



**SACE**

South African Council for Educators

*Towards Excellence in Education*



# Voices of Educators

Vol. 2



# LEADERSHIP

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# The Editor



## Policy and Research

The vision for Council in its 2020-2025 strategic planning period is to inspire a credible teaching profession. Thus, we are always seizing opportunities to document best practice from educators, their insights on the teaching profession, challenges, and wins.

As a statutory professional self-regulatory body, South African Council for Educators (SACE) has an enormous role to play in setting and maintaining both the professional and ethical standards in the teaching profession. To protect the integrity of the profession and to safeguard public interests. The ethical and professional standards also contribute to teacher professionalism and reinforce public confidence and trust in the teaching profession. Hence the Council intentionally looks for opportunities to collaborate and participate in professional development initiatives such as the SACE/Umlazi District Mathematics Indaba. This publication focuses on leadership in the teaching and learning environment. SACE sought to hear

teachers' views on leadership as we believe by virtue of being a teacher you are a leader, and you are tasked with the responsibility of leading your learners to excellence. Therefore, we sat down with the three National Teacher Awards winners, Mr. Thulani Sibiya (Mpumalanga), Mr. Albert Mohithli (North West), Mr. Thabiso Mothipa (Limpopo), as well as Mr. Wonder Mondlane (KwaZulu-Natal) who was a provincial second runner-up for KwaZulu-Natal. These four young gentlemen are in leadership positions in their respective schools and have a zest for teaching Mathematics, but a bigger zest for leading their learners to victory.

We also zoom in on female leaders to reflect on their experiences on leadership in the profession. This is done in the backdrop of an initiative spearheaded by SACE to empower female leaders who are heads of schools located within the KwaZulu-Natal educational districts to accomplish their goals and to take up space in leadership. We end off with an article written by Mr. Hammer, a secondary school principal from the Northern Cape, who provides us with his views on leadership and management. The article focuses on what being a leader entails and most importantly that as a leader your staff members must be valued and always supported, because they are your greatest asset.

The Council continues to advocate for the Teachers' Rights, Responsibilities and Safety programme and we encourage our teachers to access the handbook on Teacher Safety and Security in South African Schools. Further to that a facilitator guide and participant workbook are also readily available for teachers to capacitate themselves on safety and security issues in schools. In addition, an online self-study course on the handbook has been developed in collaboration with VVOB and is available to all teachers and SACE stakeholders.

In line with the fourth industrial revolution and in support of the presidential and ministerial priority on reading, the Council has on offer a virtual library to support and encourage reading in the teaching profession. The SACE virtual library presents a reading opportunity for SACE-registered educators and stakeholders to access various digital resources that will contribute to their knowledge, material and professional development, and teaching and learning. We therefore encourage you to make use of this resource that's available for you.

As the Council for Educators, we would like to thank and appreciate each teacher who contributed to this publication; your narratives are moving. You really do inspire a credible teaching profession!

# CEO's Corner

As several educators and leaders share their best practices in this publication, I chose to focus on courageous leadership conversations that require all of us to reflect on the impact of our leadership in our diverse contexts.



Ms Ella Mokgalane  
Chief Executive Officer SACE

## Being Comfortable with Uncomfortable Leadership Conversations

As several educators and leaders share their best practices in this publication, I chose to focus on courageous leadership conversations that require all of us to reflect on the impact of our leadership in our diverse contexts. Like Melody Hobson in her Color-blind or color-brave TED Talk, I also chose to use my positionality to be comfortable with uncomfortable leadership conversations that affect the oppressed and those experiencing social, cultural, and political injustices in and outside our institutions.

As one of the educational leaders in a public institution, I have observed, experienced, and practiced traditional or mainstream leadership that is dominated by the heroic and individualistic traits. This is the leadership that is often divorced from its context and fails to recognise that leading organisations is not a one-size-fits-all process; it cannot overlook its social, cultural, and political milieu. Therefore, I am challenging various mainstream leadership styles

that maintain the organisational status quo and those that are mainly centered around internal organisational transformation in terms of focusing mainly on achieving organisational results at the expense of recurring social ills and inequities.

Notwithstanding the importance and role of mainstream or traditional leadership styles, like critical approach scholars I am agitating for the repositioning of leadership and shifting gears from an individualistic heroic perspective to transformative leadership (not transformational) one that is based on the interconnected relationships amongst individuals that are driven by social vision and transformation for a better and socially just world. This means having educational transformative leaders for social justice who recognise that excellence in organisations and schools means striking a balance between efficiency and effectiveness or academic excellence and a socially just agenda that is responsive to inclusivity, equity, embracing diversity and challenging the socio-economic and cultural injustices in our internal and external environments. Just like proponents of transformative leadership, I am maintaining that the balancing act I am agitating for between the two stances must co-exist to revolutionise leadership in our educational institutions.

Thus, in leading SACE that is making good strides in calling upon teachers to register online, uploading professional development points on the Continuing Professional Teacher Development Information System (CPTD-IS), and enhancing a reading profession through a virtual library, to what extent is my transformational efficiency and effectiveness leadership being exclusionary and perpetuating social injustice to those teaching and leading in rural and remote areas without connectivity and electricity? Similarly, your school as a transformational or transactional leader may be doing exceptionally well with matric results. Nonetheless, it may also have numerous learners who experience harm and serious violation through educators and community or family members who abuse them sexually and physically while the principal turns a blind eye due to their fixation with the 100% pass rate results. In this case, the principal lacks the moral courage and authority, social activism and agency, as well as deep examination of their values, principles, and beliefs that are pivotal to emancipating the learners from their social injustices and dehumanisation.

I am therefore underscoring that the urgent need for transformative leaders who will lead for social justice, liberation and emancipation is long overdue. These critical transformative leaders move from the premise of questioning the purpose of their organisations and

# LEADERSHIP

their roles in achieving that defined purpose. If the response to their organisational purpose and leadership roles is (a) to ensure employees perform their duties in line with the organisational structure, job descriptions and get rewarded according to their performance; or (b) to run an efficient and effective organisation with 100% matric pass rate or to achieve set outcomes and targets within the allocated budget; then for many critical leaders leadership in this context is reduced to a day-to-day technical exercise requiring enhanced management knowledge, skills and traditional leadership styles despite the dehumanized and violated lives, together with exclusionary and unequal experiences. The difference between these traditional leadership styles is going beyond leading an efficient and effective organisation or 100% pass rate. They're using the organisation's diversity, employees' cultural capital and varied backgrounds as essential tools to deconstruct exclusionary systems and reconstructing the achieving of organisational goals even better by creating inclusive, equitable and socially just organisations for the greater good and hope for all.

In conclusion, I am arguing that South African educational organisations are currently experiencing socio-economic and cultural injustices in a valueless society that affects employees, teachers, school leaders, learners, and communities to a great extent. Equally, the country is experiencing exponential and unprecedented change, with COVID-19 and Education 4.0 as the change drivers that require equal attention as organisational efficiency and effectiveness. As we lead educational institutions within this painted context, to what extent do we learn from Bronfenbrenner's socio-ecological system that will assist us in considering our micro-systems (immediate environment), meso-systems, exo-systems (two relating settings), macro-systems and chromo-systems (change in the environment) to practice responsive leadership to internal and external context. This will assist in repositioning ourselves and gravitate towards leading transformative and emancipating interventions for social justice, greater good and a better world for all.





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- Credit bearing
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- Short/long
- 2hrs – 5 days
- 6 days+

## SACE Endorsed and by Approved Provider

## Teacher

- Teacher Initiated

## Principal / Delegate

- School-Initiated

## Employers and Providers

- Externally Initiated

# 1

Participation in 3 types of PD Activities in Order to Earn 150 PD Points

## Teacher Initiated

- Self-development
- Self-chosen
- Personal Growth
- Taking responsibility for my own PD

## School Initiated

- Learning on-the job
- Professional collaboration
- Collegiality
- Resourcefulness
- Communities of practice / PLCs
- Culture of School-focused / based PD

# 3

Reporting Participation to SACE in 3 different ways

# 2

Recording Participation in PD Activities in the PDP

## Record and Evidence of Participation

## Monitoring CPD (Individual, School, SACE, Employer)

## Reflective Practice



# SACE/Umlazi District Mathematics Indaba

SACE at the Forefront of Teacher Development

It is of great importance to SACE that practicing educators engage in life-long learning to improve their professional competence, hence teacher development is at the heart of the Council. For this reason the Council continues to intensify the drive to support the development of educators through collaboration with key stakeholders.

The Umlazi district in KwaZulu-Natal organised an intensive development session for Mathematics educators in grades 10 to 12, and a few from the Capitec Mathematics programme in collaboration with SACE, Kutlwanong centre for Mathematics, Science and Technology, and Capitec. The purpose of this two-day session was to share best practice and assist the Umlazi district in improving their Mathematics performance with the view that if they invest more in the development of Mathematics content methodology, the district will perform better in future. The session was mainly targeted at Mathematics educators from schools that achieved below 60% in the 2021 National Senior Certificate (NSC) examinations.

This initiative was deemed a game changer as it also included the National Teacher Award winners and other educators whose schools are doing well in Mathematics to share their good practices and methodologies during the Mathematics Indaba. Several key topics were presented by the Circuit Manager, District Director, Head of Department (KwaZulu-Natal Department of Education), Kutlwanong Centre Manager and the SACE CEO to unpack and map a picture of why it was important for this session to take place, as well as to share insight with educators on the state of Mathematics performance in the Umlazi district and the barriers they currently face. The session unpacked the national trends in Mathematics performance and factors that lead to poor performance, and observed tendencies and practices that are at the centre of poor performance in Mathematics within the Umlazi district.

Key to the two-day sessions were the three commissions aimed at further engaging with Mathematical concepts

and crafting actionable improvement strategies. What was crucial for these commissions was that a platform to engage, explore and share Mathematical knowledge and skills was formed which enabled all present, new and experienced educators to share their strategies and learn from each other. Also, of significant importance was the opportunity for the mathematics "gurus", the three National Teacher Award winners, to share their secrets to achieving high performance in Mathematics at their specific schools. They shared a few common practices which can easily be applied at any school, some of which include:

- lesson planning and preparedness as a teacher is crucial to achieving desired results;
- peer learning or learning in groups; dressing appropriately (this not only makes you look good and professional as a teacher, but learners understand and see that you take yourself seriously and thus will take what you deliver seriously);
- rewarding positive behaviour and good results motivates learners to do better;
- being relatable as a teacher and leader;
- understanding the type of learners you have;
- understanding the needs and interests of your learners (Generation Z) who are growing up with technology, internet, and social media; and
- being able to identify the strengths and weaknesses of learners.

In essence, the SACE/Umlazi District Mathematics Indaba proved that collaboration and sharing ideas will strengthen teacher development and achieve the greater good, which is to ensure the success of learners in their schooling career.



# National Teacher Award Winners

The Council had the privilege to sit down with the National Teacher Awards winners during the SACE/Umlazi District Mathematics Indaba. We spoke to four vibrant young teachers who are passionate about the teaching profession and in particular, their love for Mathematics. Here's what they had to say about the role they are playing in the profession and their views on leadership.



Mr. Thulani Sibiya  
Mathematics and Science HOD,  
Mpumalanga

An energetic young teacher from Mpumalanga province who speaks with much vigor about his love for teaching and teaching Mathematics in particular, Mr. Thulani Sibiya is a graduate from the University of Johannesburg who stumbled onto teaching professionally whilst assisting at his former high school. He is a Mathematics and Physical Science teacher, who's love for Mathematics stems from high school where he used to assist his peers with understanding Mathematics concepts. He does not see himself as being naturally gifted in Mathematics but as a hard worker who gives a 100% at every given task. He has developed a slogan for his learners #Siyagadla meaning "we are winning no matter what". This is the attitude he instills in his learners, as he believes that the right attitude is a huge determinant to achieving desired performance. "I instilled this attitude to them that they've already won," he says.

Incorporating the fourth industrial revolution (4IR) into the teaching and learning environment is crucial at this day and age. Even more so with how the pandemic impacted on how and where we teach. "Since we are in the 21st century, try to incorporate your lessons with technology.

Make sure that you include all the things they love, such as gadgets. You need to try to make learning central to what they enjoy and fascinates them, as learning becomes more natural when you are doing something you love," says Mr Sibiya. He ensures his Mathematics classes are fun by creating songs using Mathematics concepts. "You will hear them singing the song automatically and they will remember the lesson and will not forget the topic you taught them." He further insists that the pandemic pushed him to utilise available and safe resources so his learners would not fall behind. The use of Zoom and WhatsApp applications were key for Mr. Sibiya in facilitating online learning during the pandemic. "Sending previous question papers and memorandums to the learners via WhatsApp or sending voice notes explaining to them how you solve a certain equation helped immensely in advancing and achieving the desired performance despite the challenges brought on by the pandemic."

He insists that it's important to be a reflective teacher, in that way you can adequately find alternative solutions to assisting your learners but also find better strategies of teaching in the classroom. He remembers how he was advised by his high school teacher to study Medicine, but in reflecting he identified that the challenge they had in his community was the lack of understanding Mathematics and this posed a barrier for many learners. This is what also led him to become a teacher, as he would be able to help many learners. He says that "as a Math teacher you find yourself producing 20 distinctions, which means you are producing doctors, engineers and so on. So, if I decided to study Medicine, I wouldn't have helped in producing these distinctions. We need to remember we are not only living for ourselves, we are also living to change and impact the lives of others."

In how he manages diversity in the classroom in terms of ensuring he caters to different learners and their learning abilities he says, "A little progress a day produces bigger results. You don't need to spoon-feed the learners. But what you need to do is to ensure you have different activities. Conduct tests so you can identify which learners are struggling and then you will be able to assist them." He also believes in peer learning as he splits his learners into groups and tasks the stronger learners to help the learners who are struggling. "Actually, peer learning is the way to go."

When asked about his views on leadership in the classroom he boldly states that "leaders live by example because as a leader you need to be disciplined, you cannot come to class five minutes late and expect learners to be early in class." He also strongly emphasises dressing appropriately and professionally, "How you look also has a big effect on them."



Mr. Albert Mohithli  
Deputy Principal, North West

A young teacher from a rural area called Mothanthanyaneng, Mr. Mohithli exudes confidence about who he is and what he does. He describes himself as “a rural boy who is not defined by where he comes from.” Born to a loving home, the last of seven children and the first to matriculate and become a university graduate in his family, his mother was a domestic worker and father a food cropper who cropped potatoes and onions. Being a Medical Doctor or Engineer would have been “ideal” career paths to pursue but his Mathematics teacher advised him to explore teaching and become a Mathematics teacher, as good Mathematics teachers were rare. Albert graduated in 2012 and in 2013 he started working as a teacher specialising in Mathematics, inspired by his Mathematics teachers, one in primary school and one from high school (who is now his colleague). “I was inspired by my teachers, so I followed their footsteps.” His teachers inspired him by being driven by purpose, “they were always prepared, it was like they were the only Math teachers in the entire school. My Math teachers used to express life experiences through Mathematics. For example, I asked my teacher why there is a need to teach Calculus and my teacher replied that Calculus teaches you to be more organised. That is how I developed my love for Mathematics.”

Mr. Mohithli describes himself as an avid planner and that is what helps him in the classroom and to achieve desired

results. “In my planning, I categorise my learners according to levels to accommodate all learners. For example, when I give a class activity to my learners the activity will be from the same topic but with different skills catered to different learners. This assists me to also identify the strengths and weaknesses of each learner, and for them to help each other in grasping concepts.” He insists that motivation, self-reflection, and feedback are key in the classroom. He ensures that he receives feedback from his learners through surveys where his learners can rate his delivery mode, topics and where they are having challenges. This helps him as a teacher to identify where each individual learner has limitations and is then able to devise a plan on how he can assist. “That is one of the strategies I use to assist them even though it is not 100% guaranteed, but you are able to reach a certain percentage that you would not normally be able to reach.”

Understanding the type of learner you have is also crucial in designing and articulating the correct content and material. Mr. Mohithli says there are four types of learners in a classroom, “the first group are learners who want to learn Math and who can do Math. The second group are learners who want to do Math but cannot. The third group are learners who do not want to learn Math but can do Math. This group does not put in much effort because they know that at the end of the day, they will pass Mathematics. The last group are learners who do not want to learn Math and cannot do Math. Parents, friends and even the community members push learners to do Math. Poverty also pushes them to do Math because they believe that Math is the way to come out from poverty.” In understanding these different types of learners you are then able to analyse and create a plan of action. “I’ve been able to help learners move from Math to Mathematical Literacy, and they are doing exceptionally well in Math Literacy.”

He holds a strong stance that “leaders lead by example. A leader provides a vision to people, in other words a leader is a visionary, he sees further than the followers. I am tasked with providing a vision to my learners and thus I also expose them to different dimensions of life.” In this way Mr. Mohithli makes sure he engages with his learners about different topics and not just Mathematics. “We speak Life Orientation, psychology, mental issues, and life after grade 12. That is how I express leadership to them. I lead by example, they see from me how things are done. For example, I sing at assembly and I arrive first at work.” On his relationship with his co-workers and as a young leader he stands by respect, “I really believe in self-respect because you cannot respect others if you cannot respect yourself. You need to set boundaries for yourself, have values and principles which guide your life.” He is also an accessible leader who does not use power or domination to get what he wants. “I respect my subordinates so much. The same respect I give them, I receive. I believe in this saying which says, ‘You shall receive what you give’.”



Mr. Thabiso Mothipa  
Deputy Principal, Limpopo

**T**all in stature, articulate and passionate about the teaching profession, Mr. Mothipa is a young teacher from Limpopo who grew up in a village called "Nobody". Quite a contrast, because this very village produced somebody who has become an outstanding teacher. How he became a teacher is also an interesting story to hear. His first choice was to study Medicine, but after being told he had not been selected he opted to study for a Bachelor's in Science, which he only attended for one week after which he realised that it was not what he wanted to pursue. "I went back to one of my high school teachers and I told her that I was miserable and frustrated. I told her I didn't know what to do and she said to me she knows me very well and that I am a teacher. She said to me I should take my matric results statement and go try my luck, and I did that. After a few days I received a call, from the University they told me that someone has withdrawn, and I must come and register. That is how I got myself into teaching."

Interestingly, Mr. Mothipa says he used to struggle with Mathematics in high school, but after attending a winter school whilst in grade 12, he started to enjoy it and thus also taught his classmates who were struggling. That is where he discovered his love for mathematics. "For me, Math is the same as driving a car. If you know the principles, you can drive any car. The same with Mathematics, if you know the principle it becomes easier to understand Math.

For Math you only need to bring your theory into practice." When asked how he manages to cater for each individual learner in the classroom he says, "I do what is called differentiated teaching. For example, if I am teaching how to solve for  $x$ , when I go to my class I prepare extra work for my learners because I know there will be individuals who will finish fast. So I mix them with those who are falling behind so they can help each other. That is called peer learning and it helps the learners to gain from their peers, because as you explain to another person you automatically learn as well."

In speaking about the pandemic, Mr. Mothipa states it made teaching and learning difficult. Rotational learning was challenging to apply as learners had to rotate in groups. Having learners attend class once in two weeks made it challenging as applying revision in such instances posed a challenge. Learners would always come back having forgotten some concepts. "Because of COVID-19 restrictions we were not supposed to be close to each other, so as a teacher you must stand in front of them and far away from them, not even knowing if they are doing what they are expected to do as Math is a practical subject. Also, they were not allowed to be close to each other, so it was difficult to apply peer learning in a classroom context." Because of this they are now left with the challenge of closing the gaps created by the pandemic, which can be difficult for the teacher as you risk overwhelming learners by giving them a lot of work to cover the required content.

Mr. Mothipa sees leadership as an act of influence. "As a leader you must have a vision, the vision must be created by you as a teacher and must be communicated with your followers, who are your learners. Include your learners in your vision. For example, if you want to achieve a certain percentage let them know so they know what they are expected to do." Looking professional is key as a leader, "as a Math teacher I am always neat. I make sure I dress up when I am going to work, I look good and I smell good. As a teacher you need to make sure your learners always look forward to seeing you and for me that is a big motivation, and it is plays a huge role in the performance of my subject."

As an advocate for the profession, Mr. Mothipa states that "teaching is about changing lives when we are teaching. We influence people to be problem solvers around the country but at the same time you need to be aware that when you join the profession you are going to deal with different people every time. Teaching is a beautiful profession with challenges and thus requires a lot of love as we interact with different people." Knowing each individual learner personally and understanding their backgrounds is important in being a teacher of note who can identify each learners' strengths and weaknesses.



Mr. WM Mondlane  
Deputy Principal, KwaZulu-Natal

W e sat down with Mr. Wonder Mondlane who speaks with great passion and clarity. Mr. Mondlane discovered his love for Mathematics at the tender age of 10. He has a fond memory of when he wrote a Mathematics test and received a mark of 49 out of 50 and went straight to his late Math teacher, Mrs. Shongwe, to ask why he didn't get a full mark. After the explanation he received from his teacher that he had made a simple error of forgetting to insert a bracket in his sum, his passion for Mathematics grew and he has never looked back, thus he is passionate about sharing his knowledge with learners. "I had two choices: be an engineer or be a teacher, but I realised that if I chose to be an engineer I would not get an opportunity to do what I love, which is sharing my knowledge of Math with learners."

One of the strategies he uses to get learners engaged is revision before introducing a new concept. If teaching grade 12 learners, he ensures that grade 11 concepts are revised thoroughly. "For example, if the lesson for the day is analytical geometry, first thing is to discuss the concept of the circle and its properties in terms of lines and the relationship. By doing that my learners automatically know what to expect in the lesson for the day."

He acknowledges some of the challenges that the South African education system still faces, one being big class numbers, "During my training I studied that due to huge class capacity in our schools we need to be aware of inclusivity of learner barriers, so whenever I am planning my lesson I don't only plan for a certain type of learner but for all learners to be able to understand the lesson equally." Peer learning is another strategy he swears by, and the evidence has shown that learners grasp concepts better when they discuss amongst each other. "Another strategy I use is to mix my learners because I know everyone's performance in my class. So I mix them according to their performance, the one who is struggling goes with the one who is doing better so they can help each other. I know it is easier for them to talk to each other than for them to be constantly asking me questions." In addition, morning and afternoon classes assist in making sure that the curriculum is covered in time and revision can take place.

On the discussion of leadership in the classroom, Mr. Mondlane mentions three important points, "Firstly, as a leader you must lead by example, you need to show your learners that you mean business, you know what you are doing by knowing your subject what you are teaching. Secondly, you need to be disciplined when you go to your class, the lesson must be well planned, you must be able to organise your subject, control your subject, monitor your learners, and lastly motivate your learners and get buy-in from their parents to assist."



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# Female Leadership



Mrs. Beauty Mntungwa  
Principal, KwaZulu-Natal, Ilembe District

**“Be yourself, believe in yourself and stay focused. Be a life-long learner as a leader.”**

**In your own words, what does female leadership mean?**

A key attribute of a well-functioning and effective organisation in the country is a sense of order. Therefore, the school's sense of order involves rhythms, routines, and practices of functionality, which forms part of its culture, attitudes, beliefs, and values, also referred to as the school's climate. It does not matter whether one is female or male in leadership. What is more important is that a leader is the key driver of instructional improvement in the institution. They are expected to spend much of their time building its strength and capacity to effectively lead instructional improvement and all processes necessary for best performance.

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*In her own words:  
female leaders in the teaching  
profession*

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**Why is it important to have female leaders in education?**

Real change occurs in a school when its culture changes, this can only be done when leaders have a crucial role to play in influencing and reshaping practices and beliefs in the education sector. This can only be put into practice by sending important signals about what behaviors they value, redefining roles and relationships, and establishing clear expectations for what needs to be done to improve teaching and learning in the education system. In South Africa, there is significant potential for schools, especially ones led by females, to tap into the assets of the broader community and to collaborate with its members and partners to address some of these challenges to schooling, to support teaching and learning process.

**What are some of the challenges still encountered by female leaders in the teaching profession?**

Schools are not immune to the negative effects of challenges faced by societies, i.e., crime and violence, substance abuse, gender-based violence, teenage pregnancy, bullying, acts of racism. School leaders, despite their participation in some of the professional development programmes, and especially female leaders, are often ill-prepared to deal with these challenges. At times, it feels like putting out fires much of the time. As a result, this can make the work of the school leader hard and frustrating. Persistent poverty and inequality in our society also affect life experiences and chances of the young generation and their families, threaten the stability of communities, and undermine their potential to participate as active participants in the society.



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## How can some of these challenges be addressed?

We cannot solve our problems with the same thinking used when they were created. Organisational work within complex living systems have emphasised the need for school leaders to think differently about their roles and leadership practice. In complex systems, a problem or a challenge faced may be the result of many different influences. The problem might be multi-layered, with no clear cause and effect relationship. In such situations, there may not be one right answer or solution to the given problem, or a simple response to resolving it. Rather than jumping into problem-solving mode, the school leader should attempt to develop a deeper understanding of the challenge faced. This should be done by engaging with others and being open to multiple perspectives that will allow them to see across the layers of the education, socio-economic and political systems, and to make sense of its influences on the school system.

## Please describe why it is important as a female leader to be accountable?

As supervision takes place within the context of a professional relationship, the notion of accountability becomes very important. The leader is on an instructional mandate and has legitimate authority to direct the work of the curriculum in a professional manner, to monitor work implementation taking place at all levels of the organisation and to provide support as and when it's needed. Reciprocal accountability involves providing support and building capacity based on the notion that for each unit of improved performance required, there should be the provision of a reciprocal unit of support and capacity. The leader, in her professional role of supervisor, therefore has an important role to play in providing the necessary support to build team capacity to improve performance outcomes.

## As a woman you inherit multiple roles: being a mother, wife, daughter, and manager etc. How do you ensure that each role is fulfilled and that you balance all these roles?

Self-management relates to a manager's success in doing what helps her achieve work objectives. A school manager who regards self-management as important will have a vision and a very clear set of objectives. Clearly defined personal, family and life

goals are important aspects of self-management, because one personal goal influences the way one sees herself, self-development, what you want to achieve in life and, therefore, one's objectives and work performance. However, there are areas of living and working that need to be balanced, i.e., professional dimension, financial, social, cultural, creative, and personal dimensions. In its broadest meaning, a sense of purpose relates to your life and worldview.

## Why is it so important that the teaching profession ensures that mental health is a priority?

2020 and 2021 have been the most difficult years in the world because of the COVID-19 pandemic. This period proved to the global community that no one is immune to face death at any given moment in time but nevertheless, the truth was to remain calm, collected, and focused. Despite all challenges faced on a daily basis and sudden developments and protocols introduced to save lives, it all demanded one to be resilient and empathic at the same time to provide care and support where desperately needed. The community school has a strong developmental orientation, which not only involves direct efforts to improve teaching and learning but counselling and social support must be built into the functions of a school with clear connections being made between a healthy mind, healthy body, and healthy community.

## As a woman do you experience some resistance when you are leading men in the profession and if so, how do you navigate around it?

The essential work of a school leader is to transform the set of institutional arrangements, commitments, procedures, practices, and routines to support the instructional mandate of the school more effectively. Changing practice and behaviors is hard and slow. It makes demands of their time and requires them to work together in new and different ways. The work of improvement calls on everyone to examine existing practices and their thinking about the work they do. All these processes take time, and it's not surprising that at certain points resistance is experienced. This is a natural and expected response to the work of change. Generally, humans do not like the uncertainty and anxiety that comes with changing practice and behaviors. Most importantly, this is not experienced based on gender, it's a human phenomenon.

# Female Leadership



Mrs. Duduzile Faith Sibiya  
School Principal, King Cetshwayo district,  
KwaZulu-Natal

**“Live and lead without limits, be assertive, do not be apologetic when taking decisions and believe in your capability.”**

## **I n your own words, what is leadership?**

Leadership is influencing people to carry out tasks without coercing them but by understanding why they must do those tasks. Leadership has nothing to do with gender but has everything to do with the individual.

## **Why is it important to have female leaders in education?**

For the longest time, females have been confined to house chores as their core function (confining them to the kitchen) and were being denied access to the professional working space. Even after they had joined the formal and paid working environment, they are not entirely given an

opportunity to lead in those professional spaces because of the belief that they are weak and emotional. So, to break male dominance, undo societal stereotypes and achieve gender equality, female leaders are needed in education.

## **What are some of the challenges still encountered by female leaders in the teaching profession?**

There is still male dominance in positions of influence and deciding who leads where e.g., school governing bodies. There are traditional and stereotypical attitudes held by communities about women as principals of large schools, particularly secondary schools. Also, despite a female principal's qualification, capabilities, experience, and strides made, a female must constantly prove herself to the people she is leading, the community and male counterparts by virtue of being a female principal. Female leaders are targeted for leading a school ranked as a 'big' or a high quintile school. As a woman you are not the right person to lead that kind of institution, forces in and out of the school will be mobilised to frustrate one, to discredit the leader and to destabilise the institution. They will go at length to force the lady principal out, either by her throwing in the towel or by compulsion. It is as if their work is about lifting heavy boxes or mixing and carrying heavy loads of concrete (rely on masculinity). Thus, female principals end up resigning because of intentional and deliberate pressures created to push them out of the system for petty and selfish reasons.

## **How can some of these challenges be addressed?**

Females must be taught that leadership has nothing to do with masculinity and males must be taught at a very young age that they are equals with females. Communities must be sensitised into appreciating the fact that females are as capable as their male counterparts in terms of leading. Females must be capacitated to be more assertive, believe in themselves and stop being apologetic when they occupy those positions.

## **Please explain why the term 'quality' is important in leadership?**

When performing duties, we need not focus only on how many targets we could meet but focus more on how good we were when executing that task. For instance, it doesn't have to be how many learners passed but it must be how many learners got outstanding marks that can help them face the next challenge or grade with ease. For me, this refers to quality and not quantity.

# LEADERSHIP

**As a woman you inherit multiple roles: being a mother, wife, daughter, and manager etc. How do you ensure that each role is fulfilled and that you balance all these roles?**

Multitasking is one of a woman's strong attributes. It all relies on time management. One must manage time in such a way that all responsibilities are attended to. Also, as a female, do not be afraid to get help such as hiring services of a helper so that one is able to attend to all responsibilities.

**Mental health has become a huge topic since the onset of the pandemic. What are the things you do to ensure your mental well-being, taking into consideration your demanding role?**

Spending time in church, reading the bible and attending empowerment seminars that deal with how to cope under stressful circumstances like the loss of a loved one due to the pandemic. These mechanisms have helped me cope, especially with the loss of my husband in 2021.

**Why is it so important that the teaching profession ensures that mental health is a priority?**

A teacher cannot be productive if they do not take care of

their mental well-being. This is because as teachers we deal with human beings daily who can easily be negatively affected if we do not ensure that we are mentally and emotionally sound.

**As a woman do you experience some resistance when you are leading men in the profession and if so, how do you navigate around it?**

Yes, I do experience male resistance. The key is sticking to policy, the code of conduct and the job description. It is also important to avoid being personal and rather deal with the task at hand, not the person.

**What advice would you give to the next generation of female leaders in the teaching profession?**

It is important that as female leaders in the profession we provide leadership that creates space for people of both genders to be challenged, to try their best to shine and be acknowledged for it. At the end of the day each person has a unique set of skills, abilities, and personality whether male or female and can equally contribute to the success of the team.



# Female Leadership



Ms. Vanessa Mthembu  
Deputy Chief Education Specialist,  
Zululand district, KwaZulu-Natal

**“Be intentional about creating physical and non-physical spaces that are conducive to women empowerment.”**

**I**n your own words, what does female leadership mean?

It means acknowledgement or recognition of the valuable leadership roles women have and are playing in various structures of society, be it in their homes, work, or social structures. Women have an inherent ability to lead, however, societal stereotypes in some instances have prevented recognition or elevation of women to leadership roles.

**Why is it important to have female leaders in education?**

First and foremost, there are more females than males in the world and in the Education sector as such, female leaders generally lead people differently. For example,

females tend to be more intuitive and nurturing than their male counterparts. For a long time, it has mostly been men who have been accorded the opportunity to lead and women have only been given supportive roles, meanwhile the reality is that women also have the same or even more capabilities as men. The time has come for the playing ground to be levelled, where women are given the same opportunities as men to show their capabilities.

**What are some of the challenges still encountered by female leaders in the teaching profession?**

The lack of confidence in women leaders means they must work twice as much as their male counterparts to be recognised as valuable leaders. Female leaders' failures are often exaggerated when compared to those of males. Lack of support, especially from other women is also a problem and some women are not confident enough to take leadership roles for fear of harsh criticism or judgement should anything go wrong while they lead. We are also still facing not being taken seriously by men due to cultural and societal norms (this includes men's previous or background perceptions of the opposite sex).

**How can some of these challenges be addressed?**

A major shift in societal expectations and perceptions is needed, which means doing away with gender stereotypes that have existed for ages. This means raising our boys and girls as equals from a very young age so that neither sees themselves as superior or inferior to the other. Having progressive leaders (at the top) that support women leaders and view them as adding value. Being intentional about creating physical and non-physical spaces that are conducive to women empowerment e.g., committing to achieving and maintaining gender parity (in salaries), putting in place progressive policies such as sexual harassment, employment equity and B-BBEE policies to regulate professional behavior when promoting women. This further means ensuring when promoting women, they are given mentors and that we are intentional about placing women leaders because it sends a message to younger women that “it is possible” for them too.

**Please explain what the term ‘transparency’ means to you and why it is important in leadership?**

Transparency in leadership means the opposite of hogging information that would empower others. It is achieved when information that would help people do a great job or make great decisions is shared and not hidden. Politics tend to inhibit transparency. People are empowered when leaders create an environment where there is transparency.

# LEADERSHIP

**As a woman you inherit multiple roles: being a mother, wife, daughter, and manager etc. How do you ensure that each role is fulfilled and that you balance all these roles?**

Learning to strike a balance such as developing a routine where specific times are allocated for each of these roles and not over prioritising one specific role to the detriment of others. Also, learning when to fulfill each role without any compromise. It is also important for your family to know and understand your work and the demands that come with it. In that, they will be able to support you and realise when you need their support.

**Mental health has become a huge topic since the onset of the pandemic. What are the things you do to ensure your mental well-being, taking into consideration your demanding role?**

I exercise as much as I can, I try my best to eat healthy and if I don't feel well, I consult.

**And why is it so important that the teaching profession ensures that mental health is a priority?**

As an educator or a leader in the teaching profession it is important that you always have and display a sound mental state because we cannot afford to be vulnerable as we are supposed to lead, manage, and guide curriculum delivery. We need to maintain good relationships with

everybody in the sector, something we cannot do if we do not have sound mental health as we need to be able to contribute meaningfully to our learners and all other stakeholders in the fraternity.

**As a woman do you experience some resistance when you are leading men in the profession and if so, how do you navigate around it?**

In the past, yes, I have but I have navigated around it by acquiring more knowledge and skills on leading others and managing their performance. I've had to be confident in my skills, expertise, and abilities and be comfortable in not knowing everything even if I am the leader. I am confident in saying "I don't know but I can find out and revert back to you" or challenge others by asking "what do you think" so that others may also provide answers and contribute to the solution.

**What advice would you give to the next generation of female leaders in the teaching profession?**

It is important that as female leaders in the profession we provide leadership that creates space for people of both genders to be challenged, to try their best to shine and be acknowledged for it. At the end of the day each person has a unique set of skills, abilities, and personality whether male or female and can equally contribute to the success of the team.



# Steps to follow when recording professional development points on the CPTD-IS

1

Go to [www.sace.org.za](http://www.sace.org.za)

2

Click **CPTD IS** tab (4th tab from **Home** tab)

3

- Click **login** tab on top right of the page
- Enter login details as provided when signing up

4

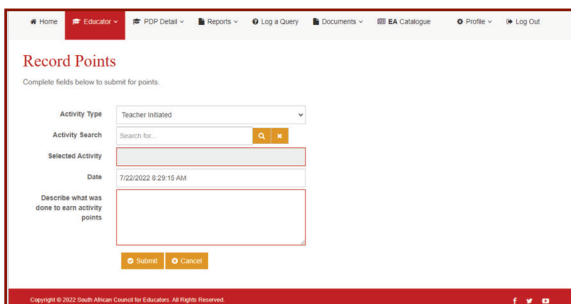
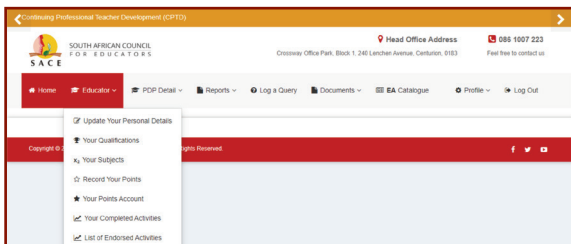
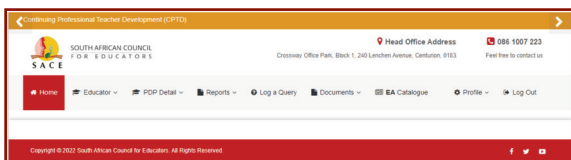
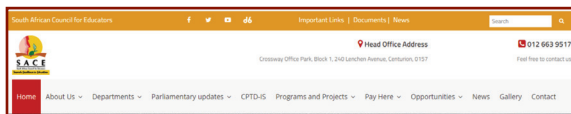
Click **Educator** tab (2nd from **Home** tab), on the drop down click **Record Your Points**

5

- Activity Type will appear as per the login (if logged as an Individual it will appear at **Teacher**)
- Initiated, if logged as School the activity will be **School initiated**, if logged as Provider it will indicate **External Initiated**)
- Click **activity search** tab and select the activity you participated in
- The selected **activity** will be populated in selected activity
- Select **date** which the activity was done
- **Describe the activity** in the provided block
- Click **Submit** button to save the activity.

6

Message of **Attendance Record Captured** will appear





# Mr. Olehile Hammer

Principal at Tetlanyo Secondary School, Kimberley, Northern Cape

"The people you lead must know where you are leading them and know how to get to where they are led to. They must be valued and always supported."



**S**ound education management and leadership are two essential features any school's success depends on. As a teacher who has gone through all the levels of school leadership (departmental head, deputy principal and now principal) and has led both a primary and a high school, I can, without any doubt, confirm that school leadership and management contribute a huge percentage to how a school performs.

A principal, as a leader, must be able to communicate, be committed, and set the correct direction (vision). He leads the school in sourcing, utilising and managing necessary resources and ensures that learning outcomes are achieved as directed. This leadership includes motivating the staff, ensuring learners remain focused and that they are given the best life experiences and education. An effective principal creates and sustains systems and processes essential for the successful running of schools.

I subscribe to the notion that a school is just as good as its leader. Each one of the staff members must be empowered to perform their responsibilities to the best of their abilities. I started in my current school in January 2021, and

# LEADERSHIP

one of the first wins I went after was to make the school management team I led understand that we are responsible for the school's direction. Teachers and managers of different school departments draw their strength from the school principal. I dedicated two weeks to empower the departmental heads, the deputy principal, and the teachers. I conducted empowerment sessions because I expect the teachers to produce quality results and the different managers to lead by example and execute their oversight roles effectively and efficiently, considering the limited resources at our disposal. A strong and capacitated school management team eventually leads to high performing teachers and high performing learners, and thus the school managed to improve its matric 2021 results by 17.4%. The people you lead must know where you are leading them and know how to get to where they are led to. They must be valued and always supported.

Without the requisite human resources, a proper system to manage human allocation and management of human resources at school, learning and teaching becomes a challenge. Post-provisioning can also be very complicated. Principals struggle at times to allocate subjects to teachers for several reasons, including the weaknesses in the post-provisioning models used to allocate teachers to schools. This is one area where the principal's managerial and leadership roles are limited. The principal must lead his teams to ensure that every class has a teacher. Always consult widely and use relevant policies to enrich the advice you give the staff and the School Governing Body to identify vacancies and fill thereof.

One aspect I find challenging is forging and sustaining stakeholder relationships. Stakeholder collaboration is like a three-legged pot. The pot cannot stand if one leg is down. Parents, learners, and teachers represent the three legs of this relationship. All three stakeholders must do their bit in the school's quest to achieve its mission and vision. The principal must give leadership in this instance. Parents' meetings are very important. Make all understand the vision and mission of the school and take them along through every programme and decision that concern them.

Learners must see their principal taking a special interest in them. The improvement in performance in 2021 can also be attributed to the continuous interaction between the staff and learners led by the principal. I have quarterly meetings with them and lead them to commit to doing their best. Continuous motivation is imperative.

Some of the challenges still faced by my school is the use of drugs by some learners. This is extremely frustrating as it interferes with learning and teaching. There are cases

of bullying associated with the usage of drugs and some of the boys have been caught selling drugs at school. The biggest frustration is that when you call the parents in dealing with these problems, they are also depressed and emotional about even worse behaviour from the same children. Many parents come through my office and lay bare their frustration, including a painful personal situation that leaves you in tears for days after meeting with them. The system is not sufficiently responding to the drug abuse crisis. As much as we lay our frustration at the doors of the relevant authorities, learning and teaching must happen through it all. Therefore, the principal must remain composed, creative, and focused not to cause more hopelessness but to lead his team to understand and truly act in loco parentis.

The onset of the pandemic forced all leaders to think out of the box. Principals were expected to adapt their school systems to respond to the COVID-19 protocols. This exercise demanded strong leadership and schools had to continue to operate out of the norm. Timetabling and allocating teachers in reduced numbers with increased classes needed a lot of creativity from the staff. Leading and managing schools drew more strength than it should from us as principals and the staff as managers in their fields of expertise. COVID-19 had compounded the problems that already existed before they crept up on us. The overextended teachers had to contend with the fear of the deadly virus. It became even more challenging to lead in instances where COVID-19 claimed a teacher's life, or when several teachers had to fight to survive the virus. Leading and managing required resilience. When all were down and weary, the principal had to rise and draw all his strength to ensure school systems remained functional. School leaders had to face demoralised staff and lead them through it. Once you take on leadership roles, you must stay true to them even during the worst of times. In reflecting, school management teams are now more empowered to deal with complex situations than before.

More support is needed for principals and teachers, as the allocation of personnel to schools is one aspect that needs attention. There are a lot of infrastructure problems in schools due to poor artistry and this occupies the principals' time and compromises learning and teaching. Principals must continuously strive to improve their leadership and management skills. The demands of the current world order on them are massive and many institutions offer courses to enrich the knowledge and skill of current leaders and those who aspire to be leaders in the future. Therefore, we need to strengthen the hands of the principal by dealing with systemic challenges to allow the principal to lead the curriculum implementation effectively and efficiently.





*Towards Excellence in Education*

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