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Continuing Professional Development in South African Schools: Staff Perceptions and the Role of Principals

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ABSTRACT Changes in education depend on the quality of teachers. As a result, the Professional Development (PD) of teachers has become increasingly important for school improvement initiatives. To address the challenges in the South African education system, the National Policy Framework for Teacher Education and Development (Republic of South Africa 2007) was instituted to assist in the provision of qualified teachers. The perceptions of staff and the role of leadership in the professional development of staff in South African schools? The inquiry discussed in this article was qualitative within specially selected schools. The following major findings emerged from the data analysis: (1) Overall view of professional development in the South African education system; (2) Experiences of official PD programmes: "A waffle, waffle waffle" versus being "excited"; (3) "Programmes should lead to a paradigm shift in teachers"; and (4) The key role of the principal in professional development: "plant and plough" in teachers.

INTRODUCTION

Schools are currently facing their greatest challenge: to provide quality education (Darling-Hammond and Richardson 2009; Fennell 2005; Hess and Kelly 2005; Levine 2005; Southworth and Du Quesnay 2005). Studies confirm that teachers can play a key role in making a difference in the quality of education, since investing in teachers' development may have more positive effects than investing in other physical resources (Rodrigues-Campos et al. 2005; Vemiæ 2007). Reeves et al. (2005) believe that complicated dynamics exist and that individuals cannot change without the compliance and participation of others in a particular system. As such, it is necessary to understand the processes involved in changing practice among all role players in order to create effective learning conditions, since these conditions will depend on cooperative and collective efforts.

The continuous development of professionals' skills and knowledge is a crucial element of improvement in all professions (Boyle et al. 2005). As regards education, the focus is in particular on teachers as the key to improving student performance (Desimone et al. 2006; Murtaza 2010). Effective PD (Professional Development) of teachers is embedded in daily school activities, adapted to meet the particular school contexts and continued over a period of time (Lee 2005: 40). Moswela's study (2006: 631) indicates that school effectiveness and PD are "inextricably" linked. It is within this context that the importance of leadership in improving the quality of schools is identified as a crucial element (Chappuis et al. 2009; Hallinger 2005; Olivier and Hipp 2006).

Effective leadership necessitates the active involvement of principals in the learning and developmental process in their schools (Donaldson 2009; Dymoke and Harrison 2006; Houle 2006). Cardno (2005: 293) believes that one "aspect of leadership in its broadest sense is the capacity of key individuals to exert influence that results in positive change for the school, for teams, for individual staff and ultimately for the benefit of students". One implication of this is that principals have to be committed in identifying PD needs of their staff and provide appropriate PD programmes to meet these needs (Heaney 2004; Lee 2005).

In transforming the South African education system it is important that teachers are suitably equipped to address the needs and challenges (Republic of South Africa 2007). The President's Education Initiative research project states that the "most critical challenge for teacher education in South Africa was the limited conceptual knowledge of many teachers" (Republic of South Africa 2007: 4). The National Policy Framework for Teacher Education and Development has been an endeavour aiming to pro-

vide suitably qualified teachers in South Africa (Republic of South Africa 2007). This policy identifies two complementary subsystems: Initial Professional Education of Teachers and Continuing Professional Development for Teachers (CPDT) (Republic of South Africa 2007). For the purpose of this article, the focus is on CPDT, which emphasises the improvement of teachers' conceptual knowledge and skills through their PD.

Valuable contributions have been made to an understanding of teachers' continuing professional development in South Africa although much remains in this field of study that is unclear and incomplete. As a developing country, it is crucial that South African students are equipped with the necessary knowledge and skills to become productive citizens and to eventually compete internationally. According to Metcalfe (2011: 6), the education outcomes of South African schools are poor and disappointing. She is of the opinion that the South African education system has failed to transform teaching and that it has not paid enough attention to the professional development of teachers. Her solution lies in developing teachers professionally because she believes that 'better teachers will make better education' (Metcalfe 2011: 6).

This article forms part of a series of articles (Steyn 2008 , 2009, 2010) which also examined the South African teachers' perceptions regarding the principles outlined in the National Policy Framework. As a follow-up study the following research question is posed: What are the perceptions of staff and the role of leadership in the continuing professional development of teaches in South African schools? This is in accordance of Van Veen and Sleegers's (2006: 89) view that staff have very "personal and strong views on how they think they should work". In addressing the research problem, it is necessary to give a brief explanation of CPDT in the National Policy Framework and to present a brief overview of the professional development of teachers.

The National Policy Framework for Teacher Education and Development with Special Reference to Continuing Professional Development for Teachers

The core aim of CPDT for South African teachers is to enable learners to "learn well and equip themselves for further learning and for satisfying lives as productive citizens, for the benefit of their families, their communities and our nation" (Republic of South Africa 2007: 25). This system attempts to develop teachers' professional knowledge and skills to successfully complete their responsibilities, to continually develop teachers' performance and competence, to empower teachers by improving their professional self-efficacy, subject knowledge and skills and classroom management, to improve the professional status of teachers, and to help teachers to identify appropriate PD programmes that may assist them in their growth (Republic of South Africa 2007). All teachers registered by the South African Council for Educators (SACE) have to earn PD points by attending accredited PD activities that meet their professional growth needs (Republic of South Africa 2007). The implementation date of the full point system has been planned for January 2011 (South African Teachers' Union, News Flash 7, 2009). A preliminary study was undertaken by the Department of Education to determine the extent of teachers' involvement in PD activities (South African Teachers' Union, News Flash 7, 2009). The mentioned study indicated that 91 percent of all teachers are involved in such PD activities.

An Overview of Teachers' Professional Development

Studies on teachers' PD have shed light on suitable programmes that develop teachers' knowledge and skills, improve their teaching practice and raise students' performance (Desimone et al. 2006; Desimone 2009; Drago-Severson 2007; Notman et al. 2009). PD is most effective when it is a continuous process that involves appropriately planned development and follow-up through supportive feedback and observation, staff dialogue and peer coaching (Bolam 2003). Since the definition of PD emphasises the continuing development of teachers, it may be equated with CPDT in the National Policy Framework (Republic of South Africa 2007).

Professional growth in teachers occurs when a PD programme acknowledges teachers' needs (Lee 2005). In Mewborn and Huberty's study (2004), a needs-based model for mathematics teachers on site was successfully implemented. Their findings discovered three major criteria for

successful PD: (1) programmes should be developed for teachers teaching particular grades, (2) PD has to be contextualised, sustained and appropriate for teachers' classroom practice, and (3) programmes should be "site-based so that the staff developers understand *their* students, *their* curriculum, and *their* school structures" (Mewborn and Huberty 2004: 2). The principals who were actively involved in the mathematics teachers' PD programmes developed an appreciation for teaching the subject and for the value of classroom discourse. Needs-based PD is also supported by Desimone et al. (2006), who believe that principals could evaluate and monitor teachers and identity the kinds of PD programmes teachers need and then assist them in aligning PD programmes that suit their professional needs. However, studies show that teachers should have ownership for selecting PD programmes since a top-down approach may not be that effective (Desimone et al. 2006; Lee 2005).

Research identifies a number of aspects that may influence the effective implementation of PD. The major aspects include the following:

1. An Emphasis on Teachers' Learning: It is important that PD programmes should be differentiated to meet teachers' individual needs and varying levels of content knowledge and skills (Desimone et al. 2006; Smith and Ueno 2006; Lee 2005; Penuel et al. 2007). Studies show that teachers have a preference for PD programmes that are practical in nature and aim to meet their specific developmental needs (Robinson and Carrington 2002).

2. The Commitment of Teachers: A commitment to professional development refers to the psychological state in which teachers desire to experiment and learn (Van Eekelen et al. 2006). Teachers' commitment towards PD is required for their successful professional growth (Blackmore 2000).

3. Effective Leadership: Effective leadership means that principals are involved in the learning process and collect evidence that teachers' PD has occurred (Dymoke and Harrison 2006; Heaney 2004; Mewborn and Huberty 2004; Notman et al. 2009). This leadership style also implies principals' commitment in identifying teachers' needs and facilitating suitable training to meet their needs (Heaney 2004; Lee 2005; Penuel et al. 2007). Facilitating learning for the individual school leader as well as the members of an organisation is viewed as the primary goal of leadership (Amey 2005; Notman et al. 2009). When conceptualising leadership as learning, the objective is to uncover mental models that affect the way in which educational leaders view the world and act within their contexts (Amey 2005).

The school principal's role is "grounded in shared ideals where the leaders serve as the head follower by modelling, teaching, and helping others to become better followers" (McKerrow et al. 2003: 2). This is in line with the findings of Southworth and Du Quesnay (2005), who identify two sets of categories: the behavioural (including modelling, monitoring and dialogue) and the organisational category. As regards the organisational category, "leaders carefully design and deploy organizational structures and systems that enable them to influence their colleagues, and they simultaneously use these systems to create and sustain the school as a learning organization" (Southworth and Du Quesnay 2005: 218). Through a supportive and encouraging leadership style, principals can offer individualised support and concern about teachers' professional needs (Heaney 2004; Lee 2005).

4. The Particular School Context: There are certain variables in the school context which may either improve or hinder the professional learning of teachers (Heaney 2004; Hirsh 2005; Lee 2005; Van Eekelen et al. 2006; Penuel et al. 2007). Yu et al.'s study (2000) included mediating variables, such as school culture and teacher collaboration, that may influence teacher development and commitment and as such also impact on PD effectiveness. A collegial culture creates an ownership of teachers' own professional learning and involves more effective teaching (Dymoke and Harrison 2006; Boyle et al. 2005). Frost (2008: 345) indicates that teachers can play a meaningful role in creating and sharing professional knowledge. To create a conducive environment for professional development such professional knowledge needs to be generated and accumulated through collaboration between teachers and leaders (Frost 2008; Printy 2010; Kelly and Saunders 2010; Day 2009).

5. Feedback on Teachers' Development: The importance of feedback to teachers and monitoring their professional development is supported by research (Birman et al. 2000; Notman et al. 2009). Teachers need to know whether they are making any progress when implementing new teaching initiatives.

Theoretical Framework

The study reported in the article primarily focuses on an interpretivist perspective (Nieuwenhuis 2010a) as a lens to understand how staff in schools view PD and the role of leadership that shapes their PD challenges and opportunities. This perspective also illuminates the interaction between individuals' developmental capacity, their engagement in school practice and developmental foundations of the principal's practice (Drago-Severson 2007). One outcome of interpretive approaches to the understanding of PD has been the development of social constructivism (Nieuwenhuis 2010a). According to social constructivist learning theories, learning is constructive and learners construct and build new conceptualisations and understandings by using what they already know (Chalmers and Keown 2006; Mahoney 2003: 3).

The aspects of PD can be operationalised by means of constructivist approaches which recognise the following (Chalmers and Keown 2006; Darling-Hammond and Richardson 2009; Hodkinson and Hodkinson 2005; Nieuwenhuis 2010a):

- The focus on people's subjective experience. In this process staff discovers new knowledge, skills and approaches and then personally interpret their significance and meaning. Reality as such is not objectively uncovered, but rather socially constructed.
- The situated nature of cognition. This aspect acknowledges that PD is strongly linked to actual situations and the contexts of individual schools. Engestrom's model of expansive learning also postulates that people do not live in a vacuum, but are embedded in their particular socio-cultural context (Paavola et al. 2004: 560). It implies that their behaviour can also not be understood independently of this context.

A researcher's own understanding and knowledge of a phenomenon, in this case PD, are influenced by which he/she has been exposed and his/her unique experiences in this regard. Moreover, in this particular study the researcher has been "emphatically immersed" (Maree and Van der Westhuizen 2010: 33) and she acknowledges that individuals develop through certain developmental phases in their lives. This also applies in respect of teachers in the teaching profession. Through formal, structured PD teachers are equipped with the necessary knowledge and skills to assist them in fulfilling their professional responsibilities.

RESEARCH DESIGN

A qualitative research design (Nieuwenhuis 2010a) was selected for this study since the researcher sought an in-depth understanding of staff's views on professional development of teachers and the role of principals in this regard. In order to understand staff's personal meanings which were constructed from their professional development experiences, the study employed an interpretive approach. This approach was considered to be appropriate since it reveals the perceptions, attitudes, understandings, feelings and experiences of participants regarding continuing professional development and the role of principals in this regard (Nieuwenhuis 2010b: 99)

A purposive sample of four South African schools with maximum variance was selected: School A (an Afrikaans primary school which is a Quintile 4 school), School B (an Afrikaans primary school which is a Quintile 5 school), School C (an English combined school which is a Quintile 1 school) and School D (a English high school which is a Quintile 5 school) (McMillan and Schumacher 2006: 319). In South Africa, schools are ranked according to different quintiles which indicate their socio-economic status. Quintile 1 and 2 schools are viewed as the poorest of schools, while Quintile 4 and 5 schools are viewed as richer schools (Rademeyer 2007: 5). Teachers in the study were purposively selected by principals to ensure the inclusion of information-rich participants for the study (Greeff 2005). Focus group interviews were used to facilitate the collection of data simultaneously and to increase the quality and richness of the data (Creswell 2007). The focus groups consisted of post level one teachers, heads of departments (HODs) and deputy heads. In School A there were six participants: two teachers; three heads of departments and one deputy head; School B had seven participants: three teachers, three heads of departments and one deputy; and School C also had seven participants: three teachers, three heads of departments and one deputy. For the sake of clarity, a follow-up focus group interview was held with teachers in School A. Individual interviews were conducted with the three principals

of Schools A, B and D. In the case of School C, the principal requested the presence of the deputy head and one HOD in the interview in her school. The interviews were held at the four schools that participated in the study.

The participants in the interviews were briefed about the focus of the study. Permission was granted to record the interviews and to take down field notes (Greeff 2005). All field notes were expanded by the researcher immediately after each interview as a verifying measure. The following main question was put to the participants: What is your view on professional development of teachers in National Policy Framework for Teacher Education and Development in South Africa? A natural flow of conversation then followed.

The researcher inductively coded and segmented the data (the transcribed interviews and field notes) (Nieuwenhuis 2010b: 99). This was done when reading the field notes and transcripts for the first time in order to identify the data in pure form. Meaningful comments were grouped into categories. Trustworthiness of the study was ensured by combining focus group interviews, individual interviews and field notes, verifying the raw data collected, doing member checking, avoiding generalisation and maintaining confidentiality and anonymity (Nieuwenhuis 2010b). Trustworthiness was also ensured by tape-recording and transcribing interviews verbatim to ensure an accurate reflection of the participants' views and by cross-verifying data provided by participants from different post levels. The Afrikaans interviews of School A and School B were translated in English according to the original transcription.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The following major findings and subcategories of findings which emerged from the data analysis are depicted in Figure 1. In vivo coding which includes the "exact words used by participants" (Creswell, 2007:153), assisted in understanding the perceptions of participants. **(**1) Overall view of professional development in the South African education system ("Only one thing; training"; Accumulation of PD points: "I will not earn points, for sure I will resign" versus "It is a good thing"; (2) Experiences of official PD programmes: "A waffle, waffle waffle" versus being "excited"; (3) "Programmes should lead to a paradigm shift in teachers"; and (4) The key role of the principal in professional development: "plant and plough" in teachers.

Overall View of Professional Development in the South African Education System

Participants shared their views on PD, the compulsory accumulation of PD points and their experiences of previous PD programmes.

"Only One Thing – Training"

All staff in the focus groups agreed that PD is "vital", "crucial", "extremely important" and "necessary" for teachers' professional growth. One teacher said: "People cannot afford to stagnate, otherwise the learners may pass you and you cannot be left behind". Another teacher believed that teachers need to constantly develop professionally "by engaging in a life-long learning" by attending workshops, improving their academic competence and networking with teachers from other schools. Staff felt that there are so many stimulating changes currently taking place in the fast growing world that teachers "are actually foolish not utilising all the opportunities". Working in teams as a way of developing themselves was acknowledged by teachers. One teacher said:

If they [teachers] work as a team, they can develop themselves, first by learning from each other, and secondly by being able to identifying the strengths and weaknesses of each other.

Principals can create opportunities by means of teacher talk where teachers share "problems ranging from curriculum, discipline, teaching strategies and labour matters. Problem areas are easily highlighted and it then becomes easy to isolate areas for development".

One teacher was of the opinion that members of the School Management Team (SMT), who are most of the time in contact with ordinary teachers, "can help the principal prioritise areas of development". Even more important, teachers expected the school leadership to be role models by focusing on their own leadership development. A teacher explicitly said that principals cannot require teachers to develop if they do not develop themselves as well.

The views of staff were supported by those of the principals. One principal was of the opinion that "teachers have to be life-long learners". This

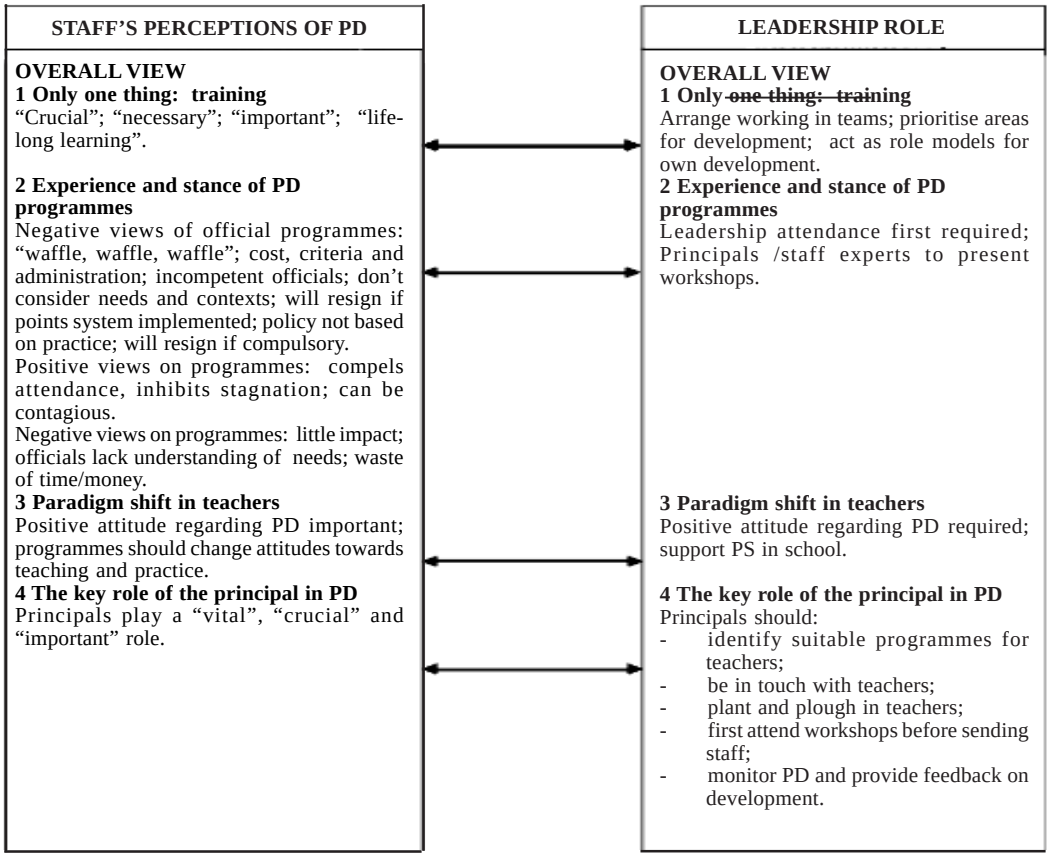

Fig. 1. Staff's perceptions of professional development and the envisaged role of leadership

was confirmed by another principal, who said that teachers "can never say they had enough training". They are responsible for their development because it is essential to stay abreast of developments. Yet another principal explained why the staff of a particular school always received promotion posts at other schools: "Only one thing, and that is training of teachers". He also supported principals' own PD development. After a number of years as principal he realised that if a principal does not develop "it will create a ceiling", and a principal must not be left behind.

Studies support the necessity of PD in assisting the professional growth of teachers (Boyle et al. 2005; Van Eekelen et al. 2006; Desimone et al. 2006; Penuel et al. 2007). Moreover, a collaborative culture among teachers in the school may create a positive school environment that is committed to the creation of better learning opportunities for all students (Robinson and Carrington 2002). This implies that individual teachers have to reflect on their actions and develop into role models by which they become powerful instruments to enhance a professional development culture at schools (Murtaza 2010: 220). Within such a culture principals are required to update staff's professional development, support teachers' 'professional growth and to develop their professional performance' (Notman et al. 2009: 5). Principals also have to set appropriate examples and demonstrate that they value staff development (Hodkinson and Hodkinson 2005; Rodriguez-Campos et al. 2005: 311). In this regard Moswela (2006: 630) states that principals should be concerned about "facilitating, guiding, advising and creating an environment that is conducive for teacher learning". While the necessity of PD was supported in the study, teachers had explicit views on the

accumulation of PD points to continue their registration as professionals.

The Experiences and Stance of PD Programmes: "A Waffle, Waffle, Waffle" Versus "It is a Good Thing"

The enthusiasm after attending successful PD programmes was supported by all schools. One teacher reported that her head was "throbbing" after such a programme, but she was energised because she had learnt so much. She believed that the enthusiasm of teachers can be "contagious" because her children were excited to see what she had learnt. In line with this, a principal believed that many experienced staff members often stagnate because no renewal has takes place in their practice. The principal from School C preferred formal training because teachers should receive qualifications and "not only certificates of attendance for training".

There was, however, agreement that many official PD programmes often had little or no impact on teachers or on schools. Teachers justified their views by saying there was a lot of repetition in such programmes: "different soundtracks, but the same content" and often a "waffle, waffle, waffle". These programmes did not address or consider their specific development needs or those of the school because officials often did not understand the teaching context, and arranged programmes to spend money that had been budgeted for. This explains why teachers considered some official programmes to be a waste of time, and why they were reluctant to attend future official PD programmes. Many of the views of teachers were supported by those of principals. One of them said that decision-makers "did not go through the system and do not truly understand it". Considering these views, it is understandable that teachers suggested that principals or SMT members evaluate the quality of official programmes and make recommendations before sending staff to attend such programmes. In line with this, one principal preferred to attend workshops and then present them to his staff, while other teachers believed that schools also have experienced teachers capable of conducting effective workshops at schools.

Teachers had different views on the accumulation of PD points required by the Policy Framework. Some teachers were adamant that they would leave the profession if this system were put into practice. Other teachers shared their concerns and doubts about the system, in particular the unnecessary costs of the system and its administration. They believed that officials are often appointed in management positions after a short teaching career and write school policies to be implemented. They do a "random study and we [teachers] should execute it", which shows that they do not understand the teaching practice. Teachers had other concerns too and believed that the system "will not work", especially in the case where a teacher attended an accredited programme. This teacher would receive the points and share the content with others in the school without those other teachers receiving any points. Teachers, therefore, prefer policies that come from practice.

Only a few teachers, in particular those in management positions, expressed positive views of the points system. One HOD expressed his understanding of the rationale of this policy: it would force staff to attend official workshops. Another HOD was of the opinion that younger teachers, who are often reluctant to attend workshops, might be encouraged to attend such compulsory programmes.

Studies show that traditional approaches to PD were often unsuccessful since they did not change teachers' content knowledge or teaching skills and did not consider the developmental needs of teachers nor the contextual factors of schools (Desimone et al. 2006; Mewborn and Huberty 2004; Moswela 2006). In their study Penuel et al. (2007: 952) also criticise PD programmes that do not consider the local contexts of schools. For the sake of effectiveness they suggest that PD programmes should be "tailored both to the program and to the local context" in which staff work (Penuel et al. 2007: 952). This is in line with the recommendation of Mundry (2005: 14) who suggests that educational leaders, including principals, need to "invest in these more 'practice-based' approaches to professional learning for teachers". In line with this Moswela (2006: 631) suggests that principals should play a facilitating role in creating a climate in school-based workshops for teachers to exchange ideas. The principles of the Policy Framework refer to "sustained leadership and support" (Republic of South Africa 2007: 3) but does not explicitly encourage or explain school-led programmes for teachers' development or the role of school principals in teacher development.

International trends support the accumulation of PD points required by the Policy Framework (Desimone et al. 2006: 205). However, earning PD points should not be the main emphasis. The main focus should in essence be on improving teachers' growth and development for the sake of improved student performance (Boyle et al. 2005: 22; Lee 2005: 39). Teachers' experiences and stance regarding PD programmes could have an effect on teachers' attitudes.

"Programmes Should Lead To a Paradigm Shift in Teachers"

Many teachers acknowledged the importance of being positive about PD programmes to eventually put the knowledge and skills acquired during such programmes into practice. As one teacher said: "Without a positive attitude, we [teachers] would not benefit from it [a workshop]". Moreover, workshops should also change their attitudes towards teaching. A requirement is, however, that teachers "should have a say on what is to be taught and how it is going to be taught. Teachers know their shortcomings and must be allowed at least a say on how they think they should be developed".

Successful PD programmes have the potential to make an impact on the attitudes of teachers. One teacher said: "Professional development enhances the belief in me, my self-confidence and my capacity beliefs". She believed that if the school cannot afford certain PD programmes "I must be able to do that myself". Since she desired to sustain her readiness for and interest in any change, she wanted to remain committed to PD. As regards the leadership, another teacher stated: "The principal as a member of the school management team needs to have a positive attitude towards PD and has to support PD in our school".

The importance of teachers' positive attitudes towards PD was also emphasised by the principals. One principal explained that PD programmes should lead to a "paradigm shift in people". Teachers work with children and they need to stay positive. Another principal mentioned that a teacher should be able to say after attending a PD programme, "Yes, I am in education". Such a positive attitude will have a great impact on students.

PD programmes will be meaningless without the positive commitment of teachers, even if such programmes are well planned (Blackmore 2000). This is confirmed by the study of Murtaza (2010: 220) that indicates that most teachers attend professional development courses, but that 'some of them do not change their mentality and their way of working'. As such Hirsch (2005), Nielsen (2008) and Van Veen and Sleegers (2006) believe that selecting suitable PD programmes that align with teachers' beliefs and experiences so that teachers have the desired attitudes both before and after PD programmes is an important challenge for principals. However, the equilibrium between supporting and balancing teachers' development may be more difficult to maintain with top-down decision-making about PD. As mentioned before, if teachers do not have ownership in selecting their development programmes, their development will potentially not be very effective since the professionalism and autonomy of the teacher have been ignored (Boyle et al. 2005; Desimone et al. 2006; Dymoke and Harrison 2006). Only when staff becomes involved in decision-making and obtain ownership, they become empowered and form cultures of collaboration within a collegial leadership school environment (Printy 2010: 119; Day 2009: 72). However, the empowerment of staff depends on principals' devolution of power (Singh 2005: 13; Raihani 2008: 490). Once empowerment has taken place, teachers receive the opportunity to be responsible and also accountable for their decisions which may lead to positive attitudes regarding their professional development. Moreover, studies show that empowerment of teachers can effectively engage them in the change process and successfully revitalise the school setting which could improve the school climate and the quality of interactions in the setting (Raihani 2008; Rhodes et al. 2009; Printy 2010). Empowerment implies that principals are involved in the developmental process, which requires collecting evidence that teachers' development has taken place (Dymoke and Harrison 2006; Heaney 2004).

The Key Role of the Principal in Professional Development: "Plant and Plough" in Teachers

Teachers agreed that school principals play a "vital", "crucial" and "important" role in their

development. Principals need to set the example and take the lead for growing and development. Teachers required principals to keep abreast of school developments as one teacher explained:

As heads of institutions, principals should be well versed in current trends and issues. Our principal addresses issues of professional development in our staff meetings. Sometimes he does speak to teachers as individuals … But I think he should play a more prominent role. … He must devise means of instilling the importance of professional development into his teachers.

Furthermore, principals need to be in touch with their teachers, identify their shortcomings and see where they can "plant and plough in them [teachers]". Many teachers were of the opinion that it is the responsibility of principals to identify suitable programmes for teachers, that principals are able to do so because they have a clear view of the whole school and can play a "key role in teacher and school development". One teacher even went a step further: "I want to see that the principal or deputy principal goes out for a workshop and then comes back and trains the staff. That is ideal". In line with this view, another teacher acknowledged the expertise in their own school where teachers have the necessary "expertise and a wealth of knowledge and skills which could be shared with other staff members. Principals must draw on these strengths of their staff".

Teachers also required feedback and monitoring from principals after PD programmes to assist them in the implementation of the acquired knowledge and skills. If principals are knowledgeable about the content of such programmes, they will be in a position to support and assist the teachers in this regard.

The principals agreed with the teachers that they need to play a prominent role in the PD of teachers. One principal succinctly explained the principal's responsibility as regards PD:

A principal can never distance himself of development … It [development] should be done according to a professional development plan … you have to identify teachers' needs … but they [the teachers] should inform the principal of their needs ... The teacher must speak up … I need this or I need that… and we should work together.

The literature supports the findings that effective leadership means that principals are in the position to facilitate professional development programmes for teachers and that they should be actively involved in the PD of teachers (Murtaza 2010; Notman et al. 2009; Penuel et al. 2007). Moswela's study (2006) shows that principals need to view the PD of teachers in their schools in a more serious light. Since principals are "on site of implementation", they can "easily and readily" identify and address teachers' developmental needs (Moswela 2006: 631). Principals who create PD opportunities that revitalise teachers' passion for learning and development will support their growth and also enhance teaching (Drago-Severson 2007:118; Notman et al. 2009: 6). For the sake of effectiveness this means that principals also have to monitor and evaluate the teaching processes, especially after PD programmes in order to take appropriate action (Moswela 2006: 631). This, however, implies that principals first need to be trained themselves in order to effectively implement PD in their schools (Dymoke and Harrison 2006; Lee 2005; Moswela 2006: 631).

CONCLUSION

This study examined the views held by teachers on PD as envisaged by the National Policy Framework and in particular as it links to leadership in schools. Teachers were unanimous in their support of the necessity of PD and the role of leadership in this regard. Their perceptions also illuminate the myriad challenges for principals associated with implementing effective PD of teachers in practice. One of the great challenges principals face is how to encourage teachers to become committed to their own development. This is supported by Notman et al. (2009:9) who state that one of the leadership challenges that principals face is to attend to the complexities of teachers' personal and professional development. Another challenge principals face is how to encourage a collaborative culture in their schools. Such an approach involve and invite all role players to advance and support the school which contradict strategies that promote isolation, limit participation and authoritarian and bureaucratic approaches (Reyes and Wagstaff 2005:109). By doing this, principals shift the power distribution among the staff members into a flatter network whereby they promote professional communities that are involved in attaining success for all students (Louis et al. 2010: 331; Reyes and Wagstaff 2005:109, 110; Gurr et al. 2006: 372).

The findings in the study should be regarded as tentative. They highlight the perceptions of staff on PD in general and on CPDT in particular, their views of types of PD programmes, the impact of such programmes and the fundamental requirements for CPDT to be effective. It is clear that more extensive research over a longer period of time and in a wider range of settings in South Africa is required to test the findings of this study. Nevertheless, it indicates that new CPDT strategies may be required to equip teachers for a constantly changing education context in South Africa. One such strategy would be equipping principals with the necessary skills to assist teachers in their professional development within a particular school context.

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