. The study further revealed that sharing decision making with the teachers encourages them to cooperate in their professional development since their views are considered in the formulation of such activities. Additionally, Principals also stated that they encouraged frequently interaction of teachers within the school to promote collegial development.

4.7   Challenges hindering professional development

A number of factors were identified by the principals as a hindrance in their efforts to support teacher development, which are discussed below.

4.7.1 High workloads for teachers

One of the reasons that made it difficult for teachers to engage in professional development was the high workloads of teachers in the classroom. All four principals mentioned the high workloads of teachers, in both big and small schools. Mr Mosidi stated that teachers find themselves carrying a big chunk load which makes it difficult for them to focus on their own professional development. He said:

> *Teachers has got too much work and are overloaded, For an example, a departmental head in the foundation phase is a full-time class teacher and has to take all learning areas like other teachers and on top has to supervise the work of other teachers*

Mr Mavundla concurred about the high volume of work for teachers which take away time for them to engage in thorough professional development within the school. He said:

> *Sometimes, the workload is somehow bigger for the teacher to finish up all the expected schedule of work, which makes it difficult to create time for the development of teachers as a school because we are all striving to chase the ATP in a number of classrooms that are allocated to each teacher.*

Similarly, Mrs Nxasane stated that time was a scarce resource for teachers to carry out all the requirements of the department, including professional development because teachers do not have time when they are at school because of the amount of work they have. She said, "*Too much volume of work for teachers as they teach more subjects. Too much burden for me as a principal as I am also taking some subjects and hence a class teacher*"

Mr Hlengani, like Mrs Nxasane is also a principal with subjects to teach in his school. He complained about too much work for teachers in a very short space of time and with many classes to teach. He stated:

> *Just imagine a principal taking two learning areas in grade 8 and 9, my teachers are teaching two subjects grade 10 to 12 and take one or two other subjects in the senior phase, and that is not easy.*

The issue of overloaded teachers was also evident in the document analysis. The minutes of the staff meeting of Tholisu School revealed that teachers raised concerns about being

overloaded, and mentioned that they were unable to focus on their specialisation subjects since they were required to teach other subjects that they were not trained in. Minutes of Gaza Secondary School also indicated the unhappiness of teachers who were teaching more than one subject in grade 12 and put that as a reason for the poor performance of their school the previous year.

4.7.2   No provision of time for professional development

Some of the principals revealed that the shortage of time for professional development activities also hindered the support of their teachers. When asked if they accommodated these professional development activities in the time-table, Mrs Nxasane stated that there was no time for professional development because teachers had more to do in any given day. She said: *"One of the problems is the shortage of time for professional development activities since we even use break times to hold our meetings because we cannot disturb the contact time stipulated by the policy".*

The issue of time was also identified by Mr Hlengani who alluded that the time factor was a great concern because of the rigid policies of the department. He said:

> *We are expected to support the development of the teachers, but the question is, where do we get time to hold all these meetings stipulated by the policy since teachers do not have even one free period in a week.*

However, Mr Mosidi stated that according to Jika Imfundo, all the activities that took place within the school needed to feature in the time table. He responded by saying:

> *The new program of Jika Imfundo that we are using now stipulates that everything must be in the timetable. If I meet my DP it must be in the timetable. Same thing with the DP meeting the HoDs must be featured in the timetable. Even the meeting between me visiting the teachers at times down there, it must be in the schedule. So it is like that everything must be in a schedule.*

Mr Mavundla mentioned that they have a program written down regarding these activities of professional development, and that although it was not allocated a special time, they tried to squeeze it into the given contact time. Mr Mavundla said:

> *We do have programs whereby the mentor has to submit their program of action for the term to the office so that as managers we will be able to review the progress at the end of the quarter and also provide necessary support where needed.*

He further stated that creating space for development of others is not only for the principal, but also for the SMT and all other teachers since a school is a PLC.

4.7.3 Non-cooperative and non-supportive teachers

Mr Mavundla mentioned that one of the challenges he faced in his school was the issue of teachers who do not cooperate and who are not supportive. Mr Mavundla said "*Some teachers are very difficult to deal with because of their attitudes*, *they resist everything within the school regardless of its benefits"*. He mentioned that they did not want to participate in the activities of the school. Although only Mr Mavundla mentioned this challenge, the emphasis he made revealed the challenge he was faced with when trying to support professional development in his school.

4.7.4 Strategies to overcome challenges

Despite all the challenges that principals faced in trying to support teacher professional development in their schools, the study revealed that there are solutions that they are putting in place to ensure professional development occurs. All four principals responded positively and indicated that there were measures in place to counter challenges that were stumbling blocks to teacher development. Mr Mosidi said that "*It is my duty as a principal to neutralise every situation that is disturbing development in our PLC"*.

4.7.5 Creating space and time for development

The most common area of concern that most principals mentioned was the shortage of time for teachers to participate fully in the internal professional development in their PLCs. Three of four principals interviewed highlighted the provision of time for developmental activities to take place within their PLCs. Findings reveal that although time was a great concern, principals were able to motivate for the utilisation of break times and reshuffle the time table to enable teachers of the same subject to be free so that they could hold their meetings at least once a month.

Reshuffling of the time table had been implemented by introducing the relief time table that enabled teachers of the same subject to be relieved at the same time. Mr Mosidi said:

> *After identifying that meetings are not held as they supposed to be, we then try to feature them in writing in the action plan so that everyone knows that on a particular day, they are meeting as a department or as a committee.*

Mr Mavundla also mentioned that as a principal, he monitored whether departmental heads and mentor teachers held meetings whereby teachers supported one another, as teachers of the same subject or the mentor and the mentee. He said "*In our resolution as a school we agreed that our departmental heads and mentors submit their program of action quarterly that includes date and time of the developmental activities*". This corresponds with the Employment of Educators Act 76, of 1998 (p. C-64) which stipulates that one of the core duties and responsibilities of the principal is:

> To be responsible for the development of staff training programmes, both school-based, school-focused and externally directed, and to assist educators, particularly new and inexperienced educators, in developing and achieving educational objectives in accordance with the needs of the school.

4.7.6 Motivation

Participants all agreed that one key tool in overcoming the above mentioned challenges was motivation. Mr Hlengani explained that there was nothing they could do about the high duty load of their teachers because that was determined by the number of learners a school had. The only tool they have is to motivate them and try to instil a positive attitude.

According to Desimone (2011) PD activities should be arranged as such that it includes at least 20 hours of contact time. Correspondingly, amongst the strategies suggested by the principals in dealing with the shortage of time for PD activities they identified the issue of creating a specified contact time that will be allocated for such activities. Villegas-Reimers (2003) argues that shortage of time seems to be a common problem in most developing countries where schools fail to allocate sufficient time for PD activities. However, she further stated that teachers need time to engage both in professional development and also perform their daily on-going tasks of work.

On the other hand, Rhodes and Beneicke (2002) argue that the creation of sufficient time for PD activities like mentoring should take place in a school will thereby addressing the issue of a high workload for teachers. They further mention that this may not be easy in primary schools since teachers are engaged in full-time class contact.

Although both Desimone (2011) and Price (2012) have not mentioned anything about motivation but scholars like Khan and Khan (2014) argues that motivation is an important element of administration duties for the principal and can be used to stimulate the active involvement of teachers for the improvement of learning and teaching activities.

Results revealed that a high workload for teachers made it difficult for teachers to participate fully in PD activities since most time is devoted to teaching in the classroom. The principals stated that due to the high teachers' workload, there is no time allocated for PD activities. The principals also stated that some teachers are too difficult to deal with and don't cooperate which makes it difficult to support PD and suggested some strategies to deal with the above challenges. The study showed that creating time and space for PD activities in contact time and be scheduled in the school time table. They further suggested that the motivation of teachers can be used to encourage them to commit themselves to participate in PD activities.

From the above data analysis, it is noted that principals of small school sizes, Mr Hlengani and Mrs Nxasane were facing more challenges in supporting teacher professional development in their schools compared to Mr Mosidi and Mr Mavundla who manage bigger schools. The data revealed that such challenges are as results of being under-staffed in small schools.

4.7   Chapter summary

This chapter presented a discussion of the results gathered from the participants through semi-structured interviews and document analysis. Results have been presented and were categorised according to themes that emerged while analysing the data. In most cases principals gave similar views related to their roles as principals in supporting professional development in their PLCs. The principals also shared some factors that enabled or hindered them in supporting their teachers in their professional development. To conclude this chapter, I report that the principals of schools support professional development of their teachers in

school based PLCs. Based on the data generated, the activities that are implemented by principals in their schools show that principals are concerned about the development of the teachers and they are taking steps to ensure that there is an improvement in their teachers' practices.

CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

5.1 Introduction

The purpose of this study was to explore the role of principals in supporting teacher professional development in a school-based PLC. In the previous chapter, I presented the data that were gathered through semi-structured interviews and document analysis and discussed the analysis of results. This chapter discusses the findings that emerged in response to the research questions. In addition, the limitations and recommendations are outlined. The findings respond to the following research questions:

1. To what extent do principals support professional development in school-based professional learning communities?

2. What factors enable or hinder principals to support professional development in school-based professional learning communities?

5.2 Summary of findings

The discussion that follows summarises the five main findings of the study. Findings of this study are as follows

1. Principals play a key role in professional development at their schools.
2. Principals support school-based professional development through promoting teamwork, collaboration and mentoring.
3. Motivated teachers, Jika Imfundo, regular class visits, teacher involvement and regular meetings enabled effective school-based professional development.
4. High workloads, less time and non-cooperative teachers hindered school-based professional development.
5. Principals used the strategies of creating time, space and motivation to develop their teachers.

5.3 The principal as a steering wheel of professional development

The first key finding indicated that participants had a good understanding of teacher

professional development. Their responses during the semi-structured interviews demonstrated a clear understanding of what professional development is. They described teacher professional development as an "on-going concern", which I interpreted as an activity that is continuous in the lifetime of a teacher. Furthermore principals viewed teacher professional development as a lifelong journey. This is in line with the claims of Darling-Hammond et al. (2009) that professional development should be rigorous and on-going. This implies that teacher development should be cumulative overtime. The finding indicates that principals believed that teacher PD creates a positive relationship between the teacher and their work. The study also revealed that principals understand that it is their role to maintain that positive relationship between the teacher and their work as it will yield positive results at the end which is improved student learning.

This finding indicates that participants understood the development of a teacher does not end at university or college level, but is the skill of empowering teachers to be competent. The principals mentioned various aspects that needed to be considered when planning to develop teachers, including content knowledge, professionalism and ethical behaviour, and pedagogical knowledge. When I look at these factors, I can relate them to some of the core features of PD as outlined by Desimone (2011) where she attests that PD should focus on the content of the subject matter. Darling-Hammond et al. (2009) reiterate that for any type of PD to be effective it must address the subject content as it is the core business of education.

5.4 Principals support school-based professional development through teamwork, collaboration and mentoring

The second key finding of this study is that principals supported professional development in school-based PLCs in various ways. They described the different ways in which they supported or facilitated professional development in their school-based PLCs; the first supporting method was through developmental meetings and workshops. This finding revealed that developmental meetings and workshops were given a lot of consideration by school principals as a source of teacher professional development.

In these developmental meetings and workshops, the participants mentioned the formation of subject committees and the meetings that are held by those committees are given greater emphasis as they are regarded as a secondary source of continuous development. These subject meetings correspond with one of the core features of effective development outlined

by Desimone (2011), in that it is achieved through collective participation by teachers who are teaching the same subject and engaging in professional developmental activities.

Participants suggested that these subject meetings mainly focused on the content knowledge and pedagogical content knowledge of the subject they were teaching. Darling-Hammond et al. (2009) claim that PD is considered effective if it addresses challenges faced on a daily basis related to teaching and learning. They further contend that subject meetings must provide opportunities to build teachers' content knowledge and PCK.

Teamwork and collaboration was another aspect identified by the participants. This finding showed that principals encouraged and motivated teachers to work collaboratively as a team. Most participants shared the same view that promoting teamwork enhanced opportunities of teacher professional development within a PLC. The finding revealed that teamwork improved trust amongst the teachers within the school and teachers did not feel ashamed or shy to ask for assistance from others because they were a team that worked together.

This finding showed that principals encouraged subject committees to have a written program for meetings and interaction of the teachers for teamwork and collaboration to occur. The study revealed that in these meetings teachers supported one another by sharing ideas and approaches to teach the subject. This collaboration did not only help teachers with sharing ideas but also by developing a shared understanding of their work, and developing resources and activities. Thus, collaboration helped teachers develop individual competencies.

This finding resonates with Rhodes and Beneicke (2002) who argue that besides encouraging teacher collaboration and teamwork, it is also a tool that empowers teachers and increases their confidence. The study further revealed that principals played a crucial role in maintaining networks with subject advisors and expert or lead teachers from neighbouring schools as a strategy to provide quality professional development for their teachers. This finding showed that networking was done through continuous interaction with the best performing schools within the area. Lead teachers from those best performing schools were invited to share their teaching strategies with the local teachers.

Participants mentioned that through this networking strategy teachers shared resources like lesson plans and other teaching aids. This finding showed that through networking, schools

adopted a strategy to standardise tests and examinations by setting common tests and tasks to measure the development of the teachers in their schools. Rhodes and Beneicke (2002) claim that the potential benefits of networking are mostly based on the closes relationships amongst teachers and their shared outcomes.

According to the results of this study, another important aspect is principals promoting mentoring programs. This finding showed that establishing and supporting mentoring programs in schools ensures the development of teachers, especially the novice teachers. The study revealed that principals encouraged senior teachers to mentor and help develop new and young teachers' competencies through the mentoring system. This view is similar to that of Fairbanks, Freedman and Kahn (2000) who argue that the purpose of mentoring is to help the novice teachers develop their professional identity.

According to Shank (2005), mentoring is a one-on-one interaction between an experienced teacher who is the mentor and the new teacher who is the mentee, with the aim of developing the new teacher. Thus, this finding showed that principals' efforts to promote mentoring programs in their PLCs are linked with the views of Hobson et al. (2009) and Ramnarain and Ramaila (2012) regarding the purpose and benefits of mentoring.

This finding revealed that principals' perceived monitoring and supervision of teachers is important in ensuring that developmental activities take place within a school-based PLC. Monitoring is undertaken by the principals and the SMT of the schools to check if all the developmental programs that were scheduled for the year took place and that reports are written by the relevant personnel for the principal. This is done so that the principal is able to provide the necessary support for the success of those programs.

The principals believed that it was their duty to monitor developmental activities that take place within a school-based PLC. This finding showed that while monitoring, principals also checked the development of teachers through the activities that were implemented within the school.

5.5 Motivated teachers, Jika Imfundo, regular class visits, teacher involvement and regular meetings enabled school-based professional development

The third key finding of this study revealed that committed and dedicated teachers were easier to work with because they were cooperative in the activities that took place within the PLC. Teachers who were committed to their work are motivated and eager to learn and develop themselves. The finding showed that principals regarded commitment as one of the best attributes of a teacher that leads to professional development.

This finding showed that Jika Imfundo tools also helped principals to track the progress of teacher's work and hence, implement appropriate interventions necessary for individual teachers according to their needs. The study showed that although principals supported teacher development, they were not addressing the real shortcomings of teachers but the assumed weaknesses of the teachers. Thus, the finding revealed that the implementation of Jika Imfundo enabled principals to support teacher development in their PLCs. The finding also revealed that principals regarded one-on-one meetings as an enabling factor to effective professional development activities. Through these one-on-one sessions, the departmental head or the deputy principal reported back to principals about the professional development of each teacher.

In addition, this finding showed that class visits were an important factor that enabled the SMT to provide the necessary support needed by teachers. Principals believed that the SMT would not be able to diagnose weaknesses of teachers without doing class visits. This finding revealed that principals and the SMT used class visits as a tool to determine areas of concern where teachers needed support and development. The study showed that class visits also influenced the establishment of other developmental activities that were used by the principals to support the development of the teachers.

This finding revealed that principals believed that teachers become active participants in developmental activities if they were involved in the planning stage of such activities. Although this can be seen as an indirect factor, the principals perceived it to have a direct influence on the way teachers cooperated within the school and hence, enabled principals to support them. According to Price (2012), teachers who were involved in the decision making of a school had a positive attitude, and cooperated in the activities that took place within the

school. Similarly, this finding showed that teachers were motivated to participate in professional development activities when they were involved in decision making about the planning of these activities.

This finding also showed that frequent interactions and good human relations between teachers and principals supported school-based professional development of teachers. Price (2012) claims that the frequency of interactions amongst teachers and the principal promotes tolerance towards one another and therefore, encourages cohesion in all processes within the school. This correlates with principal's responses about frequent interactions and good human relations promoting teacher development.

5.6 High workloads, less time and non-co-operative teachers hindered school-based professional development

The fourth key finding showed that teachers with very high workloads found it difficult to engage in school-based professional development activities. This resulted from a shortage of time as teachers devoted more of their time to class teaching and following the annual teaching plan as outlined by the department. The finding revealed that it was very difficult for principals to support and promote teacher developmental activities in their school-based PLCs knowing that teachers have increased workloads, especially in schools in rural areas where the study was conducted.

The finding showed that the allocated time for teaching and learning took up most time of the time, resulting in teachers using break time for professional developmental activities. The study showed that it was difficult to accommodate time for teacher developmental activities since most teachers were teaching more than one subject in more than one grade. According to Desimone (2011, p.29) "professional development activities should be spread over a semester and should include 20 hours or more of contact time". Therefore, when referring to the above statement, it seemed very difficult for principals to support teacher professional development in a setup where time constraints limited developmental activities that took place in a school.

This finding showed that some teachers didn't cooperate and had negative attitudes which made it difficult for principals to provide support regarding their development as teachers.

This finding indicated that it was difficult for principals to work with teachers who were reluctant to take orders from their seniors.

5.7   Principal used the strategies of creating time and space, and motivation to develop teachers

Despite the challenges mentioned by the principals, the fifth key finding revealed that principals employed strategies to help overcome these challenges. This finding revealed that principals created space and time for developmental activities within a school-based PLC which yielded positive results. Despite the fact that most of the time was allocated for teaching and learning, it showed that principals were able to utilise break times for developmental activities for the benefit of their teachers. The principals also mentioned that the timetable was restructured to ensure that teachers of the same subject were free at the same time to accommodate their meetings and other developmental activities. Darling-Hammond et al. (2009) contend that it is important to allocate time for PD activities within a given working time. This finding showed that principals decided to feature developmental activities in an action plan to ensure that they took place and were given time like any other important activity taking place within the school.

The study found that motivation of teachers was another strategy used by the principals to help teachers understand the importance of engaging in professional development, despite all the challenges and negative factors that may impact professional development. Although not all principals mentioned this, I believe that it could be used to change the mind-set and attitudes of difficult teachers who are not cooperative and/or supportive when it comes to professional developmental activities within the school.

5.8   Limitations of the study

This study only involved a sample of four principals at four schools in two districts of UMgungundlovu and UMzinyathi. The participants did not represent the population of all the principals in the districts and the sample was conveniently selected to suit the researcher. The data that was used was only collected from the principals and not from the teachers who are the beneficiaries of teacher professional development. Therefore, the findings of this study cannot be generalised.

5.9   Recommendations

Amongst the challenges that were identified by the principals as factors that hindered their efforts in supporting teacher professional development was the shortage of time for developmental activities. I therefore recommend that school holidays be used for teacher development sessions to allow up enough time for the professional development of the teachers. This will help as contact time for teaching and learning will not be affected.

Secondly, the professional developmental activities need to be accommodated in the school timetable to ensure that everyone is aware of them and they are scheduled in notional time so that all teachers will respect such activities if they are implemented within working hours.

I recommend that the DoE organise regular workshops for principals that will empower them on how to support the professional development of teachers in their schools as it was discovered from the study that most of them did not know how to determine their teachers' challenges before the implementation of Jika Imfundo. Lastly I recommend a research on how principals can use their own PLC to professionally develop themselves as school managers.

5.10   Conclusion

This chapter provided the summary of the study and the discussion of the findings in relation to the two research questions. This study was an exploratory case study located within the interpretive paradigm. Semi-structured interviews and document analysis were used to generate data. Thematic analysis was used to analyse the data generated. Findings of the study revealed that principals supported teacher professional development through the establishment of subject committees that are functional and encourage teachers to participate in workshops and seminars. Principals promoted teamwork and collaboration that was achieved through team teaching, developmental meetings, subject meetings, and networking with the expert teachers from other schools. Mentoring programs and supervision were used by the principals to foster collegial development amongst the teachers. Principals also identified the factors that enabled them to support PD in schools. These enabling factors were motivated teachers, the implementation of Jika Imfundo, regular class visits, teacher involvement and regular meetings. In addition, the principals discussed the factors that hindered them to support PD such as high workloads, less time for PD activities and non-

cooperative teachers. They also suggested strategies to overcome these challenges, that included creating time and space for PD activities in schools and motivating teachers to willingly participate in PD activities.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: Permission: KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education

education

Department:
Education
PROVINCE OF KWAZULU-NATAL

Enquiries: Phindile Duma   Tel: 033 392 1063   Ref.:2/4/8/1427

Mr TW Nene
24 George Benjamin Place
Woodlands
Pietermaritzburg
3886

Dear Mr Nene

PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH IN THE KZN DoE INSTITUTIONS

Your application to conduct research entitled: **"EXPLORING THE ROLE OF PRINCIPALS IN SUPPORTING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN SCHOOL-BASED PROFESSIONAL LEARNING COMMUNITIES"**, in the KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education Institutions has been approved. The conditions of the approval are as follows:

1. The researcher will make all the arrangements concerning the research and interviews.
2. The researcher must ensure that Educator and learning programmes are not interrupted.
3. Interviews are not conducted during the time of writing examinations in schools.
4. Learners, Educators, Schools and Institutions are not identifiable in any way from the results of the research.
5. A copy of this letter is submitted to District Managers, Principals and Heads of Institutions where the Intended research and interviews are to be conducted.
6. The period of investigation is limited to the period from 26 January 2018 to 09 July 2020.
7. Your research and interviews will be limited to the schools you have proposed and approved by the Head of Department. Please note that Principals, Educators, Departmental Officials and Learners are under no obligation to participate or assist you in your investigation.
8. Should you wish to extend the period of your survey at the school(s), please contact Miss Phindile Duma at the contact numbers below
9. Upon completion of the research, a brief summary of the findings, recommendations or a full report/dissertation/thesis must be submitted to the research office of the Department. Please address it to The Office of the HOD, Private Bag X9137, Pietermaritzburg, 3200.
10. Please note that your research and interviews will be limited to schools and institutions in KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education.

Dr. EV Nzama
Head of Department: Education
Date: 29 January 2018

..Championing Quality Education - Creating and Securing a Brighter Future

KWAZULU-NATAL DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Postal Address: Private Bag X9137 • Pietermaritzburg • 3200 • Republic of South Africa
Physical Address: 247 Burger Street • Anton Lembede Building • Pietermaritzburg • 3201
Tel.: +27 33 392 1063 • Fax.: +27 033 392 1203• Email: Phindile.Duma@kzndoe.gov.za •Web:www.kzneducation.gov.za
Facebook: KZNDOE....Twitter: @DBE_KZN....Instagram: kzn_education.... Youtube:kzndoe

APPENDIX B: Ethical clearance: University of KwaZulu-Natal

UNIVERSITY OF ™
KWAZULU-NATAL

INYUVESI
YAKWAZULU-NATALI

1 February 2018

Mr Thembinkosi Wellington Nene 200102430
School of Education
Pietermaritzburg Campus

Dear Mr Nene

Protocol reference number: HSS/2289/017M
Project Title: Exploring the role of principals in supporting professional development in school-based professional learning communities

Full Approval – Expedited Application

In response to your application received 7 December 2017, the Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee has considered the abovementioned application and the protocol has been granted **FULL APPROVAL**.

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

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

The ethical clearance certificate is only valid for a period of 3 years from the date of issue. Thereafter Recertification must be applied for on an annual basis.

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

Yours faithfully

....
Professor Shenuka Singh (Chair)
Humanities & Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee

/pm

cc Supervisor: Dr J Naidoo
cc. Academic Leader Research: Dr SB Khoza
cc. School Administrator: Ms Tyzer Khumalo

APPENDIX C: <u>Information Sheet and Consent to Participants</u>

<div align="right">

24 George Benjamin Place

Woodlands

Pietermaritzburg

3233

</div>

Date: 27 November 2017

<u>Information Sheet and Consent to Participants in Research</u>

The principal.

My name is **Thembinkoi Wellington Nene**, a student at University of KwaZulu-Natal, Pietermaritzburg campus with registration number **200102430**, doing Master of education specializing in teacher development studies.

You are being invited to consider participating in a study that involves research on the role of school principals in supporting teacher professional development in school based professional learning communities. The aim and purpose of this research is to explore the role of principals in supporting the teacher professional development in school-based professional learning communities. The study is expected to enroll five school principals from five local schools. The duration of your participation if you choose to enroll and remain in the study is expected to be one year from January 2018 to December 2018. The study is funded by me as a researcher.

The study has no potential risk identified or anticipated. This study will provide no direct benefits to participants, however they will gain understanding of their role as principals on promoting teacher development in their schools. As a researcher I will meet the participants, one on one in an organized interview session that will last an hour per session. Then a follow up interview session may be requested if need arises during the analysis of the data. Participants will be required to provide school and/or departmental policies on teacher developments and minutes of their school's staff development meetings and sessions.

Participation in this research is voluntary and participants may withdraw participation at any point. In the event of refusal/withdrawal of participation the participants will not incur penalty or loss of treatment or other benefit to which they are normally entitled. Withdrawal in participation can be done in writing, verbally or through telephonically at any stage should the participant wish to do so or feel not comfortable to continue participating in the study.

There are no costs that will be borne by the participants at any stage. Any costs should they arise pertaining the research will be covered by the researcher. Anonymity and confidentiality will be maintained as all participants will be given pseudonyms and names of the schools will be changed to protect participants.

You may contact my supervisor, the Research Office or me should you have any queries or questions:

Supervisor:
Dr Jaqueline Naidoo
Tel.: 033 260 5867
E-mail: NaidooJ@ukzn.ac.za

UKZN Research Office
Mr P. Mohun
HSSREC Research Ethics Office
Tel: 031 260 4557
E-mail: mohunp@ukzn.ac.za or hssrec@ukzn.ac.za

My contact number:
Cell: 082 528 6275
E-mail: twnene161@gmail.com

Thank you for your contribution to this research.

Nene T.W. (Mr)

Declaration of consent

I……………………………………………………………. (Full names of participant) hereby confirm that I understand the contents of this document and the nature of the research project, and I consent to participating in the research project.

I understand that I am at liberty to withdrawn from the project at any time, should I so desire.

I hereby provide consent to the following data collection activities (please tick):

	YES	NO
Audio recording of interview		
Reviewing documents (e.g. minutes, teacher development policies, yearly programme of PD)		

_____   _____

Signature of participant   Date

APPENDIX D: Interview schedule

1. How long have you been the principal in this school?
2. How many years of experience as a principal do you have?
3. How many years of experience as a teacher do you have?
4. What professional development activities were you involved in as a teacher?
5. What professional development activities were you involved in as a principal?
6. How many teachers are there in this school?
7. How many members are there on the School Management team?
8. **What do you understand by the term professional development? What perceptions do you have about professional development?**
9. **What is your understanding of school-based professional learning communities?**
10. **As a principal, what do you do to support teacher professional development in your school?**
11. **Give examples of teacher professional development that takes place in your school professional learning community**
12. **What do you do to ensure that professional learning communities are functioning and are effective in your school?**
13. **What factors do you think helps (enables or motivates) you to support professional development of your teachers in your school?**
14. **What are the challenges (hindering factors that are stumbling blocks) in your intention to support teacher professional development in your school?**
15. **What are the strategies you employ to overcome these challenges to ensure continuous teacher professional development in your school?**
16. **As a school do you have a school based policy on teacher professional development?**
    If yes, what are the key components of this policy? If no, explain why or what steps you will put in place to develop this policy.
17. What programs of teacher professional development do you have as a school to enhance teacher practices/ pedagogical knowledge / content knowledge? Give examples.
18. How often do you conduct staff development meetings/ workshops within the school?
19. Can you describe in detail the professional development activities that take place during these meetings/ workshops?
20. To what extent do teachers cooperate in professional development activities within your school? Explain why?
21. What do you do as a principal to ensure that teachers see the benefits of a school-based PLC so that they cooperate?
22. Is there anything you would like to add regarding teacher professional development at your school?

APPENDIX E: Turnitin certificate

EXPLORING THE ROLE OF PRINCIPALS IN SUPPORTING PD

ORIGINALITY REPORT

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SIMILARITY INDEX	INTERNET SOURCES	PUBLICATIONS	STUDENT PAPERS

PRIMARY SOURCES

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3	Submitted to University of KwaZulu-Natal Student Paper	<1%
4	scholarworks.waldenu.edu Internet Source	<1%
5	Submitted to Grand Canyon University Student Paper	<1%
6	www.tandfonline.com Internet Source	<1%
7	aaaeonline.org Internet Source	<1%
8	Submitted to University of New England Student Paper	<1%
9	Watson, Cate. "Effective professional learning communities? The possibilities for teachers as	<1 72

APPENDIX H: Language editing certificate

Proofwrite Solutions

WRITE · EDIT · RESEARCH · DESIGN

25th of January 2019

To whom it may concern

EDITING OF DISSERTATION FOR MR THEMBINKOSI WELLINGTON NENE

I have a master's degree in Social Science, Research Psychology and a TEFL qualification from UKZN. I also have an undergraduate and honour's degree Bachelor of Arts in Health Sciences and Social Services from UNISA.

I have 15 years of teaching experience and have been editing academic theses for students from UKZN, UNISA, the University of Fort Hare, and DUT for the past seven years. I have further done editing, transcribing and other research work for private individuals and businesses.

I hereby confirm that I have edited Thembinkosi Nene's dissertation titled **"EXPLORING THE ROLE OF PRINCIPALS IN SUPPORTING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN SCHOOL-BASED PROFESSIONAL LEARNING COMMUNITIES"** for submission of his master's dissertation in education at the University of Kwa-Zulu-Natal. Corrections were made in respect of grammar, tenses, spelling and language usage using track changes in MS Word 2010. Once corrections have been attended to, the dissertation should be correct.

PLEASE NOTE: Should a student add content to their dissertation after they have addressed my editing suggestions, I <u>cannot</u> guarantee their work is correct in respect of grammar, tenses, spelling and language usage.

Yours sincerely

Terry Shuttleworth (Tefl, UKZN, MSocSc, Res Psych, UKZN).