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## **A Narrative Inquiry into Rural School Leadership in South Africa**

Brigitte Smit<sup>1</sup>

1) College of Education, University of South Africa, South Africa.

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# **A Narrative Inquiry into Rural School Leadership in South Africa**

Brigitte Smit  
*University of South Africa*

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## **Abstract**

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This article attends to rural school leadership in two South African schools through the lens of the concepts of relational leadership and emotional labour. The inquiry draws on five years of guided conversations and observations that speak to leadership experiences of hope and anticipation as well as despair and disillusionment. I worked with one black male principal and one black female school principal from two rural schools in South Africa. Over time, the tone of their narratives changed from hope to hopelessness and resignation. The findings spoke to how commitment and care were overcome by the educational challenges, which involved hunger and poverty, orphaned learners, teen pregnancy, rape, departmental criticism and lack of support. Theoretically, this inquiry draws on the theories of relational leadership and emotional labour in rural education and empirical evidence was drawn from narrative inquiry.

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**Keywords:** narrative inquiry, rural school leadership, relational leadership, emotional labour

# Investigación Narrativa sobre el Liderazgo en Escuelas Rurales de Sudáfrica

Brigitte Smit  
*University of South Africa*

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## Resumen

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Este artículo trata el liderazgo de escuelas rurales en dos escuelas Sudafricanas desde perspectiva de los conceptos del liderazgo relacional y la labor emocional. La investigación se basa en cinco años de conversaciones guiadas y observaciones que indican las experiencias de liderazgo tanto de esperanza y anticipación como de desesperación y desilusión. Trabajé con un director negro y una directora negra de dos escuelas rurales de Sudáfrica. A través del tiempo, el tono de sus narrativas cambió de esperanza a desesperación y resignación. Los resultados indicaron cómo los desafíos educacionales superaron el compromiso y el cuidado, los que incluyeron el hambre y la pobreza, los alumnos huérfanos, el embarazo adolescente, la violación, la crítica departamental, y la falta de apoyo. Teóricamente esta investigación se basa en las teorías del liderazgo relacional y la labor emocional en educación rural y las evidencias empíricas se obtuvieron utilizando la investigación narrativa.

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**Palabras clave:** investigación narrativa, liderazgo en escuelas rurales, liderazgo relacional, labor emocional

More attention can be paid to leadership practices in rural schools in South Africa, given the complex challenges in the context of poverty, health issues and social difficulties, which influence the daily activities at these schools. This study, therefore, seeks to offer some insight into how rural school leaders perceive and experience their work. As such, the aim of this study has been to explore rural school leadership through the lens of the theories of relational leadership and emotional labour, in order to illuminate the perceptions and experiences of two rural school principals from South Africa. To this end, the guiding research question for this study was: How do rural school principals perceive and experience leadership and management work in their schools?

When a school is labelled “rural” in South Africa, the defining characteristic is undoubtedly poverty (Brown, 2010). According to van der Vyver, van der Westhuizen and Meyer (2014):

In a democratic South Africa many schools still bear the scars of apartheid, even [21] years after the first democratic election. In rural areas, mainly populated by black African people, poverty prevails and schools still suffer despite efforts of the government to provide funding (p. 62).

This is supported by research conducted by Moletsane (2012), who argues that:

Almost two decades after the demise of apartheid, rural communities in South Africa are still plagued by seemingly insurmountable challenges, with no change in sight for those who need it most, especially those who live, work and learn in rural, informal and other marginalised communities (p. 1).

The educational setting in which I conducted the inquiry is characterised by severe poverty and under-development. Authors such as Faulkner (2015), Lumby (2015), Maringe, Masinire and Nkambule (2015) describe such contexts in terms of multiple deprivation or as disadvantaged (Naidoo & Perumal, 2014). The area in which this research was conducted is approximately 90km from Johannesburg and borders on Mpumalanga, the province to the east of Gauteng. The educational landscape of this inquiry is mostly inhabited by families who live in informal settlements, where water,

electricity and sanitation are not provided. Families here rely on government support, which is provided in the form of child provision, disability and old-age grants. Most parents do not have work and, therefore, rely on the grandparents' old-age grants from the government as their only source of income. Girls who fall pregnant and register their babies at the Department of Home Affairs may also claim financial child support, which is minimal. Child-headed households are common, and many other households only comprise of children and grandparents as the parents have passed on due to AIDS (Pillay & Saloojee, 2012).

These difficult conditions are further exacerbated by people who stream in from the neighbouring countries and take up residence in the area. These communities grow overnight into squatter communities, with no water and no electricity. Often, children from these neighbouring countries show up at schools wishing to register and attend classes. Such situations impact negatively on the quality of teaching and learning, which raises specific challenges regarding rural school leadership. Furthermore, these communities are often “riven with social problems such as substance abuse, rape and assault which principals and teachers have to deal with” (Kruss, 2001, p. 56).

### **Theoretical Framework**

Theoretically, this inquiry draws, firstly, on relational leadership (Cathcart, 2014; Uhl-Bien & Ospina, 2012; Fairhurst & Uhl-Bien, 2012; Grogan & Shakeshaft, 2011; Hosking, 2011), and, secondly, on emotional labour (Hochschild, 1983; Brook, 2009; Wharton, 2009; Ashkanasy & Humphrey, 2011; Iszatt-White, 2013).

There is a wealth of research available on the role of emotions and leadership in organisations including schools (Hargreaves, 1998; Sachs & Blackmore, 1998; Beatty, 2000; Blackmore 2006; Zorn & Boler, 2007; Iszatt-White, 2009, 2013). However, to date, little research has been conducted on relational leadership and emotional labour; specifically in rural school leadership studies. Uhl-Bien (2006, 2007, 2011a, 2011b) has written extensively on this topic and explains that the term “relational leadership” is quite new, although the concept of relation-oriented behaviour is not so new in leadership studies (Uhl-Bien, 2006, p. 654).

Firstly, relational leadership as one of the theoretical lenses, is mostly associated with women (Regan & Brooks, 1995), which offers insight into how women have transformed school leadership. These women were insiders and resisted the traditional administrative behaviour as modelled by their male counterparts (Smit, 2013). In their research, Regan and Brooks (1995) developed relational leadership as a theory based on empirical data sourced from 11 women, who resisted socialisation into the prevailing male-dominated culture (*ibid.*, xi). These accounts of their practice were described as relational as opposed to controlling.

However, it is significant for this inquiry to note that leadership as relational influence can be exercised by both men and women and is not dependent on person or place. Rather, it should be considered as a verb: “leadership is the action of influence; it is relation, and it does not exist by itself” (Schmuck & Schmuck, 1992 cited in Regan & Brooks 1995, p. xi). A new language that is relational is offered – including concepts such as care, vision, collaboration, courage and intuition.

In the South African rural educational landscape, a new way of looking at leadership that is anchored in the development of rural school leaders is proposed. Relational leaders bring a spiritual dimension to their work and strive to achieve a balance between the personal and the professional life (Arar, 2012). Moreover, relational leadership (Grogan & Shakeshaft, 2011, p. 8), implies “being in relation and sharing power with others”. This assumes leading in a caring manner, and seeing the world differently – with vision, care and collaboration. In this regard, research by Van der Vyver, Van der Westhuizen and Meyer (2014) proposes that care in leadership requires personal development plans for school leaders. However, relational leadership and associated care can also be viewed as inherent trends that do not have to be formally developed. Leadership is conducted according to a moral code of conduct, and followers are empowered to achieve (Russell, 2003). Also, Uhl-Bien (2004) affirms that the quality of leadership relationships matters because of their effect on outcomes, which are associated with benefits such as job satisfaction, higher organisational commitment, enhanced career progress, lower turnover, and even higher performance. Relational leadership approaches are recognised by the interplay of the relational exchange that generates the influence that produces beneficial leadership outcomes.

Secondly, emotional labour, as the other theoretical lens, refers to leaders who use emotional labour and emotional displays to influence the moods, emotions and performance of their subordinates or followers. Humphrey, Pollack and Hawver (2008) credit Ronald H. Humphrey with coining the phrase “leading with emotional labour”. Wharton (2009) puts it slightly differently:

Emotional labour refers to the process by which workers are expected to manage their feelings in accordance with organisationally defined rules and guidelines (p. 149).

Even more relevant to leadership is the research of Iszatt-White (2009, p. 447), who argues for the “role of leadership in making staff feel valued and emotional behaviour through which leaders’ valuing practices are accomplished”. In this regard, Ashkanasy and Humphrey (2011) posit that leadership involves an element of emotional labour, because the moods and emotions of staff need to be managed, particularly under challenging working conditions.

That said, scholarship on emotional labour in service occupations is abundant, but not much has been written about rural school leadership and emotional labour (Turnbull, 2013). Ashkanasy and Humphrey (2011) propose that, like service employees, leaders also perform three forms of emotional labour: surface acting, deep acting, and display of genuine emotions. However, whilst most service employees display only positive emotions (service with a smile), school leaders may have to display a wide range of emotions, including both positive and negative emotions. This is because leaders have to express both socially desirable emotions (e.g. being enthusiastic about collective goals) and social control emotions (e.g. being stern toward an employee who always comes late).

Ashkanasy and Humphrey (2011) argue that leaders who use emotional labour are emotionally expressive and are likely to be perceived as transformational in that emotional expressiveness is an important attribute of transformational leaders. Emotional labour can help leaders make their communications more inspiring. Relevant for this inquiry, according to Ashkanasy and Humphrey (2011), is that:

Leaders often have to be able to portray optimism, hope and confidence even when facing confidence shattering events that may be demoralising for them (p. 373).

In summary, relational leadership and emotional labour are two appropriate theories for understanding rural school leadership, as they offer insights into the research phenomenon, of the experiences of educational leadership of rural school principals. Given the demanding challenges in oftentimes tiring and strenuous educational landscapes, the intensity of emotions deemed theorising using emotional labour, appropriate.

### **Research Design and Methodology**

Educational leadership studies draw on both qualitative and quantitative research (Klenke, 2008), employing a variety of design types and methodologies. This research employed a narrative inquiry, together with ethnographic observations. Narrative inquiry, as a qualitative design type, is slowly edging its way into leadership studies (Slater, 2011) and it was, therefore, deemed relevant to employ this design as an innovative way of understanding the rural school leadership. According to Clandinin and Connelly (2000), narrative inquiry as design type, is a way of understanding experience as well as a research methodology. This methodology allows for in-depth study of the experiences of individuals over time and in context. Put differently, narrative inquiry as a research methodology has reshaped the field of qualitative research, especially with its close attention to experience as a narrative phenomenon and its emphasis on relational engagement. Accordingly, matters under investigation included: processes of relational leadership and emotional labour, intended and unintended consequences of observed interaction patterns, and relationships and socio-cultural contexts within rural educational landscapes. Furthermore, Clandinin (2013, p. 65) explains that such “contexts are grounded in Clandinin and Connelly’s (1995) metaphor of a ‘professional knowledge landscape. They developed this metaphor as a way to describe the complex historical, temporal, personal, professional, relational, intellectual, and moral qualities of schools.” Investigations were conducted via guided conversations and analysis of observational field texts. These field texts were analysed using constructivist grounded theory (Charmaz, 2014) and



narrative inquiry, which is a relational manner of knowledge production (Clandinin, 2013) in an educational setting.

Typically for qualitative research, I used convenience-sampling to select the two school principals. Their schools were in close proximity from each other and they had many years of leadership experience, which they were willing to share with me. I considered them to be particularly information rich. I visited each of the schools approximately twice per month and spent my days there observing classes, staff meetings, assemblies, and activity on playgrounds, at entrance gates, in corridors, and in the principals' offices. During these field visits I was guided by the key research question, exploring the experiences of leadership in rural schools and creating research texts from the field texts. Caine (2002) posits that field texts are co-compositions reflective of the experiences of researchers and participants and need to be understood as telling and showing those aspects of experience that the relationship allows. Important for narrative inquiry was my relationship with the principals and ease of interacting and talking about their daily work. I collated narratives of the principals into a collective narrative (Caddick, Phoenix, & Smith, 2015). This collective narrative (Smith, 2013) is represented in a dialogical fashion in order to convey to the reader the experiences and characteristics of the research participants by my documentation of their working lives. Frank (2005) in this regard asserts that a dialogical approach understands people as inherently relational, and narrative research is part of a dialogue between two or more people. It also allowed for a vivid description of the data, as the two narratives interacted with each other, which fits comfortably in a narrative approach (Saldaña, 2015).

### **A Constructed Narrative Dialogue: Joan and Peter**

The dialogue that follows was constructed, based on the data sourced from guided conversations and observations from the two school principals. It is a constructed and descriptive illustration of empirical data that is represented in a dialogue in which two principals talk to each other and share their experiences about what happens in their schools. I have purposively selected segments of texts from the raw data, and created a collective narrative to construct this dialogue. The integrity of the data was maintained and no data were compromised. Given the voluminous nature of

the field texts I chose selected texts to create a credible representation of the narratives to write a composite narrative in the form of a dialogue of the experiences of leadership in rural educational landscapes. Composing narratives in a composite and dialogical fashion facilitates insight in the lives of principals as the similarities, differences, and tensions are represented. The narrative dialogue is constructed in a chronological fashion of past, present and future experiences and offers a fresh and promising approach of understudying leadership experiences.

I met *Joan*<sup>1</sup> about ten years ago as a master's student at the University of Pretoria. Today, she is the principal of a primary school in a rural school approximately 90 km away from Johannesburg. She has been a teacher for seven years, a Head of Department for four, and served as deputy principal for eight years until her appointment as principal in 2006.

*Peter*<sup>1</sup> started his teaching career in 1986. Since then, he has worked at three different schools, teaching Sepedi, History, Afrikaans and Biblical Studies to Grades 10 to 12. In 2000, Peter was promoted to the position of head of department and shortly thereafter he took up the position of school principal at a secondary school.

*Peter:* I am so glad we get to talk a little before the workshop. Our schools are so close to each other, and yet we seldom see each other. How are you and how are things in your school?

*Joan:* I was really hoping that my school would be in a better place by now. I have been at the school as principal since 2006 and so little has changed for the better. Children are still streaming in from Mozambique and from the local farm schools, which have closed down. These learners cannot speak English or any one of our official languages, such as IsiZulu and Sepedi. Not only is the language problematic, but their parents have no identification documents to officially enrol their children at school and I am obliged to admit them into my school. This makes class placings really difficult.

*Peter:* I never realised that you had so many foreigners in your school. It must be particularly hard for you to cope.

*Joan:* I cope in a manner of speaking. I have started a non-profit organisation for additional food distribution as most children get their only meal at school. I know that most parents are unemployed, extremely poor and rely on government funding. Foreigners, however, cannot rely on such

governmental support as they have no South African identification documentation.

*Peter:* Poverty and hunger is also a problem at my school. I am so glad that the government has decided some years ago to institute feeding schemes at secondary schools as well. I remember the days when secondary school learners would go to primary schools in the vicinity to get food.

*Joan:* Yes, I remember those days too – when the children from the secondary schools came to my school for food. I could not show them away. But the food allocated to my school is not adequate and the quality leaves a lot to be desired. But at least it is something, when one has nothing. The challenge is that we have the Grade R learners who are not part of the official headcount and therefore not part of the governmental feeding scheme. The Department of Education only allocates funding for Grade R learners for purchasing teaching and learning materials, maintenance and services, but not for the feeding scheme.

*Peter:* Indeed you are right. Another issue that really concerns me is the manner in which the Department officials treat us as colleagues. I am not sure if you have experienced this. But I feel they treat us in such a patronising manner as they continuously require from me as the principal to submit progress reports and so forth. The final matric results since my inception at the school have improved drastically and yet nothing of this improvement is ever acknowledged. I remember when I accepted the position as school principal; I was so hopeful, energised and committed, but this constant criticism really gets me down.

*Joan:* Quite frankly, I have given up on the Department officials. Seldom do they visit my school for pedagogical support, nor do they guide me in financial matters. I simply have to do everything myself. I must show you the assembly roof I have had built. Now learners can enjoy assemblies and academic performances by visitors in the shade. You will also notice the paving around the front of the school yard, painted buildings and the revamped staff room. Being a principal these days is a huge challenge because I feel so alone doing the work of the whole school. But what I have done is for the love of these learners and the community. I want to leave this school with a legacy that they will remember me with.

*Peter:* That sounds wonderful. I too have been struggling to get support from the Department. I have been battling to get toilets commissioned for three years now and to have paving done in the car park. The terrain of the

school is rugged and sandy, and the place where food is served during break is seldom clean. I do not have enough employees to see to these needs.

*Joan:* I hear you clearly, as it takes a great deal of extra effort to have a clean school. Recently, I am sure you have heard, the community burnt down the local library, the health clinic and the police station. I immediately consulted with my staff and sent all learners and teachers home because there were threats from the community that, if we do not support the community protest, our school will be burnt down too. You see we work with the majority of the people who have never gone to school. Burning a library means nothing to them and they do not understand the significance of the library, the school, the police station and the clinic. So, time and again, we bow down to such things, which are not related to schooling just to protect the school buildings. Needless to add, we lost many days of teaching. This really perturbs me. I sometimes feel that we are the victims of the social ills of this society. Schools should be protected from such violent behaviour. At the end of the protest, I had to call the teachers to encourage them that they need to be involved in the catch-up programmes for the teaching days that were lost. Most teachers were committed to have extra morning and afternoon classes and some devoted their time to teach on Saturdays. I am happy that they responded so positively to the catch-up programmes.

*Peter:* I heard about these incidents. Such protests really disrupt the teaching and learning. What also concerns me is how the older learners see their future. Many of them show little interest in learning as they seldom have a vision of the future. The AIDS pandemic is so real, together with teenage pregnancies and drugs. I sometimes lose hope whereas, in the past, I was always so positive and optimistic. I remember when I took up the principalship with hope and pride. I believed in the learners and the staff and I still do. I wanted to make my school proud. I worked extra hours with learners, parents and staff. On Saturdays we taught extra classes and on Sundays I would meet with parents. All this was never recognised by the superiors.

*Joan:* I understand your frustration. I too am everything to everybody: principal, counsellor, teacher guide, finance officer, and so forth. I too get tired of all these responsibilities that are way beyond what is commonly seen as school. How do I deal with pornography and abuse of children in my school? The social welfare services are not reliable for continued

support. Little children live with their grandmothers as many of the parents have passed on due to AIDS. The lives of the majority of the learners are in danger because they are exposed to situations where they are being raped and molested by adults at home. We have lost a girl learner who was raped and strangled at home during the weekend. Some of the learners are raped and there is no proper care at home. Some of the learners are being raped by their stepfathers and their mothers keep quiet because the stepfathers are the bread winners. The school is unable to intervene or to make follow-ups in such cases because it is something that happened at home and the parents do not want the school to interfere and assist. It is simply devastating. The poverty and societal devastation is simply too much for me too.

*Peter:* Well Joan, I took a radical decision regarding my life. I will resign at the end of the year, take early retirement, and take up a position as a preacher in my community. My hope is now in the spiritual world since, after five years and three months as a dedicated and loyal school principal, I have given up. I have chosen between life and death. The stress makes me ill and I cannot continue in this way.

*Joan:* I am so sorry to hear you are leaving, and fully understand it though. I also want to leave this profession, but have not been able to find employment elsewhere. There was a time when I thought I would never leave, because I thought work had to be done in this school. But now I think differently, as all the projects I wanted to fulfil, have been completed and, emotionally, I have reached my threshold. Now it is time to move on to explore other ventures.

### **Findings and Discussion: from Hope to Hopelessness**

Given the empirical evidence, relational leadership does more than draw upon expertise and leadership from participants throughout the organisation. It is a process of reciprocal interrelation through which the expertise held by different participants interpenetrates, creating a more holistic perspective that is integrative rather than additive. Relational leadership requires the facilitation of the interpenetration of expertise, which, in turn, requires the skills to build relationships among others, creating a safe space in which they can reciprocally interrelate with one another.

Peter, for example, speaks about hope, courage, high points and pleasant experiences and he links these to why he considers his leadership role to be worthwhile. In the analysis, I recognised so much good in him, something that “gives him life” in his school, and enhanced strength that gives him power and that makes his professional life worthwhile. Also, what gives Peter joy, when and how he is energised, and where he shows commitment and courage features prominently in the data. Peter expresses hope for the children, hope for the future, commitment and hope for education and teaching and leadership, and a passion for teaching, wanting to help children. For Peter the multifaceted exposition of hope, commitment and passion is significant in the context of public scrutiny, bad publicity, constant policy change, low status, poor remuneration, and the HIV/AIDS pandemic in South Africa. Recent research (Smit & Fritz, 2008) has shown that the power of the working environment, the educational landscape, is a much stronger force in education than national educational policies. This inquiry revealed, on the one hand, that a school principal can move beyond the realms of the educational practice to make meaning of his professional life, experiencing hope, showing commitment and passion for his school, but only to a point. On the other hand, if leaders are pushed too far, hopelessness sets in. Sadly, hope, experienced by Peter as emotional labour, could only achieve so much. The emotions at school for Peter became too overwhelming. Feeling minimised, judged and discounted on a daily basis proved too much for him. The daily confrontation of poverty, the rural context, dirt and filth, violence and corruption ate away at his motivation. We learn from Peter that too much stress, negative judgments, and discounting behaviour from the authorities drove him out of the system, and he made a choice between health and death, as he put it. “Too much stress makes me ill”, he told me. This proves that school leaders are not only experiencing intellectual labour, but also emotional labour. This refers to the intensification of the daily demands of school leaders who work in such difficult educational landscapes. Stressful emotions are intensified in challenging circumstances and add emotional burdens on school leaders. Such burdens can lead to resignation and paralysis. This implies, as Hochschild (cited in Hargreaves & Fink, 2013) fittingly argues, that:

Emotional labour requires one to induce or suppress feelings in order to sustain the outward countenance that produces the proper state of mind in others (p. 513).

This further implies that people have to trade part of themselves to motivate others. In the context in which Peter worked, it became too difficult to express care, concern and support for teachers, learners and parents. The work demands and challenges accelerated and Peter resigned because the work had lost its meaning and purpose. He was close to burn-out as he tried to do all that was required of him, and more. The proposition by Ashforth and Humphrey (1993) in this regard holds true:

If emotional labour is inconsistent with a central, salient, and valued social and/or personal identity (or identities) it will lead to emotive dissonance and/or a loss of one's sense of authentic self (p.101).

This inquiry further reveals that relational leadership and associated care as emotional labour (Iszatt-White, 2013) is an inherent trend, and does not have to be formally developed. For example, Joan conducts her work according to a moral code of conduct, empowers others to achieve, and leads by example in and out of school. She takes responsibilities for far more than what is traditionally expected of school principals. Narratives “from the ground”, together with ethnographic observational field texts, redefine the relational leadership style and bring about a new language about leadership. Joan's relational leadership experiences reflect attributes of care, collaboration, vision, intuition and courage. Given the findings of this inquiry, leadership in a rural context requires a redefining not so much in terms of tasks, but more in terms of ways of being. Joan sees herself in relationships with others instead of in charge of others. This kind of leadership is grounded in purpose and relationships that build capacity, which can be harnessed to effect change (Grogan & Shakeshaft, 2013). Odora-Hoppers (2012) offers a helpful explanation in this context:

Leadership is a matter of how to be, not how to do. How to do, is the task of a manager. The most effective leaders are a living demonstration of how values and character when combined in action carry the day (p. 2).

## **Concluding Thoughts**

Inquiries into the experiences of rural school leaders from a relational perspective are critical to advance new contextual understandings of educational leadership. The challenge is to find the language and the words to articulate experiences, on the one hand, and, on the other, to make these contextual understandings accessible and acceptable for the academic community. These understandings may be articulated theoretically, empirically and practically.

Theoretically, according to Werhane and Painter-Morland (2011), leadership is an interactive, dynamic, and mutually inter-relational process between leaders and managers, where each participant contributes to the vision and progress toward change. The most effective leaders will be those who are not only visionary, but those who are used to working with a diverse population collaboratively rather than in a traditional leader-follower dynamic. The objective is for this relational way of knowing to be positively received by those in power in rural educational settings.

Empirically, experiences of female and male educational leaders in South Africa, from a narrative perspective, remain largely un-researched and, thus, relational methodologies, such as narrative inquiry, should prove helpful in uncovering how leaders negotiate their roles in rural school communities. Caine, Estefan and Clandinin (2013, p. 580) remind us that “through attending to the relational in-between spaces in narrative inquiry, possibilities arise to discover new ways of knowing and understanding”.

Practically, what may be needed for the future is relevant leadership training for school principals. The rural settings will, more often than not, remain as they are, perhaps with slight improvements. However, for the immediate future, these rural schools are so much a part of the South African education system, and given that despite democratic processes since the abolishment of Apartheid, rural schools have seen little if any improvement both in terms of the physical environment and the pedagogical context that should be conducive for teaching and learning.

And finally, the discussion seems appropriate and doable but, in practice, the rural context is simply too complex, to address social ills as they manifest in rural school leadership as well as in rural classrooms and beyond the context of school. One cannot divorce school from community, particularly from rural communities, which makes rural school leadership



even more difficult. The understandings of relational leadership, coupled with care and emotional labour, could shed light on diverse leadership training and practices, which could enhance rural school leadership practices. The time has come to unleash the power of a caring purpose, relational leadership and emotional labour for education in order to create the kinds of schools our children deserve.

## Notes

<sup>1</sup> Pseudonym

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**Brigitte Smit** is Professor in the Department of Educational Leadership and Management in the College of Education at University of South Africa, South Africa. ORCID id: [0000-0002-0145-9652](https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0145-9652)

**Contact Address:** Brigitte Smit, Department of Educational Leadership and Management, College of Education, University of South Africa, 0003 Pretoria, South Africa. Email: [bsmit@mweb.co.za](mailto:bsmit@mweb.co.za)