

# Parental Involvement in English Literacy Homework with Primary School Learners

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## Abstract

*The aim of this research is to explore parental involvement within an English Literacy intervention programme focusing on a group of Grade 4 primary school learners. The study postulate that active involvement of parents in their children's education can enhance learning, and argues that in order for learners and parents to actively engage with the learning processes they should become more emancipated in the process. Therefore, the main focus is that parents can be assisted by educators, to scaffold the learning processes of their children.*

*The study is framed by a qualitative approach, to which the parents of identified learners were invited. The programme was implemented to investigate the benefits of parental involvement in after school homework activities. A small multilingual focus group was formed to determine the success (es) of this programme. A research paradigm was used to lean towards a critical theory paradigm framed by an action research model.*

**Key words:** Emancipation, partnership, parental involvement, homework, intervention programme

## Introduction

### 1.1 Background and Context of Research

Teachers contend that parental involvement in assisting children with homework has always been lacking. Wolfendale (1992:6) supports this view and argues: "in textbooks on the history of education, parents are conspicuously absent: they appear to exist only in relation to their primary legal duty to send children to school." What has also become more noticeable is that parents find it increasingly challenging to assist their children with homework, often due to variables such as learner characteristics, lack of knowledge and education and integrative orientations (Brown, 2007: 170).

In recent years, educators have opted for various alternatives as a way to involve parents in the schoolwork of learners, but with no or little success. As a result, parents often disclosed various factors, which include their inability to assist their children either due to their level of schooling, or their unfamiliarity with the varying materials and methodological approaches to scaffold the lessons presented in the classroom. This is in contrast with the expectations relayed by the Department of Education (DoE) that requires a greater degree of parental involvement in children's educational development (Mestry & Grobler, 2007:176).

Outcomes Based Education (OBE) demands educators to afford learners homework that would engage parents more with their child's educational endeavours, and to serve as a platform for parents to collaborate with educators in the educational undertakings of their children. Van Der Horst and McDonald (1997:6) review the mission of a change to OBE where the focus is on the learner and his/her needs. Acknowledgement of human diversity (learners' differences must be accommodated). A move to participatory, democratic decision making in education (teachers, parents and learners have a say in how they experience education). Emphasis on accountability (responsibility). Allowing all learners to achieve their full potential (different levels according to individual ability).

In view of this, Van Wyk and Lemmer (2009:17) state that "parents (should) also benefit greatly from being involved with the school. For both parents and teachers, teamwork reduces the characteristic isolation of their respective roles." Collaboration consequently means where the parents and the teachers or the school work together, and in this case for the improvement of children's development.

In 2007 the Western Cape Education Department (WCED) distributed a circular which encouraged parents to support their school-going children with homework activities. This document states that stakeholders such as the School Management Teams (SMT's) and School Governing Bodies (SGB's) should use this opportunity to debate with parents the significance of assisting their children with their homework (DCD/0065:2007).

Members of the SMT as well as the SGB are expected to continuously post urgent appeal to the parents at Parent Teacher Associations (PTA) meetings to become more actively involved and to support these pupils. In further view, Van Wyk and Lemmer (2009:83) share these sentiments with the approach used by the WCED that children can be assisted by their parents on a (various) range of activities to scaffold their learning.

According to Van Wyk and Lemmer (2009:83) these vital activities are referred to as the "curriculum of the home." Herein, Van Wyk and Lemmer (2009:83) further suggest that these activities at home can include tutoring, parental supervision and the checking of homework, as well as conversations between the parent and the child regarding everyday events. Parents can also encourage their children to read for enjoyment. The reason why reading is seen as vital to complement stimulating strategic action beyond the classroom, is documented in the National Reading Strategy:

*To read is to empower*

*To empower is to write*

*To write is to influence*

*To influence is to change*

*To change is to live.* ¶ (National Reading Strategy, 2008: 4)

The National Reading Strategy suggests that the parents should show a greater level of interest in how their children perform academically, and should afford closer attention to their children's personal growth.

Van Wyk and Lemmer (2009: 83) support the idea that parents should reward their children when they perform well at school. These methods of reward that parents can afford learners could consist of appraisals, incentives, encouragements, praise and compliments. These may serve as further motivation to the child to perform well at school and stimulate both their intrinsic and extrinsic motivation to achieve more academically and socially.

## **The Purpose of The Study**

This study aims to conduct research into an intervention programme, involving parents of a selected group of Grade 4 learners through a series of English literacy homework sessions; to ascertain whether such a form of intervention would then enable parents to assist learners with the then-afforded homework activities. The homework programme, which was implemented, comprises of listening and language homework activities. An action research approach was used to frame observations during the various stages and sessions of this programme. For this study, the level of parental involvement was crucial as parents needed to become much more supportive, helpful and more compassionate to complement the learning processes of the child. A strong bond or partnership between the school and the home were essential for the learner's holistic development. It was evident that parents needed to display a more hands-on approach and to work collaboratively with the teacher to meet the expectations from learners and to yield more meaningful ways on how parents could effectively assist their children with their homework activities.

The purpose of the language homework programme was to provide an academic and strategic link between the school and the home, as well as to create a collaborative space for further engagement between parents and learners. Furthermore, the aim was to develop a more transparent level of communication between home and school, as a way to support parents with the necessary knowledge and skills to assist learners with homework, especially as parents are seen as the child's foremost educators. In this study, the language programme was used as an instrument to enable parents to be more supportive towards their children's schooling as well as for parents to reflect on their involvement and their contributions within the learner's learning processes. The intention behind the language programme was to illustrate to parents that effective parental involvement can be beneficial to all stakeholders i.e. learners, parents, educators etc. especially when it comes to defining the roles of the different stakeholders such as DoE, community and Non Governmental officials (NGO's) in order to improve and assist with parental involvement, and by assisting parents to become emancipated.

## **Background To the Homework Programme**

The framework provided by Van Niekerk (2007) serves as research instrument for the study. This programme, devised by Van Niekerk (2007) is specifically designed as an instrument to foster greater collaboration between the school, parents and learners. The homework programme is divided into various themes. In her programme, Van Niekerk (2007:3) integrates various themes to complement activities and skills within the classroom and at home. The outline below charts these topics as covered during the six sessions with the participants.

**Table 1.** An abbreviated version of the Van Niekerk (2007) model was used for the purposes of this research study. The themes selected were covered over a 5 themes period

Theme 1	The School	Topics	The Classroom
			Late for School
Theme 2	The City	Topics	The Shopping Mall
			Occupations
Theme 3	Transport	Topics	The Bicycle
			The Service Station
			Road Safety
			The Railway Station
Theme 4	Animals	Topics	The Zoo
			Farm Animals
Theme 5	The Supermarket	Topics	Odd one out <a href="http://www.ijer.n et">www.ijer.n et</a> Vol. 1 -
			Let's bake

The programme of Van Niekerk covers a 28 week timeframe. For the purpose of this study only 18 weeks were covered; consisting of the six contact sessions of one hour each with the parents as indicated in table 2.

**Table 2.** The 28 week framework of the listening and language 2 home programme (Van Niekerk, 2007)

Week 1	The School	Week 2	The Classroom
Week 3	Late for school	Week 4	The City
Week 5	The Shopping Mall	Week 6	The Shopping Mall (continued)
Week 7	Occupations	Week 8	Transport
Week 9	The Supermarket	Week 10	Odd one out
Week 11	Listening games (Supermarket) Let us bake!	Week 12	The bicycle Revision Game (1)
Week 13	The motor-car Road safety	Week 14	The Service Station
Week 15	The Zoo	Week 16	The farm
Week 17	Animals - games	Week 18	The Railway Station
Week 19	The Weather Seasons Days of the week	Week 20	Revision games (2) Good manners
Week 21	The Park	Week 22	Safety in and around the house Emergency services
Week 23	The Library	Week 24	The Post Office
Week 25	The Dentist	Week 26	The Doctor
Week 27	The Airport	Week 28	Revision Game (3)

Each topic consisted of a comprehension activity, a family game, vocabulary activities, auditory reception activities and memory skills. The topics covered also consisted of a large range of sound and phonic activities as well as reasoning skills. As the purpose of the programme was to improve the language skills of the learners further emphasis was also placed on writing activities which formed part of the home programme.

## **Research Question**

In order to strengthen the relationship between home and school and simultaneously improve the English literacy skills of the Grade 4 learners the study focused on addressing the following questions:

1. How can parents be supported to assist their Grade 4 children with English literacy homework?
2. What strategies can be implemented to involve parents of Grade 4 learners with English literacy homework?

The parents were supported in assisting their children with homework by putting the intervention programme into practice and to improve the relationships between the home and the school. This was done through regular contact sessions with parents and/or other family members of the learners. The researcher had regular communication with parents or representatives of the learners through telephonic communication to remind parents of meeting dates and/or written communication via letters and circulars. Home and school liaison books to discuss the progress of learners afforded parents with feedback on the learner's performance. Report cards were also used to inform parents how their child/ren performed during the term. The researcher forwarded SMS's to the parents if learners failed to complete homework or if parents did not sign the homework sheet.

The following approaches were applied to involve the parents with English literacy homework intervention. The aims were to eliminate barriers between the school and home, such as the language barriers due to the multilingual range of languages spoken among the research participants. English was used as a tool to level the equity caused by the language diversity. Another approach was to strengthen relationships shared between the teacher and the parents especially among foreign nationals who were regarded as 'aliens' in the immediate social setting. These existing power relationships were turned around by initiating the building of trust between parents and teachers and parents of different cultural backgrounds as well.

Time management skills were integrated as parents set aside certain slots to assist their children with their homework. Such homework timeslots were instrumental in building family relationships as well and provided a platform for parents to interact on a neglected terrain that is the education of their children. Time management facilitated a specific form of discipline and routine in family life that further added value to the importance of linking home as informal learning environment and school as formal learning environment. Transport was provided as parents were brought to the school environment where the learners spent most of their time. Learning opportunities were created via the homework programme where parents were informed on how to help their children with homework and finally an empowering atmosphere was established by means of the homework programme to strengthen relationships amongst parents and children thus familiarized parents with insights into what their children experienced daily.

The approach that was most beneficial for the group was the language barriers that were broken down between the home and the school, as all the parents who participated in the intervention programme understood the English used in the intervention. There was also a better level of understanding between the parents and the educator as the parents began to understand how they could assist their children with their schoolwork.

## **Literature Review**

### **Theoretical Framework: Critical theory**

The research approach used in this study leans towards the critical theory paradigm, as the entire study is underpinned by the action research model. According to Duffy and Scott (1998:184) critical theory has been dominated by Jurgen Habermas since 1971. They further view that the central aim of Habermas's critical theory model was to obtain a concept of civilization with a realistic aim that could lead to the liberation of people from supremacy. In other words, individuals are able to view life critically and objectively as a way to create opportunities which would allow them to be free from domination and oppression, so that they would be able to think more critically and become independent. For this reason the intervention programme was implemented as a way for parents (or the representatives) and learners to become emancipated from the difficulties experienced with homework assigned at school.

In his framework, Habermas (as cited in Duffy and Scott, 1998: 184) has specific viewpoints to outline how one can understand what social reality, technical, practical and emancipation mean. In the study conducted by Horkheimer (1982), the study largely centered on the parents' inability to assist their children with homework. Horkheimer is also of the opinion that critical theory must be realistic in its meaning as it is imperative that it identifies the actors of change. These actors of change allude to the intervention programme that was offered so that the parents or the representatives could be empowered, and to be of assistance to the children. In addition, Critical Theory should also afford clear direction and provide both clear norms for criticism and achievable practical goals for social transformation (Horkheimer, 1982). In essence, derived from Horkheimer's view, Critical Theory can therefore be seen as a theory which can be radical and emancipatory (Kemmis, 2001:92), as it brings along change through research. The transformation that is referred to by Kemmis came to fruition in this study as parents became self-sufficient in assisting their children with homework.

In the research of Lilly and Green (2004:4), they relate to the notion of critical theory, through a different focal point. They propose that critical theory is defined through the societal and ethnic milieu that accompanies children when they start attending school.

The central purpose of this study is to introduce and evaluate the effects of a homework programme to emancipate the parents in assisting learners with homework.

### **Action Research**

In order to gauge the effect of such a programme, Riding, Fowell, and Levy (1995:1) cautions that "a methodical, iterative approach embracing problem identification, action planning, implementation, evaluation, and reflection" should be considered and that the insights gained from the initial cycle, should then feed into the planning of the second cycle, for which an action plan should be modified and the research process repeated again.



## **Planning**

Planning is the first stage within the Riding, Fowell and Levy (1995) cycle and involves an analysis of the problem before a strategic plan of action is compiled (Kemmis and Mc Taggart, 1988:11). During the planning stage of this study, the researcher evaluated the current situation and noticed that parents struggled to assist learners with their homework. The researcher therefore planned ways on how to have a constructive influence that would be beneficial to both the parent and learner.

## **Acting**

This stage involves the implementation of the strategic plan (Kemmis and Mc Taggart, 1988:12). The homework programme was implemented which consisted of six sessions of one hour each. During these sessions, parents were equipped with ways on how to assist their children with homework. Parents were encouraged to interact with both teacher and learner during the implementation phases of the programme.

## **Observing**

During this phase, the observer (educator) should be consistent with the monitoring-aspect, and take notes on what was implemented and to do pro-active planning (Kemmis & Mc Taggart, 1988:13). The educator observed how the parents interacted with the programme through monitoring. Observations of how the learners responded to the programme were done in class context and learners' performances were monitored accordingly.

## **Reflecting**

This stage reflects on the outcomes (results) of the evaluation (Kemmis & Mc Taggart, 1988:13). The researcher planned the next sessions in advance and made the necessary adjustments (based on observations) accordingly, to allow parents a better opportunity to interact with the content and scaffold the learning processes of the learner.

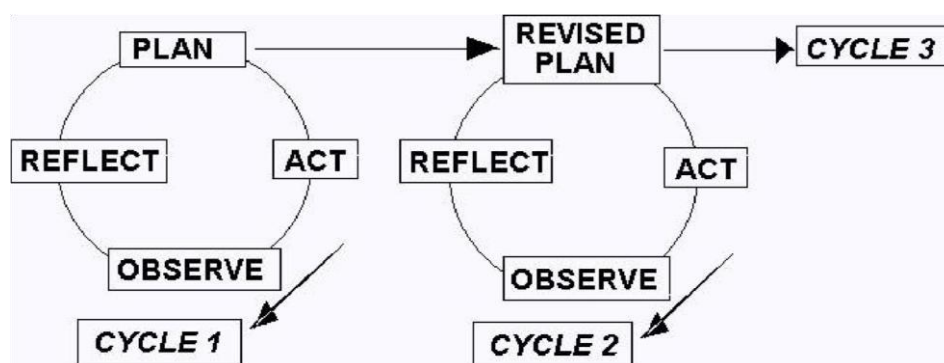


Figure 1. The action research cycle (Riding, Fowell, & Levy, 1995)



## **Methods**

This chapter focuses on a qualitative research design framework as a means to ascertain how the parents of Grade 4 learners could be supported to assist their children with English literacy homework assignments. This was done by offering an intervention programme for parents using English literacy as a vehicle to establish common ground. This chapter includes a further discussion on the research design and methodological framework used by the researcher to which the process of obtaining the relevant data will be explained. Furthermore, this chapter will highlight key points of action research as it relates to the critical theory paradigm used in this study.

## **The Research Site**

The research site is a primary school which was started in 1910 in the Cape Peninsula. There were originally four schools in the area. The research site is the only one that remained. The other three schools were closed down. The school comprises of Grades R to Grade 7 learners with only one class per grade. The family composition of the learners range from single parenting, nucleus families and extended families. Parental involvement at the research site was practically non-existent prior to the intervention programme. The reasons (as shared by parents) were mainly due to different parenting patterns, low self-esteem with regard to subject knowledge, low education levels (of parents), and that most of them were not acquainted with the OBE framework and expectations. The parents also mentioned their work related issues such as long hours during harvesting time on the wine farms. Other parents who resides outside the area stated that they must use different modes of transport and that the lack of finances in many instances played a negative roll which influenced their participation and involvement in their children's school work.

The data was collected at the primary school through means of questionnaires, a focus group of parents and from data obtained from learners' homework books. The data was collected to establish if the parents were able to assist their children with their homework. The respondents were the Grade 4 parents which modelled the multilingual focus group. There are 38 learners in the Grade 4 class of whom 18 are girls and 20 are boys. The learners come from different cultural groups, have diverse backgrounds and speak different home languages. The table below will give you an idea of the diversity of the learners in this class.

**Characteristics of research sample group**

Table 3. A statistical breakdown of the sample group

Medium of instructions	Afrikaans
Second Language of instruction	English
Learners' mother tongue:	Number of learners: 38
Afrikaans	26
English	2
isiXhosa	8
Shona	2
Number of parents that reside with both parents	19
Number of learners who reside with a single parent	8
Number of learners who reside with single parent within extended family	6
Number of learners who reside with guardian	2
Number of learners who reside with grandparents	3
Number of immigrants	2
Number of learners that receive a social grant	16
Number of learners that benefit from the school's nutrition programme	34

The abovementioned information was obtained from the school's CEMIS. The information is an indication of how diverse the sample population at the research site is, especially with reference to the different home languages, the different family types as well as the level of poverty.

**Research design**

The research design in this study was devised in such a way as to obtain information on the degree of involvement of parents in the edification of their children.

Fouché and De Vos (2005:1320) define a research design as the plan that the researcher intends to use when conducting the research. A case study based on an action research model of the Grade 4 class of 38 learners was conducted. The researcher networked on a regular basis via SMSs, telephonically and informal conversations with the parents. The design employs a qualitative approach, and relevant data was derived from research instruments such as self-administered questionnaires and focus group interviews. In focus group interviews respondents were interviewed on their opinions and concerns to ascertain how they could best be supported to assist with their children's homework.

In a scholastic study conducted by McMillan and Schumacher (1993:37), McMillan *et al.* (1993) viewed the benefits of traditional qualitative research also is when one is able to use which a single 'case' to which that case is studied in depth." For this purpose the researcher used her own class as a case study. Qualitative data comprises of texts in the configuration of effective oral descriptions (McMillan & Schumacher, 1999:37).

The qualitative research design framework afforded the researcher insight into the intensity of parental commitment to their children's schooling. The qualitative approach used, focused on a single purpose, namely to "portray and comprehend the proceedings within the tangible, natural context in which the engagement with learners and parents transpires (Babbie & Mouton, 2002:272)."

### **Research Instruments**

The instruments that were used consisted of self-administered questionnaires, homework sessions, field notes, focus group interviews, observations and CASS marks of learners.

### **A Qualitative Research Approach**

This study focused on a qualitative research approach which enabled the researcher to learn directly about the communal world of the respondents by investigating the involvement and participation of the parents.

Fer (2004:562) declares that "researchers are more interested in the qualitative studies, involving an interpretive approach to its subject matter to provide an in-depth description of a particular situation or setting in a particular classroom, school, or practice." He contends that "intricacy, appropriateness, investigation, and common sense" are the key words in qualitative research. Fer (2004:562) furthermore states that there are a variety of research types that can be utilised in teaching such as case studies, grounded theory and participative inquiry. The reason a case study approach was decided upon is because the study could be confined to one class as a "subject" which allowed the researcher to gather information that could delve deeper than the surface to get to the heart of learners' dilemmas and parents' involvement in the children's learning at home.

#### **Validity And Reliability In Qualitative Research**

Feldman (2007:30) states: "To demonstrate validity in qualitative studies, such as narrative forms of action research, there need to be expectations for the types of things that action researchers ought to pay attention to in how they inquire into their practice, and ways to assess how well that has been done." At the research site the data that was collected via the questionnaires, focus group interviews, homework programme, field notes and learners' The CASS marks reflected were true and meticulously awarded. Respondents were asked to be honest, sincere and open with their responses as authenticity of data refers to the correctness in which the data is presented. The parents had to respond without revealing their identity. The focus group interviews were conducted using a recording device in order to ensure that scrupulous data being recorded.

### **The Intervention Programme**

The homework programme was introduced to the parents of the Grade 4 class in 2009. Table 4 indicates the sessions that took place at the research site on the following days.

**Table 4. Sessions that took place at the research site in 2009**

Day	Date	Times
Saturday	25 April 2009	10H00 - 12H00
Saturday	16 May 2009	10H00 - 12H00
Saturday	23 May 2009	10H00 - 12H00
Saturday	06 June 2009	10H00 – 10H45 10H45 – 11H30 11H30 – 12H15
Saturday	25 July 2009	10H00 – 10H45 10H45 – 11H30 11H30 – 12H15
Saturday	22 August 2009	10H00 – 10H45 10H45 – 11H30 11H30 – 12H15

During the first three sessions all the parents met at the research site at the same time. Parents, grandparents, a guardian, a social worker from a Children’s Home and a cousin attended the sessions.

After the third session the parents informed the researcher that the time slot did not suit all of them and that the times therefore had to be reconsidered. Parents then met at the research site at different times. The researcher made the necessary changes to accommodate the parents’ needs.

The intervention in 2009 was a period of trial and error that could serve as a “pilot” to the actual study to commence in 2010.

The programme commenced with the Grade 4 parents in 2010 and took place over a period of six sessions which ranged from February 2010 to June 2010. Parents who found it extremely difficult to come to the research site because of travelling problems were accommodated in a community hall in Westlake. The researcher made the necessary booking arrangements at the hall well in advance. The sessions were therefore held at the research site as well as the community hall in Westlake, which was much more central and convenient for the majority of parents. The parents could choose the venue and the time most suitable for them.

Table 5. Times at the school and community hall

10H00 TO 11H00	Research site (School)
11H30 TO 12H00	Westlake community hall

The researcher interacted with parents, grannies, older brothers and sisters as well as aunts at the two venues during the different time slots. Table 3.6 indicates the date and time slots.

Table 6. Indicates the date and time slots in 2010 of the homework sessions

Saturday	27 February 2010
Saturday	13 March 2010
Saturday	24 April 2010
Saturday	08 May 2010
Saturday	29 May 2010
Saturday	12 June 2010

### **Background To the Intervention Programme**

An English literacy homework programme was implemented to assist parents in order for them to help their children with homework. After an initial analysis conducted by means of a questionnaire focusing on the parents' ability to assist their children with homework, the researcher decided to follow an English language and listening homework programme. The programme opted for was devised by Liesel van Niekerk who is a speech and hearing teacher. This programme which is commonly referred to as "Listening and Language Home Programme" consists of different components of literacy such as reading, comprehension, vocabulary, listening, speaking, language study, spelling, sentence memory and auditory reception. This coincides with the six main Learning Outcomes according to the Revised National Curriculum (2002:6).

The intervention programme facilitated the above mentioned outcomes as the parents were asked to endorse the outcomes while implementing at home what they were trained during the intervention sessions.

### **Action Research**

An action research approach was used as a suitable method for the emancipation of the Grade 4 parents at the sample site. Somekh & Zeichner (2009:6) mentions that "action research was developed in Europe and the USA in the first half of the twentieth century and its take up in many countries can be seen as a product of the 'World of Flows'; a modern-day approach to educational reform." Henry and Kemmis (1985:3) are of the opinion that action research is a learning process that is systematic, while Somekh and Zeichner (2009:6) maintain that action research "brings along an independent obligation to oppose domination and cultivate and maintain justice." In this study the researcher focused on the relevance of action research and critical theory in order to emancipate the participants and to explore to what extent it can be seen as "radical and emancipatory."

In addition to this, Somekh and Zeichner (2009:5) portray action research, "as a proposition, that has discursive power because it embodies a collision of terms. In generating research knowledge *and* improving social action *at the same time*, action research challenges the normative values of two distinct ways of being –that of the scholar and the activist."

Supplementary to all the above, action research is also described as "proceeding in a spiral of steps, which is composed of planning, action and the evaluation of the result of action (Kemmis & McTaggart, 1990:8)."

Carson (1990:168) supports this view and states that "the process of critical action research is collaborative and follows a cycle consisting of moments of reflection, planning, acting, observing, reflecting, replanning, etc. which takes place in a spiral fashion." Kemmis believes that "this form of action research aims not only

at improving outcomes, and improving the self-understandings of practitioners, but also at assisting practitioners to arrive at a critique of their social or educational work and work settings (Kemmis, 2001:92).”

According to all of these aforementioned definitions of action research, it is clear that action research has a lot of benefits including that it treats the process as a collective, as well as collaborative and consultative. In other words while the research is carried out, all the role players such as the principal, educator, parents and school community interact with each other and work collaboratively. This empowers all involved. Abrams (as cited in McMillan & Schumacher, 2010:445) maintains that action research is a benefit to educators as it empowers and assist them in an evidence-based systematic inquiry. Another advantage is that it also involves individuals such as the educator, learners and parents.

Ferrance (2000:8) implied that action research is a plan that educators will embark on a cycle of asking questions, gather information, reflecting and choosing a schedule of activities. The six steps cycle, sketched by Ferrance (2000:8) is explained in the following figure:

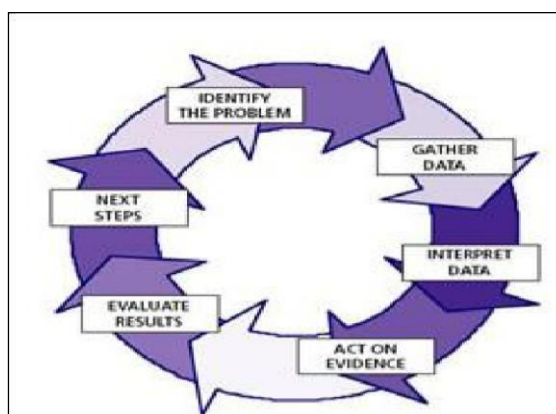


Figure 2. Ferrance’s Action Research model (2000:09)

Table 7. Times per session at the research site and the community hall.

10H00 TO 11H00	Research site
11H30 TO 12H00	Westlake community hall

Parents, who could not attend due to various reasons, were asked to send a representative, in their place. It is for this reason that grandparents, sisters and other family members attended the homework sessions as substitutes for parents unable to attend. Those who have attended engaged actively during these sessions. The researcher explained the content of the programme step- by- step. Parents were allowed to respond by asking questions and to give their input and also to interact with the researcher constantly during the duration of the sessions. The homework programme consisted of different themes, which included:

Table 8. The different themes of the homework programme Van Niekerk (2007)

The School	
The Classroom	Late for School
The City	
The Shopping Mall	Occupations
Road Safety	
The bicycle	The service station
Animals	
The zoo	The Farm animals

Each theme was followed by exercises in the form of comprehension, vocabulary, memory activities as well as sentence constructions. The researcher dealt with each section by reading the content to the parents. In information sessions conducted, it was also explained to them how to go about completing these exercises with their children. The researcher encouraged the parents to establish a routine to interact with the learners' homework programme on a daily basis.

The parents had to tick next to each exercise as they completed it in order for them to mark where to follow on the next time. They had to indicate all the activities that their children struggled with or were unable to complete. The purpose for this was so that the parents could consolidate the work before continuing with the next theme or exercise. Parents were encouraged to praise their children for all the work completed and/or attempted. Parents were reminded to sign and date all completed work.

In addition to the aforementioned, parents were encouraged to interact with the researcher while the sessions were in progress, to eliminate any uncertainty regarding the homework programme.

### Questionnaires

Questionnaires (See Appendix F, p 128) were used to gather qualitative data and in doing so the researcher was able to give a well described description of the involvement of parents of the Grade 4 class. The questionnaires were given to all the parents before the intervention programme started. parents before the intervention programme started. This was done to see whether the parents were capable of helping their children with homework.



### Planning Of the Focus Group

For this research study, the researcher had to have a clear idea of the specific information that was needed and why the information was important, before the focus group was conducted. It is for this reason that a group of nine multilingual individuals were chosen. The participants were “pre-screened” via the telephone by letter and orally. This was done to ensure that they would be representative of the various diverse cultural groups.

The table below indicates the various language groups of the participants of the focus group.

Table 8. A breakdown of respondents based on

first language groupings	
Different Home Languages	Num ber of respondents
Afrikaans	4
English	1
IsiXhosa	2
Tsonga	1
Tshwane	1
	9

In response to this, Anderson (1987:203) suggests that “the participants must have some common characteristics related to what is being focussed upon.” In this case, the aim of the focus group interview was to determine whether or not the homework intervention programme was beneficial to the participants.

The focus group interview was conducted using open-ended questions. This was done in order to stimulate an environment in which participants could feel free to discuss their concerns and issues regarding their children’s progress and their own involvement in assisting the children with their home work. For this, the researcher occupied the role as the group moderator/ mediator. Anderson (1987:204) affords the following suggestions for the group moderator. According to Anderson, the moderator must be comfortable with the group processes and that s/he must encourage the respondents to participate in the discussion. The moderator must balance the contributions of those who form part of the focus group. Anderson (1987) cautions and advises the moderator to listen both actively and attentively to all the verbal contributions of the respondents to paraphrase and to summarise of what was said.

The moderator must be innocent, empathetic and sensitive and must function as a facilitator and not a performer. The moderation must be aware of past, present and future perspectives during the session. It is vital that the moderator must keep the discussion moving, focused and must know when to wrap up. It is recommended that the moderator must use silences, pauses and probes effectively. The mediator should exercise mild control, but avoid leading participants. Furthermore, s/he must remain flexible and adaptive and

must stay in the background because it is the views of the participants that are important. The mediator must suspend his or her personal prejudice and acknowledge individual contributions and should control those individuals that are dominating the interview.

In terms of time management, the moderator must always be conscious of time and respect the participants and believe their contributions are important regardless of their background, experience or education. The moderator must have adequate background of the topic and have effective communication skills and must understand how to use humour and naïve questions.

In essence, the role of the moderator is very significant. Good levels of group leadership and interpersonal skill are required to conduct a group successfully.

With permission of the respondents these interviews were recorded on an electronic recording device. The responses were recorded to ensure that the information collected was true and accurate.

The focus group constituted of grandparents, sisters and other family members. Each representative was asked to sign an attendance register every time that they attended one of the homework sessions.

The table below indicates when the sessions took place and how many participants attended at the two different venues.

**Table 9. A breakdown of dates and attendance**

When were these session s held?	Where was it held?		How many people attar the sessions? Total
	Research site School	Westlake Community hall	
Saturday 27 February 2010	5	Not Applicable (N/A)	5
Saturday 13 March 2010	4	Not Applicable (N/A)	4
Saturday 24 April 2010	1	3	4
Saturday 8 May 2010	8	6	14
Saturday 29 May 2010	6	0	6
Saturday 12 June 2010	3	0	3

The focus group interview was conducted at the research site. The researcher informed the respondents timeously of the date, time and place where the interview would be conducted. Rabiee (2004:656) supports this view by saying that: “In order to maximise participation it is important to obtain an agreed date from the informants well in advance of the interviews and to remind them a few days before they start.” The interview took place one Thursday evening at the research site. This was done in order to accommodate the nine

respondents. The researcher had to prepare the venue for the interview and arrived a half an hour prior to the interview scheduled. The researcher welcomed the respondents as they arrived and thus created a relaxing atmosphere.

The researcher and the respondents were involved in a systematised conversation (See Appendix G, p 131) where parents shared their experiences and gave feedback on the intervention programme. Anderson (1987:200) describes a focus group as a “group is a carefully planned and moderated (framed on) informal discussion where one person’s idea bounces off another’s creating a chain reaction of informative dialogue.” The function of the focus group is to focus on a precise theme, to do it in depth, in a relaxing atmosphere. It furthermore aims to illicit a wide range of opinions, attitudes, feelings or perceptions from a group of individuals who share common experience that relates to the topic under study (Anderson, 1987:200). The result of a focus group is an exceptional form of qualitative information which conveys awareness about how people respond to an incident or product.

Parents were engaged by means of interviews to collect data on their perceptions on duties related to their involvement in learners’ homework activities. The interview was recorded on a voice recorder. Participants reflected on how the sessions enabled them to assist their children with homework and this concurred with the researcher’s aim to assist parents in helping their children with homework. The researcher also inquired about their capabilities to assist their children with the homework.

I am in agreement with Dos Reis (2007:36) who views the focus group interview as a research tool that is highly consistent with current trends in educational research, and which aims at understanding more about what respondents think and feel.”

### **Conducting The Focus Group**

The researcher acted as the moderator and made use of the tips mentioned in Anderson (1987:204). At the start of the interview the participants were welcomed and thanked by the researcher in order to make them feel at ease with the group process. These interviews were conducted after the intervention programme was implemented. The interviews were audio taped and were transcribed to ensure that the information was accurate. The participants were informed before the time that their responses would be recorded and they were asked to give their permission in order for the researcher to use the recording device.

Everybody present was encouraged to participate in the discussion. They were asked to respond openly and honestly to the questions. The researcher listened attentively and was very sensitive to the way the participants responded to the questions and by doing this remained to stay flexible and adaptive. The input of each participant was recognised and respected as each contribution was regarded as important. There was no- one that dominated the interviews (group). This was done in order to exercise effective control while the interviews for the focus group were conducted.

The interviews were conducted in English as it was an English intervention programme with nine multilingual parents. The focus group interviews were conducted and completed at the research site to ensure that the participants felt at ease and comfortable on 16 September 2010.

## Results And Discussions

In this chapter the data -presented from the questionnaires obtained from the parents of the 38 Grade 4 learners, the focus group interviews with 9 of these parents (family representatives) and the information gathered from the homework sessions that parents had to attend, will be presented.

Data that was also obtained from the informal communication with parents, observations of learners in class during contact time, field notes and homework activities reflected in their homework books and CASS marks were triangulated to reflect themes that emerged from the data process, to reflect the reason why the researcher equipped the parents by engaging them in the homework programme. **Analysis Of Questionnaires**

Parents were engaged by means of questionnaires (see appendices) that they had to complete prior to the homework sessions to determine their level of involvement and their capability in their children's homework. Each of the questions consisted of options whereby the parents would select the option of their choice. There was also a section in each question for parents or family representatives to clarify, give reasons or to provide additional information to the question.

Parents' responses were recorded on a spreadsheet and are represented in graphic form or in bar graphs. There are 38 learners in the Grade 4 class, but of the 38 issued, only 25 were returned.

Question One: Does your child get homework on a regular basis

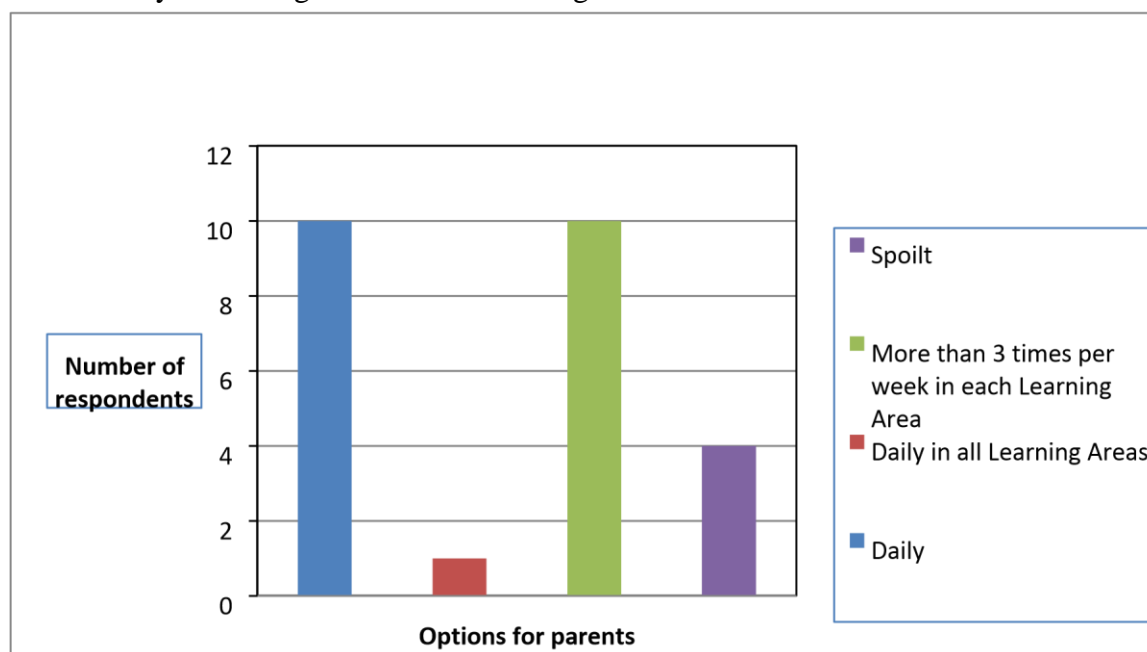


Figure 3. A statistical breakdown of the regular submission of homework

Of the 38 questionnaires that were forwarded to parents, 25 were returned. Only 10 (40%) of the respondents indicated that their children get homework on a daily basis, whereas 1 (4%) indicated that her or his child gets homework daily covering all Learning Areas. An additional 10 (40%) indicated that their children received homework more than three times per week in each Learning Area. Of the questionnaires 4 (16%) were spoilt as respondents chose more than one option despite the instructions clearly stating how to complete the

questionnaire. The aim of this question was to determine the level of parental involvement to ascertain whether parents are aware of the fact that their children do receive homework in an ongoing basis

Question Two: Do you assist your child your child with the homework?

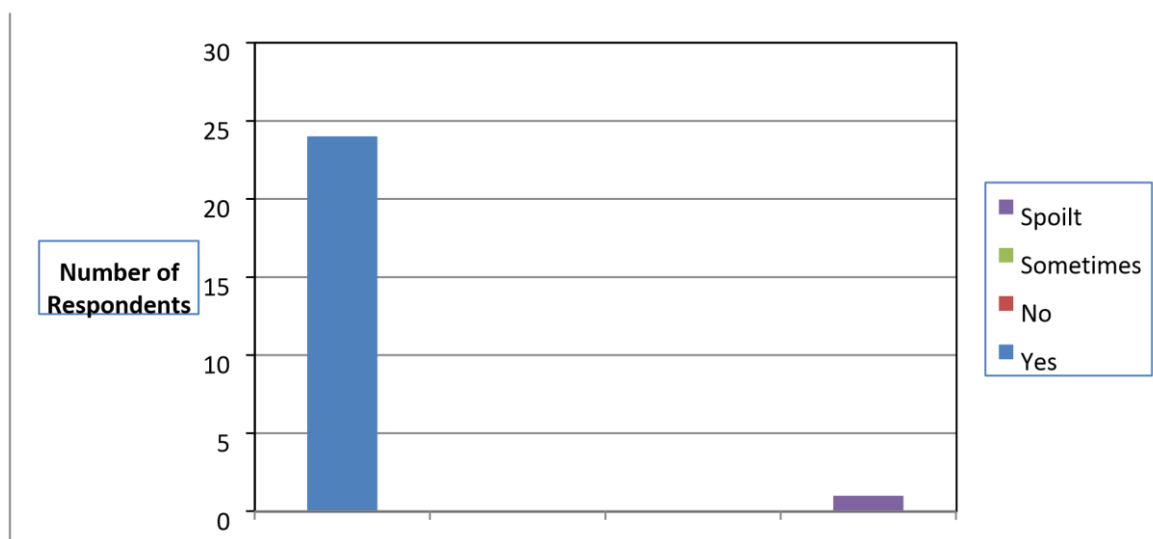


Figure 4. Parents' assistance with homework

In this figure it shows that of the twenty five respondents 24 (96%) indicated that they assist their children with their homework, whereas 1 (4%) of the questionnaires were spoilt in the sense where the parents indicated that they do and do not assist their children with homework.

Question Three: Do you understand the homework?

Parents who indicated that they understand the homework, comprises of 18 (72%). Respondents, who indicated no to the aforementioned question, consisted of 1 (4%) and the parents who indicated that they only sometimes understand the homework were, 5 (20%) while 1 (4%) questionnaire was spoilt.

Question Four: What is the nature of the homework that your child gets at school?

In the above figure, the majority of parents 14 (56%) indicated that their children receive homework in the form of activity sheets. 1 (4%) specified that his or her child gets homework in the form of projects, 9 (36%) referred to the homework as written assignments and 1 (4%) indicated that their children get homework in more than one of the options.

Question Five: Do you sign the homework?

Of the total number of respondents, 13 (52%) said yes to the question, compared to the 3 (12%) who indicated 'no', compared to the 9 (36%) of them who replied sometimes.

Question Six: Do you have a specific time when you sit with your child to assist him or her with the homework? Of the 25 respondents, 18 (72%) replied yes to the question, 5 (20%) indicated no, 1 (4%)

indicated sometimes; to which and 1 (4%) of the questionnaires were spoilt. 20 parents motivated whether or not they have a specific time that they spent with their child's homework

Question Seven: Do you liaise with the educator if you are uncertain about certain aspects of the homework? On the question to whether they liaison on a regular basis if they are uncertain about certain aspects of the homework, a mere 7 (28%) respondents replied to the question affirmatively that they do communicate if they are uncertain about how to assist their children, compared to the 10 (40%) who indicated that they do not interact, to which 8 (32%) indicated that they sometimes do liaise with the educator.

### **Intervention Programme**

Based on the responses gained from the listening and language intervention homework programme in English literacy, sessions were held to assist the parents with content matters that their children have to master at this grade level. This programme, designed by Van Niekerk (2007), was aimed at parents who wanted to take an active role in contributing to a homework series for their children. Written permission was obtained from van Niekerk to use her programme for the purpose of the research.

The first cycle of the action plan was put into practice while the first session was planned and implemented. The first session started out as a two hour session, commenced from 10h00 to 12h00 on a particular Saturday at the research site.

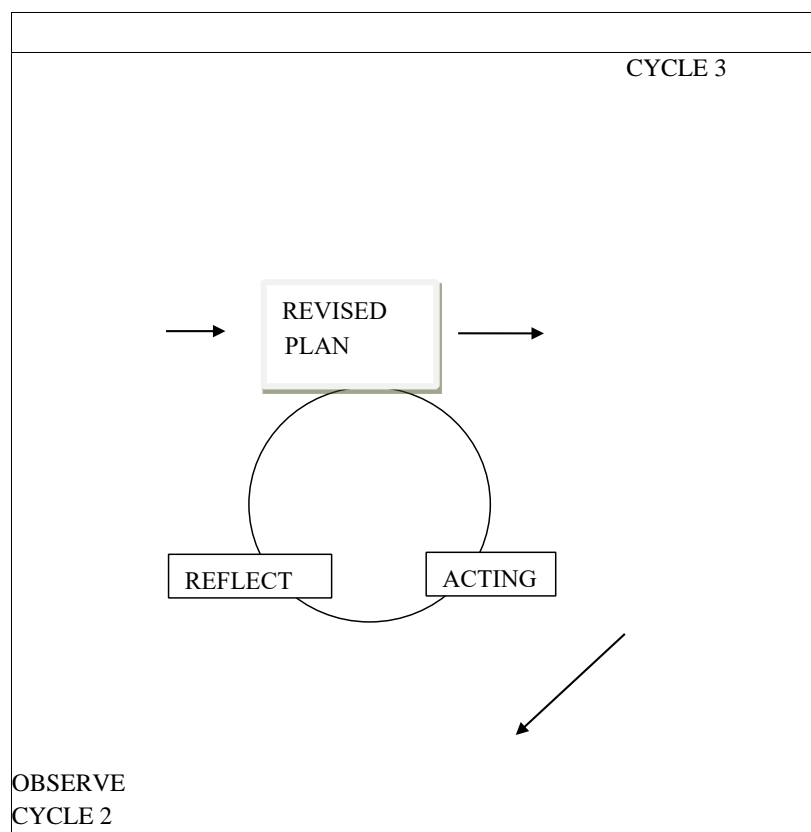


Figure 5. The Revised Plan. Adapted from Riding, Fowell & Levy (1995)

The following figure depicts the parents' attendance during the implementation of the intervention programme. The first two sessions in 2010 were initially held at the research site (school). After the researcher reviewed and reflected on the research process the researcher planned to move to an additional venue in Westlake for the remaining 4 sessions to accommodate those parents who stayed in the Westlake vicinity.

The attendance during the 4<sup>th</sup> session which was held on Saturday, 8 May 2010, showed an escalation in the number of attendance at both venues due to a parent – teacher meeting that were held prior to the homework programme. The researcher emphasized the importance of parental involvement and reminded the parents of the mid- year examination in June of that year which were fast approaching. Most of the parents' working conditions during the winter season are of such a nature that it made it much easier for them to attend the homework session as their working conditions differ from season to season.

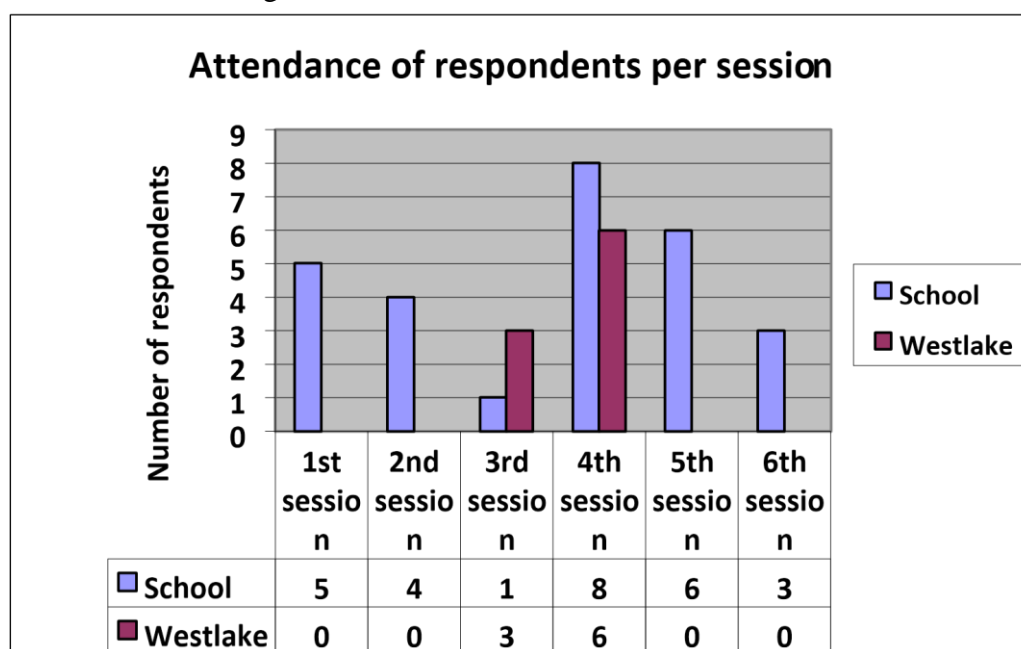


Figure 6. Attendance of homework programme at the different venues

After such interventions I was able to assess their involvement in the learners' homework activities to determine whether there has been a greater interest or a decline in the interest in their children's homework and schooling. One of these intervention strategies included interactive homework programmes between the educator and parents.

After each intervention I collected data on parents' perceptions of their duties and capabilities in assisting in their children's homework activities and to determine to what extent the interventions has brought about change in the perception and actions of parents. The spiral effects such as planning, acting, observing and reflecting of the action research were utilised and came into effect each time after the researcher made an assessment of the contact sessions with the parents.



## **Recommendations**

### **How Parents Can Help Their Children**

There are many ways in which parents can be of assistance to their children. Parents can continue to build a good rapport with their child's teacher, seeking guidance and suggestions for learning. It is further recommended that parents ascertain an invariable routine with their child for completing homework, including a regular study time and location, and encourage their child to maintain the routine. Parents can make a point of it to discuss school work, successes, concerns, and interests with their child. In addition to this parents can encourage their child to "exercise" his or her mind by doing crossword puzzles, brain teasers, and word searchers. Moreover parents can involve relatives and family friends to help support their child's learning.

### **Application Of Blooms Taxonomy at Home**

It is recommended that parents, being partners in their children's' education, can implement the different learning activities and levels of questioning at home and assist their children to develop critical thinking skills apt to the classroom. It is for this reason that parents were constantly motivated to maintain the different levels of questioning to develop critical thinking abilities. Garland (2011:5) suggests the following as reference to Bloom's taxonomy:

When children are moved beyond Bloom's lowest level, **remembering**, to the next level of **understanding**, they are answering questions which ask them to organize previous information, such as: comparing, interpreting the meaning, or organizing the information.

According to Garland, children are mainly just reiterating the information verbatim. Garland (2011:5) furthermore argues that critical thinking abilities are not developed if learners repeat the information word for word. Parents were urged during the homework sessions to encourage their children to reason for themselves and to avoid pressure of their age group (Garland, 2011:5).

It was noticeable during the intervention programme that parents want their children to have the necessary skills to listen, analyse and interpret the information that will be a continuous fragment of their lives. Recollection and insight are part of this process, but to succeed in further processing this flow of knowledge, requires a higher level of thinking and reasoning techniques especially in view of Blooms Taxonomy. Garland (2011:5) encourages parents to continuously implement the following while assisting their children with homework.

**Analyzing:** It is recommended that parents ask their child/ren to identify motives and/or causes from real-life stories as was the case with the shopping list that parents and children encountered as part of the homework programme. Parents can encourage their children to conduct an interview or survey. They can also have their child make a flow chart, family tree or role play a real-life situation.

**Evaluating:** It is suggested that parents ask their child to form and defend an opinion on a subject. Children, especially teens are pretty good at this one for example children can be encouraged to write a letter to an editor or evaluate a character's actions in a story. During one of the homework sessions the learners were asked to write a poem about the educator on one of the activity sheets.

**Creating:** Parents are advised to ask their children to put together several bits of old information to form a new idea. They can be asked to create, design or invent a new item, proposal or plan. This requires a bit of creativity and their ability to think in the abstract

Garland (2011: 2) continues by urging parents to help their children to utilise their critical thinking skills and to practise their minds so that their level of thinking will improve drastically. These higher level thinking skills are required especially from learners that are in Grades 1 to 6 as well as learners who are in Grade 9 to master the provincial and national testing which takes place in the form of the Annual National Assessment (ANA) and the Systemic testing from learners in Grades 3, 6 and 9. It is for this reason that the researcher recommends to parents to implement and follow Bloom's taxonomy to improve their children's level of thinking as the parents are regarded as partners in their children's schoolwork.

According to Garland (2011 :2) teachers point out that with the enormous pressure of the departmental testing and the pressure to teach to the test, it is becoming increasingly difficult for them to be able to take their time and teach at a higher level.

### **The Focus Group**

What is recommendable of a focus group is the interaction between the researcher and the participants. The researcher selected a group of nine participants whom she thought were the best equipped to discuss what was experienced during the intervention programme. It was evident that the participants shared certain characteristics that were relevant to study such as the importance of doing homework and their eagerness to assist their children with homework. Through the focus group interview the parents are allowed to express their views on the importance of homework and the vital part parents can play in it. In this way the researcher can obtain responses from non verbal cues such as facial expressions or body language. This can consequently be used to collect information to assemble qualitative data. Parents subsequently indicated that they were willing to help their children, but that they found the standard of the work demanding.

The researcher can ask focused questions to create and stimulate an environment that is supportive and to encourage discussion. This can also be done to encourage the expression of different viewpoints and opinions of the various respondents. Focus group interviews are further recommended because it is a popular way for gathering information in almost every area since the design is effortless. It consists of a selected group of respondents which the researcher selects. The group that are chosen are the best equipped to discuss what aspects the researcher hopes to investigate or explore.

### **The Questionnaires**

It is suggested that the questions must be clear so that the respondents find it easy to understand so that they can easily interpret the questions as the sequence of the questions should be straightforward to follow. This can result that the participants could answer the questions to the best of their abilities. The researcher will have an indication of the levels of competency of the parents before the intervention programme started.

### **How Parents Assisted Their Children**

There are many ways in which parents can assist a child with literacy homework for example by letting them do comprehension, reading, crossword puzzles, brain teasers and word searchers.

Parents can continue to build positive working relationships with the researcher by seeking advice and ideas on how to implement further learning through telephonic conversations and SMSs. Parents can also establish a consistent routine for completing homework with their children, including a regular study time and location that is beneficial for learning. In addition, parents can encourage their children to maintain the routine and also complimenting their achievements, and voicing their uncertainties. Parents can involve relatives and a family friend to assist in supporting their child's learning endeavours.

### **The Diversity of The Class Population**

It is recommended that the educators use diversity as a resource within the classroom, especially given that learners possess many talents. These strengths can be used as a motivation to the other learners. On the other hand, learners (especially those studying in an additional language) also need added support to deal with linguistic challenges. This can be very demanding and consideration should be afforded to stimulate the use of second language classes more often.

### **School Visitations by Parents to View Learner's Work**

This should motivate and encourage parents to become involved in their children's schooling and it will motivate learners to progress in school. Parent and educator meetings must therefore be encouraged. Hornby and Lafeala (2011:40) state "schools which are welcoming to parents, and make it clear that they value parental involvement, develop more effective parental involvement than schools that do not appear inviting to parents." It is therefore recommended that parents and educators meet on a regular basis for parents to be acquainted to what is needed in their child's educational setting.

### **Parent Support Group**

Support groups such as SGB's or parent support committees should encourage parents to have regular contact with the school and for children to become involved in the school. Some parents might experience problems whereby they are unable to pay the school fees, or they might have a complaint about an educator and the support group could be there to assist or advise them accordingly. Parents might find it difficult to assist their children with school work due to various reasons like low education levels of parents and language diversity. It is highly recommended that these support groups are representative of all racial groups in multi-cultural schools. Parents of multi-cultural communities may need further assistance with parenting tasks. Carrasquillo and Clement (1993:216) suggest that by assisting parents or other interested members of the community to understand the school curriculum and by providing literacy training in the school, parents can tutor their children in their native language and the skills can then become transferable to which positive results can be achieved in diverse linguistic and cultural settings.

### **Written communication**

Coleman (2013: 266) reckons that: “communication is often characterized as a dual responsibility.” There should be constructive communication between the sender and the receiver of the message. Schools should therefore have language translators to assist families, as needed. Teachers may consider to send home weekly or monthly folders of student work for review and comments by parents. Educators can arrange for parentstudent pick-up of report cards, and plan conferences on improving grades. A regular schedule of useful notices, memos, phone calls, newsletters and other communication can be implemented. The school can provide clear information on all school policies, programmes, reforms and transitions.

Walker, Ramsey and Gresham (2004: 286) reckon that: “positive communication with parents needs to begin on the first day of school. Schools should always make the first move; they should never wait until something goes wrong to establish school-home communication.” They refer to classroom calendars, newsletters, good news notes and phone calls as ways to communicate effectively with parents and guardians of children.

Written communication is a permanent product that requires careful consideration regarding format and content. The goal is to organise concise, accurate information so that parents will read and understand it. Newsletters are commonly used to share written information with a parent community. Consistent application of several specific strategies can make classroom and school newsletters even more effective communication tools. Educators can also make use of different colours of paper when sending written correspondence home. Teachers should incorporate the same colour, quality, and paper size for all newsletters to create a communication “set”, use everyday language and ensure grammar, spell checks, and proofing of the information. Schools can also develop an eloquent pamphlet to provide helpful information for new families moving into the school community. Teachers can also use a variety of school notes as a tool of communication between the school and home.



Figure 7. Example of School- Home Note. (Walker, Ramsey and Gresham, 2004:290)

### **Informing Parents About Homework**

Further suggestions would focus on the relationship between educators and all stakeholders, especially on areas relating to parental support. Parents can be issued with circulars to answer questions that parents might have about homework. Questions such as: What is the purpose of homework? Does homework do more harm than good? How can the parents assist their children? In what way does homework frame formative assessments? These are all key areas that can illuminate the role and position of the parent, and provide a

space for educators to intervene if such a need is mentioned by parents. It is however important for the educator when communicating to the parents in writing to be sensitive to family culture and their literacy levels. Educators must however limit the amount of written information to prevent parents from feeling overburdened with paper.

### **Limitations To the Study**

The researcher encountered some restrictions while the study was in progress such as:

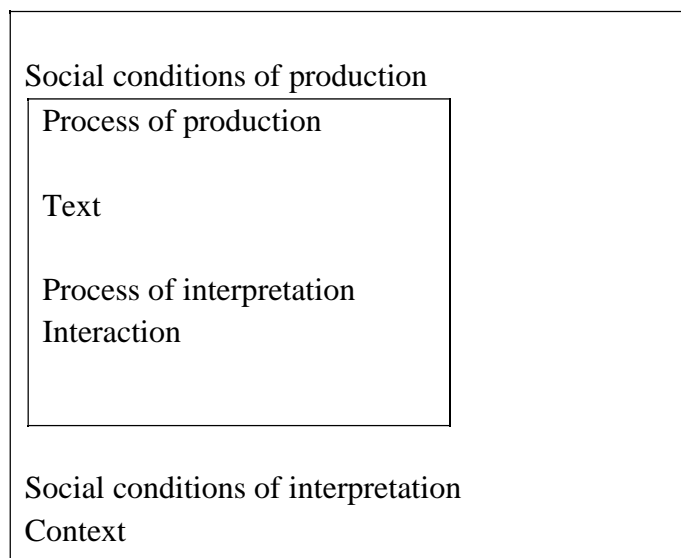
#### **The Language Barrier**

There is a huge diversity at the research site due of the different home languages that the learners speak at home as we all have a cultural heritage. Sands, Kozleski and French (2000:82) “The heritage of a family influences the behaviours, expectations, interactions and communications styles of family members.” The language of instruction at the research site is Afrikaans which made it difficult for the foreign parents to assist their children with homework. Some parents, whose mother tongue is not the same as the language of instruction, lack confidence in helping their children. They also feel that they cannot communicate effectively with teachers.

#### **The Low Literacy Levels of Some of The Parents**

Parents with low literacy levels found it extremely difficult and awkward to assist their children and to address their educational needs. In such cases parents asked a family representative to attend the homework sessions. These low literacy levels can be the cause of parents leaving school at a young age due to various conditions which are common in sub economic societies. Fairclough (2001:19) endorsed this statement by stating that “linguistic phenomena are social in the sense that whatever people speak or listen or write or read, they do so in ways which are determined socially and have social effects.” Fairclough (2001: 20-21) refers to the discourse that involves communal circumstances. He continues by saying that it can be specified as “*social conditions of production*, and *social conditions of interpretation* (Fairclough, 2001:20).” He makes reference to the discourse as text by depicting it in the following figure

Figure 8. Discourse as text, interaction and context (Fairclough, 2001:21)



### **Working Conditions of Parents**

Most of the parents worked as farm labourers on the neighbouring wine farms and they often worked long hours and over weekends which made it difficult for them to attend the workshops. Other parents worked as gardeners or domestic workers in the area. This resulted in parents experiencing transport problems most of the time as they lived quite a distance from the research site.

### **Transport Problems**

The majority of the parents does not possess their own transport and must rely on public transport and this caused problems for those who wanted to attend the homework sessions. Some of them did not live on a taxi, bus or train route and were always dependent on someone else for transport and this were not always readily available.

### **Location Of the School**

The research site is a commuter school and not a community school. In other words, all the role players do not live within walking distance from the school but instead must depend on different modes of transport like taxis, cars, trucks, bakkies, etcetera.

### **Cultural Differences**

There are different cultures because of the diversity of the school population. This in itself caused difficulties while the research study was conducted. The researcher developed effective partnerships with families. Respects for the different culture groups were promoted. All role players were encouraged to have a positive attitude towards each other. Effective communication was paramount. Culture plays a role in determining who the individuals are, how they interact with one another on daily basis and how they manage their lives (Sands, Kozleski and French, 2000:82).

### **Poor Socio-Economic Conditions**

It is of utmost importance that the educator understands the socio-economic factors that have an influence on how families function. The composition of a family can have an effect on the socio-economic status of the family. These poor socio-economic circumstances were very eminent in the areas where the learners live. Unemployment is rife in the areas which contributed to the poor living conditions.

### **Family Problems**

The different family types contributes in most cases to many family problems such as homes that are overcrowded because of the number of family members that resides there, financial constraints, different family types, the medium of instruction, a low work status and a low level of education.

Hornby and Lafeala (2011:410) substantiates on these abovementioned factors by stating that: “family circumstances can be major barriers to parental involvement. For example, solo parents and those with young families or large families may find it more difficult to get involved in parental involvement because of their caretaking responsibilities. Parents’ work situations can also be a factor. When parents are unemployed money could be an issue as they may not be able to afford a car or to pay babysitters in order to get to school meetings. For parents with jobs, whether both parents work and the kind of jobs they have may be issues. When both parents work, there will be less time available for both home-based and school-based parental involvement.” (Hornby & Lafeala 2011:410).

### **SMSs**

This can be a very effective way of keeping in contact with the parents informing them of homework, assignments or tests dates, the child’s level of participation, or the percentage of work completed in class.

### **Ethical Considerations**

Permission to conduct the study at the school was obtained from the WCED. This pertained to a description of the research project, copies of the questionnaires the name of the school where the research was conducted and the duration of the research. Permission was also granted by the principal for the use of the school facilities as research site. In addition to this a permission letter was obtained from a member of the Westlake United Church Trust for the use of their hall to accommodate the parents and guardians from the Grade 4 learners that took part in the study.

All participants received explanations of the aims and purpose of the research. Everyone that were part of this project and who agreed to participate namely the parents and guardians were assured of the fact that all the information which they shared, would be dealt with confidentially. They were assured that feedback would be given to them.

All parents were requested to complete an informed consent form granting permission for information collected to be used for research purposes by the researcher. Participants therefore gave their approval that the researcher could use the collected data which formed part of the study.



## Conclusion

In conclusion, despite various challenges faced within the schooling system, this chapter highlighted key areas to serve as

key recommendations especially in structuring support mechanisms to parents to assist them in supporting their children's academic endeavours.

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