LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME FOR SCHOOL PRINCIPALS

Experiential leadership training and skills development that ignites change in schools, classrooms and communities

Make your pledge today
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PROGRAMME OVERVIEW

Effective leadership starts at the top

The quality of school leadership – with the school principal at the helm – is widely regarded as one of the most important factors in South Africa in an effort to deliver enhanced school performance across-the-board. When considering any school leadership intervention, however, solving the problem of the country’s current education crisis presents a complex, yet opportune, setting to not only reflect on the strengths and weaknesses of leaders at school level, but also particularly the environments they work in.

One of the main barriers to the effective implementation is a weak leadership structure, limited buy-in and support from school leadership. Therefore, effective leadership starts at the top. The unique nature of individual school systems should be taken into account, and any intervention introduced into a system is unlikely to be successful unless leadership supports the initiative and, more importantly, has the capacity to manage the intervention successfully.

The strength of leadership capacity at school level, moreover, has a significant trickle-down effect that is likely to benefit not only the teachers and learners of the school, but also parents and – very significantly – the community in which it functions.

With an increasing emphasis on sustainable school leadership (underpinned by documents such as the Department of Basic Education’s Strategic Plan, Diagnostic Report of the National Planning Commission and Goals of Schooling 2025), training and mentoring of those individuals in leadership positions are pivotal in realising and fulfilling their specific roles – especially in ways that relate to the quality of education.

“Education is the business of developing brains. The knowledge we receive from this training can never be found anywhere else. This is an innovative course that the Department [of Education] needs to sustain.”

—Garry Ndwango
EMASANGWENI PRIMARY SCHOOL
Intervention at leadership level
At Enterprises University of Pretoria, we strongly believe that school principals play a central role in the realisation that – and as one of the single most important factors in the effectiveness of their schools – they require specialised skills, knowledge and values to contribute to improved education across the school system.

The key difference between a school that succeeds and a school that fails, is the vision, commitment and leadership skills of the principal. Regrettably, the majority of school principals are not equipped with the requisite know-how or resources they need to lead major change processes in their schools.

The problem, however, goes well beyond the school environment. The broader environment that affects school performance also involves the parents, family members, friends and the wider community that a school functions in. The extent to which parents and other community members are involved in the school – and understand their responsibilities in relation to the educational process – plays an important role.

In April 2013, a group of 14 principals from the Tshwane South District in cooperation with the Gauteng Department of Education embarked on a life-changing endeavour with a workshop on Optimising Whole Brain® Learning in the Digital Age. The pilot project became the flagship Corporate Social Investment (CSI) initiative of Enterprises University of Pretoria – the Leadership Development Programme for School Principals.

Aimed at specifically equipping principals with the tools and techniques to optimise on the strengths of their respective teams’ unique capabilities, and achieving the vision and mission of their schools, the programme ignites a catalytic approach to school leadership and transforms them into drivers of technological and entrepreneurial change.

Ten of the nominees on the pilot workshop went on to complete the full Leadership Development Programme in September 2014, with a second group of 12 principals successfully completing the programme by end of October 2015.

The Leadership Development Programme for School Principals has been commended by the Department of Basic Education on its significant impact on the quality and outcomes of professional skills development for school principals in the Tshwane South District, welcoming the third annual instalment of the programme in 2016.

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT METHODOLOGY

Better teaching for better learning
School principals are often faced with the challenging situation of managing a diverse group of teachers and learners that come together – each being a unique human being with unique teaching or learning styles. As leaders of diverse teams, they need to understand the thinking preferences of each
individual and the impact it has on effective teaching for effective learning.

Based on the principle of **better teaching for better learning**, the programme has been specifically designed by prominent academics and thought leaders at the University of Pretoria using the Herrmann Brain Dominance Instrument (HBDI®) – one of six recommended models developed for use in further education and training.²

Grounded in values of inclusivity, openness, optimism and systematic planning, the HBDI® encourages **flexibility, adaptation and change** – critical features in the development of an effective education system in South Africa.³

Therefore, the programme aims to ignite the creative ability of every principal with a very unconventional, yet catalytic, approach pre-empted by a strong leadership intervention that is based on directed thinking preferences.

**Driving entrepreneurial and technological change**

As the leading and executive champions in the process of driving their schools’ strategic objectives, principals also need an entrepreneurial outlook and the business acumen to be able to adapt to the complexities of the current educational climate. As such, the programme presents an innovative design that not only instils a business orientation to lead school management teams towards an **intrapreneuring** environment, but ultimately one that drives a change to also optimise on technology in the classroom.

Combining the strengths of skills development and Whole Brain® facilitation of learning, the programme implements a spectrum of innovative educational tools – from computers to mobile technologies – in a systematic and organised way.⁴

**Experiential learning at the core**

By equipping school principals with these invaluable decision-making, entrepreneurial and technological skills to become leaders of change in their schools and communities, they are guided through on-the-job action planning and problem-solving processes to help them sharpen their awareness of and apply their knowledge of thinking preferences when tackling real-life leadership challenges in an effort to achieve better results.

At the core lies an **experiential learning model** that incorporates three fundamental stages of the programme that explore the possibilities and opportunities for school principals to become the leaders they can and need to be in their schools and respective communities:

**1. Effective facilitation of teaching and learning**

**2. Preferential thinking and decision-making skills**

**3. Drive for technology and entrepreneurship**

At the outset, they are engaged through contact sessions, meeting the expert course presenters and they are equipped to go through an experiential process to gain better insight and personal perspectives on implementing and applying the skills that they learn – not only by the knowledge imparted...
Motivation to go the extra mile

During the programme each principal will be inspired and more decisively empowered to:

- Illustrate the comprehensive Whole Brain® Model in the facilitation of teaching and learning at their school.
- Take cognisance of different thinking preferences within their teams and the impact it has on the delivering effective teaching methods.
- Manage group dynamics and collaboration by applying the change model of MIND, WILL and HEART.
- Apply techniques and skills in developing and increasing their emotional intelligence for self-management and the management of others.
- Use the Whole Brain® Model to solve problems in the workplace and develop deductive/inductive reasoning processes within their teams.
- Discover their own task structuring style and applying it to effectively delegate to team members.
- Motivate both under- and high-performers in their teams.
- Optimise technology in the classroom for the digital age.
- Delve into their entrepreneurial and creative abilities to launch innovative processes and optimise on opportunities aligned with the overall strategic objectives of their school.
“The [programme] is brilliant. As teachers we are expected to grow the nation. Teachers are expected to groom the different streams, be it the economy, the health sector or agriculture – not just in South Africa, but globally. In terms of models this will go a long way to assist teachers to recognise the ability of learners in order create ‘super beings’. If everyone can base their lives on this model, it will assist us to develop a better society. The core factor is human potential. The model is well-integrated, practical and achievable. The inner you has the potential to make it in the world. The model targets all sectors, schools, government and commercial business. The model is the proper vehicle to reach people on the ground.”
—Patrick Sikhumbana

MEETSE A BOPHELO PRIMARY SCHOOL

EXPERT INTERVENTION TO MOBILISE LEADERSHIP

Course leader

Prof Ann-Louise de Boer has been involved in teaching and lecturing for over 30 years, with a special interest in how people think and learn. As a research fellow at the University of Pretoria, one of her first publications on the subject was published in 1995 as *Demoncratize the classroom: the voice of learners with different learning styles*. Several publications followed since, including co-authoring a book on *Whole Brain® learning in higher education evidence-based practice*. With extensive experience in the corporate environment as well, she has successfully presented several interactive workshops and courses on leadership development to numerous high-level companies and industries in both the public and private sectors.

Course presenters

Prof Ann de Boer is assisted by the following expert course presenters:

Prof Pieter du Toit lectures on learning and teaching in higher education as a field of specialisation in educational professional development in the Department of Humanities Education at the University of Pretoria. His interest in adult and community education has led to the publication of numerous articles in accredited journals and co-authoring of books and book chapters on the topic. He currently leads the Postgraduate Certificate in Higher Education (PGCHE) at the University of Pretoria and has supervised close to 30 postgraduate students on the subject already – many who are academics and leaders in their prospective professional fields themselves.

Prof Alex Antonites lectures on the Chair of Entrepreneurship at the University of Pretoria and serves on the adjunct faculty of the Gordon Institute of Business Science (GIBS) MBA programme with a focus on Entrepreneurship, Creativity and Innovation. He is also the founder of the University of Pretoria Business Incubator that is currently blending a number of new innovative start-up businesses. He is also directly involved in the world of entrepreneurship through an array of business ventures where he shares his interminable passion through the facilitation of the entrepreneurial process. Prof Antonites facilitates the module on innovation and entrepreneurship on the programme.

Detken Scheepers is Head of E-Learning in the Department of Education Innovation at the University of Pretoria where her research interests and teaching focus on computer-assisted education. She facilitates the module on optimising technology in the classroom on the programme.
LEADERSHIP EXCELLENCE THROUGH SUSTAINABLE INVESTMENT

Funding for change across-the-board

Supporting school leadership interventions can be seen as a valuable contribution towards the upliftment and development of the not only the education sector, but ultimately those whose lives are also conversely affected by the continuation of these interventions.

A small investment can often be seen to be going much further when invested towards the top (leadership) rather than the bottom of the education pipeline. Nonetheless, the scope for a valued and sustainable impact is boundless if aligned to both short- and longer-term strategic objectives of organisations and other Corporate Social Investment (CSI) sponsors.\(^5\)

The Leadership Development Programme for School Principals is funded through corporate sponsorships in the form a one-on-one – or corporate-to-principal – basis, where organisations and other interested parties can invest in the sustainable development of a selected school principal as a community leader. In this way, corporate sponsors not only spent their budget on improving and developing professional skills, but they also work in conjunction with principals to affect and lead change at their schools and in their communities.

How can my organisation make its pledge?

Organisations and CSI sponsors can invest in an R18 000 partnership per nominated principal to attend the year-long training programme. With a maximum of 15 principals per year group, sponsors invest on a personal level and get involved in areas of improvement and the communities where they want to see change for the better.

For more information on the programme and to get your organisation involved in igniting change in schools, classrooms and communities through dedicated leadership training and skills development, please contact:

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**NOTES**

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