

FOCUS GROUP 1 – VERBATIM TRANSCRIPTION

Brandon	<p>Firstly, let me thank you for your time, I know I am taking time out of your busy day. When you respond to the questions, please be as honest as possible. Again, no one will have access to this data besides my supervisor. Once the thesis has been written up, I will send a copy to the school.</p> <p>Please introduce yourself and mention your role in the SMT – What portfolios are you overseeing?</p>
R1	T1. I am the HoD for languages and I do the attendance of the learners. That is screening, capturing and then discipline is everyone's job within the SMT
R2	T2. I am the HoD for the technical department. I am an administrative HoD actually. So um its more by default but my task tends to be more administrative.
R3	T3. Good morning, I am he HoD for tourism, geography, and Life Orientation. I am also an administrative HoD. so, I um would also um see to the registers of the teachers signing in the morning and the afternoon
Brandon	Okay, so besides the department that you are leading, you have extra duties which leans more to admin. Okay, so how long have you been serving on the SMT under the leadership of this principal
R1	T1. I have been acting since last year June um and then I became permanent this year in May
R2	T2. I have been acting since 2017 and became permanent last year
R3	T3. I have also been acting for um 2 years and I also became permanent last year.

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Brandon	<p>Okay I actually don't think you have to say the Ts because I actually know your voices.</p> <p>****everyone laughs****</p> <p>Okay so accor, rather, in your opinion, what kinds of leadership styles are there? If you want to think about it, take your time. Urm Ms Maree, you do not have to answer first al the time, we can simply have a discussion around the question.</p>
R2	<p>Okay great, I would then say autocratic, but in this day and age, it is now seen as transactional leadership where you follow my instruction as a leader. Laissez faire, where you kind of allow things to happen. E.g. We have a discussion about things, but there is still room for me to do what I want to do.</p>
R1	<p>Democratic one, which is the one most of us follow. And then the autocratic one, where I say and the rest have to do what I say or so, but then you know the work is being done. Democratic is a good thing, but everyone works against their own speed. But as teachers, you know, there is a timeframe for everything so that is a bit concerning for me because it allows the teachers to do things on their time, but the work has to be completed</p>
R3	<p>I think people are set in their ways. They like to do things on their time and if leadership doesn't step in, we will do what we want to do. With that said, we need leaders that are not afraid to step on the toes of the staff otherwise everyone will just do what they want to do. I think it is important that there are rules, always, that has to be followed. And we know that teachers with their workload needs strong leadership. It will give that overall view to the staff and the community that there is some sort of structure at the school.</p>

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Brandon	<p>Okay, based on what you have just said, how would you describe the leadership style, or styles, because you know, the principal, or someone like yourself can have more than one leadership style, depending on the situation that you are faced with. SO how would you describe the principals leadership style and can you give me an example of how this principal used this leadership style, or how he uses it in the day to day running of the school?</p> <p>If you look at the page that I gave you, it lists a range of current leadership styles a principal can employ. From bureaucratic right up until transformational leadership</p>
R2	<p>Mr Ahmed likes to use combinations, which I think is a good thing because no one leader can just use one leadership style for every situation. I think that is just looking for trouble. It also depends on the people you are leading and the situation. So I would say when Mr Ahmed started as the principal, he was kind of Laissez-faire when he would just sit and observe and saw okay, certain things has its place. He left the duties up to other people and then after a while he said okay, you had your chance to show me how things are run at the school, and you were given the opportunity. So he was democratic. For him, he also developed over the time since he has been here. Because he made changes to how things are done at the school. it might not have been popular amongst the staff, but it was what was needed to take the success of the school forward</p>
Brandon	<p>So would you say that the Laissez faire approach he had in the beginning was necessary, to just sit and have a like a helicopter view to see how things are at school before he decided what approach was best for the academic success of the school and the learners.</p>
R123	<p>Yes, yes, absolutely</p>

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R2	Remember, he came from the outside, and he didn't come in and say it's my way or the highway, like I said you coming in, you got to assess what is happening. You need to know what the strengths and weaknesses are, What's working and what is not at the school in terms of the success of the school
Brandon	That's a good point that you are making because you are speaking about a change in the leadership and there is a theorist that I am using, His name is Fullan. And he advocates hallmarks noting that change is necessary. So, are you telling me that there was a shift in his approach from Laissez faire to a different approach? So what approach is he using now?
R2	I would say 80% democratic and transformational leadership because he discusses things with the staff before making a decision and 20 % transactional or autocratic where he still makes it known that he will consult you with decisions but also reminds you that ultimately the decision lies with him as the principal, that is if he feels we not reaching a point that has any merit to it
R1	That is where I gained respect for him, he didn't just come in and say pink now becomes blue and blue is now black. He has the helicopter view, but he made his presence known. He is here he is involved. He first looked at everyone's strong and weak points and after he became comfortable with the staff, his leadership approach was seen as transformational. I can truly say that he has grown as principal, he is open to change, if it is for the better and he really listens if the staff has ideas or simply something to say. That's what I like about him, he actually listens, He would take it in, he also acknowledges what you said and if he disagrees, he would say Mrs, I hear what you saying and I thought about it, but if we go this route or that route it would benefit both the school and the learners. Or he would say, yes MRs you were right, does not matter your rank at the school. And I also feel the staff is at ease with him, they find

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	<p>it easy to raise their opinion in the sense that he listens and that he is a person's person, he is approachable.</p> <p>However, it can also be negative because teachers still find they can do things on their time, but he has been working on that, where he wants things done according to the timeframe of the school. I say this because in our meeting he can be firm and say, unfortunately today is the due date for this that and the other, e.g., the submission of marks. So, I can really say that he is a good leader</p>
R3	<p>I agree with Mrs, another thing, he is not someone that is very loud, he doesn't need to raise his voice, but he is very firm when he speaks. If you done something wrong, he would call you in and address the issue but also provide you with insight into how you can go about doing things better</p>
Brandon	<p>Yes I hear you, and I think as teachers, knowing or unknowing we have to bureaucratic leaders, because you know as teacher we have to be compliant with WCEDs policies and frameworks</p> <p>So based on the results you obtained would you view your school as successful? Does the leadership style the principal employ aim to address academic performance of learners?</p> <p>Should I read the question again?</p>
R123	<p>Erm yes, yah, please *giggles*</p>
Brandon	<p>Okay, then let me ask you, what is your view of a successful school?</p>
R1	<p>To me, everything revolves around the results of the grade 12s. that is a measure people us to say whether a school is successful or not. And I agree, yes, your results must be good, but we must send happy, young adults out into the world that are developed holistically, that has</p>

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	<p>everything. That has a good academic background, that has a bit of religious backgrounds, well- disciplined. If they leave the school, they must be well rounded young adults. That to me, is a definition of a successful school.</p> <p>You know, we have learners at the school that fail grade 12, but we encourage them to come back and rewrite, and they pass with entrance to universities and colleges. They already possess the qualities of a well-rounded person.</p>
R2	<p>We know you get kids at model C schools that are brilliant in terms of academics, but they get nervous breakdowns and are not ready to face the hardships of the world. The one thing I absolutely admire about our kids are their resilience, they fall which is normal, but they pick themselves up and address their shortcomings. And I would like to think that we as teachers as well the leader of the school will be there to help them stand up to continue their journey through school. Although we get judged by our Grade 12 external results, we as a school doesn't judge ourselves in that way, we judge ourselves by every learner we are able to keep in the system without dropping out, despite the many hardships they face at home. We pride ourselves in asking did we do enough for those kids we were unable to keep. Your matric results, without a doubt opens many doors for you, it will make your life easier if you obtain the certificate, gives you choices for the future. If our kids do not get university entrance results, we remind them that it is not the end of the world. We always tell them to look back at their previous year, academic or not, and by their own definition, define the year in the context of successful for them, not use the definition of a textbook. How successful are you in your life? And only you can decide that. We strive to provide them with the necessary skill to be successful and happy with who they are.</p> <p>I am a maths teacher and classes do ask why do I need to know what x is $+ 2$, but I also tell them do no look at the expression like that, instead,</p>

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	<p>look at the problem, doesn't matter how complex, and ask yourself how am I going to get out of this problem, we provide you with the skill, you need to apply it. X is a placeholder, its little blocks. It depends on you, how successful are you going to be in thinking your way out of this problem with the skill you were taught at your school and even in your day-to-day life at home.</p> <p>Also, what do we as teachers model for our kids in terms of values? Do we model forgiveness, relationship building, team work because we cannot expect our kids to model these values in their community if we as teachers and the leader doesn't instil or model these values at school. I think as a school that is what we strive for to make a valuable contribution to themselves and the greater world out there</p>
R3	<p>To add to your question, we also have a 9th period with the Grade 12s at the end of the day, like a revision or consolidation session. I will never forget when the principal had to do a presentation to the district based on the schools results, he ended off by mentioning that even though we are faced with severe socio-economic circumstances, we obtained 80%, learners being expelled from other schools, come to our school, we accept them and we get them through grade 12. So, we must do something right. Leadership at the school is definitely doing something right. We are instilling values in the learners. We might not obtain a 96 or 100% pass rate but When we are outside of the school perimeter, the learners have so much respect for you, so something we must be doing right.</p> <p>You know, a lot of our learners who started in Grade 8 that comes back to the school as a police officer or a teacher, you would never have said that very child would become so successful because of their hardships, so again, leadership must be doing something right. So, we as the leaders, the principal and the SMT doesn't just look at the 80% and say we were successful, instead, a child that can mention a success to</p>

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	himself, irrespective of their results, tells me the school and its culture positively contributed to success of the learner.
Brandon	Yeah, so what would you say is the contributing factors, because I hear you speak about a 9 th period, so what are the contributing factors of the success of these learners. I also hear you speak about values
R2	<p>Obviously, like said before, we have the 9th period and also the extra classes offered to our learner. We also look at the subjects and analysis each learner based on their results obtained in each subject. I am a math teacher, I would love if everyone can do math, but it is not about me, it is about the learner. We advise learners on the next options for them. Instead of obtaining a 20 or 30% in maths they can obtain a 70% in maths lit, so now they have choices again and their academic success looks better in terms of results. Although they won't be a doctor, there are many other careers that they can choose from, if they feel strongly about something like medicine. And this made a big difference. Learners that did very poorly, switched to more accommodating subjects and they simply did much better. The fact that they were okay with the change and didn't see it as they are failures showed to me that the leadership style of the principal was concerned with the academic success of the learner and not about his ego where learners did not have a choice.</p> <p>We also asked the parent to come in and the decision to change subjects was made by all three parties involved. The parent, learner, and the principal</p>
Brandon	So you say you analyse the results of each learner and based on the results you provided options to the learner to assist in their academic success?
R2R1R3	Yes
R2	And you know what, we made it known that we support their decision, if we couldn't get hold of the parents, the principal would become very

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	bureaucratic and actually write letter upon letter, being very persistent until the parent played a role in helping the school assist the learner.
R1	<p>Once the learner saw that the school, through the leadership of Mr Ahmed only wanted the best for them, they changed without question, and they were such happy learners. They wanted to learn. The learner also saw that they can get more than just 30% if they change and actually make something of their life.</p> <p>Another thing, the learners were closely knitted to each other. They looked out for each other, the relationships between the learners were amazing. If someone was absent, someone would offer to take the notes home to that learner, so they really shared with each other what was needed to make them a success.</p> <p>Another thing that contributed was the matric camp they had, and immediately there was relationship building between these kids it was just amazing. The learner was free to be who they wanted to be, express who they are, find their identity and run with it. And it made a big difference because we also started a mentoring program where each teacher was assigned a certain number of learners, so again, there was relationship building between the teachers and learners, even if you didn't teach them</p>
Brandon	Just tell me, what is the purpose of these camps?
R2	<p>So we have 2 camps. One is at the beginning of the year, and its actually in preparation for grade 12. So its about mentoring these learners, preparing them for what lies ahead, but also to foster a positive relationship with these learners and for them to help each other, that's why we have trust exercises on this camps. Because when you have trust. So we told them , leave you're your books at home, this camps is about values, trust, building relationships, fining yourself. It was to prepare you for academics but we did not do any academics. They were</p>

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	<p>divided into groups and they had to learn to look out for each other, They had to cook for each other which was nice because they could really spend some time with one another. They also had to write down their goals for the year and beyond, based on the goals of the school, which was in line with what the school expected from them.</p> <p>The second camp was different, more academically driven. The 1st night would just be fun, where we dance and sing and people would showcase their talent. The second day its all about learning, tutoring, catching up on missed work and so is the third.</p> <p>Mrs, do you have anything to add</p>
R3	<p>Yes, we tried to transform these learners so that they could find who they are in order to get better results.</p>
Brandon	<p>I hear what you are saying, so would you agree that transformational leadership is necessary to bring about change? Because I hear you speak about the values that you want to instil in these learners. Because again, Fullan says that instructional leadership is narrow a solution, So would you then say that transformational leadership is necessary</p>
R2	<p>Okay, so urm times change. Covid had such a huge impact on our learners and our teachers. Our learners had to endure so much, so what worked pre covid might not necessarily work now. So we have to adopt. The leadership approach had to adapt. Because Mr Ahmed and the SMT had to change the way they lead in order to maintain good results and to keep the moral of the learners. So what worked pre covid is not going to work post covid, so we had to come up with other plans. Mr Ahmed wanted to know where our learners are right now, and what are we going to do to get them where they need to be in terms of curriculum. We decided to stick to our values route because what we have been infusing in lessons with regards to values was not overt, we didn't just say right</p>

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	<p>today we looking at kindness. So instilling a sense of helping the person next to you like a study buddy. Or someone says they do not how to do something and another learner in the class would say I know, let me show you. But everything starts with the leader, setting the ball in motion, filtering it down to the teachers to manifest these values within your teaching in the classroom on a daily basis.</p>
R1	<p>Yes, also with regards to covid, our learners tend to learn more from each other, so we strategically place weaker ones with stronger ones, but covid had made it very difficult. We use to do assignments in class and there was such excitement among the learners because they were learning from each other, together. So we had to adopt a changed mindset, and ask ourself how are we going to keep the spirit of the learners to maintain the results and get them through the system without them falling off the wagon.</p>
R3	<p>If I can just add, my point, We are moving away from the terminology so badly just to get through the work because we have a curriculum to complete. I am teaching Afrikaans in English already. We are now counting on the values we instilled in them to navigate their way at home, to understand that education comes first. Again it comes back to the mindset thing, what was and what is.</p>
R2	<p>We asked ourselves what are we teaching? Are we just teaching to teach, or is their meaning beyond the curriculum? And this again is what I referred to with regards to the values.</p>
Brandon	<p>Okay, so the teacher is a very important resource at the school, actually the most important resource a principal has to his disposal. So my next question would then be, how do you as an individual feel about CPTD</p>
R1	<p>CPTD is very important, because if you are not going to develop, you are going to be stuck in the past, stuck in your old ways. Remember there are new ways of teaching all the time. And if I am not going to upskill</p>

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	<p>myself, I will never be able to stay with the new learner coming in year after year. Simple example. If I do not know how to use technology, like a PowerPoint presentation, I am going to lose today's child in the lesson because today's kids are technology driven. There are easier ways to present your lessons</p> <p>What is also important to me, is if the principal, gives our allocation in the beginning of the year, what we need to teach and who needs to teach, put your best teacher you have for the subject they can teach the best. I am Afrikaans, don't give me an extra Geography class because my timetable has space, in the end we are disadvantaging the learner. I know it depends on our totals and so but to the best of your ability, a principal should always try to put his best teachers by the subjects they are qualified for.</p> <p>And then you must continuously develop, because teachers are never done with learning. Always, always. Even though sometimes we say we do not want to go or we don't have time, but in the end we go because we know how important CPTD is. You must always be on top of your subject area.</p>
R3	<p>I think if we force it more, maybe once a term or something, then we can even achieve a better result because as Mrs just said, we always lack something and we can always learn from each other. Because it is important, because at the end of the day, teaching and learning is about the child, to the benefit of the child. We want to have the child better, the best there is to give. So, maybe staff will see beyond the classroom because without CPTD we will forever be stuck in our ways. But times have really changed. And again like Mrs said, with the technology, we need to ask ourselves, are we going to stay by the old ways or are we going to develop ourselves to help our learners achieve the best that they can achieve. The child already knows a lot when he comes to class. He takes out his phone, presses on a button and there's a new way of</p>

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	<p>teaching. So CPTD is important because we must be able to offer the learner something new. We must actually make space on our yearly calendar for CPTD, that's how important it is</p>
R2	<p>I don't think that any profession can go without PD. Not anybody, not at any level in your teaching career can say they do not need to develop. 2 years ago, who would have said that Covid would have been here? So if people were just complacent, and don't care, then that is the type that doesn't belong in teaching. I mean, who wants a teacher for their child that only knows so much and is not interested in knowing more. You cant only know what you want to teach and it actually makes no sense because then how do you break it down, how do you teach it if you only know that's in the textbook. Your skills isn't just about what's there. Your skills come from everything that you do, everything that you say. I am not a language teacher, but I at least need to speak properly in class or as best as possible, bu...but you know what, you know what Brandon, you teach every subject because I cant go in a maths class and say yah ma I don't mean such stuff, you know what I mean. Then my kids are going to speak like that you know, so, PD isn't only about your subject discipline, it is about you as a person. Are you a rounded a person, because how are you going to teach a child to be a well rounded individual if you yourself are not rounded.</p>
R1	<p>And its also not only, sorry, its not only about your subject area, but it is about classroom discipline, administration, everything, you must know everything. You need to develop constantly. If you do not know how to work on an excel document to do the register or whatever, find out, in doing so, you your developing yourself. Sharpen yourself up.</p>
Brandon	<p>So then would you say that the CPTD add value to the success of the learner? Because you spoke about if you are able to make use of different methodologies you will be able to deliver the lesson better.</p>

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R123	*continuously nodded in agreement * yes, yah, natuurlik. Mmmmm
R1	And you also reach the child easier, because if you tell the child, “haal jou selfoon uit” or take out your cell phone and just go in here and there, just google this. Can you now see there are synonyms? It opens a whole new domain for them. Then they say oh Mrs and look at this, and that and the other, automatically, you have captured the attention of the child, you engaged with him, and a relationship was built because you are his level now. Today’s learner is all about technology. These days technology is all over, so we cannot use the old way of teaching. Instead of banning the cell phone use it as a teaching and learning tool. Just make sure you put in on your lesson plan for when a query is raised regarding cell phones, because you can now show whatever, that it is part of the lesson
Brandon	<p>Yes! And I think it goes back to what Mrs Martinis has said. Because you are now fostering a relationship with the learner again</p> <p>Okay, So if you think about yourself, how often do you develop yourself, and you as HoDs have departments that you are overseeing, and do you assist in the development of the staff that you are overseeing?</p>
R123	Everyone laughs, R1 shjoe – let me think
R2	Okay let me say this, I am the HoD for the technical department where maths and Science is included, so we are always in crises mode, in saying this, We receive workshops and training on biweekly or monthly basis, We always hav workshops that we need to attend to upskill ourselves. For last couple of months, I just had workshops on workshops on workshops
R1	Yes its true hey. Sometimes I thought, but yoh, does this teacher only have workshops, it was literally every week.

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R2	<p>Because you know what, obviously something is wrong and these workshops and training sessions was basically to try and get something better out. To improve the results of our learners. SO if I look at the staff that works under me, the technical results are not bad. But I try and develop them in more than just content. Little things like looking at a question paper, giving it back, that is also developing your staff, its not just a formal setting like a workshop. It can simply be a discussion. Listen I see you are not comfortable in setting Question papers, lets have a look at it after school. We tend to think that PD is you in a classroom listening to someone speaking because that's the school of thought that we come from. But that's not only the case, Simply popping into the class or workshop, have a look have a discussion, asking your staff where do you feel you need to develop further? And finding routes to assist your staff. Simply checking in with people, how are you doing? Do you have enough resources or equipment. Unfortunately we didn't have a sit down or interactive PD session this year because of Covid. In last year the principal organised the PD session with google classroom to help the teachers get familiar with the technology needed to teach online should schools have to close again, so he was thinking ahead which I liked and I think that was really the last in term of that formal setting PD sessions at school.</p> <p>If information comes through from district office the Principal, will forward it to us as the SMT and we will distribute the development sessions to our departments if it is applicable. We also give the teachers the space to leave immediately after school to attend the workshop in the comfort of their own home because everything is online these days. But like I say, the most important is actually that one on one sessions with your department to try and find their weakness and assist them, but also to find their strengths and build on it. We always try and send the new teachers, because they sometimes try their luck because they sometimes come with an attitude of don't tell me, I just finished studying I know</p>

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	<p>everything, I can take over the world type of thing, but I think all of us were like that man, you just come and you going to walk into a class and everyone is going to pass and now they don't pass and then they don't pass. But this is also where PD comes in, because you must go back into that class and try again</p>
R1	<p>Then you must also build relationships with your staff, I am a very hands on person. If I walk pass the class then I would ask Mrs are you still okay are you still on track with your work and so on, if you have a problem please come speak with me. I also regularly send a WhatsApp message individually because I don't like groups, asking if they are coping so I am a very hands on person. So I know what's happening with everyone in my department. I also like the one on one. I will be very general in our subject meetings but I will address issues one on one with someone if there is an issue and there must be that trust relationship between you and your subject department</p>
R3	<p>I run three departments, Geography, Life orientation and tourism. Geography, Mr links helps me a bit with that department. In terms of professional development, we do a lot of workshops, even with tourism, we had a roles and responsibilities workshop for both Hods and teachers and everything is online. These workshops prepare me as HoD to better develop my own team. And of course, you as an individual can develop yourself by reading material relevant to your subject or your department so that you can assist your team. And where you know you are doing a good job is where your colleagues come to you with issues and feel free and at ease to tell you they struggle with something, and they need to f=develop in certain areas. With regards to Life Orientation, and where I can really see that I am growing is that I have a much more open relationship. Learners are more comfortable to come to me with their problems, so there I know that I am doing something right, you know, sometimes we give LO to any teacher, but everyone doesn't have the necessary skill to council learners, you have to be trained, that's why we</p>

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	do these PD sessions. And sometimes teachers that never taught LO will not be able to make a decision that will benefit the child health and academics in the end
Brandon	<p>I agree with you Mrs, I taught LO for first time last year and I did not enjoy it. With that said, I never want to teach it again because I do not possess the necessary skill to teach it.</p> <p>Now let's think about the principal as the leader, which programs has he initiated to ensure that the teachers are developing to maintain the 80% that you achieved, whether it was informal or formal</p>
R3	Mr Ahmed had something, where he called in every single teacher, and he wanted to know from us how are we going to improve our results. Yes, he had a session like that. He looked at our results and asked, okay, how are we going to get these learners to a 50% and it was nice because we could openly talk about challenges, we are facing
R1	We also had quite a few team building activities with Mr Ahmed to bring the staff together
R2	<p>We had quite a few workshops, refresher courses, how to use google classroom how to use your WhatsApp appropriately. Google classroom is a good idea except our children didn't buy into it because of the data issue. I remember the CA saying that if this thing happens next year we cannot use data as an excuse and I was like Women, do you know that many of these kids don't have food in their house but jy worry oor data. Do you live in the same world that I live in. So yes, these are these activities that we did, how to best utilise your social media platforms and how does ot work effectively for teaching and learning. Like I said we had google classroom, everyone was linked but it didn't work, so we shifted to WhatsApp, a platform everyone used, but we had training on how to use it appropriately for academics and it was a great platform, I tried</p>

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	<p>google classroom but one child was online and I said now this can't work, moved to WhatsApp and I could reach between 90 and 100% of the class. The push was obviously online learning and the principal with the SMYT tried to equip the teachers as far as we could coz we had to take it to a next level depending on how easy it was for you to use this platform. We also had sessions in the hall where we were showed the different apps and put in on your phone to assist the teaching process. Out of it, at first I don't think a lot of teachers were keen in learning about this possible new way of teaching, but a lot of teachers gained knowledge in understanding how it works and knowing that there are other ways of teaching out there and people sort of gravitated towards what they thought would work for them and the kids, depending on their subject. But at least the options were there, online collaboration</p>
R1	<p>What Mr Ahmed also did was he secured food for the learners for the extra classes that was offered at the school as well as the 9th period because then the learners stayed. That's all they always ask, are there gonna be something to eat?</p>
Brandon	<p>So if you think about IQMS, what is your opinion of IQMS, and how does the leadership style of the principal impact the process of IQMS and the analyses of it?</p>
R2	<p>IQMS, okay so, can we be honest about it</p>
Brandon	<p>Yes please, you have to</p>
R2	<p>I can lie about it, but IQMS is not very reliable at our school because it is an exercise in paper work which is why I think QMS will be better because there is much less paperwork and much less other things. Its more about the compensation. IQMS is about filling in papers and from transferring scores from one page to the next. We can say maybe leadership could have been more clear with it or they should make it count for more but ot</p>

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	<p>really does take up a heck of a lot of time and it becomes more about the paperwork and that's where you are loosing out because if I must, lets say I do my preassessment and I fill in all the things I want and now we discuss it then I must do Q1 -Q6 or whatever by then time I get to my PGP, we literally at the point where we just say ja sign please, just sign. You know what I mean, its unnecessary. You don't have to transfer the scores so I do think it is a waste of time, time we could have used better. The principle behind it is not it is the practical aspect that's why I say QMS might be better which we will be doing once a term, which is essentially how you suppose to do it anyway. SO when we look at how does it feed into the rest, because you get stuck in the paperwork, it doesn't feed in well as you would hope. When we started we had to do the educator improvement plan and we had to take what everyone highlighted but we don't do it anymore now we wonder now what was the point? Are people taking it seriously? No they are not, that's now just being honest. Its for that 1% or 1.5%. and then we must still find place to store everything you know. The principle behind it is great because people must be assessed. You need to assess yourself. How do you grow if you don't assess yourself or get assessed. Where you are and there you want to go. So everything else around it is just unnecessary</p>
R1	Mr Ahmed is a bureaucratic leader during this process because its something that must be done
R2	And its not like he a choice because you must state your plan, you must take the documents to be signed off, they don't even look at it because you can put the same thing three years in a row, and not once will they come back and say but you still did not do it. You got to put in what type of support you require from the district
Brandon	And do you have a reflection after the entire IQMS process?

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R1	<p>No, unless it's a teacher here for the first time, then I will do the whole process with them. And I think in your second and third year you still take IQMS seriously, but by your fourth year not anymore. But after that, you also know the teacher, a relationship was formed, you know the quality, so there is trust between you and your staff. So we literally just sit there and fill in forms. I tell the people that I have to IQMS beforehand, do not give yourself a four, you do not know everything. Just give yourself a 2 or a 3, the process is designed so that you can identify your shortcomings so that you can develop</p>
Brandon	<p>So you are part of the leadership of the school because you are managing certain portfolios, can you just briefly describe the macro and micro planning of the school, particularly with regards to the delivery of the curriculum?</p>
R2	<p>`yes so obviously you take the year before, you have your timetable, which is governed by CAPS, which tells you how much instruction time per subject so that's obviously things you cannot change, where you come in is with your subject meetings where you discuss who will teach what. SO you start off on top with your guidelines in terms of what must be and what can be so that is on SMT level, then you go to your subject meeting. You discuss all of these things. The classes get decided by the SMT, the number of classes per grade and that is also what you take into your meeting. Now you know how many classes you have and what you need to speak about, how many grade 8 classes, sometimes, what grade 8 class because we do not stream anymore because we want strong learners with the weak learners. Whatever the outcome of the subject meetings, the SMT meets again to report back to the principal, from there we generate a timetable that you what happens the year before. SO in the new year, now you obviously have a timetable and your classes and class teachers are also allocated the year before. The staff does not really have much of a say there, unless somebody comes and ask you know</p>

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	like I had 8a I want 9a so there is room for that request but its not set in stone
R1	The same with the subjects, the year before we have a meeting and they say I want to teach grade 10 this year or I want my grade 8s of last year and then I will say remember, this is only your wish list we will go to the SMT and we will decide there. But they can ask, like last year, some teachers came back to Mr Ahmed and asked Sir, can we just switch this around, then we try and work something out internally so that the teachers can also be happy.
R3	And also in our subject meetings we decide who is the strongest or the teacher with the most experience who is going to lead the group because we as HoDs also have a heavy workload so its best practice I would say, so we have pacesetter in every grade
R2	Which is very nice I have to admit for a new teacher coming in, the kind of structures that are in place makes it so much easier for them
Brandon	Are you referring to structures enforced by the WCED
R2	Yes, but look you don't have to follow theirs, but for someone that doesn't know, there is a framework. When I started teaching I was told go in and teach and I was like what must I teach, here is the textbook. You had to do it on your own. So now we have better structures in place and we made it available to the staff and then obviously discuss it with both new and old teachers
R1	Sorry to break in, but that is also what we like doing, what was your strong points, what was your weak points and then we share it with each other and so we are learning from each other, when I did oral this method worked very well and then someone else can also use it, you must share with your department, best practices. And what are the bad things, wait

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	this is where I can improve and novice teachers will see oh Mrs is also struggling, so its okay to struggle and learn from each other
R3	If I can add to that, for example, the LO classes we have a shortage of textbooks. Instead of copying for 200 learners I only copy one set per class, because you have more than one class in a grade and so we share notes. So in our meeting we share these types of ideas that works, so we guide the team.
Brandon	Okay, so how does the principal monitor or guide you as the SMT, regarding the delivery of the curriculum? Is there any role that he plays? That is in terms of the content that is being taught.
R1	Yes I think he does support us a lot, if there are any problems. For most part of the content, the HoDs will oversee it. Our rule on SMT is we are going to check books in the classes with the teachers file and the learners' writing book and the assessments completed. We never had something like this before, if there are any issues the HoDs sorts it out, if the problem is to big in terms of unfinished work, we refer it to Mr Ahmed. And what I like about him is if you ask him to address an issue, he does ot immediately and its gets sorted out . He has an open door policy.
R2	What he also does is, he respects line functions. Because it is not his job, coz remember, the person reports to me as an HoD in terms of curriculum, ultimately I am responsible because I need to give a report on. So I go with my report to him and say listen I picked up this problems and we discuss it and he would make a suggestion. But he would offer the person support first. Always. Always offers support first because you do not know what is happening, but if support is not wanted or needed or is not being followed then obviously it needs to go to the next level which is district, or when the CA come, they also report to the principal is there are any problems, look they would have told the HoD as well. So of there problem needs to go the principal, he would call the HoD and tell the HoD this is the report from the CA, now lest call the teacher in, so how do we

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	rectify it? How to we assist the teacher to deliver the curriculum better and he request a short term plan to get rid of the problem, if you are 5 weeks behind what is your plan for catching up.
Brandon	And does he visit the classrooms? Is he visible in the corridors?
R2	Yes, but he also has his own classes, but yes he is around and he walks around, the more the kids see you, the more the teachers see you, the more likely they are to listen and its good because everyone knows he might be here at anytime so I have to work. I think everyone would prefer if he could do it more often but there's also other tasks that must be done and from the outside perspective we don't always know what other work he is busy with to ensure the success of the school is maintained. Stuff that had to be handed in or signed off for head or district office.
R3	I mean the three of us just realised that there are so many paperwork and sometimes the paperwork has to be in so you miss teaching time or the department sends an email they want documents the same day or tomorrow then we have to run around
Brandon	SO with regards to your novice teachers, how does the principal ensure that they are managing in class in terms of the content and how does he support them delivering the curriculum? And I see you are smiling Mrs so you must have a story
R3	Yes, I am smiling because I am thinking of a novice teacher that came late last year and Mr Ahmed called them to say butt as a teacher, your day cannot start the same time as the learner, you at least have to be here by 7h30. So one thing that I do notice is he acts immediately.
R1	So we as the HoDs make sure that they have the ATPS, they have everything they need to ensure that the curriculum is being delivered effectively and we check if they have the necessary resources for that. We explain how the ATPS work but also to make sure that they are

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	<p>happy. Because you know we have difficult learners. But I am a form believer that the teacher who works in my department has to call me to address nay issues first. Teaching is something you master of time, there is no right way, so I remind them that we learn with time, don't think there is something wrong with you if you couldn't finish, lets discuss the matter</p> <p>Because we were just given the textbook to teach, we are not like that, we have experience, so we know how it is, so we make sure they have everything they need. We sit with them and show to set up a paper, the requirements, mark allocations, how the taxonomies work</p>
R2	<p>What has helped like I said, the structures that are in place, the lesson plans and that is where you start because even they are nervous, if the know what they must do it's a good start. So you start with the discussion, so for this term this is where we going to start this is more or less how much time we have. Looking at specific examples in the textbook. Then we go check, are you good are we on the same page are you happy with the way things are going. With us a lot of problems is discipline related, so we have a head of discipline that steps in. coz you got to separate the two, there is a difference between curriculum problems and discipline problems. Yes the discipline effects the curriculum to a major extent. You cant send a teacher for curriculum training if discipline is the issues, so you got to know the difference. So after the two ahs been separated, we follow up cos its important, double check so you here now ow did it go</p> <p>You know, I was sitting in one of my novice teachers classes and she started out with an ice-breaker and I thought wow when last did I do that and I could feel I was in a new teachers class because when I come in I am like right guys take out your books, where is your homework, I don't do ice breakers anymore, and you know what, it is fun. Yes you are worried about time and what you must cover. I don't spy on teachers and ask learners outside of the class to see their books, I don't think its fair towards the teacher. However, kids that come to the office are given the</p>

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	space to raise their concerns under certain circumstances. Lets say the teacher is absent for a while, it's a valid reason for the learner to ask what about my school work?
R3	I have a 2 novice teacher in my team, but the person leading her is a very strong experienced teacher who assist the teacher in ensuring the work is covered. The other novice teacher is so strong that she is actually leading a grade, but I meet with her on a regular basis. But I think as HoDs we really support our novice teachers in terms of curriculum coverage
R1	I assess them regularly and we speak about it, like I told the one you doing a good job but your time management is a issue, not necessarily the curriculum, but handing in of marks, stiff like that, so lets try and work on that a bit or due dates for question papers. SO in the week of a due date, I will remind them everyday, whether it is in person or a message on WhatsApp
R3	Once a term we check the books and files. Teacher portfolios, the assignments with the memos is in in the file. We give feedback, we usually fill in a form, after everything has been done, we give feedback to Mr Ahmed. We also moderate the learner book
Brandon	Ok, so would you say that the principal plays a vital role in the academic success of the learners
R3 R1	Yes most definitely
R2	The top, if the top is not right, nothing is right. You can have strong people in the middle, but of your top structure is not right, so I would say he is the most important person because you are making a decision about where the school is going

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Brandon	Okay, so then how would you describe the principals relationship with the learners at the school?
R1	He has a very good relationship with the learners, we always have assemblies, so the learners always saw him. He also loves sending letters to the parents to come to school, so the learners can go to class but the next day they must be accompanied by their parents
R3	A teacher was angry because Mr Ahmed listens to the children, which I think is good. He listens to all sides of a story before he addresses an issue. He is not going to yell at the learners and say you are wrong he will always listen. I was with him while he was dealing with a learner and he has such a good relationship with the learners and the manner in which he speaks to them. And he is very thorough. He will not leave anything unaddressed
R2	Even though he is not loud, he is firm and the kids really respect him and they respect him because they know he is fair, he will give them a chance. Like I said before, you need to discern what is valid and what is not, but you won't know if you don't listen, and he listens
Brandon	Do you think that the principal creates a positive or conducive amongst the learners and with the staff as well.
R3	After intervals, he would be visible to ensure all the learners are back in their classes so he supports us in that regard to ensure teaching takes place. We have a WhatsApp group where they ask, I was busy teaching in the prefabs and I saw Mr Ahmed coming pass and took the learners out of the class who was disruptive and took them to the office. SO he makes sure that while we are busy teaching, he can assist by trying to deal with problems that occur. so that teaching and learning can go on.
R1	He is very accommodating in that sense not just with HoDs, he respects everyone, even the caretakers. SO he gets that back in return

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R2	Yes I agree, he models respect for teaching time, and teachers know that, so they do the same and so do the learners.
Brandon	Okay, last question. Is there perhaps a different approach you think he can employ to improve the academic success of learners or what would you say he can do differently to maintain or improve academic success of learners?
R2	In a perfect world, get more parents involved, let them come and see what the kids are busy with. Assign some of his lighter tasks to someone else to free him up to be even more involved on the school grounds. Have the time to actually sit in a teacher's class and show me what you have done. Teachers and learners will perform better knowing that the principal is there with continuous support. And Change can only happen when something happens on a regular basis, not just once or twice.
R1	A teacher must feel comfortable in the principal or the HoD sitting in the class knowing that we are not there to scold or check what you are doing wrong, but to actually provide support and see where you are lacking
R3	We submit subject improvement plans per term for subjects with less than 60% pass