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## Applying Leadership for Learning (LFL) Principles in Ghana: Reflections on Their Relevance, Challenges, Prospects and the Opportunities They Offer

Dr. Albert L. Dare

Vice Rector, Spiritan University College, Ejisu, Ghana

### **Abstract:**

*From the mid-1980s up and till date, Ghana has implemented many educational projects with support from non-governmental organizations and development partners aimed at improving teaching and learning in basic schools. However, most of them have left little lasting impact, making many teachers quite cynical about the value of such interventions. Not so with the project known as Leadership for Learning (Lfl) the principles of which are steadily being embraced in Ghanaian basic schools. This paper examines the relevance of the principles of Lfl in the context of Ghana, the challenges associated with their application and the opportunities that they offer for improved teaching and learning in Ghana's basic schools. The paper concludes that Lfl principles are relevant in the Ghanaian context, that they offer good opportunities for improving teaching and learning, and that though applying the principles is challenging, the challenges can be overcome through school level in-service training and incorporation of the principles in initial teacher-training curricula.*

**Keywords:** Leadership, learning, relevance, challenges, prospects, opportunities

### **1. Introduction**

The five principles that this paper examines are derived from a project named Leadership for Learning (LFL) Project which ran from 2002 to 2006. Participants in the project came from seven countries, 24 schools and eight higher education institutions (MacBeath, Frost, Swaffield & Waterhouse, 2006).

The project was replicated in Ghana and a core of 15 personnel drawn from three universities in Ghana, four colleges of education and three education directorates were trained and designated as Professional Development Leaders (PDLs). The PDLs in turn trained a host of head teachers and circuit supervisors who were expected to extend the training to classroom teachers and other educational leaders. Directors of education in the regions and districts were also involved in workshops organized by the project implementers in order to sell the philosophy of LFL to them

As should be expected in a country that has experienced many interventions provided by development partners, many of which had made little impact on student learning, one basic question most of the Ghanaian project participants initially asked was, "What is new?" Participants thought that it was business as usual, simply an attempt to transplant some curricular and managerial ideas gleaned from (mostly) developed countries in Ghana with scant regard to context. This cynical stance of the participants has a basis. For as Bosu, Dachi, Dare and Fertig, citing Daniel (2007), and Tikly and Dachi (2009) noted,

The emergence of global economic networks across the continents has increased the temptation to move towards a homogenized view of education, which often fails to take sufficient account of either local context or local educational mores (Bosu et al., p.67).

The purpose of this paper is, therefore, to interrogate these principles, assess their relevance in the Ghanaian context and discuss challenges they pose as well as the opportunities that they create for achieving improved learning outcomes.

To achieve this purpose, I intend to argue that, in retrospect, all of the LFL principles have long been relevant in Ghana. Their relevance and the inherent challenges and the opportunities they offer for improving teaching and learning in the Ghanaian context are discussed in this paper using anecdotes accumulated during my own school days and during the evolution of my teaching career. My approach is nested in narrative research. Therefore, I think it is important to provide some theoretical perspectives on narrative research as a peg on which to hang my reflections.

#### *1.1. Some Theoretical Perspectives on Narrative Research*

As Moen (2006) has explained, a narrative (or story) is "a natural way of recounting experience, as a practical solution to a fundamental problem in life, creating reasonable order out of life" (p.56). Quoting Zellermyer, Moen adds that narratives are developed "to make sense of the behavior of others" (Moen, 2006, p.56).

Narrative research is gaining popularity in studies of educational practice and experience. Some scholars think that this trend stems from the fact that teachers not only tell stories but also lead storied lives, both socially and individually (Connelly & Clandini, 1990).

My approach to presenting my reflections on the principles of LFL is based on the notion that the narrative approach can be a frame of reference as well as a way of reflecting on my past and present experiences with the aim of communicating the values that must be understood to make any innovation in Ghana contextually worthwhile.

I also assume that through thick descriptions, it is possible to judge the potential impact of the LFL principles on teaching and learning in Ghanaian schools. Thus, these thick descriptions, albeit a second-best approach, atone for absence of other techniques of triangulation, such as member checking, to enhance the trustworthiness of the anecdotes recounted in the present paper. At my last check, when I tried to seek corroboration by my mates, especially at the primary and middle school levels, of some of the stories told in this paper, I realized that the more capable ones who would have been helpful are either no more or have virtually relapsed into illiteracy. Experiences relating to the early years of secondary school and college were, however, readily corroborated by some of my surviving mates.

Having provided the theoretical basis, and limitations of this narrative, I now return to my main task with the hope that the educational importance of the issues that will emerge may not be lost even if there appear to be unresolved issues about trustworthiness of aspects of the narrative.

## 2. LFL Principles

### 2.1. *The First LFL Principle*

The first LFL principle, "A focus on learning", demands that educational leaders maintain a focus on learning. Macbeath et al. (2006, p.3) explain that to maintain a focus on learning as an activity, one must recognize that:

- Everyone (including students, teachers, head teachers, the school as an organization) is a learner
- Learning relies on the interplay of social, emotional and cognitive processes
- The efficacy of learning is highly sensitive to context and to the differing ways in which people learn
- The capacity for leadership arises out of powerful learning experiences
- Opportunities to exercise leadership enhance learning (exist).

Using these indicators that operationalize "a focus on learning", I claim that my first school teacher focused on learning. He was the head teacher but also had responsibility for primary classes 1 and 2 (i.e. approximately 6 to 8-year-olds). He used every opportunity as a teaching and learning experience, thus, influencing his students' attitudes toward their own learning (Mager, 1968). He loved his job and exercised leadership in every circumstance to stimulate student learning.

However, this teacher neither fully understood how many of his students actually learned, nor was he aware of the misconceptions that sometimes arose, especially when his teaching was done in an informal setting. He was one of those teachers who received a two-year initial teacher training after completing four years of middle school education (called Standard 7 in the 1950s). Such teachers were awarded Teacher's Certificate B. The Certificate B teachers were very well trained in pedagogy suitable for lower primary classes (Stages 1 to 3) but were, invariably, quite deficient in foundation areas such as educational psychology, and social and philosophical foundations of education. The teacher referred to could tell how well his students were doing at any point in time; but could not tell why they were doing well, save to feel that he was a great teacher. He could also tell when his students were not doing well, without knowing why they were under-performing. If he understood why things happened the way they did, he would, probably, have done more of those things that made his students do well and less of those that tended to impede student learning. The anecdotes that follow provide some insight into this teacher's handicap.

#### 2.1.1. The Anecdotes

The first of my anecdotes concerns an incident that occurred on a Saturday, nearly three score years ago. My best friend and I went to fetch water for the head teacher's household. The source of water was a borehole in our village, located about one kilometer away from the teacher's house. It was usual in those days for students in rural communities to fetch water for the use of their teachers' families. Such activities by school kids were never considered as child labor. The services the kids rendered were the teachers' pecks of office and parents also believed that it was a part and parcel of the child's preparation for living in a harsh environment.

The head teacher in my narrative is hereinafter referred to as Mr. Nadi<sup>1</sup>. My friend and I found Mr. Nadi swinging in a hammock tied to two teak poles erected like a goal post under a shady ackee apple tree (known by botanists as *Blighia sapida*) in front of his house. This way of relaxing was his pastime. He often did this in mock imitation of how the colonial government agents in the Gold Coast (now called Ghana) slept when they went on tour to the villages. We stood at attention and were soon engaged in conversation with Mr. Nadi as following:

"Good evening, Sir," we saluted.

"Good evening, Albert and Linus," responded Mr. Nadi, "how do you do?"

We were silent.

"How do you do?" Mr Nadi repeated his inquiry.

Linus was a shy 9-year-old. Although I was younger and two years his junior, Linus hoped that I would provide the answer and save us both the embarrassment. Unfortunately, I, too, did not have the answer to that one – “How do you do?” Mr. Nadi seemed to have understood our difficulty. So, he said to us: “Say, ‘How do you do, too.’” We blurted after him, “How do you do, too” with all the confidence that we could muster.

Mr. Nadi seemed pleased that his beginning students had been taught the response to “How do you do?” Unknown to him, however, I had already built a theory, after reflecting on our encounter. I reasoned that the response to the question “How do you do?” was associated with numbers. We were two when the question was put to us and so the teacher had told us to respond, “How do you do, two (sic)”. If we were four persons, for instance, our response would, predictably, have been “How do you do, four,” I soliloquized. Simple!

Soon, I had the chance to show off my new learning. Two of my mates and I met Mr. Nadi on a different occasion. In response to our greeting he popped the question: “How do you do?” This time, unlike my two friends, I was fully prepared. They had no idea, but I ‘knew’ how to respond. Therefore, confidently, I responded, “How do you do, three!”

This strange answer confused Mr. Nadi. He had no idea how I came by that response. However, rather than trying to find out why I responded the way I did, he said we should respond, “How do you do, too.”<sup>2</sup> We said that, but I went away even more confused than Mr. Nadi was when he heard my unusual response. The question bothering me was, “Why were we still talking about “two” when we were three in number?” But I could not ‘challenge’ Mr Nadi who was, in my opinion, a walking encyclopedia.

Mr. Nadi never tried to find out the source of my mistake; he never helped me to reappraise my theory; he had lost an opportunity to learn that “two” and “too” meant the same to me. I knew “two” as a number but the other word “too” was outside my vocabulary. I had spent only one term in primary class one (Stage 1) and the medium of instruction was Dagaare, my mother tongue. We were only taught oral English as a subject of instruction. So at that stage my English vocabulary was probably less than 200 words – most of which were names of objects in the classroom (such as table, chair, black board), animals (such as cat, dog, donkey, cow, horse), birds (such as hen, cock, hawk), relations (such as mother, father, uncle, sister, brother), human physiology and anatomy (such as boy, girl, man, woman, mouth, nose, eye), movement (such as walk, run, play), household chores (such as sweep, wash).

In middle school (now called junior high school) there was this other incident that illustrates three things:

- The teacher’s misconception about the students’ learning or lack of it.
- The pupils’ own understanding of the teacher’s question.
- The theoretical basis of the students’ answers.

The second anecdote is about a science lesson the purpose of which was, ostensibly, to demonstrate the harmful effects of alcohol abuse. The purpose of the lesson was unknown to us students. In Ghana, even today, it is not unusual for students not to be told the purpose of a lesson. Very few teachers often make the purpose of lessons clear to their students. So, the teacher began his lesson without indicating its purpose. He displayed, on his demonstration bench, two empty white bottles. Then he poured clean water into the first bottle until it was three-quarters full. He wrote the word “WATER” on a piece of paper and pasted it on the bottle.

Similarly, he poured a locally distilled dry gin called “Akpeteshie” (also known in local parlance as “Kill me quick!” into the second bottle till it, too, was three-quarters full. He labeled the second bottle “ALCOHOL”.

Next, the teacher released two live caterpillars concealed in a tin into the bottle containing water. We, the students, positioned around the demonstration bench, watched the caterpillars wriggling in the water, obviously enjoying their swim despite their confinement. Ten minutes passed. The teacher poured the water in the first bottle into the tin till the caterpillars fell into the tin. He then used a pair of scissors to transfer the live caterpillars from the tin into the bottle containing the gin whose alcoholic content was probably over 45% by volume. In less than no time, the poor organisms lay, fully immersed in the alcohol, motionless. The teacher smiled contentedly.

Back in our seats in neat rows and columns, we were now to interpret and discuss the results of the experiment. The teacher opened the discussion by posing the following question: “Which one of the two liquids is better?”

When no response was forthcoming, he felt we had not heard the question. So, he repeated it.

“I say, which of the two liquids is better?” the agitated teacher bellowed.

There was silence. Dead silence, the type of silence that would have tested even the biblical Job’s patience.

“Didn’t you observe the experiment?” the teacher wanted to know.

“We did, Sir. We saw all that happened,” replied the class in chorus.

“Good! Then tell me: which is better, water or alcohol?” His sarcasm was not lost on us, as he visibly swallowed hard to control his anger.

Come to think about it, the poor teacher had a point. Here was an untrained teacher who had studied science at secondary school for the School Certificate. He had been awarded a Division 3 certificate and was then engaged as a “pupil-teacher.” In Ghana, the term “pupil-teacher” is used for untrained teachers, particularly those without initial teacher training who teach at the basic school level. The teacher referred to was eager to demonstrate his knowledge in science and it had cost him a fortune to procure that gin to perform what he felt was a ‘ground-breaking’ experiment! Additionally, he had had to literally scavenge through garbage to obtain the white bottles that he used. Therefore, he found it hard to accept that all that money and time spent had been in vain.

Unknown to this teacher, as was evident when our class later took liberties to discuss our thoughts when the teacher was out of earshot, several members of the class had been propounding their own little theories as the experiment

unfolded. We were in the month of July and caterpillars were a common sight in our school garden. We watched them every day as they voraciously consumed vegetables that we labored to grow. So, any liquid that could kill such troublesome creatures instantly must certainly be better than water. In our minds, that was too obvious for even a dimwit to fail to notice. Moreover, the men who distilled and/or distributed the gin used in the experiment were the richest in our community. In those circumstances, how could any rational person compare that highly priced gin with ordinary, "common" water? That was our thinking!

Anyway, we had to answer the question to avoid aggravating the teacher's wrath which we had already incurred. A bigger boy seated at my right-hand side signaled me to answer the question. So, I stood up and told the teacher that the alcohol he had used was the better of the two liquids. My colleagues concurred. The teacher was furious. For our mischief, or rather our "stupidity", we were punished to run round the classroom block four times and the child who was last had to make two additional rounds. That ended the science lesson. This is an example of situations in some Ghanaian classrooms, albeit quite rare now, that some writers refer to as actions that produce frustration, humiliation, pain and embarrassment which tend to inhibit learning (Child, 1981; Lefrancois, 2000; Mager, 1968; Snowman & Biehler, 2000).

The science teacher in my narrative never understood what question we were answering. We, too, never learnt the harmful effects of alcohol abuse. The teacher had no patience to engage us in prolonged learning discourse. He never prompted us to recognize new perspectives related to the use of alcohol. A catalogue of lost opportunities! Such lack of patience to understand the student's point of view is a challenge for focusing on learning.

Strange as this science teacher's behavior might seem, it had some cultural underpinnings. Culturally, Ghanaian children (as children in most parts of Africa) are expected to quickly learn what adults feel is correct. Thus, this teacher had expected us to recognize that since the caterpillars had felt good in water but had died when exposed to the highly concentrated alcohol, water was better than alcohol because water promoted good health while that local gin destroyed life. This was what he "knew" and had expected us to "know". The teacher's apparent philosophy of education--though he obviously was unaware of it--appeared to have been nested in the philosophical base of idealism or realism, which is akin to essentialism. He understood his role to be that of a person that, at least for the purpose of teaching science at middle school (junior high school), was an 'authority' in science and also a believer in explicit teaching of traditional values. This contrasts sharply with the educational philosophy of progressivism, nested in the philosophical base of pragmatism, where the teacher understands his or her role to be that of a guide for problem solving and scientific inquiry (Ornstein & Hunkins, cited in Ornstein & Behar-Horenstein, 1999, p.16). This teacher's stance was also incompatible with the essential ingredient of focusing on learning – that is, the notion that everyone is a learner (MacBeath et al., 2006).

### 3. The Second LFL Principle

The second learning principle involves creating "an environment for learning." This refers to the practice whereby educational leaders create conditions that promote learning as an activity in which:

- a) Cultures nurture the learning of everyone
- b) Everyone has opportunities to reflect on the nature, skills and processes of learning
- c) Physical and social spaces stimulate and celebrate learning
- d) safe and secure environments enable everyone to take risks, cope with failure and respond positively to challenges
- e) Tools and strategies are used to enhance thinking about learning and the practice of teaching (macbeath et al.,2006, p.4).

#### 3.1. Relevance of the Second LFL Principle

The second LFL principle is relevant in the Ghanaian context. Many Ghanaian schools always set aside specific days when they showcase students' achievements. Besides these, many individual teachers have other ways of celebrating learners' success. For example, when I was in secondary Form 1, the best ten compositions written by students in our class were usually put on the class notice board for other students and visitors to read. I observed a similar practice in a Junior School in Cambridge during a school visit in 2007. I also recall how our secondary Form 2 French teacher, a Peace Corps Volunteer, celebrated our success. She usually threw a party for the best ten students in French at the end-of-term examination. Speech and prize-giving days were days when I particularly felt appreciated, since I had no talent in competitive sports, the alternative means by which a student could gain recognition from the school publics. For example, in secondary Form 1, I was thrilled beyond measure when I won three prizes – one for general proficiency, one for English Language and one for mathematics. I still have sweet memories of similar experiences in later years at secondary school and teacher training college. From all of these experiences, however, I have observed that, with a few exceptions, ceremonies such as speech and prize-giving days in many schools are often organized to reward highest achievers, not necessarily hard-working students. Recognition given to students who make the most progress is rare. For example, the student who is often at the bottom of the class and who puts in effort to place in the 50<sup>th</sup> percentile is unlikely to be celebrated as the one who is always first. Thus, Ghana's school leaders are not doing a good job at "nurturing the learning of everyone" (Dempster & Bagakis, 2009, p.92). Also uncommon in Ghanaian classrooms is the engagement of students in formulating and testing hypotheses within their experience. Thus, learning through exploration, discovery and experience is stifled because teachers teach to examination requirements that take no account of the students' original learning. Indeed, students who are due for national or school leaving examinations, especially at senior high school level, often call any initiative towards more experiential learning as "non-sylla", meaning that what the teacher is trying to teach is not in

the syllabus (Henderson, cited in Dare, 1995). Though Henderson reported this phenomenon more than thirty years ago, those familiar with the nature of examination backlash in Ghana know too well that it is still largely real.

In many Ghanaian classrooms, too, physical and social spaces hardly stimulate learning. Following the introduction of the capitation grant, enrolments at the primary level have increased and there is overcrowding (Bosu, Dachi, Dare, & Fertig, 2011). Walls, where they exist, are bare. In some cases, even in some urban areas, classrooms are in serious state of disrepair. Yet, research in senior high schools in Accra, capital of Ghana, has shown that there is a correlation between structural facility conditions and students' academic achievement (Dare & Agbevanu, 2012a). There is also a correlation between physical facility condition and students' academic achievement (Dare & Agbevanu, 2012b). Therefore, when schools operate within unattractive classroom spaces and crazy classroom buildings, there is reason to believe that it is challenging to stimulate and celebrate learning.

As regards tools and strategies used to enhance thinking about learning and teaching, my experience is that few Ghanaian teachers have capacity in using data gathering instruments systematically to collect data that would inform teaching, learning, and leadership. Most teachers gather no data at all for teaching purposes. The regulations require them to keep cumulative records on every student, which they do. But they hardly analyze these data and use the results to improve leadership practices or teaching and learning outcomes.

#### 4. The Third LFL Principle

The third principle is concerned with creating a dialogue about LFL. In this type of leadership practice, Macbeath et al. (2006) explain that:

- LFL practice is made explicit, discussable and transferable
- there is active collegial inquiry focusing on the link between learning and leadership
- coherence is achieved through the sharing of values, understandings and practices
- factors which inhibit and promote learning and leadership are examined and addressed
- the link between leadership and learning is a shared concern for everyone
- different perspectives are explored through networking with researchers and practitioners across national and cultural boundaries (MacBeath et al., 2006, p.5).

##### 4.1. Relevance of Third LFL Principle

The third LFL principle is quite unfamiliar to Ghanaian teachers, but is now being embraced by head teachers on school improvement projects. For instance, the Institute for Educational Planning and Administration (IEPA) of the University of Cape Coast was involved in one such project. One aspect of this project was aimed at building the capacity of some head teachers in deprived areas to identify and find solutions to problems in their schools, using action research. Data that emerged from the action research projects suggest clear links between improved leadership and improved pupil learning (Bosu, et al., 2011). Bosu et al. reported excerpts from action research studies that showed how head teachers in some Ghanaian and Tanzanian schools, in collaboration with researchers from the University of Cape Coast in Ghana and the University of Dar es Salaam in Tanzania, dialogued with students to identify their learning difficulties and then through a series of interventions, helped the students to make remarkable progress in their academic achievement.

#### 5. The Fourth LFL Principle

Shared leadership (principle number 4) appears, on the surface, to be a familiar practice in the Ghanaian context. This principle involves the sharing of leadership such that:

- Structures support participation in developing the school as a learning community.
- Shared leadership is symbolized in the day-to-day activities of the school.
- Everyone is encouraged to take the lead as appropriate to task and context.
- The experience and expertise of staff, students and parents are drawn upon as resources.
- Collaborative patterns of work and activity across boundaries of subject, role and status are valued and promoted (Macbeath et al., 2006, p.6).

##### 5.1. Challenges Associated with the Fourth LFL Principle

Appointment of prefects and student councils are common administrative arrangements in all Ghanaian schools. These structures and systems allow older or more senior students to assist their peers to focus on learning by regulating students' times for study and leisure. However, there exists a power distance between the head teacher and the teachers and also between the teachers and students. There is even a power distance between senior students and junior students. This power distance weakens the authority that is delegated, especially to the students. Thus, sharing leadership in Ghana's pre-tertiary institutions, in practice, remains problematic and is, therefore, a challenge.

#### 6. The Fifth LFL Principle

The last principle - "Shared accountability" - is a battlefield in the context of Ghana, especially at the pre-tertiary level. Yet, accountability is recognized in some countries as a significant driver of school improvement and is integral to the routine of teachers. The shared sense of accountability inherent in this principle involves:

- A systematic approach to self-evaluation embedded at classroom, school and community levels.
- Focusing on evidence and its congruence with the core values of the school.
- A shared approach to internal accountability as a precondition of accountability to external agencies.

- A recast of national policies in accordance with the school's core values.
- The school choosing how to tell its own story taking account of political realities.
- An endeavour to maintain a continuing focus on sustainability, succession and leaving a legacy (macbeath et al., 2006, p.7).

### 6.1. *Relevance of the Fifth LFL Principle*

In Ghana, at the tertiary level, shared accountability cannot be wished away. Institutional regulations and standards of accountability compel higher institutions to build structures that ensure that the tenets of the principle of shared accountability are met. Professors are accountable to their students and so are evaluated by the latter. Students are accountable to faculty and so are evaluated by faculty. Such evaluations of professors by students and students by professors are facilitated by internal quality assurance units and external examiners and visitors. The universities, as learning organizations, are accountable to the state and so are evaluated by the state, represented by the National Accreditation Board.

However, at the pre-tertiary level, the internal structures to promote shared accountability are weak. Teachers are more likely to resist being evaluated by their peers and their pupils than by their superiors, especially external supervisors, who wield power over them. The weaknesses in the internal accountability system have tended to occasion buck passing at the basic and secondary levels. There is a lot of finger pointing when accountability is mentioned at these levels and so there exist many ideas about who should be held accountable in matters of teaching and learning. Parents blame teachers when external examination results are poor. Teachers react by accusing parents and education authorities of not providing the necessary support, motivation and inputs.

## 7. **Prospects of Application of LFL Principles**

People accustomed to huge gains easily take little gains for granted. So, has it been with the benefits of LFL in Ghana. I became aware of this after two colleagues and I made a presentation at the UK FIET Conference in Oxford in 2008. In that presentation, we reported how head teachers had succeeded in promoting social justice through carefully managed interventions that had boosted the participation and retention of learners who were at the verge of dropping out of school. The substance of this presentation was subsequently published (see Bosu et al., 2011). A member of the audience asked us this question: "If the measures taken by head teachers that resulted in the changes in student learning, touted by your team, are considered significant, then what had head teachers been doing prior to the intervention that culminated in these outcomes?" This questioner was obviously not informed about the difficult situations under which head teachers in Ghana, as in many other developing countries, work and always need support to make even the modest gains that we reported. But it would be erroneous to assume that such views could only be expressed by those not familiar with the educational terrain in Ghana. For it was only after the strategic implementation of another project dubbed EdQual that some education leaders outside the school system became aware that, given adequate support, head teachers can make a difference at the school level. I recall that at a dissemination conference at Legon in Ghana, after a village head teacher had struggled to tell his story about how his experience on the EdQual project had turned the fortunes of his ill-equipped, unappreciated school, a Chief Director of the Ministry of Education was so overcome with emotion and admiration that he immediately arranged to mobilize and deliver a busload of school supplies to that school and promised the school an additional classroom block.

### 7.1. *Head Teachers' Impressions about LFL*

Similar to what transpired at the dissemination conference referred to above, head teachers across Ghana who participated in the LFL project have continued to proclaim how LFL principles have improved learning in their schools. This is evidence that the application of LFL principles has prospects. For example, the head teacher of a school at Zebilla in the north-east of Ghana reported how there had been improvements in his school, thanks to the application of the knowledge and skills acquired from the LFL project. This head teacher had led his assistant teachers to focus on learning, leading to a leap in student learning. He was celebrated by the community and the district directorate of education and voted the second-best teacher in the district in 2010. For his prize, he took home a 21-inch TV set and a certificate. Moreover, using the principle of improving the learning environment, he was able to have GHACEM (a cement production company in Ghana) donate cement for the construction a new three-classroom block. Impressed by this initiative, the district assembly absorbed the cost of constructing the building and the learning environment has now become conducive. Furthermore, the principle of dialogue was effectively applied by the head teacher and staff to improve community-school relations (Bosu, 2012).

Another head teacher of a school at Kade in the Eastern Region of Ghana said, "Kudos to IEPA, the LFL program is yielding massive results. My school is now a learning site!" His colleague in a different school at Kassmiya in the Northern Region expressed unflinching faith in LFL. He said, "Leadership for learning is really our hope. It is crucial for learning and supervision in our schools" (Bosu, 2012, pp. 2 & 3). This head teacher at Kassmiya attributes his ability to create an enabling environment for effective teaching and learning to the knowledge and skills he had acquired from his participation in the LFL project. In the same vein, another head teacher of a basic school in Cape Coast in the Central Region of Ghana attributes the team spirit of the teachers in her school to the application of the LFL principles.

In the newsletter that contains the excerpts from the head teachers' evaluation of the benefits of using LFL principles (Bosu, 2012), one thing that resonates with the head teachers is the sustainability of the skills developed

through LFL despite the enormous prospects that it has. This is a challenge, but it can be managed by colleges of education and the training teams in the education directorates.

## 8. Conclusion

From my narrative, one can conclude that the five LFL principles are relevant in the Ghanaian context. However, there are challenges associated with their application and some of these challenges are highlighted in this paper. Be that as it may, there are good prospects because opportunities abound to turn these challenges around and improve teaching and learning in Ghanaian schools if head teachers intensify their training efforts at the school level and colleges of education introduce the LFL principles to teacher trainees.

### 8.1. Research Agenda

In order to make learning central to all teacher and student activities in Ghanaian schools, there is the need for future research in Ghana to be guided by the following questions:

- In what ways can teachers make the school publics in Ghana focus on learning?
- What forms does accountability take in differing Ghanaian school contexts?
- How do Ghanaian schools handle conditions that promote or inhibit learning?
- How is learning dialogue exemplified in different forums within the schools in Ghana?
- How are Ghanaian schools working toward the sharing of leadership?

### 8.1.1. Notes

- All names referring to actors in the text, except one for which no consent was required, are pseudonyms.
- Thanks to Auntie S., a good pal on the LFL project in Ghana, I have learned that native speakers of English do not really say, "How do you do, too?" Whenever someone asks them "How do you do?", they simply reply, "How do you do?"

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