

Art. #2221, 12 pages, <https://doi.org/10.15700/saje.v43n4a2221>

Instructional leadership practices: Exploring deputy principal's instructional leadership practices – A Zimbabwean case study

Norman Chitamba  and Loyiso Jita 

Faculty of Education, University of the Free State, Bloemfontein, South Africa
nchitamba01@gmail.com

School reform efforts have focussed on the principal as the major determinant of students' outcome without saying much on the contribution of deputy principals. Deputy principals are 2nd on the school's hierarchical structure. The distributed leadership construct advocates more actors in instructional leadership. In this study we examined whether deputy principals were engaged in instructional leadership practices for overall student performance. The study was carried out in high schools of the Gutu district of the Masvingo province in Zimbabwe. A qualitative research approach and a case study design were adopted for the study. Three deputy principals, 1 deputising at a government-run school, another at a church-run school and the other at a rural district council-run school were purposively sampled for document analysis, observation and multiple interviews. The findings reveal that deputy principals were engaged in instructional leadership practices cursorily and to a limited extent. Deputy principals performed instructional leadership tasks through vision statement formulation, supervision of lessons, monitoring students' progress and modelling good teaching behaviour. In the era of accountability and distributed leadership, pressure mounts for more engagement of deputy principals as instructional leaders. We, therefore, recommend a collective approach to vision development by all stakeholders and the development of protocols that encompass pre- and post-observation conferences that mainly focus on the teacher.

Keywords: deputy principal; distributed leadership; instructional leadership; instructional leadership practices

Introduction

Instructional leadership plays a significant role in student improvement (Leaf & Odhiambo, 2017). In a school setting, principals and deputy principals are key figures in instructional leadership (Spillane, Harris, Jones & Mertz, 2015). VanTuyle (2018) suggests that assistant principals, also known as deputy principals or vice principals, have similar responsibilities to principals and should therefore fulfil an instructional leadership role as well.

While principals have been extensively studied, less attention has been given to the role of deputy principals (Spillane et al., 2015). There is a lack of information about deputy principals as instructional leaders. Deputy principals are often overlooked and underestimated (VanTuyle, 2018). However, due to increased accountability demands and the concept of distributed leadership, the instructional leadership role of deputy principals is regaining importance. As Ho and Ng (2017) state, school leadership is typically shared among various stakeholders, including deputy principals and teacher leaders. Therefore, it is necessary and timely to study the instructional leadership practices of deputy principals.

In the United States of America (USA), the No Child Left Behind reform placed significant pressure on schools to improve student outcomes (Mitani, 2018). This necessitated a new type of leadership. Given the growing accountability demands on principals, the role of deputy principals in instructional leadership is crucial for school achievement (VanTuyle, 2018).

According to the hierarchical structure of a school, the deputy principal is second-in-command after the principal. Williams (2019) explains that instructional leadership tasks are carried out by individuals in positions such as principal, deputy principal, or lead teacher, who are involved in supervision and curriculum development. Therefore, the deputy principal forms an integral part of the instructional leadership team at the school level. Distributed leadership theory suggests that instructional leadership should be a shared responsibility (Spillane et al., 2015), making deputy principals an essential part of the instructional leadership team.

With this study we aimed to investigate the instructional leadership practices of deputy principals in secondary schools in Zimbabwe, with the goal of enhancing teaching and learning in their schools. The research question guiding this study is: What are the specific practices of instructional leadership that deputy principals in Zimbabwe engage in?

Statement of the Problem

The instructional leadership of the principal has long been seen as the solution to low student achievement (Bush & Glover, 2016). However, this perspective differs from the distributed leadership model. Spillane et al. (2015) suggest that school leadership and administration may involve multiple individuals, rather than just one person. Jita (2010) also argues for the involvement of many individuals in carrying out instructional leadership responsibilities. To alleviate the workload on principals, who often have too much on their plate, Muranda, Tshabalala, Gazimbe and Mapolisa (2015) recommend incorporating deputy principals into the instructional leadership role. Despite the importance of deputy principals in schools, there is a lack of substantial research on

their instructional leadership role (Marshall & Hooley, 2006). Therefore, it is necessary to investigate the instructional leadership role of deputy principals in Zimbabwe to understand their perspectives and improve teaching and learning in their schools.

Literature Review

We examined the instructional leadership practices of deputy principals, based on the framework developed by Hallinger and Murphy (1987). Their framework proposes a “three-dimensional instructional leadership framework”, which encompasses defining the vision and mission of the school, managing teaching and learning, and fostering a positive learning environment (Hallinger, 2015). Within the dimension of defining the school goals, two specific practices are identified: establishing concise school objectives and effectively communicating these objectives.

Framing school goals

This practice involves the instructional leader in creating the school’s vision, mission, objectives, and core values (Harris, 2013; Leithwood & Louis, 2012).

According to Mombourquette (2017), there are three methods of vision formulation: hunches, group, and rational level method. Gurley, Peters, Collins and Fifolt (2016) recommend adopting a team approach for vision development in order to ensure commitment from all stakeholders. These vision statements are collaboratively developed by all members involved in the school and should be centred on student achievement.

Communicate school goals

The school’s vision and mission statements should be effectively communicated to all stakeholders. Matalon (2018) suggests a three-stage process for developing a vision, with the deputy principal playing a central role as an instructional leader. The first step involves the collective formulation of the vision, which requires input from various school constituents, including the principal, deputy principal, teachers, parents, learners, and responsible authorities. Collaborative effort in developing the vision is essential (Gurley et al., 2016). Matalon (2018) also highlights the importance of securing buy-in from stakeholders to ensure their commitment.

The second stage involves marketing the vision to stakeholders, which primarily involves the principal and deputy principal explaining the vision in meetings and other forums. Given the competitive environment, schools need to engage in marketing activities (McClees, 2016). Without effective marketing, schools may struggle to thrive. Marketing strategies such as consultation days, visiting days, and school magazines can be adopted

(Dâmaso & De Lima, 2020). McClees (2016) suggests leveraging technology by creating an active social media presence, maintaining a website, and developing a school magazine through a marketing club. According to McClees (2016), technology, particularly social media platforms like Facebook and Twitter, plays a crucial role in successful school marketing, especially for engaging parents.

The last stage involves putting the vision into practice. Various stakeholders work together to implement the vision, with the deputy principal overseeing and supporting their efforts. Two key factors that impact the process of vision development are the involvement of stakeholders and the role of instructional leaders. Stakeholders play a critical role in both stages of vision development. Existing literature on vision and mission statements emphasises the importance of stakeholder engagement in developing the vision (Gurley et al., 2016; Matalon, 2018). Dâmaso and De Lima (2020) stress the role of instructional leaders, including principals, deputy principals, and teacher leaders, in formulating the vision statement. Spillane et al. (2015) suggest that an effective vision is the result of stakeholder participation and the inclusion of instructional leaders. When stakeholders truly embrace the school’s vision, they become motivated to commit to all efforts aimed at student growth (Gurley et al., 2016). A shared vision helps instructional leaders stay focused and avoid wasting time and resources on trivial matters.

Managing instruction

Managing instruction has three leadership practices (Hallinger & Murphy, 1987). The leadership functions are supervising and evaluating instruction, coordinating curriculum, and monitoring students’ progress. Instruction is the core business of the school (Shengnan & Hallinger, 2021). Cruickshank (2017) argues that due to the increase in accountability demands in education, focus should be directed on the instructional needs of the school.

Monitoring students’ progress

The success of a school is determined by its ability to ensure that every student achieves academic growth (Vaccaro & Sabella, 2018). To achieve this, it is essential for school leadership to actively monitor student progress (Shengnan & Hallinger, 2021). Monitoring student progress involves analysing performance data to evaluate instruction and make informed decisions regarding teaching methods (Vaccaro & Sabella, 2018). According to Harper-Young (2018), an important aspect of a successful school is the involvement of principals and deputy principals in assessing students to identify their strengths and weaknesses.

The role of the instructional leader in monitoring student progress

Deputy principals are encouraged to introduce the concept of monitoring student progress at their schools and emphasise its benefits in improving student outcomes. According to Houston and Thompson (2017), instructional leaders can use formative and summative assessments to monitor students' progress. Their responsibility is to oversee teachers' administration of these assessments and ensure compliance with departmental policies.

Formative assessment, also known as assessments for learning (Kulasegaram & Rangachari, 2018), are designed to provide teachers with information about the level of achievement of instructional objectives for decision-making purposes (Ahmed, Ali & Shah, 2019). These assessments offer feedback during teaching and learning processes (Houston & Thompson, 2017). Examples of formative assessment include observations during instruction, daily homework assignments, question and answer sessions, quizzes, and classroom activities that allow students to share their findings (Lau, 2016).

On the other hand, summative assessment determines whether students have learned the intended material by the end of a teaching unit (Kibbie, 2017). These are often referred to as assessments of learning (Kulasegaram & Rangachari, 2018). Summative assessment can be given at the end of a month, term, or year (Broadbent, Panadero & Boud, 2018). They are particularly valuable in measuring learning progress. Summative assessment is designed to assess students' comprehension of the material at the conclusion of a teaching unit.

Dixon and Worrell (2016) emphasise the importance of data gathered from both formative and summative assessment in assisting teachers with lesson planning, grouping students for targeted instruction, and tailoring teaching methods to accommodate individual differences.

Supervising and evaluating instruction

This instructional practice involves deputy principals providing guidance and feedback to teachers in order to identify their strengths and areas for improvement. According to Esia-Donkoh and Baffoe (2018), instructional supervision refers to activities that aim to enhance teaching and learning. Suson, Galigao, Velasquez, Baratbata and Mejica (2019) further emphasise collaboration between the deputy principal and teachers in their definition of supervision, regarding it as a joint effort to enhance teaching. Glanz (2018) views instructional supervision as classroom observation, typically using a structured observation instrument, followed by a conference between the supervisor and the teacher. Bush and Glover (2016) note that

observation protocols can be either structured or unstructured. Abonyi and Sofo (2021) advocate for unstructured protocols, arguing that they provide more comprehensive data on classroom interactions.

Characteristics of observation protocols

Glanz (2018) identifies four characteristics of observation protocols. These include assessing the quality of teaching rather than simply describing it, focusing on both the teacher and the learner, incorporating the content being taught, and combining with other data sources.

The protocol should be designed to assess the quality of teaching, not simply provide a description (Abonyi & Sofo, 2021). An observation protocol should capture the key elements of quality teaching by the teacher. Descriptive protocols only document the teacher's practices without making any judgments about the quality of teaching or its impact on the learner (Bell, Dobbelaer, Kleitte & Visscher, 2019). They focus solely on specific behaviour without considering the effectiveness thereof.

The second characteristic of an observation protocol is its attention to both the teacher and the learner (Ngwenya & Ngwenya, 2017). While there is often a stronger focus on the teacher, neglecting the learner is not conducive to quality instruction (Garira, Howie & Plomp, 2019). Glanz (2018) asserts that a key aspect of classroom observation is assessing the learner's response.

The third feature of an observation protocol is its consideration of the content being taught. A strong emphasis is placed on the importance of content in teaching and learning (Halim, Wahid & Halim, 2018). The subject matter being taught plays a crucial role in the teaching and learning process. Observations that prioritise external behaviour of teachers or learners without considering the content may not provide a comprehensive view of classroom interaction (Ampofo, Onyango & Ogola, 2019).

The final characteristic of an observation protocol is its ability to integrate with other data sources. Observation protocols should be used in conjunction with pre- and post-observation interviews. Esia-Donkoh and Baffoe (2018) argue that interviews with the teacher prior to observation are a common source of data used alongside classroom observation. Relying solely on observation instruments can result in important information being overlooked, which is crucial for enhancing quality teaching and learning (Bush & Glover, 2016).

According to the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education (2006), deputy heads are responsible for supervising teachers and writing reports. The circular does not specify the number of narrative reports that deputy heads should produce

per term. As a result, there is a lack of consistency in supervision practices among deputy heads in schools. The goal of supervision should be to improve the teaching and learning process.

Cogan (1995) argues that instructional leaders can use clinical supervision as a model for teacher development. He proposes that clinical supervision, which involves formal cycles between the teacher and the instructional leader, can improve teaching and learning. Goldhammer, Anderson and Krajewski (1980) outline five stages for implementing clinical supervision, including pre-supervision conferences, supervision conferences, analysis, post-supervision conferences, and post-supervision analysis. Cogan (1995) suggests that face-to-face interaction, an essential component of clinical supervision, promotes collegiality and trust between the supervisor and the teacher. An instructional leader should be respected and trusted by the teachers. The five stages of clinical supervision should be conducted collaboratively between the teacher and the supervisor, fostering a strong bond of trust between the two parties.

Conceptual Framework

The study was grounded in the conceptual framework of instructional leadership. According to Shengnan and Hallinger (2021), instructional leadership refers to the influence of a principal on classroom interaction and ultimately on students' learning outcomes. Through instructional leadership, the principal indirectly impacts student achievement by working with teachers. Abonyi and Sofo (2021) identify several leadership practices that are crucial to instructional leadership, including classroom observation, providing frequent feedback, conducting walkthroughs, and modelling effective instruction.

Research on instructional leadership indicates that principals often have limited time due to their managerial responsibilities. Therefore, it is important to involve other school leaders, such as deputy principals, in instructional leadership efforts (Spillane et al., 2015). Ho and Ng (2017) suggest that instructional leadership should also involve other stakeholders in the school community.

Research Methodology

We used a qualitative research methodology, which was considered appropriate due to its ability to gather detailed and comprehensive data (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2015) in this study. Our aim was to investigate the strategies that deputy principals employed to enhance student performance. We adopted an interpretivist epistemological paradigm, which involves understanding reality through the perspectives and actions of the participants (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2015). In the context of qualitative research, case study designs are

valuable for examining complex social phenomena in real-life situations where the boundaries of the phenomenon and its context are not clearly defined (Yin, 2014).

Participant Selection

A case study design was used to examine the instructional leadership practices of deputy principals within a specific timeframe. Three data collection tools, document analysis, observation, and multiple interviews were employed to ensure credibility and validate the findings. The sample consisted of three deputy principals purposively selected from the Gutu district of the Masvingo province in Zimbabwe.

The research sites and participants were deliberately chosen based on their relevance and knowledge of the phenomenon being studied. The Gutu district was selected as the research site due to its significant number of substantive deputy principals compared to other districts in the Masvingo province. Three deputy principals with substantial experience in their positions were chosen as they possessed the necessary information to address the research question.

In summary, we adopted a case study design to explore the instructional leadership practices of deputy principals. Careful consideration was given to selecting the research site and participants to ensure the validity and relevance of the findings.

Data Collection Procedures

Commonly used data collection methods in qualitative research include interviews, observations, and document analysis (Billups, 2020). In this study, we conducted interviews with deputy principals to gain insights into their instructional leadership practices. Observations were conducted to observe deputy principals' instructional leadership practices. Additionally, documents such as vision statements, supervision reports, and school reports were analysed to further understand instructional leadership practices and interactions within the school. It is important to note that all data collection methods used in this study were considered equally important and no method was given more significance (Billups, 2020). We employed semi-structured interviews, observations, and document analysis as data collection tools, allowing data to be gathered from multiple sources for the purpose of triangulation.

A pilot test of the semi-structured interview protocol was conducted with a deputy principal from a district not included in the research. Following the pilot study and validation, semi-structured interviews were conducted with each interview lasting 30 minutes per case. An interview schedule was used to guide the information elicited from the respondents (McGrath, Palmgren & Liljedahl, 2019). Interviews

were recorded and detailed field notes were taken to capture nonverbal cues for data analysis. All audio recordings were transcribed verbatim. Analysis of the interview data revealed various themes, subthemes, and categories that are discussed in the subsequent sections.

Deputy principals were asked about their engagement in instructional leadership practices using predetermined questions. Three deputy principals were observed engaging in three main activities: supervision, teaching, and administration. The observation protocol facilitated the ease of conducting these observations as relevant areas for observation had been identified prior to the actual observation process. Specifically, documents such as supervision reports, scheme-cum-plans, school reports, continuous assessment forms, and vision statements were used to gain further insights into instructional leadership practices and interactions within the school.

Findings

The study was guided by the research question which sought to explore deputy principals' instructional leadership practices in Zimbabwean schools in pursuit of improved student outcomes. In view of the large volumes of data generated from multiple interviews, observations and document analysis, it was prudent to organise data thematically. From the theme, deputy principals' instructional leadership practices, two subthemes emerged, namely, goal setting, and supporting teaching and learning.

Goal Setting

Interviews revealed that the deputy principals contributed to the development of their schools' vision. Principal ([P1]), who deputised at a government school said:

Yes, I contribute towards formulating the vision statement of the school. We do it as a team comprising the principal, senior master, senior woman and myself. We brainstorm as a committee and then come up with the vision. After discussing as a team of administrators, it's now left to me to write the vision of the school and ensure that the vision is displayed in every office. You see that vision (pointing at frame with the school vision) that is my language. Every office here including the reception, has the vision statement.

P2, who deputised at a church-run boarding school had this to say about his contribution

I am the one who drafted the vision statement. I am the one who framed it. I was given the responsibility to formulate the vision and present it to the rest of

the teachers for discussion. I am the one who led that discussion. Let me hasten to tell you that, as a church-run school, the church gave us its core values, like Christlikeness and uprightness. So our vision is a product of the school and the church as the responsible authority. I have also helped introduce a school magazine, The Guide Post that markets the school.

Responding to a question about his contribution to the formulation of the school vision, P3, who deputised at a rural district council-run school replied:

Ummm yes, I can say I contributed to its formulation in a way. The thing is, I attended the meeting that was chaired by the Principal to formulate the vision. I was also given the responsibility to explain the vision to the learners during assembly.

It emerged from the interviews that deputy principals participated in the formulation of school visions. Defining the mission or setting the direction is an important instructional leadership practice (Hallinger & Murphy, 1987).

Supporting Quality Teaching and Learning

Supporting quality teaching and learning is one of the practices of instructional leaders (Hallinger & Murphy, 1987). We examined how deputy principals enacted the practice using three dimensions: supervision of lessons, using performance monitoring students' progress and modelling good teaching behaviour.

Supervision of lessons

Interviews, observations and document analysis revealed that deputy principals engaged in supervision of lessons for teachers. P1 supervised about six heads of department, P2 about 10 senior teachers and P3 about eight junior teachers. Asked whether she supervised teachers, P1 had this to say:

Oh, yes I do. It is one of my major tasks. I am given a group of teachers to supervise, for example, in this case, I supervise heads of department and there are six of them. I use a structured supervision instrument (cf. Figure 1).

Asked how often she supervised the heads of department (HODs), she responded as follows:

I supervise them twice per term, if I am not disturbed. However, sometimes I am disturbed in my programme and I fail to meet my target. I draw up my supervision schedule at the beginning of each term and follow it. Last term I supervised all the HODs in the first round. I only managed three in my second round. This means I failed to supervise the other three and I have to make a plan to visit them this term.

LESSON SUPERVISION REPORT

Name of teacher: _____

Class: E6 45

Subject: GEOGRAPHY Topic: GREEN REVOLUTION

OBJECTIVES:
The objectives were clearly stated. Preparation and planning was done in line with objectives of the lesson. The lesson addressed all the objectives given by the teacher.

INTRODUCTION:
Effective introduction was done by the teacher with content relevant to real life situations.

LESSON PRESENTATION:
The teacher grouped the pupils so that each group would look at issues in line with the objectives. e.g. one group was dealing with the packages, etc. the green revolution. The teacher would then comment at the end.

CONCLUSION:
At the end of lesson, the teacher gave pupils some written work.

SUGGESTIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS:
The media used by the teacher was very relevant. However, the class is too big such that there is need of splitting the class.

Figure 1 Supervision instrument

Based on the interview with P1, it was evident that the participant conducted teacher lesson observations and used a structured supervision instrument. P1 created a schedule for these observations, although occasionally it was challenging to adhere to due to numerous other responsibilities demanding her attention.

P1 was questioned about the subsequent actions she undertook following the lesson supervision, to which she responded:

I write reports on my observations during lesson supervision. I then discuss one-on-one with the supervised teacher. If my observations are similar across all HODs, I call for a meeting with all of them where we discuss my concerns. If need be, I may, with the knowledge of the Head, convene a staff meeting where my observations are discussed and a common position is adopted by the school. If I see serious methodological challenges after lesson observation, I may call for a demonstration lesson. An HOD who would have conducted a successful lesson is called upon to give a

demonstration lesson. After the demonstration lesson, then teachers discuss the lesson.

Additional findings from the interview with P1 reveal that they engaged in various post-lesson supervision activities aimed at enhancing instruction. Following the supervision, P1 engaged in discussions with the respective teachers to provide feedback based on the observations. Depending on the extent of the challenges faced by teachers, P1 may arrange meetings or facilitate demonstration lessons for the staff to foster improvement in instruction.

When asked the same question regarding supervision of teacher lessons, P2 and P3 both acknowledged that they conducted such supervisory sessions. The only difference was in the specific individuals they supervised. P2 said:

I supervise senior teachers only using a structured format. There are 10 senior teachers in the school. These teachers do not require a lot of supervision such that even if I fail to supervise their lessons, we

will be convinced that learning will be taking place.

P3 indicated as follows: *“I supervise junior teachers mostly. These are newly appointed teachers who require a lot of supervision. We have eight such teachers in the school. They need to be assisted in teaching strategies and class control.”*

Participants also differed on the question relating to the frequency of supervising. P2 noted the following:

Ummmm I supervise these teachers once per term. Remember, I have just said these are senior teachers who are self-starters. They do not require a lot of supervision. Sometimes we just supervise them to meet requirements; otherwise, they can deliver even without our supervision.

Responding to the same question, P3 said:

I supervise junior teachers twice per term and there are eight of them. Since they are junior teachers, they need a lot of supervision for them to be effective. I use an observation protocol for the lessons. Sometimes I do not supervise them twice per term because of the nature of my duties. I do many activities here so sometimes I fail to meet my supervision programme.

Responding to a question on the follow-up activities done after lesson supervision, P2 explained:

After lesson supervision, I discuss with the teacher using notes made during the lesson. After the discussion, I then compile a report, I ask the teacher to read the report and then allow him/her to sign it. I finally ask the teacher to pay particular attention to recommendations that I would have made. Let me remind you that I supervise senior teachers who are very experienced.

On the same question relating to follow-up activities after lesson supervision, P3 said:

After lesson supervision, I discuss my findings with the teacher and write a report. My follow up-activities depend on my recommendations. If a teacher fails to deliver an effective lesson, I may schedule another supervision lesson early to address the anomalies. This is common with junior teachers. If I discover that teachers have a common problem, we organise a demonstration lesson. We have once done it when we found out that teachers were using rote learning.

Monitoring students' progress

According to Rothman (2000), a successful school is often characterised by instructional leaders who assess learners to identify their strengths and weaknesses. Wildy (2012) suggests that teachers should discuss tests written by students to adapt their teaching based on the identified gaps. The marks obtained by students in daily or weekly exercises, as well as monthly or termly tests, hold significance for the learners, teachers, and instructional leaders. Given this context, we aimed to explore the involvement of deputy principals in student assessment and evaluation. We specifically aimed to understand how deputy principals addressed the task of monitoring student progress.

To begin our interview, we asked P1 how student progress was monitored in the school, and the response was:

We give our students daily exercises, weekly essays and termly tests but these depend on the subject. For example, maths is daily while English compositions are given on a weekly basis and we give termly tests. That is how we monitor our students. We record marks obtained by students in a book called Record of Marks. We maintain a profile of marks for each student. At the end of the term, we give tests in all subjects and record marks on a mark schedule. The marks from the mark schedule are transferred to each student's school report which is taken to the parent. There is a section on the report where a parent or guardian signs to confirm that they have seen the report.

Responding to the same issue on how students' progress is monitored in the school, P2 said the following:

We give tests at two levels. Level one is done at departmental level. At this level, tests that are given are guided by the departmental policy. Some departments give fortnightly tests in addition to weekly exercises. Some departments give monthly tests. Level two are tests run by the school. These tests are given at the end of the term. Therefore, we have three tests, end of term one, end of term two and end of term three. However, forms 4 and 6 write external examinations at the end of term three.

P3 shared a similar viewpoint regarding the monitoring of student progress at their school:

According to our school policy, we administer tests every 2 weeks, every month, and at the end of each term. The resulting marks are recorded in the official mark record, school reports, and mark schedule. Anyone interested can access these marks. Additionally, I personally monitor student progress during lesson observations, paying attention to student participation.

Modelling good teaching behaviour

Chitamba (2019) describes modelling as a teaching technique in which deputy principals showcase a new method of acquiring knowledge through observation. By observing others, individuals can acquire new knowledge and skills. Deputy principalship is a high-ranking and promotional role within a school, where the incumbent acts as the principal in their absence (Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education, 2006). Therefore, it was important for us to examine the teaching values held by these deputy principals that could serve as examples to junior staff in their efforts to enhance teaching and learning. P1 expressed the following thoughts on modelling good practice:

I am always exemplary. The fact that I was promoted to deputy principal is a sign that there is something in me teachers can learn. I am very fair when I observe lessons for teachers. I do not reprimand them. I encourage them to work hard. I am a man of his word. Once I promise them anything, I will keep my word. When I promise to

look into the issue brought by a teacher, I do act. My office is a public office. I maintain an open-door policy. Besides, I keep a lot of confidential information about teachers. I do not disclose anything private about teachers.

Questioned further about how she modelled teaching practices that benefited teachers, P1 noted the following: *“Oh yes, I have a teaching load. I have 20 periods. I teach History (Forms 4 and 6). I have also conducted a demonstration lesson for all the teachers. It was a lesson on the causes of the First World War to the Form 6 class. It had a lot of talking points. I used group work, involved all the students and at the end of the lesson, students were given written work. Students were put into six groups. Group 1 looked at how Germany contributed to the outbreak of the war, Group 2 looked at the role played by Austria-Hungary, Group 3 looked at the role of Serbia, Group 4 focussed on Russia, Group 5, France and Group 6 examined how Britain contributed to the outbreak of the first World War. I can assure you teachers benefited quite a lot. After the lesson, teachers discussed the lesson pointing out the strengths and weaknesses of the lesson. The lesson was used as a reference to guide teachers in their daily teaching. As for the records, I have a scheme-cum-plan, tests record, record of marks and lesson notes. I maintain these records for my teaching.”* The comments above indicate that the participant has identified valuable qualities that teachers can incorporate to enhance their teaching and improve learning outcomes. The participant highlighted the importance of fairness, honesty, and responsibility as key dispositions for teachers (Salisu & Ransom, 2014). Additionally, she mentioned that she effectively managed her teaching workload and kept organised teaching records to support her instructional practice. Through the implementation of demonstration lessons, the participant demonstrated a task- and performance-based approach to modelling (Salisu & Ransom, 2014). When asked the same question, another participant, P2, offered their own insights on their personal values and beliefs:

I think I have all the values that if teachers copy from me, they can be very effective and be promoted early (laughing). I am very punctual for lessons. Lessons start at 0730h but I am always here at 0700h to ensure that everything is in place before lessons start. I am an early bird. Apart from being punctual, I am very fair. I am the Chairperson of the Procurement Committee and we deal with budgets. I try as much as possible to be fair in budgeting for departments. I do not favour any department including my own. The last thing I will talk about is welfare of teachers. I am very concerned about the welfare of teachers such that we have a bereavement committee that I chair. The committee sits to assist any teacher who loses a

relative. We do these things to motivate our staff.

Asked about specific teaching practices he modelled for the benefit of teachers, P2 had this to say:

I have 22 periods. I teach maths (Forms 4, 5 and 6). My teaching load is similar to HODs. I can say I have a full load and that is a lot of work as you can see. Besides, I am a ZIMSEC [Zimbabwe School Examination Council] assistant examiner. I mark ‘O’ Level maths. During my lesson observation routines, I discovered a teacher who delivered a very successful lesson that I felt our teachers would benefit. I asked the teacher to plan a demonstration lesson. The lesson was on fencing and the subject was agriculture. The teacher was teaching a Form 3 class.

Based on the interview with P2, it appears that he holds values aligned with disposition modelling (Salisu & Ransom, 2014). These positive teaching habits, if adopted by other teachers, have the potential to enhance teaching and learning outcomes. Values such as punctuality, empathy, and responsibility contribute to a favourable environment for effective education. Upon observing a successful lesson, the deputy principal requested the teacher to prepare and present a demonstration lesson.

P3’s reflections on the teaching values that he prioritised are outlined below: *“I teach business studies, 22 periods per week, to the Form 4, 5 and 6 classes. That is a full load. HODs have a similar load. I have produced very good results over the years. Last year (2015) I had 100% pass rate at ‘O’ level and 15 students’ with grade ‘A’ for that. In 2016, ‘A’ level results were good as well. I had a 100% pass rate with five students recording ‘A’s. I am the best business studies teacher in the district and for that, I was given a certificate. I conduct my lessons professionally. I thoroughly prepare for my lessons, I scheme and prepare teaching notes, etc. As for my department, I always neatly turn out for lessons.”* When asked to share teaching practices that he modelled that could potentially benefit teachers, P3 remarked:

I can give you two examples. I have conducted a business studies demonstration lesson on financial motivators. All the teachers attended and after the demonstration lesson, we discussed the lesson. The teachers appreciated my effort and recommended that the lesson was a success. The second example is when I asked the physical education teacher to conduct a demonstration lesson. After the lesson, teachers discussed the strengths and areas of improving the lesson.

Discussion

Goal Setting

Not all stakeholders were involved in vision formulation. In the case of P1 and P3, the vision was formulated by teachers implying that the responsible authorities did not play active roles in

the formulation of the vision. For P2, it was the teachers and the responsible authority. The church as the responsible authority might have wanted Christian values upheld at their school. Parents were not involved in all cases. During observations, we noticed that vision statements, mission statements and core values were displayed in all participants' offices.

While the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education (2006) identifies one of the roles of deputy principals as assisting the principal in framing clearly defined goals of the school, Matalon (2018) advocates embracing all stakeholders in the development of a vision. Interviews and observations confirmed that deputy principals heavily relied on telling parents and children, and through the school magazine, marketing the vision of the school. McClees (2016) however, contends that schools should embrace technology like Twitter, Facebook and websites in their marketing efforts.

Lesson Supervision

The narratives from P1, P2 and P3 suggest that participants engaged in supervision of lessons for teachers. It was noted that P1 supervised about six HODs, P2 about 10 senior teachers and P3 about eight junior teachers. The differences in the categories of teachers supervised by participants and the differing number of times they supervised prompted me to determine whether a policy circular existed to guide these instructional leadership practices. From the interviews it became clear that there was no policy circular that directed who should be supervised by whom and for how many times per term/year. Each principal used his or her discretion for the allocation. The supervision seemed to be aimed at teacher growth and the realisation of school goals. Mhlanga (2014) argues that teachers need to be supervised so that they can improve their effectiveness and realise both institutional and private goals. Mead (2011) also contends that supervision of teachers is important because it provides for teachers to grow professionally and promotes student achievement.

The Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education (2006) states that deputy principals are responsible for overseeing teachers' professional work. Additionally, research supports the idea that instructional leaders, such as deputy principals, should engage in lesson observation (Broadbent et al., 2018; Ekatte & Eno, 2016).

During the observation phase, we had the opportunity to witness the participants supervising teachers' lessons. In one particular instance, we observed P1 supervising a religious education lesson taught by an HOD to a Form 2 class. The lesson focused on "The Parable of the Sower" in Matthew 13 verses 1 to 23. The narrative report for this observation included sections on the teacher's

details, documentation, teaching procedures, professional attributes, and suggestions/recommendations. Similarly, P2 observed a teacher instructing a Form 4 class in mathematics, specifically on the topic of "Travel Graphs." The narrative report for this observation covered planning and preparation, teaching procedures, media usage, classroom management, and suggestions/recommendations. P3 observed a geography lesson for a Form 6 class, with the topic, "Green Revolution." The subheadings in the report included objectives, introduction, lesson presentation, conclusion, and suggestions/recommendations.

Upon analysing the documents, we found that the supervision protocols predominantly focused on the teacher rather than the students (Garira et al., 2019). This contradicts Glanz's (2018) suggestion that classroom observation should primarily focus on student response. The protocols were developed as separate instruments and did not seem to integrate pre-observation interviews and/or post-observation interviews (Bush & Glover, 2016). Ekatte and Eno (2016) argue that combining pre-observation interviews with classroom observations provides a more comprehensive understanding of the classroom dynamics during lesson delivery.

Further document analysis revealed that not all protocols included details about the subject matter. It is important in all teaching and learning activities to consider the subject matter (Halim et al., 2018). Observations that solely focus on the external behaviour of teachers and/or students without considering the content being taught may result in a detached description of the teaching and learning process (Ampofo et al., 2019). Our observations and interviews also reveal that participants conducted lesson observations without any prior arrangements. This approach to observation deviates from the principles of clinical supervision advocated by Goldhammer et al. (1980), who emphasise the importance of collaboration between the supervisor and the supervisee.

Monitoring of Students' Progress

All participants, namely P1, P2, and P3, affirmed during the interviews and document analysis that they effectively monitored formative and summative assessments by carefully scheduling and overseeing regular tests throughout the academic terms and years. It is widely recognised that one of the significant indicators of a thriving educational institution is the extent to which instructional leaders assess students to identify their strengths and weaknesses (Houston & Thompson, 2017). Copies of school reports containing term marks were also examined.

Modelling Good Teaching Behaviour

The analysis of the excerpts and observations suggests that P3 exhibited effective teaching methods, as described in the disposition modelling and child-centred modelling literature. P3 consistently achieved excellent results for the school and diligently maintained teaching records. By successfully managing a full workload and producing positive outcomes, P3 aimed to demonstrate the value of hard work in achieving success. The interview findings also reveal that participants strived to model effective teaching practices, encompassing disposition, task, and performance modelling principles. However, these forms of modelling may have a limitation in terms of fostering collaboration between deputy principals and teachers, unlike scaffolding techniques that promote collaborative learning opportunities. Therefore, incorporating scaffolding into the model of good teaching behaviour can enhance its effectiveness (Zakaria, Care & Griffin, 2016).

Recommendations

It is important for deputy principals to take a collaborative approach to developing a vision. It is crucial to involve all stakeholders in order to gain their commitment to the vision. We found that vision development in schools was the responsibility of the school administration.

To effectively manage the role of observing lessons, deputy principals should develop observation protocols that focus on the learners rather than the teachers. These protocols should include pre- and post-observation conferences to support the development of the teacher. We also found that deputy principals often used observation protocols that only focused on the teacher's performance.

It is important to incorporate scaffolding as a technique for modelling effective teaching behaviour. We found that deputy principals primarily modelled child-centred and task-oriented teaching. However, unlike these models, scaffolding offers opportunities for observation and growth for the teachers.

Conclusion

In this article we tell a story of deputy principals' instructional leadership practices. The findings of our study provide evidence that, although deputy principals engaged in instructional leadership practices, more needed to be done for them to impact positively on students' achievement. When managing instructional programmes, comprehensive observation protocols that aim to develop the teacher need to be considered.

Authors' Contributions

NC conducted the research and wrote the manuscript and LCJ supervised the research study and reviewed the article.

Notes

- i. This article is based on the doctoral thesis of Norman Chitamba.
- ii. Published under a Creative Commons Attribution Licence.
- iii. DATES: Received: 3 May 2021; Revised: 6 September 2023; Accepted: 5 October 2023; Published: 30 November 2023.

References

- Abonyi US & Sofo F 2021. Exploring instructional leadership practices of leaders in Ghanaian basic schools. *International Journal of Leadership in Education*, 24(6):838–854. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13603124.2019.1629628>
- Ahmed F, Ali S & Shah RA 2019. Exploring variations in summative assessment: Language teachers' knowledge of students' formative assessment and its effect on their summative assessment. *Bulletin of Education and Research*, 41(2):109–119. Available at <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1229441.pdf>. Accessed 30 November 2023.
- Ampofo SY, Onyango GA & Ogola M 2019. Influence of school heads' direct supervision on teacher role performance in public senior high schools, central region, Ghana. *IAFOR Journal of Education*, 7(2):9–26. Available at <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1236226.pdf>. Accessed 30 November 2023.
- Bell CA, Dobbelaer MJ, Kleitte K & Visscher A 2019. Qualities of classroom observation systems. *School Effectiveness and School Improvement*, 30(1):3–29. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09243453.2018.1539014>
- Billups FD 2020. *Qualitative data collection tools: Design, development and applications*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Broadbent J, Panadero E & Boud D 2018. Implementing summative assessment with a formative flavour: A case study in a large class. *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education*, 43(2):307–322. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02602938.2017.1343455>
- Bush T & Glover D 2016. School leadership and management in South Africa: Findings from a systematic literature review. *International Journal of Education Management*, 30(2):211–231.
- Chitamba N 2019. The role and experiences of deputy principals with instructional leadership in Zimbabwe. PhD dissertation, Bloemfontein, South Africa: University of the Free State. Available at <https://scholar.ufs.ac.za/server/api/core/bitstreams/156c3eb7-d8ee-4555-add0-aa109c4bc331/content>. Accessed 30 November 2023.
- Cogan ML 1995. *Clinical supervision*. Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin.
- Creswell JW & Plano Clark VL 2017. *Designing and conducting mixed methods research* (3rd ed). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

- Cruikshank V 2017. The influence of school leadership on student outcomes. *Open Journal of Social Sciences*, 5(9):115–123. <https://doi.org/10.4236/jss.2017.59009>
- Dâmaso M & De Lima JÁ 2020. Marketing the school? How local context shapes school marketing practices. *Journal of School Choice*, 14(1):26–48. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15582159.2019.1616993>
- Director's circular minute no. 15 of 2006*. Harare, Zimbabwe: Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education.
- Dixon DD & Worrell FC 2016. Formative and summative assessment in the classroom. *Theory Into Practice*, 55(2):153–159. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00405841.2016.1148989>
- Ekatte EI & Eno EE 2016. Principals' instructional supervision and teachers' effectiveness. *British Journal of Education*, 4(7):99–109. Available at https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Ekaette-Emenike-Iroegbu/publication/334726426_PRINCIPALS'_INSTRUMENTAL_SUPERVISION_AND_TEACHERS'_EFFECTIVENESS/links/5d3cadd2299bf1995b508958/PRINCIPALS-INSTRUMENTAL-SUPERVISION-AND-TEACHERS-EFFECTIVENESS.pdf. Accessed 30 November 2023.
- Esia-Donkoh K & Baffoe S 2018. Instructional supervisory practices of headteachers and teacher motivation in public basic schools in Anomabo Education Circuit. *Journal of Education and e-Learning Research*, 5(1):43–50. <https://doi.org/10.20448/journal.509.2018.51.43.50>
- Garira E, Howie S & Plomp T 2019. An analysis of quality of education and its evaluation: A case of Zimbabwean primary schools. *South African Journal of Education*, 39(2):Art. #1644, 9 pages. <https://doi.org/10.15700/saje.v39n2a1644>
- Glanz J 2018. Chronicling perspectives about the state of instructional supervision by eight prominent scholars of supervision. *Journal of Educational Supervision*, 1(1):1–17. <https://doi.org/10.31045/jes.1.1.1>
- Goldhammer R, Anderson RH & Krajewski RJ 1980. *Clinical supervision: Special methods for the supervision of leaders* (2nd ed). New York, NY: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston.
- Gurley DK, Peters GB, Collins L & Fifolt M 2016. Mission, vision, values, and goals. An exploration of key organizational statements and daily practice in schools. *Journal of Educational Change*, 16:217–242. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10833-014-9229-x>
- Halim S, Wahid R & Halim T 2018. Classroom observation- a powerful tool for continuous professional development (CPD). *International Journal on Language Research and Education Studies*, 2(2):162–168. <https://doi.org/10.30575/2017/IJLRES-2018050801>
- Hallinger P 2015. *Assessing instructional leadership with the Principal Instructional Management Rating Scale*. Bangkok, Thailand: Springer.
- Hallinger P & Murphy J 1987. Instructional leadership in the school context. In W Greenfield (ed). *Instructional leadership: Concepts, issues, and controversies*. Newton, MA: Allyn and Bacon.
- Harper-Young K 2018. The impact of teacher efficacy on implementing progress-monitoring structures. PhD dissertation. Chicago, IL: National Louis University. Available at <https://digitalcommons.nlu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1317&context=diss>. Accessed 30 November 2023.
- Harris S 2013. Characteristics of the principal as a change agent. PhD thesis. Hammond, LA: Southeastern Louisiana University.
- Ho J & Ng O 2017. Tensions in distributed leadership. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 53(2):223–254. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0013161X16681630>
- Houston D & Thompson JN 2017. Blending formative and summative assessment in capstone subject: 'It's not your tools, it's how you use them'. *Journal of University Teaching & Learning Practice*, 14(3):2. <https://doi.org/10.53761/1.14.3.2>
- Jita LC 2010. Instructional leadership for the improvement of science and mathematics in South Africa. *Procedia Social and Behavioural Sciences*, 9: 851–854. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2010.12.247>
- Kibbie JD 2017. Best practices in summative assessment. *Advances in Physiology Education*, 41(1):110–119. <https://doi.org/10.1152/advan.00116.2016>
- Kulasegaram K & Rangachari PK 2018. Beyond "formative": Assessments to enrich student learning. *Advances in Physiology Education*, 42(1):5–14. <https://doi.org/10.1152/advan.00122.2017>
- Lau AMS 2016. 'Formative good, summative bad?' - A review of the dichotomy in assessment literature. *Journal of Further and Higher Education*, 40(4):509–525. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0309877X.2014.984600>
- Leaf A & Odhiambo G 2017. The deputy principal instructional leadership role and professional learning: Perceptions of secondary principals, deputies and teachers. *Journal of Educational Administration*, 55(1):33–48. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JEA-02-2016-0029>
- Leithwood KA & Louis KS 2012. *Linking leadership to student learning*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Marshall C & Hooley RM 2006. *The assistant principal: Leadership choices and challenges* (2nd ed). Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.
- Matalon N 2018. School vision: A stakeholder analysis. PhD thesis. Portsmouth, England: University of Portsmouth. Available at <https://core.ac.uk/download/pdf/211024036.pdf>. Accessed 30 November 2023.
- McClees EI, Jr 2016. School vision statements: A look at influencing behaviour. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science Review*, 2(1):50–54.
- McGrath C, Palmgren PJ & Liljedahl M 2019. Twelve tips for conducting qualitative research interviews. *Medical Teacher*, 41(9):1002–1006. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0142159X.2018.1497149>
- Mhlanga N 2014. Perceptions of principals in promoting professional learning communities: A case study of three principals. MEd dissertation. Durban, South Africa: University of KwaZulu-Natal. Available at <https://researchspace.ukzn.ac.za/server/api/core/bitstreams/aca13e32-10ae-4c08-b217->

- 766e97d738c1/content. Accessed 30 November 2023.
- Mitani H 2018. Principals' working conditions, job stress, and turnover behaviours under NCLB accountability pressures. *Educational Administration Quarterly*, 54(5):822–862. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0013161X18785874>
- Mombourquette C 2017. The role of vision in effective school leadership. *International Studies in Educational Administration*, 45(1):19–36. Available at https://www.researchgate.net/publication/317589799_The_Role_of_Vision_in_Effective_School_Leadership. Accessed 30 November 2023.
- Muranda AZ, Tshabalala T, Gazimbe P & Mapolisa T 2016. Examining the role of the head as an instructional leader in Bubi district secondary schools. *Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences*, 4(1):1–5.
- Ngwenya VC & Ngwenya O 2017. Supervising the performance of teachers in Bulawayo Metropolitan Province. *Journal of Research in Marketing*, 8(1):641–651. <https://doi.org/10.17722/jorm.v8i1.728>
- Rothman BK 2000. *Recreating motherhood*. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press.
- Salisu A & Ransom EN 2014. The role of modeling towards impacting quality education. *International Letters of Social and Humanistic Sciences*, 32:54–61. <https://doi.org/10.18052/www.scipress.com/ilshs.32.54>
- Shengnan L & Hallinger P 2021. Unpacking the effects of culture on school leadership and teacher learning in China. *Educational Management Administration & Leadership*, 49(2):214–233. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1741143219896042>
- Spillane JP, Harris A, Jones M & Mertz K 2015. Opportunities and challenges for taking a distributed perspective: Novice school principals' emerging sense of their new position. *British Educational Research Journal*, 41(6):1068–1085. <https://doi.org/10.1002/berj.3166>
- Suson R, Galigao R, Velasquez M, Baratbate C & Mejica SPI 2019. School heads supervision and practices: A literature review. *International Journal of Current Research*, 11(6):4706–4710. <https://doi.org/10.24941/ijcr.35528.06.2019>
- Vaccaro DT & Sabella LD 2018. Impact on student learning: Monitoring student progress during reflective essay writing. *Journal of Practitioner Research*, 3(1):5. <https://doi.org/10.5038/2379-9951.3.1.1070>
- VanTuyle VL 2018. Illinois assistant principals: Instructional leaders or disciplinarians. *ICPEL Educational Leadership Review*, 9(1):1–20. Available at <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1200805.pdf>. Accessed 30 November 2023.
- Wildy H 2012. *Using data to drive school improvement*. Paper presented at the Australian Council for Educational Research, Sydney, Australia, 26–28 August. Available at https://research.acer.edu.au/research_conference/R2012/27august/9/. Accessed 30 November 2023.
- Williams RB, Jr 2019. Exploring the perceptions of secondary assistant principals toward their development as instructional leaders. PhD dissertation. Jacksonville, FL: University of North Florida.
- Yin RK 2014. *Qualitative research from start to finish*. New York, NY: The Guildford Press.
- Zakaria Z, Care E & Griffin P 2016. Scaffolding instruction where it matters: Teachers shift from deficit approach to developmental models of learning. *Journal of Education and Practice*, 7(23):144–152. Available at <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ112908.pdf>. Accessed 30 November 2023.