

**AN ACTIVITY THEORETICAL INVESTIGATION INTO HOW
LEADERSHIP CAN BE DEVELOPED WITHIN A GROUP OF CLASS
MONITORS IN A NAMIBIAN SECONDARY SCHOOL**

A thesis submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

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By

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Declaration

I, Tomas Kalimbo, hereby declare that this is my own work written in my own words, and that where I have drawn on the words or ideas of others, these have been acknowledged according to Rhodes University Referencing Guide. I also would like to declare that this thesis has not been previously submitted for any Degree or examination at any other University.



(Student's Signature)

20th November 2017

(Date)

Abstract

Literature suggests that developing leadership in learners benefits them and their schools in general. Learners are prepared as future leaders and they gain leadership skills and democratic values and principles. Learner leaders therefore contribute to transformation in their schools. However, research on the same topic has also found that learners have limited leadership development opportunities, as they are not authentically and democratically involved in leadership in many schools. Informed by the distributed perspective of leadership, this study investigates how leadership can be developed within a group of class monitors in a Namibian secondary school. Its overarching goal was to develop leadership and build transformative agency within class monitors. The study was designed as an interventionist study, theoretically and analytically framed by Engeström's second generation of Cultural Historical Activity Theory (CHAT). Multiple methods were used for data collection, including questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, document analysis and Change Laboratory workshops. Data analysis took the form of content analysis and coding, as well as using the CHAT lens to surface contradictions. The findings of the study revealed that there was conceptual awareness on what learner leadership and leadership development meant among participants. However, little was being done to develop leadership in class monitors. Traditional leadership practices and cultural belief that learners are mere children, as well as confinement to formal leadership structures and policies were the main hindering inner contradictions within the research school. A formative intervention was instituted through the Change Laboratory workshop process and it resulted in leadership training to capacitate and empower class monitors, as well as enhance their transformative agency. The study thus recommends for a shift from traditional autocratic leadership practices to a contemporary distributed perspective of leadership that recognises the need to develop leadership in learners.

Dedication

I dedicate this thesis to my daughter, Mommy Taimi Ndinelago Kalimbo, in the hopes that she one day obtains a Master's degree like her daddy,
and
to my niece, Kornelia Ningenisheni Amunyela, who aspires to one day become a teacher and a school Principal like her uncle.

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Furthermore, I wish to thank the learners, teachers and School Management Team members at the research school, for their support and willingness to work with me during my research. My appreciation also goes to the Directorate of Education in the Omusati region, for permitting me to conduct this study in one of the secondary schools in the region.

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LIST OF ACRONYMS

CHAT	- Cultural Historical Activity Theory
DWR	- Developmental Work Research
ELM	- Educational Leadership and Management
ETSIP	- Education and Training Sector Improvement Program
HOD	- Head of Department
LRC	- Learner Representative Council
MEd.	- Master of Education
MBEC	- Ministry of Basic Education and Culture
MBESC	- Ministry of Basic Education Sport and Culture
MOE	- Ministry of Education
NANSO	- Namibia National Student Organisation
RLC	- Representative Council of Learners
SDP	- School Development Plan
SMT	- School Management Team
UNICEF	- United Nations International Children Emergency Fund
ZPD	- Zone of Proximal Development

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CHAPTER ONE

BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT OF THE STUDY

1.1 Introduction

This chapter provides some orientation on an investigation into how leadership can be developed within a group of class monitors in Omukwiyu (pseudonym) secondary school in Omusati region, in Namibia. In this chapter, the reader is firstly introduced to the context and background of my study. Secondly, I foreground my rationale for conducting this study, followed by an explanation of what this study set out to achieve and the questions it intended to answer. Then, I provide a brief description of the research design and methodology which I employed, before ending the chapter with an outline of the entire thesis.

1.2 The study background and context

Developing learner leadership is an important aspect in ensuring learners' democratic participation in school leadership and in bringing about transformation in schools. Through leadership development, learners not only become agents of change in their schools, but they also get instilled with values and principles of democratic citizenship (Grant & Nekondo, 2016). In addition, learner participation in leadership gives them an opportunity to make their voice heard on what matters to them, in terms of their school experience (Mitra & Gross, 2009).

In the context of this study, learner leadership refers to the democratic and authentic participation of learners in all aspects of school leadership (Jansen, Moosa, & van Niekerk, 2014), while leadership development refers to building capacity (Berg, 2003) and agency (Engeström, 1987), for learners to actively participate in school leadership and transform their schools. But, given the limited literature on learner leadership in the context of Namibian schooling, sometimes in this study, the term 'student leadership' is used to refer to 'learner leadership'. This is because I draw on some international literature that uses the term 'student leadership' when they are in fact referring to what can be called learner leadership, in the Namibian schooling context.

For too long, school leadership has been understood from a traditional individualistic perspective, characterised by the belief in “the power of one” (Gronn, 2000, p. 319). With this view, the school principal is often recognised as the only leader, with the necessary skills and competence to transform the school and bring about effective performance (Yukl, 1999). As a result, learners continue to be disregarded as people with the potential to lead and bring about changes, as well as contribute to the overall school outcome. Learner leadership development seems not to be well understood or properly practiced in schools (Uushona, 2012). One of the reasons given is that of the persisting cultural perceptions of learners as children who are expected to obey adult’s commands (Uushona, 2012; Strydom, 2016). As a result, learners are virtually absent within the emergent field of school leadership (Gunter & Thomson, 2007).

Historically, the disregard of learners and young people’s ideas in school affairs has often resulted in violent conflict. These conflicts occurred when students resisted social injustices which they suffered at the hands of autocratic school leadership and education systems, and the larger societal structures of inequality and injustice, particularly in the colonised countries in Africa (Strydom, 2016). Some examples include, the student demonstrations and boycotts in South Africa and Namibia during the apartheid era in the 1980s. Most recently, the fees must fall movement and its associated violent destruction of property by students across South African universities, is a good example of the need for leadership transformation in educational institutions (Strydom, 2016), not only in South Africa but in all democratic societies, like Namibia.

However, in Namibia, the notion of learner leadership is not new to her schooling system. Before independence, certain structures such as the prefect system, existed in schools, which potentially provided opportunities for learners to participate in school leadership (Uushona, 2012). However, the prefects were not generally seen as being representative of other learners’ interests, as they were not democratically elected, but rather handpicked by school heads (*ibid.*, p. 5). In addition, the Namibia National Student Organisation (NAMSO) was formed in 1984, its formation being a reaction to the repressive and autocratic laws and inequalities purported by the Bantu education system of the apartheid regime (Shekupakela- Nelulu, 2008).

Upon the attainment of Namibia's independence in 1990, reform policies were adopted to right the wrongs of the autocratic and racist Bantu Education system. One such policy was "*Towards education for all*" (Namibia. Ministry of Basic Education and Culture [MBEC], 1993). It identifies the four national goals of education as "access, quality, equity and democracy" (*ibid.*, p. 32). While this policy advocates for learners to be placed at the centre of learning, it remains relatively silent on learners' democratic participation in leadership within schools.

Besides this, the *Education Act No. 16 of 2001* provides the establishment of a learner representative body known as the Learner Representative Council (LRC) in all secondary schools. The LRC serves as a platform for learners to participate in leadership and decision-making within their schools (Namibia. Ministry of Education [MoE], 2001). However, Namibian studies on learner participation in leadership (focusing on the LRC body) have found that little or no leadership development initiatives were under-taken in schools to enable learners in the LRC to carry out their duties as representatives of others (Shekupakela- Nelulu, 2008, Uushona, 2012).

Education in the era of democracy and social transformation requires new ways of thinking about school leadership. Thus, a need arises to shift from traditional leadership views and practices that see one leader in a school, to a distributed perspective of leadership that sees leadership as a shared responsibility by all stakeholders, including learners (Gronn, 2000, Harris, 2004, Williams, 2011). In this study, distributed leadership is a key concept that encompasses learner leadership and it is used to advocate for the understanding that "leadership is not limited to formal positions and can be exercised by individuals and groups other than the principal" (Grant & Nekondo, 2016, p. 13). In the pursuit of learners' democratic participation in school leadership and social justice for school transformation, there is a need to look at schools from the perspective of the learners (Rudduck & Flutter, 2000). Against the above background, this study focuses on the development of learner leadership in a Namibian secondary school.

1.3 Rationale and value of the study

My motivation for conducting this specific study firstly stemmed from my personal interest in mentoring and coaching young people to realise their potential. Coaching, mentoring, and

giving motivational speeches are among the things I do as part of my role as a school principal, as well as during my spare time. Secondly, the few studies conducted on learner leadership in Namibia and South Africa, which I came across in my literature review, focused either on the Learner Representative Council (LRC) in Namibia or on the Representative Council of Learners (RLC) in South Africa. These include Shekupakela-Nelulu (2008), Mncube (2001), Uushona (2012), and Strydom (2016). The LRC and the RCL are formally recognised structures in these two countries (Uushona, 2012; Strydom, 2016).

However, I argue that by limiting leadership to the formal structures of the LRC and the RCL, leadership potential amongst other learners in the school is lost. Hence, I chose to focus my study on the class monitoring system. From my experience as a teacher in five different schools in Namibia for the past ten years, I have observed that class monitoring is a common practice in many schools. Each of the five schools where I have taught had a class monitoring system in place, whereby learners elect representatives in all classrooms. I therefore find them to be well positioned to exert a positive influence on other learners to do well within their respective classrooms, if they are empowered and motivated to do so. However, little is known about what the class monitoring system entails and why it is practiced in schools, since there is no documentation about it. I thus developed an interest in pioneering knowledge about class monitoring by conducting this study. This was thus a unique study with the potential to add to the knowledge base of the ELM field on learner leadership.

1.4 The goals and questions of the study

The overarching goal of this study was to develop leadership and build transformative agency within class monitors in a Namibian secondary school. To achieve this, the study had four specific goals, which were:

- To determine how the concepts of learner leadership and leadership development were understood in the school;
- To explore what the class monitoring system entailed and what the expected roles of class monitors were;
- To identify the enabling and constraining mechanisms influencing class monitors' leadership development in the school and;
- To explore ways to capacitate and build class monitors' agency to actively assume leadership roles in their school.

To achieve the above goals, the study was guided by the following four key questions:

1. *How are the concepts of learner leadership and leadership development understood in the school?*
2. *What does the class monitoring system entail and what are the expected roles of class monitors?*
3. *What mechanisms enable and/or constrain leadership development of class monitors in the school?*
4. *How can we build class monitors' capacity and invoke their transformative agency to exercise leadership?*

1.5 Research orientation and methodology

This study adopted a critical orientation. Unlike positivist and interpretive research, critical research does not merely seek to understand phenomena, but also to transform them (Grogan & Simmons, 2012). A critical study is therefore change oriented. For this reason, this study was designed as an interventionist study. Theoretically and analytically, it drew on Engeström's second generation of Cultural Historical Activity Theory (CHAT). I found CHAT to align well with the critical research orientation due to its transformative power. I instituted a formative intervention (Virkkunen & Newnham, 2013) through the Developmental Work Research approach. I used the Change Laboratory as a formative intervention method, underpinned by the theory of expansive learning. The purpose was to allow participants to learn and act in order to transform and improve class monitors' leadership development activity.

Data were gathered from 18 learners (class monitors), six class teachers, and three School Management Team members (SMT). The methods and tools for data collection included qualitative methods such as semi-structured interviews, questionnaires, and document analysis. Data were also gathered from three Change Laboratory workshops, which I held with participants as part of the intervention process. Regarding data analysis, I firstly applied an inductive approach, using qualitative content analysis and coding to create data themes and categories. The emerging themes and categories were useful in presenting the data and in discussing the findings. I then applied a deductive analysis approach whereby I used the CHAT

lens to surface contradictions hindering leadership development of class monitors in the research school. CHAT helped me to provide an in-depth explanation of the phenomenon under study, not only from the experiences and feelings of participants, but also from a cultural-historical perspective.

On the subject of ethics, I obtained an ethical clearance certificate from Rhodes University which gave me the green light to conduct this study. This study could also not have been possible without permission from the Education Director of the Omusati region and the principal of the research school. Most importantly, to make this research ethical, I did what was right throughout the process. Participants participated of their own free will by signing letters of informed consent and under no circumstances did I reveal their identity and that of their school. I now provide the outline of this thesis in the next section.

1.6 Thesis outline

This thesis is comprised of five chapters. **Chapter One** provides an overview of the study conducted. In it, the context, the background, and the rationale of the study are foregrounded. This chapter provides the goals and questions which guided the study, as well as a brief description on the research orientation and methodology I used for data collection and data analysis. This chapter ends with an outline of the entire thesis.

Chapter Two on the other hand, is the literature chapter. In it, I discuss a review of the literature, both local and international, as they relate to my study. The review covers the concepts of leadership and management, as well as an overview of traditional and contemporary leadership theories. I paid special focus to distributed leadership and learner leadership, as key concepts framing my study. Furthermore, I discuss the theoretical assumptions of CHAT as the theory framing my study. This encompasses the background and development of CHAT, the underpinning theory of expansive learning, as well as the Change Laboratory as a formative intervention method which I employed for this study.

Chapter Three covers the research design and methodology of this study. There, I describe and motivate my choices for the critical orientation in which the study was located. The chapter also provides a description of the research site, the participants, and the sampling procedure

that I used in selecting the participants. The methods and tools for data gathering are also described in this chapter, in terms of what, why, and how these were used. These included semi-structured interviews, questionnaires, document analysis, observation, and Change Laboratory workshops. In addition, I highlight how data was analysed; thereafter, I address issues of validity, trustworthiness and research ethics, before concluding the chapter.

Chapter Four constitutes data presentation and discussion of the research findings. Here I present the original data as obtained from the participants in response to the research questions. At the same time, I discuss the data and draw conclusions based on the relevant literature on the phenomenon of learner leadership and leadership development. Furthermore, I applied a cultural historical analysis using the CHAT lens, utilising Engeström (1987)'s idea of an activity system as the primary unit of analysis, to surface the emerging contradictions. Lastly, I present and discuss data from the change intervention process, before concluding the chapter.

Chapter Five is the concluding chapter of this thesis. In it, the reader is firstly reminded of the research goal and questions. Thereafter, the chapter provides a summary of the research findings. Furthermore, the chapter highlights the limitations of the study, as well as the benefits it has to offer. This study makes some recommendations for practice and for future research, and these are also provided in this chapter. Finally, the chapter covers my reflections on using CHAT as the theory framing my study, and on my general experiences during the entire research journey. Lastly, the chapter brings the entire thesis to a conclusion.

The next chapter (Chapter Two) provides a review of the literature relevant to this study, as well as the theoretical assumptions about CHAT, the theory framing my study.

CHAPTER TWO

CONCEPTUAL AND THEORETICAL ASSUMPTIONS

2.1 Introduction

This study investigated how leadership can be developed within a group of class monitors in a Namibian secondary school. In this chapter, I provide a review of the literature relevant to this study. I draw on the available Namibian and international literature related to leadership and management, learner leadership and leadership development. I begin with a distinction between the concepts leadership and management, followed by a discussion on the evolution of leadership theories, from traditional to contemporary leadership views. This is necessary to understand the roots of the phenomenon of learner leadership development. Next, I discuss distributed leadership as a preferred lens through which to look at the current school leadership practice, after which I look at learner leadership as the focus area of this study. Thereafter, I discuss the theoretical assumptions of Cultural Historical Activity Theory (CHAT) as a framework for the study, before concluding the chapter.

2.2 Understanding the concepts leadership and management

In the schooling context, the concepts leadership and management are often used interchangeably, despite being distinct (MacBeath, 2005; Bush, 2008; Christie, 2010). It is therefore useful in this study to distinguish between them, while at the same time acknowledging their interrelatedness. With *leadership*, a single definition is not possible as there are thousands of them (Yukl, 2002). However, one of the commonly accepted definitions of leadership is that it is a process used by someone to influence a group or members towards a common goal (Bass, 1990; Howell & Costley, 2001).

Similarly, Christie (2010) suggests that “leadership may be understood as a relationship of influence directed towards goals or outcomes, whether formal or informal” (p. 695). For Christie (2010), leadership, unlike management, relates more to social relationships of power whereby some can influence others. Naidu, Joubert, Mestry, Mosoge and Ngcobo (2008) state that leadership in the context of education “comprises the ability to understand emerging trends

in education and guide a school through various challenges by achieving a vision based on shared values” (p. 6).

Management on the other hand, also has no universally accepted definition. Christie (2010) refers to it as an organisational concept that relates to “structures and processes by which organisations meet their goals” (Christie, 2010, p. 696). Similarly, Bolam (1999) suggests that management can be defined as “an executive function for carrying out agreed policies” (p. 194). In the school’s context therefore, management has to do with planning, organising, leading and controlling school affairs. These may include planning and implementation of school plans, budgeting, as well as monitoring and evaluation and supervision of staff and learners. It is argued that one major limitation of the application of management in schools is “the perpetuation of the notion that management refers to a senior group of staff” (Naidu, et al., 2008, p. 4). Adding to this, Christie (2010) argues that unlike leadership, management is often linked to structural positions of authority such as the principal.

Although leadership and management are distinct, it is also important to understand that the two concepts are complementary to each other. Coleman and Earley (2005) point out that, “leadership is frequently seen as an aspect of management” (p. 6). As such, leadership and management need to be given equal prominence (Bush, 2003) if educational institutions are to operate effectively and achieve their objectives. This implies that as much as it is needed to ensure that set plans and policies are implemented and followed, it is equally important to ensure that healthy social relations amongst all stakeholders are constantly nurtured and maintained and that a positive influence is exerted throughout the school. This is necessary to motivate school members to work towards the attainment of overall goals of the school. Of specific interest to this study is however leadership development, particularly as it relates to learners. Hence, a stronger emphasis is placed on the concept leadership in this thesis, than management. My attention now turns to the evolution of leadership theories.

2.3 Traditional views of leadership

The thinking about the ‘what’ and ‘how’ of leadership has come a long way. To get a better understanding of the notion of learner leadership (the phenomenon under study), it is necessary to look back at where it all started. There is a substantial amount of literature on leadership and

as a result, many competing models and theories about leadership were developed (Bush, 2003). To comprehend the vast leadership literature, some writers have tried to cluster these various conceptions into different broad theories such as great man, trait, contingency, managerial, moral, transactional, transformational, instructional, and many more (*ibid.*). For this study, I will however not talk about all these theories but rather, I will concentrate on the ones that relate to education. These include the trait, behavioural, situational, contingency and transformational theories. I now briefly discuss the trait theory.

2.3.1 The trait theory

The trait approach to leadership holds the understanding that there are certain qualities and skills which distinguish leaders from non-leaders. One can argue that trait theorists have made a list of all positive adjectives under the sun to describe good and effective leaders, including amongst others, being adaptable to situations, being alert to social environments, ambitious and achievement-orientated, assertive, cooperative, decisive, dependable, tolerant to stress –the list is endless (Bolden, Gosling, Marturano, & Denniso, 2003, p. 6).

However, critiques of the trait theory argue that there are no universally agreed traits or qualities that make one an effective leader (Derue, Nahrgang, Wellman, & Humphrey, 2011). This means that there can be an effective school principal for instance, who may not necessarily possess one or more of the above traits. It is therefore not possible to conclude that certain traits and skills distinguish leaders from non-leaders since, as argued by Bolden et al. (2003, p. 6), it is not possible to measure traits such as honesty.

In the context of education, desired traits are expected from school leaders. In South Africa for example, the expected skills and attributes for principals are outlined in the National Policy on the South African Standards for Principals (South Africa. Ministry of Basic Education [MBE], 1996). It is therefore evident that the trait theory recognises a single leader in a school – the headteacher or the principal – limiting the potential contribution of other stakeholders such as learners, teachers and parents to the school's outcome. It is therefore said to have limited impact on contemporary school leadership theorising (Coleman & Earley, 2005). Some scholars suggested that traits should be coupled with leaders' behaviours instead (Derue et al., 2011). This is what I turn to next.

2.3.2 Behavioural theory

Behavioural theories of leadership focus on the actions and behaviours of leaders (Uushona, 2012). Bolden et al. (2003) also point out that “different patterns of behaviour are observed and categorised as styles of leadership” (p. 6). This implies that leadership is not something that a person is born with, nor does a person need a set of commonly accepted traits to be a leader, but it is dependent on the right behaviour that leaders need to portray. In other words, one can learn how to act like a leader (Northouse, 2001). In a school’s context, Uushona (2012) argues that if leadership can be learned, then learners can also learn to be leaders, but arguably, only if they are provided with opportunities to do so. This is something that rarely happens in many schools. Like the trait theory, behavioural theory also holds a heroic view of school leadership.

Furthermore, it is argued that one myth in the thinking of behavioural theorists, is that outward behaviour is enough to establish that one is indeed a leader (Howell & Costley, 2001). On the contrary, Uushona (2012) emphasises that a “leaders’ actions cannot be consistent, considering the ever-changing contexts and situations they are presented with” (p. 13). A school for instance, is a complex social unit, where teachers, learners and parents are constantly interacting. The interactive situations are therefore not always the same, as sometimes there is consensus and sometimes there are disagreements and or even conflicts. It can therefore be argued that whilst behavioural theories may help people to develop some desired leadership behaviours, they shed little light as to what constitutes effective leadership in different situations (Bolden et al., 2003). This gave rise to situational-contingency leadership theories.

2.3.3 Situational and contingency theories of leadership

The situational theory is more concerned with the context of applied leadership, which is left unaccounted for in both the trait and behavioural theories (Hiraire, 2008). Here, the focus is on situational variables – the leader modifies his or her leadership style according to his or her own personal characteristics and the context, i.e., the current situation (Hiraire, 2008, p. 8). Further, this theory recommends that different situations call for different kinds of leadership. The emphasis of this theory is that an effective leader knows how to adapt his or her personal characteristics and actions to the context or situations they find themselves in (*ibid.*). Contingency theory recommends matching a leader’s style to the right situation, which involves matching it to a team of people and goals (Bolden et al., 2003, p. 8). This model

highlights that “the leader-member relations, task structure, and positional power dictate a leader's situational control” (*ibid.*, p. 9).

Although these theories may be applicable to the context of education, they still do not heed the call for a distributed approach to leadership. Rather, they refer to the leadership of one person in the school – the principal – whom all other members of the school must look up to (Harris, 2004). But a school is a complex organisation and transforming it requires the participation of all stakeholders, learners included.

2.3.4 Transformational leadership

Transformational leadership marked an important shift in the evolution of leadership thinking. It holds the view that effective leaders consider the needs of others, rather than their own and that they inspire their followers (Coleman & Earley, 2005). It therefore values human relations in an organisation like a school. This is unlike the trait and contingency theories, which focuses on the organisation, neglecting the needs of followers. As a result, the transformational style of leadership happened to be favoured in the Western thinking of school leadership (*ibid.*, p. 16).

In addition, empirical research has proven that transformational leadership can, to a large extent, be beneficial to the overall school success (Leithwood, 1994). However, the transformational model of leadership is criticised as being a way of exerting control over the teachers and hence, it is likely that only school leaders will like it and not the teachers themselves (*ibid.*, p. 85). It also sees the school principal as a key role player, with all the power to influence school performance. It may therefore not be successfully appropriate in democratic organisations, of which a school is contemporarily viewed to be one.

Basically, all traditional leadership theories possess one underlying assumption, that there is one heroic leader in any school. In this regard, leadership in the school is presumed to be the sole responsibility of the principal or headteacher (Coleman & Early, 2005). In addition, Spillane (2006) argues that heroic leadership is a persistent norm in many accounts of school leadership. This, according to Spillane (2006), often happens “with the principal or head teacher as the protagonist, sometimes accompanied by the assistant principal and others in formal leadership positions” (p. 5). As the search for democratic leadership and social justice continued, scholars in the discourse of Educational Leadership and Management shifted focus

from the heroic leader who leads others to success, to shared leadership. I therefore turn my attention to the contemporary view of leadership, paying special focus to distributed leadership.

2.4 Contemporary views of leadership

Research in the ELM field has long concentrated on what an individual leader, such as the headteacher, does in an organisation to define effective leadership (Harris, 2004). It has thus turned a blind eye to the kinds of leadership that can be shared across many roles and functions in the school (*ibid.*). Furthermore, although countless studies have been conducted on the role of formal school leaders such as the principal, there has not been enough evidence to substantiate the assumption that principals or headteachers alone can bring about school success (Harris & Spillane, 2008).

With increasing external demand for schools to shape up in terms of performance and with new challenges facing education in the twenty-first century, a need arises for new thinking about school leadership (Harris & Spillane, 2008). As a result, distributed leadership has emerged to be a new type of lens through which to view school leadership. Potentially, distributed leadership has come to replace the traditional forms of leadership that are challenged in relation to “their strong commitment to a unit of analysis consisting of a solo or stand-alone leader” (Gronn, 2002, p. 423). Therefore, I now discuss distributed leadership as a contemporary perspective of leadership, since it encompasses a leadership plus perspective (Spillane, 2006), which includes learner leadership, the phenomenon under study.

2.4.1 Distributed leadership explained

A single definition of distributed leadership is impossible, since there is an increasing body of literature on the subject. Distributed leadership is founded on the premise that it is better for leadership to be shared among all in the school, rather than to be in the hands of a single person – the principal (Coleman & Earley, 2005). What distinguishes distributed leadership from traditional leadership theories, is therefore the fact that leadership is assumed to be fluid and not limited to formal hierarchical positions (Harris, 2004). With this understanding, Bolden et al. (2003) suggest that individuals at all levels in the organisation and in all roles, can exercise leadership influence over their colleagues and thus, influence the overall leadership of the organisation. In this regard, “distributed leadership concentrates on engaging expertise

wherever it exists within the organisation, as opposed to seeking this only through formal position or roles” (Harris, 2004, p. 13). Learners can therefore be among those stakeholders needed to contribute to school transformation, if they are accorded opportunities.

However, Spillane (2006) argues that distributed leadership means more than just shared leadership. Spillane contends that a distributed perspective of leadership “is about leadership practice that is framed to allow for interaction between school leaders, their followers and aspects of their situation such as tools and routines” (p. 3). This implies that distributed leadership values interactions and collaboration between school principals, learners, teachers and parents, as equal contributors to overall school success. The school being a complex organisation, cannot be led by one person. For this reason, the distributed perspective of leadership sees multiple leaders in the school (Spillane, Halverson, & Diamond, 2004). Distributed leadership can therefore promote democracy and social justice in the school.

2.4.2 Why distributed leadership matters

According to Bush (2011), “Distributed leadership has become the normatively preferred leadership model in the twenty-first century” (p. 88). For Bush (2011), “The importance of social relations in the leadership contract, the need for a leader to be accepted by their followers and a realisation that no one individual is the ideal leader in all circumstances” (p. 89), has paved the way for a paradigm shift to distributed leadership as a choice in educational leadership discourse. In addition, Hatcher (2005) provides two overlapping reasons why distributed leadership has become so prominent in leadership literature: first, that achieving the engagement of a wider group of staff is more effective in implementing change, and second, that in a more complex world, the skills and experience of more diverse people are necessary to create successful leadership. Similarly, this is emphasised by Grant (2006, p. 3), who writes:

As early as 1954, Gibb (cited in Gronn, 2000) wrote that leadership is best conceived as a group quality. In line with this view, a form of distributed leadership is needed where principals are willing to relinquish their power to others and where fixed leader-follower dualisms are abandoned in favour of the possibility of multiple, emergent, task-focused roles.

On this premise, distributed leadership assumes that the ultimate goals and objectives of the school can successfully be achieved through shared vision, collaboration and division of labour amongst both the SMTs, teachers and learners. One can argue, as I will do in this thesis, that

learners matter more because whatever happens in the school is centred around, and indeed concerns them.

However, despite receiving massive attention and praise as a theory of choice, distributed leadership also faces criticism and challenges that are worth highlighting. I therefore turn my attention to the critiques and challenges of distributed leadership.

2.4.3 The critiques and challenges of distributed leadership

One challenge in understanding distributed leadership, is the absence of a clear generic definition. In some instances, it is used interchangeably with concepts such as democratic, participative and/or shared leadership (Lumby, 2013). This can be confusing. Further, Lumby (2013) claims that literature on distributed leadership is full of contradictions, for example, while it rejects previous heroic and hierarchical models of leadership, it also acknowledges their persistence, and even supports their necessity and value. It is also argued that the idea that everyone can lead is not supported by practical evidence and it is not made clear as to what “inclusion of many in leadership” really means (Lumby, 2013, p. 584).

Distributed leadership dictates that those formal leaders such as school principals, hand over power to others (Spillane, 2004). In contrast, centralisation of power is by far noted to be a major constraint to distributed leadership in South African schools, for example (Grant, 2017). According to Grant (2017), power “remains inseparable from the formal principal role and closely associated with the legislated structure of the SMT” (p. 10). Similarly, Harris (2004, p. 19) states that schools are traditionally hierarchical, with formal positions and pay-scale, and hence, they may not easily be responsive to a distributed perspective of leadership.

It is also argued that literature is not explicit on how the distribution of power should be done. Lumby (2013) claims that “the central issue of power surfaces only superficially if at all, in much of the literature” (p. 583). School principals will therefore rarely distribute power as principals may feel disempowered or threatened by teachers and possibly by learners (Harris, 2004; Lumby, 2013).

Distribution of power may be seen as a threat to accountability, which is solely expected from the head of the school – the principal. On the other hand, adoption of distributed leadership

may have financial implications for schools. The fact that formal leadership positions come with extra remunerations, means that it is likely that incentives will also be needed to pay those who take on leadership roles, even if it will be informally (Harris, 2004, p. 24).

Contemplating the above critiques and challenges, one may argue that as much as distributed leadership can be beneficial if applied in schools, there is also a need for more empirical research on its practical applicability, especially in the Namibian context. This study is thus one of these needed studies, as it investigates how to develop learner leadership – an aspect of distributed leadership. I therefore engage with the concept of learner leadership and how it can be developed, in the next section.

2.5 Understanding learner leadership and leadership development

There is limited literature on learner leadership, especially in the Namibian context (Grant & Nekondo, 2016). There is thus no concise definition of the concept learner leadership. To define learner leadership in this study, I draw on Wallin (2003, p. 55) who calls for learners' democratic participation in decision-making, and on Niegel (2006, p. 20) who propagates authentic involvement of learners in aspects of school leadership. From these two perspectives, learner leadership can therefore be referred to as learners' authentic and democratic participation in school leadership. Furthermore, in his study on learner participation in leadership in a Namibian secondary school, Uushona (2012, p. 21) refers to the following as the characteristics of learner leadership:

It is a relational process; it involves interactions and building relationships with other students, peer leaders and other members of the school; it involves external community; it has an outcome of developing leadership skills in students; it involves many types of leadership; it may develop through participation.

The above explanation captures the essence of learner leadership and can be useful in understanding the concept. The explanation also suggests that leadership can be developed in learners through developing their leadership skills and through allowing them to participate in leadership. Developing leadership in learners is significant in many ways. Hence, in the next section, I discuss what the literature says about the need to develop learner leadership.

2.5.1 The need to develop leadership amongst learners

Learners make up most of a schools' population (Woods, 2012) yet, in most cases, they are excluded from leadership in their schools (Gunter & Thomson, 2007). In pursuit of distributed leadership and leadership for social justice, a need exists for learners to be developed as leaders. Leadership development in the context of this study, means building capacity for learners to participate in leadership (Duma, 2011). Grant (2015, p. 109) argues that by involving them in leading, learners can be the main agents in school transformation and have a significant role to play in the process of change. In direct contrast, Mitra and Gross (2009) state that "disengaged learners attend school less, have lower self-concepts, achieve less academically, and are more likely to drop out of school" (p. 522). Learner leadership development can thus help instil in learners a sense of purpose and belonging in their school.

Developing learner leadership can be beneficial to learners themselves and their communities. Grant and Nekondo (2016, p. 15) refer to developing leadership among learners as crucial, since it serves the purpose of instilling in them the principles and values of democratic citizenship. In addition, taking part in leadership, be it at school or in the community, can help learners to acquire the skills and beliefs that will help them to function in this world of democracy. To support this view, Walsh and Black (2009, p. 6), stress the following:

Participation in the life of the school and the community is an important means of fostering the development of skills that provide a foundation for young people's wider active citizenship while also meeting more specific educational purposes such as improved student engagement and learning.

By allowing and supporting learners to be active participants in their schooling, teachers and school principals can play a crucial role in improving their educational engagement and social awareness. Adding to this, it is argued that "when students are given the skills and opportunity to lead within their schools, they are empowered to have a real impact on their learning and school environment and are prepared to participate meaningfully in their community" (Black et al., 2015, p. 5). One can therefore conclude that reaping the benefits of learner leadership can only be achieved through empowering learners, recognising that their ideas matter and basically, giving them a chance to lead. Next, I look at opportunities for learner leadership development in Namibian schools.

2.5.2 Learner leadership development opportunities in Namibian schools

Though limited, there is literature to support that there is potential for learner leadership development in the Namibian schooling system. There exist structures in many Namibian schools that potentially serve as opportunities for learners, not only to participate in leadership, but also to develop as learner leaders. These structures include among others: Learner Representative Councils (LRCs), learner leadership clubs and the class monitoring system (Shekupakela-Nelulu, 2008; Uushona, 2012; Grant & Nekondo, 2016; Kalimbo, 2017). I therefore discuss some of these structures next.

2.5.2.1 The Learner Representative Councils (LRCs)

The LRC is a formal learner representative structure expected to be active in all state secondary schools in Namibia, as provided for by the Education Act 16 of 2001 (Namibia MBESC, 2001, p. 30). If well supported and coordinated, learners on the LRC have the potential to contribute meaningfully to school transformation (Uushona, 2012). The LRC is tasked with the responsibility to represent other learners in decision-making and to assist with various leadership roles in their schools (Namibia, MBESC, 2002).

However, studies have found that despite the LRC being a legitimate body that can significantly give learners an opportunity to participate in leadership, schools do little to develop them as learner leaders (Shekupakela-Nelulu, 2008; Uushona, 2012). In addition, the LRC is only found in secondary schools (Grade 8 - 12). This may deprive young children at primary school level a chance to have a voice in their schooling, as well as developing leadership skills (Uushona, 2012).

2.5.2.2 Learner leadership clubs

Leadership clubs present another opportunity for learners to engage in leadership development and participate in bringing change in their schools. This has been proven by an extensive research project exploring learner leadership in schools in South Africa and Namibia, which focused on the establishment of leadership clubs in schools by Bachelor of Education (BEd) Honours degree students (Grant, 2015; Grant & Nekondo, 2016). This study found that although the notion of learner leadership was unfamiliar in many schools, leadership clubs that were established provided an avenue for developing learner voice, as well as an opportunity for learners to initiate and lead change projects in their respective schools (Grant, 2015, p. 23).

However, despite the potentials that clubs had for learner leadership development, some challenges were identified which prevent learner participation in clubs. As pointed out by Grant and Nekondo (2016), some of these challenges include lack of interest, shyness, low self-esteem and above all, time constraints on the part of both learners and teachers.

2.5.2.3 Class monitoring

A pilot study has established that another structure that serves as a leadership development opportunity in Namibian schools, is the class monitoring system (Kalimbo, 2017). I carried out the pilot study in the form of a pre-course assignment as part of this MEd degree. However, efforts to trace literature focusing on what class monitors really are and what their roles should be, proved futile. This gap in the literature thus prompted me to focus this study on leadership development within the class monitoring structure. I believe this will expand the limited literature available on learner leadership, particularly in the context of Namibia.

Nevertheless, as much as we advocate for increased participation of learners in leadership, the fact remains that there are challenges that hinder learner leadership practices in schools. Hence in the next section, I discuss the challenges to learner leadership development.

2.5.3 Challenges to learner leadership development

There are real challenges that hinder the practice and development of learner leadership in schools. Some of these challenges include policy issues, lack of leadership capacity, as well as limited opportunities for leadership development. I therefore discuss these challenges below, beginning with policy limitations.

2.5.3.1 Policy limitations

Policies are believed to share the blame for the absence of learners in school leadership positions. Gunter and Thomson (2006) argue that one reason why learners are absent is “because policy and practice is constructed and conceptualised around the interests of elite adults and they are virtually absent because their presence is that of objects that elite adults are meant to give reference to and impact upon” (p. 23). Certain policies, both at national, regional or school level, may therefore constrain learner participation in leadership in schools.

After independence in 1990, Namibia adopted a policy document [Towards Education for All] which serves as a road map for education and it identified four national goals for education which are access, equity, quality and democracy (Namibia. Ministry of Education and Culture, 1992). However, while this policy puts learners at the centre of learning in its definition of learning, it is silent on issues of leading, especially concerning learners (Grant & Nekondo, 2016, p. 14).

Furthermore, the Ministry of Education introduced the Education and Training Sector Improvement Programme (ETSIP) in 2007, to improve the standard of education, including management and leadership of schools (Namibia. Ministry of Education and Culture, 2007). However, Grant and Nekondo (2016) maintain that this policy remains silent on learner leadership development and only advocates for the training of educators, as well as personnel in the education ministry (p. 14). The most recent important document that touches on the aspects of school leadership, is the strategic plan of the Ministry of Education [2012- 2017]. One of the five strategic themes identified by the Ministry is “leadership and management”, which focuses on visionary leadership and management, by creating an atmosphere that allows staff to perform to their utmost best (Namibia, MOE, 2012, p. 8).

In addition, the strategic plan singles out the role of leaders and managers in education as key to the attainment of goals and objectives (*ibid.*). Arguably, there is however no mention of learners specifically in regard to leadership and management in schools. Certainly, some educational policies in Namibia still maintain the recognition of positional authority and hierarchical power of educational leaders and managers, more so, contrary to the advocated notion of distributed leadership discussed earlier in this chapter. This status quo is tantamount to exclusion and deprivation of opportunities to have their (learners) voice heard, let alone their acquisition of leadership skills and experience.

2.5.3.2 Perception of learners as leaders

In many African cultures, including some in Namibia, children are viewed by adults as young people who have to abide by whatever the adults want them to abide to, as well as respect them. In their study on learners’ democratic involvement in school governing bodies in South Africa,

Mncube and Harber (2013, p. 19) write:

A common obstacle to attaining greater participation by young people in their schooling than they have had in the past in many cultures is the adult view of the role of the child in society. Chiwela (2010: 66) wrote of Zambian society: “Cultural attitude – children are brought up to believe that they should remain silent in the presence of adults. Hence the child may be hesitant to speak, while the adult is uncomfortable with the child who expresses an opinion”.

Such cultural beliefs and practices therefore hinder learner leadership development, as adults will not see its value. Similarly, Uushona (2012) points out that “adults generally perceive children as people with no moral standards, who can be out of control and lacking experience and capabilities to participate in leadership” (p. 32). Such perceptions of children as juniors whom adults have total control over, leads to their [children’s] exclusion in leadership almost everywhere, at school and in communities. Therefore, there is a need to educate adults about the importance of valuing learners as equal partners in leading schools.

2.5.3.3 Lack of capacity for leadership

Capacity in this study refers to having skills, understanding and agency needed for leadership (Berg, 2003). One way to build leadership capacity amongst learners is through training. Uushona (2012) states that training is the best means to empower people. However, a Namibian study on LRC participation in leadership has found that there was no regional or national training offered to build capacity for learners on the LRC (Shekupakela-Nelulu, 2008, p. 56). The absence of regional or national LRC support programmes may therefore mean that it is the responsibility of individual schools to train their learners (*ibid.*, p. 57). It is therefore ideal that schools develop capacity building programmes aimed at developing leadership skills amongst learners, if learners are to actively participate in school leadership.

2.5.3.4 Limited opportunities for learner leadership development

One cannot expect learners to assume leadership if there are no opportunities available to them at school or in their communities. Mncube and Harber (2013, p. 7) argue that learners can participate actively in school governance, but doing so will depend on the leadership development opportunities allowed to them. The literature has confirmed that although some schools have made an effort to have learner leaders appointed, the roles which those learner leaders execute are mostly extensions of school management tasks. As claimed by Jansen et al. (2014), “learner leaders in many instances become an extension of management, and simply

serve as assistants in a quasi-policing role of the teaching staff and management of the school” (p. 4). A need therefore exists to increase leadership development opportunities for learners in schools. But a question arises: how can increased participation in leadership be achieved. Some possible answers to this question are provided in the next section.

2.5.4 Ways to promote learner participation in leadership

Schools have a broader democratic task to prepare learners to become engaged and contributing citizens (Mitra & Gross, 2009). One way to do this is by engaging learners in leadership and giving them a voice (*ibid.*, p. 522). Learner voice is a crucial aspect of developing learner leadership. Shuttle (2007) emphasises that “learner voice is about true democracy within institutions and it is a potential catalyst for student agency” (p. 67). Therefore, one cannot talk about learner leadership development if learners are not listened to. Mitra and Gross (2009) suggest three ways to develop learner voice in their pyramid as shown in Figure 2.1 below.

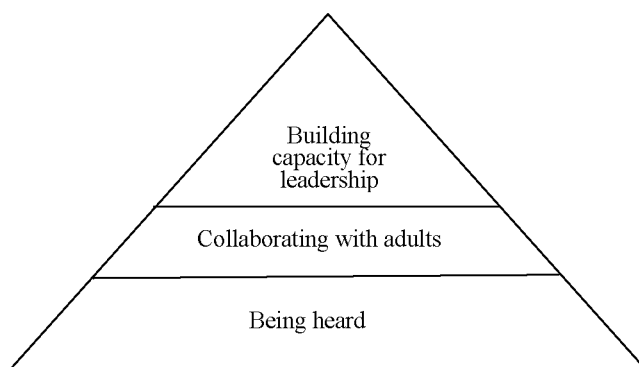


Figure 2.1: The pyramid of learner voice (Mitra & Gross, 2009, p. 523)

The pyramid is a three-level structure used to illustrate possible opportunities for learner voice development in the school (*ibid.*, p. 253). It starts with the bottom structure called *being heard*, where learners have an opportunity to make their voices heard through sharing their experiences about the school, as well as what they consider to be important (*ibid.*).

The second structure, called *collaborating with adults*, is when learners are expected to work together with adults [school personnel] in order to bring about changes in the school, by identifying and solving school problems (*ibid.*, p. 254). Finally, at the top of the pyramid is the third structure named *building capacity for leadership*. This can be considered as the advanced

level of learner voice since, as emphasised, “at this level, students can serve as a source of criticism and protest in schools by questioning issues such as structural and cultural injustices within schools” (Mitra & Gross, 2009, p. 524).

Moreover, in his article titled, *Silent leadership: Educators’ perceptions of the role of student leadership in the governance of rural secondary schools*, Duma (2011, p. 78) suggests that in order for learners to be actively engaged and participate fully in leadership, schools should develop the necessary framework and communication opportunities for developing learner leadership. Duma (2011) stresses further that “educators need to modify their attitudes towards student leaders and learn how to work effectively with them and the educator training programs should give enough attention and centrality to student leadership” (p. 78).

In addition, it is suggested that “schools should encourage all learners to become actively engaged in their school community by promoting and offering a variety of opportunities for participation at different level of life” (Welsh Government, 2011, p. 31). To emphasise, the Welsh Government (2011) added that having a voice through consultation as is the norm in many schools, is not enough but rather, learners should be given the opportunity to play an active role in helping to improve their learning (*ibid.*).

As I indicated earlier in this chapter, there is limited empirical literature on the practical application of learner leadership development in schools. To contribute to the literature in this regard, this study is framed by Cultural Historical Activity Theory (CHAT). This is a practical social theory ideal for investigating how leadership can be developed within the class monitoring system in a school. I therefore engage with CHAT in relation to this study in the next section.

2.6 Cultural Historical Activity Theory (CHAT): The theory framing my study

Cultural Historical Activity Theory (CHAT) is a learning and development theory that seeks to analyse development within practical social activities (Engeström, 1987; Sannino, Daniels, & Gutierrez, 2009). CHAT originates from the work of the Russian social psychologist Lev Vygotsky in the 1920s (Engeström, 2001). It was developed further by post-Vygotskian scholars, most notably including Aleksei N. Leontiev and Yrjö Engeström (Engeström, 1996;

Yamagata-Lynch, 2010). CHAT is said to have originated as a response to heeding the call of the Russian government, to reformulate psychology so that it incorporated Marxist philosophical principles with a primary goal being to ensure social justice and social transformation (Mukute, 2015). It thus aligns with the critical paradigm which I chose for this study. The underlying assumption in CHAT is, that human activities are systemic and socially situated. As such, Engeström (1987) proposes that studies on how humans gain consciousness ought to take a holistic view of human activity in their social, cultural and historical settings.

2.6.1 The relevance of CHAT to my study

In my introduction chapter, I indicated that this was a critical study and that critical research is activist and emancipatory. I therefore find CHAT to align perfectly well with my study. CHAT itself is an activist and interventionist theory (Sannino, 2011). It is a useful tool, both for analysing data in real situations and as a basis for planning change interventions in a cultural and social setting, such as a school (Roth & Lee, 2007). Engeström (1987) suggests that learning is socially constructed through object-oriented activities which are historically and culturally evolving. CHAT is therefore ideal for studying and analysing the activity of developing leadership within class monitors in the research school, from a cultural-historical perspective. In addition, CHAT has transformative power imbedded in its central principles. I will discuss these principles later in this section. For now, I will briefly discuss the development of CHAT.

2.6.2 The development of CHAT: Brief overview

CHAT has evolved through three generations of research (Engeström, 1996). The first generation is based on Vygotsky's notion of mediated action to explain how an individual learns. The second generation is based on Leontiev's object-oriented collective activity while the third generation is based on Engeström's notion of two or more interacting collective activity systems which partially share the same object (Engeström, 1996, 2001; Yamagata-Lynch, 2010; Sannino, 2011). However, this study adopted CHAT second generation as the analytical frame. It is therefore important that I shed more light on the second generation of CHAT in terms of how and why it frames my study.

2.6.3 CHAT second generation as the unit of analysis

The second generation of activity theory as theorised by Leontiev, is characterised by the notion of object-oriented collective activity systems as the analytical unit (Yamagata-Lynch, 2010). This implies that the development of consciousness is achieved through collective activities in which humans engage. These activities are driven by certain objects (goals) which individuals and groups want to achieve. As such, to fully understand human actions, one must study and analyse the complexities involved within the activity system as individuals interact in pursuit of their activity.

I therefore chose the second generation since it moves beyond Vygotsky's individually focused unit of analysis in the first generation, to a collective model of an activity system to describe human actions (Engeström, 1999). In this case, my study looked at leadership development of class monitors as a collective activity, involving not only learners but teachers and the SMT members as well. However, as a second generation CHAT study, I only focused on one activity system, rather than multiple activity systems (third generation), because of time. Related to second generation CHAT, Engeström (1987) suggests an expanded triangular model of a collective activity system, building on Vygotsky's original model and on Leontiev's object-oriented activity system idea. Figure 2.2 below thus illustrates the second generation of CHAT as per Engeström (1987).

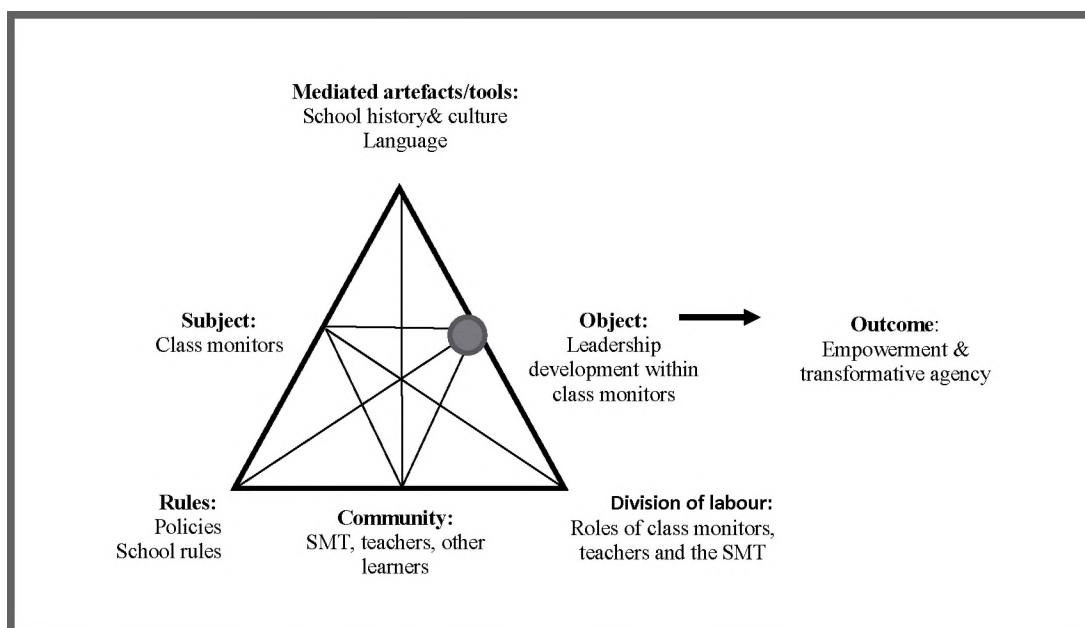


Figure 2.2: Model of an activity system (Engeström, 1987, p. 78)

As shown in Figure 2.2, an activity system comprises different elements which are in transactional relationships with one another (Ward, 2016). These are: the subject, rules, community, division of labour, object and the mediating artefacts or tools (Engeström, 1987). To explain each of these elements and what they mean in the context of my study, I draw on Engeström and Sannino (2010). According to Engeström and Sannino (2010, p. 6), the **subject** refers to an individual or collective group of people whose agency is chosen as a point of view. In this study, the subject are the class monitors (learners elected as class representatives). They are viewed as learner leaders who need to be empowered and whose agency needs to be enhanced through leadership development.

The **object** of the activity system refers to the orientation of the action being undertaken by the subject, a horizon never fully reached. In other words, the object is the envisioned goal driving the activity (Engeström & Sannino, 2010). In my study, the object is leadership development within class monitors. The **mediated artefacts or tools** refer to the conceptual and material artefacts or tools which include symbols and language used for understanding or transforming the object. This study looked at how the object was mediated by the history and culture of the school as well as how language influenced the activity. Another element constituting the activity system is the **rules**. Engeström and Sannino (2010) describe the rules as the way actions are structured and which are often historically located, mediating the interaction between the subject and the community, and between the subject and object. The rules in my study included policies (both at school and national level) as well as school rules.

The **community** is the setting in which the activity and actions take place and include individuals or groups of people who share the same object (Engeström & Sannino, 2010). For this study, the community comprises the class teachers, the SMT members and fellow learners of the class monitors who were also concerned with the leadership development of class monitors. Finally, the **division of labour** refers to how the activity is divided into separate actions (horizontal and vertical allocation of responsibility), shared by individual(s) in co-ordination with others (Engeström & Sannino, 2010).

In my study, the division of labour refers to the expected roles of class monitors, as well as the roles of the SMT and teachers in developing class monitors as leaders. These elements are in constant interaction with each other and it is these interactions which generate tensions which

eventually trigger transformation of the activity systems (Engeström & Sannino, 2010). Activity systems are guided by five central principles, and these are what I turn to next.

2.6.4 The guiding principles of CHAT

Engeström suggests five key principles which guide activity systems. These principles thus constitute the essence of CHAT. It is essential that I discuss these principles because, together, they provided a practical and comprehensive lens for analysing and explaining the phenomenon under study. Those principles are summarised in Engeström (2001) as follows: ***The first principle*** is that the prime unit of analysis is a collective, artefact-mediated and object-oriented activity system. In the context of this study, leadership development in the school was analysed as a collective activity system, beyond an individual actor. Therefore, focusing on the interactions between class monitors, teachers and the SMT helped me to understand the complexity of the phenomenon.

The second principle is that of multi-voicedness of activity systems. This means that activity systems consist of multiple points of view from individuals and groups making up the community of practice. In this case, teachers, SMT members and learners provided multiple views about leadership development of class monitors. ***The third principle*** is historicity. Activity systems evolve over long periods of time. Therefore, an account of history is considered in understanding problems and situations within activity systems. To understand the enabling and constraining mechanisms influencing leadership development of class monitors, it was necessary to trace the history and culture of how the school performed the activity over time. This helped to identify potential for change.

The fourth principle is that activity systems change and develop through contradictions. Contradictions are “historically accumulating structural tensions within and between activity systems” (Engeström, 2001, p. 137). They are thus not the same as challenges or problems (*ibid.*). Contradictions are inherent in all activity systems and can also be referred to as paradoxes, tensions, inconsistencies, conflicts or dilemmas (Engeström & Sannino, 2010). What makes them essential is that “contradictions reveal opportunities for creative innovations, for new ways of structuring and enacting the activity” (Foot, 2014, p. 16).

Four types of contradictions are identified in the literature: primary, secondary, tertiary and quaternary contradictions (Engeström, 1987; Virkkunen & Newnham, 2013; Karanasios, Riisla, & Simeonova, 2017). Since this study focused on the second generation of CHAT, it is necessary to distinguish between primary and secondary contradictions, as the other two are relevant to the third generation. Primary contradictions are said to be located within the elements of an activity system e.g. within the tool, while secondary contradictions occur between the elements of an activity system e.g. between the rules and the division of labour (Karanasios et al., 2017). The contradictions surfaced in this study are discussed in Chapter Four and they were at the centre of the change intervention which took place.

The fifth principle suggests the possibility for expansive transformation in an activity system. According to Engeström (2001), “expansive transformation is accomplished when the object and motive of the activity are reconceptualised to embrace a radically wider horizon of possibilities than in the previous mode of activity” (Engeström, 2001, p. 137). This principle also applied to this study because the study was interventionist. I, the researcher-interventionist instituted a formative intervention to guide participants through, what Engeström (2001) refers to as, “a collective journey through the Zone of Proximal Development of the activity” (p. 137). The Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) dates back to Vygotsky’s work and in this context, refers to the difference between the individual’s present-day actions and the historically new form of societal activity that is collectively carried out (Engeström, 2001).

2.6.5 Expansive learning explained

The expansive learning theory builds on the foundational ideas of CHAT put forward by Vygotsky and colleagues and it is used in a number of studies and interventions. Engeström and Sannino (2010) explain expansive learning as a kind of “learning in which the learners are involved in constructing and implementing radically new, wider and more complex object and concept for their activity” (p. 2). In addition, Engeström (2016) indicates that during expansive learning, “the community learns to expand its object and possibilities for action by re-designing its own activity and re-mediating the activity with new tools and signs” (p. 109).

The expansive learning process is thus understood as a presentation and resolution of continually evolving contradictions (*ibid.*, p. 48). It takes place in a series of specific epistemic

or learning actions that ascend from the abstract to the concrete (Engeström & Sannino, 2010). Figure 2.3 below is a general model, which Engeström refers to as the expansive learning cycle:

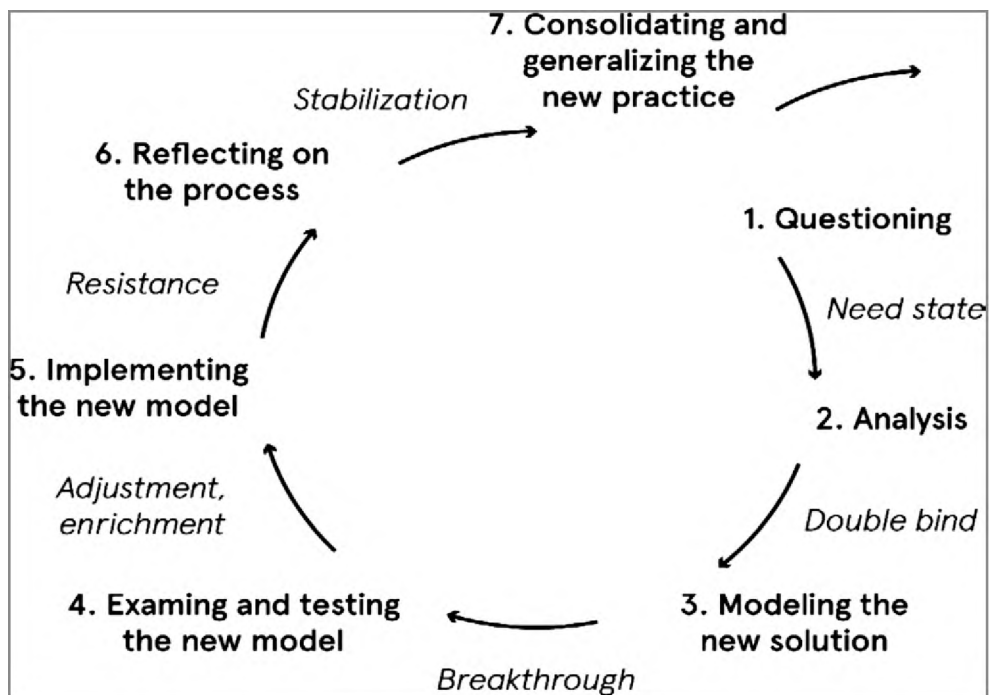


Figure 2.3: Learning actions in an expansive learning cycle (Engeström, 2016, p. 49)

The learning actions shown in Figure 2.3 above are summarised in Engeström and Sannino (2010, p. 7). The first action is **questioning**, and it involves practitioners criticising or rejecting some aspects of the current accepted practices and existing wisdom. The second action is **analysing**, which involves mental, discursive or practical transformation of the situation in order to find out the causes or explanatory mechanisms. The third action is **modelling the new solution**. Here practitioners collaborate to construct an explicit, simplified model of a new idea that explains and offers a solution to the problematic situation. **Examining and testing the new model** is the fourth learning action and it involves running, operating and experimenting the new model to fully grasp its dynamics, potentials and limitations. At number five is **implementing the new solution**, which involves practical application of the new model, enrichments and conceptual extensions.

The sixth action is **reflecting on the process**, whereby practitioners reflect on and evaluate the entire process of the new model. Lastly, the seventh learning action on the cycle is

consolidating and generalising the new practice which deals with implementing the refined model into a new stable form of practice (Engeström & Sannino, 2010). In the context of my study, the expansive learning cycle was the underpinning guiding tool of the change intervention process. These learning actions were the steps which the participants in this study took in working towards resolving the surfaced contradictions. This was done during a formative intervention process which I discuss next.

2.6.6 Formative intervention and Developmental Work Research

In keeping up with the demand for solutions for the ever-increasing societal problems, Engeström proposes that radical approaches and methodologies combine research and development, in order to solve these problems and improve practice (Virkkunen & Newnham, 2013). Hence Engeström introduces interventions as part of the CHAT informed research methodology. An intervention is defined “as purposeful action by a human agent to support the redirection of ongoing change” (Midgley, 2000, p. 113). Drawing on Engeström’s work, Sannino, Daniels and Gutierrez (2009, p. 321) distinguish between two types of interventions; linear interventions (pre-defined and whose goals are known beforehand) and formative interventions (whose content and goals are not known beforehand).

For this study, I used a formative intervention and it is essential that I elaborate on it a bit further. According to Virkkunen and Newnham (2013), a “formative intervention is a partially unpredictable process on intervention and collaboration that produce emergent outcomes, which the involved actor cannot fully predict or determine beforehand” (p. 6). As mentioned earlier, a formative intervention destiny is determined on the job as participants learn and act to transform their activity. Sannino et al. (2009, p. 321) describe three key characteristics of formative interventions, which also applied to my study:

- In formative interventions, the subjects (whether children or adult practitioners) construct a novel solution or novel concept, the contents of which are not known ahead of time to the researchers.
- In formative interventions, the contents and course of the intervention are subject to negotiation and the shape of the intervention is eventually up to the subjects.

- In formative interventions, the aim is to generate intermediate concepts and solutions that can be used in other settings as tools in the design of locally appropriate new solutions.

For this study, I used Engeström's Developmental Work Research (DWR) as the guiding approach for data collection and the formative intervention process. Engeström (2005) refers to Developmental Work Research as "an interventionist approach to the study of transformations and learning in technology and organisation" (p. 9). DWR is strongly rooted in the tradition of CHAT. A further explanation on the modalities for using DWR in this study is provided in the next chapter (methodology). For now, I move on to the Change Laboratory, as another formative interventionist method which I used for this study.

2.6.7 Change Laboratory: A formative intervention method

The Change Laboratory is "a formative intervention method for developing work activities by practitioners in collaboration with the researcher-interventionists" (Virkkunen & Newnham, 2013, p. 15). According to Engeström, Virkkunen, Helle, Pihlaja and Poikela (1996, p. 1), the purpose of the Change Laboratory is to provide, on the shop floor, a space with necessary tools for analysing contradictions and for constructing new models for the work practices. As indicated in the previous section, this study was designed as a formative intervention.

The intervention comprised of three Change Laboratory workshops. Of primary concern during these Change Laboratory workshops, was the resolution of the surfaced contradictions. To do this, participants followed the expansive learning actions which I discussed in the previous section. Participants questioned, analysed and collaborated to develop a new model solution of class monitors' leadership development. The Change Laboratory process was informed by Vygotsky's (1978) mechanism of double stimulation (Sannino, 2011). Double stimulation refers to "the mechanism with which human beings can intentionally break out of a conflicting situation and change their circumstances or solve difficult problems" (Sannino, 2011, p. 584). Sannino (2011) further emphasises that the first stimuli are usually problematic situations that people are faced with, while the second stimuli refers to the signs and tools which they use to gain control of their activity and make new meaning of the initial problem (p. 585).

In the context of my study, the first stimuli were the contradictions presented to the participants in the form of mirror data (discussed in the next chapter). The second stimuli were the artefacts and tools which helped them to envision and model a new solution. These included the triangular model of the second generation of an activity system, the model of the expansive learning cycle and the language for communication.

The Change Laboratory is a powerful methodology that gives CHAT its transformative power. During Change Laboratory interventions, “problems are solved collaboratively, and new understanding is produced about the nature and origin of the problem” (Virkkunen & Newman, 2013, p. 12). Therefore, one important benefit of Change Laboratories is the fact that it builds transformative agency, both amongst participants and for the researcher-interventionist (*ibid.*, p. 13). Engeström and Sannino (2010) define transformative agency as “participants’ ability and will to shape their systems” (p. 20).

Similarly, it is argued that “transformative agency occurs from encounters with and an examination of disturbances, conflicts, and contradictions in the activity system” (Ward, 2016, p. 64). It was therefore my anticipation that Change Laboratory workshops would enhance participants’ individual and collective agency, to transform the activity under study. Basically, CHAT is embedded with tools and methodologies that have transformative power. However, no theory is perfect and hence, CHAT has its own critiques too. These are what I turn my attention to in the next section.

2.6.8 The critiques of CHAT

It is argued that the recent triangular representation activity system designed by Engeström fails to capture the key ideas of the founders of CHAT (Sannino, 2011). In this regard, Roth (2009) argues that the current triangular representation fails to account for subjectivity, feelings, experiences and ethico-moral issues of human actions in its triangular representations of activity systems. To elaborate, Roth (2009, p. 70) writes:

Without articulating and theorizing needs, emotions, and feelings, we are hard pressed to arrive at more than a reductionist image of activity generally, and concrete activity systems such as the hatchery I studied particularly. Only by including these needs, emotions, and feelings do we capture the activity system as a whole, that is, as intended by cultural-historical activity theory since its inception.

There is thus a need to consider both collective and individual needs and emotions in order to define the level of activities and the level of actions (Sannino, 2011). Another critique levered against CHAT is that a single triangle alone, is not enough to comprehend and explain human actions within activities and network of activities (*ibid.*, p. 578). In this regard, Sannino (2011) claims that “the contemporary, widely known version of CHAT, related to Yrjö Engeström’s theoretical and empirical work, neglects different aspects of dialectical thinking and consequently narrows its potential to a socio-critical approach to societal practice and human development” (p. 578).

As an interventionist theory, CHAT also has some limitations in relation to the Change Laboratory as its method of intervention. Virkkunen and Newnham (2013, p. 12) argue that practitioners may feel they might lose control of their work as a result of the interference of the researcher-interventionist. In this study, this was minimised by providing clear explanations on firstly, the purpose of the study and secondly, the purpose of intervention workshops to participants. Doing so encouraged the participants, especially the learners, to take ownership of the entire process.

CHAT is also critiqued for its overreliance on historical artefacts and tools, such as print and writing, as the only means for mediating the object in activity systems (Engeström & Sannino, 2010). In this case, CHAT is seen to ignore the fact that society is not static but ever transforming. In the world that has become increasingly technologised and digitalised, a need exists for the reconceptualisation of the mediating artefacts and tools to incorporate technological tools such as computers. This is necessary in resolving some of the societal contradictions and also in mediating the intervention workshops. For example, I used a laptop and PowerPoint to mirror data to participants during the Change Laboratory workshops. I could not imagine any other tools to use that would be more appealing to the participants in the 21st century.

Change interventions bear beneficial results such as enhanced agency. However, Virkkunen and Newnham (2013) argue that “the significance of outcome and success of Change Laboratories depends on subsequent nurturing, support and further development in the organisation” (p. 13). In this regard, as the researcher-interventionist I made some recommendations to my research school’s management team, to continue with local Change

Laboratories, in pursuit of learner leadership development. Despite the above criticisms however, CHAT is hailed as one of several practice-based approaches that provides a robust framework for analysing work practices (Julkunen, 2011, 2013).

2.7 Conclusion

In this chapter, I reviewed the literature related to the phenomenon of learner leadership development. Amongst other things, it provided a distinction between the concepts of educational leadership and management, as well as a discussion on the traditional and contemporary views of leadership. This was necessary because this study is grounded in the Educational Leadership and Management field and to help in understanding the phenomenon under study. I also placed emphasis on the notion of learner leadership and how it can be developed. Moreover, I reviewed the literature on Cultural Historical Activity Theory (CHAT) as the theoretical and analytical framework of this study.

I now move on to Chapter Three, which outlines and describes the research design and methodology, which was specifically chosen and employed in conducting this study.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

3.1. Introduction

A research design is defined as “the schema or plan that constitutes the research study” (Briggs, Coleman, & Morrison, 2012, p. 107). In other words, it describes the ways in which I, as a researcher, intend to go about answering the research questions, solving the research problems, and thereby achieving the research goals. Therefore, I describe the schema of my research study in this chapter. To remind the reader, the main goal of this study was to develop leadership within a class monitoring system in a Namibian secondary school. I commence with a discussion of the critical research orientation which I chose for the study. Brief descriptions of the research site and participants, my position as a researcher, as well as the sampling procedures are also provided in this chapter. Furthermore, I describe Developmental Work Research as the guiding approach for this study, along with data gathering and data analysis methods, and tools. Lastly, I also address issues of validity and trustworthiness, as well as the ethical considerations, before ending the chapter with a conclusion.

3.2 Orientation of the study

This study took a critical stance to educational research. According to Plooy-Cilliers (2014), the critical orientation was “born out of frustration with positivism’s non-humanistic and narrow focus as well as with interpretivist’s passive, contextual, subjective and relativist views” (p. 31). As such, critical research orientation is therefore a combination of aspects of both positivist and interpretivist paradigms (*ibid.*). Grogan and Simmons (2012) emphasise that critical research is often change oriented. Similarly, Plooy-Cilliers (2014) argues that “because the aim is to empower people, critical researchers often take dramatic action and are likely to be activists” (p. 31). It is for these reasons that my study was activist and interventionist. It did not merely seek to interpret and understand the phenomenon of class monitors’ leadership development in the research school, but also to attempt to transform how it is viewed and practiced. As discussed in the previous chapter, this study is framed by CHAT.

I find CHAT to align well with the critical orientation because of its potential to bring about transformation.

I now describe the research site and the research participants respectively in the next sections.

3.4 The research site

I conducted this research in one public secondary school. The school is located in the Omusati region, in the northern part of Namibia. I chose to conduct my study in this specific school, primarily because it was where I carried out a pilot study in the form of a pre-course assignment for my MEd degree. The pre-course task served the purpose of contextual profiling prior to conducting this study. As I indicated in the literature chapter, the pilot study found that structures such as class monitoring, the LRC and several other committees existed in the research school. These structures therefore served as opportunities for learner leadership development since they served in these structures. I thus developed an interest in focusing my study on understanding the development of leadership within class monitors. Furthermore, the school was a convenient research site for me because it is in the same circuit and region as my place of work. It was therefore easily accessible to me.

3.5 The research participants

The primary participants in this study were learners who served as class monitors in the school. However, since I adopted the second generation of CHAT, it was necessary to consider the principle of *multivoicedness*. I therefore involved class teachers, as well as School Management Team (SMT) members, as participants. Teachers and the SMT were part of the community element in the leadership development activity system, and their input enriched the study data. Below, I provide a brief description of each of the three groups of participants.

3.5.1 The class monitors

In this study, class monitors, also referred to as class captains, were learners elected to be leaders of other learners, in their respective classrooms. As I argued in the previous chapters, many studies done on learner leadership mainly focus on the RCL (South African schooling system) or LRC structure (Namibian schooling system). For this study, the unit of analysis was the activity system of developing leadership within class monitors. As such, class monitors were the main *subject* of this activity system, as per the second-generation model of activity

system illustrated in Chapter Two. There was a total of 36 class monitors in the school, since each of the 18 classrooms (Grade 9-12) had two class monitors (a class monitor and a vice class monitor). I held the assumption that class monitors were positioned to exert a positive influence on their fellow learners and, if capacitated and empowered as learner leaders, could become agents of change within the school.

3.5.2 The class teachers

In this study, class teachers were teachers who had classrooms assigned to them or who were once in charge of a classroom. They were suitable as research participants for this study given their experience in working with class monitors and their understanding of the class monitoring system in general. They were the focal people to whom class monitors had to report.

3.5.3 The School Management (SMT) members

The SMT in this study refer to members of the school management team. These included the school principal and two Heads of Departments (HODs). They were suitable participants given their positions and experience in school leadership. Although they did not deal directly with class monitors, they were accountable for ensuring that leadership development opportunities were available for the learners, particularly for class monitors. My attention now turns to how the above participants were sampled.

3.6 Sampling methods and procedures

Since this was a small-scale research, I used a non-probability sampling method to sample the research participants. According to Pascoe (2014), “non-probability sampling is used when it is nearly impossible to determine who the entire population is or when it is difficult to gain access to the entire population” (p. 137). I chose to use non-probability sampling methods because, despite the disadvantages that arise from their non-representativeness, as pointed out by Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2011), they are far less complicated to set up and less expensive (p. 155). Specifically, I used purposive sampling to select 18 class monitors, one from each of the 18 classes (Grade 9-12) in the school, to participate in the study.

Purposive sampling is defined as a procedure whereby specific settings, persons, or events are intentionally chosen because of the important information they can provide that cannot be

obtained from other choices (Maxwell, 2008). I initially sampled 10 class monitors only. However, this changed after I briefed the principal that one of the study goals was to empower class monitors through an intervention. The principal requested that each class benefit from the study. I also used purposive sampling to select three SMT members (including the principal) and three class teachers as participants. As I mentioned earlier, both groups were suitable for my study as they provided useful and enriching data which helped me to get a sense of leadership development practices in the school. The total number of the research participants was 27. The table below shows the total sample size of my study.

Table 3.1: The study sample size

Participants	Males	Females	Total
SMT members	2	1	3
Class teachers	3	3	6
Class monitors	7	11	18
Total	12	15	27

This was a manageable size, since I could collect the data within eight weeks before mid-year examinations started. One key concern of critical research is social justice. It was thus necessary for me to ensure that there was gender representation in the participant samples.

3.7 Researcher positionality

My position as a researcher was that of a partial insider. This was because I worked as a school principal in the same circuit and region as the research school. Although I did not specifically work in that school, I was known to some participants, especially the principal and teachers. An insider is “someone whose biography (gender, race, class, sexual orientation and so on) gives her [him] a lived familiarity with the group being researched” (Mercer, 2007, p. 3). Potentially, this might have brought a power differential and bias implication to the study, particularly during data collection. However, I endeavoured to ensure that participants clearly understood the purpose of the study, as well as the benefits it had for participants and school leadership in general. I also established a positive rapport with teachers and the SMT members

and encouraged them to be open and frank with me. I assured them (teachers and SMT members) that the information they shared with me would only be shared with my supervisor, and that their identity in resulting documents such as the thesis and conference presentations would be protected through pseudonyms.

With regards to the learners, I firstly sought consent from their parents before I engaged them in the study. I did this by contacting them telephonically since it was a boarding school. The parents allowed class teachers to sign letters of informed consent on their behalf. This helped me to gain learners' trust as a researcher, knowing that their parents were aware of their participation in the research. Secondly, I introduced myself to the learners as a student from Rhodes who knew little about learner leadership and would rely on their valuable assistance and input for the success of his study (Einarsdóttir, 2007). Involving learners as participants during the intervention also helped me to gain their trust. I also assured the learners that I would not reveal their identity under any circumstances.

My attention now turns to Developmental Work Research, an approach that guided the data gathering process of this study.

3.8 Developmental Work Research (DWR) as the guiding approach

Developmental Work Research is an approach to research used in studying work in practice, in complex environments (Engeström, 2007). Developmental Work Research is grounded in CHAT – the theory that frames this study, as discussed in Chapter Two. In today's world, research has a role to play in the development of human activities (Engeström, 2007). For this reason, Engeström advocates for intervention-based research, as it allows for practitioners and researchers to improve on their work practices. To heed this call, I designed this study as an interventionist study, using Developmental Work Research as the guiding approach.

At the heart of Developmental Work Research is an interventionist approach that encompasses the methodology of the Change Laboratory. In Chapter Two, I referred to the Change Laboratory as a platform where practitioners learn about their activity and work together to transform it (Virkkunen & Newnham, 2013). Developmental Work Research thus seeks to provoke expansive learning and transformation (Daniels, 2008). At play during Developmental

Work Research are: *the principle of contradiction* as well as *the mechanism of double stimulation* (Engeström, 2007). What this means in this study is that, first, a problematic situation was presented to participants (contradictions) as a prime stimulus. A platform was then created (second stimulus) for participants to figure out how to get out of the current, undesirable situation, using new mediating tools such as the triangular model of activity system and the expansive learning cycle. This study took place in two phases for a period of six weeks as outlined in the table below.

Table 3.2: Phases of the Developmental Work Research process

Phases:	Activities:
1. Gathering ethnographic evidence (Week 1-3)	-Collecting initial data through qualitative methods i.e. questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, document analysis and observation.
2. Change Laboratory Workshops (Week 4-5)	-CLW 1: Modalities, Mirror data (contradictions), Questioning; -CLW 2: Modelling, examining the new model; -CLW 3: Implementing the new model.

As shown in Table 3.2 above, I collected data on the phenomenon of learner leadership and leadership development of class monitors. The main purpose was to surface contradictions and tensions impeding leadership development within class monitors. Phase two on the other hand, was made up of three successive Change Laboratory workshops and thus served as the intervention phase. I now elaborate more on these two phases below.

3.8.1 Ethnographic data gathering: Phase one (Weeks 1-3)

In the first week of this phase, I worked on the logistics of gaining access to the school, briefing the staff about my study and its purpose, as well as choosing the participants. During the second and third weeks, I embarked on the data collection journey on the phenomenon of developing leadership within class monitors. The main aim was to obtain data that would inform answers to my first three research questions.

To remind the reader, my first three questions were:

1. *How are the concepts of learner leadership and leadership development understood in the school?*
2. *What does the class monitoring system entail and what are the expected roles of class monitors?*
3. *What are the enabling and constraining mechanisms influencing class monitors' leadership development practices in the school?*

I used questionnaires, interviews, and document analysis to collect the data during this phase.

3.8.1.1 Questionnaires

According to Rule and John (2011), “questionnaires are printed sets of field questions to which participants respond on their own or in the presence of the researcher” (p. 67). This study had a small sample size; therefore, I used semi-structured questionnaires with a mixture of closed and open-ended questions, covering all four research questions. Two sets of questionnaires were designed – one intended for the SMT members and class teachers, and another for the class monitors. Before administering these questionnaires, I piloted them with one respondent each from a different school in the same circuit, during the first week of data collection. Piloting of research tools is important because, as pointed out by Bertram and Christiansen (2014), it helps to ensure that questions are not ambiguous and that they can provide the data needed to answer the research questions.

Participation in filling out the questionnaires was voluntary, and for ethical reasons I explained participants' rights to participation and withdrawal from the research. Participants also had to sign letters of informed consent. Regarding learners who were minors, consent letters for their participation were signed by their class teachers since the school was a boarding school, and therefore learners could not go home to take letters of informed consent to their parents. Questionnaires were administered to 18 class monitors, four class teachers, and two SMT members. The advantage for using questionnaires was that, as emphasised by Cohen et al. (2011), they could be completed without my presence as a researcher and they were moderately easy to analyse.

However, one challenge I experienced was the reluctance of some participants, especially teachers and SMT members, to complete and return the questionnaires on time. I had to extend the return date because I understood the teachers had busy work schedules. Overall, the return rate was very good (93%) with only two participants (3%) not returning completed questionnaires, despite my efforts and negotiations to encourage them to do so. The returned questionnaires were representative of all the three groups of participants, that is the class monitors, class teachers, and SMT members.

3.8.1.2 Interviews

An interview is a discussion between the researcher and research participants; a somewhat guided conversation (Rule & John, 2011). I designed two sets of semi-structured interviews, of which one was meant for teachers and SMTs, while another one was for class monitors. Semi-structured interviews often take the form of “a few major questions with sub-questions” (Briggs et al., 2012, p. 252). With these interview types, I could obtain detailed and in-depth answers from respondents by posing probing questions, as opposed to structured interviews which normally follow fixed major questions with no follow-ups, (Briggs et al., 2012).

Before conducting the interviews with the intended participants, I piloted the interview schedules with my supervisor (interview schedule for class teachers and SMT members) and with one of my class mates (interview schedule for class monitors). This was helpful because I could detect that some questions were not well aligned to the main research questions, and that I needed to add some other useful, key questions.

I interviewed one class teacher and two SMT members. I initially sampled four class teachers and four SMT members, two of whom each had to voluntarily choose whether to participate in interviews or questionnaires. This worked perfectly well for these participants. I however could not interview the second teacher as he happened not to be available during the last two days of my data collection, for understandable reasons. As for the learners, I chose to interview four class monitors from a total of 18. This was a manageable number since 18 interviews would be extremely difficult to transcribe. I used the referral technique whereby the first monitor had to refer a fellow monitor until the fourth monitor was interviewed. Gender balance was also considered in this regard.

A power differential was evident during my interviews with class teachers and learners, due to my position as a principal, though not in the same school. I therefore tried to establish a positive rapport with the respondents and I encouraged them to be free to express themselves during the interviews. I also assured the interviewees that their identity would never be revealed as I would use pseudonyms. All interviews were voice recorded with the consent of the respondents. The interview recordings were transcribed as this would ease data analysis.

3.8.1.3 Document analysis

Bowen (2009) defines document analysis as “a systematic procedure for reviewing or evaluating documents – both printed and electronic (computer-based and Internet-transmitted) material” (p. 27). In order to complement the data from interviews and questionnaires, I used document analysis. Firstly, I analysed the Education Act (Act 16 of 2001) to determine whether it made any provision for the class monitoring system in public schools. Secondly, I looked at school documents such as the School Development Plan (SDP), the school year plan, internal school policy, and the school rules. This was to see if there were planned activities, initiatives, and opportunities aimed at developing leadership amongst class monitors.

I used field notes to record information which I obtained from these documents. Document analysis is said to be advantageous in that data is usually readily available, it saves time, it is economical, and it does not intrude on people’s space (Bowen, 2009). However, I was aware of some of its limitations, such as out-dated documents and records not being relevant to my study. I therefore tried to obtain the latest documents and I only extracted information that I found relevant to my study. Although I obtained all the school documents which I requested (School Development Plan, year plan, school rules, internal school policy), they contained very limited information relating to class monitors. I therefore relied on data from interviews and questionnaires, as well as from the Change Laboratory workshops, which I discuss next.

3.8.2 The Change Laboratory sessions: Phase two (Weeks 4-6)

The Change Laboratory process was comprised of three workshops, which were underpinned by the expansive learning cycle. The Change Laboratory workshops served as platforms for participants to learn and collaborate in order to transform their activity. The activity in this context refers to the leadership development of class monitors. This was achieved through

questioning the past and current practices, and resolving some of the contradictions that emerged from the ethnographic data generated during phase one. The Change Laboratory process in this case also served as a data collection method. It generated data which informed answers to my fourth research question which was: *How can we build class monitors' capacity and invoke their transformative agency to exercise leadership?*

Below, I describe the setup and lay out of the Change Laboratory workshop, before discussing each of the three workshops which took place.

3.8.2.1 The Change Laboratory workshop set-up and layout

The three Change Laboratory workshops took place in a Biology laboratory. We could not secure a classroom because the workshops took place in the afternoon when afternoon study was in session. All classes were thus occupied at the same time the workshops were happening. The front layout of the CLW room consisted of three surfaces or mirrors as shown in Figure 3.1 below.

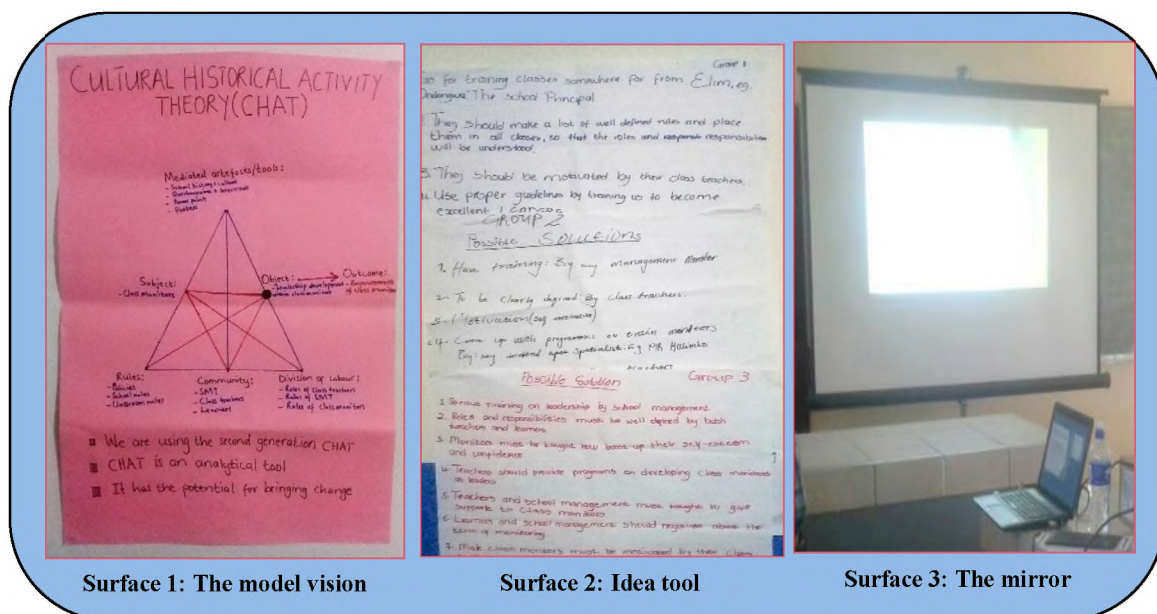


Figure 3.1: The CLW's three front surfaces

The first mirror was the model vision (CHAT and the expansive learning cycle), the second surface was the idea tool (the working space), while the third space was the mirror (PowerPoint screen for mirroring data). In Chapter Two I highlighted the notion of double stimulation as a

fundamental principle underlying CHAT interventionist research (Engeström & Sannino, 2010). These surfaces served as the second stimulus which guided the participants as they made meaning from the current practice and worked collaboratively to transform it. Figure 3.2 below shows the seating arrangements during one of the Change Laboratory workshops inside the biology lab.



Figure 3.2: The Change Laboratory workshop seating plan

As seen in Figure 3.2 above, the seating arrangement was something of a challenge as the Biology lab had fixed concrete counters which could not be moved around to create the ideal space for the set-up. However, this did not deter me and, despite being slightly anxious, the workshops yielded the desired outcomes. Participants could still work collaboratively during all three workshops. Next, I briefly describe each of the three Change Laboratory workshops which took place.

3.8.2.2 The first Change Laboratory workshop

The first Change Laboratory workshop took place in week four. It was attended by all 18 participating class monitors, one class teacher, and one HoD. During this workshop, I first explained the purpose and modalities of the workshop. Secondly, I explained the research ethics, regarding participants' right to participation and/or withdrawal from the research. Thirdly, together with the participants, we set up some house-keeping rules. This included freedom of expression, active participation, and respect for other's opinions, amongst others.

I then reminded participants about the purpose of the study and explained the use of CHAT and expansive learning during the workshop. This was necessary for participants to understand the significance of the workshops and for them to be engaged every step of the way.

After the preparations, I mirrored the data collected through questionnaires, interviews, and document analysis to the participants. I used PowerPoint as this was one of the mediating tools. I exposed the contradictions that emerged in the data, from the three groups of participants i.e. SMT members, class teachers, and class monitors. Participants began *questioning* and *analysing* as per the expansive learning cycle, as I, the researcher-interventionist, led them to interrogate the mirror data. They questioned the current practice, considering the exposed contradictions. Since the group was large, participants worked in three smaller groups to analyse the contradictions and suggest possible solutions and actions that needed to be taken. The groups used flipcharts to notate and present their suggestions. As a researcher-interventionist, I kept a reflective journal of what transpired during every workshop as a way of collecting data.

3.8.2.3 The second Change Laboratory workshop

The second Change Laboratory workshop took place in week five. Here, I facilitated further discussion on what needed to be done to resolve some of the contradictions constraining leadership development of class monitors. Participants drew up a priority list of what needed to be done, from the first workshop presentations. This was based on what mattered to them. As a result, a new model for building capacity and empowering class monitors was developed by the participants, with my help as the researcher interventionist. As per the expansive learning cycle, two learning actions took place during this workshop. These were, *modelling the new solution*, and *examining and testing the new model*. The anticipated outcome was empowerment and enhanced agency of class monitors, to become change agents in their school.

3.8.2.4 The third Change Laboratory workshop

This was the last Change Laboratory workshop and it was primarily meant for implementing the new solutions. It was attended by all 18 class monitors and the HoD. The two expansive learning actions which took place here were: *implementing the new model* and *reflecting on the process*. The challenge was, again, that other participants in the study, including class teachers and the principal, were not interested to attend this workshop. However, this did not prevent

the intended goal of the workshop, as it yielded good results. The outcomes of all the workshops are discussed in the next chapter.

During the entire change laboratory process, data was collected through observation. Bertram and Christiansen (2014, p. 84) describe observation to mean that the researcher goes to the site of study to look at what is basically happening there. I used unstructured observation, which, unlike structured observation, means that I did not have to follow through a check list, ticking off boxes or rating activities as they happened (*ibid.*, p. 89), but rather, I used field notes to write free descriptions of what happened.

For more concrete evidence, I also used my cell phone for photography and video recording of scenes from some of the Change Laboratory sessions. Although not commonly used, photography and video recording help one to tap into unconscious and unquestioned aspects of participants' experiences (John & Rule, 2011) during the intervention process. Another significant advantage of the workshops, which Virkkunen and Newnham (2013, p. 13) also highlight, was that I collected a rich set of data in the form of photographs, video clips and field notes. However, it was not easy for me to facilitate the workshops and take pictures and record video at the same time. I therefore requested the assistance of one of the class monitors. The phone could not video record entire workshops due to limited storage space. This was indeed a lesson for planning future Change Laboratory interventions. My attention now turns to the discussion of the data analysis approaches which I employed.

3.9 The data analysis process

Data analysis is defined as “the process of making sense out of the data” (Merriam, 1998, p. 178). After data collection, I began to ponder how I would go about organising, sorting and preparing the huge amount of data which I had, for effective analysis. I employed three approaches to manage and analyse the data, namely, data organisation, the inductive approach, and the deductive approach.

3.9.1 Data organisation and preparation

Organising data in a manageable way was essential as it eased the demanding process of data analysis. This involved organising, preparing, and sorting the data. Firstly, I transcribed all

interview recordings and parts of the video recordings. I sorted and grouped all questionnaires as per the different groups of participants, i.e. class monitors, class teachers, and SMT members. I then photocopied pages with field notes from my journal and stapled them together in chronological order. I also copied photographs and video recordings from my cell phone onto a backup folder on my personal computer to avoid losing them. I then prepared the materials I would use for analysing the data, including highlighters, marker pens, flipcharts, pens, pencils erasers and sticky notes. The next step was then to begin with the messy, demanding, yet exciting process of data analysis.

3.9.2 The inductive approach

Firstly, I inductively analysed the data. The inductive approach to qualitative data analysis “is a process of organising the data into categories and identifying patterns (relationships) among the categories” (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014, p. 117). In this respect, firstly, I used qualitative content analysis to examine all data sources and get a sense of what the data said in response to my research questions. Content analysis is defined as “a systematic approach to qualitative data analysis that identifies and summarises message content” (Nieuwenhuis, 2007, p. 101). For this I read through all interview transcriptions, completed questionnaires and fields notes one by one, looking for data to inform answers to my research questions.

I then applied coding using highlighters of different colours to colour code similar data. Coding is defined as “a process of choosing labels and assigning them to different parts of data” (Rule & John, 2011, p. 77). For example, all data related to research question one, across all data sources, would be highlighted in green. Thereafter, I used sticky notes of different colours to write key words or brief quotes from the colour coded chunks of data for each question. I grouped these notes with related data to create categories and placed them under the labels of these categories onto flipcharts. This whole process was an onerous exercise as it involved moving back and forth, within and between all data sources. Figure 3.3 below shows the inductive analysis process upon which I embarked.

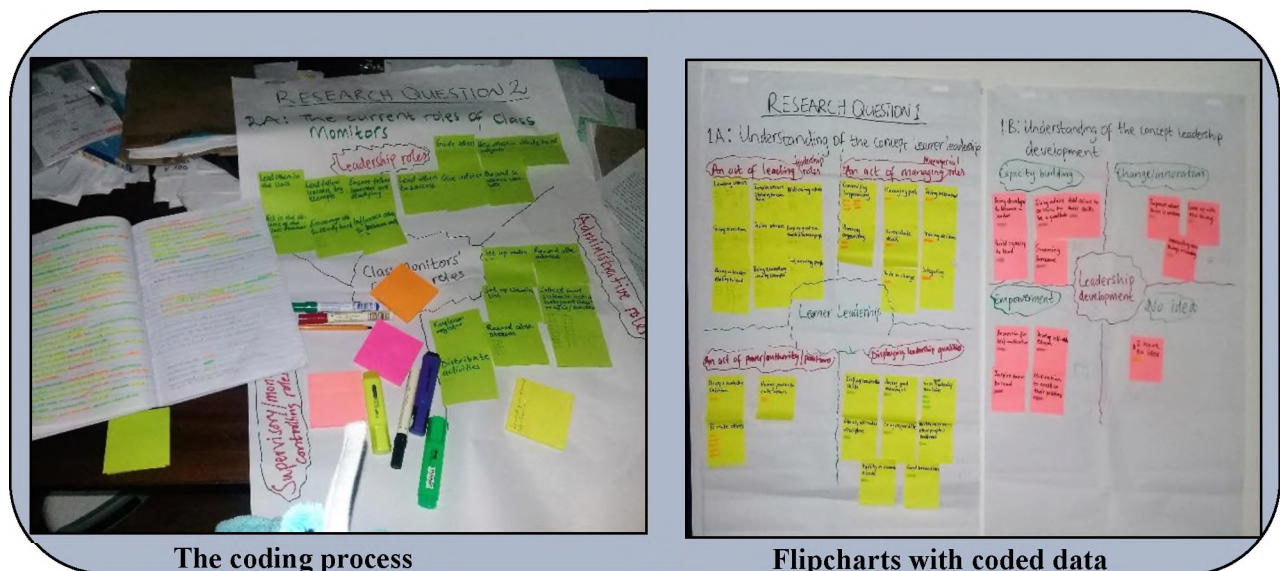


Figure 3.3: Inductive analysis process

Coding was advantageous because it not only enabled me to identify related information and group it together, as emphasised by Cohen et al. (2011), but it also helped with data reduction as there was a considerable amount. I displayed the colourful flipcharts of coded and categorised data on the walls inside my bedroom (as seen in Figure 3.3). This made it easier for me to write up the data analysis and presentation section (Chapter Four) of my thesis. With data presentation, I first presented the raw data inductively. This means that I applied inductive reasoning to provide answers to my research questions. Inductive reasoning is when tentative hypotheses are formulated by making specific observations and detecting patterns and regularities in the raw data collected (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014). In simple terms, I let the data speak without applying the CHAT lens as my theoretical and analytical frame.

3.9.3 The deductive approach

In contrast with the inductive approach, deductive analysis takes place “when the researcher starts the process with a set of categories that have already been established by a model or a theory” (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014, p. 121). Further categories and themes are created for organising and classifying the data based on the theory (*ibid.*, p. 117). Here, I firstly interpreted the data in light of the literature on learner leadership and distributed leadership. I constructed broader themes and categories which encompassed the data categories which I created during the inductive analysis. I could then look for patterns and relationships between these categories.

Secondly, I applied a cultural-historical analysis to the data using the CHAT lens. This helped me to think critically about the data in order to understand why the leadership development of class monitors in the school was the way it was. Essentially, CHAT as the theoretical and analytical framework for my study helped me to surface contradictions in the data, that potentially constrained the activity system under study.

I must acknowledge that the process of analysing qualitative data is as complex as the data collection process itself. As such, the assumption by some researchers that qualitative data are easy to analyse compared to quantitative data is a myth (Newby, 2010). The process involves preparing the data, identifying the basic units of the data, organising the data and interpreting the data, using several different approaches (*ibid.*, p. 459).

In the next section, I address validity and trustworthiness issues, as they apply to the data and the whole research process in general.

3.10 Validity and trustworthiness

In the critical paradigm, validity concerns the extent to which the research data can be trusted and deemed credible (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014). According to Masilela (2017), credibility or trustworthiness “is established when findings reflect as much as possible the meaning as described or experienced by participants” (p. 63). Unlike in positivist and interpretive research, credibility and trustworthiness in critical studies includes reflecting participants’ social, political, cultural, and gender positioning in the data (Bertram & Christiansen, 2014). It was thus important that I employed various measures to ensure validity and trustworthiness of my research and its data, both during data collection and data analysis. Here below, I discuss these measures one by one.

3.10.1 Piloting the research instruments

I piloted the research instruments to test their appropriateness. The interview schedules were piloted with my supervisor and necessary adjustments were made to ensure that the questions prompted answers that would inform the answers to my research questions. Furthermore, I piloted the questionnaires with teachers and learners at a different school before I administered them to the intended participants. This also minimised ambiguity and potential bias.

3.10.2 Ensuring representativeness through triangulation

I employed triangulation; that is, using and comparing multiple data sources to ensure that data is complemented and to identify common themes (Leedy & Ormrod, 2010). As pointed out by Maxwell (2008, p. 245), triangulation minimises the risk of systematic bias (p. 245). I therefore used questionnaires, interviews, document analysis, and observation in collecting data. These were complemented by intervention workshops. I also ensured that interviews and questionnaires were administered to all groups of participants (learners, teachers, and SMT members). Power differentials existed between these adult and learner groups and I believed it would be interesting to capture their experiences and knowledge about the practice of developing leadership in class monitors. Triangulation also happened during data analysis to ensure that my claims, interpretations, and conclusions were representative enough.

3.10.3 Respondent validation and member-checking

Respondent validation and member-checking is done to ascertain that recorded data reflects the truth of what is said by participants (Maxwell, 2008). I therefore firstly transcribed all interview recordings and some video recording sections. Thereafter, I took the transcriptions to the participants as feedback and I asked them whether or not they agreed with the written data. This was necessary to minimise misinterpretation. For this, I remained at the research site for an additional week after the entire process of data collection and the intervention were done.

3.10.4 Reflexivity

Reflexivity is constantly thinking about one's position as a researcher and being conscious about minimising potential bias emanating from one's position (Guillemin & Gillam, 2004). As I discussed earlier in this chapter, my position was that of a principal who was partly an insider. As such, I ensured that respected my participants in terms of who they were during data collection. I also made sure that participation was voluntary for participants, especially during the intervention workshops. During data analysis, I was vigilant to read and interpret data in ways that reflected the reality of participants' experiences as per the evidence they provided. This was contrary to considering what would be appealing to me. I also considered power differential issues in relation to all groups of participants. In this sense I tried to avoid bias.

The next section outlines the principles and standards of ethics which I had to consider.

3.11 Ethical consideration

It has been pointed out that research involving human subjects can potentially cause harm or generate conflicts between various parties involved, such as: the participants, the researcher, the researcher's discipline and or society in general (Bloor & Wood, 2006). This research involved learners, who were minors, teachers and SMT members who were all human subjects. Therefore, it was imperative that I subscribed to an appropriate code of ethics and guidelines for conducting research, as required not only by the university, but also by national and international protocols. This was necessary to avoid conflict or harm of any sort that could endanger the lives and welfare of all participants, the school, and the community in general. As such, the set of ethical codes, principles, and standards that guided me as a researcher and the whole research process included: autonomy, respect and dignity; transparency, honesty and confidentiality; accountability and responsibility; as well as integrity and academic professionalism.

In pursuit of autonomy, respect and dignity, I firstly obtained an ethical clearance certificate from Rhodes University (Appendix A) which approved my proposal for conducting this research. I also obtained permission to conduct this research, both from my supervisors, the Directorate of Education for the Omusati region, as well as from the principal of the research school (Appendix B & C). Furthermore, the rights to participation were explained and participation was voluntary. Participants signed letters of informed consent (Appendix D & E), before being interviewed or asked to complete questionnaires. Informed consent is a procedure by which an individual chooses whether to take part in research or not, after being made aware of the facts that would influence their decisions (Cohen et al., 2007).

However, the learners who took part in the study were minors and could not legally make decisions for themselves. Hence, their participation was subject to the consent of their class teachers on behalf of their parents, who were informed about the study through consent letters. Class teachers signed, because learners could not take the letters home to their parents since the school was a boarding school and learners had just returned from holidays.

Regarding transparency, honesty, and confidentiality, I revealed my position as school principal, a student, and a researcher at the same time. Furthermore, the purpose, goals, and

data collection procedures of the study were made clear to the participants, so that they could make the right decision as far as their participation was concerned. In addition, participants' identities as well as that of the school were protected through pseudonyms. At times where photographs had to be taken and/or voice and video had to be recorded, permission to do so was provided by participants. Also, I assured them that their faces would be covered, to protect their identity. In addition, transcription of the interviews and the asking of participants to verify their responses, helped in ensuring transparency.

In relation to accountability and responsibility, I endeavoured to carry out the research with a sense of both these values. Since the study involved working with learners (minors), I remained responsible in making sure that all procedures did not have a negative impact on them or their learning. Article 3 of the United Nations (UN) Convention on the Rights of the Child says that, "all adults should do what is best for children" (UNICEF, n.d.). Also, Article 12 emphasises that children have the right to give their opinion about what should happen, whenever decisions affecting them are made (*ibid.*). I therefore upheld the spirit of these articles during my study by respecting learners' opinions and their feelings towards the research, and whether they wished to participate or not. It was also possible that, given their age, learners might not have fully understood the purpose and value of the research (Briggs et al., 2012). It was thus my responsibility to clearly explain the purpose of the study and how they would benefit from it. This was done in the learners' vernacular language, so that they would all understand better.

Finally, with regard to integrity and academic professionalism, it was important that I conducted myself in a manner that would not jeopardise the chances of others doing research in the school, circuit, and region as a whole. I ensured that my assumptions and conclusions reflected the truth of what had been said by participants. I also abided by Rhodes University's ethics code, as well as its plagiarism policy. Where I have used other researchers' or authors' work, I ensured that I have carefully acknowledged that those words are not my original work, by adhering to the relevant referencing style as per the university guidelines (APA), during the write up of this thesis. However, as pointed out by Bloor and Wood (2006), ensuring that this research was ethical was not simply as easy as following guidelines as provided by the university's ethics committee (p. 51). It involved due consideration of how I collected and analysed data.

3.12 Conclusion

In this chapter, I discussed the research design that guided an investigation into how leadership can be developed within a group of class monitors in a Namibian secondary school. I discussed the critical orientation in which the study was located and how it aligned with CHAT – the theory framing the study. Subsequently, I provided background information regarding the research site, the participants, the sampling methods, as well as my position as a researcher. Thereafter, I looked at Developmental Work Research, an approach to interventionist research as advocated for by Engeström. Data gathering took place in two phases, ethnographic data gathering and Change Laboratory sessions, and these are also discussed in this chapter. In addition, I described the qualitative data collection methods, as well as how I went about analysing that data. I then addressed issues of validity and trustworthiness of the data, and the entire research process. Finally, I looked at principles and standards of ethics that I had to consider during the research process, before concluding the chapter.

In Chapter Four, I present the data and discuss the findings of the study.

CHAPTER FOUR

PRESENTATION OF DATA AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

4.1 Introduction

In this chapter, I present data and discuss the findings of the study. The study investigated how leadership could be developed within class monitors in a secondary school in the Omusati region in Namibia. The study had four specific goals and questions which were, firstly, to determine how the concepts learner leadership and leadership development were understood in the school; secondly, to examine what the class monitoring system entailed and what the roles of class monitors were; thirdly, to establish what mechanisms enabled and/or constrained the development of leadership within class monitors; and lastly, to explore ways to capacitate and empower class monitors to actively participate in leadership and be agents of change. Data was gathered from learners who served as class monitors, class teachers and School Management Team (SMT) members, through semi-structured interviews, questionnaires, document analysis, and Change Laboratory workshops.

Eight broad themes encompass the data presentation and discussion in this chapter, namely:

- Participants' understanding of learner leadership;
- Participants' understanding of leadership development;
- Exploring the class monitoring system;
- The expected roles and responsibilities of class monitors explained;
- Mechanisms enabling class monitors' leadership development;
- Mechanisms constraining class monitors' leadership development;
- Surfacing the contradictions;
- Change laboratory as a space for learning and transformation.

4.2 Coding of data sources

I used different codes in this chapter to represent various data sources. It is therefore important that one understands what these codes represent before navigating through the presentation and discussion of the data. Data was sourced from three groups of participants, namely 18 learners,

who served as class monitors (**L1-L18**), three class teachers (**T1-T3**), the principal (**P**) and two other SMT members (two HoDs) (**SMT1-SMT2**). The data collection methods and tools which I used included: Semi-structured interviews (**I**), Questionnaires (**Q**), Document analysis (**D**), Change Laboratory workshops (**CL**), Video recording (**VR**) and Evaluation Questionnaire (**EQ**). A combination of these codes is used to indicate the source of data in terms of the tools and participants. For example, **L1, I** means that data were sourced from a learner during an interview.

I now present the data and discuss the findings of the study in the next section, beginning with participants' understanding of the concept learner leadership.

4.3. Participants' understanding of learner leadership

As discussed in Chapter Two, there are many definitions of the concept leadership. It was thus not surprising to find that participants in this study had different viewpoints as to what the concept learner leadership meant to them. Predominantly, learner leadership was seen in the light of the roles of a leader (what a leader does). In this regard, the definitions and explanations provided were related to the definition of the concept leadership in general. However, the concept was also understood from the perspective of managerial and administrative roles; the trait theory of leadership; and lastly, from the perspective of sharing power or authority.

4.3.1 To possess leadership qualities and the ability to lead others

Learner leadership is possessing or displaying good leadership qualities and skills as a learner. This was reflected in some participants' responses in the questionnaires and interviews. Two learners (L7 & L10) indicated that learner leadership had to do with "*qualities of being a good leader*" (Q). To be a leader of others, a learner must display good leadership skills, have respect for teachers and fellow learners as well as be self-disciplined. This was the principal's understanding as he said, "*Occupying a leadership position as a learner is something that calls for ethics, attitudes, discipline and being exemplary to others*" (P, I). Other traits linked to learner leadership which emerged from the data included being "*responsible*" (L3), having "*good manners*" (L1) as well as the "*ability to communicate*" and "*solve problems*" (L11).

Contemplating on the above viewpoints, one can argue that learner leadership was understood from the trait theory perspective of leadership. As emphasised by Bolden et al., (2003, p. 6), trait theorists suggest that certain traits and skills are often used to describe and distinguish leaders from non-leaders. Those traits include being adaptable, achievement-orientated, influential, willing to accept responsibility and many others.

Furthermore, learner leadership was perceived as an act of learners leading other learners. In this respect, some participants used terms related to what leaders do, to define the concept learner leadership. These included terms like leading, guiding, influencing and being exemplary, amongst others. During their interviews, three of the participants (T1, SMT2 & L3) said that learner leadership simply meant “*to lead others*”. Similarly, another participant referred to it as “*being in charge of leading others*” (L4).

Generally, leadership is about influencing people (Christie, 2010). Likewise, learner leadership was understood to be about learners influencing other learners to do well academically and behaviour-wise. One learner for example, indicated that learner leadership meant “*guiding, directing and influencing people*” (L11, Q). The term *influence* is a strong and a common term in many definitions of leadership (Bass, 1990; Howell & Costley, 2001). Therefore, one may argue that learner leadership was linked to the general concept of leadership.

Leaders lead by good example. As such, the principal pointed out during the interview that learner leaders were those who were “*exemplary to others in terms of behaviours and performance*” (P1, I). Similarly, another learner defined learner leadership as a way “*to lead others by good example, by keeping order*” (L14, Q). These findings show that participants had an awareness of the literal meaning of leadership generally and learner leadership specifically. However, the data also revealed that learner leadership was understood from a management and power sharing perspective, which I turn to next.

4.3.2 The involvement of learners in management and having power to control others

Managing a school is not a one-man task. Hence, learner leadership is about involving learners in the management affairs of the school and giving them power to control others. This was evident in some of the terms, such as planning, organising, controlling, managing and

delegating, used by some participants to define learner leadership. During the interview, one SMT member explained that learner leadership was “*a step where learners are brought into the four areas of management such as planning, organising, leading and controlling*” (SMT2). Controlling – a management task, also featured in the definitions of learner leadership.

Four learners (L2, L4, L7 & L16) wrote that learner leadership was simply “*to control others*” (Q). Another learner (L12, Q) on the other hand, was of the understanding that learner leadership involved making decisions and delegating work to others. Often, the concepts leadership and management are conflated and sometimes used interchangeably (Christie, 2010). It was therefore not surprising that the concept learner leadership was understood both from a leadership and a management perspective.

In leadership, just as in management, power is an important commodity. Some participants saw learner leadership as being associated with a leadership position, while others, as having power to rule others. According to the principal, those learners who were elected to head others such as class monitors and LRC members occupied leadership positions. Hence, “*they are normally given tasks to carry out in the school*” (SMT1, I). Furthermore, one learner wrote that learner leadership was “*having power to rule others*” (L3, Q).

Similarly, four other learners also wrote that learner leadership was simply “*to rule others*” (L1, L2, L5, & L13, Q). I therefore find the term “*ruling*” to have some power connotations and, as mentioned earlier, one cannot separate power from leadership. Leadership, Christie (2010) argues, is “*an exercise of power, which is directed towards achieving goals, and it is associated with vision and values*” (p. 696). As such, learners too need to have power, if they are to lead other learners.

All the different viewpoints which I discussed above, point to the fact that learner leadership can be understood broadly, just like the concept leadership itself. This concurs with Uushona (2012), who acknowledges that there is no generic definition of learner leadership. According to Uushona (2012, p. 21) learner leadership involves interactions and building relationships with other students, peer leaders and other members of the school; it involves external community and it has an outcome of developing leadership skills in students, among others.

The next section looks at participants' understanding of the concept leadership development.

4.4. Participants' understanding of leadership development

Leadership development was the primary concern, the object of this study. Hence, it was of interest to get a sense of how this concept was understood by the participants. To this effect, two key categories emerged from the data which summarised participants' viewpoints on the notion of leadership development. These were leadership development as innovation in leadership practice, as well as leadership development as capacity building and empowerment.

4.4.1 Leadership development as innovation in leadership practice

Innovation in the context of leadership development is a way of bringing change and devising new mechanisms for leadership practice. This was the understanding of one teacher who defined leadership development by saying, "*Leadership development to me means innovating new things into the channel of leading*" (T1, I). The teacher added that it was about bringing changes in the way of leading in order to "*improve where there are weaknesses*" (T1, I).

The above viewpoint implies that in pursuit of leadership development in learners, such as class monitors, we need to think innovatively and do things differently. It also concurs with Grant and Nekondo (2016), who suggest that we need to think beyond the confines of the formal curriculum and provide more opportunities for learners to be heard and develop agency (p. 16). Adding to this, Duma (2011) propagates the need for educators to change their attitudes towards learner leaders and work towards supporting them.

Next, I discuss capacity building and empowerment as another viewpoint that emerged from the data, about what leadership development meant to the participants.

4.4.2 Leadership development as capacity building and empowerment

Capacity building and empowerment are two key aspects of developing leadership in learners. This point of view was encompassed in some of the participants' responses to the question of what leadership development meant to them, during the interviews. According to one learner, leadership development meant "*to be developed to become a leader*" (L1). Another class

learner mentioned that it was to “*give advice on how to become a good leader*” (L2), while a third learner understood it as “*building capacity to lead*” (L4).

Similarly, the principal said that leadership development to him meant “*grooming someone*” (P, I). In the case of learners, the principal added that was about “*adding value to the learners’ leadership skills to become competent in carrying out their tasks*” (P, I). One way this was done in the school, was by offering training to learner leaders and entrusting them with various roles, the principal emphasised (SMT1, I). Building leadership capacity ought to be an essential concern of developing leadership amongst class monitors too. In addition, empowering and motivating people are integral parts of developing leadership. In this regard, one HoD saw leadership development as “*a preparation for self-motivation*” (SMT2, Q). The HoD added that it was to inspire learners to lead others and “*to develop their self-esteem*” (Q).

Furthermore, the Principal understood leadership development as “*motivation for leaders to excel in their positions*” (P, I). By leaders, the principal referred to those learners who were in charge of leading other learners, singling out the LRC members as an example. One can therefore conclude that all participants, class monitors, class teachers and SMT members, had an awareness of what the concept leadership development was all about. Next, I turn to the class monitoring system and the expected roles of class monitors.

4.5 Exploring the class monitoring system

The notion of class monitoring is common practice in many secondary schools in Namibia. Yet, there appears to be no research conducted on developing leadership in class monitors. One goal of this study was therefore, to establish what the class monitoring system entailed and what the roles of class monitors were. In the context of the research school, class monitoring is a system where by two learners (a boy and a girl) are elected to lead other learners in their respective classes. According to one class teacher, “*Learners are usually given two weeks from the start of each academic year to get to know each other before they elect their representatives*” (T1, I). The elections are usually done with the guidance of their respective class teachers and to be elected, one must display good leadership qualities, the teacher added (T1, I). The two elected learners become the class monitor and the vice class monitor respectively.

It appeared that class monitoring had been a part of the school culture for many years. Nobody seemed to know exactly when it started. Responding to the question as to how long the class monitoring system has been in existence in the school, a teacher said, *“Hearing from my siblings who schooled here, some of whom are older than me, it has been existing since then. This is a living testimony that it’s a culture of the school to have such a system”* (T1, I). Adding to this, the HoD indicated in the questionnaire that the system was in place *“ever since the establishment of the school”* (SMT2). Two other class teachers (T2 & T3) indicated in the questionnaires that they were *“not sure”* about how long the system had been in place.

To understand why the school practiced class monitoring, I posed the following question during my interviews with class teachers and SMT members: *Do you think the class monitoring system is working?* In response to this question, one class teacher had this to say: *“Yes, it is working. Without it, the class teacher will not know who cleaned and who did not clean the class, the class teacher will also not know who was making a noise during study time”* (T1, I). The teacher added that class monitors assist both the supervisors (teachers supervising study sessions), teachers and the principal in controlling noise in the school. The HoD responded by saying, *“Yes, it is indeed helpful in controlling teaching and learning at classroom level”* (SMT1, I). The HoD thus emphasised that he would recommend that every school should have class monitors.

Historicity is an important principle of CHAT (Engeström, 2011). It was necessary to understand how the class monitoring system had evolved over time and where it was heading, in terms of leadership development of class monitors. I therefore asked participants during the interviews, about how the system was different now compared to the past, say five years back. One of the HoDs said, *“I have been here for seven years now and every year we have class captains. I think the system is really working now and learners understand their roles, unlike in the past”* (SMT1, I). The principal on the other hand, pointed out that it was never the same given that every year new learners were elected. The principal (P, I) said:

You see it always depends on the type of learners you have that year. Learners have different personalities and different abilities and they are from different backgrounds. But yes, I can say it has improved because in the past learners did not see that we gave them those roles to benefit them in the future.

From my own experience, having been a learner in three different schools during my childhood and having been a teacher for ten years now, I have observed that class monitoring has been, and is still, a common practice in many Namibian schools. I am currently a primary school principal and our school also has class monitors from the fourth to the seventh grade. The class monitoring system can provide unique opportunities for learners to develop leadership values and skills. It can as well, promote the practice of distributed leadership in schools. However, it remains an unwritten tradition. Little, if anything, is written about this system in terms of what it is, why and how it is being practiced in Namibian schools. No one questions it either and hence, there is little reflexivity and potential for change. Once again, this motivated my interest in focusing this study on class monitors' leadership development. I now turn my attention to the expected roles of class monitors as this was another question of my study.

4.6 The roles and responsibilities of class monitors explained

Expectations were high of class monitors as leaders and managers of their respective classrooms. Participants listed a number of the roles which class monitors were expected to perform in the school, both in the questionnaires and during interviews. Roles included, leading others, supervising, controlling and monitoring, class administration as well as taking part in decision-making in the school, though to a limited extent.

4.6.1 To lead others in their classrooms

Class monitors were expected to lead other learners in their respective classrooms. According to one class teacher, one of the class monitors' roles was "*to lead others in their classes*" (T1, I). The principal also mentioned that class monitors were expected "*to act in the absence of the teachers*" (P, I) In addition, three learners indicated that monitors also had to lead fellow learners by good example (L3, I; L6, Q & L9, Q). This was supported by another class teacher, who said that they had "*to lead by example by studying hard*" (T2, Q).

Class monitors were also charged with leading others in academic affairs. Two learners indicated that class monitors had to "*encourage others to study hard*" (L4, I & L10, Q). This was similar to the views of another learner who said that they have to "*ensure that fellow learners are studying*" (L1, Q). Furthermore, another learner (L11, Q) said that monitors also helped other learners in subjects, especially those who do not understand. Summing up this

role, it was also stated that class monitors were expected “*to lead others to success*” (L6, Q) and “*to guide others to reach their goals*” (L9, Q).

The above roles show how class monitors can play a significant role in influencing and motivating other learners to do well academically. As suggested, leadership is a relationship of influence towards achieving set goals and outcomes (Christie, 2010). For this reason, it is ideal to develop and empower class monitors as leaders of other learners in the school.

4.6.2 To supervise, control and monitor other learners and teachers

Class monitors act more like managers and police officers. They supervise, control, oversee and ensure compliance with school rules in their classrooms. Ensuring that classrooms were cleaned, appeared to be one of their daily supervisory roles. Almost all participants mentioned it. For example, one learner wrote, “*to make sure that the class is cleaned everyday*” (L3, Q), while one class teacher wrote, “*to supervise cleaning*” (T3, Q). In an interview, the principal also highlighted that class monitors were expected to maintain hygiene in their classrooms. This also corresponds with a clause in the school rules which reads: “*Classrooms must be kept clean everyday*” (D5, p. 1). By ensuring cleanliness, class monitors were therefore enforcing the school rules and any noncompliance was to be reported to their class teachers.

Other monitoring and supervisory roles that were listed by participants included: monitoring attendance of teachers to their classes (SMT1); supervision of afternoon study sessions (P, I); ensuring that fellow learners dressed properly (L1, I; L3, Q; L14, Q & T3, Q), controlling of noise making (L3, Q; L7, Q; L9, Q; L13, Q & L16, Q); keeping order and maintaining discipline (T1, I; SMT1, I & L4, Q); ensuring that school and classroom rules were obeyed (L17, Q) as well as reporting cases of emergency and vandalism of property to teachers and the main office (P, I; L4, I; L2, Q; L8, Q; L15, Q; T2, Q & SMT2, Q). Finally, one class teacher added that class monitors were also “*responsible for giving permission to other learners in their respective classrooms to go out of the class*” (T2, Q) when they needed to. This speaks to a clause in the school rules which stipulates that “*Learners should not leave the class without the permission from the subject teacher or teacher on supervision or from the class captain*” (D5, p. 2).

While the above roles may be necessary to maintain discipline in classrooms, there is the possibility that they will lead to autocratic leadership behaviour amongst class monitors and be in violation of the democratic intent of policy. Tension may also develop between class monitors and the teachers, especially when class monitors report to the principal about teachers' lesson attendance.

Similar to these findings, a Namibian study on learner participation in leadership (focusing on LRCs) found that learner leaders were mostly expected to “control fellow learners to ensure positive behaviours” (Uushona, 2012, p. 69). This was done through spying on others wherever they were, both inside and outside the school premises (Uushona, 2012, p. 69). According to Uushona (2012), this scenario is “akin to policing and is associated with traditional leadership thoughts where individuals are bound to adhere strictly to the set rules and punishment is the cost of any trespassed rule” (*ibid.*, p. 86). This corresponds with Jansen et al. (2014) who state that learner leaders in most cases, serve as management extensions of schools rather than as leaders. A need therefore exists to redefine class monitors' roles, to focus more on participative and democratic leadership. This will help in shaping young people into the kinds of leaders we want in this era of democracy and social justice.

4.6.3 Class monitors as class administrators

Apart from being leaders, supervisors and controllers, class monitors also served as class administrators. As such, they were entrusted with numerous administrative tasks by their class teachers, as well as by the SMT. Predominantly, they collected and submitted activity books as well as distributing these on behalf of the teachers. This was confirmed by almost all participants in the questionnaires and during the interviews. For instance, the principal mentioned “*taking books or worksheets to teachers at the office*” (P, I), while one HoD mentioned “*collecting and submission of books*” (SMT2, Q). One class teacher indicated “*collecting books*” (T2, Q), while one of the learners mentioned “*taking books to the office*” (L1, I), to mention a few.

Class monitors also served as record keepers. They recorded school attendance of fellow learners every day. This was confirmed by three learners (L5, Q; L7, Q & L15, Q) as well as by another HoD (SMT2, Q), who all responded in the questionnaires that class monitors' role was expected to “*record absenteeism*” of fellow learners and submit the names of the absentees

to their class teachers. The principal added by saying “*They keep lesson attendance register*” (P, I). This implies that class monitors had to take note of the time every teacher started and ended their lessons, daily. According to the principal, the purpose was to ensure that teachers attended lessons on time. Another record keeping task for class monitors was to record the names of the noise makers.

Based on the above discussion on the class monitor’s roles, there is evidence to suggest that the school made the effort to involve class monitors in leadership. Assigning class monitors various roles to perform, provides them with opportunities to develop leadership skills and experience. However, it can also be concluded that class monitors were practically more like class managers and administrators, than leaders. This is because many of their roles were managerial and administrative in nature and the aspects of leadership were somehow overlooked within the roles. In addition, it appeared that their roles were bound to the classrooms, since the data did not reveal any role which they had to perform outside the classroom. A need therefore exists to give class monitors more opportunities to lead both inside and outside the classrooms. Next, I turn to the enabling and constraining mechanisms that influenced leadership development in the research school.

4.7 Mechanisms enabling class monitors’ leadership development

Leadership development of class monitors can only be realised if conditions exist in the school that promote or enable the activity. In this regard, the study established that although limited, some conditions and practices promoted the development of leadership in class monitors. These included, provision of leadership opportunities and learner motivation, as well as provision of support by class teachers and SMT members.

4.7.1 Provision of leadership opportunities and learner motivation

The fact that the research school had a class monitoring system in place was commendable. It provided class monitors an opportunity to practice leadership by leading other learners in their respective classes. Responding to the question: *What leadership development opportunities exist in the school for class monitors?* a HoD said, “*First of all, class monitors are given the opportunity to lead their classes whenever the teacher is not there*” (SMT1, I). As I discussed earlier, participants, including the principal and one of the class teachers, confirmed that class

monitors were elected every year and each class had a class monitor and a vice-class monitor. These class monitors were assigned various roles to perform, through which they gained leadership experience and skills.

Although limited, class monitors also had opportunities to lead beyond the classroom. This was confirmed by the HoD, who mentioned that “*some of them are given the opportunity to spearhead committees such as the Student Christian Movement (SCM)*” (SMT1, I). Adding to this was the principal, who during the interview said, “*We give them tasks to organise events to generate their income*” (P, I). On the learners’ side however, only one of them confirmed that he once led outside the classroom. Responding to a question during the interview, of whether or not class monitors were involved in leading outside the classroom, the learner said, “*Yes, sometimes if there is a bazaar, class monitors may be elected to work there sometimes*” (L1, I). This showed that opportunities to lead outside the classroom might have been there for the class monitors, but they were limited.

Learner motivation was also considered as a way to encourage learner leadership development. The school leadership made efforts to organise motivational activities each year for all the learners, including the class monitors. This was confirmed by the principal who said, “*We organise school motivational activities, calling in people who can come and address our learners on issues of life. We call in people who are influential like church leaders and the councillors from the local community*” (P, I). According to the principal, learners could be inspired to become leaders as they listened to role models from the community. However, these motivational initiatives were meant for all the learners, and were not specific to class monitors.

4.7.2 Support from class teachers and the SMT

Class teachers were part of the community as per the unit of analysis for this study. As such, they played an important role in supporting class monitors in their roles and in developing them as learner leaders. Class teachers were therefore charged with the responsibility to train their monitors and give them advice on how to be good leaders. This was pointed out by one teacher in an interview, responding to the question: *How are the class monitors capacitated to carry out their roles effectively?* the teacher said, “*at classroom level, teachers are assigned to train their class monitors, tell him or her what to do, how he must behave and so on*” (T1). This implied that class teachers served as mentors to their class monitors.

Confirming the support offered to class monitors, one of the HoDs also said, “*Class monitors work together with their teachers and HODs*” (SMT1, I). The HoD gave an example that teachers and SMT members always act whenever disciplinary cases were reported to them by monitors. All four class monitors I interviewed also indicated that they normally report to their class teachers or to the principal if they experienced problems in their work.

Class teachers also provided administrative support to the class monitors. For instance, one learner said, “*They give us books to write the names of the people who are absent*” (L1, I). Another learner said, “*We received some brooms for cleaning*” (L4, I). Recording of noise-makers and ensuring that classrooms were cleaned, were amongst the monitors’ roles presented earlier. This kind of support made it possible for them to execute these specific roles. It is thus evident that the support offered to class monitors was mainly to help them in their policing and administrative roles. There was no evidence to suggest that enough support was given to class monitors as far as developing them as learner leaders was concerned.

4.7.3 Class monitors had the agency to lead

Many of the class monitors demonstrated their eagerness to bring changes in the school. This was evident in their responses to the last question in their questionnaires which read: *If you were given an opportunity, what change would you bring in your school?* A number of new ideas were suggested in this regard. Among others, one learner responded by writing, “*I will not waste the opportunity that I have, I will let all learners at our school express out their feelings or say out their problems so that I will give them to the principal to be solved*” (L1). Similarly, another learner wrote, “*I will introduce a suggestion box*” (L3).

Furthermore, other ideas included “*motivating other learners to study hard in order to achieve their success and become good persons in future*” (L6); “*I will make sure the uniform of class monitors is different and make sure that they are given enough training*” (L13); “*All Grade 12 day-learners should come in the hostel*” and “*All my fellow learners should speak English and computer teachers should teach us how to use computers*” as suggested by another learner (L17). In addition, learners also wanted to give motivational speeches to fellow learners (L8 & L11) and to set up an “*English club*” (L10), among others.

One can therefore conclude that all these suggestions were evidence that class monitors had the agency to bring about change in their school. I find this to be an enabling mechanism. All that class monitors needed was the space or opportunities to spearhead these initiatives. Eventually, they would enhance their leadership capacity. However, despite the aforementioned enabling conditions, the class monitors' leadership development activity system, was also faced with numerous challenges which I regard as its constraining mechanisms. Those are what I turn to in the next section.

4.8 Mechanisms constraining class monitors' leadership development

The current practice in regard to developing leadership within class monitors in the research school, was not effective. This study surfaced some mechanisms which were potentially constraining the activity system. These included policy limitations, misconception of the notion of learner leadership, limited space to participate in leadership, limited training, lack of interest and drive to lead, as well as negative attitudes towards class monitors.

4.8.1 Policy limitations

One notable gap in many educational policies and programmes, both at national and school level, is their silence on the issue of learner leadership. During data collection, I analysed documents such as the Education Act (D1), the school's internal policy (D2), the School Development plan (SDP) (D3), the school year plan (D4), and the school rules (D5). It appeared that all these documents were basically silent on the practice of the class monitoring system. To begin with, the Education Act 16 of 2001, which is a national policy on school governance, only makes provision for the establishment of a learner representative body (LRC) in all state secondary schools. It remains silent on class monitors.

In the case of school-based policies and plans, no activities or information relating to leadership development of class monitors featured in the school's internal policy, the School Development Plan or the year plan. The exception was however with the school rules, where class monitors were expected to implement their lead in the classrooms, as I indicated in Section 4.6.2.

Furthermore, there appeared to be neither proper guidelines on developing leadership in class monitors, nor documentation of their roles and responsibilities in the school. This was

confirmed by one class teacher, responding to a question of what challenges the school faced in developing leadership among class monitors. The teacher wrote, *“There are no proper guidelines in developing leadership amongst class monitors”* (T3, Q). All 18 class monitors also said *“No”*, to whether or not their roles and responsibilities were documented (L1-L18, Q). This was thus evidence enough to claim that initiatives aimed at developing class monitors as learner leaders were not part of policies and plans, both at national and school level. This status quo thus needs to change if we are to develop class monitors as leaders.

4.8.2 Learner leadership is associated with the LRC body

The practice of learner leadership seemed to be associated with the LRC body and its functions in the research school. Evident to this were the responses of some participants, especially teachers and SMT members, to the question: *“What is the relationship between class monitors and the LRC?”* which I posed during the interviews.

In response to this question, one of the HoDs (SMT1, I) said:

They are all leaders of other learners, except that the LRC have more responsibilities than class monitors. They lead even at the hostel, at classes, in fact, they control everywhere in the school. But the class monitors are specifically for the classes. They exercise their leadership there.

One can conclude that the LRC appeared to be given more prominence than the class monitors. As a result, class monitors had limited space to practice leadership compared to the LRC, despite having demonstrated their transformative agency. Eventually, limited leadership development opportunities could limit their potential to develop as learner leaders.

I was interested to learn about the relationship between class monitors and the LRC, simply because some participants kept referring to the LRC in their responses to certain questions. For instance, in response to the question of how class monitors were capacitated to carry out their roles, a teacher emphasised: *“We train them, especially the LRC. I think the LRC is the most important body because if we do not train them, then everything in the school will collapse”* (T1, I). Although the question had specific reference to class monitors, the teacher’s response referred to the LRC instead. The principal also confirmed that every year the LRC members were sent for leadership training at regional level. However, when I asked if the same was done

to class monitors, the principal responded saying *“No, those ones are assigned to their class teachers to train them. Maybe that is where we are failing”* (P, I).

The above scenario concurs with a Namibian study on learner participation in leadership, which found that learner leadership was primarily understood in terms of the LRC body and its functions (Uushona, 2012). This could be attributed to the fact that the LRC is regarded as the legitimate learner representative body which is provided for by the Education Act 16 of 2001. According to the Education Act 16 of 2001, *“Every state secondary school shall have a learner representative body to be called the Learner Representative Council”* (Namibia. MBESC, 2001). It was therefore not surprising that class monitors were not involved in the decision-making in the school as the LRC are. Confirming this, one HoD wrote: *“The LRC represents the entire learners including the class monitors”* (SMT2, Q). This was in response to the question of whether or not class monitors were involved in decision-making in the school.

4.8.3 Limited leadership capacity building initiatives and support

One way to develop leadership is through capacity building. However, it appeared that there were no formal leadership capacity building initiatives in the school and beyond, particularly meant for class monitors. In the questionnaires, participants were asked about what leadership development initiatives were in place in the school for class monitors. One teacher responded by writing, *“They are offered mini training about their roles and responsibilities”* (T3, Q). An HoD wrote, *“Apart from the support offered by their respective class teachers, none that I am aware of”* (SMT2, Q).

All 18 class monitors (L1 to L18) who filled out the questionnaires, answered *“No”* to the question of whether or not they received any leadership training. Although one of the teachers indicated that class monitors were usually trained by their respective class teachers, there was no evidence to confirm it. Three out of four class monitors whom I interviewed (L1, L3 & L4) also could not confirm it either, as they all responded by saying *“No”*, to whether they attended any leadership training or any formal meeting since they were elected.

Furthermore, when I asked class monitors how they were informed about their roles, one of them said, *“I just learned myself”* (L1, I). Another one said, *“I was not informed, I just take it up myself”* (L3, I). Also on the same question, a third monitor made it clear that they were not

officially informed about what was expected of them as she said, *“We did not receive any information about our duties”* (L4, I). However, only one of them said that she was told what to do by her class teacher. She specifically said, *“When I was chosen, my class teacher tells me that I will be going to submit the learners’ books”* (L2, I). There was thus evidence to suggest that there were limited capacity building initiatives and support undertaken to develop leadership within class monitors in the school. This is also confirmed by Jansen et al. (2014, p. 4), who highlight that learner leaders in many schools are not trained on leadership and as a result, they lack skill and experience on how to lead. There is thus a need for teachers and SMT members to recognise the need to build leadership capacity among class monitors.

4.8.4 Class monitors lacking interest and the drive to lead

Some learners lacked interest in leadership and they lacked motivation. In the questionnaire, one teacher wrote: *“Not all learners are willing to become class monitors, sometimes they have to be forced to accept, making it difficult to develop leadership”* (T3). This implied that some learners accepted the role of class monitor just because they were selected, and they possibly did not have the courage to turn down the nomination. It would be difficult for a learner to act and behave like a leader, if they were not interested in leadership. In support of this, another teacher said that first of all, *“A learner needs to be a leader him or herself”* (T1, I). The teacher was responding to the question of what leadership development opportunities existed in the school for class monitors.

Some learners did not want to be different from the rest of the learners. In view of this, one HOD said, *“Even though they are in leadership positions, they don’t want to take the lead and deal with issues on their own”* (SMT2, Q). This was also supported by another teacher who indicated that generally, learners did not see themselves as leaders. The teacher added that *“They have an understanding that teachers are always there to lead them”* (T1, I).

Motivating learners was part of the school culture, as I earlier discussed. However, data revealed that some class monitors lacked confidence and motivation in carrying out their roles. In this case the principal said, *“You find that there are people with abilities but because of the lack of confidence in the English language, they tend not to take up their responsibilities”* (P, I). The principal also emphasised that some monitors did not lead by example as he said, *“Bravery in terms of academic achievement is not something that is evident with most class*

monitors” (P, I). The principal (P, I) attributed this to the possibility that some of those monitors could have been appointed based on their age, height or closeness to the class teachers. A class monitor added that *“Some class monitors have low-self-esteem”* (L4, I), adding that they tend to give up when they have misunderstandings with fellow learners. These excerpts provided evidence to suggest that there was a need to motivate and empower class monitors to actively carry out their leadership roles.

4.8.5 Lack of discipline and negative attitudes as barriers

A lack of discipline among some class monitors made it difficult to develop them. Responding to the question of what challenges the school was faced with in developing class monitors as learner leaders, one HoD said that some of the class captains elected by other learners were undisciplined. The HoD motivated this by saying, *“Instead of being our eyes and ears in the classrooms, they end up violating the rules instead of trying to enforce them”* (SMT1, I).

Disciplinary problems were also confirmed by one of the teachers in the questionnaire. The teacher wrote, *“Lack of discipline especially amongst male class monitors”* (T2, Q). This was therefore a primary contradiction existing within class monitors as the subjects of the analytical unit of the activity system under study. It was mentioned by some participants that class monitors were expected to lead by example as part of their roles. Being ill-disciplined therefore, meant that these specific class monitors were failing in their duties and needed to be corrected.

Moreover, some learners had negative attitudes towards class monitors, making it difficult for them to carry out their role as learner leaders. This was evident in that many class monitors mentioned that they were at the receiving end of bullying, insults, beatings and other ill deeds, at the hands of their fellow learners. For example, one monitor wrote, *“Some learners shout at me that I cannot be able [sic] to become a class monitor”* (L2, Q). She added that some learners usually said that she was selfish, while some were not happy with her being a class monitor. Another class monitor said, *“Most of my fellow learners, they used to say many bad words to me when I am trying to tell them what is wrong and what is right”* (L3, Q). In addition, five other monitors (L10, L11, L12, L14 & L17) confirmed that they were insulted and shouted at by fellow learners when carrying out their duties.

Some other class monitors also reported incidents of disrespect from their fellow learners. One of them said, *“My fellow learners don’t do what I tell them to do, some they don’t submit their*

books on time” (L4, Q). Another monitor expressed concern about being a class monitor, saying, *“It is not easy to be a class monitor because most of my colleagues they don’t like to follow what you are telling them to do and to work together”* (L9, Q). The learner added that some of her fellow learners used to answer him as they pleased. Issues of disrespect could be attributed to the age difference. This is because one monitor claimed that *“Some of the learners usually say that they will not be under the control of someone who is younger than them”* (L16, Q).

In view of the above scenarios, one may conclude that cooperation between class monitors and their fellow learners was sometimes fraught. The reason could be that the rest of the learners were not aware about what the roles of class monitors were. It could also be an indication that other learners did not value class monitors or see them as leaders. Hence in the next section, I discuss these possible contradictions which emerged from the data.

4.9 Surfacing the contradictions

Contradictions are a central focus in a CHAT analysis because “they are the chief sources of movement and change in activity systems” (Engeström, 1987, p. 7). Contradictions mean more than just what people see and experience. As Engeström (2001, p. 137) argues, contradictions are not the same as the problems or conflicts that we see but rather, they are complex structural and systemic tensions within the activity system which may have accumulated over time. As such, the constraining mechanisms which I discussed in the previous section were a manifestation of contradictions within the activity system under study.

Through a CHAT lens, this study surfaced two secondary contradictions which were: 1) traditional authoritarian leadership attitudes and practices and 2) a culture of confinement to formal leadership structures and policy frameworks. As discussed in Chapter Two, secondary contradictions point to tensions between two different elements of the activity system (Karanasios et al., 2017). These contradictions were the main motives for the state of affairs in terms of class monitors’ leadership development in the research school.

4.9.1 Traditional authoritarian leadership attitudes and practices

Some of the mechanisms constraining leadership development of class monitors can be deep-rooted within SMT members and teachers' traditional authoritarian leadership attitudes and practices in the school. This emerged to be a contradiction between the *subjects* of the activity system (class monitors) and the *community* (SMT and class teachers). For too long the practice of leadership in schools was characterised by a top-down approach, "with the principal at the top of the management hierarchy" (Grant & Nekondo, 2016, p. 13) and learners at the very bottom. Principals and teachers tend to make decisions with little or no regard of learners despite the fact that they (learners) make up the majority of school population (Woods, 2012). Although there could certainly be learner leaders such as class monitors in schools, their roles were usually to spy on others (Shekupakela-Nelulu, 2008) and assist teachers and school management in maintaining discipline and ensuring adherence to school rules.

The above scenario could also be true in the research school, as it was evident in the expected roles of class monitors which I discussed in Section 4.7 of this chapter. One expected that class monitors would be more involved in leadership roles, such as leading academic clubs and motivating others to study hard. But rather, their roles focused more on controlling and policing of other learners, as well as on helping teachers in administrative work. With this practice, the object of the activity (which was leadership development in class monitors) could not be easily achieved. There was thus a need to transform the practice to involve class monitors more in leadership.

Historically, Namibia has emerged from a bitter colonial and apartheid past. An authoritarian form of leadership was the modus operandi in schools as purported by the Bantu Education system of the apartheid regime. Therefore, some of those authoritarian attitudes we see in teachers and principals' practices today could have been inherited from our history. In addition, culture too has to share the blame for the absence or limited participation of learners in leadership within schools. In many African cultures, Namibia included, children are viewed by adults as young people who have to be silent when adults speak (Mncube & Harber, 2013; Strydom, 2016). They are to listen to and obey adults on whatever they may say or decide for them. This can explain why little was being done to develop class monitors as leaders in the

research school, as well as why they lacked interest in leadership. Possibly, adults did not believe they could lead, as they were just small children.

At one point, one teacher mentioned that “*Learners are just learners, they cannot be trusted*” (T1, I). This was an indication that learners could not automatically be involved in every aspect of school leadership since they cannot lead. This status quo needs to be challenged. As argued, neither principals, nor teachers can do the whole school leadership task on their own (Harris, 2004). Sometimes, certain answers to certain school problems reside with the learners. It is therefore imperative that we need to expand our engagement with learners and involve them fully in leading schools. This will allow us to listen to their voice and heed their calls.

4.9.2 Culture of confinement to formal leadership structures and policy frameworks

It can be argued that the school was confined to believing that leadership is practiced within formal leadership structures. This is because it appeared that learner leadership was understood and more fully practiced within the LRC, than in the class monitoring system. Participants, especially teachers and SMT members, also gave specific reference to the LRC in some of their responses, as I indicated in Section 4.8.2. At one point, a teacher also claimed that the LRC was more important when it came to leading other learners. One possible reason for this could be because the LRC is a legitimate learner representative body, which is provided for by the Education Act 16 of 2001. As such, there was tension between the ***rules*** (policies and programs) and the ***object*** (to develop leadership within class monitors) of the activity system. Policies and programmes at national and school level remain silent on class monitors.

The assumption that the LRC was the most important leadership body, influenced the way teachers and the SMT members treated class monitors in terms of leadership development. Class monitors only had space to lead in the classrooms. Leadership roles outside the classroom such as organising social events, were mostly assigned to the LRC. In Section 4.7.3, I argued that class monitors had demonstrated transformative agency, but they, however, had limited space to initiate new ideas. Their involvement in decision-making in the school, was also very minimal. In this way, their voice was disregarded. As a result, their potential to develop leadership skills and competencies was in turn limited.

It also emerged that leadership capacity building initiatives such as training, were offered to the LRC members but not to the class monitors. Class monitors themselves indicated that they had not received any leadership training since they were elected. Their roles and responsibilities were also not officially communicated to them. In addition, their roles and responsibilities were not documented. As indicated by one participant, the absence of policy guidelines on developing class monitors as learner leaders was a challenge in the school. All these constraining mechanisms were thus signals, pointing to the fact that the school was stuck on believing that learner leadership was concerned only with the formal, legislated LRC structure.

From a distributed leadership perspective however, leadership is fluid and it does not reside in formal structures alone (Harris, 2004). I therefore argue that class monitors too can lead and hence, they should be developed to lead successfully. A need thus exists to innovate and transform school leadership practices to develop multiple leaders in the school, including class monitors. This may, however, require schools to think and act beyond the confines of formal rules, such as policies and formal leadership structures such as the LRC. This has the potential to contribute positively to the achievement of the overall school learning outcome. The table below summarises the two secondary contradictions under discussion.

Table 4.1 Summary of the contradictions surfaced

Contradictions:	Zone of tension:	Associated problems or constraining mechanisms:
1. Traditional authoritarian leadership attitudes and practices	Between the subjects and the community	-Learners cannot be trusted; -Less support from teachers; -Roles not documented; -Lack of interest and motivation.
2. The culture of confinement to formal leadership structures and policy frameworks	Between the rules and the object	-The LRC is more important; -No training; -No policy guidelines; -Limited space.

In the table above, the zone of tension refers to two elements of the activity system between which a contradiction exists. The associated problems or constraining mechanisms refer to how a specific contradiction manifested itself. These problems were thus the signals which pointed to the structural tensions and they prompted the need for change and transformation.

In the next section, I present data and discuss the findings from the Change Laboratory workshops which I held as part of the formative intervention which my study undertook.

4.10 Change Laboratory as a space for learning and development

In Chapter Two, I explained how the Change Laboratory is a platform where practitioners are assisted by the researcher-interventionist as they learn and collaborate to transform their work activities (Virkkunen & Newnham, 2013). I held three Change Laboratory workshops in which I mirrored data which I initially collected from the participants. The idea was to expose the contradictions and to allow participants to work towards resolving those contradictions.

The workshops were guided by the expansive learning theory, which is characterised by the expansive learning cycle as discussed in Chapter Two. Participants carried out a series of six learning actions as part of the expansive learning process. These learning actions were questioning, analysis, modelling the new solution, examining and testing the new model, implementing the new model and finally, reflecting on the entire process (Engeström & Sannino, 2010; Virkkunen & Newnham, 2013). Figure 4.1 below illustrates the steps taken by participants during the three workshops.

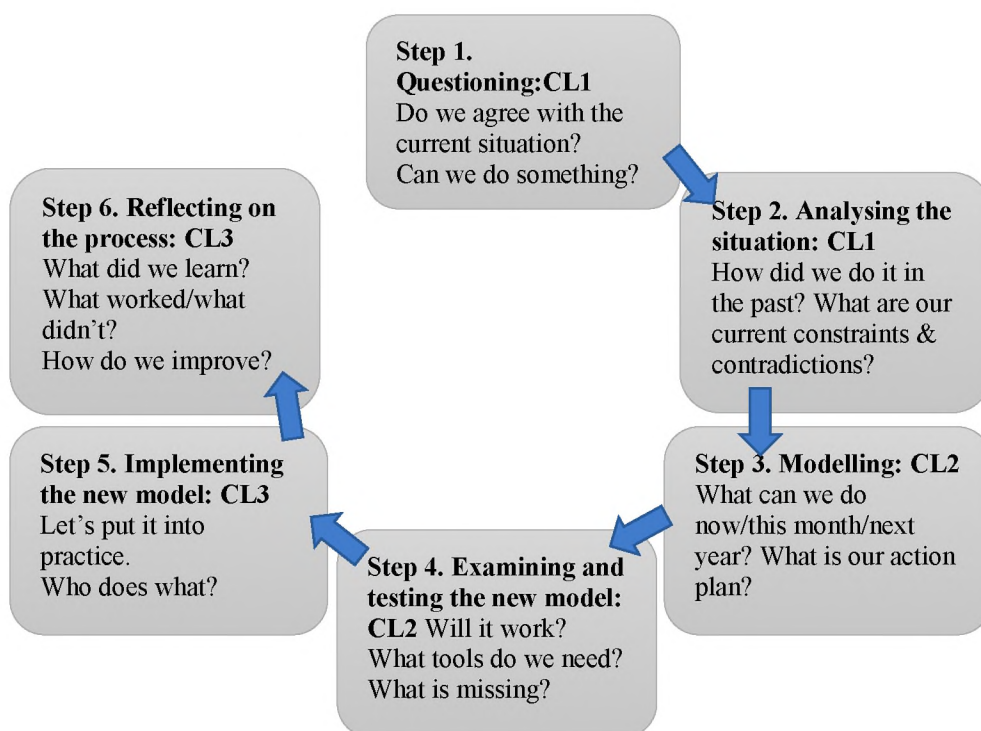


Figure 4.1: Steps of expansive learning (Adapted from Engeström, 2016, p. 49)

4.10.1 Change Laboratory workshop 1

The first Change Laboratory workshop took place on 26th June 2017 and it was attended by all 18 class monitors, one teacher and one HoD. I mirrored the initial data to the participants using a PowerPoint presentation. The presentation covered four themes which emerged after analysing the initial data. These themes were: participant's understanding of the concepts learner leadership and leadership development; the current roles of class monitors; mechanisms enabling leadership development of class monitors; and contradictions surfaced and their associated constraining mechanisms.

The mirror data depicted the current practice about class monitors' leadership development and its associated contradictions. In addition, the mirror data was the first stimuli as per the mechanism of double stimulation, through which participants gained agency to take charge of the workshop (Engeström & Sannino, 2010). After listening and looking at the mirror data, participants began questioning and analysing the current practice. Below is a vignette from the videotape describing the questioning process.

Table 4.2: Vignette of the questioning and analysis process

(Video recording 1: 26.06.2017)

<p>Researcher-Interventionist: Do you agree or disagree with the current situation based on the mirror data which I just presented?</p> <p>Teacher: I think that is the current situation yes.</p> <p>HoD: I agree with the information too, especially male class monitors are not disciplined.</p> <p>Researcher-Interventionist: What about you learners?</p> <p>Learner1: (The point of learners cannot be trusted): It's a lie, learners are angels.</p> <p>Learner2: (The point of male class monitors not disciplined is not true): Not all male class monitors misbehave, maybe some.</p> <p>Researcher-Interventionist: Ok, now we need to think of what can be done to solve some the contradictions and their associated challenges and I think working in three groups will do because we are large group.</p> <p>Teacher: I think so too.....</p>
--

As shown in Table 4.2 above, participants analysed and discussed the mirror data. I asked them to question the data and especially to agree with or deny the emerging contradictions. Participants agreed to almost all the contradictions except for the belief that learners could not be trusted. The class monitors strongly disagreed, claiming that it was not true. Some male class monitors also disagreed with the claim that they lacked discipline.

Furthermore, I asked the participants to think about how the above contradictions could be resolved. They then worked in three groups and came up with suggestions on how the contradictions and their associated constraining mechanisms could be resolved. Thereafter, each group presented their suggestions. Below are photographs taken during the group discussions and presentations.

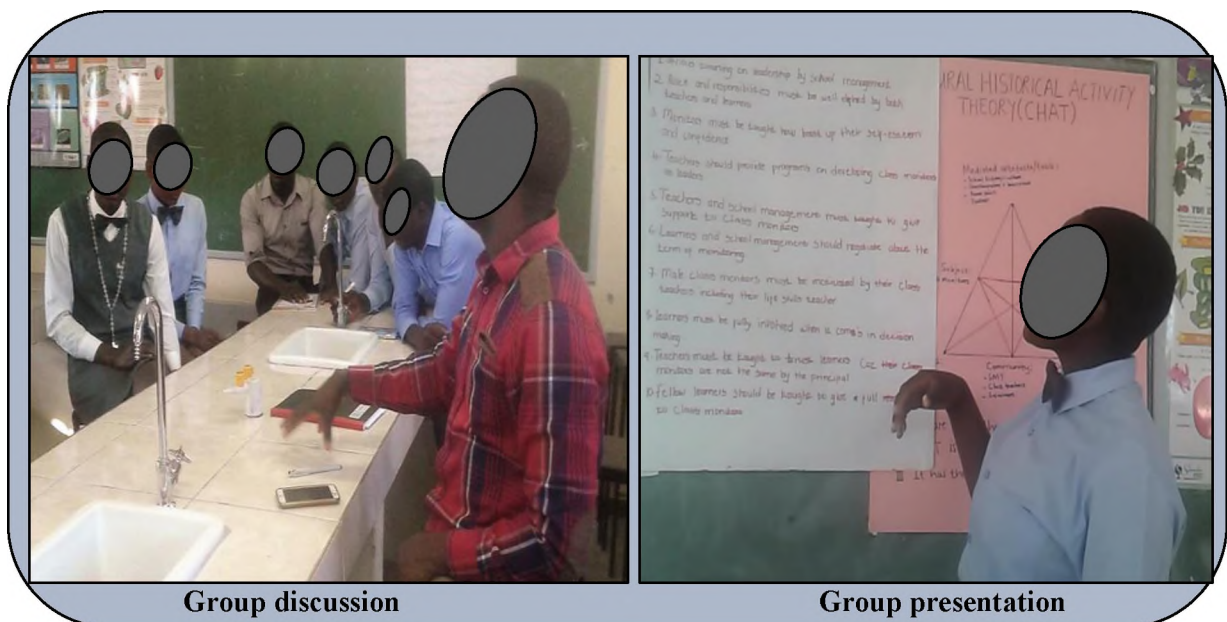


Figure 4.2 Change Laboratory workshop 1

In the group discussion photograph, one of the three groups can be seen busy at work while the other photograph shows a presenter from one group presenting their solutions to the rest of the participants. The outcome of the discussion was a list of resolutions and an action plan to implement them. Those are summarised in Table 4.3 below.

Table 4.3: Action plan for implementation of suggested resolutions

(Video recording 1: 26.06.2017)

What needs to be done	Who to do it	Time frame
1. Leadership training of class monitors.	-SMT, Experts	Every year
2. Define and document class monitor's roles.	-Monitors, teachers & SMT	July
3. Motivation to boost class monitors' self-esteem.	-Teachers, SMT or Experts	Every year
4. Consult class monitors when decisions are made.	-Teachers and SMT	Always
5. Give class monitors more support.	-Teachers and SMT	Always
6. Class monitors should be taught about confidentiality.	-The principal	Every year
7. Allow class monitors more opportunities to lead.	-Teachers and SMT	Always
8. Class monitors should be reminded of the school rules.	-Teachers and SMT	July
9. Teacher should learn to trust learners.	-Teachers and SMT	Always
10. Teach others to respect and cooperate with class monitors.	-The principal	Every year

According to Table 4.3, 10 resolutions were suggested. Capacity building for leadership was high on the agenda. Both groups suggested that there was a need to train class monitors in order to develop their leadership understanding, skills and competencies. *"We need a serious leadership training so that we can understand what leadership is"* (L1, VR1).

Clearly defined and documented roles and responsibilities of class monitors was also a necessity. As highlighted by a presenter from one of the groups, *"There should be a list of clearly defined roles of class monitors and these should be well communicated to them"* (L2, VR1). This was necessary to ensure that class monitors were aware of what was expected from them as they were not well informed about their roles. Other resolutions included: motivation of class monitors, more support from teachers and the SMT, provision of more leadership opportunities and creating awareness about school rules amongst class monitors (VR1, 26.06.2017). These were to be discussed further in CLW 2, which I look at next.

4.10.2 Change Laboratory workshop 2

The second Change Laboratory workshop took place on the 3rd July 2017 and like the first workshop, it was attended by all 18 class monitors, a teacher and a HoD. It was impossible to

implement all the suggested resolutions at the same time, given the limited amount of time for the study. Hence, during the second workshop, participants re-looked at the suggested resolutions and came up with a priority list in terms of transforming the current practice. The list consisted of the top four of the ten resolutions provided by each group in the first workshop. These were: 1) Leadership training; 2) Motivation; 3) Inclusion of learners in decision-making; and 4) Clearly defining class monitors' roles and responsibilities.

From the top four, they then had to choose two of the resolutions which they felt could be resolved with my assistance as the researcher-interventionist. The pictures below show how participants decided on what mattered.



Figure 4.3: Change Laboratory workshop 2

Looking at the photographs, four sticky notes of different colours were used. The pink sticky notes were to be stuck in the column which a participant felt was the number one priority, peach sticky notes in the second priority column, green sticky notes in the third and lastly, orange sticky notes in the fourth priority column respectively. Each participant had to stick all four different sticky notes in order of importance. As can be seen above, it turned out that firstly, what mattered to most participants was ‘leadership training’ (CLW2). Secondly, participants wanted ‘clearly defined and documented roles of class monitors’ (CLW2). Motivation and involvement in decision-making were considered to be the third and fourth priorities respectively (CLW2).

Considering what mattered to the participants, more especially to class monitors themselves, it was important to hear from them what they wanted the training to focus on. Hence, I asked them to give their input on what the leadership training should entail. This process is called modelling of the new solution (Engeström & Sannino, 2010), the fourth learning action in the expansive learning cycle. According to Engeström and Sannino (2010), modelling has to do with “constructing an explicit, simplified model of a new idea that explains and offers solutions to the problematic situation” (p. 7). Below is a vignette of the modelling process.

Table 4.4. Vignette of the modelling process

(Video recording 2: 03.07.2017)

<p>Researcher-Interventionist: It is clear that we all support leadership training. Now what do we want the training to focus on?</p> <p>Learner1: We need to know the correct definition of leadership.</p> <p>Learner2: How to be a good leader.</p> <p>Researcher-Interventionist: From the teacher and the SMT’s side?</p> <p>HoD: I think this will be a good platform to explain the school rules to the class monitors so that they will be able to assist us in enforcing them.</p> <p>Teacher: I think we should also come up with clear roles of class monitors. This will probably help all of them to be aware of their roles and these can be part of the training too.</p> <p>Researcher-Interventionist: That is a good idea I think. Now, let us list those roles so that we can prepare a draft duty sheet of class monitors’ roles.</p>
--

Expansive learning allows practitioners to gain new insights and concepts about their activity (Engeström, 2016). Class monitors thus suggested that they needed to understand what leadership is. They also suggested the need to know about the qualities of a good leader as one monitor mentioned “*How to be a good leader*” (VR2, 03.07.2017).

Furthermore, one main concern of the SMTs and teachers in any given school is usually maintaining discipline among learners. It was thus not surprising that the HoD suggested that a topic on school rules should form part of the training. The class teacher on the other hand, suggested that the roles and responsibilities of class monitors needed to be clearly defined and

be put in writing. “*This will probably help all of them to be aware of their roles and these can be part of the training too*” explained the teacher (VR2, 03.07.2017).

Engeström (1987, p. 6) suggests that an activity system is mediated by certain artefacts or tools which help in achieving the object (the goal of the activity). The modelling process therefore culminated in the development of two new important tools, namely, the leadership and a *draft duty sheet for class monitors and a training program* (see Appendix K & L). The training programme included a prayer, welcoming remarks, presentations, discussions and concluding remarks. The duty sheet on the other hand included leadership roles, supervisory roles and liaison roles, which class monitors were expected to perform (Field notes, 03.07.2017). The object of the analytical unit of this study was to develop leadership within class monitors. These two documents therefore became part of the mediating tools of the activity system under study. Next, I describe what transpired during the third Change Laboratory workshop.

4.10.3 Change Laboratory workshop 3

The third Change Laboratory workshop took place on 18th July 2017 and it was the last workshop as part of the intervention process. In attendance were 18 class monitors and the HoD. It was primarily meant for the implementation of the new model – the fifth learning action on the expansive learning cycle. The new model for this study was the leadership training for class monitors. During the workshop, I, the researcher-interventionist, presented some slides on leadership as I was entrusted to do from the second Change Laboratory workshop (see Appendix N for a printed copy of the slides). The table below summarises the content of my presentation.

Table 4.5: Summary of the first leadership training presentation

(Video recording 3: 18.07.2017)

Presentation theme:	Summary of content:
The concept leadership	<p>What is leadership? -There is no single definition of the concept leadership. Some definitions of leadership include: -The ability to influence other; - Having distinctive qualities that distinguish you from non-leaders; - The ability to create a vision and direct others towards the achievement of that vision.</p>
Different leadership styles	<p>1. Autocratic leadership style; 2. Consultative leadership; 3. Democratic/ participative/distributed leadership style. Which style do you think is the best? (For discussion)</p>
Qualities of a good leader	<p>Humility, Empowering, Collaborative, Communicative, Fearlessness, Integrity, Compassion, Shared vision and actions, Supportive, Genuine, Self-awareness. What do they mean to you as a class monitor? (For discussion)</p>
Class monitors as learner leaders and their roles	<p>- Class monitors are leaders too; -They too can lead change in the school; Their main roles are: 1. To lead; 2. To supervise; 3. To liaison with LRC, other learners, teachers and the SMT.</p>

As shown in Table 4.5, my presentation covered four themes. Firstly, I explained the concept leadership. Secondly, I provided insight into the different styles of leading. Thirdly, I emphasised some qualities associated with good leaders. Finally, I elaborated on what it means to be a learner leader as a class monitor and presented the document containing the roles of class monitors which was developed during Change Laboratory workshop 2. At the end of my presentation, there was a discussion around two main questions which I posed (**see table 6**). Below is a short extract of the discussion from the videotaped work.

Table 4.6: Vignette of the training discussion session 1

(Video recording 3: 18.07.2017)

Researcher-Interventionist: I have asked you to take notes, now it time for us to talk. I spoke about different leadership styles. Which style do you think is the best?

Learner1: I think democratic is the best one.

Researcher-Interventionist: Why do you think it is the best one?

Learner1: Because the leader allows people to give their opinions.

Researcher-Interventionist: That is correct, I have said that one characteristic of democratic leaders is that they involve people in decision-making. Well anybody else?

Learner2: I also think both democratic and consultative leadership are good because they have a two-way communication.

Researcher-Interventionist: That is a brilliant idea, both consultative and democratic leadership share one a common characteristic, which communication from top-bottom and from bottom-up. The leader actually listens to the people he or she leads, and the people listen to the leader as well. Mostly democratic and consultative leadership is preferred but in some cases, though not always, a leader need to apply dictatorship.

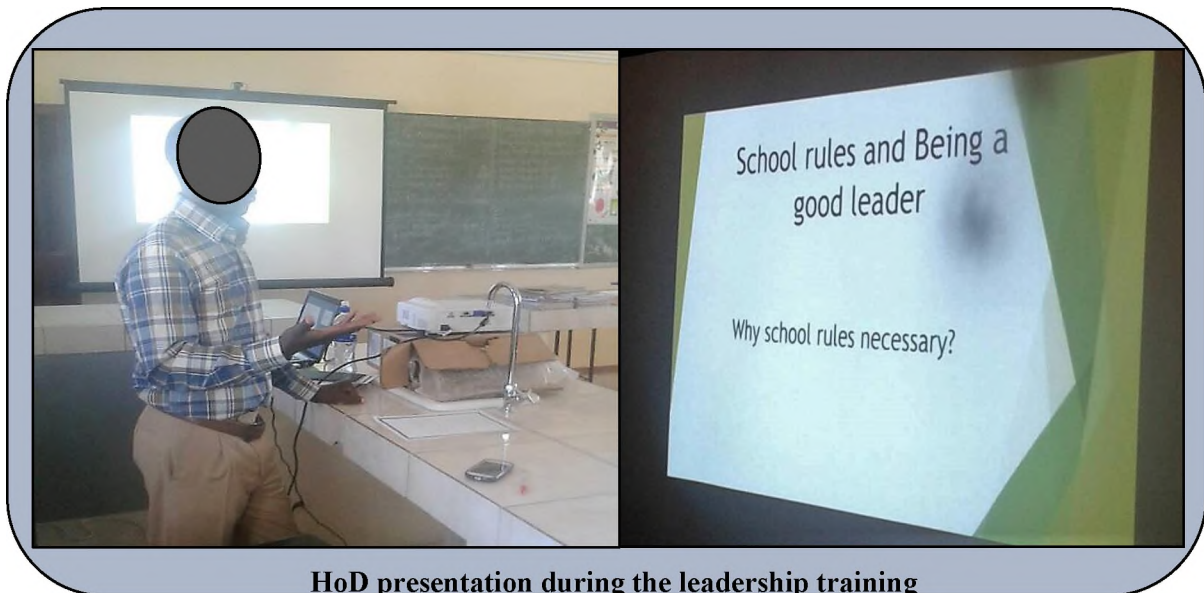
Researcher-Interventionist: I have also spoken of qualities of a good leader. What do those qualities mean to you as class monitor?

Learner3: For me I think we need to be strong not to give up when other learners are misbehaving. We also need to have cooperation with them and to help others.

Researcher-Interventionist: That is a wonderful answer. You know, good leaders care about people they lead. They show good example by behaving well and they work together with everyone, they chose who like and dislike. Ok. Let's hear from another person.

Learning was taking place during the training. I could tell this by the participants' responses to the questions during the discussion. They demonstrated that they understood the different styles of leadership, as well as the qualities of being a good leader. The second presentation was done by the HoD and it covered two key themes, namely, school rules and being a good leader.

The photograph below was a screenshot from the video recording and it show the HoD giving his presentation during the training.



HoD presentation during the leadership training

Figure 4.4: Change Laboratory workshop 3

No school can claim to be free of disciplinary problems and without school rules, no school can achieve its overall learning outcomes. According to the HoD, *“School rules are necessary because they help to maintain discipline and promote a conducive teaching and learning environment”* (VR3). The HoD further stressed that as learner leaders, class monitors had a significant role to play in ensuring that school rules were obeyed by other learners. *“We expect you to lead by example and obey the school rules, but you find sometimes it’s you who are violating the school rules again”* (VR3). The HoD therefore called on class monitors to change their attitudes so that they could become good leaders.

Being a good learner leader requires commitment. Hence the HoD emphasised that *“As class monitors, you are expected to work hard in your school work that is the first thing. Secondly, you are expected to work hard in your role which Mr. Kalimbo just presented to you”* (VR3). Class monitors were also encouraged to respect teachers, themselves and other learners. *“Without respect, you cannot call yourself a leader”*, the HoD emphasised (VR3).

Finally, class monitors were assured of support from the teachers and the SMT. In his concluding remarks, the HoD emphasised that, *“We from the school management’s side will be there to support you. I will also encourage your class teachers to give you more support in carrying out your roles”* (VR3). The HoD also acknowledged that the school was failing in its duty to ensure that they build leadership capacity within class monitors. *“You see we honestly*

used to overlook class monitors and concentrate on LRC development. Thanks to Mr. Kalimbo, your research was an eye-opener to us” (VR3). This to me was therefore evidence to suggest that the study and the intervention, promoted learning about learner leadership development. The HoD (VR3) also remarked that the school management would collaborate with class monitors to implement the action plan which class monitors drew up, in order to resolve the challenges that were identified.

The sixth learning action as per the expansive learning cycle is ‘reflection’ by which participants engage in evaluating the new model (Engeström & Sannino, 2010). At the end of the leadership training, participants had to fill in questionnaires to evaluate the training and the whole learning process in general. The leadership training was empowering and emancipatory. In response to the question of what new things the participants learnt, one class monitor wrote: *“I learnt that class monitors can also bring change in the school and can be leaders as long as they are confident enough” (EQ3).*

Others have indicated that they have learned about qualities and skills that one need to possess to be a good leader, such as being *committed*, being *punctual* and being *honest* (EQ2 & EQ4). In addition, some monitors indicated that they had learned that as leaders, they had to be exemplary to others (EQ3 & EQ6). Finally, it also appeared that one class monitor felt motivated after the training as she wrote: *“I learned that whatever situation you are in you need to be strong and always believe in yourself” (EQ6).*

The leadership training was very crucial to all class monitors. On the question whether or not the training was indeed necessary, all class monitors indicated that, *“Yes”*, the training was a need to them. Most of them motivated their responses by saying they learned new things about leadership, which they never knew before. For instance, one of them wrote: *“It enables us to learn new things that we never knew before about leadership” (EQ3).* On the other hand, another monitor wrote, *“Yes, because it taught me how to be a leader, respect others, have faith and not to be put down by other learners e.g. through insults” (EQ6).* This also indicated that this monitor felt motivated after the training.

Leadership training has the potential to enhance transformative agency in learners. The second last question asked what class monitors were going to do differently after the training. One

monitor wrote *“to make learners understand my roles”* (EQ1). A second monitor wrote, *“I am going to drive my other fellow learners towards their goals”* (EQ2), while a third one wrote, *“I am going to be punctual and make sure that my fellow learners are following the rules and regulations”* (EQ3). Two other class monitors (EQ4 & EQ6) indicated that they were going to study hard to inspire others. For instance, one of them said, *“I will make sure that I am always first in the class to lead others by example”* (EQ4).

Building leadership capacity among learners through training is commendable and hence, it should form part of the school’s leadership practice. In this regard, the last question in the evaluation questionnaire asked what suggestions class monitors had for future leadership training. It was suggested that the leadership training of class monitors should be an annual activity. *“Class monitors need to have their training at the beginning of each year”* (EQ4). Two other monitors on the other hand felt that in future, class monitors should be taken for excursions as part of leadership development. One wrote, *“The future training should be done far from the school”* (EQ3), while another monitor wrote, *“At least the school management should organise a trip or tour for class monitors”* (EQ5). On a different note, it was suggested that future training should encourage teachers and learners to work together with class monitors (EQ1).

Contemplating on the evaluation, there was some evidence to suggest that the leadership training, as well as the whole Change Laboratory process, had resulted in expansive learning. The intervention created awareness of, and expanded participants’ understanding of, the concepts learner leadership and leadership development. Class monitors felt motivated and all were sufficiently confident to indicate that they were going to do certain things differently.

The above reflections concluded the formative intervention which I undertook as part of this study. This was also where the intervention ended on the expansive learning cycle since there was no much time left before the learners sat for their mid-year examinations. I could therefore not cover the last learning action of the cycle which is about consolidating and generalising the new practice.

4.11 Conclusion

I presented data and simultaneously discussed the findings of the study in this chapter. The data presented was sourced from learners, teachers and SMT members. The study found that although with variations, there was an awareness of what learner leadership and leadership development meant amongst participants. It also emerged that though unexplored, the class monitoring system was a long-standing structure in the school that potentially serves as a leadership development opportunity for learners. In addition, class monitors roles emerged to be predominantly policing-like and administrative in nature, as well as classroom bound. Furthermore, the class monitors' leadership development activity system was faced with many constraining mechanisms as opposed to the enabling ones. Through the CHAT lens, I provided an in-depth discussion on two secondary contradictions that were responsible for the various constraining mechanisms which emerged. These contradictions were traditional attitudes and practices towards leadership, as well as the culture of confinement to formal structures and policy framework. Lastly, I presented and discussed the findings from the change intervention process. Here I described how participants worked collaboratively to develop new tools and decide on a leadership training which they preferred to their new model solution, through expansive learning underpinned by Change Laboratory workshops.

Next is the concluding chapter, in which I summarise the main findings of this study and thereafter make recommendations for future practice.

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

5.1 Introduction

This chapter is the destination of my research journey. I thus begin it by reminding the reader about the goal and questions of this study. This will then help the reader to summarise the main findings of the study. Furthermore, every study has its own boundaries and, hence, I highlight the limitations specific to this study. It is also imperative that I explain the value this study holds and the contribution it set to make to the ELM field and the education sector in general. The study offers some recommendations both for practice and for future research and these are also illuminated in this chapter. Moreover, it was my first time using CHAT as a theoretical and analytical framework. I therefore briefly share my experiences using what I can call a robust and practical theoretical tool, before providing my final thoughts and eventually concluding this chapter.

5.2 The goals and questions of the study

To remind the reader, the overarching goal of this study was to develop leadership within class monitors. This was achieved through finding answers to four key questions which were:

1. *How are the concepts learner leadership and leadership development understood in school?*
2. *What does the class monitoring system entail and what are the expected roles of class monitors?*
3. *What mechanisms enable and or constrain leadership development of class monitors in the school?*
4. *How can we build class monitors' capacity and invoke their transformative agency to exercise leadership?*

Data were gathered from three sets of participants and these were 18 learners who served as class monitors, three teachers and three members of the School Management Team (SMT). The

data collection methods took the form of semi-structured interviews, questionnaires, document analysis, observation and Change Laboratory workshops. The analysis of the data was first done inductively then secondly, using the CHAT lens. Data presentation and discussion were done simultaneously, according to emerging themes and categories based on the research questions.

5.3 Summary of the research findings

The findings of the study suggest that participants had conceptual awareness of the meaning of learner leadership and leadership development, although their understandings varied. Predominantly, learner leadership was understood as possessing leadership qualities and being able to lead others. Other views, however, conflated learner leadership with management. Leadership development was understood as innovation into leadership practice as well as capacity building and empowering people to be able to lead. However, despite having demonstrated such good conceptual awareness, the findings revealed that little was being done by the SMT and the class teachers to develop class monitors as learner leaders.

Furthermore, the class monitoring system emerged to be the school's endeavour to develop leadership among learners. It was the school's culture to ensure that learner leaders known as class monitors were elected in all classes every year. Although class monitors were assigned many roles to perform, it emerged that these roles were predominantly managerial and administrative, rather than leadership related. Class monitors were primarily expected to supervise, control and police other learners and teachers in pursuit of assisting the SMT in maintaining discipline and ensuring adherence to school rules. They also served as administrators who kept records and administered work activities provided by their teachers in their respective classrooms. But, to a limited extent, they were also expected to perform leadership roles such as motivating others to study hard and leading them by good example.

The fact that class monitors could lead their classrooms unhindered was praiseworthy on the school's part. This gave class monitors an opportunity to gain leadership skills and experience and to develop leadership competence. It was also good that they received, though limited, support from their class teachers and the SMT in general. However, the findings further revealed several limiting conditions which constrained their leadership development. These

included among others, policy limitations; limited space to make their voice heard, since they mainly led at classroom level; disciplinary issues and bad attitudes amongst themselves and their peers. They also lacked leadership capacity since they were not trained or officially informed about their roles. Lastly, the support they got was to a limited extent. This was why some of them lacked interest and courage to perform their roles as learner leaders.

Through the CHAT lens, two secondary contradictions were surfaced which constrained class monitors' leadership development. Firstly, it appeared that the SMT and teachers still held traditional hierarchical and authoritarian views about leadership. With such a view, learners were seen as children who cannot lead but have to obey the commands and decisions of adults. Secondly, it appeared that the practice of learner leadership and leadership development was limited to the formal structure of the LRC, at the expense of class monitors. Contemporary leadership views suggest that leadership is fluid and it is not limited to formal positions and or structures (Harris, 2004). There was thus a need for a change of mind-set to move away from traditional leadership practices and expand opportunities for learner leadership development.

The intervention that took place during the study has shown that the activity theoretical Change Laboratory is a powerful and practical method of learning and transformation of work activities. Through the Change Laboratory workshops, expansive transformation was achieved. As indicated by Daniels (2008), "an expansive transformation is accomplished when the object and motive of the activity are reconceptualised to embrace a radically wider horizon of possibilities than in the previous mode of the activity" (p. 126). In this case, participants worked collectively and collaboratively towards resolving the emerging contradictions and challenges surfaced. They suggested many possible resolutions, but it turned out that offering leadership training to class monitors was the number one priority. In this way, participants expanded the object of their activity from being leadership development to leadership development through training.

The principle of moving from the abstract to concrete had also taken effect during the intervention process, as part of expansive learning. Sannino (2011) indicates that ascending from the abstract to concrete implies that "the learner abstracts from the whole a particular aspect and attributes a meaning to it" (p. 584). This principle involves dialectical thinking, "the ability to look for dysfunctions and anomalies" (*ibid.*). In this case, participants examined the

contradictions presented to them and identified the absence of certain tools necessary to achieve the object of their activity. As a result, participants developed new concrete mediating tools such as an action plan, a duty sheet containing class monitors' roles, as well as a leadership training agenda programme. Participants thus acquired new concepts and knowledge of their activity.

In expansive learning, the subjects learn what is not yet there (Engeström, 2016), meaning, knowledge is learned as it is produced (Daniel, 2008). The creation of new tools by participants was therefore evidence that suggested that the Change Laboratory process had resulted in participants gaining more knowledge about their activity (leadership development) by producing that knowledge themselves. It also demonstrated that participants, especially class monitors themselves, had gained transformative agency to change the way things were done. From the leadership training that was offered, class monitors' leadership capacity was built.

Class monitors were also motivated to carry out their leadership roles. This demonstrated their gaining of transformative agency. As Engeström and Sannino (2010, p. 20) argue, transformative agency is one of the most important outcomes of expansive learning and it refers to participants' eagerness and willingness to change their way of doing things. Finally, the future practice of the class monitors' leadership development was also envisioned. Engeström (2016, p. 74) argues that through interventions, participants also get to envision new patterns or models of their activities.

During the evaluation of the intervention process, class monitors recommended that there should be an annual leadership training, which they also said should be held somewhere outside the school. The HoD on the other hand, gave an assurance that the SMT would continue to collaborate with class monitors on implementing the rest of the resolutions included in the action plan developed by participants. The HoD also indicated his willingness to take charge as a mentor to all class monitors. This was a sign of boundary crossing which is said to happen when representatives from different activity systems join hands in collaboration or partnership (Sannino, 2011; Engeström, 2016).

Next are my reflections on using CHAT as a theoretical and analytical framework.

5.4 Reflections on the use of CHAT as a theoretical and analytical framework

I found CHAT to be a useful and practical theory for studying work activities in a social setting like a school. It is particularly ideal for critical interventionist research, because it provides practical methodologies such as the Change Laboratory which facilitates change and transformation. Contrary to its common critique that it lacks depth ontology, I have learned that CHAT alone can indeed provide the needed ontological depth to deeply analyse a complex phenomenon. This is because CHAT accounts for culture, history and the artefacts and tools (Engeström, 1987) in analysing phenomena. By applying a cultural-historical analysis, I could surface the structural tensions and contradictions that were constraining the class monitors' leadership development in the research school. This helped me to understand the situation beyond participants' feelings and experiences. Contradictions are central in CHAT, since they trigger change (Sannino, 2011).

However, I have learned that surfacing the contradictions requires critical thinking. It is easy to think that contradictions are the visible problems that people experience in pursuit of the activity. But rather, these problems and challenges are the signs of something invisible that hinders the achievement of the object of the activity under study. I have also learned that the expansive learning process underpinning the intervention method used in CHAT, requires much time. As Engeström (1996) suggests, "The cycle of expansive learning in the Change Laboratory typically takes three to six months" (p. 6). This study could therefore not reach the consolidation phase of the expansive learning cycle due to the time constraints imposed by my MEd degree.

Lastly, I wish to acknowledge that being a researcher-interventionist in a school is tantamount to intruding into peoples' space. As Virkkunen and Newnham (2013) argue, "Change Laboratory is seen as interference between two worlds i.e. the researcher-interventionist's world of research and development and the practitioners' productive work" (p. 12). Researchers therefore have to be ethical in their conduct and flexible with the school's already set programme. A lack of interest amongst some participants (primarily, the teachers) to attend the Change Laboratory workshops was also a real challenge in my study. Because some teachers elected not to join the Change Laboratory workshops, they could not learn and gain agency

from this experience and they were therefore not sufficiently prepared and able to take the lead in developing class monitors along their new trajectory.

5.5 Limitations of the study

Limitations are potential weaknesses in the research that are out of the researcher's control, yet they can impact or restrict the methods and analysis of the data (Simmons, 2009). One limitation for this study was a limited empirical base for my study focus. I could not find studies focusing on developing leadership within class monitors to support my study. However, as I indicated in Chapter One, I opted to draw on learner leadership studies which focused on LRC or RCL bodies, since they provided a useful background, relevant for my study. Another limitation was the absence of documentation including policy, on the class monitoring system, both at national and school level. I therefore relied on participants' views and experiences, as well as on my own observations, during data collection.

Regarding the use of CHAT as a framework, this study was limited to the second generation, with one activity system as a unit of analysis. The findings of this study could have been enriched by drawing on multiple activity systems, such as those of teachers or parents (third generation of CHAT), to see how these systems influenced class monitors' leadership development in the research school. But due to limited time, the study only analysed one activity system, with class monitors as the primary subjects. In addition, this study was conducted in one secondary school only and in one region. Therefore, its findings may not be generalised to fit the contexts of other schools, the entire region or country. Specific studies should be conducted in these contexts instead. However, if the readers of this thesis find it fitting, it is possible to transfer findings of this study to understand or make comparisons to their own contexts.

5.6 Value of the study

Despite the limitations which I highlighted above, this study is still valuable in different ways. Firstly, research on learner leadership development in the Educational Leadership and Management (ELM) field is limited. Hence, this study adds to the knowledge base of the field. Secondly, it promotes understanding of learner leadership development and its application in a school context. It does this by providing a practical example of how leadership training could

be used as a means to build learners' capacity to lead and enhance their transformative agency. Learners, teachers and management team members of any school, can thus learn from this study.

Thirdly, educational planners and policy makers might be interested to draw on the findings of this study, to inform their planning of capacity building programmes on school leadership and formulation of policies that include learners. These programmes can include training of teachers and SMTs on how to develop learner leadership in schools. Fourthly, other researchers and academics with an interest in researching learner leadership, may find it useful to draw on the findings of this study to support their own studies.

Finally, CHAT is increasingly becoming a theory of choice for framing research across disciplines, due to its potentiality for expansive learning and social transformation (Engeström, 2016). I can confidently say, that this study is one example of how CHAT can be used to transform both the world of research (from passive interpretive research to activity-theoretical transformative research) and the world of work practice. In the next section, I offer some recommendations on the use of CHAT to improve learner leadership development practice.

5.7 CHAT as a vehicle for leadership development

The findings of this study revealed that leadership development within the class monitoring structure in the research school was not given enough attention. I therefore suggest that there is a need for the school to shift from traditional leadership practices and beliefs which exclude learners, to a distributed perspective of leadership, which sees learners (class monitors) as partners in school leadership. In this case, I also suggest that teachers and the SMT members use CHAT and the Change Laboratory intervention process locally, to develop learner leadership. For example, a programme could be planned to develop class monitors and prepare them for taking up leadership roles later on in the LRC.

In addition, it is important that the SMT and teachers in the research school, think beyond the limitations of formal structures and innovate to expand leadership development across the wider learner community. This can be done, for instance, by establishing a leadership club in which class monitors could also be involved. This has the potential, not only for preparing

learners as future leaders, but also for bringing change and addressing some of the problems learners may be facing. Furthermore, the leadership training provided to class monitors as part of the intervention for this study was found to be beneficial. It enhanced class monitors' transformative agency and built their leadership capacity. I therefore recommend for the school leadership to consider training class monitors every year.

Regarding future research, I also have some recommendations to make and these are what I turn to in the next section.

5.8 Recommendations for further research

This study was conducted in one secondary school in Omusati region in Namibia. It may be necessary to expand its scope by including many schools in the same region or across regions. As discussed under limitations, this study adopted the second generation of CHAT, focusing on a single activity system (class monitors' leadership development) as the unit of analysis. There is thus a potential to expand this study by drawing on other role players such as parents, teachers and the SMT members. Interested researchers may therefore consider expanding the unit of analysis of this same study to the third generation of CHAT, which focuses on two or more interacting activity systems which share the same object.

In addition, it appeared in this study that there was no explicit relationship between class monitors and the LRC in the research school. I therefore suggest that one could conduct a third generation CHAT study, looking at the potential for horizontal collaboration between these two bodies in a school. This could expand learner leadership development opportunities in that given setting.

5.9 My final thoughts

This research journey has been a wonderful learning experience for me. Through this research project, I have gained considerable knowledge and understanding of the academic discourse in general and the ELM discourse in particular. Essentially, my insight into the world of research has been broadened and my academic writing skills have improved remarkably. Furthermore, the change intervention for this study did not only build transformative agency amongst participants, but also in myself as a researcher-interventionist. This is one of the benefits of

CHAT interventionist research to the researcher, as suggested by Virkkunen and Newnham (2013, p. 13).

I have also gained more insight into the phenomenon under study, as well as knowledge and concepts about CHAT informed Developmental Work Research. I have gained confidence in using CHAT and I am now determined to take up the phenomenon of learner leadership development at a PhD level, whereby I plan to investigate leadership development in terms of horizontal collaboration between class monitors and the LRC. I must also acknowledge however, that the journey had its own obstacles and challenges, which have helped me to grow even stronger, both academically and professionally.

5.10 Conclusion

This study investigated how leadership can be developed within a group of class monitors in a Namibian secondary school. Its findings revealed that although the class monitoring system had the potential for learner leadership development, little was done to develop class monitors as leaders of other learners. With the use of CHAT as a theoretical and analytical framework, the study surfaced two secondary contradictions, and these were, traditional leadership views and practices and a culture of confinement to formal leadership structures and policy frameworks. These were evident in the recognition of the LRC body over the class monitoring structure, limited support to class monitors and absence of capacity building initiatives such as training. There is a need for a paradigm shift from traditional leadership thinking and practices, to contemporary leadership theories such as distributed leadership, that recognise multiple leaders in a school. Lastly, the intervention undertaken by this study provided evidence to suggest that one way to build leadership capacity and enhance transformative agency within class monitors, was through the Change Laboratory and leadership training.

As I bring this study to its conclusion, I am still left to ponder about the way forward. Do we still need class monitors in our schools? Who should take ownership of their leadership development? In fact, unless we educate teachers and SMT members about the essence of learner leadership and guide them on how to develop it, learners, and class monitors in particular, will continue to be “virtually absent” within the emergent field of school leadership (Gunter & Thomson, 2007, p. 25).

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Ethical clearance certificate



RHODES UNIVERSITY

Grahamstown • 6140 • South Africa

EDUCATION FACULTY • PO Box 94, Grahamstown, 6140
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PROPOSAL AND ETHICAL CLEARANCE APPROVAL

Ethical clearance number 2017.06.02.07

The minute of the EHDC meeting of 1 June 2017 reflect the following:

**2017.06.02 CLASS B RESTRICTED MATTERS
MASTER OF EDUCATION RESEARCH PROPOSALS (FULL)**

To consider the following research proposal for the degree of Master of Education in the Faculty of Education:

Tomas Kalimbo (17K4941)

Topic: An investigation into how leadership can be developed within a group of Class Monitors in a Public Secondary School, in rural Namibia.

*Supervisors: Professor H van der Mescht
Professor C Grant
Ms F Kajee*

Decision: *Approved*

This letter confirms the approval of the above proposal at a meeting of the Faculty of Education Higher Degrees' Committee on the 1 June 2017.

The proposal demonstrates an awareness of ethical responsibilities and a commitment to ethical research processes. The approval of the proposal by the committee thus constitutes ethical clearance.

Sincerely

Prof Mare Schäfer
Chair of the EHDC, Rhodes University
8 June 2017

Appendix B: Permission letter from the Director of Education



REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA



OMUSATI REGIONAL COUNCIL

DIRECTORATE OF EDUCATION, ARTS AND CULTURE

Team Work and Dedication for Quality Education

Tel: +264 65 251700

Private Bag 529

Fax: +264 65 251722

OUTAPI

Enq: Apollonia Hango

05 June 2017

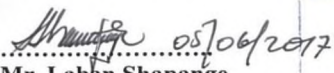
Tomas Kalimbo
Rhodes University
P.O. Box 94
Grahamstown

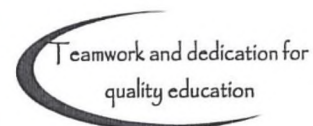
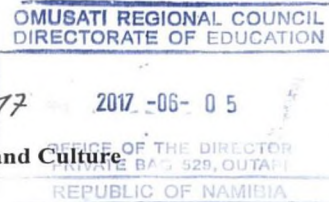
Subject: Permission to Conduct Research in a Secondary School in Omusati Region

This letter serves to notify you (**Mr. Tomas Kalimbo**) that permission has been granted to conduct a research in a secondary school in Omusati Region regarding "**The overall objective to determine how leadership can be developed amongst learner**". Please be informed that the research to be conducted at school should by no means whatsoever disrupt teaching and learning.

We hope and trust this exercise will enhance quality education in the Region.

Yours faithfully


..... 05/06/2017
Mr. Laban Shapange
Director of Education Arts and Culture



All official correspondence must be addressed to the Chief Regional Officer.

Appendix C: Permission letter from the school principal



██████████ SECONDARY SCHOOL
ELIM CIRCUIT
OMUSATI REGION

Enq: Mr. ██████████
Tell/Fax 065-██████████

P/Bag ██████████
OSHAKATI

01 May 2017

To: Principal
Epya Primary School
Oshikuku Circuit
Omusati Region

Dear Mr Kalimbo

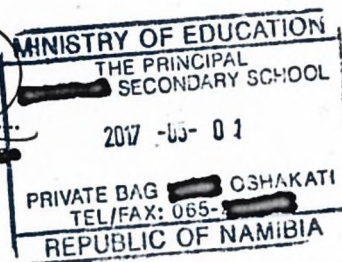
Subject: Granting permission to conduct research in Ashipala Secondary school.

I wrote to affirm the above stated subject matter that, I would like to confirm officially through this letter of a permission granted to conduct your research at Ashipala SS. We as ██████████ SS hopefully and trust your research will also be of benefit to the entire school through your research feedback:

All the best in your research and thank you for picking as to be part of your sample research study.

Yours sincerely

Principal



Appendix D: Letter of informed consent for learners

Enq: T. Kalimbo

Cell: xxxxxxxxxxxx

Bathromeouw 16

Grahamstown

South Africa

To: The parent/ guardian/ class teacher

Dear Mr/Ms-----

REQUEST FOR PERMISSION TO ALLOW YOUR CHILD/ LEARNER TO TAKE PART IN A RESEARCH STUDY

My name is Tomas Kalimbo, a school Principal at Epya P.S in Oshikuku Circuit and currently a full time Master of Education student in the field of Educational Leadership and Management at Rhodes University, Grahamstown, South Africa. I am sending this invitation and request for permission to allow ----- to participate in a research study to be undertaken at Ashipala SSS. This will be an interventionist study, aiming at developing leadership amongst class monitors/ class captains. Your child being a class monitor would therefore be in a position to contribute meaningfully to this study and also to benefit from it in terms of leadership development. Furthermore, kindly take note that the information shared between the child and myself will remain confidential and that his/her identity will not be revealed. This will also not be an evaluation of your child's performance or competence. I undertake to uphold the child's autonomy and he/she will be free to withdraw from the research at any time without negative or undesirable consequences to himself/herself. Against this background, I am kindly inviting and requesting you to allow your child to participate in this research study during break times or after school. I can be contacted at the above contact details, so please feel free to contact me at any time should you have any further questions you would like answered.

Yours faithfully,

Tomas Kalimbo (Researcher)

Student number: 617K4941

Declaration:

I ----- (full names of the parent/guardian/Class teacher) hereby confirm that I understand the content of this document and the nature of this research study and that I have permitted ----- (learner's name) to participate. I understand that I reserve the right to withdraw my child/learner from this study at any time.

Signature:

Date:

Parent / Guardian/ Class teacher

Appendix E: Letter of informed consent for teachers and SMT members

Enq: T. Kalimbo

Cell: +XXXXXXXXXX

Bathromeouw 16

Grahamstown

South Africa

To: The class teacher/ HoD/ Principal

Dear Mr/Ms-----

REQUEST TO TAKE PART IN A RESEARCH STUDY

My name is Tomas Kalimbo, a school Principal at Epya P.S in Oshikuku Circuit and currently a full time Master of Education student in the field of Educational Leadership and Management at Rhodes University, Grahamstown, South Africa. I am inviting you to kindly participate in a research study that I am currently undertaking in your school. This is an interventionist study, aiming at developing leadership amongst class monitors/ class captains and empowering them to carry out their roles effectively. Your honest contribution will therefore help in realising the research objectives.

Furthermore, kindly take note that the information shared between you and myself will remain confidential, and that your identity will not be revealed. This will also not be an evaluation of your performance or competence. I undertake to uphold your autonomy and you will be free to withdraw from the research at any time without negative or undesirable consequences to yourself. Against this background, I am kindly inviting and requesting you to participate in this research study during break times, after school or during your free times. Your participation will take the form of filling out a questionnaire and or taking part in interviews.

Finally, I can be contacted at the above contact details, so please feel free to contact me at any time should you have any further questions you would like answered.

Yours faithfully,

Tomas Kalimbo (Researcher)

Student number: 617K4941

Declaration

I ----- (**full names of class teacher/ HoD/ Principal**) hereby confirm that I understand the content of this document and the nature of this research study and that I have accepted to participate. I understand that I reserve the right to withdraw my participation from this study at any time.

Signature:

Class teacher/ HoD/ Principal

Appendix F: Interview schedule: SMT members and class teachers

Introduction

My name **xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx**. I am currently studying towards a Masters' degree in Educational Leadership and Management at Rhodes University. I am carrying out a research focusing on learner leadership, as part of the requirements to fulfil my Masters' programme. The purpose of the study is to investigate how leadership can be developed within class monitors. This study will benefit participants especially learners, since it is an interventionist study whereby I, as researcher will work together with participants to transform the way class monitors are developed as leaders, so as to empower them to actively carry out their roles. Kindly be assured that the information that you will share with me here will remain confidential and your name will not appear anywhere in my research. After the interview, I will transcribe the recording and I will bring it to you to see whether what I have captured reflects what you have said.

Kindly allow me a few minutes of your time to ask a few questions to enable me to collect data for this research project.

Interview questions:

1. What are your views about the concept learner leadership?
2. What does leadership development mean to you?
3. Which leadership structures exist in your school in which learners serve?
4. What leadership development opportunities are available in the school for learners?
5. Do learners participate in all decisions to be made in the school? If yes, give examples of these decisions. If no, why?
6. I do understand a class monitoring system exists in your school, how long has it been in place?
7. How are the class monitors appointed or chosen?
8. What are their roles and responsibilities? Are these roles documented?
9. How are the class monitors supported or capacitated to carry out their roles? How is this different, compared to past years?
10. What is the relationship between class monitors and LRC members?
11. Do you think the class monitoring system is working? Are you satisfied with the work of class monitors currently?
12. What challenges does the school face in developing leadership amongst learners, particularly the class monitors?

The end. Thank you for your time!

Appendix G: Interview schedule: class monitors

Introduction

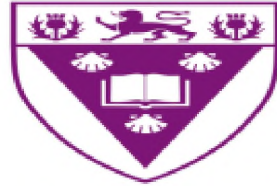
My name is xxxxxxxxxxx and I am currently studying towards a Masters' degree in Educational Leadership and Management at Rhodes University. I am carrying out a research focusing on learner leadership, as part of the requirements to fulfil my Masters' programme. The purpose of the study is to investigate how leadership can be developed within class monitors. This study will benefit participants especially learners since it is an interventionist study whereby I, as researcher will work together with participants to transform the way class monitors are developed as leaders so as to empower them to actively carry out their roles. Kindly be assured that the information that you will share with me here will remain confidential and your name will not appear anywhere in my research. After the interview, I will transcribe the recording and I will bring it to you to see whether what I have captured reflects what you have said.

Kindly allow me a few minutes of your time to answer a few questions to enable me to collect data for this research project.

1. In your view what is learner leadership?
2. What does leadership development mean to you?
3. As class monitors, do you see yourselves as leaders? Why? / Why not?
4. Do **other learners, teachers and parents** see you as leaders? Why? / Why not?
5. What are your current roles and responsibilities? How were you informed of these roles and responsibilities? Are these roles in writing?
6. Could you tell me about any decisions made in the school, which you were part of?
7. How does the school support you in carrying out their roles? Did you receive any training? When? On what? By who?
8. What do you enjoy/ don't enjoy about being a class monitor?
9. What problems do you face in your daily roles as leaders of other learners?
10. Who do you report to whenever you experience problems in your work?
11. What do you think the school should do in order to ensure that the class monitoring system is functioning very well?
12. What are your future plans?

The end. Thank you for your time!

Appendix H: Questionnaires: learners (class monitors)



RHODES UNIVERSITY
Where leaders learn

This questionnaire is part of a research to fulfil the requirements of a Masters' degree in Educational Leadership and Management at Rhodes University. The questionnaire aims to collect data for a research project on how leadership can be developed within class monitors.

You have been selected to receive this questionnaire because the researcher trusts that you would greatly contribute to this study by providing relevant information. Please note that this information will be treated as confidential and will not be used to rate any participant or the school. For any clarifications, kindly contact me at xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx.

1. Participant information

Grade and class: _____ Gender: _____

2. Leadership and leadership roles:

2.1 What does the concept learner leadership mean to you?

2.2 Do you consider yourself to be a leader? Why/ why not?

Yes No Not sure

Reasons _____

2.3 How were you chosen to be class monitor?

- a) Elected by learners
- b) Appointed by class teachers
- c) Chosen by learners with the help of a class teacher

2.4 Why do you think you were chosen to be a class monitor?

2.5 What are your roles and responsibilities as a class monitor?

2.6 Have you ever taken part in making a decision in the school? If yes, give examples of the decision/s you have taken part in.

Yes No Not sure

Examples _____

2.7 Did you receive any leadership training?

Yes No Not sure

2.8 If yes in 2.7, what was covered in the training?

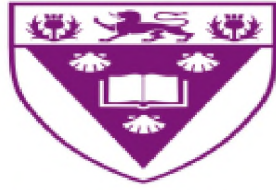
2.9 What problems do you experience in carrying out your role as a class monitor?

2.10 In your opinion, how can class monitors be helped to become good leaders and to carry out their roles and responsibilities effectively?

2.11 If you are given an opportunity, what important change/s do you want to bring in your school?

Thank you for your time.

Appendix I: Questionnaires: Principal, HoDs and class teachers



RHODES UNIVERSITY

Where leaders learn

This questionnaire is part of a research to fulfil the requirements of a Masters' degree in Educational Leadership and Management at the Rhodes University. The questionnaire aims to collect data for a research project on how leadership can be developed within class monitors.

You have been selected to receive this questionnaire because the researcher trusts that you would greatly contribute to this study by providing relevant information. Please note that this information will be treated as confidential and will not be used to rate any participant or the school. For any clarifications, kindly contact me at xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx.

1. Participant information:

1.1 Rank : Class Teacher Head of department Principal

1.2 Gender : Male Female

2. The concepts learner leadership and leadership development:

2.1 To what extent do you agree or disagree with the following statements? (Tick in the appropriate box)

a) Leadership is a role of those in formal leadership and management positions.

Agree Strongly agree Disagree Strongly disagree Not sure

b) Learners are too young to lead and they cannot be involved in certain decisions.

Agree Strongly agree Disagree Strongly disagree Not sure

c) Learners have to participate in all decisions to be made in the school.

Agree Strongly agree Disagree Strongly disagree Not sure

d) Developing leadership within learners should be part of the school plans.

Agree Strongly agree Disagree Strongly disagree Not sure

2.2 What are your views about learners' involvement in all aspects of school leadership?

3. Class monitoring system (class captains):

3.1 Does your school have a class monitoring system in place? (tick in appropriate box)

Yes No Not sure

3.2 If 'Yes' in 3.1, for how long has the class monitoring system been in place in the school?

3.3 How are the class monitors chosen? (tick in appropriate box)

Elected by learners

Appointed by class teachers

Chosen by learners with the help of class teachers

3.4 How many class monitors are there in the school? (Indicate no. of girls and boys).

Girls Boys

3.5 Is the selection of class monitors informed by any leadership qualities? (Tick in appropriate box).

Yes No Not sure

3.6 If your answer in 3.5 is 'Yes', list some of these qualities.

3.7 What are the current roles and responsibilities of class monitors?

3.8 Are these roles documented in school policies?

Yes No Not sure

3.9 List some examples of school decisions in which class monitors take part.

3.10 Were class monitors trained on executing their roles?

Yes No Not sure

3.11 What initiatives are in place in the school to develop leadership within class monitor and to support them in carrying out their roles?

3.12 What is the relationship between class monitors and the learner representative council (LRC)?

3.13 What challenges does the school face in developing leadership amongst learners, particularly class monitors?

3.14 How in your opinion can class monitors be empowered to carry out their roles as lead learners?

Thank you for your time!

Appendix J: Document analysis guide

Date of analysis: -----

Week no: -----

Documents analysed	Findings
1. The Education Act 16 of 2001 and its Regulations	
2. The School internal policy	
3. The School Development Plan (SDP)	
4. School Rules	
5. School year plan	

Appendix K: Roles and responsibilities of class monitor

The roles and responsibilities of class monitors include, but not limited to the following:

1. Leadership roles:

- Be a good role model to fellow learners;
- Motivate other learners;
- Work in collaboration with Learner Representative Council (LRC) members;
- Assist in organising social, academic and other related school events;
- Initiate new ideas to develop the school;
- Conduct morning assembly on behalf of the class;
- Promote a sense of pride and accomplishment in their classes.

2. Supervisory roles:

- Ensure cleanliness in the classroom (floors, walls, black board etc.);
- Monitor lesson attendance (by teachers and learners);
- Supervise completion of tasks (class works, home works etc.);
- Assist with supervision of after lesson study sessions;
- Keep law and order in the classroom (control noise making);
- Maintain discipline and bring to the class teacher's attention, any case of indiscipline among fellow learners;
- Comply with, and enforce school and classroom rules;
- Report cases and emergencies to the class teacher or the school Principal.

3. Administrative roles:

- Collect and submit activity books for all subjects;
- Record absenteeism and noise makers and report such to the class teacher;
- Any other duty as delegated by the class teacher, subject teachers or school principal.

Appendix L: Class monitors' leadership training programme

Chairperson: Learner

AGENDA:

1. Prayer : Learner
2. Welcoming remarks : The principal
3. Presentation: What is leadership : Mr. Kalimbo
4. Discussion : All
5. Presentation: School rules and being a good leader : The HoD
6. Discussion : All
7. Closing remarks : The HoD
8. Prayer : Learner

Appendix M: PowerPoint presentation of mirror data

PRESENTATION
Mirror Data: Key findings of the study
By: Mr. Tomas Kalimbo
MED, ELM student, Rhodes University
XXXXXXX SS
26th June 2017

FACTORS OR MECHANISMS ENABLING AND CONSTRAINING LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT WITHIN CLASS MONITORS

ENABLING FACTORS

- Each class has a class monitor/s who are democratically elected by the learners themselves each year
- They are given an opportunity to manage their classrooms
- They get support from their class teachers
- Many class monitors consider themselves to be leaders
- Urgency in learners/ monitors to do something

CONTRADICTIONS/ LIMITING FACTORS

- Lack of training on leadership
- No proper for them to serve as with roles and responsibilities are not formally documented and not clearly defined
- Some monitors have low self-esteem or lack confidence
- No proper guidelines or programs on developing class monitors as leaders

UNDERSTANDING OF THE CONCEPTS LEARNER LEADERSHIP AND LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

1. Learner leadership

- Participants especially teachers had an idea of what learner leadership means
- Learners however had a limited understanding of what leadership means

2. Leadership development

- Participants have an awareness of the meaning of leadership development
- Participants however agree that leadership development of learners should be part and parcel of school programs

CONTRADICTIONS/ LIMITING FACTORS CONTINUES.....

1. Lack of training on leadership
2. Roles and responsibilities are not formally documented and not clearly defined
3. Some monitors have low self-esteem or lack confidence
4. No proper guidelines or programs on developing class monitors as leaders
5. Less support from class teachers and school management
6. There is no fixed term for class monitors to serve
7. Lack of discipline especially amongst male class monitors
8. Learners not fully involved in decision making
9. Belief that learners cannot be trusted
10. Lack of respect from fellow learners

THE CURRENT ROLES OF CLASS MONITORS

Their roles and responsibilities include among others:

- Ensure cleanliness
- Monitor lesson attendance
- Supervise completion of tasks
- Collect and submit activity books
- Keep law and order
- Maintain discipline
- Report cases and emergencies
- Record absenteeism and noise makers
- Enforce school and classroom rules
- Lead by example etc.

These roles are however not documented and class monitors were not officially informed about them.

CHALLENGES FACED BY CLASS MONITORS IN THEIR DAILY ROLES

- Lack of respect from class mates
- Refusal to cooperate
- Being a class monitor is too much work
- Shouted at, gossiped about, insulted or beaten by some fellows
- Language barrier
- Blamed by teachers for late submission of books
- Some learners do not submit their work on time
- Misunderstanding and disagreements
- Dealing with conflicts and fighting
- Disobeying of school and classroom rules

Appendix N: PowerPoint presentation of the leadership training (Researcher)

Leadership Training for Class Monitors

By: Mr. Tomas Kalimbo and
Mr. XXXXXXXX
XXXXXX Secondary School
18th July 2017

QUALITIES OF A GOOD LEADER

- 1. Humility.** True leaders have confidence and are eager to lead others
- 2. Empowering.** True leaders make their associates feel emboldened and powerful
- 3. Collaborative.** True leaders solicit input and feedback from those around them so that everyone feels part of the process.
- 4. Communicative.** True leaders share their vision or strategy often with those around them.
- 5. Fearlessness.** True leaders are not afraid to take risks or make mistakes.

The concept 'LEADERSHIP'

What is leadership?

- There is no single definition of the concept leadership

Some definitions of leadership includes:

- The ability to influence other
- Having distinctive qualities that distinguish you from non leaders
- The ability to create a vision and direct others towards the achievement of that vision

QUALITIES OF GOOD LEADER CONT.....

- 6. Integrity.** Good leaders are honest and respected
- 7. Compassion.** Good leaders truly care about their followers and the communities in which they operate.
- 8. Shared vision and actions.** True leaders communicate their visions with the people and allow the to be part of the mission to achieve it.
- 9. Supportive.** Good leaders foster a positive environment that allows your team to flourish.
- 10. Genuine.** You need to be clear on what your values are and must be consistent in applying them. As part of that, you need to have the courage to hold true to them. You must not lose sight of reality.
- 11. Self-awareness.** You need to be clear on what your strengths are and what complementary strengths you need from others.

DIFFERENT STYLE OF LEADERSHIP

- 1. Autocratic leadership style**
 - Based on fear and threats
 - One-way communication
 - Decision-making is centralised
- 2. Consultative leadership**
 - Based on appropriate rewards
 - Two-way communication (limited upwards communication)
 - Decision making is decentralised (limited)
- 3. Democratic/ participative leadership style**
 - Based on group participation
 - Two-way communication
 - Decision making is decentralised

The roles and responsibilities of class monitors

- Class monitors are leaders too
- They play a major role in influencing other learners
- Their main roles are:
 1. To lead
 2. To supervise
 3. To liaise with LRC
 4. To liaise with teachers and the SMT

Appendix O: PowerPoint presentation of the leadership training

(HoD)

School rules and Being a good leader
By: Mr. XXXXXXX

Why are school rules necessary?

If you want to be a good leader, you must do the following

1. Know your Strength
2. Get Involved
3. Gain Experience
4. Take Action
5. Make a Difference
6. Try your Best
7. Be Respectful
8. Be on Time
9. Help others
10. Be Trustworthy
11. Be Fair to Everyone
12. Stay Positive
13. Don't Participate in Bullying or Gossip

School rules and regulations are necessary for and/or because;

- ◆ Order
- ◆ Harmony
- ◆ Effective educational training
- ◆ Staying safe and focused
- ◆ Maintain discipline
- ◆ Learners to know how to behave and consequences of misbehaving
- ◆ Learners to carry themselves
- ◆ Guide you and away you from trouble
- ◆ Allows learners to exercise self-control, solve problems etc

Our school rules should not be looked at as NEGATIVE controls, but as a system of maintaining discipline, express disapproval to negative conducts and behaviors. Thus, we are encouraging you to cultivate a habit of self disciplines at all times.

A good leader is someone who knows the rules and who understands different positions of authority. You may not agree 100% with your teachers and parents at times, but you should always maintain a respectful, pleasant attitudes towards them.

Showing respect for adults now also shows your teachers, parents and peers that you are a mature and confident leader.

I thank you!!!

How to be a good leader

There are many ways to be a leader, whether it's through Academic teams or community activities. When you are highly involved in the school activities, chances are that other learners look up to you. If you are elected or chosen as a leader, this is a great honor. No matter what type of leader you are, there are THREE STEPS to help you become a good leader

- Taking on a leadership position
- Being a good role model
- Practicing good leadership qualities