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| Brandon | So I am going to start by asking you the first question.  So the first question is, how long have you been in the teaching profession? |
| Principal | In the teaching profession I have been 38 years, that is 38 years this year. |
| Brandon | Oh wow, and then serving as the principal, how long have you been principal? |
| Principal | Serving principal, I have been principal 2018, 2019, 2020 that is 2 years acting principal, so and now again, so I would say 2 and a half years. |
| Brandon | Okay, so what would you say is your view of a successful school? That is in terms of learner performance. |
| Principal | My my view? A successful school is a school that is well managed in terms of discipline. And obviously the good results of a school. |
| Brandon | Mmm so contributing factors, what are the contributing factors to the success of learner academic performance. Let me say, what contributing factors from you as the principal, the SMT, the teachers, contribute to them being successful? |
| Principal | Obviously I would say that learners must be well disciplined, they must be focused, they must know that they are coming to school to improve t heir academics and obviously well qualified educators that educates them to get the good results. Well qualified and experienced educators. |
| Brandon | So as a school serving communities that are facing inordinate hardships like illiteracy, poverty and all of that, here in the Western Cape, yet you obtained an 80% pass rate in the NCS examinations, so would you say that your school is successful? |
| Principal | Yes, definitely, you see you must also remember, that success in our schools or schools in the Western Cape, is determined by the matric results, not really the other grades that is why my focus was on the matric and to make the change there.  I feel you start with the matric and the other learners from other grades will see no this is the results of the school, and it will impact the other grades as well. |
| Brandon | Okay, so then what would you ascribe those results to? Why do you say the school is successful based on that80%? How did you get that? |
| Principal | How did I get that 80%? You must remember, before I got here, I worked at a different school. So speaking to the learners. One of the biggest things was parents did not pitch up for meetings. Learners did not stay for the 9th period that we have. The discipline of the learners was taken into consideration as well. I made it a point that teachers must inform me If learners do not perform in the class and I would respond to that immediately and I think that was most important. And also, with regards to the matric, what I really focused on was on their results. So what I would do I would take their grade 11 results, and based on that I would interact with them on a termly basis. I would discuss individually with the grade 12s. I will call them in individually and tell them listen here this was your results, how are you going to try and improve on this? And then I would monitor them and their performance, so my focus when I started was basically on the grade 12 learners, their results and their behaviour in the classroom and I would interact with them on a regular basis. |
| Brandon | So you say that you analyse the results and based on that you call in the learners and talk to them one on one? |
| Principal | Yes, what is their goal, I then let then sign a consent form saying that this is what they want to achieve. I also send a form to the parents, they must also sign and know what the plans of their children are at school. That is their commitment to maintaining or improving their results. This also allows parents to interact with them at home. If there are any issues I ask the parents to bring it to us and see how we can assist. I also encourage them to have a study schedule. And if they cannot study at home, I need to know about this so that we can make more provision at school. You see lie I told you, before I came to this school, there was a lacksy daisy attitude towards the matric. That’s why the matric were not focused that’s why the results were less than 60% or so in the other years. The other thing I also did was, most of the learners were forced to do mathematics and physics, so I also relooked at their subjects in 2018 and where I could have advised learners on the best subjects for them to get a good result. Although they were grade 12, I had the co-operation of the central, the person that is in charge of the district. I went straight to him and said this is the situation and we need to change it. That was another thing. That is also why we got that 80% the first year I took over. |
| Brandon | So this form that you give them is like a binding contract between them and the school? Does this form tell them what is expected of them and then what they can expect from you as the principal in terms of goals that they want to achieve? |
| Principal | Yes, it does, you see the form I actually got from the department, central. All those things are in there. I will try and get you a copy and give it to you. |
| Brandon | Okay, them sir tell me how do you as an individual feel about continuous professional development |
| Principal | You see, I believe that teachers must continuously develop. You can never say that you are done learning. I mean I have been teaching for 38 years but there are still things that I don’t know. You know each year the department send stuff for developmental purposes and I really encourage my staff to attend these sessions. I tell them you must go for that, to develop you further. Even if you have a degree in that or even better, you must still go for it. And especially if you are teaching a matric class. I won’t give a matric class to an educator that is not developed or experienced. That’s why I say professional development is very important, I encourage them to go. I even go with them, while I was acting principal, I went to develop myself too. One holiday I spent my entire holiday with colleagues of different school developing myself. |
| Brandon | That’s actually my next question, how often do you as a principal develop yourself and your staff in terms of professional development? |
| Principal | Look as I said, on a yearly basis, every year I encourage them to go on professional development and as I said the department gives professional development classes and I keep a register of the professional development that we do. And myself, we have this principal’s academy where we have mentors to help us lead the school better. I also had a mentor that came to school and we had a discussion, she was an experienced principal where she guided me to through the process of principalship. And because the previous year’s results were so low, 45%, we also had to submit a SIP, school improvement plan and we also had to go for classes, for lecturers. |
| Brandon | And then what is your view of IQMS? Urm, do you think it’s a good thing? Do you think it is working? |
| Principal | To tell you the truth, I do not think it’s working, it’s just a lot of work that needs to be filled in but nothing comes of it, your peers just come sit in your class once a year and you fill in from number 1 to number 5, but nothing comes from it. My personal opinion? It is just extra administration work. |
| Brandon | Mmmm, extra administration work, okay… and then urm, in your opinion, what kinds of leadership styles are there? That you can use at the school. |
| Principal | You see you have the autocratic principal who just informs the staff this and that must be done, there is no real communication. And then I believe in transformational leadership where you interact with your staff. You make a decision based on your interaction with the staff. And that’s very important, obviously there are times for emergency decision, but I also try and consult the staff because the more people you get on your side the better co-operation you get form the staff. So I have that communication with the staff, any decision that I make, I consult the staff about it first. |
| Brandon | So urm, based on the page that I gave you, which of those leadership styles would you say you employ as a principal, and then give me an example of where you used this leadership style in the day to day running of the school. |
| Principal | Like I said, I am a transformational leader, where the principal and the staff empower each other. I always try and bring about change, good change. And then also the leadership about leading form the top, giving instructions. |
| Brandon | Are you referring to the participative leadership style? |
| Principal | Yes, that one, just give me the question again |
| Brandon | So, which of those leadership styles would you say you employ as a principal, and then give me an example of where you used this leadership style in the day to day running of the school. |
| Principal | Okay, like I said, the participative and transformational. So the first thing we have in the morning is a SMT meeting, so we discuss the day ahead and the decision that needs to be made. The decision of the SMT we take to the staff, it is not a final decision. Whatever comes out by the staff, we will adjust the decision taken to the meeting. If the staff disagrees and it makes sense, I would rather go with the collective decision. So there is a lot of participation and consultation before the day even starts. |
| Brandon | Ok good, so tell me, urm how do you monitor the delivery of the curriculum by the teachers? |
| Principal | Ok, so what we have is we have a subject head for each subject. They have been tasked to see that the curriculum has been taught, they need to go and go sit in the class for example to monitor how the teachers teach and so on and monitor the curriculum. As I said we have a quarterly meeting, every quarter and we discuss how far we came with the curriculum, so that is how we monitor the curriculum. If there is a shortage, the teachers need to come in in the holiday or over weekends to finish the work. SO the SMTs meet with the subject’s heads for feedback and they bring it to my attention in our SMT meetings. |
| Brandon | Then in terms of your planning, you know you and your SMT have your macro planning and then it filters down into the micro planning. So tell me in terms of your macro planning how do you ensure that the curriculum is being delivered the you have meetings with your SMT before they take it to their departments. |
| Principal | How will I ensure that it has been done? Okay, we have a year plan that we do the previous year, the we have term planners. The subject heads have meetings with their group of teachers and they have to bring their planning to the SMT. When I have meetings with the staff I tell them this is what I expect in terms of dates for curriculum to be covered, especially before the exams. If not, they must explain to me why so that we can make a plan to get the necessary work covered. |
| Brandon | And do you have, does the school have a curriculum co-ordinator? |
| Principal | Yes, we do have a co-ordinator. |
| Brandon | Okay so in terms of that person, how does the curriculum co-Ordinator lead the staff in terms of curriculum delivery and development of the school? |
| Principal | You see, he sits with the Subject heads, and he records the meetings and they outline what they are going to do and the subject heads takes it to their staff and as I said, whatever was not done, or any intervention needed, the staff reports to the Subject heads and the Subject heads reports to the curriculum co-ordinator and we discuss the matters in the SMT further. |
| Brandon | Okay, so by definition, a novice teacher, they are beginner teachers right, but they have to perform like any veteran teacher, so they must perform like any experienced teacher because the curriculum has to be delivered. So keeping that in mind, how do you monitor and support novice teachers with the delivery of the content. |
| Principal | Novice teachers, we give them a mentor, we assign a mentor, it is either a SMT member or an experiences teacher and it’s their task of that person to guide them. If there are any issues or problems, the mentors will report to me and I will step in and assist in terms of intervention and any support the teacher needs. |
| Brandon | Okay, so through the mentor you provide, you provide support for the teacher, for teaching and learning. |
| Principal | Yes, I will also send senior teachers to their classes to sit in on a lesson and to provide further support based on the lesson outcomes. |
| Brandon | So would you say you are an instructional leader in that regard? Because instructional leadership is about supporting teaching and learning. |
| Principal | Yes, for that purpose, I am an instructional leader and I will also encourage them to attend extra professional development sessions. |
| Brandon | Yeah, so then how do you go about ensuing the day-to-day functionality inside and outside of the classroom are executed correctly to improve or maintain the academic performance of learners |
| Principal | The important thing is, the mentor must see that is has been done, from my side, I also go around and visit the classes and see what is happening there, but it depends totally on the mentor. And if the mentor is a member of the SMT, so the mentor brings the outcomes back to our SMT meetings. |
| Brandon | Okay, so them would you say the principal plays a vital role in the academic success of learners. |
| Principal | Yes, definitely. |
| Brandon | Why would you say that? |
| Principal | The principals and the SMT. Because we are the leaders we are the examples and if we are not a good example, the staff will not be good examples to the learners so yes, a principal plays a vital role in the academic success of the learners. |
| Brandon | So I believe that you are also teaching |
| Principal | Yes, I believe the principal must teach at least one class to know what’s happening in the ground. And also the deputies, with me, they look at teaching about three classes. |
| Brandon | So then, how would you describe your relationship with the learners at the school. The SMT mentioned about the camps you went on to build relationships with the learners. So how would you describe your relationship with learners? |
| Principal | My relationship with the learners is that they must know that I am the principal, so I have a one on one relationship with them, I have discussions with them so they must be able to trust me, they must be able to speak to me, that is the type of professional relationship, not a, how would you say, a ‘friend’ relationship, more professional they must be able to feel comfortable to come to me with any issues and that is how I talk to them there must be that respect. They must respect me and I must respect them. |
| Brandon | I see you speak a lot about the Gr12s, because like you said, the school success depends on the results of the Gr12. But I also hear you speak about certain values that you have tried to instil between yourself and the learners, respect, kindness and so on. So would you regard yourself as a transformational leader in that regard? |
| Principal | Yes, definitely. |
| Brandon | Okay, so do you think that you create a positive learning atmosphere at the school? |
| Principal | For the learners, yes definitely. As I said, I interact a lot with them. They must feel that I am the principal but I am also accommodating, if they have any issues, whether at home or with their academics, it is important to me. Their academic success is important to me so I always try and help them to improve their academics like simple classroom visits, instilling values and so on. |
| Brandon | Is there perhaps a different approach you would employ to further improve the academic results of learners at the school, or how would you go about doing things differently? |
| Principal | You see, each year the type of learners that we work with, they change and again I am referring to the matric, in that year that I started in 2018, the learners were hardworking, they would come to extra classes. Now let’s look at this year’s class for example. I would use the same approach, although the type of learner changed, I would just intensify my approach. Be more transformational and instructional. Because they are not as focused as previous years. And It is an adjustment because we need to change with the learners. We need to change our way of thinking to accommodate our current learners. This year I have more one on one sessions because their work ethic is not as good as the previous years. And they are not as focused. So my approach depends on the learners we work with. |
| Brandon | Okay sir, that’s all the questions I have for you, I there anything you would like to add |
| Principal | Urm, no |
| Brandon | Okay, thank you. |