

**THE IMPACT OF THE EQUIP PROGRAMME ON SCHOOL MANAGEMENT  
TEAMS IN TWO RURAL SCHOOLS**

by

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I declare that **THE IMPACT OF THE EQUIP PROGRAMME ON SCHOOL MANAGEMENT TEAMS IN TWO RURAL SCHOOLS** is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

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## SUMMARY

TITLE: The Impact of the EQUIP Programme on School Management Teams in Two Rural Schools

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DEGREE : Masters Degree in Education Management

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### SUMMARY:

This study deals with the impact of the Education Quality Improvement Partnerships programme (EQUIP) on school management teams in two rural schools where it was implemented for three years. A qualitative evaluative research design was used involving initial baseline studies, document analysis, observation and eight naïve sketches. The literature study discusses factors that constitute effective management and leadership and characteristics of effective schools. The findings were based on an analysis of the impact of the EQUIP programme on the key performance areas of school management before and after the intervention. Important conclusions derived from this study showed that there was significant improvement in the way schools were managed after the intervention, particularly in achieving the goals of the schools' strategic plans. It was also found that curriculum monitoring was only partially successful and that remedial programmes for learners with reading and other learning challenges needs serious attention.

### **Key Terms:**

Education Quality Improvement Partnerships programme; Effective leadership and management; Characteristics of effective schools; Key performance areas of school management; Strategic plans; Monitoring of curriculum;

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## **CHAPTER ONE**

### **OVERVIEW AND RATIONALE FOR THE STUDY**

#### **1.1 TITLE: THE IMPACT OF THE EQUIP PROGRAMME ON SCHOOL MANAGEMENT TEAMS IN TWO RURAL SCHOOLS**

#### **1.2 MOTIVATION FOR THE RESEARCH**

##### **1.2.1 Background to the Education Quality Improvement Partnerships Programme**

The Education Quality Improvement Partnerships programme (EQUIP) was started as an RDP project in 1995. Since its inauguration, it has been operational in over 450 schools, with elements of the programme reaching over 6 000 schools in Gauteng, Kwa-Zulu Natal, the Western Cape and, more recently, in the Eastern Cape, the Northwest and Mpumalanga provinces of South Africa

The EQUIP programme is a whole school developmental programme that is implemented in each project school for a three-year period. During the three-year intervention, schools are assisted to develop strategic plans that set out realistic goals to address their developmental needs in all the key performance areas of general school management and curriculum delivery. Their developmental needs are determined through an external baseline study conducted before the intervention begins, as well as through the schools' own self-evaluations, which form part of their strategic planning process. Two educators from each school are sponsored to study two years part-time for the Accredited Certificate in Education (ACE) Mathematics and Natural Science courses through a university. The Mathematics and Natural Science educators are also supported with workshops and support class visits by the service provider. In the schools selected for this study one educator from each primary school was also sponsored to study part-time for the ACE Learners' with Special Needs (LSEN) course.

The EQUIP programme is managed through the National Business Initiative (NBI) and endeavours to encourage and co-ordinate partnerships between local businesses, Government Education Departments, non-government organisations (NGOs), and school communities, in support of effective practice with regard to school management, governance and curriculum delivery.

Although the EQUIP programme will no longer be directed through the NBI after 2010, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) may, in the future, still offer a whole-school developmental programme based on the EQUIP model, but under a different name. Any new models of this whole school development programme will no doubt have to address newly identified challenges that are facing education in South Africa today. This study on the impact of the EQUIP programme model in rural schools will therefore still be relevant to future whole school development programmes offered by service providers in partnership with the Department of Education.

### **1.2.2 The Aim of the Programme**

The EQUIP programme supports the development of schools in the form of customised, needs-based, whole-school development initiatives. The main initiative of the EQUIP programme, however, is to ensure effective school leadership and governance. Mathonsi (2001:6) differentiates between the concepts of governance and management stating,

“ A close definition of the two concepts could be understood within the broader management of complex institutions where power, people’s interaction and rules are at the centre stage (governance), and planning, co-ordination, supervision, work processes and production plays a pivotal role in the day-to-day running of an organisation is important (management).”

The South African Schools Act 84 (RSA, 1996:14) leads the way to a school-based system of education management whereby schools will increasingly come to manage themselves. Thurlow (2003:7) says this implies a profound change in the culture and practice of schools, and the extent to which schools are able to make the necessary change will depend largely on the nature and quality of the internal management.

EQUIP promotes sustainability through its capacity-building interventions, assisting schools to take responsibility for their own development towards self-reliance and the delivery of quality teaching and learning in their classrooms. It also attempts to develop school functionality and effectiveness by supporting schools in the conceptualisation, design, production and implementation of school improvement plans. Green (1995:43) also believes that successful school management must be seen in the context of effective leadership. That effectiveness is rooted in clear values and a vision for the future which, as far as possible, are owned by the whole school community and made explicit to all the school's stakeholders. However, he further believes that although articulating a vision for the future forces people to be accountable for acting in a way that is congruent with that vision, people must actually do what they say they are going to do.

The EQUIP programme has three primary outcomes namely:

- Outcome 1: Effective management structures
- Outcome 2: Development of School Governing Bodies (SGBs) and Representative Council of Learners (RCLs)
- Outcome 3: Curriculum development for educators in Mathematics and Science and Remedial Education.

This study will only concentrate on exploring the value or impact of the EQUIP programme on the effective management of certain selected schools. The criteria for this primary outcome is defined further in point 1.4.1: Criteria of Primary Outcome 1 – 'Effective Management Structures'.

### **1.2.3 The Importance of the Research**

This research would be important for the Education Department officials of Provincial Departments of Education who support this intervention in their schools, and for the Department officials who sit on the steering committees of the programme who monitor how schools' improvement plans are actually being implemented.

Since the school development plans include goals relating to the improvement of teaching and learning, the research would also inform the Provincial Departments of Education of the progress in the implementation of the new curriculum and assessment initiatives. This information could assist them to determine strategies to address any shortcomings in order for the initiatives to succeed. Coleman (2003:83) supports this by saying that because of curriculum changes occurring in South Africa, there is a need to provide leadership in developing and implementing the new national curriculum at a range of different levels of the education system.

The Department of Education's manual on "Instructional Leadership" (2000:1) identifies school management teams (SMTs) as being made up of the Principal and Heads of Departments (HODs). Lofthouse, Bush, Coleman, O'Neill, West-Burnham and Glover (1995:22) say that, while leadership is often identified at the level of the head of a school, the level that is likely to have the greatest impact on learning and teaching in the classroom is actually that of the curriculum middle manager. Coleman (2003:83) quotes Everard and Morris who identify curriculum middle managers or HODs as "those teachers who have some responsibility for planning, organising, directing and controlling the work of other teachers".

Garret (1997:112) also acknowledges that middle managers can be a significant influence in schools, both on classroom practice and on whole school management. Garret (1997:112) believes that middle managers are now being recognised as the target group for development. He feels that their professional development can play a large part, not only providing them with appropriate teaching and management skills, but also in helping them with the wider issues of developing confidence, clarifying their role, and being prepared to take on their responsibilities.

Besides being of interest to the Department of Education, the evaluation of the impact of the EQUIP programme on the capacity building of SMTs would naturally also be of interest to the many corporate businesses that sponsor a number of schools in the programme. In a speech made by Mr Cameron Dugmore (2006), the Provincial Minister

of Education of the Western Cape, he referred to the EQUIP programme and the importance of support by businesses in assisting with whole school development in schools in his province. He quoted the UNESCO's Institute for Statistics report entitled "Financing education – investments and returns – analysis of the world education indicators 2002 edition". This states

"Investment in human capital, and by implication in education, has thus moved to center stage in strategies to promote economic prosperity, fuller employment and social cohesion. As a result education is increasingly considered an investment in the collective future of societies and nations, rather than simply in the future success of individuals"

#### **1.2.4 The Contribution the Research Can Make**

The research can contribute to the improvement in training by service providers (NGOs) and the refocusing of the programme training if necessary, especially in light of new initiatives and demands on school management teams. For example, with the introduction of the Integrated Quality Management System (IQMS) in South Africa, the role of the HOD as coach and staff developer has become even more important. Early and Fletcher-Campbell (1992:189) state that many of the team-building strategies employed by the effective practitioners were closely related to the ways in which they promoted staff development. Harris (2003:78) agrees that successful school improvement projects focus specifically upon the teaching and learning processes and the 'conditions' at school and classroom level that support and sustain school improvement.

#### **1.2.5 Conclusion**

An evaluation of the EQUIP programme is of key importance in determining its impact on school management team performance in the light of the extra responsibilities and the new democratic, participatory style of management expected of school management teams by the revised education system in South Africa.

### **1.3 FORMULATION OF THE PROBLEM STATEMENT**

The formulation of the research problem is as follows:

How effective is the EQUIP programme in terms of its impact on school management teams in two rural schools?

### **1.4 AIMS OF THE RESEARCH**

The aims of the research are to

- evaluate the programme in terms of its impact on the managerial performance of SMTs (behaviourial knowledge);
- evaluate the programme in terms of its sustainable organisational impact (organisational impact); and
- evaluate its worthiness for SMTs (reaction of opinions) by naïve sketches.

#### **1.4.1 Criteria of Primary Outcome 1 – Effective Management Structures**

The criteria that will be used to judge the impact of the programme on effective management structures require schools to plan for their medium to long-term development and for SMT members to be developed in the following

- time management;
- development of job descriptions;
- coaching and giving feedback;
- development of school policies;
- financial management;
- management of the school's physical assets;
- curriculum management; and
- the development and implementation of school administrative systems and procedures.

The measures of school effectiveness that relate to effective management structures are discussed in point 2.5 in Chapter 2.

## 1.5 RESEARCH DESIGN

An evaluative design will be used for this study that will include the situational analysis (otherwise known as a baseline study), that was carried out before the EQUIP programme's intervention to determine the schools' developmental needs. School documents and observations from school visits as well as naïve sketches from the selected project schools will also be used. Naïve sketches are a feature of qualitative research which, according to an article from the Centre for Organisation, Leadership and Management Research (COLMR) (2006:1), is an important methodological option in conducting management research. It says, "Qualitative research, with its emphasis on understanding complex, interrelated and/or changing phenomena, is particularly relevant to the challenges of conducting management research."

The baseline study done at these schools at the beginning of the programme will be used to note any improvements. A document analysis will determine if they reflect the true climate of the school and if the following documents are in place and implemented:

- mission and vision statements;
- minutes of school management meetings;
- school policies which include
  - admission policies
  - language policies
  - religious policies
  - safety and security policies
  - absenteeism policies for educators and learners
  - learners' code of conduct
  - pastoral policies
  - subject policies;
- the school improvement plan; and
- HODs' strategic and daily operational plans.

### **1.5.1 Research Methods**

The research methods for this study will include the baseline studies carried out in the two schools at the start of the intervention, document analysis, observation and naïve sketches to document participants' experiences.

#### **Plan of Action**

The following steps will be taken in using the research design mentioned above:

- Step 1: The Baseline Study Reports will be used to note any improvements in organisational change.
- Step 2: School documents will be examined and evidence of key performance indicators such as policies and minutes of meetings will be requested and reviewed to see if they are effectively implemented.
- Step 3: An appropriate question will be formulated to determine the impact on personal behavioural and organisational changes and to elicit opinions on the worthwhileness of the programme.
- Step 4: Principals of the selected schools will be approached and asked if their SMT members would write essays (naïve sketches) on the question formulated regarding their impressions of the impact of the EQUIP Programme.
- Step 5: Principals and respondents will be given adequate information on the aims of the research, the procedures that will be followed and how the results will be used. They will also be assured of anonymity and confidentiality. (Myburgh & Poggenpoel 2002:17-19)
- Step 6: Arrangements will be made to collect the naïve sketches.
- Step 7: The information gathered will be analysed.

Step 8: The findings will be stated.

Step 9: Conclusions will be drawn.

Step 10: Recommendations based on the conclusions will be made.

Step 11: If organisational change has occurred, it will have to be determined whether other factors or interventions contributed to the changes.

Step 12: The programme's limitations will be discussed.

Step 13: If the research evaluation is accepted as worthy for publication, copies will be given to the relevant sponsors, Department of Education officials and participants.

### **1.5.2 The Size and Rationale of the Selected Sample**

Out of ten schools which have been part of the EQUIP programme for the last three years, two primary schools will be selected because they are clustered in close proximity to each other and are situated in a rural environment.

De Vos, Strydom, Fouche & Delpont (2005:201) use Singleton et al's description of cluster samples that state, "Unlike stratified sampling, which draws cases from each stratum, cluster sampling draws cases only from those clusters selected for the sample." Strydom (De Vos et al 2005:201) sees cluster sampling being employed when economic considerations and cluster criteria are significant for the study. In this study a conclusion can be drawn on the impact on the programme in similar cluster schools whose SMT members come from similar cultural and educational backgrounds.

## **1.6 DEFINITION OF TERMS**

### **(a) The EQUIP Programme**

The acronym EQUIP stands for Education Quality Improvement Partnerships, which is aimed at improving the quality of education through whole school development, especially focusing on building the capacity of school management teams.

### **(b) Impact**

The ‘impact’ of the programme will be determined by evaluating the behavioural knowledge or managerial performance of SMTs, the organisational impact on sustainability and worthwhileness for SMTs.

### **(c) School Management Teams**

‘School Management teams’ refers to members of the schools who are appointed to manage the schools as a whole. These appointments are either formal or voluntary in the case where the Department of Education (DoE) has not yet advertised posts. The members include the principal, deputy principal/s, and HODs.

### **(d) Rural Schools**

‘Rural’ refers to schools situated in outlying areas, some distance from small towns. In this case two schools are situated within a 30-40 km radius of Steelpoort. Steelpoort is a mining town located on the border of Mpumalanga and Limpopo Provinces.

## **1.7 CHAPTER DIVISION**

The subsequent chapters will be divided as follows:

Chapter Two contains the literature review that gives the theoretical background for what constitutes effective management of schools.

Chapter Three describes the research design and is explained in terms of the methods used and the steps taken to collect the information.

Chapter Four discusses the data analysis and findings.

Chapter Five constitutes a summary of the research results, as well as recommendations and limitations and contextual factors in implementing the programme.

## **CHAPTER TWO**

### **EFFECTIVE SCHOOL MANAGEMENT TEAMS AND THEIR RELATIONSHIP TO THE EQUIP PROGRAMME**

#### **2.1 INTRODUCTION**

Since one of the most important components of the EQUIP programme is to improve the effectiveness of school management teams (SMTs) in the project schools, this review will discuss what is generally thought to determine so called ‘effective schools’, ‘effective management’ and ‘effective teams’.

An examination of what meaning these concepts have in our modern society should help to determine what impact the EQUIP programme has had in developing school management teams to manage their schools efficiently and effectively and to continually reflect on their practices.

However, before examining the aforementioned terms, it is deemed necessary to first discuss the origins and background of school management teams and this new democratic, participative style of management or ‘school-based management’ as it is commonly referred to. Besides looking at school-based management in the worldwide context, it is also important to understand and relate this concept in terms of the African context and the South African one in particular. This is important when determining what impact the EQUIP programme has on school based management teams in the State schools involved in the project.

#### **2.2 BACKGROUND TO SCHOOL-BASED MANAGEMENT**

According to an article, in evaluating school-based leadership by Turnbull (2005:73), it is stated that policymakers, educators, and academics have advocated participative leadership as a key ingredient in school improvement and reform for more than twenty years. Somech (2005:77) cites site-based management as the “educational religion” of the

21<sup>st</sup> century” and defines it as “joint decision making or at least shared influence in decision-making by a superior and his or her employees”. De Grauwe’s (2005:271) general definition of school-based management is “the transfer of decision-making power in management issues to the school level.”

The two fundamental assumptions that underlie the logic of participative leadership, according to research, are: (a) schools are most effective when stakeholders from across the school community are meaningfully involved in core school decision-making and, (b) participative leadership reflects democratic practice and, as such, is justified as valid management strategy (Turnbull 2005:73).

Although the practice of participative leadership varies in different countries, it is usually comprised of administrators, teachers, staff members, parents and community members. De Grauwe (2005:271) quotes Caldwell (1998) who draws a distinction where responsibilities are transferred to professionals within the school (generally the principal with senior teachers), and school-based governance, which implies giving authority to an elected school board representing parents and the community.

The change from an autocratic style to a more democratic style of school leadership came about after legislation of the new South African Schools Act (84) of 1996. (RSA 1996). This Act made it compulsory for schools to be managed by School Governing Bodies (SGBs). Although the Act makes it compulsory for schools to elect school governing bodies that include parents and community members, it does not state specifically that each school must have a school management team (SMT). However, it assumes that senior members of staff will assist and support the principal in the management of the school. As already mentioned, The Department of Education’s manual, ‘Instructional Leadership’, (2000:1) says these senior staff members include the Principal, Deputy Principal and Heads of Department.

### **2.3 THE CASE FOR DECENTRALISATION**

The case for and against the decentralisation of education management has made for interesting research. In looking at school-based management from international perspectives, De Grauwe (2005:272) points out that it is almost impossible to list all the countries that have adopted school-based management policies in one form or another.

His research found that first-world countries such as the United Kingdom, New Zealand, Australia and the United States were the first to adopt this policy in the 1970's. Many Asian and Eastern European, Latin America and African countries followed in the 1990s, while in other countries the concept is still being piloted. Models and degrees of autonomy vary widely. For example, one model puts schools in the hands of a group of private managers to obtain the desired results, e.g., the Charter Schools in the United States and the United Kingdom. Several Australian states differentiate between what real powers are delegated to the Principal and those delegated to the community. Except for Romania, which has undergone little reform, most Eastern European countries have redistributed the responsibilities to local education offices as well as to schools. In Latin American countries communities have strong control over teachers and the appointment of principals.

Reform in French-speaking Africa is said to be brought about by pressure from international agencies as well as the scarcity of resources made available by the state. This has led to Principals and Head Teachers collecting additional funds from the community and managing them autonomously (De Grauwe 2005:273).

De Grauwe (2005:273) sees the situation in post-apartheid South African as being unique as the power vested in school governing bodies in determining the level of fees and the language of teaching has allowed formerly 'white' schools to remain fairly exclusive. At the same time it has helped to gain the commitment of the upper and upper middle classes to the new education system.

In giving an overview of the advantages and disadvantages of decentralisation when examining the concept in different first world and third world countries, De Grauwe (2005:274, 273) notes the five most common arguments to support the introduction of school-based management are that it

- is more democratic, allowing teachers and parents to make decisions;
- is more relevant, locating the decision-making power closer to where problems are being experienced which will lead to more relevant policies;
- is less bureaucratic allowing for decisions to be taken and carried out sooner than if having to go through a long bureaucratic process;
- allows for greater accountability which in turn acts as a tool for greater effectiveness;
- allows for the mobilisation of resources, as teachers and parents will be more eager to contribute to school funding if they have a voice in management.

Other analysts quoted by Somech (2005:778), e.g., Scully, Kirkpatrick & Looek, Armenakis, Harris & Mossholder, Yammarino & Naughton, also sing the praises of school-based management by adding that it

- is likely to increase the quality of decisions taken;
- contributes to the quality of teachers' working lives; and
- increases teacher motivation and satisfaction.

De Grauwe (2005: 275) points out, however, that the context of countries such as Australia and the United Kingdom, where school-based management policies were first introduced, is very different from that of most developing countries. In the first place, developed countries have generally more efficient public authorities and good resources as well as good communication networks while in underdeveloped countries there is an absence of a supportive state framework. He sees this inequality as a risk that may threaten the disparity and disintegration not only of individual schools, but also of the system as a whole.

Like Squelch and Lemmer (1994:1), De Grauwe (2005:276) further asserts that only a minority of head-teachers can be properly described as well-trained professionals and that

quite a number are simply teachers who have benefited from end-of career promotion. De Grauwe (2005:276) goes on to state that in most of these countries, selection and recruitment practices have not changed, capacity-building initiatives cover few staff members and professional development opportunities remain scarce. Furthermore, head-teachers, especially in the more remote schools, are often isolated and receive little or no support from the administration.

Added to the concern of the effectiveness of school-based management in developing countries is the accountability that the school feels towards the community as well as pressure that the same community can exercise on the school.

Another important point made by De Grauwe (2005:276) is that it is wrong to presume that school staff members, especially Principals, are always ready and willing to undertake reform, as there is already a great demand on their time. As a result, only a relatively small portion of the school staff's total energies is available for improvement purposes.

Indeed, it has been the experience of the researcher that in schools where the Principals are about to retire and have been used to uni-lateral decision-making for a great deal of their professional careers, it is still very difficult for them to make this paradigm shift to participatory styles of governance.

Whilst working on ground level with school management teams in historically disadvantaged state schools, the researcher has also observed that although South Africa appears to have a supportive state framework that includes national, provincial, regional, district and circuit levels, their efficiency in supporting school management teams leaves much to be desired. For example, almost all schools complain that although they submit requisitions to the Regional Office for resources such as desks and chairs, science equipment, etc. year after year, they never receive them. Indeed, some mentioned that they have been submitting requisitions for over ten years without success. Many schools have people in senior posts who have filled the positions for years but have not been

formally appointed or whose salaries have not been upgraded. Most schools lack the infrastructure and are understaffed. Classes are overcrowded and schools have to wait for months, if not years, before posts are advertised and filled. No substitute educators are sent for educators who are away on extended sick leave or have passed away. These factors are also noted by Davidoff and Lazarus (2002: 3,4) and Grobler, Campher, du Preez, Loock and Shaba (2003:13).

Murgatroyd (1991:17) also notes that part of the problem of decentralisation is the complex service functions which schools feel the need to carry. Besides being subjected to measured learning outcomes, he also sees intangible learning outcomes such as social skills training, job preparation, social work roles, substitute parent roles, counseling and guidance roles as being critical. This is especially the case in South African schools where staff members have to take on extra psycho-social counseling roles to deal with child abuse and learners left orphaned by AIDS, and other causes. Besides these new loads, teachers have to contend with new ways of teaching and assessing (OBE) and with new ways of disciplining.

As already mentioned, when discussing the effectiveness of school management teams in the EQUIP project schools, the contextual factors mentioned above should be taken into consideration. These factors should also be considered when examining what constitutes effective schools.

## **2.4 SELF-MANAGING SCHOOLS AND THE EQUIP PROGRAMME**

In moving towards a school-based system of education management, schools will increasingly come to manage themselves. Since this concept was introduced in South Africa just ten years ago, this study may prompt further research to determine how schools that have not been part of the EQUIP programme have effectively adapted this approach. The Task Team on Education Management Development, as quoted by Thurlow (2003:9), observes that the move toward self-management in itself offers no

guarantee of positive change. It states that self-management must be accompanied by an internal devolution of power within the school and in transformational leadership.

The Task Team (Thurlow 2003:7) also acknowledges that participative management implies a profound change in the culture and practice of schools and the extent to which schools are able to make the necessary change will depend largely on the nature and quality of their internal management. Thurlow (2003:7) believes that in spite of variations in underlying philosophies and practice in the shift to school-based management in different countries, there is common acknowledgement that the importance of appropriate and capable management at school level has increased. However, what 'appropriate and capable management' might mean remains a matter for ongoing debate.

In order for this move to a democratic style of education management to be achieved effectively in South African schools, it is necessary to develop the capacity of their managers to appropriately adapt attitudes, to introduce new strategies and to collectively manage structures, administration systems, curriculum and resources. It was essentially for this reason that the EQUIP programme was introduced. The successes or failures found in this study, in building the capacity of school management teams in the above-mentioned areas, will hopefully serve as an important source of information for similar school-based management training programmes in rural schools.

## **2.5 WHAT CONSTITUTES EFFECTIVE SCHOOLS AND HOW IT RELATES TO THE EQUIP PROGRAMME**

In the light of the diversity and inequality of school cultures in South Africa, Purkey and Smith's (1983:452) review on effective schools is relevant as, like De Grauwe, they also question whether academically effective schools are within the grasp of all society. Harris, Jamieson and Russ (1996:10) agree with this point stating that while one of the most common ways of measuring a school's performance is by its examination results, many researchers generally agree that differences in learners' socio-economic

backgrounds also have to be taken into account. This implies that school effectiveness depends on how effective schools have been with the students in their schools.

In the opinion of the researcher this further begs the question: Should criteria used to determine effective schools in developed countries, be the same as those applied to determine what constitutes effective schools in poorly developed countries? In the case of a bi-polarised country like South Africa with its mixture of advantaged and disadvantaged schools, this question can be taken a step further by asking whether expected standards performances within different socio-economic sectors should be the same across the country.

Before examining what constitutes effective schools, a distinction should perhaps be made between dysfunctional, functional and effective schools. It is believed one could define dysfunctional schools as those in which there is total chaos and where there exists absolutely no culture of teaching and learning. A functional school, on the other hand, could be defined as one where daily teaching and learning activities do take place, but there is no organisational culture that promotes the delivery of quality education. An effective school could be described as one that achieves its educational outcomes. The factors that constitute school effectiveness in achieving quality educational outcomes mainly concern academic analysts, policy makers and professional decision-makers.

Purkey and Smith's article, "Effective schools: A Review" (1983:452-457) is relied on in this discussion on what constitutes effective schools. This is for two reasons. The first being that their study casts a wide net which includes studies from other parts of the world, case studies, surveys and evaluations of the views and research done by many other analysts on this topic. Besides including studies of program implementation and theories on the organization of schools and other institutions, their research is also concerned with process and content. The second reason for depending on this study is that their findings and conclusions are similar to the tenets on which the EQUIP programme is based.

Purkey and Smith (1983:440-442) argue, for example, that an academically effective school is distinguished by its culture, i.e. a structure, process and climate of values and norms that emphasise successful teaching and learning. They use school organisation theory and the literature on implementation to support the idea that the nature of the process of building consensus is key to improving schools. They describe school systems as 'nested' layers' in which the outer layers, i.e. management structures, sets the context for the practice in the classroom. The framework of the outer layer is said to be composed of organisational and structural variables that precede and facilitate the development of the second layer. They believe that these two sets of variables define the climate and culture of a school. The EQUIP programme was also founded on the belief that it is necessary to have effective management and efficient administration systems and structures in place in order to support and oversee the quality of teaching and learning. The implementers of the EQUIP programme also agree with the organisational variables and sustaining characteristics which Purkey and Smith derived from their intensive study, which are thought to be pertinent to school effectiveness. These include the following

- site based management;
- instructional leadership from the Principal as well as from other administrators;
- staff stability;
- a curriculum that is purposefully planned;
- schoolwide staff development;
- parental involvement and support;
- schoolwide recognition of academic success;
- maximized learning time; and
- district support.

Like Purkey and Smith, (1983:440) the idea that values and beliefs underpin an organisation's culture are also advocated by Karpicke and Murphy in their article on Productive School Culture (1996:26). This states that all members generally share

values and beliefs that make up a successful organization's culture and the group operates within a common set of assumptions about the way that things are done.

More recent researchers also conclude that effective schools are those that have developed an organisational culture that promotes the delivery of quality education. The critical success factors or characteristics most agreed upon by international analysts and more recent research are similar to those outlined above, with some additions, e.g. Harris et al (1996:43) use the Halton model which adds the dimensions of recognition and incentives as well as teacher collegiality and development. McKenzie (2001:1) and Lezotte and Hully (2002:2) include a clear and focused mission, a climate of high expectations, frequent monitoring of student progress and student time on task. ACT Council of Parents & Citizens Ass. (2004:1) add effective student welfare systems and a strong organisational framework. The Department of Education and Training, State of Victoria, Australia (2004:1) also includes purposeful teaching and accountability.

Lezotte (1991:1) goes a step further and uses the concept of second generation correlates in an attempt to incorporate the recent research on school improvement findings. His belief is that school improvement is an endless journey but that second generation correlates cannot be implemented successfully unless the first generation correlate standards are present in the school. His second generation correlates represent a developmental step beyond the first and are in keeping with transformation in educational practices. These second generation correlates offer an even more challenging developmental stage to which schools committed to a learning mission ought to aspire.

For example, using the correlate "safe and orderly environment" as a characteristic of school effectiveness, Lezotte (1991:1) believes the first generation correlate would describe this as being an "orderly, purposeful, businesslike atmosphere which is free from the threat of physical harm." The second-generation correlate moves beyond the elimination of undesirable student behaviour that could lead to physical harm and places increased emphasis on the presence of certain desirable behaviours, e.g. co-operative team learning where students actually help one another.

In the recent spate of student against student violence and student against teacher violence in South Africa, thinking about second-generation correlates is of the utmost importance in transforming schools. (Pretoria News, 24 October 2006 and “You” Magazine 26 October 2006).

Ndhlovu, Bertram, Mthiyane and Avery (1999:76) also argue that school effectiveness research tells us what an “effective” school is but not how to change schools. They believe some of the weaknesses of school effectiveness research are that it

- defines effectiveness too narrowly;
- defines it mainly in terms of result or outputs;
- assumes incorrectly that weak (ineffective) schools could be improved by developing the same characteristics as effective schools;
- neglects to explain how we make change happen;
- treats complex institutions like schools too simplistically; and
- ignores the importance of different contexts, e.g. developing countries.

Notwithstanding inequalities in society, one of the key characteristics generally agreed upon internationally about what constitutes an effective school, is a management style that includes the involvement of all stakeholders of the community. The latter is the focus of this study.

The characteristics of effective schools discussed in this chapter serve as measures to evaluate the impact of the EQUIP programme on the criteria of Primary Outcome One of the programme, i.e., effective management structures.

## **2.6 EFFECTIVE MANAGEMENT AND LEADERSHIP**

There is a plethora of literature in both corporate and professional contexts on what constitutes effective management. Because South African legislation has instituted the

new trend of a democratic-participative style of management, the definition and effectiveness of this style will be examined.

### **2.6.1 Management and Leadership**

Management and leadership have been used synonymously in the past to mean the same thing. However, Fidler (1996:72) states that it has become fashionable to differentiate conceptually between ‘management’ and ‘leadership’. It is therefore important to reflect on modern thinking on what these concepts mean.

In its manual on “Managing and Leading Schools” (2002:8, 9) the Department of Education stresses that schools need both good leadership and management and explains ‘leading’ as being about guiding and inspiring, while ‘managing’ is about getting things done efficiently and effectively. However, it stresses that one without the other is not sufficient and a good SMT will combine the skills of good leadership and management.

Owens (1995:119, 120), another proponent of the idea that leadership is about engaging with followers writes: “Leadership over human beings... is exercised when persons with certain purposes mobilize, in competition or in conflict with others, institutional, political, psychological and other resources so as to arouse and satisfy the motives of followers.”

Green (1995:39) explains, “Most definitions of ‘management’ are focused on people and tasks.” He quotes the School Management Task Force proposal that “management was achieving goals, by, with and through people” (Green 1995:39). He also quotes the Industrial Society’s description that states “the purpose of management is developing individuals, building teams and achieving tasks” (Green 1995:39).

Jones (2005:20-22) believes no definitive definition of leadership exists and that the distinctions between leadership and management are not clear-cut. He says that this means that successful leadership and management will rely heavily on the overlapping skills of leadership, management and administration

Squelch and Lemmer (1994:2) are also of the opinion that leadership is not easily definable, believing it refers to a complex set of behaviours and characteristics that vary from one person to another and depend on the situation. They do acknowledge, however, that many definitions refer to leadership as the ability to influence people to willingly follow one's guidance and adhere to one's decisions. Squelch and Lemmer (1994:2) quote Terry (1997) who believes "leadership is the activity of influencing people to strive willingly for group objectives", Koontz and O'Donnell (1972) " leadership is influencing people to follow in the achievement of a common goal", Kowalski and Reitzug (1993) "leadership is a process that results in the determination of organisational objectives and strategies, entails building consensus to meet those objectives and involves influencing other to work towards those objectives".

Despite the different opinions about the interchangeability of the terms, 'management' and 'leadership', the development or 'empowerment' of individuals in skills, knowledge, attitudinal changes and particular leadership qualities, is seen as key in developing the leadership and management capacity throughout the entire school (Davidoff & Lazarus 2002:175, 176). Busher and Saran's (1994:137) study of appropriate models of leadership found that several of the models emphasise the importance of interpersonal skills as a means through which Heads can manage institutions and direct staff. The most important skills are considered to be those of motivating people, resolving conflicts, and negotiating effectively with people.

According to Purkey and Smith's (1983:427-423) study on effective schools, analysts such as Glenn (1981); Newman (1981); Armor et al (1076); Deal, et al (1977) and Little (1918), agree that the important sustaining characteristics of a productive school culture that continues to 'learn', are founded on collaborative planning and collegial relationships; a sense of community; clear goals; high expectations of academic success; and order and discipline. This is backed up by Earley and Fletcher-Campbell (1992:197) who believe that effective schools are those that are good at two-way communication and create opportunities for teachers to participate in decision-making processes.

Squelch and Lemmer remind us in their book “ Eight Keys to Effective School Management in South Africa” (1994:viii) that effective schools are managed by effective leaders. They go on to say that good leadership, however, does not happen by chance. People in leadership positions need to continually reflect on their skills and attributes and to improve and develop those skills that are essential for good leadership and management.

Van Niekerk’s article (2003:160-185) promotes whole school self-evaluation as a means to school improvement. Van Niekerk points out that self-evaluation concerns establishing where you are coming from and where you are going to, knowing your strengths and your weaknesses and finding out where and how to improve the functioning of the organisation and the individual in the organisation.

The idea of school management continually reflecting on their practices as a means to monitor their effectiveness is a main component of the EQUIP Programme.

Added to the importance of schools engaging in their self-evaluation of their strengths and development needs, is making sure that improvement plans are implemented and monitored. Monitoring and follow-up on strategic plans are also strongly encouraged in the EQUIP programme.

The switch from the old style of unilateral decision-making by an autocratic style leadership to participative strategic planning and decision-making involving all staff members requires that principals and management teams in South African schools also have to be leaders or agents of change.

### **2.6.2 Managing and Leading Change**

In describing a “learning organisation” Butler (1999:5) feels that change and innovation are ongoing features of the school’s existence and the school should make change part of its organisational ethos and mission.

Reflecting on the management of change in South African schools, Garrett (1997:94, 96) and Kendal (1989:23) are of the same opinion that the ability to manage change is an essential skill for all those in schools, whether they are managing at classroom level, middle management or senior management level. Garrett points out,

“change can mean stepping out of a position where you feel confident, where you know the rules and the script, and where you are able to function comfortably, into an altogether more uncomfortable position where there is uncertainty about role, relationships and responsibilities and where you have less confidence in having the skills and knowledge necessary to function effectively.”

It has been the researcher's experience that this “swampy ground”, as referred to by Plant, (Garrett, 1997:96) is certainly still the situation in rural schools twelve years down the line after the new Schools' Act (RSA, 1996) was legislated. Many former teachers who have been taken on board as members of middle-management and members of school management teams but have not been trained in management skills still do not understand what is expected of them, and lack the confidence to lead, once again stressing the need for SMT training.

Fullan's article on the “Complexity of the Change Process” (1993:103) outlines eight basic lessons of the new paradigm of change. His first lesson states that the more complex the change the less you can force it. Grobler et al (2003:29) and Garrett (1997:58) again make a similar point by emphasising that the crucial thing for the change manager to understand is that everyone will go through this process at her/his own pace, and that s/he should be allowed time for this process. Evans (1993:20) adds that staff members' response to reform depends not merely on its substance, but on their own readiness for change. However, since many people do not like moving out of their comfort zones to take on extra responsibilities, this should not be seen as an excuse not to motivate staff to adapt to change as soon as possible, especially in the fast-paced changing society South Africa has become today. Indeed, the researcher is of the opinion that if schools cannot adapt quickly to the pace of change they can undoubtedly become unhealthy, dying organisations.

Badenhorst's (1997:330-352) view is that in order to understand the management of a school, one needs to understand its historical foundations. This is important in the historical context of South African schools. He therefore advocates the principles of the chaos theory as an alternative theory of school management. This theory recognises that chaos is a natural part of life and all change is accompanied by chaos. This is to be expected in a school particularly when it is subjected to change. The chaos theory suggests that a complex structure like a school, with its orderly and its chaotic aspects and its continuous mutual influence, cannot change its identity completely. Mossberg (1993: 50) thinks chaos theory is actually an oxymoron, and describes chaos as "an expression of infinitely complex order". Like Badenhorst, Mossberg (1993:50) believes that the chaos theory provides a new way to interpret our current educational challenges.

The chaos theory is relevant when assessing the performance of SMTs in the implementation of strategies to handle these new changes, as well as the introduction of new services and roles in their schools. For example, with the abolishment of corporal punishment, many schools are in chaos while they are trying to find new measures of disciplining.

It is the participation of school managers and leaders in the new system that will help to define how teaching and learning will occur in the schools of the future. Badenhorst (1997:349) and Evans (1993: 20) think the more teachers know about how schools are organised, governed, and administered the better prepared they will be to influence the system.

Kendall (1989:77) sums up the subject of managing educational change as a very complex one that has to be studied at several levels. This is not only because there is the level of the individual being changed but other levels such as the institutional level, the organisational level, the community level and the level of the wider environment also have to adapt to change. The EQUIP programme focuses on building the capacity of school managers at two levels, i.e., the school management team and the school

governing body. It is intended that its attempt at influencing change at these levels will automatically filter down to the community and wider environment levels as well.

This is in line with the thinking of Ndlovu et al (1999:120-131) who also discuss change management from both an organisational approach and a community approach. They suggest that change agents pay a lot more attention to three issues. These are, firstly, school development projects must understand and take into account the community dynamics in which the school finds itself if they want to be sustained over time; secondly, they warn against rigid planning because of the ‘chaotic’ and rapidly changing environments in which schools are located (chaos theory); thirdly, they suggest that school change is ultimately driven by moral imperatives and not by technical efficiency imperatives.

### **2.6.3 Key Performance Areas of School Management Teams**

Besides emphasising that one of the most important responsibilities of the SMT is to give instructional leadership in the school, the Department of Education’s manual on “Managing and Leading Schools” (2000:3) further outlines another seven key performance areas for which SMTs and SGBs are responsible.

Although these areas of responsibilities for SMTs and SGBs, as defined by the SA Schools Act (RSA 84:1996) are the same, there is a division of the roles each body plays. However, since this particular study is based on the effectiveness of school management teams in schools that have had the EQUIP programme, this review will examine only what constitutes effective performance in the key performance areas managed by SMTs. They are, as defined by the Department’s manual for SMTs on “Managing and Leading Schools” (2000:3).

- teaching and Learning – organising activities that support teaching and learning and administering teaching and learning;
- professional functions – performing professional functions;
- curriculum - deciding on intra-mural activities;

- textbooks, materials, equipment – deciding on what to buy;
- financial planning and management – performing specific tasks in support of the SGB’s mandate;
- property, buildings and grounds – performing specific tasks in support of the SGB;
- mission, Code of Conduct and welfare – assisting in developing a Code of Conduct for learners; and
- personnel – managing personnel.

In the researcher’s opinion, it is important to note that although the roles of the HODs as both SMT members and leaders and managers of curriculum are inter-related, they are better understood if the HODs are seen to be wearing three caps. The first cap is worn as collective leaders in assisting and supporting the Principal to manage the entire school in all the areas stated above, while the second cap is worn as individual leaders of a department or learning area responsible for the performance of specific staff members under them. The third cap is worn as teachers themselves, responsible for managing the teaching and learning in a classroom of their own. The key performance areas of school management that dissect these three areas of their responsibilities are, therefore teaching and learning and managing people.

Coleman (2003:83) states that while leadership is often identified at the level of the head of a school, the level that is likely to have the greatest impact on teaching and learning in the classroom is actually that of the curriculum middle manager. Since teaching and learning is the core business of the school and involves many detailed activities and responsibilities, it is obvious that role of HODs in South Africa today in assisting with the management of other key performance areas of school management, places a huge burden on them. One of the common complaints that is frequently heard from HODs in disadvantaged state schools is that, owing to shortages of staff and overcrowding of classes, they do not have fewer teaching periods in which to monitor educators’ work and do extra administration. This adds impetus to the earlier discussion on the problems of the weak support system of schools at government level.

As implied in the term 'School Management Team', school-based managers have to work as a team or in teams. Once again, for the purpose of this study, it is considered necessary to understand that HOD's are in fact, members of three teams. As discussed previously, they are members of a team that manages the school as a whole, secondly they are leaders of their own teams of teachers and thirdly they are members of general teaching teams. Whether interacting as a member of the SMT or as a leader of a team of educators grouped under a particular subject area or learning phase, SMTs ought to understand what characteristics make up effective teams. This is discussed in the following section.

## **2.7 EFFECTIVE TEAMS**

The essential message about school-based management and leadership is that it is a team activity. Fiddler (1996:71) does not think that collegiality, where accountability and power are concerned, is without its drawbacks. Noble and Pym (as quoted in Fiddler 1996:71) states "once a committee makes a decision everybody is responsible and nobody is responsible". Smetherham (1991:4) agrees and says, "A team is formed of individuals and will be successful only if the individuals learn to work together."

Managing the whole school therefore implies that members have to work within a management framework that defines a set of relationships and responsibilities. The school management team should establish accountability and provide clarity for individuals about who carries out tasks and who takes responsibility for them (Dean 1995:6; Dunham 1995:47). The task of the team leader is therefore about influencing the activities of a team towards achieving team goals (Jones 2005:19). Du Preez, Campher, Grobler, Looock and Shaba (2003:72) are of the same opinion saying, that a factor constantly present in the total management process can be defined as "the manager's purposeful attempt to harmonise the work done by different people." This co-ordination is important to develop team spirit and teamwork.

Dering, Cunningham and Whitby's study on developing leadership team's within an education action zone network in the UK (2006:107, 109) looks at the "Hay programme". This project, like the EQUIP programme, is based on the underlying hypothesis that by developing the competencies of Principals and their teams to better match the particular requirements of the schools, the climate of the organisation should improve. The study shows that senior team effectiveness is a critical variable relating to impact in schools and that teamwork skills cannot be taken for granted. This being the case, it is important, therefore, that senior teams understand what teamwork skills and characteristics of effective teams are.

It is for this reason that teambuilding of the SMT is included at the start of the EQUIP programme. It also emphasises the idea that unless the senior team is seen to be united and functioning effectively, well-rooted change cannot be fostered and other collegial teams within the schools cannot be successfully established. Early and Fletcher-Campbell (1992:188) are of the opinion that the sort of collegiality which results in continuous professional development, is frequent, continuous and precise talk about teaching practice; observation and constructive criticism; joint planning; designing, researching, evaluating, and preparing of teaching materials and the exchange of good practice.

### **2.7.1 Characteristics of Effective Teams**

As with the concept of management, much has been written about what is thought to constitute effective teams. In analysing the works quoted by Van Niekerk (2004:7-8), of Garner (1995), Dunham (1995), Arcaro (1995) and Chivers (1995), the following characteristics of effective teams are thought to be important by all, namely

- clearly defined goals and roles;
- competent members;
- unified commitment;
- standards of excellence;
- a collaborative climate;
- motivation and support between members;

- honest communication and trust; and
- systems for evaluation and problem solving.

Since teams at all levels within the school are ultimately accountable to their larger school community they should be conscious of the degree to which goals, objectives, and values align (Turnbull, 2005:74). If educators and support staff are encouraged to work together by learning with and from each other, this will contribute the creation of a learning school where individual staff development goes together with organisational development (Butler, 1999:5).

## **2.8 CONCLUSION**

The above discussion suggests that if school improvement is to be achieved, the emphasis should be on transformational (participative) rather than on transactional (autocratic) leadership. Although schools need to be led by strong management teams, overarching leadership has to be replicated right through the organisation so that teamwork is found to be in every aspect of school-life, including the broader school community. Continuous self-evaluation is also seen to be a key element to school improvement so that schools may have a vision for their futures and can plan effectively to achieve them. This is the thrust of the EQUIP programme.

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **QUALITATIVE RESEARCH APPROACH AND RESEARCH DESIGN OF THIS STUDY**

#### **3.1 THE QUALITATIVE RESEARCH APPROACH**

##### **3.1.1 Qualitative Research as Opposed to Quantitative Research**

For the purpose of this study qualitative research was used as opposed to quantitative research. Quantitative research which can be defined as a deductive design that uses statistical calculations with numbers to analyse and interpret results that involves numerous respondents used as a sample that is representative of a population, (Schulze 2002: 11) would not be an appropriate method to use in this study.

Qualitative research, which is an inductive design that develops concepts from patterns in data, is better suited here. De Vos et al (2005: 268) give a definition of the qualitative approach as, “those groups of small, worked-out formulas from which prospective researchers can select or develop one (or more) that may be suitable for their specific research goals”. Although various authors identify many different approaches, the five strategies identified by Cresswell (De Vos et al 2005:269-273) are regarded as the most important ones for the human sciences. These include

- Biography;
- Phenomenology;
- grounded theory;
- ethnography; and
- case study.

For the purpose of the evaluation of the EQUIP programme on school management teams in the project schools, a qualitative approach using a combination of the phenomenology and case study strategies was found the most suitable. An explanation of these types of strategies and why they could be said to fit the EQUIP programme follow.

### 3.2 EVALUATIVE DESIGN

Since this study is based on the impact of the EQUIP programme on school management teams in two rural schools, an evaluation research design was used. Johnson and Christensen (2004:10) state that evaluation research involves determining the worth, merit or quality of an evaluation object such as an educational program. McMillan and Schumacher (2001:528) agree with this definition stating it is the “*worth* of an educational program, product, procedure, or objective, or of the potential utility of alternative approaches to attain specific goals.”

The EQUIP programme started with a situation analysis (baseline study) of the schools which included a needs analysis of all key performance management areas. For the purpose of this study both formative and summative evaluation were used as it is believed both would be beneficial as a means to measure the impact of the EQUIP programme on school management teams and to improve future and present EQUIP programmes. Both these types of evaluation are traditionally used in evaluation research according to the purpose of the evaluation (McMillan & Schumacher 2001:530).

As formative evaluation is used if the purpose of an evaluation is to lead to judgements about how a program can be improved, this type of evaluation would assist the programme developers and trainers to improve the EQUIP program so that it works better.

Summative evaluation, on the other hand, would also be useful to the sponsors of the EQUIP programme as it would lead to judgements about whether the EQUIP programme is effective or other and whether it should be given further support (McMillan & Schumacher 2001: 530).

Rossi et al (as quoted in De Vos et al 2005:377) use the terms “programme process monitoring” and “programme outcome monitoring”. These terms correspond to formative and summative evaluation as the former is said to be the systematic and continual documentation of key aspects of programme performance that assesses whether

the program is operating as intended or according to some appropriate standard. On the other hand, outcome monitoring is said to be the measurement of intended outcomes of the programme, usually of the social conditions it is intended to improve.

McMillan and Schumacher (2001:520) state that formative studies are usually conducted by an internal evaluator and summative studies by an external evaluator. They agree (2001:529) that both formative and summative evaluations are essential. This is because decisions are needed during the developmental stages of a program to improve it and again, when it is stabilised, to judge its final worth or to determine its future. These are both important reasons to justify this study, and although an internal evaluator conducted the research it is hoped that the findings will be useful as both a formative and summative evaluation for both the sponsors of the EQUIP programme and the implementers. In this study both the phenomenological and case study designs were used.

### **3.2.1 Phenomenology**

Since a phenomenological study describes the meaning of experiences of a phenomenon, topic or concept for various individuals, this approach would therefore be important in understanding and interpreting behavioural changes effected by the EQUIP programme on the daily operations of the school management team members. De Vos et al (2005:270) explain that the researcher eventually reduces the experiences to a central meaning or the essence of the experience so that the product of the research is a description of the essence of the experience being studied. Through observations made during school visits and by analysing the naïve sketches of SMT members' impressions of the EQUIP programme, the meaning of the EQUIP programme as experienced by individuals can be determined.

### **3.2.2 Case Study**

De Vos et al (2005:272) refer to Creswell's definition of a case study as an "exploration or in-depth analysis of a 'bounded system' (bounded by time and/of place), or a single or multiple case, over a period of time." This is certainly the case of the EQUIP programme which is usually bounded by a three year period in specific communities. According to

De Vos et al (2005:272) the exploration and description of the case takes place through detailed, in-depth data collection methods, involving multiple sources of information that are rich in context. These may include interviews, documents, observations or archival records.

Mark (De Vos et al 2005:272) refers to three types of case studies. These include the intrinsic case study, the instrumental case study and collective case study. However, it is the collective case study which applies to the EQUIP programme as it will be used to further the understanding of the researcher about any social issues of the population being studied, in this case, the school management teams of the project schools. Two cases were chosen so that comparisons made between cases and concepts and theories can be extended and validated to other schools in similar contexts where the programme has been, and is being implemented. As the case study approach also includes document analysis, this strategy was also appropriate for the purpose of the study.

### **3.3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

According to Morse (1994:68-69) the practice of evaluation research evolved over four generations from a quantitative approach to a qualitative one because of the variation in the issues, claims and concerns put forth by the stakeholders. He believes that what is required is observation and interaction by the evaluator who should use multiple methods of data collection. Johnson and Christensen (2004:162) agree that mixing methods is an excellent way to conduct high-quality research and states one should mix methods in a way that provides complementary strengths and non-overlapping weaknesses. Schulze (2002:72) believes that using this mixture of methods or 'triangulation', as it is known, to complement interview data improves the trustworthiness of the research.

It is for these reasons that multiple methods of research using a situation analysis or baseline study, document analysis; naive sketches and observation were useful for the purpose of this study.

### **3.3.1 Situation Analysis (Baseline Study)**

Before the EQUIP programme was implemented in schools a thorough situation analysis (baseline study) was done on management and administration systems, as well as on curriculum delivery. It also included focus group and personal interviews with staff members using standardised questionnaires. De Vos et al (2005:147) describe a baseline study as “the planned, systematic collection of data on a problem before intervention commences, over a long enough time span against which to obtain a stable measurement.” Henning (2003:47) supports this stating that one of the methods for evaluation research should be a baseline study, as the intent of a qualitative evaluation is to capture change.

As in the case of the EQUIP programme, the situation analysis is normally followed by implementation and monitoring of evaluation, and eventually by an impact study. Mitchell and Jolley (1996:386) state that if the researcher establishes a stable baseline and is then able to change the behaviour after administering the treatment, the researcher can come to the conclusion that the treatment caused the effect. In the case of the EQUIP programme, the measurement can be said to be stable as the personnel of the schools involved accepted the findings of the baseline study as a true reflection of their institution at that time.

### **3.3.2 Observation**

Johnson and Christensen (2004:186) define observation as the “watching of behavioral patterns of people in certain situations to obtain information about the phenomenon of interest” or as Mitchell and Jolly (1996:405) put it “simply watching behaviour”. Two types of basic observations can be defined, i.e., ‘naturalistic observation’ and ‘participant observation’. Where in naturalistic observation the participant is observed unobtrusively, in participant observation one actively interacts with participants and becomes “one of them” (Mitchell and Jolly 1996:405; Schulze 2002:72; Henning 2003:82; Rudestam & Newton 1992: 36). It is the latter type that was mainly used in the project schools since the project implementer came to be accepted as one of the schools’ team members over the three-year period.

Schulze (2002:72) quotes De Vos et al's belief that participation observation in natural settings is generally regarded as the principal data-gathering strategy of qualitative research and the most important data-collection method for ethnography.

In this study, spending at least one day in the project schools a month over a three-year period provided ample opportunity for observing the daily functioning of the schools and their general management. This natural setting of staff room, classrooms and playgrounds of the schools allowed the researcher to observe the ordinary and typical daily routine of participants. Morse (1994:162) stresses that fieldwork is the hallmark of ethnographic research and that working with people for long periods of time and observing them in their natural setting characterises most ethnographic research. Since detailed note-taking is a requirement of validity of observation, (De Vos et al 2005:298; Johnsen & Christensen 2004:188) the notes and observations made on the school visit forms as well as deductions from repeated behaviour and general behaviour were useful in this study.

### **3.3.3 Document Analysis**

Document analysis is important in evaluation research as any changes or improvement in behaviour or operating systems after an intervention can be determined from the baseline study documents as well as from any organisational documents, such as policy documents, minutes of meetings, school improvement plans, etc.

Using official documents which McMillan and Schumacher (2001:451) note are abundant in an organisation, helps to provide an internal perspective of the organisation and can describe its functions and values, and how various people define the organisation.

For this study the following organisational data were collected and then the route of analysis and interpretation was followed (Henning 2003:98).

- minutes of meetings;
- policy documents;
- drafts of proposals;
- financial records;
- school development plan;
- timetables; and
- attendance registers.

### **3.3.4 Naïve Sketches**

An in-depth study of the target population's views and feelings is an essential strategy in qualitative research, especially in evaluation research. In this study, insight on how the EQUIP programme impacted on the school management team as a group and individually was gained through comments written by SMT members in naïve sketches based on an open-ended formulated question. Through this method it was hoped members would reveal if the programme had led to any personal behavioural changes by individuals or by the team as a whole and whether or not these personal behavioural changes in turn, led to any beneficial changes to the organisation as a whole.

### **3.3.5 Guidelines for open-ended questions**

The advice of Riessman (1993:55) was taken to develop a broad question about the topic of inquiry. When designing and interpreting the guided interview question to obtain the participants' views of the programme, a few of Kvale's (1983:172) twelve main aspects in understanding qualitative research were also kept in mind. These include, inter alia, understanding the interviewee's life-world; understanding the meaning of phenomena in his life-world; using a qualitative approach; being descriptive, specific, pre-suppositionless; focused on a certain theme and being aware that the research is open for ambiguities and changes.

The school management team members of both schools wrote the naïve sketches based on the same formulated question, namely, "What was your experience of the impact of the EQUIP Programme on the management of your school?"

The aims of the research were to evaluate the programme in terms of its impact on the SMTs' behavioural knowledge, and the sustainable organisational impact and to gauge the worthwhileness of the programme through the SMTs' opinions. The formulated question was also designed to assist with formative as well as summative evaluation.

The table below outlines the information the researcher was looking for to determine what was working in the programme and what needed changing. These questions were guided by the suggestions of Johnson and Christensen (2004:10) and Henning (2003:158-159).

**Table 3.1: Formative and Summative Questions**

<b>Formative evaluation questions</b>	<b>Summative evaluation questions</b>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What parts of the programme are working?</li> <li>2. What needs to be changed?</li> <li>3. How should it/they be changed?</li> <li>4. What aspect needs to be introduced to the programme to improve the management of the school?</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What were the most important lessons learnt by the SMTs about management through experiencing the programme?</li> <li>2. Did this lead to a change in their management practice? If so, in what way?</li> <li>3. How did they feel the programme improved the functioning of the SMT in managing the school as a team?</li> </ol>

### **3.4 THE SELECTED SAMPLE**

#### **3.4.1 Purposeful Sampling**

As the study is concerned with the impact on specific participants in the EQUIP programme, purposeful sampling was used with the school management teams as the target population of the two selected schools.

### 3.4.2 The Rationale for the Sample

Two primary schools were chosen rather than a mixture of primary and secondary schools as primary schools normally have a different culture than that of secondary schools and smaller management teams. The cultural differences between primary and secondary schools are distinguished, firstly in the qualifications of the staff members and secondly, in the developmental stages and age differences of the learners. The latter normally manifests itself in the need for more and perhaps a differentiated management style of discipline and control of learners. As one of the aims of the study is to make it representative of other schools in similar social and economic contexts on the programme, it was decided to keep the sample as similar as possible. Schools of similar types located in similar locations, i.e. rural areas, were therefore used for the study.

Since the school management teams were relatively small and representative of the study's population, naïve sketches were obtained from the SMTs in both schools (Mitchel & Jolley 1996:459). The strength of using these essays is that a few cases studied in-depth yield many insights about the topic (Schulze 2002:56).

### 3.4.3 The Size of the Sample

The school management teams of the two rural primary schools are made up as follows:

**Table 3.2: Size of the Sample**

School	Number of Management Members
A	4
B	4

## 3.5 STEPS TAKEN TO CARRY OUT THE RESEARCH

The following steps were taken to carry out the research:

- The baseline studies were reviewed to determine if there were any improvements since the intervention began.

- A document analysis of policies, minutes of meetings, the school development plan, attendance registers, stock inventories and other registers were examined.
- An appropriate question was formulated for the qualitative research to guide the participants (see section 3.3.5 above).
- The Principals of the selected schools were approached personally and asked whether their SMT members and they themselves would express their opinions about the programme by writing a brief essay (naïve sketch) on the formulated question.
- The Principals and participants were informed about the aims of the research and the procedures that would be followed. They were also informed on how the results would be used and were assured of anonymity and confidentiality (Schulze 2005:17-19).
- Arrangements were made with the schools for a convenient time to discuss the essays with the members of the SMT and to collect them at a later date.
- The naïve sketches were analysed according to recurring categories and patterns.
- It was determined whether other factors or interventions contributed to any changes or interfered with the programme.
- Conclusions were drawn and recommendations made.
- The programme's limitations were discussed.

### **3.6 VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY**

Niemann (2000:285) and Kvale (1983:191) both state that validity means whether or not one has in fact investigated what one wished to investigate. McMillan and Schumacher (2001:167) add that the validity of qualitative design is the degree to which the interpretations and concepts have mutual meaning between the participants and the researcher. Hoepfl (1997:17) agrees and states that the qualitative researcher bears the burden of discovering and interpreting the importance of what is observed and of establishing a plausible connection between what is observed and the conclusions drawn in the research report.

In defining reliability, De Vos et al (2005:163) refers in general to the extent to which independent administration of the same instrument consistently yields the same or similar results under comparable conditions. It is primarily concerned not with *what* is being measured, but with *how well* it is being measured.

### **3.6.1 Strategies Used to Enhance Validity and Reliability**

The following strategies outlined by McMillan and Schumacher (2001:408) to enhance design validity and reliability were used. These include

- prolonged and persistent fieldwork;
- multi-method strategies (baseline studies, document analysis, observation and naïve sketches);
- participant language (verbatim quotes from the naïve sketches; and
- negative cases or discrepant data (actively search for, record, analyse and report negative cases or discrepant data that are an exception to patterns or that modify patterns found in the data).

In view of De Vos et al ( 2005:348) statement that the analysis should not be so “microscopic” as to disregard conditions that derive from more “macroscopic” sources, for instance, economic conditions, social movement, trends, cultural values, etc. contextual factors were kept in mind to enhance the reliability of the research.

Henning (2003:7) sums up validity and reliability well by arguing that three things may help the research community to judge the value of an inquiry. These are based on a trio of ideas being craftsmanship with precision; care and accountability; and open communication. These ideas should serve as guidelines throughout the research process.

### **3.6.2 The Role of the Researcher**

As a female researcher of a different race and language from the learners it was necessary to bear in mind Niemann’s words (2000:283) that the starting point determines objectivity from which the research is approached. As the researcher was also involved

in EQUIP as a facilitator and project manager in the project sample schools, it was even more necessary to consistently keep in mind the validity and reliability of the research in order to evaluate it critically. Obviously, a researcher in such a position would like to conclude that the programme had a positive impact and therefore overlook its weaknesses or omit important data that would reveal failures. However, the researcher made every effort to be impartial and to be aware of areas where the programme needs improvement. From a position of a professional agent of change concerned for the learners in the classrooms as future leaders of this country, the researcher believes all school management teams should constantly strive to ensure that the highest standards are being met in all aspects of school management. Therefore, as the evaluation was not only to understand the impact of the programme, but more importantly, to improve the programme for future use, the researcher believes she may have erred on the side of being over-critical in order to ensure that school management teams manage schools effectively.

As the internal evaluator, the researcher was also very aware that the participants would probably answer the interview questions in such a way as to be polite and not to hurt her feelings. She therefore formulated an open-ended question that required them to quote examples of how the programme had affected them.

### **3.7 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

Ethical considerations used for this study included getting informed consent from the institutions concerned as well as from participants. Confidentiality was ensured and participants were also debriefed about why and how the study would be done. (See letter in Appendix A). It was remembered that participation should always be voluntary and this point was made explicit to the subjects (Rudestam & Newton 1992: 201). As a mark of gratitude for their participation subjects would also be informed on the findings of the study (Schulze 2005:19). As a member of an ethnic race different from that of the participants, due consideration was given to language that is sensitive to diverse groups as well as to cultural differences. However, cultural differences should never be used as

an excuse to compromise on standards that are not only expected from the National Department of Education but also mandatory in the international arena of educational management and ethics.

### **3.8 CONCLUSION**

In this chapter the qualitative research approach, as opposed to the quantitative approach, was discussed as being appropriate to the research design for this evaluation study.

The research methodology using a situation analysis, document analysis, observation and qualitative naïve sketches was also discussed. The reasons and rationale for the selected sample were explained as were the steps taken to carry out the research. The researcher reflected on her own subjectivities such as status, gender, race, language and experience which could have influenced the research in a positive or negative way, as well as on the required protocol for ethical considerations.

The design, methodology and considerations discussed in this chapter will pave the way for carrying out the actual research and lead to the discussion of the findings that will be dealt with in Chapter Four that follows.

## **CHAPTER FOUR**

### **DISCUSSION OF DATA AND DATA ANALYSIS**

#### **4.1 INTRODUCTION**

The data for this study were gathered from two schools, School A and School B. Both schools had been involved in the EQUIP programme for three years (from March 2004 to March 2007). These schools are situated around Steelpoort in Mpumalanga and are within a distance of about 35 kilometers from each other. The data gathered for analysis to determine the impact of the EQUIP programme on school management teams involved the following

- examining the baseline studies which were carried out at the start of the programme to determine the schools' developmental needs;
- perusing documents;
- an analysis of naïve sketches obtained from the SMT members of each school; and
- observations through site visits.

#### **4.2 GAINING ENTRY INTO THE SCHOOLS**

De Vos et al (2005:396) state that collaboration helps to provide a sense of ownership and by working together with those who can facilitate access, researchers gain the co-operation and support necessary to conduct the investigation. Since the researcher had already established a good relationship with staff members over the past three years during site visits, the Principals and their SMT members willingly agreed to write a brief, personal essay on their opinions of the impact on the EQUIP Programme on the management of their school. The SMT members were asked to be honest in their opinions and were assured that the essays would be confidential and that no names would be published. The essays were collected from the schools after completion and thereafter interpreted and analysed by the researcher.

The researcher also had access to documents such as policies, minutes of meetings, attendance registers, administration systems, etc.

### **4.3 SELECTION OF SCHOOLS**

The schools were chosen because they are both primary schools and are both situated in a rural area. They are similar in size and serve the same kind of community, i.e. previously disadvantaged communities. These facts would make the study representative of schools of similar kind that are involved in the EQUIP Programme.

### **4.4 CONTEXT OF SCHOOL A**

School A is located in Eerstegeluk Township about fifteen kilometers from Steelpoort. It has a staff of 22 educators including the principal. It has an average learner enrolment of about 800 learners. There are five SMT members in total. Most of the learners' parents either work on the mines or are unemployed. One wing of the school still has to be demolished because of bad structural cracks. There is a lack of water and toilets and learners have to use the surrounding bushes. Since the start of the project the infrastructure has been greatly improved (See Table 4.3 "Goals Accomplished Through School Development Plan").

### **4.5 CONTEXT OF SCHOOL B**

School B is located between Steelpoort and Driekoppies. It has a learner enrolment averaging 450 learners and consists of nine educators including the principal. It has three SMT members officially appointed and two volunteer members. Most of the buildings are prefabricated but four new brick classrooms have been built since the start of the programme. (See table 4.2 : "Goals Accomplished through the School Development Plan").

## 4.6 BASELINE STUDIES

Before training was implemented a baseline audit was carried out in all schools selected for the EQUIP programme. The objective of the baseline study follows that described by Arkava and Lane (De Vos et al 2005:146-147) as “the planned, systematic collection of data on the problem before intervention commences, over a long enough time span against which to obtain a stable measurement”. Thus, two days were spent in each school to gather data in order to determine the development needs of the schools. The first day was spent with the management of the school to gather information on the general functioning of the school. The instruments used for this included an administration checklist, a school profile questionnaire, an observation sheet and interview schedules for the Principal, SGB members and a teacher focus group. On the second day three lessons were observed using a classroom observation schedule to gain information on the quality of teaching and learning. Grade Seven learners and Grade Six educators were also given a Mathematics and Natural Science pre-test to determine whether the appropriate levels of attainment were being reached for these subjects.

Although the focus of the programme was to build the capacity of the SGBs and school management teams, some curriculum development of Maths and Natural Science was given by enrolling two educators in each of these fields for the UNISA ACE courses. In the areas of management, however, the baseline studies looked at the following areas

- facilities of the schools;
- learner enrolment;
- staffing;
- quality of the school infrastructure;
- school functionality;
- school governance;
- school leadership;
- curriculum;
- discipline;

- school safety and security; and
- parent and community involvement.

Overseeing each of the key performance areas mentioned above is part of the roles and functions of a school management team. This is in line with Davidoff and Lazarus' (2002:36) view of leadership as "... directing a school, and management as holding the school, maintaining the well-being of the school and ensuring that the systems set in place are working well". Therefore, the findings of this study will determine if there was an improvement in each of the aforementioned areas of management after the EQUIP programme intervention, which began immediately after the baseline studies were carried out and completed in March 2007.

To gain the above information, the development needs noted in the baseline studies will be compared with document analysis, observations and the views of the SMT gathered by naïve sketches, which will be analysed.

#### **4.6.1 Findings of the Baseline Studies**

Using the instruments outlined in 4.6 above, the findings of the baseline studies showed that the development needs of the schools were very generic. These are reflected in table 4.1 overleaf.

**Table 4.1: Development needs of the schools**

SCHOOL A	SCHOOL B
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>SGB</b></p> <p><b>The SGB needs further training in the following:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Understanding their roles and functions</li> <li>▪ Financial Management</li> <li>▪ Fundraising</li> <li>▪ Parental and community involvement</li> <li>▪ Policy development on disciplinary procedures, language, religion, safety and security, HIV/AIDS, pastoral care</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>SGB</b></p> <p><b>The SGB needs more training in the following:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Understanding their roles and functions</li> <li>▪ Financial Management</li> <li>▪ Fundraising</li> <li>▪ Parental and community involvement</li> <li>▪ Policy development in admission, HIV/AIDS, pastoral care, disciplinary procedures</li> <li>▪ Keeping SGB minutes</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>SMT</b></p> <p>More members of staff needed to be added to the SMT and they need training in their job descriptions and in performance management. They need to be developed in the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Revising the vision and mission statement</li> <li>▪ Strategic planning – developing a school development plan</li> <li>▪ Team building</li> <li>▪ Job descriptions</li> <li>▪ Monitoring</li> <li>▪ Goal setting</li> <li>▪ Coaching and feedback</li> <li>▪ Performance appraisal</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>SMT</b></p> <p>The management team needs capacity building to improve the culture of teaching and learning and should put the following in place:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ A vision and mission statement</li> <li>▪ A school development plan</li> <li>▪ Team building</li> <li>▪ Job descriptions</li> <li>▪ Monitoring</li> <li>▪ Goal setting</li> <li>▪ Coaching and feedback</li> <li>▪ Performance appraisal</li> <li>▪ Report writing</li> </ul>

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>School functionality</b></p> <p><b>The following need to be put in place:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Computerised administration system</li> <li>▪ Attendance registers for non-educators</li> <li>▪ Casualty/Injury register</li> <li>▪ Playground duty rosters</li> <li>▪ Updating of library accession register</li> <li>▪ Procedure for issue and return of stock</li> <li>▪ Homework timetable/study tables</li> <li>▪ Analysing of annual results</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>School functionality</b></p> <p><b>The following need to be put in place:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Computerised administration system</li> <li>▪ Getting admission of learners up-to-date</li> <li>▪ Casualty/Injury register</li> <li>▪ Playground rosters</li> <li>▪ Homework study timetable</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Curriculum resources</b></p> <p>The school needs the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Textbooks</li> <li>▪ Computers</li> <li>▪ Laboratory equipment</li> <li>▪ More library books</li> <li>▪ Photocopier</li> <li>▪ Fax machine</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Curriculum resources</b></p> <p>The school need to procure the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Computers</li> <li>▪ Textbooks</li> <li>▪ Maps and charts</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Infrastructure:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The school needs more classrooms</li> <li>▪ Fencing and gates</li> <li>▪ Kitchen for feeding scheme</li> <li>▪ Administration block</li> <li>▪ School hall</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Infrastructure:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Water and toilets should be the top priority while teaching and learning would benefit from a library, laboratory and administration block</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Safety and security requirements</b></p> <p>The following is required:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Burglar bars on all classrooms</li> <li>▪ Fix broken window panes</li> <li>▪ Fire extinguishers</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Safety and security requirements</b></p> <p>The following need to be put in place:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Burglar bars</li> <li>▪ Fix broken window panes</li> <li>▪ Fire extinguishers</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ More First Aid training</li> <li>▪ Civil defense plan</li> <li>▪ Civil defense drills</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ First Aid training</li> <li>▪ Civil defense plan</li> <li>▪ Civil defense drills</li> </ul>
<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Curriculum</b></p> <p>Educators need development in the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ OBE teaching strategies</li> <li>▪ OBE assessment strategies</li> <li>▪ Classroom management</li> <li>▪ Development in Mathematics and Natural Science content and teaching</li> </ul>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Curriculum</b></p> <p>Educators need development in the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ OBE teaching strategies</li> <li>▪ OBE assessment strategies</li> <li>▪ Classroom management</li> <li>▪ Development in Mathematics and Natural Science content and teaching</li> </ul>

## 4.7 DOCUMENT ANALYSIS

### 4.7.1 The School Development Plan

As neither school had a long-term strategic plan, schools were instructed on the basis of their own evaluation of their strengths and weaknesses (SWOT analysis), as well as the findings of the baseline study, to drive their vision and mission statements by drafting a three-year development plan. They were to do this together with all their stakeholders. Mobovula's paper delivered at the EMASA conference on Managing Change in Education (2005:7) supports this view saying, "A learning organisation involves people at multiple levels thinking together about significant and enduring solutions and then helping those solutions come about."

The school development plan was seen to be the main thrust of the EQUIP programme to get schools to address their developmental needs and to have a clear sense of purpose vital to productivity and innovation (Purkey & Smith 1983:442; Bell & Chan 2005:6).

Therefore, before embarking on the process of developing a school development plan, schools had to first form a school development team committee comprising of all

stakeholders. The required format of the school development plan included a page for the names and signatures of the members of the school development team and the signature of the Chairperson of the SGB. This revealed that both schools included the following stakeholders:

- Parents
- Community members
- Educators
- SMT members
- The Principal

With the aim to get school development teams to develop a three-year plan to improve their schools, a workshop was held for the school development teams on strategic planning. Purkey and Smith (1983:442) state that though specific tactics may vary in schools where change and major innovations have been successfully implemented, the general strategy is best characterised as one that promotes collaborative planning, team work and a school atmosphere conducive to experimentation and evaluation.

The outcomes of these workshops were therefore to get the stakeholders working together to

- develop or revise their vision and mission statements;
- do a SWOT analysis to determine their strengths and weaknesses;
- set goals;
- prioritise goals according to the impact they have on teaching and learning; and
- do a detailed action plan for the goals set for the three years.

These outcomes are included in the development plan's format determined by the National Business Initiative (NBI).

The goals set by the two case-study schools are set out in tables 4.2 and 4.3 below: The tables also indicate achievement of the goals over the three-year period.

**Table 4.2: Goals of School A 2004 to 2006**

<b>Goal</b>	<b>Impact on teaching and learning</b>	<b>Achievement against goal (performance indicators)</b>
1. Improve monitoring of teaching and learning	Impact on results	New monitoring instrument developed
2. Implementation of IQMS	Improvement of teaching and learning through educator development	Every educator has personal growth plan
3. Computer center	Introduction of computer literacy to learners	Computer centre built and computers obtained
4. Building of new classrooms	Safe environment for learners as old buildings are falling apart	Four new classrooms built
5. Building of administration centre	Improved record keeping and efficient administration supports teaching and learning	Administration block built with offices for Principal, offices for HODs, staff-room, clerks office, safe room, toilets for staff and stockroom.

Goals not achieved and carried forward to next three-year plan:

- Demolishment of old classrooms and replacement by more new classrooms.

**Table 4.3: Goals of School B 2004 – 2006**

<b>Goal</b>	<b>Impact on teaching and learning</b>	<b>Achievement against goal (performance indicators)</b>
1. To procure a photocopying machine	Preparing of worksheets, lesson preparation and wall charts	Photocopying machine procured through fundraising
2. Implementation of	Educator performance	Every educator evaluated

IQMS	appraisal and development of educators through personal growth plans	according to the IQMS performance requirements. Every educator has a personal growth plan
3. To procure a fax machine	To aid in communication with Department, etc.	Fax machine linked to telephone
4. Build additional classrooms and administration block	To alleviate overcrowding.	Four new classrooms built
5. Computer centre	All learners to be computer literate	A classroom was converted into a computer center and computers were obtained through sponsorship
6. Improve security	Fence and gate will help make the school safer environment for teachers and learners	Secure fencing and gate set up.

Other achievements not included in the development plan include

- building of school feeding scheme kitchen;
- building of shelter for assemblies; and
- acquiring of science kits.

Goals not achieved and carried forward to the next three-year plan: Building of an administration block.

#### **4.7.2 The Impact of the EQUIP Programme on the Achievement of Development Plan Goals**

One of the EQUIP co-ordinator's main tasks was to assist in monitoring the progress of the schools' improvement plans with the SMTs. Schools were also given a small grant by sponsors of the EQUIP programme towards implementing their plans. However, this

amount was not enough for schools to achieve all their infrastructural goals. It could be said, however, that the EQUIP programme was instrumental in helping them achieve these goals through the assistance given them to develop a vision for their schools and to spur them on to seek further sponsorship for new infrastructures and for computer equipment.

Developing a three year plan for their schools gave school management teams the impetus to have a vision for the future growth of their schools, whereas before there was none (Monoana 2005:7). This is borne out by comments of principals and school management members cited in “Qualitative Naïve Sketches” (see section 4.9.1 below).

The EQUIP programme also tried to encourage SMTs to organise their own fundraising events. However, although schools raise small amounts of money through events like casual days, Valentines day, etc. they do not plan big fundraising events as they state their communities are too poor and parents and local communities don’t support them. Sponsorships that helped the school to achieve building and other infrastructure goals mainly came from the surrounding mining companies.

### **4.7.3 Policies**

“Policies in a school situation usually mean some general plan of action which is designed to achieve a particular goal at the school”, states Botha (2002:24). As can be seen from the baseline studies both schools lacked policies, and assisting them to develop policies with all stakeholders was another key outcome of EQUIP. This is in accordance with Harman’s (1999:72) view that policy does not emerge within a vacuum. Rather, it is developed within the context of particular sets of values, pressures and constraints, and within particular structural arrangements. It is also a response to particular problems, needs and aspirations.

What was particularly worrying was that schools did not have a Code of Conduct in place together with disciplinary measures when learners breached the code. This was mainly due to the fact that after corporal punishment was abolished in schools, staff members

were at a loss as how to best discipline learners. The EQUIP programme gave workshops to assist the SMT and SGB to get disciplinary measures in place.

Another important policy sorely lacking in the schools, but vital for the effective day-to-day functionality of the schools, is a policy to deal with the absenteeism of educators. Many educators have to frequently attend departmental workshops and may be away from school for up to three days. Control of classes during the absence of teachers is found to be problematic. A policy dealing with a substitute teacher timetable was lacking in both schools. Although schools were urged to develop an absenteeism policy for educators to deal with control of classes during the teachers' absence, this was not achieved by the end of the programme.

The following tables show policies that needed development before the EQUIP programme and what policies were developed after the EQUIP programme intervention.

**Table 4.4: Policies – School A**

<b>Policies lacking at baseline study</b>	<b>Policies developed since EQUIP programme intervention</b>	<b>Key performance indicators observed/checked</b>
Disciplinary procedures	Disciplinary measures	Disciplinary procedures policy
Language	Language	Language Policy
Religion	Religion	Religious Policy
Safety and Security	Safety and Security	Safety and Security Policy
HIV/AIDS	HIV/AIDS	HIV/AIDS Policy
Finance	Finance	Finance Policy
Pastoral Care	Condolence	Condolence Policy
Subject/phase policies	Phase policies	Phase Policies for Foundation, Intermediate and Senior Phases
Absenteeism of educators and learners	No yet done	

**Table 4.5: Policies – School B**

<b>Policies lacking at baseline study</b>	<b>Policies developed since EQUIP programme intervention</b>	<b>Key performance indicators observed/checked</b>
Admission	Admission	Admission Policy
Staff Appraisal	IQMS in place	IQMS documents
HIV/AIDS	HIV/AIDS	HIV/AIDS Policy
Pastoral Care	Dealt with in HIV/AIDS policy	Pastoral Care Policy
Disciplinary measures	Code of conduct with disciplinary measure	Disciplinary measures Subject/phase policies
Subject/phase policies	Phase policies	
Absenteeism policy	Not yet done	
Financial policy	Not yet done	

### **Implementation of Policies**

Reimers and McGinn (1999:130) acknowledge that part of the complexity of the links between research and policy lies in the complex relationship between stated policy and implemented policy. Implementation of policies in schools is ongoing and it was not always easy for the researcher to know if they were implemented by all. It was emphasised, however, that policies should be reviewed yearly, copies made available to all stakeholders, and the SMT should see to it that they are implemented.

#### **4.7.4 Administration Systems**

When the baseline studies were carried out, neither school had any administration clerks, so the principals had to carry the load of administration and filing besides their other duties. However, by the middle of 2006 the Department of Education had appointed one administrative clerk to School A and two to School B. This immediately created a new opportunity for the EQUIP programme to assist the school management teams in training and monitoring their clerks so that they could develop efficient administration systems.

School management teams were encouraged through the EQUIP programme to draw up job descriptions for their clerks, conduct regular meetings with them and to monitor their

work. Fortunately, both schools had also acquired computers from the Department. Although School B already had two computers for administration purposes when the programme started, the administration system had not yet been computerised. School A acquired a computer after the programme started. The EQUIP co-ordinator was able to assist both schools to improve stock control and financial systems by setting up these systems on the computer.

The following table shows administration needs at baseline and after the EQUIP programme intervention.

**Table 4.6: Administration Systems Improvement at School A**

<b>Administration systems lacking at baseline</b>	<b>Administration systems improvement after EQUIP programme intervention</b>	<b>Key performance indicators observed/checked</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Attendance register for non-educators</li> <li>▪ Casualty/Injury registers</li> <li>▪ Playground duty rosters</li> <li>▪ Procedure for the issue and return of stock</li> <li>▪ Homework timetables</li> </ul>	<p>Non-educators sign in same book as educators</p> <p>Not done</p> <p>Break duty rosters</p> <p>Log book opened</p> <p>Done by individual educators</p>	<p>Names signed in time book</p> <p>Names on rosters</p> <p>Log book</p> <p>Homework timetables</p> <p>Analysis schedules in file</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Analysis of annual results</li> <li>▪ Learners' profiles</li> <li>▪ Financial systems</li> </ul>	<p>Exam analysis</p> <p>Not yet started</p> <p>Computerised cash receipts, cash payments and monthly bank reconciliation</p>	<p>Printouts of cash receipt and cash payment schedules and monthly bank reconciliation up to date. Files of receipts, used cheques, invoices</p>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Annual budget projection</li> <li>▪ Monthly expenditure spreadsheet</li> <li>▪ Asset stock register updated</li> <li>▪ Consumable stock register</li> </ul>	<p>Set up on computer</p> <p>Set up on computer</p> <p>Set up on computer</p> <p>Asset register done</p> <p>Set up on computer but not up to date</p>	<p>Printout of annual budget projection and expenditure spreadsheet in line with annual budget figures</p> <p>Asset stock register up to date</p> <p>Consumable stock register up to date</p>
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**Table 4.7: Administration Systems Improvement at School B**

<b>Administration systems lacking at baseline</b>	<b>Administration System Improvement after EQUIP programme intervention</b>	<b>Key performance indicators to be observed/checked</b>
Computerised administration system	In place	Administration systems
Updated admission of learners	Admission register	Updated admission book
Learner profiles	Still in progress	Learner profiles done up to Grade 3
Casualty/Injury register	Injuries recorded	Injury register
Playground rosters	Not yet in place	Playground rosters
SGB minutes	SGB minutes book	SGB minute book
Homework study timetables	Not yet in place	Homework timetables
Financial systems	Set up on computer	Annual budget projection
Annual budget projection	Set up on computer	Monthly expenditure spreadsheet up to date
Monthly expenditure spreadsheet	Set up on computer	
Cash and receipt payments computerised	Set up on computer and invoices filed	Cash and receipt payments schedules Cash Payments file
Monthly bank reconciliation	Set up on computer	Monthly bank

Consumable stock register	Set up on computer	reconciliation up to date File of bank statements Updated consumable stock register
Asset register up to date	Asset register done	Updated asset register

#### 4.8 SAFETY AND SECURITY

With rising incidences of crime and vandalism in South African schools, the safety concerns of learners and staff should be high on the agenda of school management teams. One of greatest problems of schools, such as those in the project, is that they serve communities that are characterised by poverty and unemployment. As a result, schools are constantly vandalised during weekends and holidays. In discussing schools in their local community contexts, Davidoff and Lazarus (2002:4, 5) believe the way the community and the school relate to each other is crucial if the school is really to meet community needs, and if the community is to support the school in accomplishing this. Principals in the project schools stated that they find it difficult to get community support. However, with the involvement of the police in community forums and projects such as “Adopt a Cop”, things are improving.

The following tables will show improvements in safety and security since the baseline studies.

**Table 4.8: Safety and Security- School A**

<b>Safety and security needs at baseline</b>	<b>Safety and security after the EQUIP programme intervention</b>	<b>Key performance indicators to be observed/checked</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Burglar bars on all classrooms</li> <li>▪ Fix broken window panes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Burglar bars only in administration block and computer room</li> <li>Some broken panes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Burglar bars on all windows</li> <li>Unbroken window panes</li> </ul>

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ More First Aid training</li> </ul>	Most educators attended the course given by the Mine	Certificates of training
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Fire extinguishers</li> </ul>	Only six, and they have not been checked this year	Fire extinguishers in all blocks
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Safety plan</li> <li>▪ Civil defense drills</li> </ul>	Learners taught to respond to whistle signals	Safety plan on paper Log of civil defense drills carried out
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Improve fence and gate</li> </ul>	New fence and iron gate on rails	Secure fence and gate

**Table 4.9 Safety and Security – School B**

<b>Safety and security needs at baseline</b>	<b>Safety and security after the EQUIP programme intervention</b>	<b>Key performance indicators to be observed/checked</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Burglar Bars</li> </ul>	Burglar bar only in admin block and some classrooms	Burglar bars on all windows
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ First Aid box</li> </ul>	First Aid box is empty	Fully equipped First Aid box
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ First Aid training</li> </ul>	None	Certificates
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Fire extinguishers</li> </ul>	Only one	All classroom blocks have fire extinguishers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Safety plan</li> </ul>	Safety plan done	Safety plan displayed
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Civil defence drills</li> </ul>	Civil defense drills not carried out	Log book on defense drills carried out

#### **4.8.1 Safety and Security Measures Still Lacking**

It was found that both schools still needed to have staff trained in basic First Aid and that First Aid boxes need to be checked and refilled constantly. The required amount of fire

extinguishers is still lacking in both schools and the ones that they have are not regularly checked each year. This is a low priority in schools that lack resources and where fencing and security gates are a bigger priority to avoid theft and vandalism. Civil defence drills are very rudimentary in School A and are not carried out at all in School B

#### **4.9 QUALITATIVE NAÏVE SKETCHES**

To gather information on the impact of the EQUIP programme on school management using the qualitative approach, it was decided to request SMT members in both schools to write down their views in brief essays. One open-ended question was formulated, namely “ What was your experience of the impact of the EQUIP programme on the management of your school”?

Besides impacting on management functions, some key categories and patterns emanated from the essays to illustrate how the EQUIP programme impacted in other ways. These categories could be identified as

- improved personal skills;
- renewed personal motivation;
- improved inter-personal relationships;
- improved teaching and learning; and
- improved school governance.

Some of the following selected comments from the naïve sketches illustrate improvements in these areas and reliability of the data analysis.

##### **4.9.1 Personal Impact of the EQUIP Programme**

Comments with regard to how the EQUIP programme impacted on staff development include the following: “Our school educators are equipped with basic tools such as thinking and interpretive skills”. “ The workshop developed us as individuals and as a school to manage our school productively.” “The question of teachers dodging periods is

a thing of the past. Teachers respond to 'time on task'. The impact of the EQUIP programme is huge."

Although training in planning was related to the job, it also affected staff members personally, as cited by the following quote. "It is through this programme we learnt that planning is the tool for success and not only based on teaching and learning."

Further comments on how the EQUIP programme inspired personal motivation is revealed by the following comments, "We saw that renewal of purpose and commitment which results in an atmosphere more conducive to learning and teaching, so EQUIP programme came to our rescue." "We were revived in every area as teachers, SMTs and governing bodies of schools." "We were reminded of our job description and urged to adhere to it." "The SMTs met regularly for some time. Their eyes were opened to their roles and contribution to the education of their children." "The love for our work has been rekindled." "We also saw the need to develop further professionally. We were so discouraged and felt trapped in a field with no options."

#### **4.9.2 The Impact of the EQUIP Programme on Inter-personal Relationships**

One of the training workshops that seemed to have a great impact was the one on conflict management. This is evidenced by the fact that seven out of the eight naïve sketches mentioned the improved inter-staff relationships after participants learnt the techniques of dealing with conflict. One commented,

"We realised as teachers that central to our work environment is our relationships. We received valued information on conflict management as an important element in the work situation. Our relationship to one another was therefore improved and we experienced a flowing communication, more openness and discussions on the government policies were our day to day thing."

Another comment reveals that tensions within the schools stem from people not understanding one other's roles and responsibilities, and confirms what the situation at the schools was like before the EQUIP programme intervention on conflict management.

“ In an environment where there is conflict, no learning takes place. A conflicting environment is very stressful. This was the situation at our school. There was conflict between all stakeholders, particularly the community and the school and between educators themselves. After attending the workshop on conflict management and members of the SMT attending the coaching workshop, people understood the roles and responsibilities.”

Another comment sums it up as follows, “We can manage conflict which is among educators.”

#### **4.9.3 The Impact of the EQUIP Programme on Teaching and Learning in Key Teaching Subjects**

A number of educators in both schools were sponsored by the EQUIP programme to enroll for Mathematics, Natural Science and Learners with Special Needs (LSEN) ACE courses through UNISA and the University of the Witwatersrand. These educators became equipped to improve their teaching and assessment methods. This is verified by the following comments from the naïve sketches. “ “We were equipped with learning outcome and assessment standards applicable for all phases in Natural Science and Mathematics. Every educator is able to integrate N.S. and Maths in other learning areas. We understand the role of process skills and how it must be taught, providing the framework for learners to engage with the world around them.”

A common problem identified in all schools is that educators do not fully understand OBE assessment and the techniques of criterion referencing. They are also confused by the terminology used by the Department of Education in this respect. Besides the professional ACE courses, the support given by EQUIP facilitators in this regard proved very enlightening, as is attested by the following comments, “The programme assisted them (educators) on learners’ assessment. There are different types of assessment which are confusing but through this programme, they were unfolded to educators. They also had a problem with portfolios, not knowing what to include or exclude in the portfolio, but now they know what is expected.” “ We can make assessment tools effectively with contextual information for cross-referring purpose. Tips for constructing rubrics using the computer are very much useful to us.” “Educators (now) understand the terminology

used and develop their own assessment tools and understand rubrics. Continuous assessment is the order of the day.”

There were three comments in the naïve sketches from School B that demonstrate how the educator who did the ACE LSEN course has applied the course advantageously to inspire both learners and colleagues alike. Two of these comments include, “One educator who enrolled at Wits through EQUIP is doing a wonderful job. She always holds meetings with educators to identify our learners with barriers and find solutions how to help them. She is always in contact with the office whenever parents are to be called for the performance or behaviour of their learner. Extra/classes/lessons have been introduced, e.g. in reading and writing.” Another comment agrees stating, “...our remedial educator who is completing her course in 2007 does a great job by helping learners with barriers, by communicating with us in meetings, doing thorough research to have a recorded report.”

#### **4.9.4 The Impact of the EQUIP Programme on School Governing Bodies**

Although the DoE does provide training for newly elected SGBs on their roles and functions, this training is also supported by the EQUIP programme in more depth. Three of the naïve sketches contained references to the benefit of this additional training. One, for example, states, “It is through the workshops conducted that the SGB at our school were trained regarding governance and now they know their positions and expectations as SGBs.” Yet another testifies to the fact that SGBs have difficulty in drawing the line between management and governance, “...our SGB can now draw the line between administration and governance”.

As attested by one comment stating, “the programme touched every corner of the schools”, it is acknowledged that the EQUIP programme is a whole school development programme. However, since the focus of this study is on school management, an analysis of the naïve sketches relating to school management functions is discussed in greater detail below.

#### **4.9.5 The Impact of the EQUIP Programme on School Development Planning**

As mentioned previously, getting the schools to develop a three-year development plan was the main thrust of the EQUIP programme. The training in strategic planning was also aimed at ensuring schools would continuously be self-evaluating so that after the three-year project period schools would constantly re-vision themselves. The schools were advised to ask themselves the following questions, as outlined by Ndhlovu et al (1999:122)

- Where is the school now?
- Where would we like our school to be?
- How will we manage these changes over time?
- How will we know if we've been successful in our changes?

As can be determined by the following comments from the naïve sketches this strategy proved highly effective. For example, one SMT member said, “ As the programme unfolded, we were advised to select a school development committee who, together with the educators, brought about so many changes at our school. The school development plan was drawn up and followed and today we stand proud and point to new developments at our school.” Murgatroyed (1991:16) holds the view that self-managing service teams, i.e. teachers, parents, administrators, etc., should be looking for ways of constantly improving the organisation in terms of the general strategy. The following comments show that the planning process has been understood and can be perpetuated in the future: “ Before the introduction of the EQUIP programme, our school did not have a development plan. The programme has assisted the school on how to develop a school development plan. Year after year we upgrade our school development plan. This plan has changed our school completely; things are happening.”

Another comment stated, “A SWOT analysis of the school was done where a number of educators were assigned or tasked to develop a plan for the school.... The mission and vision of the school were crucial points for departure in that regard.” The importance of

the vision and mission giving impetus to the development plan, is supported by Bell and Chan (2005:17) who state that it is this sense of vision that facilitates effective school development planning.

Van Niekerk's (2003:164) comments on self-evaluation being "a process that is not focused on its product, such as a report, but on the improvement that should be brought about as a result of the evaluation" is illustrated by the following comment in one of the naïve sketches,

"The workshop developed us as individuals and as a school to manage our school productively. Before the EQUIP programme, the school had its own development plan, but according to the EQUIP co-ordinator, it was not according to the required standard. The school has a one-year plan and some of the items were not met. The members of the SGB and two SMT members attended the workshop. They were workshopped on how to start to plan, e.g. doing the SWOT analysis, i.e. analysing your weaknesses and strengths, looking at the needs of the school, identifying priorities, then having an action plan for each priority. The school has achieved all its goals within a year. All the stakeholders co-operated making the plan a success. The action plan was a driving tool and monitoring contributed a lot to the success of the plan. At the end of the year the school has reach its goals, i.e. having a photocopier, buying science equipment, fencing the school, having a sliding gate. All educators evaluated on IQMS. We have secured a sponsorship to build additional classrooms and a kitchen."

Another member commented, "At our school there had not been much development and record keeping.... The school has to realise that planing should be the foundation of your initiatives and there have to be time frames within your plan. That will lead the person(s) who are responsible to draft a plan, to have focus on what you want to achieve."

#### **4.9.6 Implementation of the Integrated Quality Management Systems (IQMS)**

One of the important goals set by all schools in their school development plans was to carry out the Integrated Quality Management System (IQMS) required by the Department of Education in 2005. Teu and Motlhabane (2006:10) quote the specific purpose of IQMS as being to identify the specific needs of the educators, the schools and the district offices for support and development; to provide support for continued growth; to promote accountability; to monitor an institution's overall effectiveness; and to evaluate an

educator's performance. It must be noted that former attempts by the DoE to implement a formal appraisal system for educators failed after the new Government came into being in 1994. This was mainly owing to the fact that there existed union opposition to classroom observations. Attempts to institute a formal appraisal system included the Developmental Appraisal System (DAS), Performance Measurement (PM) and Whole School Evaluation (WSE). Final agreement by unions to the IQMS system meant that for the first time in ten years educators would be monitored and evaluated (Education Labour Relations Council, Agreement 8 of 2003:3,4).

The reaction against classroom observation for the ten years prior to the implementation of the IQMS meant that HODs were not following a process whereby the purpose of monitoring educators' work was to set them goals for growth. Younger and newly appointed HODs, therefore, did not have the experience or knowledge to monitor the quality of teaching and learning. Indeed, many did not think of the need for such a performance appraisal system.

Although the Department carried out a series of cascade type workshops to assist schools to understand the IQMS process, many educators and SMT members indicated that they were still not clear about the IQMS requirements. The schools were therefore assisted through an EQUIP programme workshop to help them understand the IQMS process and the requirements of performance standards 1-4 of the IQMS document, i.e. classroom observation. Comments from the evaluation forms given out after the workshop were very positive and include comments such as, "The workshop serves as an eye-opener both for the SMT and the educators." "We now understand our roles better." "The workshop was very positive towards the attaining of the school's objectives." "We appreciated it to have such an educative workshop. We will be happy if we have more."

Comments from the naïve sketches regarding the EQUIP programme assistance given to educators to implement the IQMS process include: "We no longer have a problem of IQMS at our school. The workshops that were conducted at the school has really changed the attitude of the teachers." "EQUIP helped us to understand the IQMS better since we

were still struggling with it. It unfolded each step and we were able to move on with understanding.”. “The workshops on IQMS were done concurrently with Departmental workshops on IQMS. The EQUIP programme workshop revived the knowledge and motivation acquired and we found it relevant. Now we have the courage to face our teaching and learning.”

#### **4.9.7 The Impact on the Ongoing Monitoring and Evaluation of Teaching and Learning**

From discussions and observations after the first implementation of the IQMS process it is difficult to ascertain if ongoing classroom observations are taking place. Fitzgerald (2004:2) states that one of the more critical challenges that middle managers face is teaching while managing a team. This was found to be true for the project schools and it was learnt from discussions held with HODs on school visits, that their workload does not permit them the time to observe and monitor educators. Although the Departmental job descriptions for HODs state that they are supposed to have fewer periods than other educators so that they can carry out their monitoring and administrative duties, this is not the case in reality. HODs have the same number of periods and teach the same numbers of learners in overcrowded classrooms. They also have to attend and prepare for meetings, such as SMT meetings, subject meetings, etc.

Taking seven as the average number of educators that an HOD normally has under his/her supervision, and supposing that the HOD observes each educator once a term as is required, s/he would miss a total of twenty-eight periods with her/his own learners a year. These periods missed together with other periods missed owing to the attendance of departmental workshops and meetings, together with absence owing to personal issues, translate into a substantial loss of teaching time over the year.

Although EQUIP assisted the schools to understand the process of IQMS implementation, it came to light during discussions with SMT members on school visits, that some felt that the gap between the NGO and the Department needs to be narrowed with regard to ongoing monitoring of the curriculum. In both schools SMT members felt

that there should be more frequent interaction with the service provider in assisting the HODs in monitoring the curriculum. They felt that instead of coming only one day a month to the school to assist with administration issues and to build the capacity of the SMT in running the entire school, another day should be spent in the school to assist the HODs in monitoring the curriculum.

#### **4.9.8 The Impact of the EQUIP Programme on Curriculum Monitoring**

##### **(a) Learning Area Policies**

According to Turner (1996); Blandford (1997) and McClendon and Crowther (1998), as quoted by Fitzgerald (2004:3), the role of the middle manager is not widely understood internationally. However, Fitzgerald (2004:3) states what is apparent is the dual role that middle managers play. That is, middle managers have an administrative role within the school as well as a teaching responsibility. In citing Bush and West-Burnham (1994), Fitzgerald (2004:3) states that a middle manager's role is simultaneously that of a leader, manager and administrator who works with and through other people to achieve key tasks and activities. One of these tasks would be managing and controlling the quality of teaching and learning through developing learning areas or departmental policies. Prior to the EQUIP intervention, none of the project schools had learning area policies in place. HODs were shown how to develop these by means of a workshop that assisted them to understand what components should be included in a learning area policy. HODs were then required to develop learning area policies together with their educators. This was done in both schools, and comments from HODs in the naïve sketches showed that the development of subject/learning area policies had a strong impact on them. In School B one HOD stated, "All members of the SMT attended a workshop on developing learning area policies. After they had attended the workshop, the principal called a feedback meeting. Time was allocated for all subject heads to draft their learning area policies. The learning area policies serve as a monitoring tool for class visits, as it tells us what to check, and what educators have to do each week, e.g. regarding classwork, homework, assignment projects, tests and examinations. It has made the work easier for the principal and HOD when checking learners' work". A comment from School A included, "The

SMTs were oriented on the drafting of subject policies, on year-plans and the overall management of schools”.

### **(b) HOD Planning**

At the start of the programme HODs were not aware that they had to plan in order to monitor their phases or learning areas. It was emphasised that planning was the starting point of management. Harris et al (1996:90) support this, stating that effective schools establish a continual planning, implementation, monitoring and evaluation cycle which involves and supports staff.” Therefore, the next step after developing learning area policies was for the HODs to implement them through an annual operational plan that outlined daily activities. At the beginning of 2007 an improvement in curriculum planning by HODs was noted by the facilitator. Where previously HODs had no year-plans for managing their phases, most HODs now have these in place. The plans show the days when classroom visits and the checking of educators’ portfolios are supposed to take place. However, as previously noted, this has to be implemented and a process followed to set goals for improvement as well as developing a means to monitor their progress. Comments from the naïve sketches showed that developing a year-plan was one of the most important lessons learnt through the EQUIP programme. Comments included, “Presently the SMT is able to write a year planner and follow it to the letter.” “EQUIP helped the Department to equip us in teaching and learning. It is very important to plan in advance in respect of learning programmes, schedules, lesson plans, etc. “Meetings were held with teachers to address and improve on the basics, e.g. planning of work, work schedules, assessment techniques, reporting and recording.” “The following management levels were discussed: 1. Planning 2. Organising 3. Control 4. Monitoring 5. Communication 6. Time frames.” “The SMT was also assisted with drawing of year-plans and even made aware of the fact that following the plan will make the work easier and progressive.”

### **(c) Monitoring Instruments**

As Marland (1972: 20) states, “The Head of Department must know what goes on in the classes for which he is responsible. He needs to know for practical reasons (the provision

of teaching material), for educational reasons (to see what aspects of the subject or approaches to learning are experienced by the pupils), to assist him in the spreading of ideas, and to get to know the work of individual teachers. In the case of the two project schools, the previous monitoring instrument that the HODs had to check educators' portfolios on a monthly or quarterly basis was merely a checklist of what the educators had to have in their files and lacked the criteria to check the quality of the lesson plans, assessment, and the quality of learners' work, etc. It also did not have a section that sets out goals to monitor the educator's development.

School A has, however, developed an improved monitoring instrument that includes classroom observation and the setting of goals for educators. This initiative came from the circuit office. However, the EQUIP programme co-ordinator was asked for her input to improve the draft. It is intended that the improved version be circulated to all schools in the circuit. One comment from the naïve sketches noted, "It is also through the programme that the SMT was advised to have monitoring tools and Departmental policies so that teaching and learning can be effective."

The proof that the monitoring instrument is being used and implemented especially in School A, is borne from the following comment, "The SMT has a monitoring tool which it uses to monitor curriculum and extra curricular activities."

#### **(d) Coaching and Feedback to Staff**

In discussing the changing context of education management in South Africa, Thurlow (2003:15) states that those charged with empowering others in the performance of their work must also empower themselves through mastering alternative ways of managing performance. At the start of the EQUIP programme it was evident that besides having problems in understanding their roles in monitoring the curriculum, HODs were not coaching educators who are under-performing or setting them goals to improve in areas where they needed to improve. Some comments from the naïve sketches verify that the techniques taught in the workshops on how to coach and give feedback had some impact, and can be attested by the following statements, "HODs are given one hour every month

for coaching sessions. Educators show commitment and present an environment conducive for learning.” “The workshop provided us with methodologies for use in coaching staff. We know and apply key outcomes, key principles and coaching for results.”

The following comment shows how the newly acquired techniques of coaching helped change a Principal’s formerly autocratic management style and mindset to adopt a more democratic approach, “This was really a good thing that was introduced. At our school ‘Bos’ was the manager. He has learnt how positively to approach people, in different situations.”

#### **4.9.9 The Impact of the EQUIP Programme on SMT Team Building**

In accordance with Turnbull’s (2005:74) belief that teams are ultimately accountable to their larger school communities and to this end must be conscious of the degree to which their goals, objectives and values align, the EQUIP programme tried to encourage the SMTs to work together as cohesive teams. Initially, teambuilding workshops allowed individuals to put forward issues that they thought were preventing the SMT from being effective. They were also afforded the opportunity to come up with solutions to solve or improve these issues. After the workshops these issues and solutions were noted in reports and given to each school to constantly reflect upon so as to address them.

Van Niekerk (2001:5) quotes Jay and Dunham’s list of benefits of working as a team as

- improving morale and motivation;
- reducing staff turnover;
- increasing productivity;
- improving job satisfaction; and
- overcoming problems more easily when everybody is working together.

That these benefits are true is borne by the following comment in one essay, “The impact was also on relationships, teamwork and communication. Educators became aware that

good relationships, teamwork and good communication are the better tools to a conducive working environment. They were also made aware of their job descriptions and they now know their expectations and limits as per job description.”

Another quote taken from the naïve sketches again verifies that in School B in particular, there was a marked improvement towards democratic governance. “ The EQUIP programme organised our management team by establishing a SMT and how to work together in management. Before the principal was used to working alone without a school management team. But since the EQUIP programme, it has helped our school to have a team.”

School A had this comment on the impact of the teambuilding exercise. “ This was the first step that the EQUIP programme started with to enhance development at school. The following was done: Educators and members of the SMT were divided in order to discuss and identify each other’s weak and strong points. A SWOT analysis was done. With this method we managed to identify our weaknesses and learnt a lot from each so that we could collectively come up with solutions to the problems identified. We suffered a lot of misunderstanding which brought conflict, but as we all know that constructive conflict brings development it did exactly that.” Another comment from the same school asserted, “ The SMT has learnt that working in isolation from other SMT members is suicidal. Our SMT is a unit and they work as a unit. All these success stories are a result of the impact of the EQUIP programme.”

#### **4.9.10 The Impact of the EQUIP Programme on Administration Systems**

As noted by Harris et al (1996:13) efficient and orderly administration systems are another element of an effective school. These systems are the formal bureaucratic linkages that allow an organisation to operate (Firestone & Wilson 1985:9). One of the most important administration systems in any organisation is that of finance management. In the case of Schools A and B, it was disconcerting to note that although they had a budget, they were not keeping accurate record and there were no procedures in place to control or monitor expenditure. In order to improve efficiency in this respect, the EQUIP

programme also assisted newly appointed administrative clerks to improve their financial records and systems so that they could report back to the SMT and the SGB and the financial committees on the state of the schools' finances.

Marishane and Botha (2004:95) had the following to say on school based financial management, "Data from empirical research emphasise the importance of training school-based financial management structures in financial management. Emphasis on financial management training shows that these structures perceive training as important for professional development and thus an essential empowerment tool."

The following comments from the naïve sketches of School A verify that this was achieved, "Our financial officer who is a clerk was workshopped on doing the monthly financial statement on the computer. The school is able to run its finances by checking the monthly financial reports to regulate overspending or underspending. Our clerks have been greatly assisted by the programme." School B stated, "The EQUIP programme organised a workshop to develop our financial and administration clerk to monitor and record keeping our school books. Our financial books are now in order together with our monies. The books are taken yearly for auditing with confidence."

#### **4.10 CONCLUSION**

In conclusion, it can be seen that various data gathering methods were used to analyse the impact of the EQUIP programme on school management teams. These included using the initial baseline study to measure improvement in administration, safety and security, policy development, as well as curriculum development. School documents such as minutes of meetings, policy documents and administration records revealed whether the administration improved. The naïve sketches completed by SMT members verified if the training given to build the capacity of school management teams and the development of three-year strategic plans had the desired effects. They also revealed the positive impact the programme had on personal and inter-personal relationships of all stakeholders, the improvement of teaching and learning and the improvement on school governance.

The following chapter will draw conclusions of this analysis and recommendations will be made.

## **CHAPTER FIVE**

### **CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND LIMITATIONS**

#### **5.1 INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW OF THE INVESTIGATION**

The key aim of the EQUIP programme is to build the capacity of school-based management teams. It is believed that through this capacity building intervention to develop the ability of institutions and individuals to perform effectively, improved quality of learning and teaching can be achieved (De Grauwe 2005:284).

The Task Team on Educational Management (Kapp 2000:286) states that such capacity building must address the following five key components: strategic direction; organisational structures and systems; human resources; infrastructure and other resources; and networking partnerships and communication.

Infrastructure and the other resources referred to above, as well as the provision of financial incentives and the appointment of posts for educators are clearly the responsibility of the State. However, bearing in mind that the acronym EQUIP stands for Education Quality Improvement Partnerships, it is the aim of the programme to form a partnership with the DoE to assist in the capacity building of school management and governance. It also has the purpose of improving teaching and learning, especially in the Mathematics and Natural Science learning areas through sponsoring educators to study the ACE courses through an accredited institution.

In the literature study (see Chapter 2), the concept of school based management and what is generally thought to determine effective schools, effective management and effective management teams, in the global and African context were discussed.

The review brought to light that most countries in the world have adopted the trend of decentralising education management to the school level, albeit with some variations.

Reference was made to researchers such as De Grauwe (2005:267), Squelch and Lemmer (1994:1), Davidoff and Lazarus (2002:3,4) and Murgatroyed (1991:17) who express concerns about the success of school based management in developing countries if they do not receive the same state support as First World countries. Since the concept of school based management was introduced in South Africa in 1994 through legislation of the new Schools' Act (84) of 1996 (RSA 1996), the importance of this research to determine how schools in the EQUIP programme have effectively adapted to this approach before and after the intervention was highlighted.

In the discussion on what constitutes effective schools, it was concluded from Purkey and Smith's intensive study (1983:428-452) that most analysts agree with the following organisational variables

- site based management;
- instructional leadership from the Principal and other administrators;
- staff stability;
- a curriculum that is purposefully planned;
- schoolwide staff development;
- parental involvement and support;
- schoolwide recognition of academic support;
- maximized learning time; and
- district support.

Analysts also agree that values and beliefs underpin an organisation's culture and must be shared by all stakeholders.

In the literature review were also discussed the views of researchers on effective management and leadership (see section 2.6). It was found that although there were different opinions about the interchangeability of the terms 'management' and 'leadership', the empowerment of individuals in skills, knowledge, attitudinal changes

and particular leadership qualities, is seen as key features in developing leadership and management capacity throughout the entire school.

In discussing managing and leading change, (see section 2.6.2) the review examined the opinions of various analysts and found that most agree that change and innovation are ongoing features of a school's existence and that the ability to manage change is an essential quality of leaders at all levels of management.

Section 2.6.3 of the literature study broke down the key performance areas of school management teams in managing and leading schools, and concluded that if school improvement is to be achieved, the emphasis should be on transformational rather than transactional leadership.

Finally, it was found that the essential message about school-based management was that it is a team activity and the characteristics of effective teams were identified to achieve this end (see section 2.7.1). Continuous self-evaluation was also seen to be a key element to effective management and this was stated as being an important element of the EQUIP programme.

Chapter three outlined the qualitative approach that would be used in the empirical part of this study on the impact of the EQUIP programme. This evaluative research design combined both phenomenological and case study strategies (see sections 3.2.1 & 3.2.2). The design started with an examination of the initial baseline studies carried out before the programme intervention at the two selected schools. Observations and document analysis formed part of this evaluation. Naive sketches were also used to allow the people to express their own voices and opinions about their experiences and feelings about the implementation of the EQUIP programme.

## **5.2 CONCLUSIONS OF FINDINGS**

The findings in chapter four show that the EQUIP programme did have a significant impact on helping the schools to develop in a strategic direction. The programme also helped the project schools to reflect on and improve their organisational structures and systems (see section 4.7.4). Raising standards in the classroom was not only done through upgrading educators through Mathematics, Natural Science and LSEN ACE courses, but also by implementing a general school support programme that built the capacity of the school management teams to better co-ordinate and monitor teaching and leaning and general school management (see section 4.9.8).

The findings of the baseline studies carried out at the beginning of the programme (see section 4.6.1) showed that there was a significant improvement in many key performance areas after the three-year intervention (see section 4.7). Referring to the key performance areas of management examined in the baseline studies the following can be concluded:

### **(a) Facilities**

Both schools achieved the goals of their school development plans to improve their facilities. This can be attested by the fact that School B procured a photocopying machine, fax machine, and computers. School A also procured computers for learners and organised for waterpipes and taps to be installed at the school.

### **(b) Infrastructure**

The DoE built new classrooms and an administration block for school A, and Xstrata mines built the new classrooms for School B. Both schools used their initiative to raise funds for computers and turned classrooms into computer centres. Once again, it can be concluded that the strategic planning intervention had great impact on schools to encourage their stakeholders to revise their schools and to set goals to improve both the physical resources as well as the skills and attitudes of their human resources.

### **(c) Safety and Security**

Although there were some improvements in this area after the intervention, attention had still not been given to the servicing of the fire extinguishers and civil defense drills or to the keeping of First Aid boxes with the necessary equipment. This attitude can be attributed to the poor socio-economic conditions of these communities and the limited resources, where priority is rather given to putting up fences and gates to keep out potential thieves and vandals. School B was able to raise money for secure fencing and gates and most educators at this school attended a free First Aid course offered by the mine. When visiting School A some months after the intervention ended, the researcher observed that this school had also managed to procure funds to put up fencing and a sliding gate.

### **(d) Policy development**

The baseline studies showed that at the start of the intervention, both schools lacked the basic policies needed by schools for good management. Through constant encouragement and assistance in policy development both schools developed many of the basic policies required by the DoE. A key one was the disciplinary procedures for learners to replace corporal punishment. However, some policies were still outstanding by the end of the intervention. The most important of these is a policy on educator absenteeism and the control of classes during educator absence. Another policy that the schools were urged to develop was a pastoral care policy that outlined how the school would care for the welfare of orphans and other vulnerable children. This policy still needs developing in both schools by an established Health and Welfare Committee.

### **(e) Administration**

Although both schools had basic filing systems, and attendance registers and timetables in place at the start of the intervention, the baseline studies showed that the administration systems needed much improvement. Fortunately, administration officers were appointed at both schools during the intervention, which relieved the principals of this load. These appointments allowed for the EQUIP programme to build the capacity of the new school administrators to improve administration systems and controls.

Through the EQUIP programme financial systems were greatly improved as it was found that neither school was reconciling the monthly books or keeping control of the budget. Another drawback in both schools shown at the baseline was playground duty rosters and homework timetables and by the end of the intervention there was only limited success in getting the schools to develop these and to implement them.

#### **(f) Improved Relationships within the School Management Team**

The baseline studies also showed that there was a great need for teambuilding between the school management teams, especially in School B where the educators complained about the autocracy of the leadership. The baseline also showed that SMTs did not meet regularly and did not understand their roles and functions. This was also revealed in the reports of the teambuilding workshops conducted by the EQUIP programme.

Patterns of the impact of the EQUIP Programme that emanated from the participants' experiences, feeling and attitudes expressed in the naïve sketches verified that the EQUIP programme was instrumental in getting SMTs to meet regularly, to work as a team and to improve attitudes and relationships and to delegate. It can therefore be assumed that the EQUIP programme assisted in changing the attitudes of Principals who found it difficult to make the mindshift to democratic governance. Norris (Karpicke & Murphy 1996:33) cautions, "changing culture is a lengthy process that takes understanding, patience, human relation's skills, and the ability to communicate. Changing the culture involves changing habits of mind, body and spirit."

The repeated references made in the naïve sketches (section 4.9.2) with regard to the impact of the workshop held on conflict management show that conflict is a major issue in schools. Before the intervention there was a general lack of skills in managing conflict situations.

#### **(g) School Governance**

A number of references in the sketches were also made with regards to the impact of the EQUIP programme on school governing body training (see section 4.9.4). Although this

training is also carried out by the DoE after SGB elections, it was reinforced through EQUIP workshops and issues such as drawing the line between management and governance were clarified.

#### **(h) School Development Planning**

As mentioned before, the thrust of the EQUIP programme was to get the schools to develop and implement a three-year development plan to address their development needs revealed in the baseline studies, as well as in their own SWOT analysis which was done as part of the strategic planning process. The positive impact of the EQUIP programme on strategic as well as curriculum planning was clearly highlighted in the naïve sketches where participants cited different examples of how it had changed their schools for the better (see section 4.9.5).

#### **(i) Curriculum Management**

According to the baseline studies, the school management team was in great need of capacity building to improve the culture of teaching and learning. It can be concluded that as a result of the training interventions of the EQUIP programme, there was a definite improvement in curriculum management in both schools as HODs became aware of what was expected of them in their roles as middle managers. As Purkey and Smith (1983:428) point out, “The quality of the process at the classroom level will be enhanced or diminished by the quality of activity at the level above it.”

The HODs in both schools developed learning area policies with their staff and developed daily operational plans for the year to manage their departments. Comments in the naïve sketches regarding this showed that developing learning area policies as well as the development of monitoring instruments and annual operational planning greatly assisted in making the task of the HODs easier (see section 4.9.8).

It was also verified through comments in the naïve sketches that the IQMS was successfully carried out in the year of its implementation through departmental training, supplemented by training through the EQUIP programme.

However, it was revealed that the teaching workload of HODs seems to hamper on-going classroom observations and proper monitoring of educators in order to set them development goals. Another problem hampering the proper management of the curriculum is the DoE's delay in making permanent senior management appointments and in putting a moratorium on the number of educators and HODs to be appointed in schools. Evidence also showed that the vice-principal or academic heads also need more development in monitoring the HODs to see that they are implementing their operational plans.

**(j) Impact of the EQUIP Programme on the Teaching of Key Subjects**

Observations and discussions with educators and the Mathematics support facilitator during school visits revealed that there are many learners at the foundation level of the primary school who have difficulty with spatial perception and with reading. Although the DoE is aware of these problems, there is no support system in place such as diagnostic testing by child psychologists to assess learners with learning barriers. It was also found that remedial educators are not appointed in primary schools. This may be attributed to the fact that few educators have been skilled in this area.

School Management teams are also not carrying out an annual analysis of learners' results and to strategise around implementing remedial programmes for learners who are not achieving. Analysing learners' results was certainly encouraged by the EQUIP programme but it needs more intervention. One educator in a primary school trained in LSEN is not enough. It is common logic that if one does not get the foundation right, the learner will not manage the next level. With the history of the Department's policy of condoning learners to the next grade even though they failed the previous one, it is small wonder that many learners from disadvantaged backgrounds either drop out of secondary school or fail the matriculation examination.

The ACE courses completed by the sponsored educators in Mathematics, Natural Science and LSEN elicited comments in the sketches that testify to the benefits of this investment

(see section 4.9.3). This is especially true of the educator in School B who attended the LSEN course. This again emphasises the dire need for remedial education at primary school level. Another shortfall expressed in the naïve sketches before the intervention, and which the facilitators also observed, was the lack of understanding by educators of the OBE assessment process. More development of educators in continuous assessment is still needed.

#### **(k) Coaching and Feedback**

Improved relationships between the HODs and the educators they are supposed to be monitoring were also noted in the naïve sketches. This showed that the HODs did learn the importance of coaching for results and to use these techniques to get educators to buy into their own development (see section 4.9.8 (d)).

### **5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS**

Bearing in mind the above conclusions derived at regarding the impact of the EQUIP programme, the following is recommended to improve and adapt the EQUIP programme so that it stays relevant and in line with current education trends and needs.

#### **5.3.1 Improved School Management**

- There needs to be more monitoring of management teams to follow-up on policy implementation.
- The management teams ought to be required to develop a portfolio of evidence that will be evaluated in order to obtain a formal accredited qualification such as the ACE course in Leadership and Management. This will encourage more to buy in and implement the programme.

#### **5.3.2 Improved Curriculum Management**

- The EQUIP programme's intervention should concentrate more on supporting the HODs in carrying out their daily operational plans, especially in the observation of classroom lessons and in setting goals for their educators' development.

- The EQUIP programme ought to give more support to primary schools and educator development, especially in remedial teaching.
- HODs should be given assistance to develop remedial programmes for learners who are not achieving in their learning areas
- Primary school educators need more training in the teaching of reading and mathematics literacy.

#### **5.4 OTHER INFLUENCES ON THE IMPACT OF THE EQUIP PROGRAMME**

It must be acknowledged that the Department of Education did assist School A in achieving some of their infrastructural goals by building new classrooms and an administration block. Xstrata mines, however, built the new classrooms and kitchen for School B.

The DoE also held workshops for educator development for the National Curriculum Statements (NCS) as well as for the assessment and implementation of the IQMS. However, it was evident by classroom observations and comments from the naïve sketches that more support and training was needed, especially in the understanding of OBE teaching strategies and assessment.

The DoE appointed administration officers in both schools. This reduced the administrative load of the principals and as a result the EQUIP co-ordinator was able to spend time with these officers to improve administration. It is doubtful whether the principals would have had the time to be trained in these systems, since they are constantly interrupted with their other duties.

#### **5.5 LIMITATIONS**

##### **5.5.1. Limitations of the Study**

Limitations of the study were negligible since the researcher had good access to the schools during the three-year intervention and had access to all documents.

One limitation may be that the naïve sketches were limited to the members of the school management team. Another may be that the comments in the naïve sketches were all positive and there were no critical suggestions for the improvement of the programme. However, since similar comments regarding the programme came from both schools, this could be considered as verification of how the programme was experienced by other schools in the EQUIP programme.

### **5.5.2 Limitations of the Programme**

A limitation felt by the researcher was the time she had to spend at the beginning of the intervention to build up a trusting relationship with members of the school staff who perceived the project as more work.

Limitations in carrying out the programme involved reorganising or canceling training at the last minute because members of school management teams were summoned without due notice by the Department to other workshops or union meetings. Some of the members of the school management teams did not attend all the programme workshops. Time for afternoon workshops had to be limited because of transport arrangements. Schools were only visited once a month and it was felt that more time was needed to assist HODs to carry out their management roles as managers of curriculum. It was also difficult to get to work with schools in June and at the end of the year when staff members were busy with exam marking and schedules.

The Department delays in making permanent appointments of HODs and educators, and limiting the number of appointments caused some reluctance of co-opted HODs to carry out the monitoring of the curriculum as their temporary authority was not accepted by some educators. This was especially true in the case of carrying out classroom observations.

It was sometimes difficult to motivate staff members who were overloaded with work due to overcrowded classrooms and lack of resources. The fact that the HODs had the

same teaching loads as educators prevented them from carrying out their roles and responsibilities well as curriculum managers.

## **5.6 QUESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH**

This study prompts the following questions for further research:

- How is school-based management working in schools that did not experience the EQUIP programme since 1994?
- How do HODs in rural schools that did not experience the EQUIP intervention, interpret their role as managers and leaders of curriculum?
- How many state schools have long-term strategic plans in place that are implemented and monitored?
- How does the State support rural schools in terms of physical resources, infrastructure and human resources?
- How many learners in South African primary schools experience learning challenges?
- What interventions are in place to address remedial education in state schools?
- How many LSEN trained educators are there in primary schools in South Africa?
- What type of conflict arises amongst staff in South African schools?
- How many South African school management members are skilled in dealing with conflict?
- What are the common security measures lacking in South African schools?
- How many educators are trained in First Aid?
- What strategies and policies do South African schools have in place to combat the absenteeism of educators?
- What disciplinary measures have schools adopted since the banning of corporal punishment?
- What was the success of IQMS in other rural schools?

## **5.7 SUMMARY**

To summarise, if school based management is to work, schools and teachers will need capacity building. However, this needs to involve more than just training; it must include positive working conditions, incentives and the creation of motivating posts (De Grauwe 2005:284). The delivery thereof is the responsibility of the State. If there is no efficient and supportive state, De Grauwe's (2005:276) warning that the system as a whole will be threatened by disintegration and disparity, will eventuate. His belief (2005:276) is that different services, aiming at raising standards in the classroom, need to be co-ordinated and integrated into a general school support programme. This is where sponsors and NGOs involved in programmes such as EQUIP can play an important role in partnering with the Government to deliver educational capacity building training that will enable schools to become more effective in delivering their educational outcomes.

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## **APPENDIX A**

### **EXAMPLE OF LETTER SENT TO SCHOOLS A AND B**

V M Guest  
P O Box 8266  
NELSPUIT  
1200

10 August 2007

The Principal

Dear Sir

#### **REQUEST FOR SMT INTERVIEWS**

As you know the EQUIP programme implemented in your school three years ago drew to a close at the end of March 2007. Since I have enrolled with UNISA for my Masters Degree in Education, I thought the impact of the EQUIP programme on two schools which have experienced the programme would make for an interesting impact evaluation study.

Fortunately my proposal was accepted by UNISA so I would be grateful if I could use your school as one of my case studies for my research. If you are happy for me to do so, I would therefore like to request a special interview with yourself and members of the school management team to explain the type of participation I need from your school management team members.

I would also like to examine the following documentation:

- Minutes of SMT, SGB and parents' meetings
- All the school policies
- The financial records
- Asset and stock control systems
- Safety and Security plans
- The School Development Plan
- Timetables
- Registers

I would like to ensure you and the your SMT members that any information obtained from them will remain confidential and the anonymity of the school and names of staff members taking part in the research will be observed.

The results of this study will be used to inform sponsors of the successes and challenges of the programme and hopefully help to improve future EQUIP programmes. The school is welcome to contact UNISA for a copy of the research after it is completed.

I would appreciate it if you would approach your SMT members with this request. I will contact you telephonically to arrange the date of my visit.

Yours sincerely

VM GUEST