

PARENT INVOLVEMENT IN CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

by

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SINOPSIS

Die huidige onderwysstelsel in Suid-Afrika vereis die deelname van elke rolspeler in die besluitnemingsproses. Aanvanklik is rolspelers, veral ouers van leerlinge, die reg ontnem om aktiewe deelnemers in hul kinders se onderwys te wees. Hulle pligte was beperk – hulle is slegs gesien as die voorsieners van geld, skooluniforms en handboeke vir hulle kinders. Die skool se ouervergaderings is gebruik as 'n middel om ouers te herinner om die skoolfonds te betaal en ook om ouers in te lig van hul kinders se misstappe.

Hierdie studie is aangepak in 'n poging om te bepaal wat die persepsies van ouers is ten opsigte van hul betrokkenheid by kurrikulumontwikkeling. Daar is gepoog om uit te vind hoe die ouers voel oor hulle betrokkenheid in die onderwys van hulle kinders en ook om riglyne daar te stel om hulle in dié verband te help. 'n Literatuurstudie oor ouers se betrokkenheid by kurrikulumontwikkeling is ingesluit as teoretiese raamwerk vir die empiriese ondersoek en die daaropvolgende gevolgtrekkings en aanbevelings.

Die empiriese komponent in die kwalitatiewe navorsingsparadigma, sluit fokusgroeponderhoude met ouers van leerlinge in sekondêre skole in Krugersdorp (wat onder die Gautengse Departement van Onderwys ressorteer) in.

Die bevindinge wys dat ouers in hulle kinders se onderrig betrokke wil wees en dat hulle selfs voorstelle gemaak het oor hoe hulle daarby betrokke kan raak. Daar is 'n aanbeveling gemaak dat ouers opgelei moet word om hul rol in kurrikulumontwikkeling ten volle te kan vervul.

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CHAPTER 1

ORIENTATION, STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM AND AIM OF THE STUDY

1.1 ORIENTATION

The education system is in essence a social institution which should be expected to change along with other such institutions. It would be more surprising, not to say disturbing if the education system were to stagnate while all else change. For constructive change to proceed there should be no topdown model that remove teachers, parents and administrators from the process. To succeed, change should be structured to enable teachers, administrators, parents and community members to collectively address this change (Kretovics et al., 1991:295).

Oliva (1988:73) holds that involvement is a principle fundamental to democracy and effective learning theory. The very fundamental essence of democracy is predicted upon the assumption that those who are affected by any change should have some say in determining just what that change shall be. Those who are affected by curriculum development and change should therefore have a genuine opportunity to participate in the process.

The area of concern for this study is to determine whether parents of Krugersdorp secondary schools students are practicing their democratic rights of involving themselves in the education of their children, or whether they lack interest in doing so.

Times have changed. There should more than ever before, be a shift of responsibility from teachers being the sole educators of the child, to the parents being equals and complementary partners in their children's education. Studies have shown that the interest parents have in education can be associated with the academic motivation and the willingness of their children to be active in their learning (Marjoribanks, 1994:75-183).

Parent involvement in school activities is based on the natural right of parents to co-educate their children. Parent involvement in schools is significantly related to:

- ◆ improved academic achievement of students;
- ◆ improved school attendance;
- ◆ improved student behaviour in school, and
- ◆ increased community support for schools, including human, financial and material resources (Dekker & Lemmer, 1993:154).

This shows exactly why it is important that a study such as this should be conducted because as Badenhorst (1993:109) puts it, "...presently educational reforms indicated that there is a place for parents in future educational dispensation", and like Dekker and Lemmer (1993:155) say, "...parents and teachers need each other. Every parent, the mother as well as the father, is indispensable".

It can be seen that the presence of parents in education completes the circle of role-players which is indisputable. It is through involvement that the parent can restore his/her natural right in education. Involvement does not mean that parents should become involved in everything, but rather that they are represented sufficiently on all levels.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

If it is accepted that all who are affected by curriculum change should be involved in that process, then it becomes important for the parents to be involved in the decision-making process in the schools their children are attending. They should know what is happening in their schools and participate in the activities. For them to be knowledgeable in matters pertaining to school matters, especially in curriculum development, a certain level of training or orientation is needed. It may be that the lack of interest is caused by lack of knowledge hence non-involvement.

The following questions will be discussed in this study:

- ◆ How do parents of secondary schools perceive their roles in curriculum development?

- ◆ To what extent can parents effectively contribute to curriculum development?

1.3 AIM OF THE STUDY

The aim of the study is

- ◆ to find out through focus group interviews how parents of secondary schools students view their roles regarding curriculum development, and
- ◆ to develop guidelines on how parents of secondary schools students can be involved in curriculum development.

1.4 METHODOLOGY

This is an explorative study. Mouton and Marais (1990:43) state that an exploratory study aims to acquire new insight into a phenomenon, rather than collect accurate and replicable data. Therefore methods such as in-depth focus group interviews and literature review will be utilised. A descriptive study according to Mouton and Marais (1990:44) intends to describe a phenomenon accurately within its specific context and then bases itself on the collected data. The emphasis is on the in-depth description of an individual, group, situation or organisation. In this study the researcher will describe and analyse the interview material.

This study is also contextual in nature. A study which has a contextual interest is bound to the unique context of the domain phenomenon (Mouton & Marais, 1990:121). By means of the identified roles concerning parents of secondary schools, the researcher will be able to formulate guidelines on how they can be involved in the curriculum development.

The following design will be adopted for this study:

Step 1

An orientation, the formulation of the problem, the aim of the study, methodology and concepts clarification will be highlighted in chapter 1.

Step 2

A literature study of relevant and recent literature on curriculum development will be conducted. This will include sources concerning different perspectives about curriculum development with specific reference to the role of secondary schools' parents. The purpose is to develop a theoretical framework on parents' involvement in curriculum development. This review will be reported in chapter 2.

Step 3

A literature study of recent and relevant literature on research will be done in order to select a suitable research paradigm and a suitable method for data collection. A protocol for analyzing data will be given. Data analysis will be described in chapter 3.

Step 4

The empirical data from chapter 4 will be integrated with the theoretical framework from chapter 2 in order to provide recommendations regarding parents' involvement. This will be reported in chapter 4.

1.5 CLARIFICATION OF CONCEPTS

A preliminary clarification of concepts will be given. An in-depth discussion on other concepts will be done in other chapters.

1.5.1 Curriculum

The term curriculum has different meanings and the manner in which various people and experts use it contributes to further confusion (Carl, 1995:17; Ornstein & Hunkins, 1993:10). Ornstein and Hunkins (1993:9) say that the way we define curriculum reflects our approach to it and they assert that only definitions involving a plan, system and field of study represent key or legitimate uses of the word "curriculum".

In their definition of curriculum, Ornstein and Hunkins (1993:9) see curriculum as "...a plan for action that includes strategies for achieving desired goals and ends".

This definition views curriculum as linear. The planner of the curriculum uses steps that are preplanned and sequenced. It has a beginning and an end, as well as a process so that the beginning can progress to an end.

In as far as Wheeler (1983:110) is concerned, curriculum is "...a planned experience offered to the learner under the guidance of the school". Wheeler, unlike Ornstein and Hunkins, includes experiences of the learner inside and even outside of the school. All the experiences that the child has are under the guidance of the teacher.

Criticisms leveled at the planned curriculum, is that it is a preconceived document that sometimes omits relevant factors related to teaching and learning because they are not part of the written plan. The planned curriculum focuses on goals, objectives, subject matter and organization of subject matter, whereas the unplanned curriculum which is often ignored, deals with the social-psychological interaction among teachers and students, especially their feelings, attitudes and behaviours (Ornstein & Hunkins, 1993:10).

It is clear that the definition of curriculum must not only emphasize planned actions but also unplanned and informal actions. The overemphasis of a planned curriculum results in the ignorance of the unintended and dysfunction consequences of the plans and actions intended for the students. When defining the curriculum, unplanned actions should be included for it to be a complete definition (Ornstein & Hunkins, 1993:10).

On the other hand, it is also not wise to classify everything that goes on in schools as curriculum. Such a statement will be suggesting that curriculum is the same as education while education and curriculum are two different entities. What curriculum planners should not forget is for curriculum "...to consider the smells and sounds of the classroom, the intuitive judgments and hunches of the teacher and the needs and interests of the students". That evolves and cannot always be planned by the student, teacher or curriculum specialist (Ornstein & Hunkins, 1993:10).

According to Dekker and Lemmer (1993:430) the term curriculum refers to "...the

planned and organized activities pupils undertake in school which includes the subject matter they are exposed to, as well as teaching and evaluation. These activities are closely linked to aims and differing values about the purpose of schooling.

It is clear from the various definitions of curriculum that some curriculum experts employ a linear rather than a cyclical plan in their definitions. Common in all the definitions is the inclusion of the principles and objectives and evaluation. For a curriculum plan to be complete, all the elements should be included and the "plan" should be cyclical to show the interrelatedness of the separate elements. This "plan" would suffice because it would have included both the teacher's activities and the learner's experiences and aspirations.

1.5.2 Curriculum development

In defining curriculum development, Marsh (1992:129) says that it involves planning, designing and producing processes associated with a completion of a particular set of materials. This also include teaching activities associated with the implementation and evaluation of a set of materials. Carl (1995:40) also regard curriculum development as a process where a systematic planning methodology figure strongly from design to eventual evaluation. The two definitions emphasize the process of planning as the most important prerequisite step to curriculum development. Planning involves various people, processes and procedures. It also occurs on many levels like classroom level, school level, district and national levels. This involvement of various people is not without conflicts because of different perspectives and aspirations. But this must not be seen as a problem in as far as planning, designing and producing is concerned, but rather as a challenge.

Curriculum development is a process that involves various people and occurs on many levels, and should also include parents (especially parents of secondary school students) because the focus of this study is on the involvement of secondary school parents in curriculum development. They, like other stakeholders, should have a say because any educational changes or innovations also affect them.

1.6 SUMMARY

This chapter dealt with the outline of the study and a short orientation as to the main aim of the study. The following chapter will deal in more detail with the discussion of the process of curriculum development and the role of parents especially the role of parents of secondary schools students. Different perspectives regarding curriculum development will be discussed and at the end techniques or guidelines on how parents can be involved will be viewed.



CHAPTER 2

CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

2.1 AIM OF THE CHAPTER

The aim of this chapter is to conduct a literature review on recent and relevant literature regarding curriculum development and the role of parents in curriculum development. This will serve as a theoretical framework for the empirical component of the study and the recommendations and conclusion.

2.2 CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

2.2.1 Orientation

Curriculum has always been the key to what happens in schools. There has been curriculum development as knowledge changes as methodology has advanced. Curriculum development has been transformed into an active rather than a passive form.

Initially it was a top-down activity where only the administrators, teachers and principals as well as the education department were involved. There is, however, a call for curriculum development to become more inclusive by involving other people especially parents. There is a growing demand on schools and teachers to be accountable and consequently parents put pressure on teachers to account for any activities in their children's education.

Curriculum development experts also believe that curriculum development is a process that involves many people and as such, parents will also have to be involved in the process.

2.2.2 Definition of curriculum development

According to Wiles and Bondi (1984:127) curriculum development is a cooperative endeavour. It has to involve many groups, agencies and individuals from both the school and community. The teacher, who must implement this curriculum, will largely determine the success of any curriculum change. The recipients of the curriculum, namely students, should be part of the process of curriculum development. Parents and community members who should support curriculum change should also be involved from the start to the end. Because of extensive involvement, there can be complications along with its benefits. Complications can largely be solved through cooperation from all participants.

Carl (1995:74) sees curriculum development as an umbrella concept for the process which is characterized by the presence of four major phases such as curriculum design, dissemination, implementation and evaluation. He sees it as an ongoing and dynamic process where there are a variety of involved persons and role players.

Carl's model of curriculum development which explicitly shows the relationship between the four phases of curriculum development can be represented schematically as follows:

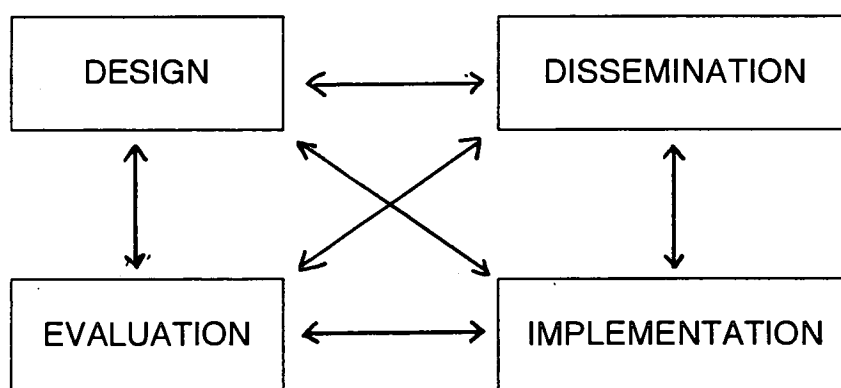


Figure 2.1: Phases of curriculum development (Carl, 1995:21)

In as far as these four phases of curriculum is concerned, there is a continuous

interrelatedness and they influence one another. There is not talk of curriculum development with the absence of any one of the phases.

It becomes imperative to discuss each phase and find out how and where parents of secondary schools students can be involved in these phases of curriculum development.

2.2.3 Curriculum design

2.2.3.1 Introduction

Once the intentions of the curriculum development effort are clear, relevant data about desired changes should be organized and prioritized into an action plan. Such a plan clearly identifies outcomes and responsibilities. This includes the order of changes to be made, the time estimated for change, various responsibilities for posts of the plan, and the anticipated results of these efforts. Collectively, the parts of the plan serve to communicate to all persons involved what is to happen, including the parents.

According to Ornstein and Hunkins (1993:18) curriculum design refers to the way we conceptualize the curriculum and arrange its major components, namely content, instructional methods and materials, learner experiences or activities to provide direction and guidance as curriculum is developed. During the process of design, these elements are arranged into a substantive entity. Not all curriculum plans comprise these elements, but most plans have within their design these essentials. They are not often given equal weight which will depend on different models of design.

Doll (1995:204) defines curriculum design as a carefully conceived curriculum plan that takes its shape from (a) what its creators would like to believe about people and their education and (b) how its creators would like to see their beliefs expressed.

There are a number of interrelated and independent elements that curriculum design takes into account:

- ◆ what its creators want done;
- ◆ what subject matter they wish to use to fulfill the design's purpose;
- ◆ what instructional strategies they favour using, and
- ◆ how they will determine the success or feasibility of the design.

When designing a curriculum, designers start thinking about a potential design by considering what subject matter is to be taught, the nature of the learners to be taught and what the community and the society at large seem to require. This indicates that parents as members of the community will also be requiring the designers to take their needs into consideration, although one of the three sources named above, that is, community, learners and society will gain pre-eminence over the other two.

Carl (1995:48) asserts that curriculum design is that phase during which a new curriculum is planned or during which the replanning and review of an existing curriculum is done after a full re-evaluation has been carried out. According to Carl, this phase usually has a number of characteristic components which include inter alia purposefulness, contents, methods, learning experiences and evaluation.

Parents have the right to be consulted when designing a curriculum because as Pratt (1980:81) says "...their opinion tend to spring from their own experience of schooling and this will also be in relation to their lives". Besides their opinions, the aspirations they maintain for their children have an authenticity that demand respects. They can therefore be involved in processes such as curriculum planning, textbook review and selection.

Doll (1995:40) says that those who are affected by any curriculum change should be involved in that change. Parents as stakeholders who will be affected, should be involved in designing the curriculum.

2.2.4 Curriculum dissemination

Dissemination is defined as specific procedures used to inform individuals or groups

about an innovation and to gain their interest in it. The emphasis is upon goal-directed activities and upon the arousing of interest in the innovation among potential clients (Marsh, 1992:142).

According to Carl (1995:49) curriculum dissemination is that phase in curriculum development during which the curriculum users are prepared for implementation. One example of dissemination is where information is sent to the very users to let them know about the new or replanned curriculum. Other popular methods of dissemination are that of in-service training and the distribution or publication of information. During dissemination the climate for the envisaged change should be created because various curriculum development tend to fail at the stage when users are not prepared for it.

Preparation of the users for the process should not be a one way process. For it to be successful, users should be thoroughly consulted for them not to receive an end product of the document. People or users of the renewed document should be ready for it. The level of empowerment will probably also determine the level of dissemination.

Rogers and Pratt (1995:136) shows that there are normally certain attitudes possible towards change. The manner in which the information is disseminated often determines how acceptable the curriculum will eventually be. That is why it becomes important for the planners or designers to take cognizance of the manner in which curriculum information is disseminated. The divergent attitudes of consumers that are being depicted by Rogers and Pratt are the enthusiasts who are energetic, accepting challenges and as having high ambitions. They will participate in meaningful innovation. The supporters are less radical, but also involved with professional associations and in-service training matters. The acquiescers who are purposeful and who are also adapted to development, will not initiate it. The laggards maintain a low profile and are usually sceptical as to any changes and antagonists are usually loners and will resist any change, new curriculum design or revised curriculum. Any curriculum dissemination strategy should therefore take cognizance of these attitudes and roles, especially of parents, as they can either be detrimental or determine the

success of the following phase, that is the implementation phase. As Grolnick and Slowiaczek (1994:23) put it, parents can be attributed to both the failing and the success of their children.

As such their being involved in the dissemination phase is a very detrimental factor for curriculum to be successful and hence the success of their children. It is important then for parents to be involved as supporters of the dissemination of information concerning the curriculum for it to be a success.

Various models for curriculum dissemination have been proposed, which endeavour to describe the process of dissemination.

Ruddock and Kelly as quoted by Whitehead (1980:1/2) and Carl (1995:152) distinguish between four main components in the dissemination process namely, translocation, communication, animation and re-education.

Parent's input becomes a necessity because for the curriculum to be successful they have to take part in every step of the process. In the four components of the dissemination process, parents should be motivated for the dissemination phase to be successful. For the process to be successful, parent's support and influence is really needed.

◆ **Translocation**

Translocation comprises the movement of people and material with a view to implementing new aspects. Problems covered are whether inspectors should visit schools to conduct some in-service training or whether teachers should go and attend those courses and how material packages should be distributed. Parents can be involved by supporting the school.

◆ **Communication**

Communication describes the ways in which information about an innovation is transmitted from one person to another. This includes whether it should be

broadcast through other channels or to what extent personal interaction might be important in encouraging diffusion. Parents work in different places and if a need arises they can be asked to help in transmitting the innovation.

◆ **Animation**

Animation links up with the need to motivate teachers towards greater interest and involvement. It is important and appropriate to provide some form of incentives to ensure that their attitude might change.

From the above discussion on dissemination, it is important to note that second to the importance of the curriculum design is curriculum dissemination because that is here where the failure or the success of the curriculum which is planned is determined. The only solution to this problem will be to involve parents. They should not receive the end product. Their attitudes should also be dealt with before implementation of the document so that they are not resistant towards this phase.

Almost any curriculum change, even one aimed at greater economy or efficiency, requires additional resources during the change-over period. The four main kinds of resources required are time, material resources, administrative support and expertise (Pratt, 1980:430). Parents' support of this innovation as part of the administration through PTSA's, is essential.

2.2.5 Curriculum implementation

After the relevant consumers have been prepared for the change envisaged, the implementation phase follows. This phase is actually the application of the curriculum and Schubert as quoted by Carl (1995:166) asserts that "...traditionally seen as the delivery process, implementation can be considered a system of engineering that takes design specifications through various channels to the teacher and classroom".

Marsh (1992:180) and Carl (1995:49) both see curriculum implementation as a phase where design is applied or implemented in the class with students. The plan that was

designed and disseminated or sent to people is now put into reality during implementation.

For successful implementation to take place, the factors which may inhibit development like preparing those involved, the maintenance of a renewal climate, the continuation of attempts to eliminate resistance to change and the continuing strengthening of facilitating factors should still be borne in mind during this phase as resistance also manifest itself in different forms during this phase (Carl, 1995:167).

The following are the determinative factors for successful implementation as pointed out by Carl (1995:167/168):

- ◆ Continuous contact with consumers to give advice and help, to encourage mutual contact between consumers as well as affecting contact with pupils and parents.
- ◆ Clear communication to illustrate roles, to explain terminology, illustration of possible means of evaluation and to supply answers to the wellknown queries, who? what? when? where? how? and why?
- ◆ Provision of a support service, for example, spelling out time scheduling, support by supplying materials, setting one's own example, creating climate within which trust and security figure and through encouragement of teachers.
- ◆ Compensation, for example, financial, praise, acknowledgement, but also intrinsic aspects of compensation.

In as far as parents are concerned, they are members of the community and as such are co-determinants of curriculum implementation. They can help in putting pressure for the adoption of a new curriculum package or help in facilitating it. It should also be kept in mind that they should also be thoroughly contacted and communicated with so that they are not amongst the group that resist the new curriculum.

2.2.6 Curriculum evaluation

“Few educators would dispute the importance of curriculum evaluation. Even if they did, many persons in the general public would counter that evaluation is indeed crucial to the health of education and its programs” (Ornstein & Hunkins, 1993:324). Evaluation is important to find out whether programs were effective, for the assessment of the content, materials and methods used and the cost of the program. Above all, evaluation is important because the public for which the curriculum is designed for its schools, wish to know the quality of education at the local, state and national levels, even how they compare with the rest of the world.

Kelly (1989:187) sees curriculum evaluation as “...the process by which we attempt to gauge the value and effectiveness of any particular piece of educational activity – whether a national project or a piece of work undertaken with our own pupils was effective”. In general, curriculum evaluation is about the effectiveness of the planned curriculum. It is about how the planned program compares with other programs.

A definition which seems to be widely quoted and used and which is most appropriate to this study, is that of Stufflebeam (1986:159) and his associates, where they state that “...evaluation is the process of delineating, obtaining and providing descriptive and judgmental information about the worth and merit of some objects, goals, design, implementation and impacts in order to guide decision-making, serve needs for accountability and promote understanding of the involved phenomena”.

In order to have a good understanding of curriculum evaluation and its implementation, a study of various models of curriculum evaluation is essential. None of them will be used in this study.

2.2.6.1 Types of curriculum evaluation

A distinction is made between the two types of evaluation namely, formative and summative evaluation (Arnold, 1988:149/150).

Arnold (1988:149/150) asserts that formative evaluation is that kind which takes place during the teaching-learning processes with the idea of identifying weaknesses in pupil performance and correcting them with respect to a particular course or unit of work. It is ongoing, diagnostic and an integral part of the lesson or program whilst it is in operation. Its purpose is not so much to judge but to improve what is being done.

According to Ornstein and Hunkins (1993:330), summative evaluation aims at getting a total picture of the quality of the produced curriculum. According to Kelly (1989:189) it is concerned with appraisal of work. It is a form of a pay-off evaluation and is concerned primarily with the ascertainment of the achievement of the goals of the course.

From the above discussion it appears that the main purpose of evaluation is to make a value determination of the success of the designed curriculum and thus to what extent objectives have been realized. It was also noted that for the curriculum to be successfully adopted by all, strategies used should be such that they include among others continuous consultation, communication and some form of remuneration if possible.



2.2.6.2 Summary

Curriculum development is a cooperative endeavour and those who are affected by curriculum change should be involved in that change. Parents become affected because for curriculum to be successful it should be satisfactory to both parents and pupils as the consumers thereof.

In as far as the four phases of curriculum development are concerned, not all of them made a clear reference to parent involvement. Because they deal with curriculum change, it would mean that even if no reference was made, parent involvement is vital and there is a need for them to be involved to curb resistance.

2.3 INVOLVEMENT OF PARENTS

2.3.1 Orientation

Oliva (1988:73) holds that "...involvement is a principle fundamental to democracy and to learning theory. The very essence of democracy is predicted upon the assumption that those who are affected by any change, should have some say in determining just what that change shall be and those who are affected by curriculum development and change must have a genuine opportunity to participate in the process".

Ornstein and Hunkins (1993:351) cite that unquestionably, education involves politics. Those affected by education should also be involved in some aspects of decision-making about education, including curriculum matters. Parents and even community members without children at a particular school should be involved in curriculum evaluation efforts. The particulars of such involvement can be worked out with school officials. The point is that parents should not just be readers of evaluation reports or receivers of the test results. Parents and community members should be contributing participants in curriculum teams engaged in all aspects of curriculum and that implies all phases of curriculum development.

Other experts that support the involvement of parents in curriculum development as a whole are Edwards and Redfern (1988:58). They hold that even if teachers are experts in their fields, parents' expertise can be sought and used for one reason or the other. An example can be cited of a blind man whose skills and expertise were used to work at a project on senses with the juniors. Expertise of parents who are zoologists or accountants can be sought to help in those subjects by way of demonstrations.

Van Schalkwyk (1989) in Badenhorst (1993:109) says "...neither the parent nor the teacher alone can educate the child adequately. Each one has a specific and important role to fulfil. This realization has contributed to parental involvement at least becoming a telling point, if not a reality in many educational systems".

Parent involvement have been defined as "...the dedication of resources by parents to the child within a given domain" (Grolnick, 1994:238). This definition recognizes that there is a difference between parent's overall involvement with the child and involvement in the child's education. This study focuses specifically on dedication of resources within the educational domain.

Parent's contribution can to a large extent be attributed towards both the failure and success of their children in schools. Not only are they there to bring their children up, but their responsibilities continue even to educational matters. They are there, together with the school, to socialize the child. Their involvement, both cognitively and affectively, is very significant in the intellectual development of the child. Parent involvement is seen as "...a significant goal and target for educational reform" (Grolnick *et al.*, 1994:237).

Stacy (1991:37-48) asserts that there is no single formula for involving parents. Parents can be involved in many areas such as being supporters, helpers, as teachers, and possibly as learners too.

◆ **Parents as supporters**

The most important part of the school besides the learning and teaching activity, is social events. This takes place when parents from different social and cultural groups come together to be part of the school community to raise funds for the school. For parents to feel as a vital part of these events, they should be given a chance to sometimes organize and decide what the money should be used for. Sometimes they are asked to contribute more and more to essential equipment of the school. The money collected can be used for this purpose so that they need not contribute themselves from time to time (Stacey, 1991:37).

◆ **Parents as learners**

To give parents information about what their children are learning is not enough. It is important for them to be involved in helping their children effectively. Teachers can organize curriculum workshops for parents, to teach them skills they do not have to

help their children. They can also be invited to their children's classroom for observation and be shown how to play useful educational games (Stacey, 1991:38).

◆ **Parents as helpers**

Stacey (1991:43) says although it is difficult at first when parents are invited to class for reading to the children, in the end everybody becomes accustomed to the practice. Children become excited when they see their parents around the school premises helping in the library or being invited to tell stories.

◆ **Parents as teachers**

"Children learn first and foremost from their parents. In this respect all parents are teachers and very effective leaders they are" (Griffiths & Hamilton, 1984:1). Teachers remain role experts by virtue of their professionalism. Although learning can take place at home, teachers will still have to confront their professionalism as they do when parents are asked into school. They are the people who should decide how much information they will share with parents. Consensus should be reached regarding the level and extent of parent's involvement.

◆ **Parents as policy makers**

According to Dekker and Lemmer (1993:159), parents can be involved as co-policy makers by providing some input on school policy and programmes as members of governance bodies. They can also be members of textbook committees, report card committees and in improving teaching in general.

Van Schalkwyk as quoted by Badenhorst (1993:109) says: "...neither the parent nor the teacher alone can educate the child adequately. Each one has a specific and important role to fulfil."

There are ways and techniques that can be employed to encourage parent involvement (Badenhorst, 1993:109):

- ◆ Creation of a strategic plan for the school, with the cooperation of the parents and teachers.
- ◆ Creation of an inviting school climate.
- ◆ Training of teachers for potential involvement.
- ◆ Creation of a parents' society or a body with working committees.
- ◆ Training of parents.
- ◆ Involvement of parents by means of the class teachers.
- ◆ Effective communication on regular basis with the parent community.
- ◆ Coordination of all activities by means of a program for the year.

Besides these techniques, there are also means that can be used to help parents to become involved in their children's education. Parents can be trained through parent meetings, parent committees and by means of interest groups.

◆ **Training during parent meetings**

The parents of, for instance all grade seven pupils or any other grade meet and listen to a lecture or view a video on a relevant theme. After the lecture they divide into groups to discuss the video with a teacher.

◆ **Training by means of class committees**

This can be done by means of a lecture, a video or panel discussions.

◆ **Training by means of interest groups**

Parents of children with special educational needs can form a special interest group committee. Lectures, videos and discussions can be arranged to address their needs.

According to Dekker and Lemmer (1993:154) some parents consider their children's education in school to be important. They want to be kept informed of their children's education. They are also interested in other kinds of information regarding activities at school. Parental involvement in school activities is based on the natural right of parents to educate their children. Dekker and Lemmer (1993:154) say parental involvement is a catch phrase. They use the term to describe a wide variety of

activities that may range from occasional attendance of school to intensive efforts to help parents become better teachers of their own children.

Parent involvement in schools is significantly related to:

- ◆ improved student academic achievement;
- ◆ improve student attendance in school;
- ◆ improved student behaviour in school; and
- ◆ increased community support for schools, including human, financial and material resources.

These factors support the notion which is held by other experts on parent involvement. Grolnick (1994:237) says that where parents are involved, there is a great deal of improvement and achievements from the side of the child which support the notion for real involvement of parents. It should be recognized that the quality of education and teaching in schools improves with the quality of cooperation and teamwork between education authorities, schools and parents.

Pupils usually experience and enjoy learning in schools where their parents take an active interest. This interest encourages pupils to attend school regularly and to behave in such a manner that their parents are not disappointed. When they know that their parents work closely with the teachers they become proud of their school. This involvement in school affairs by parents helps pupils toward self-actualization. Mutual exchange of ideas and an understanding of the part the parents and teachers should play in the education of the child, is very important.

Parental involvement according to Dekker and Lemmer (1993:155) can take the form of cooperation, participation and partnership.

◆ **Cooperation**

It should be borne in mind that the quality of education and teaching in schools can only improve with an improvement in the quality of cooperation between education authorities, schools and parents. Parent-teacher cooperation brings about many

benefits. It tends to make the parent identify with the school, it helps the teachers to understand the neighbourhood, and it has the potential of reducing conflict and tensions on both sides (Edwards & Redfern, 1988:45).

For a situation of real cooperation to exist, according to Dekker and Lemmer (1993:155), the following aspects have to be taken into account:

- Parents and teachers need each other. They are after all in pursuit of a common goal. Parents do not need to have a high school education in order to be able to help. They are the primary educators of their children in view of their status as parents.
- If the intentions are to stimulate interest, the school should involve parents and children as quickly as possible, before a feeling of apathy takes root. Only when a determined effort is made by teachers and parents to get to know each other really well, it is discovered that their aspirations for the children are very much in accord.
- For real cooperation to thrive, parents and teachers have to share skills and information with each other and to do so in an open, honest way which includes a recognition of each other's limitations in knowledge and expertise.

◆ Participation

Through participation the parent can restore his natural right in education. Lemmer and Dekker (1993:156) support this statement by saying that those concerned must constantly take stock of where participation needs to be reinforced.

◆ Partnership

Partnership also means joining forces whilst retaining individuality (Dekker & Lemmer, 1993:157). A successful partnership depends, among other things, on parents and teachers trusting one another, being aware of and understanding one another's needs and aspirations, communicating effectively, and having a say in the education of the

child, with due consideration of each partner's field of expertise.

Partnership involves a two-way process of joint activities in which parents and teachers come together on a basis of equality right from the start. It can take various forms and may involve setting goals, finding solutions and implementing and evaluating them. Therefore partnership requires working in a team which imply:

- ◆ cooperation and not confrontation;
- ◆ integration and not isolation
- ◆ continuity and not competition.

According to Morrison (1993:442) parent involvement is a partnership between parents and teachers that is built over a period of time through intentional planning based on partnership and shared decision-making. This means that it is developmental in the sense that it is formed over a period of time. Parents acquire important information on how best they can be involved in their children's education through the help and guidance of teachers.

There are many ways, according to Morrison (1993:443), to go about involving parents. These are found to be useful and beneficial.

◆ **Task approach**

Through this approach parents are encouraged to participate in certain activities such as curriculum planning, textbook review and selection committees, and helping to set behaviour standards. For this kind of involvement, parents need preparation, support and training. Often parents are ready to be involved but because of a lack of training and fear of being criticized by the teachers, they do not involve themselves. With proper training, support and preparation from the teachers or educators, they will be free to involve themselves in school activities.

◆ **Developmental approach**

Developmental orientation helps parents to develop skills that will benefit themselves and their children, schools, teachers and families at the same time. Ideally, an effective

and comprehensive program of parent involvement includes all three orientations.

◆ **Process approach**

In a process approach orientation, parents are encouraged to participate in certain activities that are important to the educational process such as curriculum planning, textbook review and selection and helping to set behaviour standards. Through training and support, parents can be extremely effective.

From the discussion it seems as if parents play a very important role in their children's education and therefore they should become more actively involved in their children's education. When parents become involved, they are more likely to make school a priority for their children.

2.4 SUMMARY

Curriculum development has traditionally been top-down. In spite of this, there is still scope for a certain amount of involvement of parents. If the schools really wish to become representative institutions, cognizance should be taken of the views and opinions of all sectors of the population, especially the parents.

From the previous discussion it is clear that there are a lot of school activities where parent involvement could help pupils to achieve good results. Parents could also be involved in all the phases of curriculum development, not as teachers, but as parents and partners in education. Their participation should therefore be encouraged by the schools.

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH DESIGN AND DATA ANALYSIS

3.1 AIM OF THE CHAPTER

The aim of this chapter is to conduct a literature review on recent and relevant literature on research. This will be done in order to select a suitable research paradigm and a method for data collection and to describe a protocol for the collection and analysis of data. Analysis and discussion of data will also be done in this chapter.

3.2 SELECTION OF RESEARCH PARADIGM

According to Guy (1987:452), a paradigm is a pattern of beliefs, values, techniques and theories shared by members of a scientific community, as a fundamental image of subject matter within a science. It is also an illustrative or conventional pattern, model or arrangement of physical or mental social objects.

Bryman (1983:5) identifies two main paradigms in research, namely qualitative and quantitative research paradigms. Neither of these two paradigms are intrinsically better than the other for constitutional research. Instead they represent alternatives between which institutional researchers might choose. In the part that follows, the researcher discusses the two paradigms in relation to their differences in order to try and show why one paradigm is preferred above the other.

3.2.1 Differences between qualitative and quantitative research

Various scholars are of the view that qualitative research can be distinguished from quantitative research by numerous unique characteristics that are inherent in the design. The following is the synthesis of commonly articulated assumptions regarding characteristics of these two paradigms.

Qualitative research implies that the data are found in the form of words as opposed to numbers. Whereas quantitative data are generally evaluated using descriptive and inferential statistics, qualitative data are usually reduced to themes or categories and evaluated subjectively (Rudestam & Newton, 1992:31).

The qualitative researcher tends to become more involved with the phenomenon while the quantitative researcher adopts a more distanced stance. At times a qualitative researcher is prepared to be part of that which is being studied (Mouton & Marais, 1988:163).

According to Mouton and Marais (1988:163) quantitative researchers tend to study a phenomenon as outsiders. They assume that if they were to become involved within the "object" they would view the phenomenon from a too egocentric point of view. In rather stark contrast with the activities of the participant observer in the field of qualitative research, the quantitative researcher would rather make use of a structured objective standardized observation technique.

Frequently, the quantitative researcher has some difficulty in accommodating response pattern in his/her system of observation where these were not anticipated. In contrast, the qualitative researcher has the openness to observe forms of behaviour as and when they occur.

Creswell (1994:162) asserts that qualitative research occurs in a natural setting where human behaviour and events occur. The focus of qualitative research is on participant's perceptions and experiences and the way they make sense of their lives. Quantitative researchers are far more concerned with ensuring that the hypotheses have been formulated before the investigation is embarked upon. They will also ensure that the hypotheses are formulated in such a manner that they may be rejected or falsified. To a large extent the whole study revolve around hypotheses.

The researcher in a qualitative mould on the other hand tend to be more vague about what their intentions are and as a rule, they will provide no more than a general research aim in their introductions. In some cases the central thesis or hypotheses

tend to gradually emerge and it can frequently be described as the results of the investigation (Mouton & Marais, 1988:161). For purposes of this study, a qualitative research paradigm will be adopted because of the following strengths pertaining to this paradigm.

3.2.2 Strengths of qualitative research

The researcher will get close enough to the people and situation being studied. In this case the parents of students of Krugersdorp secondary schools of the Gauteng Department of Education will be interviewed in a face-to-face situation.

"According to Rudestam and Newton (1992:39) one of the strengths of the qualitative study is that it emphasises the "thick description" of a relatively small number of subjects within the context of a specific setting.

- ◆ Qualitative research methods promote studies that allow researchers to be more spontaneous and flexible in exploring phenomena in their natural environment. In this study, the research occurred in a non-structured manner and the researcher recorded unexpected events such as laughter and tick of a wall clock.
- ◆ The qualitative methods advocate an approach to examining the empirical world which requires the researcher to interpret the real world from the perspective of the subject of his/her investigation (Mouton & Marais, 1988:205). Qualitative methods seek to understand phenomena in their entirety in order to develop a complete understanding. In this study the researcher will seek to understand what parents perceive as their roles in their children's education.

According to Wiersma (1991:4) qualitative researchers emphasise a holistic interpretation. They perceive facts and values as inextricably mixed.

3.3 VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY IN QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

3.3.1 Validity in qualitative research

Hammersley (1990) as quoted by Silverman (1993:149) defines validity as "...the extent to which an account accurately represents the social phenomena to which it refers". In this study, a validity check will be done by comparing the research results with a study of relevant literature.

3.3.2 Reliability in qualitative research

Reliability as defined by Hammersley (1990) as quoted by Silverman (1994:145) is "...the degree of consistency with which instances are assigned to the same observer or by the same observer on different occasions".

Guy (1987:23) says "...reliability in social research refers to whether a piece of research can be replicated - that is whether a different investigator can achieve the same results using the same methods". For this study the first reliability check will be done by giving the transcribed data back to the respondents. The respondents will verify their responses.

To ensure the second reliability check, the transcriptions together with the protocol for the analysis of data will be give to an external decoder, who is not connected to the study to get her opinion. Categories derived from the coded data will be discussed with the external decoder to establish familiarities and differences in the categories derived from coding.

It is evident from the foregoing discussion that reliability will play an important role in this study and contributes to the appropriateness of qualitative research methodology in this research.

3.4 DATA COLLECTING METHODS

Data collection involves aspects such as setting boundaries for the study, collecting information through observations, interviews, documents and visual materials and establishing the protocol for recording information (Creswell, 1994:148).

The paradigm and the research method adopted in this study, necessitates the use of the interview for data collection.

3.4.1 The interview as a research method

Babbie (1990:373) defines an interview as a data-collection encounter in which one person (an interviewer) asks questions of another (a respondent). According to Bogdan and Biklen (1992:96), an interview is a purposeful conversation, usually between two people, but sometimes involving more that is directed by one in order to get information from the other.

Merriam (1988:72) says it is "...a conversation with a purpose" and Patton (1986:96) sums up the purpose of interviews as "...to find out from people those things that cannot be directly observed, such as their feelings, thoughts and intentions".

3.4.2 Kinds of qualitative interviews

3.4.2.1 The structured interview

According to Denzin and Lincoln (1994:364) a structured interview is a situation in which an interviewer ask each respondent a series of pre-established questions with a limited set of response categories. There is generally little room for variation in response except where a frequent open-ended question may be used. There is very little flexibility in the way questions are asked or answered in the structured interview. Because of the limited data that is gathered from the interviewed individuals, the structured interview is not suitable for this study.

3.4.2.2 The unstructured interview

The unstructured interview is an attempt to understand the complex behaviour of members of society without posing any prior categorization that may limit the field of inquiry (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994:365). The unstructured interview will thus be employed in this study and the focus group interview as an example of the unstructured interview will be adopted.

(a) The focus group interview

Krueger (1988:6) views a focus group as "...a carefully planned discussion designed to obtain perceptions on a defined area of interest in a permissive, non-threatening environment". A focus group interview is characterized by the bringing of several participants to discuss a topic of mutual interest to themselves and the researcher (Morgan & Spanish, 1984:253). The following strengths of the focus group interview that will be discussed in the following section will serve as a motivation for choosing the focus group interview as a research method.

(b) Strengths of focus group interviews

Focus group interviews involve a homogenous group of people engaged in a social interaction. In this study, parents of secondary schools students in the Gauteng Education Department will interact with the researcher in a face-to-face interview. The intention is to gather data concerning their involvement in the education of their children. This high face-to-face interaction also guarantees that the data collected will be valid. The flexibility that is entailed in this technique makes it useful to discuss a wide variety of subjects with a variety of people in a very natural setting. In this study, the researcher will interview different parents of different schools about their involvement in the education of their children.

The focus group interview technique is low in cost because the researcher interviewed parents of the students in her area of residence. The fact that the respondents were interviewed as a group makes it easier for the researcher to obtain data and results speedily. The strength of focus group interview are applicable to this study.

3.5 CONDUCTING A FOCUS GROUP INTERVIEW

3.5.1 Orientation

The focus group interview is characterized by organizing several respondents to discuss a topic of mutual interest to themselves and the researcher (Morgan & Spanish, 1984:253). In this study, the researcher will interview parents of secondary schools in the Gauteng Department of Education about their role in their children's education. As interaction is a unique characteristic of a focus group, the researcher will use this technique in trying to find out how parents can be involved in the education of their children and what can be done to involve them.

As this study involves a large number of respondents, a sample of the whole population will be drawn to reduce the number of respondents. A minimum of six parents per interview and a maximum of eight from selected schools will be interviewed. As Morgan and Spanish (1984:77) point out, "...it is not the number of respondents that is important in the qualitative interview, rather the potential of the respondents".

Respondents will also be selected from all race-groups in the area. The focus group interview will be held in a comfortable non-threatening setting. The preferred place will be a community meeting room with chairs placed around a table so that respondents can talk with each other informally and to the researcher.

The respondents' confidence will be sought by conveying to them the impression that the researcher is in need of information which is vital for the research, and which no one else except them can give. The purpose of the study will be explained to the perspective participants and their co-operation will be requested. Respect for personal opinion, warmth and friendliness will be maintained. While being permissive, the researcher will control the situation to ensure that participants do not regress from the main topic. A pilot interview will be conducted, to test the validity of the research question.

3.5.2 The process of data gathering

3.5.2.1 Background on interviews

The researcher obtained a letter from her supervisor to show to the respondents, and to the employers of the respondents when asking permission to interview their employees. Where permission was granted, the researcher used the office of the principal, or in other interviews, a home of one of the interviewees was used. In one of the model C schools, the researcher made an appointment with the headmaster. On her arrival she was referred to the Guidance teacher who in turn took the researcher to the classes to ask the pupils if they can be kind enough to avail their home telephone numbers to the researcher and the purpose was explained to them that the researcher wanted to invite their parents to an interview and that their information will be used in the researcher's study.

The researcher phoned every parent whose telephone number were given by their children and made appointment to meet them at the same school. The purpose of the telephone call were explained and they agreed to come even though not all of them turned up.

3.5.3 Protocol

Data analysis and interpretation of the transcribed interviews will be done according to the steps or protocol as prescribed by Kingry *et al.* (1990:125) and Creswell (1994:166).

- ◆ As a first step, the researcher listens to the tapes of each session in order to make a verbatim transcription in which hesitations, silences and other indicators are noted.
- ◆ Typed transcript will be given back tot he respondents to check whether what was transcribed by the researcher is what they said. This will be the first reliability check.

- ◆ A distinction between relevant and irrelevant answers will be made.
- ◆ The researcher should generate a list of key ideas, words, phrases and actual quotes that reflect the sentiments of the group.
- ◆ Categories will then be formulated and under each category the researcher will place the ideas and quotes that fit most appropriately and best substantiate the categories.
- ◆ The researcher then gives the protocol and the categories to an independent decoder. The independent decoder will then repeat the steps in order to finalise and reach consensus with the researcher regarding identified categories.
- ◆ The decoder then writes his/her own report on the findings.
- ◆ Validity is then checked by comparing the results of the research with similar research in the form of a literature check.

3.5.4 Pilot interview

One pilot interview was conducted with parents of secondary schools students in Krugersdorp. This was done to find out whether the respondents will yield responses that would be enough to draw guidelines. The two questions that were asked were:

1. Would you like to be involved in the curriculum development?
2. How would you like to be involved in the curriculum development?

The respondents experienced difficulty in understanding a concept like curriculum development and the questions were changed to:

1. Would you like to be involved in the improvement of your child's education? If yes tell me your reasons and if no, tell me your reasons too.
2. What can you suggest must be done to involve you as parents in the improvement of your child's education?

These questions were asked in all the interviews. The pilot interview was of great value because it gave the researcher an idea that concepts that are used can be difficult to understand. The value of the interview data depends largely on the skills of the interviewer. In this regard, the interviewer was trained by the supervisor on how to conduct interviews.

3.6 FORMAL INTERVIEWS

The researcher conducted five interviews. The respondents as it was indicated in the previous discussion, were selected through random sampling techniques in the Krugersdorp secondary schools under the Gauteng Department of Education.

3.6.1 Target population

A minimum of six and a maximum of eight parents per interview from selected schools were invited to the interview. However, not all respondents turned up for the interviews. The researcher conducted five interviews. The following indicates the target population.

- ◆ In the first interview, eight parents were invited and all turned up. They were all from the local schools.
- ◆ In the second interview a total of seven parents turned up for the interview of which one was a White parent and one was an Indian.
- ◆ In the third interview only four black parents turned up for the interview.
- ◆ The fourth interview consisted of six parents and they were all black. This interview was not used in this study because the interviewer had to stop it half way towards the end. One parent disturbed other parents by reading a newspaper during the interview.

- ◆ The interviewer conducted another interview consisting only of White and Indian parents. This was done because the representation was not proportional. Eight parents were invited but only six turned up of which two were Indian parents.

3.7 DATA ANALYSIS

3.7.1 Orientation

According to Strauss and Corbin (1990:59) data collection and analysis are tightly interwoven processes and must occur alternately because the analysis directs the sampling of data.

Steyl (1993:105) defines data analysis as the process of bringing data in order. It is an effort to construct order out of the buzzing confusion that stands before the investigator. It makes the researcher discover themes and concepts embedded throughout the interviews and is the final stage of listening to hear the meaning of what is said.



Rubin and Rubin (1995:226) cite that data analysis begins while the interviewing is still underway and after finishing a large group of interviews. This study did not follow this theory to the latter because analysis was done only after all the interviews was conducted.

3.7.2 Report on taped interviews

The following section highlights the interpretation of transcribed interviews according to the protocol described in the previous discussion.

- ◆ The researcher listened to the tape several times in order to make a verbatim transcription in which hesitations, silences and other indicators were noted.
- ◆ For first reliability check, the researcher took the transcriptions to the respondents. No additional information was given.

- ◆ The researcher generated a complete list of relevant answers to the two questions (see pp.38-40).
- ◆ Categories and subcategories were formulated. The following is a list of categories and subcategories that were agreed upon by both the researcher and the decoder:

Reasons for positive responses

- ◆ Continuous involvement of parents
- ◆ Quality of education
- ◆ Support

Suggestions made by parents to be involved

- ◆ Choice of subjects
- ◆ Skills-training
- ◆ Communication
- ◆ Formulate a committee



Problem areas

These categories of the two questions will be discussed separately under the following sub-heading (see paragraph 3.7.3).

3.7.3 Discussion of categories and subcategories


QUESTION 1

Would you like to be involved in the improvement of your child's education? If yes, tell me your reasons and if no, tell me your reasons too.

A LIST OF RELEVANT ANSWERS

Question 1: Would you like to be involved in your child's education? if yes, tell me why, and if no, tell me why too.

Interview 1	Interview 2	Interview 3	Interview 4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ look into what is to be taught to each child ◆ the choosing of relevant subjects ◆ writing materials whether they encounter problems ◆ parents should take a look at the pupils books to look at whether the child have attend school ◆ facilitation of the writing of text-books and acceptance thereof ◆ involved in the class activity which involves the teaching and education of the child ◆ teachers have large numbers in the classroom and parents can help when they are involved ◆ parents must communicate with the teacher-teamwork that is between teacher and parents will facilitate everything ◆ regular meetings should be held between the teacher and the parents ◆ parents should look at subjects when drawing curriculum of that community ◆ parents should be given a chance in choosing the textbooks ◆ parents to choose the content to be taught to children as long as at the end a balance should be struck because this is an intercultural type of education 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ being exposed to real world I know what is needed ◆ om die kind te help opvoed tot 'n sekere standaard ◆ because you want to know your child's direction in life ◆ you have to be involved with subjects now ◆ we check our child's progress during the year ◆ we would like to teach the child at home ◆ our skills are also important ◆ everyday you have to find out from your child how he has been progressing in school ◆ if the child have a problem then you as a parent have to help the child ◆ I regard education of my child as of utmost importance to his future 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ parents are the people who must ensure that she/he helps the teacher ◆ talk to our children about what they did at school at it will help us to see whether your children is coping at school ◆ to choose subjects for your child that are relevant ◆ to check the child's progress in every subject 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ I would like to know what she is achieving in the future ◆ if there is a problem I'll also like to know about their syllabus ◆ I want to know what goes on at the school ◆ I want to know if they are happy with their teachers ◆ I would like to be more involve with the education of the children because I feel if parents are involved, the children gain a lot ◆ When I'm involved, they surely do their homework ◆ with me being involved they don't leave their work ◆ Yes because mommy is involved, mommy is at school and sees what's happening ◆ you must know the education is good ◆ You must know whether they are enjoying ◆ if you're involved you see she really understand the subjects she is doing ◆ when the child does not understand you can also go to the teacher and speak to the teacher ◆ we can't expect that only from the teachers we as parents must also be able to help our children

Interview 1	Interview 2	Interview 3	Interview 4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ when we draw the curriculum we should look at the inclusion of technical subjects ◆ in order to make education what it must look like ◆ parents should be involved in whatever is going to take place at school like drawing up of school subjects ◆ parents ought to be involved because parents serve as an incentive towards our children's education ◆ involvement of parents is going to bring a lot of improvement especially from the side of the child ◆ the child can receive better results at the end of the year 			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ we must be involved because they are making the classroom big and the teacher is going through too much stress trying to work with the class ◆ the discipline in the school ◆ it is important to me to have an understanding of the subject because if you don't understand they are going to have a drawback ◆ you must be very strict ◆ and by being interested and when the child does not understand what is going on ◆ you must see she's really understand the subjects she is doing

Question 2: What can you suggest can be done to involve you as parents in your child's education

Interview 1	Interview 2	Interview 3	Interview 4
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ parents should not be seen only at the beginning of the year. They must be seen throughout the year to help with the problems of their children ◆ we as parents have to have regular meetings with teachers where we are going to discuss subjects which the child is doing supporting the teachers ◆ we should formulate a committee, have a very strong PTSA to look at problems that are being encouraged by teachers ◆ there are those teachers that are not conversant with their subjects and there are those parents who are enlightened in those subjects ◆ parents can help in encouraging students to excel in other subjects by giving out incentives such as money or uniform ◆ actually parents should be involved highly in the education of child by being involved in whatever is going to take place at school, as you've indicated in the drawing up of a school subject ◆ Ya, but I think the only solution which can save teachers from this kind of a situation is that we should formulate a committee which will solve such problems 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ there must be a programme where parents can be involved with their children ◆ what we know, perhaps we've seen or what we know in real life we can go as parents to give eh... the talk on how to - when you go for an interview ◆ communication skill - those small things that we parents can help eh... the school with ◆ ek weet my kind sukses met Wiskunde maar ek is in 'n gelukkige posisie om daardie kind te help ◆ I could teach them leadership skills ◆ I should think the parents who are knowledgeable about the education of their child should be supplied with the syllabus in order to keep abreast of what is happening at school ◆ Another thing I think parents should suggest subjects that could be added at school... ◆ parents should be seen throughout the year... ◆ parents had to be given a chance in choosing the textbooks... 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ the school should have annual schedule - what is to be done with kids so that parents should know what ... ◆ the parents can help for instance when a parent is good in Bibst, the parent can help the child ◆ I think we as parents need to be educated ... it can be how small but the little light we have will help us ◆ as a nurse I can go and teach children about family planning ... ◆ parents who work at industries to must really bring part of the industry to school ◆ parents should suggest subjects that could be added at school let me say like in the townships you find that there is no school that teaches Agriculture so if we suggest that subject and tell them the advantages of those subject I think that will work well ◆ parents together with the educationists should try to work together to introduce skills that could help our children to be employed in different working places ◆ Once more parents should avail their skills to the children ◆ So I feel parents should be involved for example when you look at the question of discipline 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ I will suggest that you must set goals for the children ◆ I will suggest that we spent more time with them ◆ If you had time you could come to school more and realise what is going on - even sit through a class with them one day ◆ even on the issue of discipline. The parents must also be involved there - all of them must be involved ◆ they must come to support their children ◆ when she comes home with this problem, we will support her ◆ On the choosing of subjects parents have to play a role because we find that kid choose subjects which may be irrelevant in the career in the future

3.7.3.1 Category 1: REASONS FOR POSITIVE RESPONSES

A reason according to Fowler et al. (1993:902) is "...support or justification for an act or belief". This definition will be adopted as such in this study to determine what justifications were put forward by the respondents for their participation.

Subcategory 1: Continuous involvement of parents

Involvement of parents according to Morrison (1993:443) is "...a partnership between parents and teachers that is built over a period of time through intentional planning based on partnership and shared decision-making. It is also a process of helping parents use their abilities to benefit themselves, their children and school program".

Responses indicated that parents want to be continuously involved in their children's education because they saw it as a need to make education what it must look like. They deemed it fit to be practically involved in education so that they can help their children not to drop out of school, because of a lack of guidance or a lack of understanding subjects. "...see how well she is doing and you must see she really understands the subjects".

Masalela (1996:7) support the continuous involvement of parents by saying that "...parental involvement makes parents partners and as partners they support the duties and efforts of the head and the staff". Increased involvement, she says, makes it possible for the school to experience high degree of success.

Subcategory 2: Quality of education

The second reason given is that parents can improve the quality of education. They felt that they can improve the quality of education. They felt that they can improve the quality of education by motivating both their children and teachers to do their work. To motivate their children, parents felt that they should set goals for them and be there when they perform at school. They can motivate teachers by coming to school throughout the year and not only when they come to admit their children at the

beginning of the year and fetching results from school. "...because mommy is involved, mommy is at school, mommy sees what's happening". This remark exemplify how important it is for parents to be involved so that there can be quality education for children. One other thing is to check the child's progress in every subject. It helps to see where the child does not do well. They also felt that afternoon classes should be organised and parents should be invited to conduct them.

Noël (1994:75) also support suggestions by parents by saying that "...parental involvement is vital to a student's success in class and at school and where possible, parents have to be given a chance to teach or help children with other class activities".

Subcategory 3: Support

Parents indicated that they are in a better position to support teachers in whatever innovations or improvements they wish to make in the education of their children. They will be able to identify their children's problems and make teachers aware of it. They can actually support teachers and their pupils in various ways, like helping them to solve problems concerning discipline and dress-code, looking at their books to see whether they attend school regularly and whether they are having problems with any subject. "Yah, firstly I think we've got a task to play eh ...the first major one is eh ...looking at pupil's books - writing materials, whether do they encounter any problems..."

Parents involvement in the education of their children should be seen more as support than taking the place of a teacher. Ornstein and Behr (1995:70) say that any programme that is supported by parents, elicit good achievement and the school where parents are involved is characterised by among other things "...a safe orderly school climate".

Noël (1994:26) have this to say of parental involvement and their support to education "...parents can provide valuable input to all education authorities so that the education received by all children helps them to develop to their full potential". This clearly shows that parental support in schools is important to both the children and the

teachers.

QUESTION 2

What can you suggest can be done to involve you as parents in the improvement of your child's education?

3.7.3.2 Category 2: SUGGESTIONS MADE BY PARENTS TO BE INVOLVED

Jullock (1993:1559/1560) defines suggestion as "...a proposal for action". This definition will be adopted in this study to determine what suggestions were made by parents of secondary school pupils in Krugersdorp for their involvement in their children's education.

Subcategory 1: Choice of subjects

A subject is something that is being discussed, described, presented or studied (The Oxford Dictionary, 1986:815) and choice according to The Oxford Dictionary (1986:163) means to decide between possibilities or selection. The respondents emphasised the need to help their children to choose subjects that will be relevant to a variety of careers so that they become employable when they leave school. They also felt that they can encourage their children to be educated in other fields and not to become only nurses and teachers.

Parents also suggested that other subjects, like Agricultural Science, should be introduced in schools so that their children can be self-employed when they leave school.

Gore (1993:22) quotes Dr James Moulder of Union of Natal as describing education without relevant essential subject as "Education for Unemployment".

Noël (1994:26-27) also sees involvement of parents as a significant goal and target for educational reform and that the contribution made by parents can to a large extent be attributed to both the failure and the success of their children in schools.

Schools are there to serve their communities. The programme and style used in schools should be acceptable to the community it serves. This only proves how important parents are, not only as the people who pay and raise funds for the school, but as members of the community whose needs should be met by the curriculum planned for their schools.

Subcategory 2: Skills training

The Oxford Dictionary (1993:1195) defines skills as "...an expertise, practiced ability in doing something with dexterity". Skills training is the understanding and an ability to apply in practice.

Parents felt that their skills that are to be imparted to their children are also important and as such they felt if they (parents) have knowledge about important skills such as computer skills, study skills, communication skills, leadership skills, as well as skills for understanding money (financial skills), they should be involved so that they could be able to impart this to their children. "I could teach them leadership skills... just like office etiquette - how do you behave at work..." According to the respondents, training in these various skills are vital for the equipment for the school leavers to earn a living. "I would suggest that education should eh ...give children at least the basic eh.. values eh ...life skills values that they'll use should they leave education early..." It means that when they leave school, they must leave with a portfolio of skills they can use to earn money.

Masalela (1996:16) supports parents' help in the choice of subjects by saying that linking formal and non-formal education is aimed at making relevant education available to learners. Academic subjects should be linked to the working situation and life skills should be emphasised. Parents indicated that they will gladly help, because they are more involved in the out of school activities in their work places. They can be called in at school to impart their knowledge concerning the outside world.

Subcategory 3: Communication

"Communication is a social interaction that conveys information from one participant to another" (Penrod, 1993:254). Communication can take place between parents and children, parents and teachers, parents and principals and parents and other parents.

Communication between parents and children and parents and teachers is important because as Jackson (1991:18) puts it, "...the child who knows that his/her parents are in constant communication with his/her teachers will be less inclined to take advantage and disrupt the teacher's class".

Parents also believe that when they communicate with teachers, the child will see that both parties are interested in his/her education and this can yield good results. It will also help parents to understand his/her child better.

Besides speaking to teachers about the child's problem, respondents felt that the teacher should call parents to tell them about the child's problems. They also felt that they as parents should talk to their children and ask them about their problems.

Masalela (1996:26) supports the different kinds of communication by saying that "...it is important to note that children whose parents are in constant communication with their school tend to achieve more than those whose parents are not". The interest parents show in the education of their children tends to be associated with the academic motivation and the willingness of their children to be involved in their learning. Teachers, according to Masalela (1996:26), should talk to parents at informal meetings, and allow them free time once a month to come and talk to any of the teachers or the principal.

Parents felt that schools should write letters to get information and they should be sent year planners and syllabi in order to see what is happening at school. This will enable them to prepare their children well in advance whether it be tests or examination or any subject in which he can help the child with. This was indicated by the following:

"To add on the improvement of learning of the child I think regular meetings should be held between the teacher and the parents".

"... And by being interested eh ... also when the child does not understand what is going on you must can also go to the teacher and speak to the teacher about it".

"And the teacher is suppose to call the parents and tell the parents that I've got this problem with your child ... can you help me with you child ...".

"One other thing that can make us to be involved as parents is that we must talk to our children or interview them about what they did at school and now we will be able to be in contact with the teachers".

"Hm ... Well, I think the school should always write letters to the parents ...".

"... the school should have an annual schedule - what is to be done with kids so that parents should know what ... in fact in a nutshell, the school should give parents an annual report ...".

The involvement of parents cannot be done away with because as Masalela (1996:28) puts it parents are important because of their partnership in the educational development of their own children and as collaborators in the children's further development.

Subcategory 4: Formulate a committee

The involvement of parents cannot be done away with because as Masalela (1996:28) puts it, parents are important because of their partnership in the educational development of their own children and as collaborators in their children's further development. Parents felt that to alleviate teachers from their day to day problems including being overloaded with their work, they must formulate as very strong PTSA committee which will help in solving problems that are encountered by teachers. "...we somehow overlook problems that are being encountered by teachers in a school

situation, but if we have a strong PTSA, I think that's a platform whereby we are going to identify some of these problems".

Parents felt that the only platform they have is through the formation of a strong PTSA. Through the PTSA parents are able to be represented and their voice be heard at schools. They will be able to solve problems concerning the behaviour of their children.

3.7.3.3 Category 2: Problem areas

Problem areas should not be depicted as negative responses. They are actually positive because they point out negative results if parents are not involved.

Parents felt that the school should be in harmony with the school and they (parents) should go regularly to schools to see what is happening and where they can help. They should not be seen only at the beginning of the year when their children are admitted or at the end of the year when they collect their children's reports.

They felt that the other factors that contribute to problems arising at school was not reacting to requests from teachers to help them to benefit their children. There is a need for the understanding of the plea of teachers about large numbers in classes and a lack of support from parents.

Parents are positive in that they suggested that a parent's committee should be formed that will help not only with fundraising but they can also come and help alleviate stress as experienced by teachers because of their ever increasing responsibilities. They can come and offer help where it is really needed and when they are requested to do so.

The problem areas were indicated by the following responses:

"... most parents they use the school as a dumping place ... they use a school as a day care centre ...".

"... where parents are not involved you only find one part - the teacher who is highly involved in teaching ...".

Parents indicated that the fact that they don't have time anymore because of working so many hours, contribute to them not being too involved in their children's education.

From the discussions above, it is important to note that when parents are not involved in the education of their children, a lot of work remains with the teachers who in most cases do not know every child's background. With full classes, no individual attention will be given to children, especially to those with a home background that needs to be known to teachers. Parental involvement and their support to teachers is therefore the only tool towards solving problems that are faced by the school. Fortunately parents were aware of this because it was highlighted by parents in their responses. They are therefore prepared to help.

3.8 SUMMARY

The information gathered in this chapter served to guide clearly what parents have to say about their involvement in their children's education. It has shown that with their layman's knowledge about educational matters, they can make an input in their children's education.

At the same time a literature review on recent and relevant literature on research was done, a suitable paradigm and a method of data collection were chosen. A protocol for data analysis was given. Data was collected and analysed and categories and sub-categories were identified and discussed. In the next chapter guidelines and recommendations will be given.

CHAPTER FOUR

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 AIM OF THE CHAPTER

In this chapter the theoretical data in chapter 2 and the empirical data in chapter 3 are integrated in order to write conclusions and recommendations on how parents can be involved in curriculum development.

4.2 CONCLUSION

This study has identified the role of parents in the four phases of curriculum development namely, design, dissemination, implementation and evaluation. The following conclusion can therefore be arrived at in connection with this study:

◆ Curriculum design

As it was discussed in the previous chapters that curriculum design is a phase where ongoing decision-making with regard to planning is taking place, and that this planning should reflect the needs of the community and especially the parents. Parents would like to have some input into the curriculum that is offered to their children. Their suggestions, to be continuously involved with their children's education, bear witness to this. They felt that when they are continuously involved with their children's education, the subjects which they will help their children to choose will not be irrelevant as when they leave their children to do so on their own. This was because, as they said, of their life-experiences and what the outside world demands.

They also felt that for education to be of quality discipline should be instilled in children and they can help in bringing this about. They can also help to improve the quality of education by acting as incentives through supporting both teachers and their children inside and outside the classroom.

Parents also felt that new subjects like Agricultural Science should be introduced to the school subjects because this will encourage their children to have a broad career choice. They felt some subjects only channel their children to become nurses or teachers.

Emphasis was also placed on skills. They suggested that they be invited to schools to impart their knowledge on skills such as communication skills, financial skills, technical skills (like computer training) and practical skills. These skills, according to parents, prepare their children for the job market.

Parents also would like to have some input in as far as imparting life-skills to their children. They felt that because they know what is expected outside the school, they can help with communication skills, financial skills, technical skills (like computer training), and suggested that these life-skills be included in the curriculum too. Parents felt that the curriculum should include these skills to prepare their children for the job market.

◆ Dissemination

Dissemination, as it was discussed in the previous chapter (chapter 2) is a process where individuals or groups are informed about an innovation and to gain their interest in it. As a measure to curb resistance, they should be prepared, supported and trained.

In-service training courses are one of the methods that can be used to distribute information. In their responses, parents highlighted that they needed some sort of training for them to be fully involved in curriculum development. They are interested in helping the school, but without relevant training, they will not be effective.

◆ Implementation

The implementation process is one of persuading people to make certain decisions. The success of implementing a new curriculum depends on the training of curriculum designers. If parents are prepared and orientated, it will be no problem. It is therefore safe to say that when parents are involved in designing a curriculum like they indicated in their responses, there will be no resistance from their side.

Implementation of process is also characterised by motivation. Parents also indicated that they wanted to help by supporting the teachers and motivate their children to learn. They also indicated that they wanted to help teachers instil discipline in their children by setting goals for them and by helping to bring order in schools.

◆ **Evaluation**

The phase of curriculum evaluation can only be completed when parents as stakeholders have had a say in the preceding phases. Although there was no response that clearly indicated that parents would like to be involved in evaluating the plan, parents felt that they will support everything that is being done to improve the quality of education for their children, and that being involved in any change that is taking place in the education of their children, will be highly supported.

4.3 RECOMMENDATIONS AND GUIDELINES

In the light of the research undertaken, the following recommendations and guidelines on how parents of Krugersdorp secondary schools students can be involved in the education of their children, are make.

- ◆ To initiate continuous involvement of parents, structures will ultimately have to be created in order that parents can have some input in the development of the curriculum. These structures, among others, is a strong PTSA presently SGB or School Governing Body. These structures will then act as a platform for parents to:
 - freely support teachers throughout the year;
 - help in skills-training;
 - help with discipline by being at school when it starts;
 - help in choosing subjects and introducing new subjects;
 - help in the choice of textbooks and its facilitation;
 - motivate and monitor homework by setting goals for their children;
 - communicate with schools in order to help solve problems;
 - participate in other school activities besides paying school funds.

- ◆ Parents need to be prepared, supported and trained to become aides, tutors, attendance monitors and fund raisers

4.4 LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The researcher could not conduct interviews with all the parents of Krugersdorp secondary school students under the Gauteng Department of Education. Only five interviews from selected schools were conducted of which only four of them was used for this study and the reason was given in the previous discussions.

The reason for conducting interviews on a small number of parents was because this study is a mini-dissertation and its limitations are the number of pages required, time factor and financial implications. The researcher confined the study to her area of abode.

4.5 SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDY

This study suggests that research be conducted to develop guidelines as to how parents can be trained to become fully involved in curriculum development, because the researcher did not come up with those guidelines.

4.6 STRENGTHS OF THIS STUDY

The strength of this study lies in the fact that the researcher has identified how parents feel about their involvement in the education of their children, especially during the four phases of curriculum development, namely design, dissemination, implementation and evaluation.

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TRANSCRIPTION OF INTERVIEW 1
INTERVIEW WITH PARENTS

INTERVIEWER:

Good morning ladies and gentlemen. I am Mrs Molukanele, a student at RAU. I would like to interview you about your role as parents in education of your children. This will help me to come up with guidelines concerning your perceptions as parents. My first question would be: **Would you like to be involved in the improvement of your child's education? Can you tell me why?**

(Silence)

RESPONDENT 1:

May I ask a question. Involvement in which way?

INTERVIEWER:

Can anyone answer her on that?



RESPONDENT 1:

Yeh, I think eh... in the real situation, rather in the learning-teaching situation it is the situation whereby you find and parents being involved in eh... learning and teaching situation. So I feel eh... that a parent should be involved in the education of each and every child in order to make education to eh... what it must look like. Firstly I would indicate that most parents they use the school as a dumping place they use a school as a day care centre so in a real situation eh... actually parents should be involved highly in the education of child by being involved in whatever is going to take place at school. As you have indicated in the drawing up of a school subjects, we do have what we call PTSA's of which the parents are part of that committee which have to look into what is to be taught to each and every child. So I feel strongly that parents should be involved, for example, when you look at the question of discipline, you find that we use certain methods without looking at where the problem lies at home, in most cases and when you are confronted with a

question eh... a problem rather usually parents are not involved, you just punish the child according to the mistake that he has committed without getting the background of the child, and that is a very important thing that usually happens in a learning-teaching situation. Where parents are not involved you only find one part - the teacher who is highly involved in teaching. (Voices are heard at the back.)

RESPONDENT 2:

To add on that I think we as parents ought to be involved in eh... I mean in our children's education in the sense that parents serve as an incentive towards our children's learning. You know children are intrinsically and extrinsically motivated. Well, let me come to the extrinsic part of it when a child is praised particularly by a parent or when a parent is present during the performance of the child, the child will want to impress the parents highly. So I think parents have to be really involved in that sense.

(Silence)

RESPONDENT 3:

Maybe to add, even on the choosing of the subjects parents have to play a role, because we find that kids choose subjects which are maybe irrelevant in the career in the future and if parents can play their role in helping the child to choose relevant subjects, I think this will eliminate the kids in future from dropping out in universities and technikons.

(Silence)

RESPONDENT 4:

They said it all.

RESPONDENT 5:

Yeh, firstly I think we've got a task to play eh... the first major one is eh... looking at pupil's books - writing materials whether do they encounter any problems. I think in this case also it should not be the task of the teachers who must only look at the books of the children, but what should happen is that every after school parents should take a look at the pupil's books and see whether (cough) firstly they will be

looking at whether the child have attended for that particular day and whether does he encounter any problems and if there are problems, maybe that is where the teacher can be brought in order to solve the problem and again I think the child also will see that both parties, parents and teachers, are interested in his/her future. I think if both of them they can take this initiative of looking into the child's work time and I think what is going to happen is that as I have indicated is going to bring a lot of improvement, especially from the side of the child. Thus the child can receive better results at the end of the year.

RESPONDENT 4:

Excuse me ma'am, are you talking about improving the quality of education or the eh... eh... performance of the child? What improvement are your talking about here?

RESPONDENT 5:

Actually we are talking about improvement as a whole - textbooks, especially the facilitation of the writing of textbooks and the acceptance thereof.

RESPONDENT 4:

Is that quality of education?

RESPONDENT 5:

More or less.

RESPONDENT 4:

No, you must be specific. No more or less here. Are you talking quality of education in which parents have to have an input on that, or are you talking about the improvement of the performance of the child based on a quality improved education?

INTERVIEWER:

Can anyone clarify her on that?

RESPONDENT 6:

I think the first question involves curriculum if I am not wrong or the parents' involvement in the education of their children. Ja, so we have to look at one class activity, which involves the teaching and education of the child.

RESPONDENT 2:

And to add on that, I think the two are interrelated - that is the quality of education and the improvement of the child as a whole. If you improve the quality of education and you improve the child, if you improve the child you also improve the quality of education. (Respondent: and so you get the involvement of the parent) eh... yes, and in my opinion, we have to focus on the quality of education and not forgetting the child, because the two are interrelated just as I've said so with that. I don't know if I've clarified enough because I wanted to elaborate on the question itself. I... I feel parents really have are... I mean play an important role because teachers really have quite large numbers of students in the classrooms in the sense that... I mean to an extent that teachers don't have a chance of practising what we call individual attention. So, if we have parent involvement in this case we sort of have a weapon. Take for instance in the languages - the language problem. Most of the schools deliver their subjects in a foreign language to extent that our children are extroverted and they are not confident enough to can say most of the things in English. So if a child is at home in an atmosphere or in an environment in which he can say whatever in his/her own language, then I think in that case, interrelationship or the communication between the child and parent will be easier to an extent that the child will be able to tell the parent that I don't understand this and the parent will be able to take the report back to the teacher who will focus on the problem that was given to him by the parent of the child. So I think the communication... I mean... the interrelationship and the teamwork that is between the teacher and the parents of the child will facilitate everything.

RESPONDENT 1:

To add on the improvement of learning of the child, especially in the classroom, I think regular meetings should be held between the teacher and the parents, and the kids should accompany their parents to school when meetings are held so that

when the teacher give the parent a report back, that child should hear what the teacher have to say about that child.

RESPONDENT 2:

And I think in order to improve the quality of education, the parents should look at the subjects when drawing of the curriculum of that community. Parents and teachers should sit down and think what subjects can be beneficiary to the community at the end of their studies. Not to try and produce teachers and nurses and lawyers and doctors, but they should make them to enjoy their curriculum in such a way that it should be economically viable when their children are adults and they should be able to contribute to the whole country.

RESPONDENT 3:

And to add on that, I think that parents had to be given a chance in choosing the textbooks, because most textbooks that are chosen for our children aren't relevant enough, eh... I mean to the cultural situation of our children. Our children learn about Jan van Riebeeck and other people and some things that they were not exposed to. So if... I mean particularly when you look to this the... the problem of hidden curriculum, you look at the pictures that are drawn or that are shown in those books you see a white lady wearing this beautiful dress and also see a black woman in tatters or scrubbing the floors. You know the whole thing is actually indoctrinating our children, because they think that we have to remain you know, perpetual underlings, you know, we have to remain dormant, you know, our duty remains that of scrubbing floors. It makes them to... you know, submit for the rest of our lives. So I think parents would have to be involved in the choice of the textbooks.

INTERVIEWER:

It seems from the discussion that you all agree that you should be involved as parents. So, my second question ... (disturbance from a respondent).

RESPONDENT 4:

Eh... ma'am, and to add on that, I personally do not see any problem with children being taught about Jan van Riebeeck as long as at the end of the writing of that textbook we are going to struck a balance where blacks will understand that when Jan van Riebeeck came, he was not the first person to be on the South African ground, but even blacks were there. So if we bring the two, I think it will open them up, because this is an intercultural type of education system that we are trying to draw. So we should not leave them to be that ignorant where we only focus on the black history. All the histories should come together but as long as a balance eh... we are going to struck a balance at the end of the writing of that particular book. Meaning no emphasis should be given to any race.

RESPONDENT 6:

To add on that, ma'am, I think one should draw the curriculum due to what we have already mentioned. We should look at technical subjects being introduced from the primary level and that is why the teachers and the educators can detect from the early age that this child is good at motor mechanic, good at carpenting and all that, and if we have those subjects being given even at higher primary school and at high schools, we can even be able to challenge the child along those lines and that will benefit the country greatly.

INTERVIEWER:

Ok, let's come to the second question: **What can you suggest can be done to involve you as parents in this improvement?**

RESPONDENT 1:

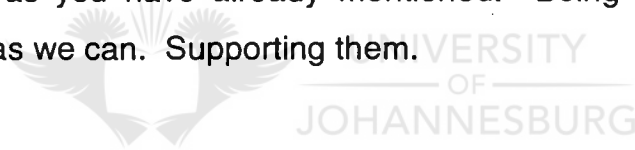
Yeh... I think the former speaker has indicated that on the first day of admission, what should happen is that each parent should come along with his/her child, which means children must not be admitted without his/her parents' accompaniment and that should not be the end. Parents should not be seen only at the beginning of the year. They must be seen throughout the year to help with the problems of their children.

RESPONDENT 2:

But I think we as parents have to have regular meetings with the teachers - regular meetings where we are going to discuss subjects which the child is doing. Regular meetings with students themselves to discuss their problems. I think regular meetings must be held so that problems which are exposed should be eliminated.

RESPONDENT 3:

As a parent, I see it from a different point here. Teachers are having a problem because it seems the government is not doing enough to intervene in as far as problems that are experienced in the school are concerned. Our black schools are overcrowded. You find a teacher in a class teaching 52 children and teaching up to nine classes. I... I believe that teachers are being overloaded and we as parents at end becomes helpless and hopeless at the end of the day. So if the government could help us with this, looking at the number of children in classes, trying to supervise the teachers to do their work, maybe it can help in a way and we getting involved as much as you have already mentioned. Being there - working with teachers as much as we can. Supporting them.



RESPONDENT 4:

The problem is we as parents, we always expect too much from the teachers. We expect the teachers as super human - supernatural beings, eh... people who can control. You know ... irrespective of their ... you know we never focus on teachers being overloaded with their work. We only think that they have to work ... otherwise they are trained to do so. We never even consider that.

RESPONDENT 1:

Yeh... but I think the only solution which can save teachers from this kind of a situation momentarily, is that we should formulate a committee, have a very strong PTSA committee which will actually solve such problems because as we've indicated, we somehow overlook problems that are being encountered by teachers. But if we have a strong PTSA in a school situation I think that's a platform whereby we are going to identify some of these problems. We will be able to come up with solutions in order to combat these problems.

RESPONDENT 5:

We can help in the maintenance of the school in ordinary way. Replace broken things, painting. We can volunteer as parents - you know ... late coming is also a problem. I think as parents we can volunteer to come to school in the morning, to help with monitoring late coming or seeing to it that our children actually come to school on time. Just by - you know - supervising and moving about encouraging our children to come early to school.

RESPONDENT 6:

I think the other issues is the dress code. The way our children come to school dressed up, leaves much to be desired. What should happen is that when the child leaves home, his/her parents should check if he/she is well dressed for school.

RESPONDENT 2:

I can add on that by saying that moving to the classroom situation, there are those teachers that are not conversant with their subjects and there are parents who are enlightened in those subjects. I think such parents can arrange afternoon classes because these students tend to understand another person more than they do with their teachers and they take them for granted. Two, there are those parents who are not conversant with subjects but because of certain incentives, they can help in encouraging students to excel in other subjects. Incentives such as money or uniform.

INTERVIEWER:

Ladies and gentlemen, thank you for your time and it was a pleasure talking to you. Thank you very much.

(Clap of hands from the respondents)