



CAPE PENINSULA UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY

MOWBRAY CAMPUS

**DETERMINING THE EFFICACY OF THE HOME SCHOOL PARTNERSHIP PROGRAMME
(HSPP)**

By

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**A full dissertation submitted in fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of
Masters in Education**

Presented to the Faculty of Education and Social Sciences

April 2015

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DECLARATION

I, Dawn Cozett, hereby declare that an investigation into 'Determining the efficacy of the home school partnership programme (HSPP)' is my own work and that it has not been submitted for any degree in any other university.

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ABSTRACT

This research project was conducted in 2010 and 2011 as a strategy to determine the effectiveness of a home-school partnership programme (HSPP) in a Grade R class. This study was an investigation into the empowerment of parents of Grade R learners in assisting the learning of literacy at home. Parents of Grade R learners attended a seven-week programme on ways of assisting their children. By attending the HSPP, parents and teachers were encouraged to form a link between home and school.

The present study is grounded in Paulo Freire's theoretical model of knowledge and acquisition as well as Bronfennbrener's bio-ecological system. Reference is made to Costa's sixteen Habits of Mind, which indicates how parents have grown in terms of their way of thinking. A qualitative approach was used. Focus group interviews, semi-structured questionnaires and footage from the local broadcasting studio were used to collect data. The sample size consisted of five participants who were interviewed during 2010 and five participants who were interviewed during 2011. These parents agreed to be part of the research programme.

The key question of this study was answered: How can the HSPP assist parents with the learning of literacy at home? The results confirmed the positive impact that the programme had upon the parents. They wanted to assist their children at home but did not previously have the skills to do that. By gaining these skills, they became confident to use everyday objects to help their young children become literate.

In conclusion, from the current research, it can be seen that if the home, the school and the community collaborate in a meaningful and sustained way, the future of our children's education, especially in poverty-stricken areas where unemployment is rife, can be improved significantly in a constructive and long-term manner.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I hereby wish to thank the following individuals and organizations:

Associate Professor Janet Condry, my supervisor, for her patience, constant support and inspiration in assisting me to complete my thesis;

To my dear ones who have entered their eternal rest:

My parents Walter and Alice Cozett and Jennifer Williams my sister;

My two friends Elizabeth Geland and Lorraine Sandberg.

Dr Matthew Curr for coming on board at the right time;

My family for their encouragement;

WCED for granting me permission to conduct the research study;

CPUT for allowing me ethical clearance for my study;

Brigid Comrie, for introducing me to the Home-School Partnership Programme (HSPP) and for granting me permission to research her programme;

Sentinel Intermediate school: the past principal Mr Joseph Jansen, and the current principal Ms Amanda Engelbrecht, staff, parents and learners. Special thanks to Anthea Elliott who co-presented the Home-School-Partnership-Programme with me;

Sandra Fortuin and the late Dave Shepherd for assisting with the background information regarding Grade R;

ETDP-SETA for your financial contribution towards my study;

E.tv for granting me permission to use a copy of the Values Campaign video clip in my study;

The staff at CPUT, Mowbray campus, especially Liteboho Adonis and the library staff in particular Pippa Campbell and Sharon Panayiotou.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ABET	Adult Basic Education and Training
ANC	African National Congress
DBE / DoB	Department of Basic Education
ECD	Early Childhood Development
ETDP-SETA	Education Training and Development Practices-Sector Education and Training Authority
HSSP	Home School Partnership Programme
IY	Imizamo Yethu
Lit/Num Strategy	Literacy and Numeracy Strategy
NGO	Non-Governmental Organizations
RNCS	Revised National Curriculum Statement
SACE	South African Council of Education
USA	United States of America
WCED	Western Cape Education Department

CHAPTER 1 INTRODUCTION

Not all parents realise that they are their child's first teacher: they are unaware that they know a great deal that they unconsciously pass on to their offspring every day. Parents and caregivers are often under the impression that they are unable to assist their children at home. Some parents prefer not to engage with their child's educator due to feelings of insecurity and the fear of making mistakes. Spending time with their children is frequently impracticable as many are working parents. Educators find it difficult when parents are not forthcoming in responding to their children at home.

The present study was conducted in 2010 and 2011 as a strategy to determine the effectiveness of a home-school partnership programme in a Grade R class. This study was an investigation into the empowerment of parents of Grade R learners in assisting the learning of literacy at home. Parents of Grade R learners attended a seven-week programme on ways of assisting their children at home. This programme encouraged parents and teachers to form a link between home and school. The aim of the programme was to empower parents and make them more confident to communicate with their child's educator on how to support learning literacy at home. Parents were interviewed before the start of the programme to determine what literacy activities occur at home as well as during the seven-week intervention programme. Parents were asked to reflect on the usefulness of the programme as a means of improving their children's literacy ability. As part of their responses, they were requested to evaluate the programme and say whether it was helpful to them or not. They expressed what they liked about the programme, whether they felt empowered to assist their children and what they found challenging about the programme.

This chapter discusses the origin and background, importance, context, approach, purpose and goals of the research project. It introduces the central research question to be answered. Terms used are clarified: the significance, limitations and assumptions of the proposed study are set out.

1.1 ORIGIN AND BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

According to the Nationwide Audit of Early Childhood Development (ECD) Provisioning in South Africa (2001:6), the majority of children in South Africa have a history of deprivation. These children's development has been impaired by a range of social inequalities and inadequacies. Furthermore the Nationwide Audit of Early Childhood Development (ECD) Provisioning in South Africa (2001:10) states that many children experience a childhood of adversity through the consequences of racist practices of apartheid and related socio-economic inequalities. Low levels of education and nutrition are among other factors including a lack of household resources which stunt the development of many South African children.

In 1994, after the election of the African National Congress (ANC) into government, President Nelson Mandela pledged that his government would make the needs of children a priority as stated in the Nationwide Audit of Early Childhood Development (ECD) Provisioning in South Africa (2001:6). The newly elected democratic government's major challenge was thus the need to provide holistic care for all South African children. The 2001 Government Gazette, Education White Paper 5, furnishes an audit of national policies and programmes relating to the provisioning of ECD. This paper mentions several inter-sectorial policies, legislation and programmes that have been adopted by national, provincial and local levels of Government. The following list is provided to illustrate some of the Government's participation and leadership in ECD development since 1994.

See Table 1.1 or a list of some of the Government's participation and leadership in ECD development since 1994

Table 1.1 Government's participation

Year	Document	Government's response to ECD
1994	Health Care Policy	Provides free health care for children younger than six years
1995	Education White Paper on Education and Training – Department of Education (DoE)	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> DoE's role in developing policy for children nought to nine years old with a focus on five year olds; the phasing in of the Reception Year. <p>DoE commits to inter-departmental collaboration and partnerships with non-governmental organisations, ECD practitioner groups and private sector</p>
1996	Constitution, Section 28 of the Bill of Rights	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Every child has a right: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> to a name and a nationality from birth; to family care or parental care, or to appropriate alternative care when removed from the family environment. A child's best interests is of paramount importance in every matter concerning the child
	Constitution, Section 29 of the Bill of Rights	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Everyone has the right – <ol style="list-style-type: none"> to a basic education.
	Interim ECD Policy of the DoE	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Provides for the implementation of a National Reception Year Pilot Project to test a lower cost model but a higher quality curriculum for the Reception Year in partnership with non-governmental organisations and community based ECD service providers; ECD practitioner training was developed.
1997	Report, Quality Education for All: Overcoming Barriers to Learning and Development	<p>Recommended a focus on the early identification, assessment and intervention for learners with special education needs.</p> <p>This document places a particular emphasis on pre-school learning and advocates inter-sectoral collaboration of the Department of Education with the Department of Health and Welfare.</p> <p>Funding of Pre-Primary educational institutions and services in the abolishment of a post (Appendix 1).</p>
1999		Rationalisation of teaching services and the implementation of the mutually agreed Severance Package.

Year	Document	Government's response to ECD
2001	White Paper 5	To ensure that all children aged 5 have access to Grade R programmes in which they are given adequate opportunities to develop to their fullest potential; to ensure that parents, communities and other stakeholders are represented in democratic governance structures; improvement of the quality of Pre-Grade R programmes
2001	White Paper 6	1. The importance of including children with special needs in the education system; 2. In addition to the establishment of systems and the procedure for early identification and addresses barriers to learning in the Foundation Phase (Grade R – 3). Pre-Primary educator posts: independent schools (Appendix 2)
2004-2007	A proposed integrated strategy to support early childhood development in the Western Cape	The development of a strategic plan for inter-sectoral collaboration. The role players are: Western Cape Education Department (WCED), Local Authorities, the Department of Safety and Security and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO).
2008	Government Gazette no 30679 Norms and Standards for Grade R	As an amendment to the National Norms and Standards for School Funding

Later, all of the ECD training units were shut down: the government was not paying ECD teachers. Colleges took up ECD training which resulted in the pre-primary teachers receiving poor salaries.

The above-mentioned table indicates that services which are being rendered to young children and their families should therefore be inter-sectoral and delivered by an appropriate multi-disciplinary team wherever possible. In view of ECD as a holistic model, care and education are seen as an integrated aspect of the child's development as stated in White Paper 5 (2001:13-14). Young children and their families should be encouraged to participate actively in the utilization of these facilities. Programmes that are delivered by the inter-sectoral committees should be held accountable for the delivery of an appropriate, effective and efficient service.

The Western Cape Education Department's (WCED) Literacy and Numeracy Strategy (Lit/Num) 2006-2016, (2006:31) states that many children entering Grade 1 lack the

knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary to engage effectively in formal schooling. This situation is often the result of poverty, little opportunity to play, poor language used by role models, illiterate parents, lack of parental involvement in the child's life or engagement with books before school entrance. The WCED continues to state the importance of learners receiving Grade R education. The Lit/Num Strategy includes the following actions:

- to develop and print a manual for parents on the development of emergent literacy and numeracy skills;
- to arrange a workshop for parents on the development of emergent literacy;
- to develop and print a developmental programme for Grade R with specific focus on emergent literacy skills.

The WCED envisages a developing model of a learning family and a learning street within a learning community. This fosters a learning turn-about in our schools through active engagement of the whole community.

The closing down of training colleges had a detrimental influence on the type of student teachers prepared to teach our children. The South African President, Jacob Zuma commented on the closure of teacher training colleges during the mid-1990. He commented that it was a mistake to have closed the colleges because the practical implications were not clarified (Mail & Guardian, 2009:1-3). Furthermore, the Minister of Higher Education and Training, Nzimande argued that teacher training colleges were closed due to two reasons: the quality of most of the colleges was considered to have been very low and training provided by the colleges was considered a great expense when measured on a per-capita basis. Most institutions were said to cater for a fairly small number of students. Pre-primary education had been included in the Foundation Phase of the education system. Even though Foundation Phase students are being ECD trained in their first year at college, there is no longer a Pre-primary Diploma in Education. Therefore few Foundation Phase students have been applying for Grade R posts. This could be the reason why Grade R learners are being taught by teachers who are not qualified Grade R teachers or who are Grade 1 to 3 teachers or even Intermediate Phase teachers.

1.2 IMPORTANCE OF THE PROBLEM

In response to the low literacy rates in the Western Cape, WCED developed a ten-year Literacy and Numeracy Strategy (2006-2016). The literacy aspect has eight domains for intervention. One of the eight aspects of the literacy strategy is that a pre-school programme will include the development and printing of a manual for parents on the development of emergent literacy skills. The Home-School Partnership Programme (HSPP) is appropriate for learners aged four to seven years. It is a programme that is applicable across different languages and cultures (Comrie, 2009:1). The importance of the home-school partnership programme is that it is intended to support parents and caregivers on how to support learning at home.

1.3 THE APPROACH TO THE STUDY

Comrie (2009:4) outlines the importance of bringing home and school learning closer together. Parents are encouraged to assist their children in an informal manner at home. This is contrary to the more formal approach in the classroom. The HSPP was presented to parents of Grade R learners to strengthen the link between home and school. An intervention strategy such as the HSPP could cultivate a lifelong commitment to learning and helping future generations. Padak and Rasinski (2008:363) mentioned the benefits of parent-child practices through informal word-play activities by stating the following:

- Children, who engage in these activities at home, outperformed those children whose parents did not become involved in their learning. Parent-child activities stimulated reading achievement and reading-related skills development at school.
- Parent-child practices help children to feel secure: they could notice that there was a commonality between what was happening at home and at school.

Parents were invited to complete an application form (Appendix 3) after a short introduction at a parents' meeting. They were given an opportunity to reflect on ways in which they have been teaching their children different skills and values. These parents were asked to reflect on how they feel when their children achieve or master a skill.

1.4 PURPOSE AND GOAL OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study is to determine how parents can be empowered through the HSPP to assist their children at home with literacy. This study provides a tool for parents to use at home since some parents might not know how to guide their children at home. The chief purpose of this research is to gather feedback data from parents who participated in the HSPP, to have the data analysed and to evaluate the HSPP and see how it benefited the learners and their parents. For the purpose of this study, one school was selected as a field of investigation. Many parents considered the school and home as two quite separate entities. The one provides education; the other provides for material and emotional well-being. This attitude could be described as separatist. Such an outlook tends to shift far too much responsibility onto the school and its teaching professionals. Instead of creating a symbiotic understanding, in which parents and teachers co-operatively undertake the raising of children, the separatist attitude polarizes children. The main purpose of this project was to awaken parents, teachers and learners to the complementary and mutually beneficial roles they can play.

1.5 RESEARCH QUESTION

The key question in this study is as follows:

In what ways have parents of Grade R children, who attended the HSPP, been assisted with supporting literacy learning in their homes?

1.6 CLARIFICATION OF TERMS

1.6.1 Reading literacy

The Revised National Curriculum Statement (RNCS) Grade R to 9 (2002:7) defines literacy as the ability to read and write, the method of human communication, either spoken or written, consisting of the use of words in a structured and conventional way. Mui and Anderson (2008:240) discuss the impact of early literacy on young children by stating that:

parents and other caregivers were generally unaware of the extent to which literacy knowledge and skills their young children were learning by participating in these events.

Literacy is about processing information and communicating information and ideas. Literacy can provide ways for children to learn about the world around them.

1.6.2 Early Childhood Development (ECD)

This term refers to programmes for children in the range from birth to nine years old: it is called (ECD). The term ECD according to the Government of National Unity in the Interim Policy for ECD (1996:2) conveys the importance of a holistic approach to child development. It signifies an appreciation of the importance of considering a child's health, nutrition, education, psycho-social and additional environmental factors within the context of the family and the community.

1.7 CONTEXT OF THE STUDY

The school used for this study is located in a low-income area in Hout Bay on the Cape Flats. The parents speak predominantly Afrikaans and English as is commonly found in this area. Many parents from this community would insist that their children be taught in English even though their home language is Afrikaans.

The school falls within quintile five which is regarded as a no fees school. Grade R learners pay an annual amount of R350,00. Learners are fed daily by the Provincial Feeding Scheme. This is a Department of Basic Education (DBE) initiative that supports the learning programme at the school and in the Western Cape.

Parents at this school frequently ask for assistance on how to help their children at home. This indicates the need for parents to attend a programme such as the HSPP. Despite the eagerness and commitment of most of the parents, some were faced with socio-economic issues that impeded the research. A lack of reading material at home created challenges. Allowing parents and children to make their own books at home provided a relief plan.

There was no assistance for parents. Neither was there any support from the Education Department within the school structure of the District Office of the WCED. Parents were

invited to sign on to the programme. This programme provides a non-challenging, non-intimidating environment for parents to ask questions and to give their input.

1.7.1 Home-School Partnership Programme (HSPP)

According to O'Carroll (in Comrie, 2009:1), this programme seeks to inspire parents and caregivers to support children in fulfilling their true potential. This intervention programme forges a crucial pedagogical link between home and school.

1.8 SIGNIFICANCE OF THE PROPOSED STUDY

The present study evolved out of a concern for the 2008 Grade R class at the school selected for this research. There were many learners who were not able to meet the criteria of the Baseline Assessment (Appendix 4). Two-thirds of the class were underachieving due to reasons such as not attending a pre-Grade R class, malnutrition or not being taught at home. Many parents are young and do not receive much guidance from their parents on how to care for and nurture, their children. This programme served as an intervention programme to empower the parents and make them realise the importance and value of their role. This new self-awareness made it easier for them to help their children. Parents showed a keen commitment and pride when they brought their homework to class.

1.9 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

This study is limited to parents of Grade R and Grade 1 learners only from one school in the Western Cape. The programme was not extended to parents of learners in grades higher than Grade 1. The programme is targeted at parents of young learners. The study was based on a sample of five participants in 2010 and five participants in 2011. It was tightly controlled for dimensions relevant to the research intervention strategy used. The study investigated only the impact that the HSPP had on literacy learning.

1.10 ASSUMPTIONS OF THE STUDY

The study makes the reasonable assumption that most of the learners entering Grade R would meet the requirements of the Grade R Baseline Assessment criteria. It assumed that most of the learners needed basic literacy activities to enable them to be enthusiastic about

and prepared for Grade 1. It was assumed that all the parents attending the programme were literate. The study also assumed that all learners came from literate backgrounds where parents read to them regularly. The study assumed that parents participated voluntarily and with goodwill during the seven-week HSPP.

1.11 ORGANISATION OF THE THESIS

Chapter 1 is the introductory chapter. The research problem is formulated: its origin and background, importance, context, approach and purpose stated. The key terms are clarified. Significance for conducting the study, limitations and assumptions of the research are provided.

Chapter 2 presents the conceptual framework which underpins this study. This chapter outlines the literature review consisting of five sub-headings which are: creating habits of mind, language learning, supporting literacy learning at home, social skills and learning through play.

Chapter 3 discusses the research design and methodology used in this study. This chapter includes the research approach, design and methodology, data collection instruments, data analysis, trustworthiness and ethical consideration.

Chapter 4 presents the results and systematically discusses the findings of the research question. Five themes are derived from the data analysis, each with the same three sub-themes which occurred on a regular and consistent basis.

Chapter 5 offers five points of discussion and further insights of the findings. Two recommendations were made and three suggestions resulted from the study and three conclusions were drawn from the research project. This chapter concludes with a declaration of no conflict of interest.

CHAPTER 2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 INTRODUCTION

The conceptual framework which underpins this project is discussed in this Chapter. The theories of Paulo Freire (1996:57) and Bronfenbrenner (in Donald, Lazarus & Lolwana, 2007:40) have been selected as the conceptual framework for the HSPP. Freire (1996:14) is particularly well suited for the purpose of this research project. Because he considers literacy to be much more than just the ability to read, and regards literacy as the ability to read 'the word and the world', literacy is a social term to him. The term 'social literacy' enables parents to recognize their role as teachers of a broader kind of literacy. Bronfenbrenner's (in Donald et al, 2007:36) theory is an appropriate match to point out the societal systems which influences child development; that is the role of the family, the school and the community. The HSPP sets out to show parents that they are, in Freire's terms, part of a broader social literacy. The HSPP aims to empower parents, enabling them to recognize their part in an overall structure of education, which includes school and home in a single pedagogical continuum. It is important to review Freire's and Bronfenbrenner's general thinking and attitude to literacy (Section 2.2) before showing how exactly their theoretical framework applies to the HSPP project (Section 2.3).

2.2 CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

Giroux (2011:154) states that Freirean pedagogy affords students the opportunity to read, write and learn by engaging in a culture of questioning which demands more than being competent rote learners. Giroux (2011:5) agrees with Freire (1996:57) that students should read texts as objects of interrogation rather than slavishly reading a text through a culture of pedagogical conformity that does not encourage questioning.

The banking concept of education as stated by Freire (1996:53) regards learning as an act of depositing: students are the depositories and the teacher is the depositor. Gilbert (2012:119) explains the banking concept as funnelling knowledge into pupils' heads. Furthermore Freire (1996:54) emphasises that:

The banking concept (with its tendency to dichotomize everything) distinguishes two stages in the action of the educator: during the first, he

cognizes a cognizable object while he prepares his lessons in his study or his laboratory.

In problem-posing education, the teacher does not regard cognizable objects as his private property but as objects of reflection by himself and his learners, (Freire, 1996:61). Later, Gilbert mentions that he was trained to impart information to his students. His job was to carry out what the National Curriculum prescribed. Freire (1996:29) strongly suggests that education becomes oppressed when it is prescribed:

Every prescription represents the imposition of one individual's choice upon another, transforming the consciousness of the person prescribed to, into that which conforms to the prescriber's consciousness.

The banking concept according to Freire (1996:55), disguises the efforts of the humanist to turn women and men into automatons. Automaton conformity prevents self-directed learning, critical thinking and autonomy in action. It encourages disconnected knowledge. Freire (1996:56) further states that problem-posed methods encourage trust in people and their creative power. In terms of the 'banking system' or rote learning, the narrative educator talks and the learner listen. The learner listens, memorises and repeats without any real insight or understanding of what he/she learnt. The learner is treated as a 'tabula rasa' or an empty vessel that needs to be filled.

Freire (1996:107) argues against the 'banking' concept of education in favour of liberation and dialogical pedagogy designed to raise individuals' consciousness of oppression: to transform oppressive social structure through 'praxis' (reflection). The educator, who follows the 'banking' concept, therefore plays the role of the oppressor, instructing learners what to think and what to believe. Learners in turn become automatons.

The educator, who practices the notion of the 'banking' theory, chooses the content and context of the study and learners adapt to it. Learners are passive and accept the world as oppressors portray it to them. The learner is in the world, but not with the world. The learner is not making meaning of the knowledge that he is filled with. The purpose of narrative education, according to Freire, is to make the oppressed passive. The oppressed are taught not to question, but to accept. This minimises the student's (the oppressed) creative power. 'Banking' serves the interest of the oppressor / educator, who does not care to have the

world revealed or transformed. This approach stifles growth and development (biophily), (Freire 1996:58). Fleming (2012:127) states that automaton conformity is particularly relevant in adult education.

In the traditional system of 'learning by heart', learners are seen as the 'containers' or 'receptacles', to be filled by the educator. The educator is deemed to be a good educator if he/she completely fills the receptacles. The more the learners permit themselves to be filled, the better learners they are. Those who are knowledgeable, consider themselves above those whom they consider to know nothing. The educator perceives him/herself as opposite to his learners. Learners accept this situation but do not realise that there is the possibility of a reciprocal and dynamic relationship between educator and learner. The oppressor almost instinctively reacts against experiments in education, which will stimulate the students' critical thinking. The oppressor is more interested in brainwashing the students and not changing the situation they find themselves in.

Mc Caffery, Merrifield and Millican (2007:40) state that Freire's methodologies show how adult literacy changes society instead of adapting to it. Freire (1996:60) states that education should take the form of the humanist approach. He recommends that the oppressed should be liberated through the process of liberating education. He believes that those who are committed to liberation should reject the 'banking' concept of education and become 'conscious beings' that interact with knowledge and the world. The humanist revolutionary educator encourages students to strive towards their liberation. The teacher's efforts, according to Freire (1996:56), should coincide with the students' to engage in critical thinking and the quest for mutual humanization. The teacher's efforts portray trust towards people and their creative powers. To achieve this, the teacher must be a partner with the students. The 'banking' concept does not acknowledge partnership. Freire (1996:61) promotes problem-posing education by encouraging dialogue, which aims at people teaching each other.

Dialogue does not allow the teacher-of-the student and the student-of-the teacher to exist, (Freire, 1996:61). Through dialogue, a new term emerges: teacher-student with students-teachers. In this way no one teaches another, nor is anyone self-taught. Teachers can learn from students. The students are no longer listeners but critical co-investigators in dialogue

with the teacher. Table 2.1 below explains the differences between the concepts of 'banking' as opposed to problem-posing education.

Table 2.1 'Banking' system as opposed to 'problem posing education'

Banking concept	Problem posing education
Resists dialogue	Regards dialogue as indispensable to the act of cognition which unveils reality
Treats students as objects of assistance	Makes students critical thinkers
Inhibits creativity	Bases itself on creativity
Isolates consciousness from the world	Stimulates true reflection
Deny people from becoming fully human	Allows people to be transformed
Fails to acknowledge men and women as historical beings	Takes people's history as their starting point

To alienate human beings from their own decision-making is to change them into objects. The pursuit of full humanity cannot be carried out in isolation or individualism but only in fellowship and solidarity. No-one can be authentically human as long as he prevents others from being so. In the revolutionary process, leaders cannot utilize the 'banking' method as an interim measure. The leaders must be revolutionary–dialogical from the outset.

Bronfenbrenner's (in Donald et al, 2007:36) concept of systems theory applies to the relationships between human beings and the interactions between groups of people in their particular social contexts. Child development occurs in four nested systems; the microsystem (familiar people, for example the family, peers and the school), the mesosystem (the neighbourhood), the exosystem (here, the child is indirectly involved, for example the parents' work place) and the macrosystem (dominant social and economic structures), these systems all interact with the chronosystem (the effects of time and how continuous change interacts with the child's development). See Figure 5.1. A child's development is shaped by their social context. Bronfenbrenner (in Donald et al, 2007:36) explains that there should be interactions of communication between a young child's parents and educator as they would have similar expectations of the learner. This theory assists in

making sense of how the parent-educator partnership connects with the environment that the learner is exposed to and how it influences the child's development.

Swart and Phasha (in Landsberg, Kruger & Nel 2008:220) stated that ecological factors have an influence on the development of learners, and emphasise the need for collaboration between home and school. In the HSPP, the link between the school and home became stronger as the parents began to understand the important role they played in the effectiveness of the development of their child especially as the sessions of the HSPP developed. van Leer (2014:10) specifies that the awareness of parents and caregivers should be empowered to improve their level of confidence. This coincides with Bronfenbrenner's (in Donald et al, 2007:40) socio-ecological system, which portrays that the child's development is influenced by forms of interactions that occur in his or her social context.

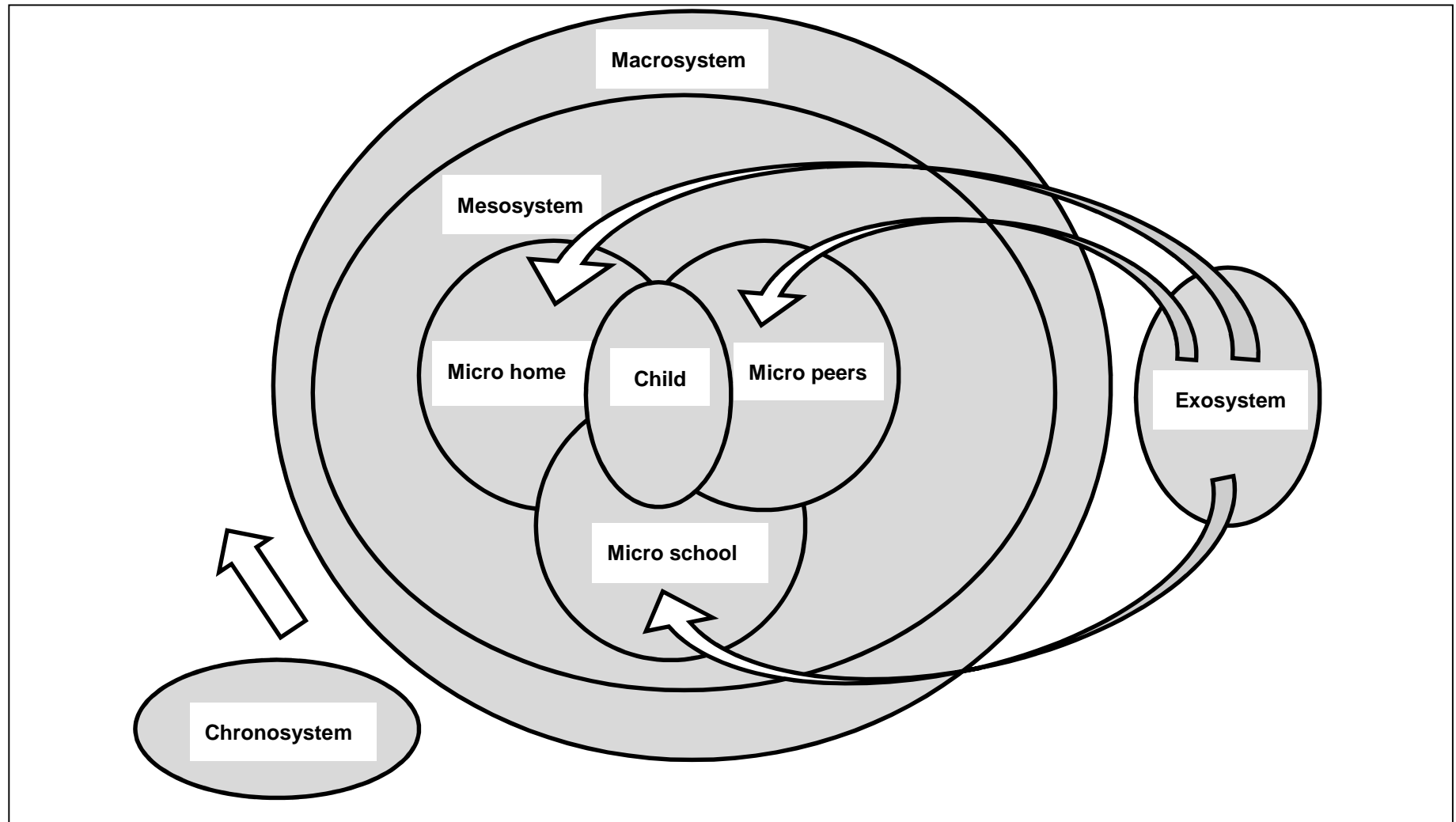


Figure 2.1 Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems approach (in Donald et al, 2007:41)

2.3 LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature review includes five sub-headings which cover the course outline of the HSPP. Although the course consisted of seven headings, this literature review has condensed the topics into five sub-headings. They are:

- Creating Habits of Mind;
- Language learning – emergent reading and writing skills;
- Supporting literacy learning at home – the role of the parent/caregiver as mentor;
- Social skills – participation, the importance of social skills; and
- Learning through play-fine and gross motor co-ordination.

2.3.1 Creating Habits of Mind

Costa (2000:1) states that: Habits of Mind are the characteristics of what intelligent people do when they are confronted with problems, the resolutions of which are not immediately apparent. He described sixteen Habits; all of which develop and deepen as they are worked with.

Table 2.2 below has three columns. The first column lists Costa's Habits of Mind. The second column describes each Habit. The third column links each Habit to an experience of participants who attended the HSPP. Examples are given from the manual, interviews, programme evaluation forms and the e.tv broadcasts.

Table 2.2: Habits of Minds and how each concept is related to the HSPP and the participants

Habits	A brief description of each Habit of Mind (Costa 2000:1)	How each Habit related to the Home School Partnership Programme
Persistence	Stick to it! Persevering in task through to completion, remaining focused. Not giving up!	79 parents registered for the HSPP. 60 completed the programme and received certificates. 75.9% of the participants showed perseverance and persistence.
Managing impulsivity	Take your time! Thinking before acting: remaining calm, thoughtful and deliberate.	Parent: LB stated that before the programme she was impatient and impulsive towards her children and how after the programme she displayed more calmness and she was more eager to help her children. This quote from the interviews shows evidence of how parent FM was more thoughtful towards her child "I am no longer the same. At first I would say 'not now' but now I want to do things".
Listening with empathy and understanding	Understanding others! Devoting mental energy to another person's thoughts and ideas. Making an effort to perceive another's point of view and emotions.	This quote from the e.tv broadcasting shows evidence of how one parent now listened with empathy and understanding. Parent AO: ... Because of these classes, I've become more positive now. I'm listening to them, we understand each other more. We work together; the bond actually has grown closer... .
Thinking flexibly	Look at it another way. Being able to change perspectives, generate alternatives, consider options.	One parent, showed being able to change perspectives, when she wrote on the semi-structured questionnaires: "... because my daughter is a slow learner, I can help her a lot with her schoolwork through play..."
Thinking about your thinking: Metacognition	Know your knowing! Being aware of your own thoughts, strategies, feelings and actions and their effects on others.	Parent AO showed evidence of being aware of her own thoughts and the effects it had on her children and on other parents when she said: "Since I've started doing this class, my self-esteem has been great. I am more excited now, I'm happier actually, now. This class has actually helped me... I'll advise all parents to do these classes and let their children become better children and good learners."
Striving for accuracy	Check it again! Always doing your best. Setting high standards, checking and finding ways constantly.	Not evident
Applying past knowledge	Use what you learn! Assessing prior knowledge,	Parent SD applied the knowledge she gained from the HSPP and stated that: "Like it's

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Habits	A brief description of each Habit of Mind (Costa 2000:1)	How each Habit related to the Home School Partnership Programme
	transferring knowledge beyond the situation in which it was learnt.	not just picking up a book at the library, you know now that a book with too many words is not good for a five year old. You know what to do exactly now. And that's a good thing that helped."
Questioning and posing problems	How do you know? Having a questioning attitude; Finding problems to solve.	Parent LB learnt the importance of posing predictive questions and problem solving regarding the books he read to his children: "I would keep the book in front of them while we lay in bed and I read to them. While I read, I asked them what they think would happen next... it was so exciting."
Thinking and communicating with clarity and precision	Be clear! Striving for accurate communication.	Not evident
Gathering data through all senses	Use your natural pathways. Pay attention to the world around you. Gather data through your senses, taste, sound, hearing and sight.	In the programme, during Session 1, the participants are made aware that all children use their senses as they learn through play. Reference is made to "playing, copying and imitating, talking and listening, guided participation, music and dance, exploring, doing and creating".
Responding with wonderment and awe	Have fun figuring it out! Finding the world awesome, mysterious and being intrigued with phenomena and beauty. Being passionate	Parent LM: ... the first time when she draw her family, I was saying to her 'you know what, everybody looks like spiders'. 'Yes Mommy, but I draw spiders... The other day, you know, it was more like a person that she drew. It may be due to the discussion between the parent and child that her next drawing showed improvement and no longer looked like 'spiders'.
Taking risks	Venture out! Being adventuresome; living on the edge of one's competence. Try new things constantly.	The HSPP programme built one mother's (JA) self-esteem so that she was able to take risks and be patient with her child when it came to reading to him. The quote below illustrates this point: "... I always told my husband you're the one who has patience and I don't have patience. I always just left that for him... I've taken little steps and I've gotten to know that I have the patience to sit with him, to teach him, to play with him, to have fun with him..."
Finding humour	Laugh a little! Finding the whimsical incongruous and	One of the parents (MS) laughed when she discovered how to fold and cut a page for her little book. This is what she said: "The best part is when you struggle to cut and to

CHAPTER 2 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND LITERATURE REVIEW

Habits	A brief description of each Habit of Mind (Costa 2000:1)	How each Habit related to the Home School Partnership Programme
	unexpected. Being able to laugh at oneself.	fold it (the page) and then we have a laugh, that's the best part".
Thinking independently	Work together! Being able to work in and learn from others in reciprocal situations. Team work.	One of the fathers (LB) realized the importance of working together with his wife and stated "Daddy('s) must be there to help his wife with the child. He mustn't just sit with the newspaper or in front of the television. Help the wife, help the child and so you can make a better life with your child".
Remaining open to continuous learning	Learn from experiences. Having humility and pride when admitting we don't know. Resisting complacency.	When he was interviewed on the e.tv broadcasting, grandparent (IV) mentioned that he felt as if he had achieved something during his time at the HSPP and was excited to continue learning. He said the following: "I feel so empowered, I can do it! I've achieved something you know, and it's wonderful to know. If I can re-do this class again, I'll do it with the greatest of pleasure!"

When attempting to link Costa's (2000:1) Habits of Mind to the HSPP two habits, 'striving for accuracy' and 'thinking and communicating with clarity and precision', were not emphasized in the programme. Since this programme works predominantly with 'oppressed parents' (Freire, 1996:29) its focus is to develop a sense of hope, and build the self-esteem of women living in situations of extreme poverty by focusing on small manageable tasks which impact positively on children's learning (Comrie, 2009:1). The HSPP seeks to promote informal learning, inspire parents and caregivers: not impose a set of ideals. It is clear that Freire's (1996:31) pedagogical philosophy and the teaching practice of the HSPP coalesce at many points in their democratic agendas.

2.3.2 Language Learning

At the time the data was collected, the Revised National Curriculum Statement (2002) (RNCS) curriculum was being used. Hence for this research project the researcher will only refer to this document. The RNCS (2002:5) states that language should be used to shape the learner's identity and knowledge. Language assists us to communicate and become acquainted with our world. It is central to our lives. Languages are used for a variety of purposes and these are described in Table 2.3 below:

Table 2.3 The purposes of language

Purpose	What purposes are reflected through Language
Personal	To sustain, develop and transform identities, to sustain relationships in families and communities and for personal growth and pleasure.
Communicative	To communicate appropriately and effectively in various social contexts.
Educational	To develop tools for thinking and reasoning, and to provide access to information.
Aesthetic	To create, interpret and play imaginatively with oral, visual and written texts.
Cultural	To understand and appreciate languages and cultures and the heritage they carry.
Political	To assert oneself and challenge others.
Critical	To understand the relationships between language, power and identity, and to challenge uses of these where necessary; to understand the dynamic nature of culture; and to resist persuasion and positioning where necessary.

The unique features of language, as further explained in the RNCS (2002:5), are that it develops reading and writing skills which are the foundations for other important literacies. In the Grade R curriculum, language is the foundation and the primary means of communication for other learning areas such as Mathematics and Life Skills. Language

inspires imagination and creativity; it provides and promotes many of the goals of science, technology and environmental education. It develops the critical tools necessary for becoming responsible citizens.

2.3.2.1 Learning Language Outcomes

In the RNCS, the Grade R curriculum consists of six Language Learning Outcomes. These outcomes have been identified as listening, speaking, reading and viewing, writing, thinking, reasoning, language structure and usage. The particular kinds of knowledge and skills needed to make such outcomes clear and understandable are listed alongside the outcomes. Table 2.4 below, describes the six Language Learning Outcomes as well as the knowledge, skills and values attached to each one.

Table 2.4 Grade R Language Learning Outcomes

Learning Outcome	Skill	Integration of knowledge, skill and values
1.	Listening	Listening for information and enjoyment and respond appropriately and critically in a wide range of situations.
2.	Speaking	Communicate confidently and effectively in spoken language in a wide range of situations.
3.	Reading and Viewing	Read and view for information and enjoyment and respond critically to the aesthetic, cultural and emotional values in texts.
4.	Writing	Write different kinds of factual and imaginative texts for a wide range of purposes.
5.	Thinking and Reasoning	Use language to think and reason, as well as to access, process and use information for learning.
6.	Language Structure and Use	Know and be able to use the sounds, words and grammar of the language to create and interpret texts.

The RNCS Policy Document (2002:9) requires that learners entering Grade R and Grade 1 have prior knowledge and a high proficiency in their home language. These learners should have developed their home language through a variety of interactions with others in the context of care, nurturing and play. These three concepts will be further interrogated in this chapter under headings: Emergent reading and writing, Supporting literacy learning at home and Social skills - the importance of social skills.

According to Grisham-Brown (2008:1025), children's growth and the way they learn are influenced by those who care for, and educate, them. To give children, from socio–

disadvantaged backgrounds, a better chance of learning to read and write successfully, as stated by O'Carroll (in Comrie, 2009:3), foundations for learning must be laid before the start of formal schooling. Teaching children to read and write should therefore be an on-going process. Imitation is a powerful form of social and cognitive education. Children's peers, older children and senior members of the community such as parents or teachers can all use this instinct to initiate as a way of leading or directing children.

McTavish (2007:86) argues that young children's literacy can be developed further through opportunities of bridging home and school. According to Grisham-Brown (2008:1025), early care and education settings such as low staff versus child ratio's and positive social interactions, influence how children grow and learn. Young children have the ability to progress when they are being encouraged and when they feel cared for by their caregivers.

Children who have been nurtured by parents, who participate in family literacy practices, grow more easily into successful readers Grisham-Brown, (2008:1042). Lara-Cinisomo, Fuligni, Daugherty, Howes and Karoly (2009:9) extend this argument by stating that children should be encouraged to use the skills they have acquired while playing or having fun indoors and outdoors to assist them with learning language.

2.3.2.2 Emergent reading and writing

Girard, Girolametto, Weitzman and Greenberg (2013:46) explain that emergent literacy has to be seen as the skill and knowledge that precede formal reading. Emergent literacy supports the development of decoding and reading comprehension. Zeece and Wallace (2009:36) state that there are several tenets regarding emergent literacy. One is that literacy development begins at birth and is highly connected with success at school. Girard et al (2013:46) argue for the importance of facilitating emergent literacy in the early childhood years. Children interact with their environment by means of their five senses from birth. Their sensory-motor experiences of touch, smell, taste, sight and hearing enable them to explore their environment. The United States Department of Education's Early Childhood Division in the office of Educational Research and Improvement suggests that the improvement of building a good enough foundation for later successful reading was relevant to the development of emergent literacy skills (Zeece et al, 2009:35).

In this paragraph, on emergent reading and writing, the following topics are discussed: print rich environments, pre-reading and pre-writing skills. Each topic is discussed in more detail.

Comrie (2009:46) indicates that an environment with print is useful for young children. Skibbe, Conner, Morrison and Jewkes (2011:43) expand this point by stating children's attention can be drawn to useful print around them and that these early literacy skills are essential for developing proficient reading and writing skills as well as overall success in school. Early reading, as stated by Hammill (2004:47), is associated with early print, which explains much of the variance in later reading performance.

When young children become aware of environmental print such as product labels, clothing, road signs and advertisements, they realise that print makes meaning. Comrie (2009:9) describes this experience as children making a big 'jump' from noticing real concrete objects to those same objects being represented by words on paper. A tool or technique that allows children to achieve a goal that would not otherwise have been reached by them is known as 'scaffolding'. Young children, as described by Neumann, Hood and Neumann (2008:314) can be asked to trace letters in words with their fingers while the word is being sounded out. While the children's tactile senses allow them to trace the letters, the children's visual, auditory and kinaesthetic senses are developed. Goldstein (2011:271) offers an insight into early word-play; songs and rhymes for example set the stage for teaching phonological awareness. Learning the concept, that letters correspond to sounds and not to their names, provides the foundation for reading.

Letter knowledge or the alphabet as defined by Skibbe et al (2011:43) is one of the strongest early predictors of children's later reading success. In addition to this, Richgels (2013:380) argues that inventive spelling is important in children's early writing and reading. Inventive spelling and word-reading are closely related and this assists children's phonemic awareness. A wordless picture book, as further explained by Richgels (2013:381), is beneficial because it allows children to view and talk about what they see. When children read and re-read picture books, they are able to predict the ending of the story.

Pre-writing, as stated by the National Early Literacy Panel (2008:68), is one of the predictors of children's later reading success. Chohan (2011:39) explains that pre-writing skills are best learned when children are allowed to organize and convey their thoughts. Cabel, Tortorelli

and Gerde (2013:650) mention that young children who were exposed to pre-writing experiences were provided with a rich foundation for literacy learning. A foundation for literacy learning includes an understanding of writing on a page from left to right, drawings and sound awareness. Children's writing, therefore, can lend information about their understanding of print and sound. The writing is often no more than directionless scribbles. Children notice written text in their environment and the scribbles become horizontal and move from left to right on a page. Furthermore Lieberman (in Cabel et al, 2013:625) states that children's drawings are their writing and that this process helps young children to figure out how writing works in an informal manner. Children often represent salient sounds or the sounds that are the most prominent because of the way they feel in the child's mouth, as elaborated by Cabel et al. When a child has the ability to identify salient sounds in words and matches them to a letter, it indicates that that child has begun to sound out the words she wrote phonetically, for example by labelling a picture of a tiger with a 'T'.

Print-rich environments, pre-reading and pre-writing skills are essential for early learners to develop into independent readers and writers. A discussion now follows that points out how these essential skills can be taught and supported in the home environment.

2.3.3 Supporting literacy learning at home

Parental relationships that support literacy in the home environment form the necessary grounding for early childhood development. Zeece et al (2009:36) state that there are several underlying factors regarding emergent literacy that seem to appear. The role of the family and the family environment itself has an effect on young children's emergent literacy development. Caregivers and teachers, together with families, help to create a basis for emergent literacy by providing literacy related activities. For many years in South Africa, as Hickman and O'Carrol (2013:49) state, there has been a misconception that learning to read and write begins when children start formal learning. The brain of an infant is impressionable; it is able to absorb and learn different skills, including language learning during the early years. Zeece et al (2009:36) emphasize that literacy development starts at birth. Issues such as the importance of family and others will be further discussed in Table 2.5.

Swick (2008:149) accentuates the importance of high-quality parent-child relationships. Through consistent and loving interactions with their parents, children experience a sense of goodness. This forms the basis upon which parents and children can train each other in better relating to, and interacting with, the environment. Parents therefore need to form a bond with their children to construct a sense of security and love. This is significant when influencing children's growth and learning. Mui and Anderson (2008:240) continue this argument by stating that homes and families are influential sites for literacy learning. Mui (2008:240) further state that reading and writing are central in children's daily lives. All the time, young children are involved in literacy interactions at home. In many instances, parents and caregivers are not aware of the impact that these literacy activities have on their children's learning.

As much as children need to be exposed to independent activities, Otto (2008:8) suggested that they need interaction with adults, which can offer learning and support. Shared reference and eye-contact, communication loops, verbal mapping, child-directed speech, linguistic scaffold and mediation are the six interaction patterns used to explain how language literacy development can be supported. In **Table 2.5**, these six interaction patterns are discussed by Otto. The discussion consists of an activity, an example and how the child benefits through these activities.

Table 2.5 Six interaction patterns to explain how language literacy development can be supported

	Interaction pattern	Activity	Example	Benefit
1.	Shared reference and eye contact	Communication involves a joint attention between adult and child on a particular object or event.	When sharing a book with a toddler, the adult will often point to a part of the picture and then...	This is essential for communication. Child learns the names of objects and adult feels motivated.
2.	Communication loops	Conversation requires that listeners and speakers take turns forming a communication loop.	The adult talks to the infant and then pauses for a response (verbal or non – verbal) from the infant.	By taking turns to talk, forms a foundation for later, more complex conversations.
3.	Verbal mapping	The adult describes an on-going event to the child; they are creating a verbal map for that event.	A mother is dressing her young child for bedtime and describes what is occurring and provides an association between actions and language.	Children are provided with words and language structure to use and understand events and actions.
4.	Child-directed speech	Adults change the way they speak when they talk to children.	Less complex grammar in sentence and phrases are used: let's go bye-bye, more expressive intonation, more general vocabulary (car instead of Cadillac), a focus on the immediate context (not what is happening tomorrow or next month).	Children's comprehension of language is being increased. Verbal participation is being encouraged.
5.	Linguistic scaffolding	Adults create language support when they structure their interaction with a child to encourage the child to participate.	The adult uses questions -expands on what the child had said. By using repetition, the adult clarifies what the child had said.	Questions and use of repetition and expanding the child's responses provide linguistic scaffold that supports the child's continual participation. The child is able to participate in conversations. It increases his/her learning and language development.
6.	Mediation	The adult simplifies the learning setting or task to allow the child to participate in the event, knowing that the child would not be able to comprehend if the story was read word for word.	When sharing a story book with a toddler, the adult might change the story text or omit it completely and instead focus on labelling and talking about the object pictures.	The child is being encouraged to participate at his developmental level.

Family members, other than fathers and mothers, according to Mui et al (2008:242) support the learning of young children at home. According to Comrie (2004:43), parents are encouraged to involve older brothers and sisters or other family members in reading and telling stories to young children. This interaction supports the older siblings' reading and sense of responsibility. Mui et al (2008:234) stated that at times, literacy learning occurs in the context of 'playing' school. Older children feel it their responsibility to help prepare their younger siblings for school entry or the next grade. Immediate family members and extended families should be encouraged to support younger children to develop basic literacy skills. Mui et al (2008:242) explains that:

The older children learn various ways to present information to the younger children, teaching them important literacy knowledge while at the same time likely enhancing and reinforcing their own literacy.

The value of older children assisting their younger siblings is that they benefit too.

Mui et al (2008:241) further explain that in the light of the increasing role that grandparents and significant other adults play in the lives of young children (children not always being raised by their biological parents), the important role of such persons should be acknowledged. Youm and Hyun (2013:2) state that Vygotsky's theory of proximal development suggests what children potentially could achieve with assistance of adults as opposed to what they know and can do on their own. The guidance and support that parents and/or caregivers offer to young children is considered critical. Zeece et al (2009:36) agree that young children's literacy and language abilities depend on support given by parents.

Not all parents are comfortable and confident enough to assist their children in an overt role. Therefore suitable support programmes should be made available so that parents do not feel pressured to perform in the company of others. Otto (2008:2) and de Coulon, Meschi and Vignoles (2011:451) made compelling arguments about the harmful effects that parents with poor literacy skills have on their young children's literacy development. Parents with poor literacy skills may not only have an impact on their children's schooling but it may also affect employment and family income. Other factors mentioned by Otto are that parents may face unemployment, having to work away from home and/or hold an unstable job with low wages. The amount of time spent together could be affected by these factors. These factors relate to the theory of Urie Bronfenbrenner (in Donald et al, 2007:40) on the different levels

of how systems in the social context interact in the process of child development. In a South African context, a majority of Grade R learners come from low-income families, it is important to recognise the factors which contribute and prevent successful literacy achievement.

2.3.4 Social skills – participation, the importance of social skills

When adults play with children, skills are being developed through participation. While children enjoy these games, it encourages healthy competition, role-modelling, scaffolding, guidance, independence, taking turns and playing fair. Cheng Pui-Wah (2010:69) pointed out that in many countries; recognition had been given to the value of play in the development and learning of young children. Rosenthal and Gatt (2010:233) explained that young children's socio-emotional competence and adjustment has been shown to be one of the major predictors of school achievement and academic success. They further state that early childhood caregivers and teachers are provided with knowledge and skill to promote language and cognitive achievement. Social and emotional developments are, however, reflections of the effects of the home environment.

In 1932, Parten (in Englebright Fox, n.d.) expanded on different forms of play that young children assume. Here follows a description of four types of play which children engage in as from birth to five years old.

Play is regarded as an important part of a child's development. Play allows children to explore and learn about their world. Along with play, imagination, creativity, social skills and problem-solving skills are developed. Starting from birth through the ages of four or five, young children go through four main stages of play: solitary play, parallel play, associative play, and co-operative play (Parten, 1932, in Englebright Fox, n.d).

The first stage, solitary play, starts during infancy. Throughout this stage (Parten, 1932, in Englebright Fox, n.d), infants are exploring their environment, constantly learning about new things and gaining knowledge from them. The young child experiences solitary play into the toddler years. Young children may be playing in close proximity to others but they are playing alone.

The following stage of play is parallel play. This stage of play is common in toddlers but is known to occur in any age group. Children may be in the same room with other children, playing with similar toys, but not necessarily playing with each other. The children may be playing beside each other rather than with each other (Parten, 1932, in Englebright Fox, n.d).

Associative play occurs when children are about three and four years old. These pre-schoolers play together in loosely structured activities. For the duration of this stage, (Parten, 1932, in Englebright Fox, n.d), children play together and talk with each other, yet they are not working together in an organized manner to create something.

In the course of co-operative play, the fourth stage begins to emerge in four and five year olds. As their social and emotional development matures, children play co-operatively with others. Their play has an organized structure. Children will communicate with each other as they work together towards a common goal. In this play stage, children learn respect for each other's property, realize they may need permission to use others' toys and are more willing to share their toys (Parten, 1932, in Englebright Fox, n.d).

The importance of play as identified by Bulotsky-Shearer, Manz, Mensz, Mc Wayne, Sekino and Fantuzzo (2012:225), was that young children who play co-operatively and who are engaged in classroom learning activities tend to be resilient and have leadership qualities. Bulotsky-Shearer et al (2012:225) later argue that children, who had difficulty in interacting with their peers, demonstrated poor language skills. It is therefore important to provide children with a safe and supportive environment that encourages play and ultimately prompts them to engage with others.

Oliveira-Formosinho and Barros Araujo (2011:223) refers to a pedagogical environment that allows children the opportunity to respect and appreciate others regarding their differences. To cultivate democracy, children should feel respected and valued irrespective of their differences and even because of them. Parents and caregivers can be the role models for showing respect to others' human rights. Agreeing on the rules of the game and playing together, as stated by Comrie (2009:69), are the starting points of becoming aware of democracy. Play can be seen as a genre through which children freely express their intentions and experiences. Play is the central feature in early childhood development.

Milteer, Ginsburg and Mulligan (2012:7) point out that, though families are under-resourced, it is important for parents and educators to recognize the importance of the lifelong advantages that children achieve through play.

2.3.5 Learning through play-fine and gross motor co-ordination

Comrie (2009:67) explains that important changes take place in the brain when children are physically involved in activities. These activities assist in preparation for writing, reading and understanding the world better. Robinson, Webster, Logan, Lucas and Barber (2010:296) argue that movement and physical activities contribute to a child's quality of life. They give examples of motor skills such as running, jumping, throwing and catching; suggesting that these fundamental skills enhance intellectual development and academic achievement. In Appendix 5 the researcher included an example of session five of the HSPP during which the parents had to give feedback about the games they used to play as children. The parents had to think about how their children would benefit from games mentioned by them.

According to Brown (2010:269), children with fine and gross motor development problems tend to have difficulty reading. The availability of toys and other manipulatives can promote the development of fine and gross motor development. Gabbard, Cacola and Rodrigues (2008:5) explain that an optimal level of development occurs within a stimulating environment and strong contextual support. Brown (2010:269) further recommends that more subtle social factors impact on motor development such as entree to play regions or space at home.

2.4 SUMMARY

In this chapter Paolo Feire's (1996:52) theory on oppressed and liberated people was discussed within his theoretical model of knowledge acquisition. An outline was given of Bronfenbrenner's (in Donald et al, 2007:40) nested systems. The literature review consisted of the sixteen habits of mind as described by Costa, the benefits and aspects of language as stated by the RNCS. Further literature described how language can be supported at home, the importance of social skills and how young children develop through play.

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CHAPTER 3 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to determine the effectiveness of the seven-week literacy intervention HSPP attended by parents of Grade R learners. Cohen, Lawrence, Manion and Morrison (2003:73) state that the intention of research determines the methodology and design of the study. This study used a case study approach embedded within an interpretivist paradigm since the area under investigation was rooted in real-life scenarios. 'How' and 'what' are questions that underlie an interpretivist paradigm: in this specific scenario 'how' refers to a general sense of purposelessness and helplessness experienced by parents prior to the intervention. The 'what' answers the questions of what sort of intervention was employed and with what effects.

3.1 RESEARCH APPROACH

The nature of this research study was qualitative. Henning, van Rensburg and Smit (2007:48) argue that a qualitative approach allows for a different view of the research investigation area that is studied so that the participants are able to view their opinions in a self-reflective objective manner. As stated by Morrison (in Briggs & Coleman 2007:27), detailed consideration should be given to the overall framework in which the research topic is embedded. A qualitative approach allows for better understanding and explanation of the study. As a research strategy, a case study is conducted within an interpretive paradigm. The instruments used were focussed group interviews, including an initial pilot focus group interview, semi-structured questionnaires, one-on-one interviews and a video recording.

3.1.1 Case Study

This research used case study methodology to conduct an in-depth investigation into determining to what extent and in what ways parents of Grade R learners were empowered by attending a seven-week literacy intervention programme. This method enabled the researcher to collect data in an organised manner. It assisted the researcher with the analysing of the data gathered and with the report on the findings. This case study technique, as stated by Cohen et al (2003:181) provided a unique example of actual people in real-life situations.

Cohen et al (2003:181) describe a case study as 'the study of an instance in action', such as a child, a clique, a class, a school or a community. A case study, according to Yin (2003:1), is the preferred strategy when 'how' or 'what' questions are being posed. The investigator (researcher) has little control over events. The focus is on existing occurrences within real-life conditions. Furthermore, Cohen et al (2003:183) point out that case studies have advantages as well as disadvantages. One of the advantages of case studies is that it allows the participants to 'be themselves'. Participants were able to reflect on how they acquired reading and writing skills when they were young children. This reflection exercise gave the parents an opportunity to re-discover the important role that they play in their young children's lives and especially in their developmental stages. They were able to relate to the learning events that they allowed their children to experience before, during and after they attended the HSPP. Case studies are down-to-earth and in harmony with the readers' own experience. They are 'strong in reality', hold the respondent's attention and allow readers to judge the implications of a study for them.

Cohen et al (2003:184) explain that there are disadvantages to case studies. A case study can be inclined to problems of observer prejudice, despite the researcher's best efforts to remain impartial. During the 2010 focussed group interviews, the researcher tried her best to remain fair by not showing favour to any of the participants by only posing questions to certain people. Case studies are not easily open to crosschecking and therefore may be selective, biased, personal and subjective, (Cohen et al, 2003:184). After the initial contact with case studies in 2010, the disadvantages of this method of data collection manifested themselves in the nature of the interview questions, which had initially seemed well-suited. On examination, however, information from initial interview questions was vague, that is too subjective to be useful and self-indulgent, that is too personal. In 2011, the interview questions were revised using the technique of 'probing'. This revision allowed for the type of objective and verifiable data required.

3.1.2 Interpretivist Paradigm

According to Cohen et al (2003:22), an interpretive paradigm is considered as having a concern for the individual. In this study, the researcher had a concern towards the Grade R learners attending the school where the study was performed. The researcher's concern

stemmed from the conversations she had had with the parents, they were eager to assist their children but lacked the knowledge and the skill. The significant understanding of an interpretive paradigm is to understand the particular world of human experiences.

Furthermore it is stated by Cohen et al (2003:22) that the interpretive paradigm focuses on the actions of the individuals and how they interpret the world around them. It became clear to the researcher that the Grade R parents found themselves surrounded by a poverty stricken community with a high percentage of unemployment. The Grade R parents felt disempowered yet they wanted a good future for their young children. Baumfield, Hall and Wall (2013:16) argue that an interpretive paradigm often relies on qualitative data, which is predominantly based on the belief that a truth is constructed and dependent on interactions within the social context. The researcher was keen to introduce the HSPP to the Grade R parents. This programme created a space for interaction between the parents and the teacher.

This research project falls precisely within the terms and definition established by Cohen et al (2003:22) in that the real-life conditions of all those participating in the intervention benefitted from it in meaningful and material ways. It seemed as both physical and metaphysical circumstances of the researcher and the researched engaged in a reciprocally beneficial and greatly improved *modus vivendi*.

3.2 RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

This study was qualitative and participatory in nature. A qualitative approach was opted for as opposed to a quantitative approach due to the exploratory and interpretive nature of the study. Henning et al (2007:3) agrees by elaborating that:

In qualitative research, we wish to give as clear and detailed an account of actions and representations of actions as possible, so that we can gain a better understanding of our world, hopefully to use it to bring about a measure of social change.

Qualitative research methods are designed to help researchers understand people and the social and cultural contexts within which they live.

A variety of data collection instruments were used in this complex study and are listed in order of collection: a pilot interview, focus group interviews, open-ended questionnaires, post interview, one-on-one interviews and the e.tv video recording. Each one will be discussed in more detail. Qualitative data was collected between February and March 2010, by means of recorded discursive focus-group interviews and semi-structured questionnaires were completed. In 2011 one-on-one interviews were conducted, and during 2012 e.tv recorded sessions of the HSPP.

Data used in this research, was first collected in 2010, from the focus group that consisted of five parents. In 2011, e.tv recorded sessions of the HSPP for that year. Data from this recording was included in this project. A letter of permission from e.tv to use this data is included in Appendix 6 This conjunction of complementary information indicated the rich multi-dimensionality of the HSPP both as a socio-pedagogical intervention and a valuable source of data obtained from various groups and individuals and in different media: interviews, questionnaires and televised versions. **Table 3.1** below indicates the complexity of data collection instruments used in this study.

Table 3.1 A list of the data collection instruments used in 2010 and 2011

Data Collection Instruments	
Interviews	<p>2010:</p> <p>7 days before the HSPP began, the researcher conducted a pilot focus group interview with 5 parents (described in Table 3.2 below) who volunteered their time and participated in the programme.</p> <p>Half-an-hour before each HSPP session, (excluding Session 1 and Session 7) there was a focus group interview with the same 5 parents. Sometimes extra ladies would join this group since they preferred not to walk alone at night. Therefore 6 focus group interviews (included the pilot interview) were conducted.</p> <p>Session 1: No interview (the first session of the HSPP, therefore no interviews)</p> <p>Session 2: Focus group interview (same 5 parents as in the pilot interview)</p> <p>Session 3: Focus group interview (5 parents + 2 ladies. They walked together for safety reasons)</p> <p>Session 4: Focus group interview (5 parents + 1 lady-different from the first 2 ladies. They walked together for safety reasons)</p> <p>Session 5: Focus group interview (same 5 parents as in the pilot interview)</p> <p>Session 6: Focus group interview (5 parents + 1 lady – different from the other ladies. They walked together for safety reasons.</p> <p>Session 7: No focus group interview – certification evening therefore no interviews were conducted</p> <p>Post interview: Following Session 7, the researcher invited the original 5 parents to attend a post interview. Parents of a Grade R learner, who had not attended the 2010 HSPP</p>

	Data Collection Instruments
	<p>attended this interview as they were excited to learn about it and the researcher wanted to encourage them to attend the next session in 2011.</p> <p>2011: During April and May 2011, a new cohort of 5 parents was interviewed as described in Table 3.3. These parents participated in the 2010 HSPP and offered their time to be interviewed. Session 1: One-on-one interview with LB Session 2: One-on-one interview with JW Session 3: One-on-one interview with GG Session 4: One-on-one interview with JB Session 5: One-on-one interview with LW</p>
Semi-structured questionnaires	<p>2010: 60 Semi-structured questionnaires (Appendix 7) were handed out on the evening of the certification of the HSPP. 53 forms were received, 50 in English and 3 written in Afrikaans.</p>
e.tv video recorded observations	<p>2011: During February and March 2011, e.tv recorded the HSPP training Session four, which took place in one of the classrooms where the research was conducted. After this training session they interviewed one of the parents. e.tv acquired verbal permission to visit yet another parent (*) at her home. She was videoed in her lounge working on a table with her Grade R and Grade 3 daughters. She was busy with emergent reading and writing activities with her younger daughter. The older daughter was colouring in. The mother and her two daughters were interacting using the HSPP principles. The school principal and the two facilitators, one of which was the researcher, were interviewed by the e.tv team. On a later day the two facilitators, one of which was the researcher, were filmed in their classrooms teaching. On the evening when the certificates were handed out, e.tv recorded the whole event. They interviewed two participants (who were grandparents) neither of who was part of the 2010 nor the 2011 cohort. On this particular evening e.tv interviewed parent (*). This data will be used in Chapter 4.</p>

3.2.1 Sample

The researcher opted for a convenient sample of parents as this group was easily accessible. Cohen et al (2003:103) explains that a convenience sample may possibly be the preferred approach for a case study. In this study, it was convenient for the researcher to approach the Grade R parents. They were easily accessible because the researcher saw them in the morning when they brought their Grade R children to school and in the afternoon when they collected their children after school.

The sample consisted of five parents who had children in the Grade R class in 2010. During February and March 2010, these parents attended a seven-week HSPP, which was conducted in English. The following year, during May 2011, the researcher had to find five other parents to be interviewed (described in detail below). These parents attended the same HSPP in 2010 but were interviewed to add more depth to the findings. The first sample group did not display sufficient response to the required study and it therefore lacked depth. Here follows a description of the conditions, which influenced the results.

3.2.2 Conditions which could have influenced the manner in which the parents responded

During 2010, sixty-six parents attended the HSPP at a primary school in Hout Bay. On the first night of the programme, volunteers were sought to assist with research data collection. This entailed a focus group interview every week for five weeks. Initially, only five parents offered to work with the researcher. Two weeks later more parents volunteered because they walked together for safety reasons. At the beginning of interview sessions, parents were told that the research being conducted was for a Master's thesis. The five parents who volunteered were assured that their responses would be kept confidential and their names not divulged. It soon became clear, however, that their responses to the interview questions were vague, lacked depth and did not meet required expectations. There were a few reasons for this.

Possibly the parents did not know exactly what was expected of them during the interviews. Or perhaps their academic background did not give them the necessary confidence to participate with more comprehension. **Table 3.2** indicates the 2010 cohort's last year of schooling and the reasons they left school. Because the interview questions did not at first manifest the responses required in terms of depth and accuracy, it was immediately necessary to ask 'why'. It seemed that, if parents had not grasped the questions, it may have been because the level of inquiry was not appropriate to their schooling level. It was necessary therefore to seek information about the schooling of each parent. A separate questionnaire (Appendix 8) was drawn up asking participants' their names, their final grade completed and the reasons for leaving school. Such information provided satisfactory explanations for some of the previously inexplicable gaps in responses received at first.

Table 3.2 2010 parents' last year of schooling and the reasons why they left school

	HK (Grandmother)	LM (Mother)	SD (Mother)	LB (Mother)	FM (Mother)
Final grade completed?	Grade 6	Grade 8	Grade 11	Grade 9	Grade 12
Reasons for leaving school?	Because of my sickness that I have. I have rheumatic fever	I fell pregnant	Did not have R14,00 for school fees. Attended night school and finished Grade 11	There was no traveling fare	Completed matric

Appendix 9 shows the attendance of the 2010 registered participants. This data shows that 79 parents registered for the course and 60 parents received certificates.

In 2011, the researcher intended to collect more data from the same group of parents. The same parents could not be found due to various reasons. One woman promised to arrive but never did. One of the mothers was looking after a small baby while another mother had opened her own nursery school. This woman stood for local ward elections, which were happening at the same time. One woman forgot her interview appointments. There appeared to have been miscommunication with the last woman. She never seemed available to meet for the interview sessions.

Therefore, five new parents were invited, who had also attended the same HSPP workshop in February and March 2010. This group of participants received the same questionnaire describing their final grade completed and the reasons for leaving school. This information is depicted in Table 3.3.

Table 3.3 2011 cohort's last year of schooling and the reasons why they left school

	LB (Father)	GG (Mother)	JB (Mother)	JW (Mother)	LW (Mother)
Final grade completed?	Grade 12	Grade 9	Grade 8	Grade 8	Grade 9
Reasons for leaving school?	Completed Grade 12	I had to work to help my grandparents pay for things	To be honest I had no reason to leave school. I did what other children did to leave school. I regret it now, cause I realise education is a must.	I had to work to provide for the family	I had a boyfriend and decided that I wanted to get out of school. My parents were very disappointed.

The researcher questioned the way in which she prepared and asked the questions. The one-on-one interviews with the new parents were conducted between April and May of 2011. The researcher prepared a new list of interview questions including probing questions (as in Table 3.4) to assist the parents to answer the questions more directly and with more depth.

Table 3.4 An example of the questions that were asked during the 2010 and 2011 interviews

2010	2011		
Question	Question	The reason for asking	Probing questions
1. Have you been spending time with your child before the programme started?	1. Are you still making little books with your children?	1. The HSPP encourages the parents to make their own little books with their children and the books can be on any topic, such as My Family, Things that I can do or my alphabet book. 2. The parents are motivated to use their home language in these books. 3. These books must be given a title, author and page numbers. 4. From the evaluation forms the parents indicated that they enjoyed making little books.	1. Do you still make little books with your children? 2. Do you still make books in your home language? Why or Why not? 3. Do you still make your child aware that books have a title, an author, and page numbers? 4. Why do you still make your child aware of this? 5. What is still the best part of making little books?

Henning et al (2007:71) stated that the researcher should select interviewees who can shed optimal light on the issues that he/she is investigating. The 2011 sample of parents proved to have provided a general perception of the findings of a large segment of the lower-income community. These new interview questions provided rich enough data to work with.

3.2.3 Site

The HSPP took place in the technology classroom at a school in Hout Bay in the Western Cape. The technology classroom was used as the venue for the 2010 HSPP because it was the largest available classroom and because the school hall was being used for dance classes every afternoon. Once the learners and educator of the technology classroom left on a Thursday afternoon, the two facilitators re-organised the classroom to create an atmosphere that would be suitable for the HSPP sessions to be conducted. The classroom was set out using 10 tables surrounded by six chairs. A table was situated at the door with the register and pens. Every week the facilitators requested the caretakers to carry pin-up boards to hang posters and quotes from literature. An easel with newsprint paper was used for facilitating.

The facilitators prepared newsprint posters beforehand to save time during the sessions. Parents were reminded of the mind-map, which discussed how children learn (Session 1). The mind-map was put against the wall every week as a reminder to parents. As the sessions progressed so did the posters against the wall. When preparing for Session 2, the facilitators arranged with the local library to borrow children's story books suitable for different ages; pre Grade R (age 0-4 years), Grade R (age 5-6 years) and Grade 1-3 (age 6-8 years). During Session 6, the facilitators prepared a display of mathematical resources that could be obtainable in any home environment.

The focus group interviews with the 2010 and 2011 cohorts took place in the researcher's classroom. Even though the classroom was under resourced, the researcher improvised to create a print rich environment, with bought, as well as self-made posters, and children's artwork. Although it was not a comfortable environment, it provided a quiet area where participants were not interrupted (Greef, 2011:370). As anticipated, this space enabled honest sharing and participation.

In 2010, the Grade R classroom, which normally seated 30 learners, was used to accommodate the five interviewees (and sometimes additional participants) and the researcher. The parents sat on suitable chairs in a semi-circle on the mat area with the researcher. A tape recorder was mindfully placed on a small chair in the middle of the semi-circle. The classroom was not specifically changed for the parents, however, the different

corners in the classroom, such as the fantasy area, book corner, block area and the tables prepared for the following day's activities, displayed a calm and neat atmosphere. After the focus group interview sessions each week, the parents assisted the researcher by carrying their chairs next door to the technology classroom where the HSPP session was about to take place.

In 2011 the new cohort of parents came to the one-on-one interviews, one at a time to the same Grade R classroom. They sat at the researcher's table, opposite her, in her classroom. A tape recorder was put between the interviewee and the researcher. Again the classroom was a print rich environment with the busy and interactive learning corners.

3.3 DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENTS

Open-ended questions were asked in a series of focus group interviews, which were crucial to this research programme. In 2010, interviews were conducted after each week of the seven-week HSPP. For the sake of keeping a record, both sets of interviews have been saved in a file on the computer. During February and March 2011, e.tv videoed the HSPP over a period of four weeks and a video clip from that filming was transcribed and reproduced and has also been saved in the computer file. On the final evening of the HSPP, the participants were requested to complete a semi-structured questionnaire.

3.3.1 Interviews

In February 2010, before the programme began, the researcher conducted a pilot interview with five parents in a focus group. The purpose of this pilot interview was to build good relationships with the parents and to establish what literacy activities occurred in their homes. Cohen et al (2003:121) state that piloting interviews can enrich the reliability of interviews.

Thereafter, over a period of five weeks, before each workshop session, the researcher conducted five focus group interviews. At the end of the seven-week programme, the researcher conducted a post-interview session with the parents thus tracking the efficacy of the intervention of the HSPP. The interviews were tape-recorded. Koshky (2010:87) recommends tape-recorded interviews by making the following statement:

As it is impossible to take notes on all that is said during an interview tape recording also makes it possible for the researcher to give full attention to the context of the interview.

Bloor and Wood (2006:104) explain that qualitative focus group interviews have a more informal conversational character, shaped by the interviewer's pre-existing topic guide and to some extent by uncertainties that are developing in the interview. In contrast to this statement, Bloor et al continues that quantitative interviews have a semi-formal character and use a standardized interview schedule. In this study, recorded focus group interviews were used as an information collection method in a qualitative research study. Henning et al (2007:59) describe the use of focus group interviews as follows:

In interviews, certain cultural knowledge is required to draw from the vast body of experience and knowledge of the individual respondent who speaks. The interviewer can go only as far as the interviewee will let him/her and vice versa.

Henning et al (2007:57) further state that focus group interviewers see respondents as social actors networking with the interviewer and, at the same time, involved in discursive practice. This emphasizes the conversational event of the interviews and serves as information gathering as well as knowledge making. Philips and Carr (2010:135) point out the following features of focus group interviews:

... to interview ... is to enquire, to ask questions ... and to listen to others connected with your project in order to hear another side, version or angle of the story.

In this research project, the focus group interviews (as described in Table 3.1), which consisted of five parents (who were also involved in the pilot focus group interview), were useful as it provided in-depth information to the researcher in a short period of time. The researcher interviewed the participants by asking open-ended questions followed up by probing questions. The participants listened to one another's opinion regarding the project (Philips et al, 2010:135). Participants were allowed to respond from their own individual experiences. Careful planning with respect to the needs of the participants and the questions to be asked assisted with the effectiveness the interviews.

According to Silverman (2011:169), focus groups are a way of collecting qualitative data, which comprises of a small number of people discussing a particular topic or set of issues. The discussion is generally constructed on a series of questions and the researcher not only asks questions but facilitates the process and encourages the interviewees to interact with each other. In this research project, the researcher conducted focus group interviews, which made it possible to stimulate the interviewees to produce new ideas as well as sharing their background information.

An advantage given by Henning et al (2007:57) is that focus group interviews are timesaving. In this study during the 2011 interview sessions, the researcher was able to ask one question and encouraged the interviewees to respond by using probing questions. Focus group interviews are a method that allows people to feel relatively empowered and supported in a situation where others surround them. The participants shared more freely as they perceived the rest of the group to be like themselves in some way. The following table describes strengths and challenges as discussed by Cohen et al (2003:271).

Table 3.5 Strengths and challenges of focus group interviews

Strengths	Challenges
Focus group interviews permit decision-makers to see and review instrumentation used in evaluation.	Focus group interviews can prevent flexibility in relating the interview to particular individuals and circumstances.
The use of focus group interviews assists the facilitation of organization and analysis of data collected.	Focus group interviews can standardize the wording of questions by limiting and bounding spontaneity.
It decreases bias when numerous focus group interviewers are used	Focus group interviews can influence the relevance of questions and answers.

According to Henning et al (2007:148) interviews aim to provide detail and information to bring the researcher's attention to what the interviewees think and feel. The interview sessions allowed the researcher to realise what the participants' thoughts and feelings were about the HSPP. Each participant was required to respect the other's opinions and perspectives with regard to this research topic.

As mentioned previously, in 2011, the researcher held one-to-one interviews with five participants who attended the 2010 HSPP (Table 3.1). The interviews took place after school when it was most convenient for the parents. The researcher structured the interview questions by formatting the same interview questions, sequencing the words in the same

order and asking each participant the same probing questions. According to Cohen et al (2003:121), a manner of checking for reliability is for the researcher to have a structured interview with the same format and sequence of words and questions for each participant.

3.3.2 Semi-structured questionnaires

Bertram and Christiansen (20014:74) explain that semi-structured questionnaires probe more open-ended questions than a structured questionnaire. Open-ended questions are questions, which the participants in this study (Appendix 8), were able to answer the way they preferred. The participants were not given answers to choose from. These kinds of answers are important for research in a paradigm that depends on, and necessitates, qualitative evidence. Cohen et al (2003:248) explain that there are several kinds of question and response modes in questionnaires. According to Delpont and Roestenberg (in de Vos, Strydom, Fouchè & Delpont, 2011:195-196), these various forms of questionnaire responses enables the researcher to obtain the desired information by being goal-directed. Delpont et al (2011:196) clarify that open-ended questions allow for an indefinite number of potential answers and self-expression. This study, however, opted for semi-structured questionnaires, which assisted the respondents to write unrestricted responses on their own particular terms.

Wiersma et al (2005:174) explain that respondents should find the questionnaire attractive and easy-to-read. The questionnaire that the participants received consisted of a layout that was not crowded but easy to comprehend at first glance. According to Delpont et al (2011:196), the respondents will be more motivated to complete the questionnaire if it is neat, attractively formatted, printed professionally on a reasonable page length and easy-to-read with instructions that are clearly set out. The participants seemed eager to complete the semi-structured questionnaire since it consisted of only three simple questions. The three semi-structured questions were: 'What I enjoyed about the programme', 'What I did not enjoy' and 'Recommendations'. The page was neatly and attractively formatted and it was professionally printed on an A4 size page. It appeared as if the participants found the questionnaire easy to read as the researcher set the instructions out plainly. In semi-structured questionnaires, as stated by Bertram et. al (2014:76) the interpretivist researcher has to make it uncomplicated for participants to give feedback to questions.

In this study, semi-structured questionnaires assisted the researcher to obtain responses that she may or may not have expected as the participants were able to give their own opinion and relate to their experiences. Bertram et al (2014:76) points out that an advantage of using semi-structured questionnaires is that they allow participants to give their own opinion or relate to an experience without being constrained by close-ended responses. Delport et al (2011:198) agrees that the participants' logic, thinking processes and frame of reference are revealed when answering open-ended questions. A further advantage, argued by Cohen et al (2003:255), is that the respondents are allowed to give an honest, personal comment when using open-ended questions instead of ticking numbers and boxes.

On the final evening of the HSPP when the certificates were presented to the participants, they were requested to complete the semi-structured questionnaire. The respondents were truthful when they indicated what they liked and did not like about the HSPP. Instead of ticking off numbers and boxes, the participants were able to share their personal remarks. The purpose of this exercise was to create a window of opportunity for the participants to shed light (Cohen, 2003:256) on their experiences of the HSPP and to provide honest and personal feedback. Since this was the first time a reflective activity had been conducted, the researcher's aim was to identify the analytical, thinking processes of the participants. It was interesting to note that most of the responses were directly linked to the questions, logical and thought through while producing unexpected responses. The facilitators of the HSPP arranged for the questionnaires to be handed out for completion at the start of the certification evening.

A significant factor to be considered when giving the participants an open-ended questionnaire to complete, was that many of them had a low level of literacy and this would necessitate them taking more than the expected time Delport et al (2011:198) to complete the three simple questions. Bertram et al (2014:79) state that participants should be literate in the language of the questionnaire. Since the participants came from a low socio-economic environment, it was important for them to be able to read and write in the language of the questionnaire. It is important that the participants understand the language used in the questionnaire.

From the fifty-three English questionnaires that were returned on the evening of the certification, fifty reply slips were written in English and three reply slips were written in

Afrikaans. This could be an indication that not all of the participants were confident to read and write in the language of the questionnaire. The depth of the critique from the participants was not what the researcher expected. This resulted in the researcher having to follow up by doing one-on-one interviews.

3.3.3 Video recording

According to Paulus, Lester and Dempster (2014:10), qualitative researchers have usually depended on the written word to epitomize their research, however, digital tools such as video recordings used in this study, allow researchers opportunities to write about, and disseminate their research in new ways. The researcher was able to transcribe the video recording of the HSPP and the video was broadcasted on national television.

Bloor et al (2006:180) describe an advantage of video recording as being dependable, in the following way:

... video recording is seen to be more reliable than real-time observation and note-taking as it allows for repeated examination of the data.

Flicks (2007:254) agrees that video recording is one of the instruments used as a genuine form of data collection. The researcher used the video footage as a reliable data collection method and was able to analyse the video recordings and use the findings to answer the research question of this study. Replayed video recordings allowed the researcher to refine and re-refine her analysis. It allowed for reflection and a more detailed interpretation of the footage (Penn-Edwards, 2012:155). Because the video clip was repeatedly watched, the researcher was able to obtain more significant information.

A further advantage of video recording, as stated by Penn-Edwards (2012:150), is that videos capture images that may have been hidden. The researcher was able to view images of the video recording, which might have been unnoticed. Cohen et al (2003:281) agree that video recording may profit more accurate data. Bloor et al (2006:182) explain that through video recordings, actual behaviour is being recorded instead of reported behaviour. The video clip allowed those who did not register for the HSPP to view the television programme and perceive the mood of the class. From the time when the researcher analysed the video

recording, it was noted that a true reflection was given from Session 4 of the HSPP and the certification ceremony.

Penn-Edward (2012:157) explains that some researchers have shown that video recordings have disadvantages. They can display 'an imperfect picture of what went on'. Seale, Gobo, Gubrium and Silverman (2008:371) mention that visual images such as video recordings are 'products of the researcher's own objectivity' and that video recordings can be 'ambiguous'. The video footage of the HSPP showed positive literacy learning experiences during Session 4. For example, one parent demonstrated how to play a particular game and a group of parents showed the books that they made as a homework task. The video recording nonetheless did not show any 'imperfect pictures' such as the times when participants hesitated to answer questions or were shy to give feedback from their group discussions. It may seem as if the television viewers were shown only positive aspects of what really occurred during the HSPP.

Bloor et al (2006:182) claims that people may not act naturally and spontaneously in the presence of a video recorder. However, the participants of the HSPP gave the impression that they were natural and spontaneous when they appeared on television. A further disadvantage of video recording as suggested by Bloor et al (2006:182) is that anonymity proves more difficult with video recording as is the case with audio recording. Denzin and Lincoln (2011:417) agree that the 'subjects' should remain anonymous, even though some are pleased and willing to be identified. In this study, the participants were assured that their identity would not be revealed, yet the thought of appearing on national television was appealing to them. Wiersma et al (2005:254) mentioned that videotaping can be an added expense. Fortunately, on the other hand, the HSPP was neither a financial burden to the school nor to the facilitators since e.tv covered all the costs concerning the video recording.

3.4 DATA ANALYSIS

Sagor (2011:126) made the following statement regarding data analysis:

... when engaged in data analysis, you figure out a way to liberate the story that is lying dormant inside your data and give it an opportunity to take form and reveal itself.

Cohen et al (2003:149) agree that, throughout the analysis stage, key themes, issues and problems are identifiable. According to Henning et al (2007:127), data analysis in qualitative research is on going, emerging and a non-linear process. The researcher analysed the data to check the importance of the results and to pursue a pattern and a purpose for the approach in which events in the study transpired. She gathered the information to investigate for correlations and themes.

Cohen et al (2003:148) state that codes define categories, which are stringent, bringing about order and structure. 'The code is a word or abbreviation that is sufficiently close to that which it is describing in order that the researcher can see at a glance what it means'. During the time of inductive data analysis, the researcher used eight different coloured pens to code the text of the interviews, semi-structured questionnaires and the video recording. The codes were: Personal Development was coded in red, Early childhood development was coded green, Building collegiality in the community was coded yellow, Developing skills was coded purple, Time management was coded silver, Strengthening relationships was coded blue, Positive self-esteem was coded orange, and finally Future hope was coded turquoise.

Some codes were discarded, other codes were broken down into new codes and certain codes occurred more frequently. These codes were interpreted, theorised and made sense of, while re-reading the theoretical frameworks of Freire (1996:57) and Bronfenbrenner (in Donald et al, 2007:40). This information substantiated and ratified the theoretical framework in Chapter 2. Data analysis supported the researcher to determine which codes matched therefore finally forming five themes each with the same three sub-themes. These themes occurred on a regular and consistent basis. Below follows an example of all the colour codes and the themes it described.

3.5 TRUSTWORTHINESS

3.5.1 Validity

Kvale (in Henning et al, 2007:148) claims that validation depends on good craftsmanship (meaning precision throughout the research process). While the researcher was conducting the 2010 focus group interviews, she ensured that none of the five participants were treated unfairly or gained preference above another in the group. In this study, the researcher

referred to the research question time and again to ensure that the focus was on empowering parents of young children. The findings were interpreted by linking them to the theories of Freire (1996:57) and Bronfenbrenner (in Donald et al, 2007:40). Validity was therefore, ensured by continually checking for bias, questioning and theoretically interpreting the findings which confirmed the trustworthiness of the research study.

3.5.2 Reliability

Cohen et al (2003:121) state that a highly structured interview with the same format and sequence of words and questions for each participant is one way of ensuring reliability. During 2011, the researcher interviewed another five parents. These participants were interviewed one-on-one. The researcher used the same format of questions and the same sequence of words for each participant with additional probing questions.

3.5.3 Triangulation

According to Cohen et al (2003:112) triangulation is a powerful approach indicating concurrent validity, particularly in qualitative research. Concurrent validity was achieved when the interviews, semi-structured questionnaires and the video recordings produced identical results. Azulai and Rankin (2012:125) state that the practice of triangulation refers to two or more data collection sources being used to sustain the validity of the research findings.

Triangulation as further explained by Cohen et al (2003:112) refers to the study when different methods of data collection produce substantially the same results. In this study, to guarantee triangulation, the researcher compared the transcriptions of the interviews, questionnaires and video recording, which generated considerably similar findings. The more the data collection methods displayed similarity with each other, the more confident the researcher became in conducting the research, and this strengthened the current study.

3.6 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Participation of parents who shared in the interview sessions, completion of the questionnaires and appearance in the video recording, was completely voluntary. The participants had the opportunity to withdraw at any stage of the interview. Parents who

participated in the HSPP were assured of the principles of confidentiality and anonymity. In this thesis, only initials (LB, GG, AG etc) were used when discussing the results and findings.

Permission to conduct this research project was obtained from the WCED (Appendix 10) and CPUT (Appendix 11). A letter of permission was received from the principal of the school (Appendix 12) where the study was conducted. In addition to this, the researcher was granted permission to use the video clip, which was aired on e.tv as part of the South African Heroes campaign.

All participants were thoroughly briefed before each of the interviews to explain that their privacy will be protected, and what the advantages of the study were. Henning et al (2007:73) confirm that participants have to be assured of confidentiality of the research process and stated the following:

... they need to know that their privacy and sensitivity will be protected and what is going to happen to their information after recording.

All participants were offered a copy of the findings of the study.

3.7 SUMMARY

This chapter presented the research design, its implications and approach of the study as a whole. The research approach, methodology, data collection instruments, data analysis, trustworthiness and ethical considerations were discussed and the literature sources were mentioned in support of the methodology design used. Chapter 4 presents the results and analysis of this investigation.

CHAPTER 4 RESULTS

This research project was aimed at determining the efficacy of a home-school partnership programme in a Grade R class. The primary focus was empowering parents to assist their children in achieving literacy at home rather than the learners' literacy abilities *per se*.

In this chapter, the results are presented systematically; later the findings of the entire research process are discussed.

4.1 FINDINGS: ANSWERS TO THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS

As presented in Chapter 1, the key focus question over-arching the empirical current research investigation was as follows:

In what ways have parents of Grade R children, who attended the HSPP, been assisted with supporting literacy learning in their homes?

After analysing all the collected data explained in Chapter 3, five themes began to emerge on a regular and consistent basis. The sub-question has been inductively analysed according to how the HSPP has assisted parents of young children with the learning of literacy at home. The final five themes included:

- personal development;
- understanding of early childhood development;
- building collegiality in the community;
- developing skills; and
- time management.

Within these five themes, a further three sub-themes became apparent throughout each one and they were: strengthening relationships, positive self-esteem and future hope. After analysis of the findings, a brief discussion and evidence of the five themes is provided by juxtaposing the three sub-themes into each one.

In the examples of the interviews, the semi-structured questionnaires and the video recordings, the exact words that the parents used are shown. The grammatical structure of their sentences has not been changed, for the sake of authenticity.

4.1.1 Personal development

Freire (1996:66) refers to the banking method as 'alienating human beings from their own decision-making by changing them into objects'. In this study, the HSPP encouraged the participants to develop on a personal level. The participants were able to recognise the important role they play in their young children's development. They also realised that their actions had an effect on their family and the community. The participants were enabled to make decisions for themselves and their families.

In order to determine how parents were empowered through the HSPP, three areas were identified: strengthening relationships, positive self-esteem and future hopes. Each of these themes is extrapolated and discussed in further detail.

4.1.1.1 Strengthening relationships

According to participants' interviews, the HSPP assisted parents to form better relations with friends and strengthen relationships with family members. Initially, they mentioned they did not have much patience when they tried to engage with their children at home. Yet, at the end of the programme, they felt they wanted to become more involved with their children's learning. The HSPP had brought families together in that they were reading together: older siblings wanted to be part of the reading time. Fathers had taken on the responsibility of assisting their children at home with story-telling and going to the library. Some of the interviewees had this to say:

- FM: I am no longer the same. At first I would say 'not now' but now I want to do things.
- LB: It brings your family together.
- SD: It makes you a better parent.
- JA: If I can't take him to the library, then my husband takes him.
- LB: Last year my wife was telling stories, but then she say no and you know it's not only for your wife to tell the stories so I took that part from my wife. And so now I'm the one who tell the stories to the child and she enjoy the stories.
- LW: Having fun with my childrenYou see, it's more fun and exciting and uhh because books in the shops are very expensive, so it's best to make books at home.
-

JA: I am proud to be a mother.

Semi-structured questionnaires confirmed the fact of 'strengthened relationships'. Participants indicated activities they enjoyed performing during the programme and how these improved their relationships with their children. Most of the participants indicated that they needed programmes such as the HSPP to enable them to assist their children before they went to school. Interacting with their young children, helped build a better relationship between parent and child. They mentioned that the programme was empowering and interesting. One of the responses to the HSPP was as follows:

The connection that I used to have with my child was not so good at first but now we understand each other.

Throughout the HSPP, parents experienced a sense of pride when they assisted their children. It seemed that parents felt good about the change that was happening in their families. Parents realized that the programme gave them ideas to assist their children with learning in a fun way. While many parents felt that they were being equipped to assist their young children, some indicated that they needed a programme to focus on helping older children and children who were experiencing difficulties with their school work. LB had the following to say:

I've got two children. Alzane is the last one. My eldest child is now in Grade 7. I didn't have the privilege before this education programme, it was amazing last year. I think, how many years I waste because I just send my eldest daughter to school and uhh I come back and I just leave her by the teacher. But now with this education programme has made a big difference in my life. I know that I must work with my child every day and I mustn't stop working with my child because it's an on-going thing. You know, if I can do this programme every year, I will do it, I feel very excited and I love working with my child and this programme teach me how to work with my child and uhm you be with your child every day, you must teach your child everyday with games, with number. You don't leave that for the teacher. The teacher is here by the school, you as the parent is also the teacher, the child's first teacher so you must also teach the child at home. Then you make it easier for the teacher.

4.1.1.2 Positive self-esteem

After the first few interviews, it became clear that parents were developing more positive self-esteem and were feeling happier about reading to their children at home. Therefore, during the interview sessions, they were asked which aspects of the HSPP contributed to them developing a positive self-esteem. All of them responded that the programme made them gain their self-worth and feeling proud to be a parent.

During Session 1 of the HSPP, the participants were questioned about who their child's first teachers were. They were asked: 'Who taught your child to brush his teeth, tie her shoe-laces, say 'thank you' and 'please', develop good eating habits etc'. Soon they realized that they were their child's first teachers. These statements made them feel good: they had been unaware of the pivotal role which they had played in their child's development. The following statements reflect this point:

- EF: My little one says that I'm like his teacher and that makes me feel good.
- LM: I am his teacher at home.
- CD: You are your child's role model.
- EJ: It made me a proud parent.
- GS: I am no longer the same; I am trying my best to answer him.

The following example was given by LB. She stated that before the programme she had a low self-esteem. After the programme she was able to help her children:

- LB: I am no longer the same because before the programme I would tell my children that I am tired or I can't now; but now I feel like doing everything.

Some parents indicated that they had become more patient with their children but others admitted that they were still working on becoming more even-tempered with their children. Below is an example of how a participant developed patience with her child and how this boosted her own self-esteem:

JA: I always told my husband 'you're the one who has the patience' always left that for him. After the course I noticed that I can also do that [be patient]... this made me feel better.

Later in the same interview JA said:

Definitely because I mean it taught me a lot and I mean and after that I'm taking the extra mile and that. During the surf walk, I've taken that extra mile otherwise I wouldn't have. To be honest I was never like that, I always told my husband you're the one who has patience and I don't have patience. I always just left that for him and just looked away and after the course I've noticed that I can also do that even though I don't have but I have to tell myself I have to invest time in my child because it's his future. And I've taken little steps and I've gotten to know that I have the patience to sit with him, to teach him, to play with him, to have fun with him, so very much in a big way.

Although some parents expressed their thankfulness for a programme such as the HSPP, one woman in the video stated that:

These teachers, they offer up their time to help us help our kids to perform in school and that is great!

During the final certification evening in 2010, however, JA shared with the group. This was not recorded but was such a powerful statement.

At first I didn't know how to work with my child but since the programme I feel proud to be a mother.

Some parents indicated that they gained important new knowledge and that increased their self-confidence and sense of self-worth. Some mentioned how satisfying it felt and how much confidence they gained from assisting their children. The question in the semi-structured questionnaire was: 'What did I enjoy about the programme?' Below are some comments from the participants (who did not write their names on their forms).

The connection that I used to have with my child was not so good at first but now we understand each other.

The programme helped me how to communicate with my child and how to help her remember the stuff that she learn at the crèche.

For me as a mother I learned a lot, ... I am a different person in my house, I feel proud to be a mother.

I teach my children things that I never done, like routine.

I have teach my children that I never have teach them before.

I learned new ideas to do with my kids.

Gave me a new way of helping my children and spending fun time with them.

Learned more patience to control myself.

It taught me a lot now I know how to teach my child ...

It is interesting to note that one parent (who wrote her name on her evaluation form) had this to say:

CL It was good to hear about how we could help our children instead of receiving criticism for not doing enough.

4.1.1.3. Future hopes

The analysis showed that the respondents were hopeful about the future for themselves and their children. The parents indicated an eagerness to continue to assist their children at home. At the beginning of every session, facilitators would allow one of the parents to light a candle as a sign of hope towards the future. This gave the parents an opportunity to reflect and gather their thoughts before they started with the new session.

The parents were positive about assisting their children. Parents understood that their task ahead was a great one. Many parents in the interviews said that the HSPP made them feel positive about the future of their children.

LB: These classes, it will make a big difference. Our children won't go for tik or dagga or anything else. In these classes they can show the children what to do

GG: It will do very good for him especially since you said like he wants to be a doctor, I will assist him if I can but it all depends on yourself if you want to go to school but as long you are in my house you must do as I tell you, ja, so it will make a difference in his life.

Summary

The parents discovered that they could play an important role not only in their children's development but also with their own personal development. It seemed that they realized how much they needed an intervention programme such as the HSPP to assist them to make a difference in their own lives as well as in the lives of their young children.

4.1.2 Understanding of Early Childhood Development (ECD)

ECD refers to how young children (birth – 9 years) should change and develop in totality by becoming physically healthy, mentally alert, emotionally and socially stable, and intellectually sound. Piaget (in Donald et al, 2007:53) believes that ECD's focus is on children learning through play, exploring their environment, and 'trying things out'. It is at this stage of development that the 'power of play' develops a natural curiosity in children. It is thought that children learn more efficiently and gain more knowledge when given the opportunity for play-based activities such as dramatic play, art and social games. This theory is based on children's natural curiosity and tendencies to 'make believe'.

Choice, active investigation, independent pursuit and learning through discovery should be dominant components of the learning climate. The RNCS is flexible within a planned framework encompassing developmentally appropriate knowledge and skills. Nager and Shapiro (2005:1) emphasise the importance of teachers grasping every opportunity to stimulate cognitive development. Developmental interactions allow young children to question, explore and grow an understanding of patterns, rhythms and relationships in the environment around them.

The HSPP places great emphasis on how young children learn best. During each session of the HSPP, a mind-map poster was displayed in the venue as a reminder to participants. Attention was drawn to different forms of play and how important it was for parents to realize that their children were learning through play. The theory of Vygotsky's 1934, (in Donald et al, 2007:59), mediation was explained to parents in simple terms. These discussions indicated to parents the important role they themselves play in the development of their young children. Parents were able to reflect on the mind-map poster throughout the seven-week programme. The following three areas, strengthening relationships, positive self-

esteem and future hopes are discussed in relation to this theme of understanding early childhood development. Reference to the interviews and semi-structured questionnaires provide evidence of the extent to which the HSPP assisted parents to have a better understanding of how young children learn.

During Session 3 of the HSPP, participants were issued with an alphabet chart. They had to decorate the chart with their children at home. JA explained during her interview that their alphabet chart hangs against the wall in their passage at home. At times, when she sent her son to fetch something in the room, she found him going over the letters. She said the following with reference to the alphabet chart:

JA: If that wasn't there I don't know how he would have been able to learn the alphabet ... It's very helpful and it has educated him a lot.

Many parents, such as JA, realized the importance of allowing their children to be exposed to different ways of learning. In this instance, the alphabet chart encouraged questioning, exploration, intellectual stimulation and enjoyment.

LB: He's always noticing stuff and he's asking questions...

GG: He is struggling with his words ... we get him the alphabet. It's useful because for reading, especially for reading and for him to know it, uhm and to make up words.

JW : We play guessing games with her like if we say 'k' I see the word in the kitchen with a key on it. I see something hanging put it in the door and then she must guess what it is. Then she say: 'it's key'...

Parents were encouraged to decorate their alphabet charts with the help of their children. Parents learned to use the chart in different ways. On the evening of the certification, parents brought their charts and other crafts to be exhibited. The alphabet chart was one example of a tool for encouraging good language use, emergent reading and writing, with the emphasis on phonics.

4.1.2.1 Strengthening relationships

According to Zeece et al (2009:35), when families engage with their young children in literacy activities, it is one way of enriching their children's education at an early stage. Love

and nurturing are essential for young children to feel safe and secure as they learn and explore their world. Zeece et al, further elaborated that early experiences with literacy tools at home, provide children with the basis of language skills such as experiences with sound and experiences with writing. During times when parents were interacting with their children, stronger relationships were being formed between them and their children. According to the semi-structured questionnaires that were completed by the parents, many of them felt that through the HSPP, they had learnt how to assist their children in a fun way. This helped the parents to improve their relationships with their children. It seemed that many parents did not realize that their young children were learning while they were having fun. Some parents had the understanding that their children learned mainly while they were at school. During the interviews, parents gave examples of how they assisted with learning language. They were noticing how much more their children were learning. Learning language provided children with thinking, reasoning and comprehension skills. One of the interview questions to the interviewees was asked: 'are you still playing language games with your child?' Some parents responded in the following way:

JA: During bath time and ... while he is dressing himself, there is a lot of activity ... like when he's pronouncing words wrong, we'll teach him how to pronounce it right in actually a playful way but we are still teaching him.

LB I like to play language games with my child... I can see the improvement ... last year she was struggling a bit with her English and uhh you can see through the games and more reading practice uhh she improved...

JA: Look, one day it was when he went to the library when he came from school, my brother's child took him to school uhm to the library and back and then he was using his imagination but the words was there but the imagination was exactly like the words. And I ask him who learn him and he say: 'no Mommy I can see the pictures here' and I say: ' okay, but the words are also standing here' and I think and then I say to him 'it's correct' and then I tell him and then he say: 'okay'.

But he is doing great, to me he is doing great with the book.

Two parents indicated in the semi-structured questionnaires that communication between them and their children improved since they were practicing the different activities at home. Some could see the value of learning through play and how it brought about calmness in the home.

The programme draws you closer to your child ... and I don't shout at her so much like before

The programme helped me to spend time with my child

During Sessions 4 and 5, the parents had homework. They had to think of games that they used to play as children. They had to sort out which games had a focus on language and maths. This reflection made them realize the value of playing games and what they as children were taught through it. The games taught body awareness; developing large and small muscles. Parents were given the opportunity to demonstrate which of the games were less familiar to them.

LB: So we sit on the floor and we also do wheelbarrow and I push her like a wheelbarrow ...

GG: I used to play it when I was a little girl. It was like the bat and the ball like hitting it up and down, then he's counting ... and then there's snakes and ladders and uhm and then the bean bag ja, the bean bag and the little cool drink tops where you turn it around. Of course he loves that game.

Most of the parents indicated that they had developed a closer relationship with their children through having fun and by playing games. This might mean that prior to the HSPP, in many of the families represented, few parents and children experienced 'having fun' and 'playing together'.

4.1.2.1 Positive self-esteem

Analysis shows that parents generally had gained self-esteem and increased their sense of self-worth as a result of the HSPP. They were excited to teach their young children at home. They had a good understanding of the different ways of how young children learn. Some of the respondents had this to say:

SD: It feels good, it's a good feeling because uhm, it's different when you know what to do. So, being at the Home-School Partnership Programme gave me sort of a map so to speak to follow, you see.

LB: I feel very proud of myself and because now I do volunteer work here at school ... I help the children with reading, mathematics and in the computer class.

Based on the participants' responses, the HSPP made parents feel motivated and inspired. At first it seemed that parents were not unaware of the important role they played in their children's lives. After the seven-week programme they seemed to have a better understanding of how young children learn best. Parents mentioned that the HSPP offered them various skills to teach their children which increased their sense of purpose and involvement. It was interesting to see that many parents became excited: they could now relate to the different ways in which their young children learned. The change in their understanding of their children made parents feel confident enough to assist their children with their learning at home.

4.1.2.2 Future hopes

Many parents did not complete their school career but they had high expectations for their children. These parents seemed determined to assist their children with the new skills and knowledge that they gathered over the seven-week sessions. They realized the importance of learning: that they should not exclude having fun while helping their children. Re-telling popular and well-loved stories was a good way of familiarizing children with language patterns. Knowing what kind of books would be suitable for young children was a way in which many of these parents were going to assist their children in future. Some of them were able to identify ways in which they could assist their children by saying this:

MF: How you read the story with the children you must make it exciting
...

SD: Like it's not just picking up a book at the library, you know now that a book with too many words is not good for a five year old. You know what to do exactly now. And that's a good thing that helped.

One mother mentioned that she realized she should not rush or pressure the child. She came to know that it will take time for him to understand and grasp certain concepts.

FM: My child wants to write his name so I try to make the 'K' for him and he's just making it a different way but at least you can see it's a 'K' ... He says: 'Mommy I know I can do it', I say: 'yes I know you can do it, don't worry it takes time'.

Summary

Many parents said that they had a better understanding of how young children learn. This knowledge made them more confident about assisting their children at home. Some participants felt empowered and understanding of early childhood education. Others were hopeful about the future for the first time. Parents had a more optimistic outlook for their children's educational future.

4.1.3 Building collegiality in the community

Freire (1996:56) stated that the humanist revolutionary educator encourages critical thinking and the quest for mutual humanization. This is opposed to the banking concept which is not open to trust among people and to their forming partnerships with one another. In this research project, the HSPP facilitators encouraged the parents to think about the ways they taught their young children and what effect these methods had on their development. The parents and teachers developed trust amongst each other which encouraged good relationships amongst the facilitators and participants. Parents and the two Grade R teachers who were the facilitators, discovered that they could learn from one another.

According to Swart and Phasa (in Landsberg et al, 2008:214) a group of people living in the same area forms a community. This group of people usually has a similar interest or origin. The school, family, home situation and neighbourhood are all instances that shape the lives of children. Peoples' lives and futures are determined by the influences and standards that their community sets. Teachers and parents form the leaders of a community. They set the tone for what is acceptable and what is not allowed. Parents form different committees and forums to maintain community values and history. Life is difficult when people live in isolation, when they prefer not to interact with the rest of the community out of ignorance or fear. According to Comrie

(2007:4) the HSPP encourages a sense of community and mutual security among parents and teachers.

There were two participants who mentioned in the semi-structure questionnaires that they enjoyed being part of the group. The one wrote concerning the importance of sharing the vision and mission that one has for one's children. This was what the one parent wrote:

Meeting with other parents, sharing our vision and mission in life for our kids...

The other parent wrote about being surrounded by many people and the teachers and learning in a short space of time. The following was written:

I enjoyed being surrounded by lots of people and the teachers and things I learned in a short period of time ...

They expressed their concerns for other parents who did not attend the programme and wanted them to experience what they did. Some made recommendations for future programmes. Others mentioned that parents across different cultures should be invited. They wrote the following comments:

I would make it more wide spread due to the fact that I would want more people to experience what I have.

... maybe have a list of contacts of people that we refer who we think would benefit from the course ...

To involve more from different races.

Involve more folk from Imizamo Yethu.

Three areas; strengthening relationships, gaining positive self-esteem and hope for the future, are used to consolidate the discussion concerning the importance of building good relations in the community.

4.1.3.1 Strengthening relationships

The HSPP assisted parents to form and re-new friendships over the seven weeks. The venue was arranged so that parents sat in groups of six or eight at a table. This arrangement

encouraged parents to participate in discussions and to share their experiences. During the first session, facilitators gave participants an opportunity to set their own 'house rules' and asked what their expectations were for the seven-weeks. It was at this stage that it was brought to the attention of participants that the confidentiality of others was to be respected. Facilitators indicated that if any one of the parents had any personal issue, they should feel free to discuss it with them. The parents mentioned that they wanted others to show respect when someone was speaking. The parents indicated the importance of switching off cellular phones and being punctual at all times.

In the semi-structured questionnaires, participants were asked to indicate what they enjoyed in the programme. Five parents mentioned that they enjoyed the friendships that were formed. These are some aspects that some participants said they enjoyed:

everything including the socialization

making friends

can't wait for Thursday evening to come ...

meeting friends...

love the group work ...

The way that the participants presented their homework was an indication of how relaxed they felt at being part of the group. They showed an eagerness to share their experiences. One parent mentioned that she felt better knowing that other parents were experiencing the same challenges that she and her family were facing.

interacting with other parents and to discover that we all share the same challenges ...

Sharing during the sessions gave the parents a chance to discuss and support each other.

During the interviews, the participants were asked whether they shared the information they had gained over the seven-weeks with other people. Some of them commented in the following way:

JA: Yes, with all my friends and my neighbours coming to me.

LB: I can't stop telling them what a privilege it is to be in an education programme like this.

JW: I will say to the parents it's nice to do this and then it opens up your mind, ...

One parent shared during an interview session that, prior to the HSPP, she would normally have walked past people. Ever since her involvement the HSPP, she greeted people and had conversations with those that she met at the HSPP. This is what she said:

FL: We normally didn't greet, we just passed each other... but now it's exciting, we say 'hi'. We communicate about what happened in the class and outside...

4.1.3.2 Positive self-esteem

In her book, 'It takes a village to raise a child', former United States of America's first lady, now Senator Hilary Clinton (in Gestwicki, 2007:443), states that:

children will thrive only if their families thrive and if the whole society cares enough to provide ...

The parents began to understand that the role of the family has an impact on their children's behaviour. Bronfenbrenner's (in Donald 2007:40) theory of nested systems, as discussed in Chapter 2. - figure 2.1, discusses the affects families have on their children, and how children benefit once they are being lead in the right direction. In this research project the parents were enthusiastic about improving themselves. They realized that they needed to show support and encouragement to other parents. Seventeen parents indicated in the semi-structured questionnaires that they wanted to attend other programmes similar to the HSPP. Some said they wanted to repeat the programme, should they be afforded the opportunity. They seemed positive about ongoing learning for themselves in order to help improve their children's chances of a positive future through education, especially through the acquisition of literacy.

The parents mentioned during the interviews that they encouraged other parents in the following ways:

LB: I will encourage them to come ...

FL: I'll encourage other parents to do the programme and learn how to support their children at home ...

LW: I'll tell my friends that the programme helps you to be there for your children ...

These parents realized that they wanted other people in their community to feel that they were able to support their young children. They wanted others to experience the feeling of being able to accomplish something and to feel good about it.

4.1.3.3 Future hopes

The parents showed a concern for their fellow citizens in the community who were not aware of the programme. O'Carroll (in Comrie, 2007:1) states that the HSPP promotes informal learning and is applicable across languages and cultures. In the evaluation forms, some parents made recommendations that, in future, the programme should be introduced to parents of other cultures and the wider community. Some participants referred to the informal settlement that is situated near the school. Four participants mentioned '... involve the community of IY.'. (Imizamo Yethu – an informal settlement in the Hout Bay area).

Eight participants felt strongly and stated '... open it to the broader community ...'

These parents felt that there is hope for those who had not yet had a chance to be introduced to the HSPP. Two parents recommended that, through the HSPP, South African youth can benefit:

... SA youth rainbow nation,

... build a strong nation...

One of the interviewees mentioned that he believed that more parents should be attending programmes such as the HSPP.

LB: ... if more parents can attend these classes, it will make a big difference

Summary

Parents exhibited marked enthusiasm for collaborating as a community; they gradually but observably learnt to encourage others to participate in the HSPP programme. Parents were eager to share their experiences with others in the community and extend this programme to the local informal settlement. These parents developed ambitions beyond their own private concerns and began to widen the scope of their concern to the altruistic desire for others to succeed as well; they wanted to see children of other parents in the local community succeed. This broadening of interest was demonstrable from the findings and one of the most significant results of the intervention as a whole.

4.1.4 Developing Skills

The banking concept according to Freire (1996:54), minimises creativity. Freire refers to the students accepting the passive role imposed on them and that they do not develop as critical conscious beings. In this study, the HSPP allowed the parents an opportunity to ask critical questions. Parents started asking advice on how to teach literacy skills to their young children at home. Engaging in activities such as reading stories to their children, drawing a picture, or spending time interacting with their children, taught parents what to do initially. Many of the parents did not know how to implement these literacy enhancers because they themselves had never been read to as children. Many of them lacked the skill of telling a story with excitement, encouraging drawing or spending time interacting with their children. These parents neither knew how to spend time with their children nor how to turn that time into an informal learning experience. During an interview, one of the parents became excited when she explained the manner in which she was reading to her children and the questions that she asked them. This is what she said:

LB: would keep the book in front of them while we lay in bed and I
 read to them. While I read, I asked them what they think would
 happen next ... It was so exciting.

4.1.4.1 Strengthening relationships

In Session 2 of the HSPP, the focus was mainly on language learning and how children learn best. During group discussion time, the parents talked about the importance of

language development. According to Comrie (2008:25), language development is important for learning. Parents had to discuss when they had good 'talking times' with their children. They were encouraged to think and talk about language. This exercise made parents aware of what happens when we use language. Parents realized that, while they assisted their children, they used language to think and talk. One parent said the following during an interview: her child used language to express the way he feels.

FL: ... he said 'Mommy, I know I can do it. I say 'yes', I know you can do it, don't worry, it takes time'. He said 'yes, Mommy'.

This parent was able to use language to reassure and support her child while he was feeling insecure.

Another parent had a discussion with her child regarding her family picture that she had drawn.

LM: ... the first time when she draw her family, I was saying to her 'you know what, everybody looks like spiders'. 'Yes Mommy, but I draw spiders... The other day, you know, it was more like a person that she draw.

Due to the discussion between parent and child, her next drawing showed improvement and no longer looked like 'spiders'.

Another parent mentioned that her child sang a song she was not familiar with. The use of language helped the child to name the days of the week. It helped the mother to listen and understand what the song was about. This is what the mother said:

LB: ... but he just sings this song that he learned here at school that says there are seven days in a week, He sang that for me and he counts on his fingers.

This session made parents aware of how they can encourage their children to talk and ask questions. Parents realized they had to show an interest and listen to what their children had to say. They began to understand the importance of language use and how they could assist their children further.

4.1.4.2 Positive self-esteem

During Session 4, parents experienced a sense of achievement when they made little books. They were issued with a pair of scissors and a photocopied page. Parents had to follow the instructions given by the facilitators. Once they folded and cut their pages, they were excited to make more books at home with their children. This activity was followed by a discussion on the importance of making your own books and what children could learn from this experience. At the end of this session, participants were given homework which was to make their own books. The following week they had to show their books to the whole group. This increased their sense of independence and usefulness. One parent mentioned that making your own books was economical. This is what he said:

LB: ... because books in the shop are very expensive, it's best to make books at home ... I also like to make books.

JW: ... mentioned that it was cumbersome to carry her books around with her.

She said the following:

JW: ... it's good, then you carry the books with you wherever you go, ... you can read in the taxi or in the car ...

The making of books became a fun activity for parents and their children. The experience encouraged parents to feel positive that they had achieved the skill of making their own books. One of the parents, however, mentioned in the semi-structured questionnaires that she struggled with the cutting and folding of the little books. It seemed that it turned out that this became a fun activity. She said the following:

MS: The best part is when you struggle to cut and to fold it (the page) and then we have a laugh, that's the best part.

4.1.4.3 Future hopes

Instead of watching television aimlessly or being exposed to violent acts in the community, parents and children were having fun through learning language. They were able to laugh together and laugh at themselves. Parents had become hopeful since they became aware of

the importance of listening to their children. They had been taught the skill of making their own books and realized why language development was significant in their children's growth. Parents also learned how to make their own puzzles. This is a comment from one parent who seemed hopeful and eager to exercise what he had learned through the programme.

LB: ... you showed us how to make puzzles and hum that makes me excited ...

Summary

It seemed that once the parents understood the importance of language learning and what their children were able to learn through having books and puzzles available, they were more than eager to further their skills in these areas.

4.1.5 Time Management

The situation of family life changes continuously. Family circumstances influence a child's progressive stages of development. Bronfenbrenner's (in Donald et al, 2007:42), nested systems describe the chromosystem which refers to the time spent with parents and their children. In this study, throughout the seven-week HSPP, participants were encouraged to adjust their schedules in order to make time for their children. At first, most of the parents did not seem to understand the importance of time-management or of making time for this course. However, later in the programme, they began to see the significance of planning their time.

According to Bronfenbrenner (in Gestwicki, 2007:58) the hectic pace of modern life poses a threat to children, second only to poverty and unemployment. Parents were reminded about the times when their children were babies. During those times they diligently followed a routine. Some of the parents commented during the interviews that since their children were growing up, they no longer followed a pre-determined routine. Their long hours at work and other priorities, such as a new baby in the family, took their focus off certain family responsibilities. During the interviews, two of the parents indicated that they did not always have the time to do what they were taught during the programme. The one parent did,

however, mention that she did 'Maths and that she read with her child. Some of the participants remarked that:

JW: ... now that I have the little one, I do not have much time to make little books.

GB: ... because there's not always time for that [playing language games], but we do the maths and the reading

In this next section, the three areas of strengthening relationships, positive self-esteem and future hopes are discussed. The value of better time-management was highlighted. Parents sacrificed their time to complete the seven-week programme.

4.1.5.1 Strengthening relationships

During one of the interviews, the parents were asked whether they had consciously taken time to listen to their children and enjoy joint activities with them, whether they had 'spent time' with them in this sense before they attended the HSPP. One parent said that they were used to spending time together. This is what she had to say:

FL: We spent a lot of time together by reading the Bible and playing together.

Another parent (LB) commented that they were used to spending time together but it seemed as if she realized that since the beginning of the programme, they had been spending much more time together. This could mean that LB was consciously aware of how she used her time and the influence it had on her children. She said that she spent more time with her children now that she was busy with the programme:

LB: ... yes [we spent time together] but not as much as now.

One of the fathers who was interviewed stated he realized that he had to change the ways he spent his time at home. His role was to assist his wife with their child. This was what he had to say:

LB: Daddies must be there to help his wife with the child. He mustn't just sit with the newspaper or in front of the TV [television]. Help

the wife, help the child and so you can make a better life with your child.

In two of the final semi-structured questionnaires, parents commented that one of the things that they enjoyed about the programme was how they spent time with their children. It seemed that the HSPP assisted parents to use their time more effectively. The two phrases that substantiate this point are listed below. Parents commented by saying the following:

... how to help my child ... and spend time.

... know [now], I'm spending more time with my kids ...

Other parents, in their semi-structured questionnaires mentioned their ideas of how they used their time to assist their children with learning language. The following were some of the suggested ideas that the parents were introduced to during the programme: letters of the alphabet, learning through play, having a routine, playing language games, emergent reading and writing, the importance of listening and exercising patience. Parents showed that they understood that there were different ways for their children to learn. They commented by writing the following statements:

I put some words like a, b, c, d, e on the frigh [fridge] ...;

... because my daughter is a slow leaner, I can help her a lot with her schoolwork through play ...;

... to teach my children things that I never done, like routine ... ;

... the games, reading books and how to teach my children to read and write ... ;

... by listening and hearing ... ;

... to have patience with your child

4.1.5.2 Positive self-esteem

Many of the parents who attended the programme realized that they might have made a good choice in registering to participate in the seven-week HSPP. These parents committed themselves to the seven weeks. This organizing of their time was beneficial to them and

their families. The programme helped them to develop a positive attitude. In the e.tv broadcasting, one parent mentioned that the programme increased her self-esteem, and this is how she expressed her new-found confidence:

AO: Since I've started doing this class, my self-esteem has been great. I am more excited now, I'm happier actually, now. this class has actually helped me. Because of these classes, I've become more positive now. I'm listening to them, we understand each other more. We work together, the bond actually has grown closer and I'll advise all parents to do these classes and let their children become better children and good learners.

From the semi-structured questionnaires, participants mentioned that they had spent their time well over the seven-week period. Some of them said that they were prepared to repeat the programme, should they be granted the opportunity. A parent wrote the following:

LW: I will like to join this group again cause it work for me, so for the seven-weeks it was a good thing for me as a parent ... And I hope I can't [can] come back to you classes again

When he was interviewed on e.tv, grandparent IV mentioned that he felt as if he had achieved something during his time at the HSPP. He was also willing to repeat the programme. He said the following:

IV: I feel so empowered, I can do it! I've achieved something you know, and it's wonderful to know. If I can re-do this class again, I'll do it with the greatest of pleasure!

4.1.5.3 Future hope

Participants seemed hopeful about the future. One of the participants was a grandmother who sacrificed her time to attend the seven-week programme. She mentioned in the e.tv interview that she did it for the sake of her grandchildren, so that she could assist them at home. This woman realized the important role that she played as a grandparent and the difference that she could make towards her grandchildren's future lives. She made the following comment:

LL: I'm so grateful, I can teach my grandchildren something. So ya, it's only for them that I really did it.

One of the parents was excited when she was interviewed on e.tv. AO felt that she was ready for new beginnings. She felt that she had new hope for the future. She said the following:

AO: I feel so ecstatic, honestly. I feel like a pre-school teacher. I'm ready for Grade R. I can start my own home-schooling for parents, not just for children and for the whole Hout Bay.

Summary

What has become strongly evident throughout the above examples was that parents have felt empowered by this entire seven-week programme.

Participants focused on issues of self-empowerment in the following ways:

- they developed a respect for time-management in their lives and homes;
- they re-invented the importance of a routine in their lives;
- they prioritised some activities over others with their children at home;
- they learnt the importance of spending time with their children;
- many mentioned they would find the time to repeat the programme as they had found it so beneficial; and
- from committing time to this programme, they had developed a sense of hope for the future.

4.2 CHAPTER SUMMARY

This chapter was aimed at setting out the findings from one-on-one and focus group interviews, semi-structured questionnaires and e.tv video recordings. The inductive analysis has shown how the parents were empowered by their attendance of the seven-week HSPP.

Chapter 5 will interpret and further discuss the findings that emerged from the study in relation to the empowerment of the parents. Recommendations and conclusions are suggested.

CHAPTER 5 DISCUSSION, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

5.1 INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study was to determine the efficacy of the Home School Partnership Programme (HSPP) and how parents of Grade R learners were empowered to assist their children at home with learning literacy. This chapter offers five points of discussion and further insights from the findings, two recommendations and concludes with three suggestions derived from the study for empowering parents of young children to assist their children at home by collaborating with the school and the community with a purposeful. The researcher concludes by declaring there has been no conflict of interest between the researcher and the persons responsible for the funding of the 2009 and 2010 HSPP.

5.2 DISCUSSION

In this chapter, discussions, insights and interpretations are dealt with that have derived from this study: how schools can build links with families and communities, Adult Basic Education and Training (ABET), the school as an agent of change, community of practice and the beneficiaries of the research project.

5.2.1 How schools can build links with families and communities

The roles of parents and the community in education have received recognition from national government in South Africa. The importance of parents and the community is explained in legislation and educational policies such as the South African Schools Act of 1996 and the Education White Paper 6 of 2001. According to Swart and Phasha (in Landsberg, Kruger & Nel, 2008: 214), the DBE envisages the provision of quality education for all children in an education and training system that respects and responds effectively to the diverse learning needs of every child. In the Interim Policy (1996:10), it states that guidelines provided for ECD by the White Paper on Education and Training (1995) stipulated that: 'a child's development and growth are influenced by many factors made up by the environment. Because the child's development is influenced by the school, family and the community, ECD should be approached in an all-inclusive context. Swart et al (in Landsberg et al, 2008:215) refer to Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory that represents the family as a system. This system is nested in a number of other societal systems. The family-

school relation has an effect on children's learning and development. The ecological system is described as follows: the growing child and his family present a microsystem at the innermost level of the ecosystem. The child and his family unit are embedded in the broader mesosystems that consist of peers, extended family, educators, neighbours and close personal acquaintances with whom the child actively engages. These units are further embedded in the even larger ecosystem that does not involve the child as active participant but is affected by what happens in the settings that do involve the child.

Findings indicate that the home-school and community are areas that have an effect on the child's development, whether or not the child is an active participator. According to Swart et al (in Landsberg et al, 2008:217), Epstein's model of overlapping spheres of influence, the family and school are the mutual factors responsible for children's learning and development. Epstein agrees with Bronfenbrenner's mesosystem that there are overlapping spheres of activity between family, school and community that can be brought together to generate an area of participation.

The findings in this research project indicate that the home, school and community cannot work in isolation from each other. The WCED's Literacy and Numeracy Strategy of 2006-2016 (2006:32), envisions an evolving model of a learning family and a learning street within a learning community. A learning family refers to parents creating a home that is rich in learning resources by using inexpensive or re-usable material. A learning street describes good use of vocabulary and print rich signs and notices. A learning community illustrates a community with a library, neighbours sharing books and grandparents telling their stories to the children at school or at home. Forming this kind of partnership, as argued by Swart et al (in Landsberg et al, 2008:217), increases children's self-esteem, motivation, academic skills and independence so that they can achieve success and develop their full potential.

5.2.2 The importance of adult literacy

It was noted in this research project that many of the parents who attended the HSPP were early school-leavers. Mc Caffery, Merrifield and Millican (2007:14) state that universal basic education includes adults as well as children, yet child education dominates that of the adult. The notion of understanding is that if all countries provide good schooling, all children who themselves will be tomorrow's adults, will become educated. This understanding does not pay attention to the fact that 1.4 million children are out of school, access to school is far

from universal and high rates of withdrawal are common. These factors, as stated by Mc Caffery et al, lead to a low rate of school completion; less than two thirds of pupils entering primary school complete it. Even though the situation regarding education is improving, early school leavers are mostly found in countries such as sub-Saharan Africa, Asia and Latin America (UNESCO, 2013:4).

Aronowitz (in Giroux, 2011:154) states that, according to Paulo Freire, literacy is not a means of preparing students for the world of subordinated labour or 'careers', but a preparation for a self-managed life. Only once people have fulfilled their goals of education, such as self-reflection, becoming aware of forces that have shaped their consciousness can self-management occur to help setting conditions for producing a new life.

Findings showed that some of the parents attending the HSPP gained enough confidence to apply for jobs and were successfully appointed. This explains the three steps of Freire's (1996) work that parents have to move through. First, they learn to 'know themselves' and understand that they fit into the world around them. Second, they have to realize the circumstances that led them to their current situation, and finally, they have to 'want to produce a new life' in order to live a self-managed life. This, in accordance to Fromm (in Fleming, 2012:128), would be the way forward for each citizen to reflect on his role as participant in the life of the community. Mc Caffery et al (2007:68) explain that in South Africa, adults are able to improve their own levels of literacy while at the same time gaining information and support on how they can help young children develop early literacy skills through programmes such as the HSPP or other similar programmes. It seems as if the HSPP has given parents a sense of purpose and direction.

5.2.3 The school as an agent of change

Fullan's (2009:7) theory of change depicts the development and retention of quality leaders. His theory suggests that identifying and employing the best teachers and principals can change the system at a school for the better. Its goal is to develop school leaders who are able to focus on motivation, coach others and generally lead and transform the school into continuous improvement. Fullan mentions the following:

... if one's theory of action does not motivate people to put in the effort, (whether individually or collectively) that are necessary to get results, improvement is not possible ...

If enough leaders across the same system engage in permeable connectivity, they change the system itself.

... more and more leaders take daily actions that build capacity and ownership, ... they realise it takes a while for change to kick in ... they frequently speak about 'staying the course' being persistent but flexible... to put in the effort with colleagues in order to get results.

The intention of the facilitators of the HSPP was to motivate the parents to attend the seven-week sessions. The facilitators received the support of the school principal and staff members and through this, the system at the school could be changed. The facilitators had to persevere throughout the HSPP as they realised that it would take time for change to take place. The HSPP sessions were conducted in both 2009 and 2010 with Grade R parents. It is interesting to note that by 2011, three years after the 2009 input, the WCED Systemic Grade 3 results appeared and are reflected in **Table 5.1** Some of these learners were children of the parents who participated in the first HSPP sessions. When comparing the 2011 and 2012 WCED Grade 3 Systemic results, there is a 12.8% improvement in the pass rate in reading and viewing as well as a 6.4% improvement in the average marks. However, there is a noticeable decrease in writing, and thinking and reasoning and language structure and use. These improvements in reading and writing may be a result of the 2009/2010 HSPP sessions where parents were taught literacy activities and then continued working with their Grade 3 children. If the results shown below is reliable, as according to Fullan (2009:7), then it is possible to postulate that the change in learners' literacy rates took a while to take full effect within the pedagogical cycle.

Table 5.1 WCED Systemic literacy results

Areas tested	2011		2012	
	Pass-%	Average	Pass -%	Average
Reading and viewing	12.2	32.6	25.0	39.0
Writing	29.3	33.4	18.8	30.8
Thinking and reasoning	23.2	25.9	24.1	20.5
Language structure and use	26.8	35.7	23.2	35.3

Another noticeable and interesting change that occurred as a consequence of the HSPP being introduced at this school was that a primary school principal from the Free State watched the broadcasting of the HSPP on television and contacted the principal of the school to enquire about the HSPP programme. The two principals started communicating and, not long after, the principal travelled from Bloemfontein to Cape Town to attend a training session of the HSPP so that he could pass the information on to the Head of Department and Grade R teachers at his school. The HSPP enabled the principal and Grade R teachers to bring about change not only at their school but at other institutions further afield as well.

5.2.4 Community of practice

The community in which the school is situated is a small fisherman's village. It is situated between two mountains overlooking the fishing harbour. People in this community, as well as parents of the HSPP, regard the school as an integral part of their lives. Wenger (2006:1) defines community practice as the following:

Communities of practice are formed by people who engage in a process of collective learning in a shared domain of human endeavour communities of practice are groups of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly.

A significant finding of the current research project showed that all the concerned participants of the HSPP formed a community of practice because they shared a learning experience. Parents joined the programme because they wanted to know how they could help their children at home and improve their own literacy skills. Their concern, according to the findings, was that they wanted to ensure that their children succeeded in their schooling. They were passionate about bringing change into their families, helping their children avoid the failure which they had experienced. Findings indicate that all of the five parents [JW, LB, GG, JB and LW] embraced the HSPP programme, by attending regularly: this assisted them to improve their literacy activities by developing a community of practice (Wenger, 2006:1). When it came to storytelling, they used to read stories with little expression: they seldom asked questions or discussed the story either before or after. They did not know how to ask predicting questions. However, after the HSPP sessions, they could ask appropriate predicting and problem-posing questions. They were made aware of how their young children learnt best: such as ways of singing and dancing, imitating, exploring, experimenting, listening and speaking. Certificates of acknowledgement were issued and

presented to the parents on the last day: the parents showed their commitment and perseverance in their tenacious attendance.

5.2.5 Beneficiaries of the research project

In 2009, the first HSPP was initiated at ... School. The data collected for this research project, in this school, was from 2011 and 2012. It is interesting to note that at this school, the 2012 systemic literacy results for the Grade 3's showed an improvement of 3.9 percent. They improved from 31.7% to 35.6% as indicated in Table 5.1.

The research project developed and so did the researcher (Figure 5.1). The level of sophistication of questionnaires and interviews gained depth. Koshy (2010:115) explains that the benefits of using qualitative data were their ability to capture the richness and holism of the situation. Similarly, the researcher was a beneficiary of the project: the HSPP was broadcast on national television. On 5 October 2011, celebrating World Teachers' Day, the South African Council of Education (SACE) and the Department of Education arranged an evening where they acknowledged and celebrated excellence in teachers. Of all the excellent teachers, within South Africa, that were shown on national television, some were invited to this function. It was here that the researcher received an accolade from the Department of Education and SACE (Appendix 13) for being committed to the education profession and for doing outstanding work in the community. Furthermore, a scholarship from Education, Training and Development Practices-Sector Education and Training Authority (ETDP-SETA) (Appendix 14) was awarded to the researcher in acknowledgement of her community work which contributed to social justice. Soon after that, she was promoted to Foundation Phase Head of Department and later to Curriculum Advisor at the local District Office. These promotions were the direct results of driving, learning to drive, and the HSPP project, which she has been researching. O'Hanlon (in Day, Elliot, Somekh & Winter, 2002:112) mentions the following that explains how new information can change a researcher's personal confidences and beliefs as in Figure 5.1.

In doing research, in deliberating about information and data accumulated in the research process, one is in fact changing one's self. The demonstration of that change is in subsequent action. Actions demonstrate any personal change or transformation which has resulted from the 'science' of research. The actions demonstrate in some way a change in the researcher, as well as a different view of the researched 'situation'. Perhaps the research has changed the person so profoundly that they are conscious of this change and therefore become aware of the changes in their choice of actions and how it

has affected their personal values and judgment.

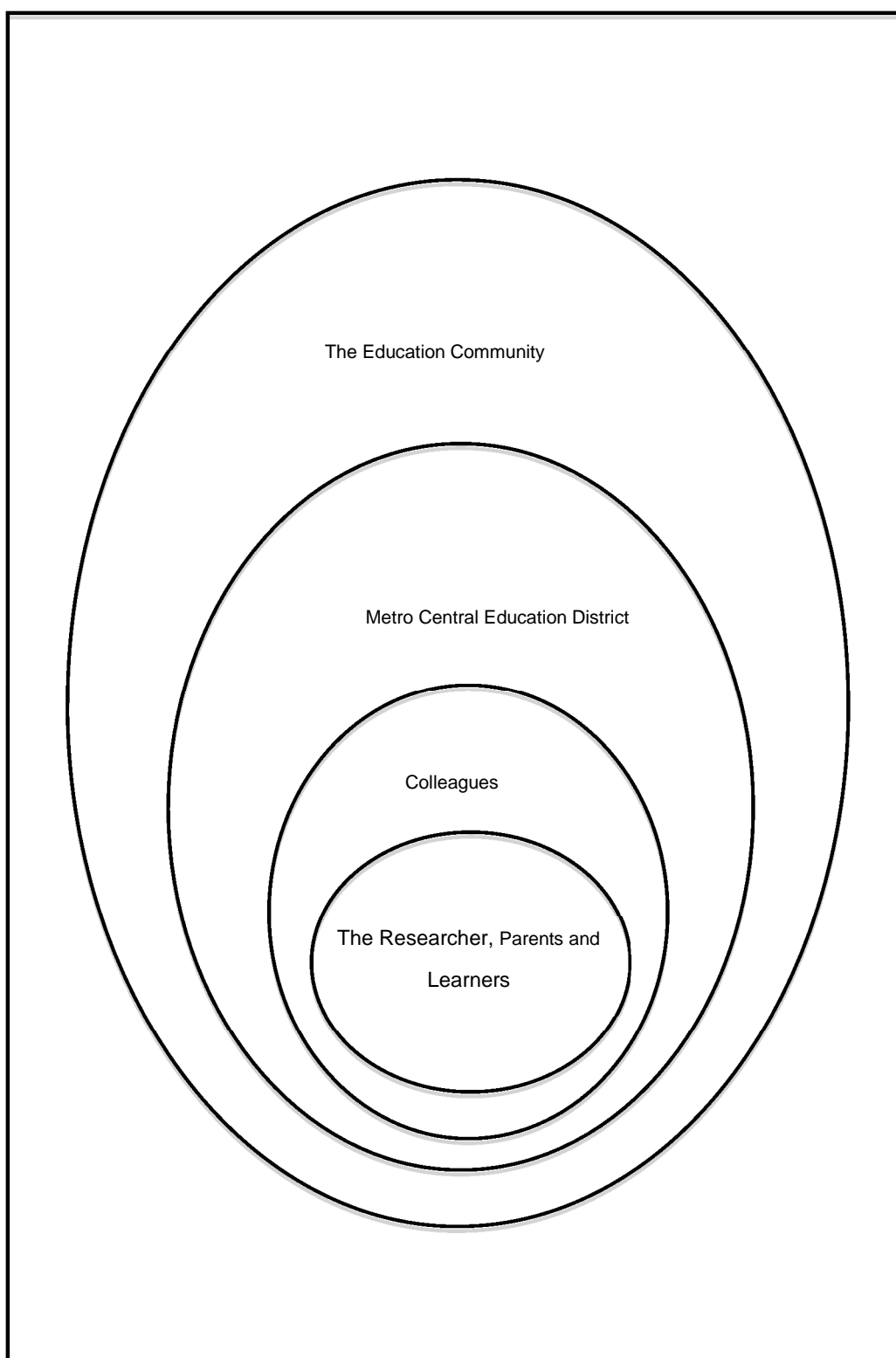


Figure 5.1 The beneficiaries of the HSPP

5.3 RECOMMENDATIONS

From the current research, it can be seen that if the home, the school and the community collaborate in a meaningful and sustained way, the future of our children's education, especially in poverty-stricken areas where unemployment is rife, can be improved significantly in a constructive and long-term manner. In this study, the school, the community and the parents experienced socio-economic hardship as well as social injustices. Based on the findings of this research, two recommendations are applicable. The first recommendation is that schools should offer programmes, such as the HSSP, which empowers and teaches parents how to recognise and value their own experiential knowledge and participate with a conscious sense of their own resources in informal literacy activities at home. The second recommendation, is that the HSP, or similar programmes, should be replicated and improved on through extended research. The findings of this study therefore recommend the following:

5.3.1 Recommendations to schools

Schools can offer programmes, such as the HSSP, which empower and teach parents to become more aware of what they are able to offer their children and participate in informal literacy activities at home.

The education system in South Africa should continue to strive for quality education. Donald et al (2007:17) describe how the process of education involves every member of society:

... transforming the process of education requires individual people to examine and modify their values, their understanding and their actions in relation to the very purpose of education ... it involves every member of society.

It is recommended that the DBE continue to recognise the importance of the principles and practices of social and environmental justice, and that they incorporate such principles and practices into curricular development.

After comparing Costa's (2000) sixteen Habits of Mind (discussed in Chapter 2) with the HSP project, it is recommended that, in any future development of the HSP, careful attention should be paid to creating an atmosphere in which parents are alerted at the start

of every seven-week programme to set high standards for themselves and their children. They should be conscious of constantly trying their best.

Costa's (2000) 7th and 9th Habit of Mind is entitled: Striving for accuracy and Thinking and communicating with clarity and precision. It is recommended that these habits of mind be incorporated into the HSPP project by encouraging parents to strive for accurate communication. One way of achieving this would be to provide more opportunities for parents to speak not only in their smaller groups but within the larger group. This may improve their confidence in speaking with clarity and precision.

With regard to quintile 1, 2 and 3 schools, it is recommended that school management bodies create opportunities to develop partnerships with their parents. The focus of these partnerships would be to extend the parents, and ultimately the children's, early literacy and numeracy experiences in a creative and fun-filled manner. Schools, teachers and families should work collaboratively and be guided by the needs of the child to develop successful and resourceful learning experiences.

It is recommended that HSPP facilitators encourage parents to become volunteers at school and even study further to qualify as ECD practitioner assistants.

Although schools face the challenge of involving parents in school activities, Prinsloo (in Landsberg et al, 2008:460) stated that many South African parents have difficulty meeting their commitments to their children's education. She explained:

... in the rural areas, children live with grandparents who are too old to travel the far distances to school. In the urban areas, parents work such long hours that they seldom have the time to become involved in the running of the school or even in assisting or motivating their children with their academic work ... the school personnel should strive towards involving the parents as far as possible.

Therefore the researcher is recommending that schools acknowledge these difficulties that parents experience and seek alternative ways of engaging with parents.

It is recommended that parents who participated in the HSPP should continue to work with their children once they have completed the programme and received their certificates. The

skills and knowledge that they acquire over the seven-week programme are still relevant when their children progress to higher grades.

It is recommended that the current group of parents who have undergone HSPP training should encourage their friends within the community to attend the HSPP projects when next offered at the school. One of the facilitators of the HSPP recommended the following when interviewed on e.tv:

I'm hoping that they would take it further and that they would encourage their friends to do the programme. Don't let it stop at this point. Do it on a continual basis so that your children can grow and develop that love for learning and love for reading and at the end of the day, I know that it will have an impact on the community and that we will see change at our school.

5.3.2 Recommendations for further research

Should a wider study be conducted in future, the researcher, from her experience of this study, would recommend the following:

The sample size of five parents, during both data collection periods, was sufficient for the study in terms of time. However, in terms of depth, it is recommended that the sample size be increased to eight participants for a deeper understanding of the process.

In preparation for interviews, it is better to provide participants with a printed copy of the interview questions before the time, to prepare themselves. This assists them to clear up any misinterpretations of the questions. Therefore the questions would need to be more specific and exclude all ambiguities. They could ask questions about certain concepts possibly not familiar to them.

It is recommended that the interview schedule and questions be piloted to refine the wording and the probing questions. This study should form part of a larger action research project which focuses on involving parents of young children and their educators in the learning of literacy.

5.4 CONCLUSION

HSPP is undoubtedly and demonstrably a successful intervention strategy for a critical situation in South African education regarding literacy. As stated in the South African Constitution (1996), every child has the right to be taught, to be literate.

The reality of re-structuring an entire educational organization after the disruption and crippling after effects of Apartheid has proved far greater than expected. The implementation of a fair and egalitarian educational option for all has been arduous and expensive. Inevitably, despite the best, often heroic, efforts of dedicated educators, many communities have not benefitted directly or materially in accordance with the ideals of the new constitution. The HSPP, however, though small, is one way of ameliorating some of the inherited damage from the past and bringing about change in a practical, practicable and affordable manner.

5.4.1 The HSPP as a practical intervention

Freire (1996:52) describes the narrative role that the subject (the teacher) plays in the banking concept in relation with the object (the student). The teacher turns the students into 'containers' to be 'filled'. The more completely the teacher fills the containers, the better a teacher she is. The more meekly the students are and allow themselves to be filled, the better students they are. Because the parents made a conscious choice to improve themselves in order to help their children, indicated that they became liberated. Parents had to make certain sacrifices in order to dedicate themselves and commit sufficient time to the HSPP. They had to take risks by walking to school in the evening and then back home again. For this reason, they preferred to walk together. Three mothers who lived in a nearby informal settlement, arranged for a taxi to bring them to school and fetch them after the programme. Refreshments were served at the first and last sessions of the seven-week programme. The facilitators approached the local Woolworths store for a donation towards the refreshments. On the evening of the certification, parents brought a plate of eats. Parents were dressed smartly which was an indication that they took charge of themselves and were proud of their achievements. Receiving certificates was the highlight: for many of these participants, this was the first time they ever received such recognition. Last year the HSPP facilitators decided to change the time to 15h30 as many other schools held their

parenting programme in the afternoon. That seven-week programme was attended very poorly. Since then, the programme continued to run in the evening.

5.4.2 The HSPP as a practicable intervention

The HSPP is an attainable and realistic programme. The facilitators' course gives the facilitators an overview of the programme with practical and interactive sessions. It offers facilitators a chance to ask questions and to raise concerns. Resource material was initially sponsored by Wordworks. This made it easier for the facilitators as far as purchasing was concerned. In the years that followed, course materials were sponsored by the local Hout Bay-Llandudno Trust Fund. The members of this Fund were eager to contribute financially towards the programme. The Trust Fund was issued with a copy of the e.tv broadcast which enabled them to see what the programme entailed and had achieved. Since the researcher was appointed at the district office, the programme continued at the school. Continuation of the HSPP indicates the sustainability of the programme as well as the importance of staff members working together as a team. Because the initial facilitators kept careful and reliable records of the sessions and homework activities, any later facilitators did not have to re-organize their planning from scratch.

5.4.3 The HSPP as an affordable intervention

Since 2010, the HSPP has been sponsored by the Hout Bay-Llandudno Trust Fund on an annual basis. The sponsors paid for resources used by the parents. The school would sponsor exercise books, newsprint for the whiteboard activities and cardboard to make name-tags. This meant that the programme did not become a financial liability to the school. All that the programme required from the parents was their commitment.

5.5 CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The researcher declares that she has no financial nor personal relations regarding the funding (WordWorks, Hout Bay-Llandudno Trust and Woolworths) which may have in any way compromised ethical standards in this thesis.

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APPENDICES

[illegible]

Appendix 3 Application form to attend the HSPP



Welcome –Welkom – Wamkelekile
To the
Home-School Partnership Programme
2010



We will be running a special course for Grade R and Grade 1 parents / caregivers on how to assist your child with reading and writing at home. It will be easy and lots of fun! Join the course and help your child to get ahead.

Where: at school

When: Thursday evenings: February 11th, 18th & 25th March: 4th, 11th, 18th & 25th

Friday mornings: February 12th, 19th & 26th March 5th, 12th, 19th

Let's work together for our children



Grade R educators

.....

Please return the form below

Name of parent / guardian

Address:.....

Contact details Home language

Names of children in the family	Age	Grade

☐

Do you know the dates and time of the course?

☐

Are you willing to attend all 7 sessions?

.....

Signature

Please indicate below, a time that will be more suitable for you to attend.

Thursday evenings @ 19h30 – 21h00	
Friday mornings @ 09h00 – 10h30	

APPENDICES

Appendix 4 Baseline Assessment for Grade R

GRADE R BASELINE ASSESSMENT – FIRST 2 WEEKS of TERM 1																	
Learners		Life Skills							Literacy						Numeracy		
Name	Date of Birth	Says name & surname	Knows age	Separates from parents	Adapts to rules & routine	Socialises with peers	Plays actively outdoors	Participates keenly indoor s	Follows instructions	Speaks clearly	Answers questions	Pencil grip	Hand dominance	Drawing of a man	Recognises primary colours	Counts objects up to ...	Recognises basic shapes
1																	
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APPENDICES

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Appendix 5 Feedback from parents about the games they used to play as children

Feedback from parents about the games they used to play as children

	LITERACY	NUMERACY
1.	Boy, girls, fruit veg	Hopscotch
2.	I had a little dog	Kennetjie
3.	Weg kruipertjie	Bok-bok hoeveel op jou rug?
4.	Huisie-huisie	Vyf klippies
5.	Skool-skool	Boys, girls, fruit, veg
6.	Ring –a ring-a rosie	Hokkies

Appendix 6 Letter of permission from e.tv



e.tv (Pty) Ltd Reg No. 1887/012915/07
P.O. Box 12124, Mill Street, Gardens, 8010, South Africa
Block B, Longkloof Studios, Darlens Road, Gardens, Cape Town, 8001
Tel: +27 21 481 4600 Fax: +27 21 481 4610

Cape Town, Friday 6 June 2014

Dear Dawn,

Thank you for your letter dated 27th May 2014.

I am reading towards my Master's Thesis at the Cape Peninsula University of Cape Town and hereby request permission from E.tv to include a copy of the Values Campaign South African Heroes clip in my research project. The title of my research is: Determining the efficacy of the Home-School Partnership Programme.

Sentinel Intermediate School in Hout bay, held a seven-week programme for parents on how to assist their young children at home. As one of the facilitators, I was invited to the World Teachers Day in Cape Town arranged by SACE, E.tv and WCED.

I will appreciate it if you would grant me my request as I will acknowledge E.tv in my study. Acknowledging my request, will validate my findings and endorse my ethical considerations. I am confident that an intervention strategy such as the Home School Partnership Programme is able to strengthen the literacy short-comings in our educational system.

Thank you for your consideration.

Re: Request to use insert as part of Master's Dissertation:

We hereby grant you permission to use the clip, which was aired on e.tv as part of the South African Heroes campaign, for your master's dissertation.


All copyright remains the property of e.tv and we request that you cite the work correctly.

Please let us know should you require information.

Thank you for the request and we wish you well with your dissertation.

Kind regards,

Unid Roets
Executive Producer – South African Heroes

 6/6/2014

Appendix 7 Semi structured questionnaire

HOME SCHOOL PARTENRSHIP PROGRAMME QUESTIONNAIRE: 25 TH MARCH 2010	
<div>What I enjoyed about the programme</div>	<div>What I did not enjoy about the programme</div>
<div>Recommendations</div>	

- Appendix 8 A separate questionnaire was drawn up asking participants' their names, their final grade completed and the reasons for leaving school.

Questionnaire asking parents about their final year of schooling and the reason(s) for leaving school.

<u>Questionnaire</u>	
Name:	_____
1. Which Primary school did you attend?	_____
2. Which High school did you attend?	_____
3. At what age did you leave school?	_____
4. What grade did you complete?	_____
5. What was the reason for you leaving school?	_____

Appendix 9 The attendance of the 2010 registered participants.

The attendance register of the participants of the 2010 HSPP

	Thursday	Friday	TOTAL
Week 1	44	18	62
Week 2	50	21	71
Week 3	50	16	66
Week 4	36	16	52
Week 5	37	14	51
Week 6	36	15	51
Week 7	60	No class	60

Total application forms received	79
Total of participants who received certificates	60
Total evaluation forms handed out	60
Total evaluation forms handed back	53
Total evaluation forms not handed in	7
Evaluation forms completed in English	50
Evaluation forms completed in Afrikaans	3

Appendix 10 Permission to conduct this research project was obtained from the

WCED



Onderwysdepartement

Education Department

Indo leNtshona Koloni

Navrae
Enquiries **Dr RS Cornelissen**
IMibuzo

Telefoon
Telephone **(021) 467-2286**
IFoni

Faks
Fax **(021) 425-7445**
IFeksi

Verwysing
Reference **20100223-0023**
ISalathiso

Miss Dawn Cozett
Harbour Road
Houtbay
7806

Dear D.C. Cozett

RESEARCH PROPOSAL: THE EFFICACY OF A HOME-SCHOOL PARTNERSHIP PROGRAMME IN A GRADE R CLASS

Your application to conduct the above-mentioned research in schools in the Western Cape has been approved subject to the following conditions:

1. Principals, educators and learners are under no obligation to assist you in your investigation.
2. Principals, educators, learners and schools should not be identifiable in any way from the results of the investigation.
3. You make all the arrangements concerning your investigation.
4. Educators' programmes are not to be interrupted.
5. The Study is to be conducted from **05 February 2010 to 19 March 2010**.
6. No research can be conducted during the fourth term as schools are preparing and finalizing syllabi for examinations (October to December).
7. Should you wish to extend the period of your survey, please contact Dr R. Cornelissen at the contact numbers above quoting the reference number.
8. A photocopy of this letter is submitted to the principal where the intended research is to be conducted.
9. Your research will be limited to the list of schools as forwarded to the Western Cape Education Department.
10. A brief summary of the content, findings and recommendations is provided to the Director: Research Services.
11. The Department receives a copy of the completed report/dissertation/thesis addressed to:

**The Director: Research Services
Western Cape Education Department**

Appendix 11 Permission to conduct this research project was obtained from
CPUT


Signatures:

Researcher/Applicant:	D. Cozett	Supervisor: 
Date:	26.09.2014	Date: 26.09.2014


Please note that in signing this form, supervisors are indicating that they are satisfied that the ethical issues raised by this work have been adequately identified and that the proposal includes appropriate plans for their effective management.

Faculty Research Ethics Committee comments:

EFEC unconditionally grants ethical clearance for the study titled "**Determining the efficacy of the home school partnership programme (HSPP)**". The certificate is valid
1 year from the date of issue.

Approved			
		Chairperson: Cina P Mosito, PhD	Date: 29 Sep 2014
Approval Certificate/Reference: EFEC 9-9/2014			

- Appendix 12 A letter of permission was received from the principal of the school where the study was conducted.



Primary School
Primêre Skool
Sentinel

Harbour Road
Hout Bay
7806
Tel: 021-790-1560
Fax: 021-790-0219
Email: admin@sentinelps.wcape.school.za

Ms D. C. Cozette
44 Secord Avenue
RETRIEAT
7945

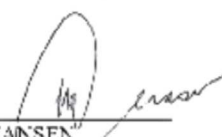
re: Consent for permission to perform a research study

Dear Ms D. Cozette

It is with great pleasure that I hereby wish to inform you that your application to conduct research at SENTINEL PRIMARY SCHOOL has been granted.

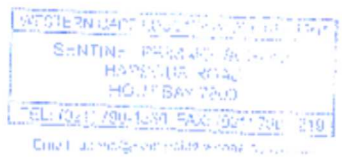
We wish you success in your research and all your future endeavours.

Yours sincerely



J. JANSEN
PRINCIPAL


Date: 05 MARCH 2010



SENTINEL PRIMARY SCHOOL
HARBOR ROAD
HOOT BAY 7806
TEL: 021-790-1560 FAX: 021-790-0219
Email: admin@sentinelps.wcape.school.za

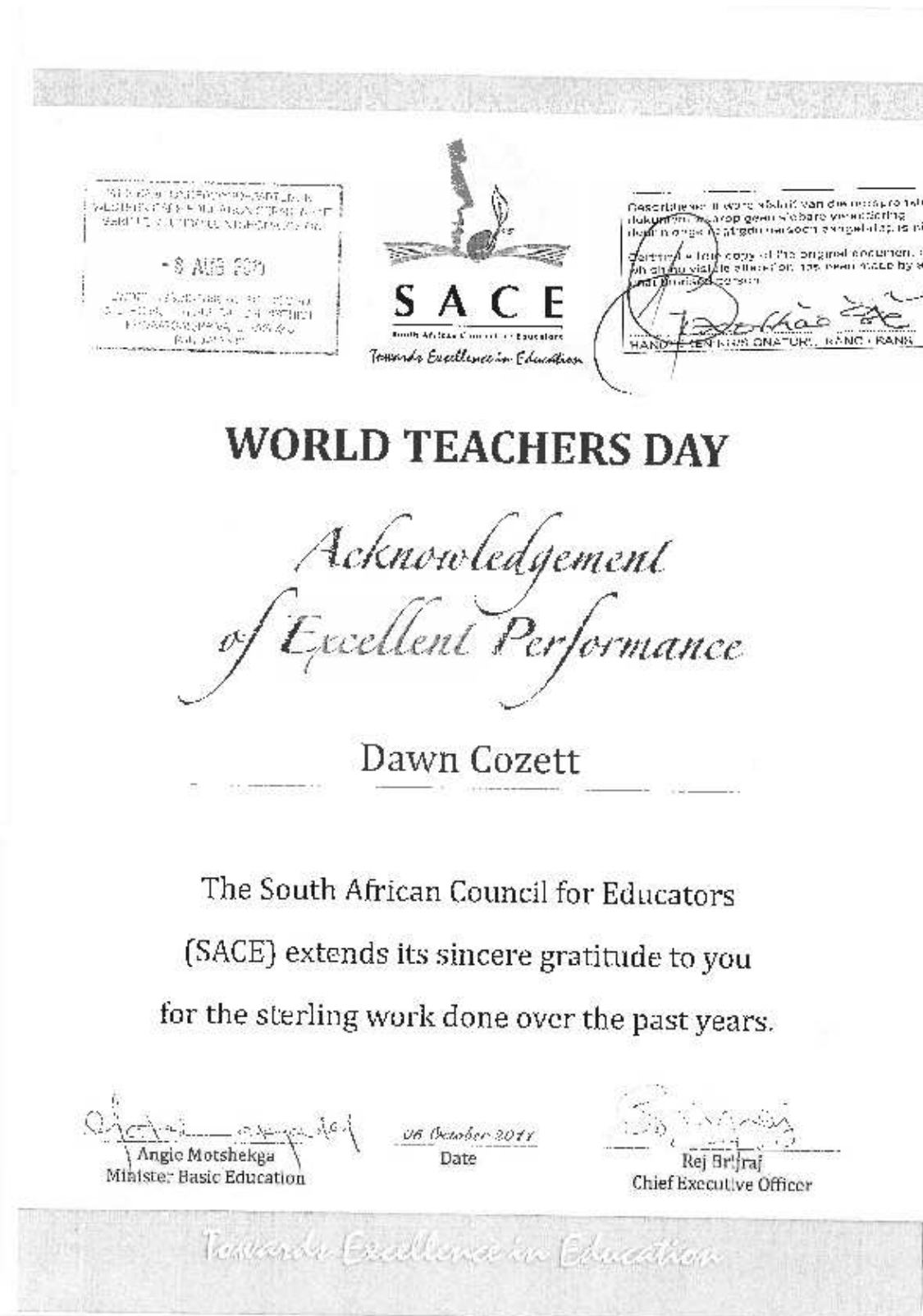
Principal: Joseph Jansen

Sentinel Hout Bay



Toegewyd aan Uitmendheid - Committed to Excellence

Appendix 13 SACE award letter



Appendix 14 ETDP-SETA award letter

