

Declaration

I hereby declare that this dissertation is my own work and has not been submitted for a degree at any other university.

A. R. Meth



This dissertation is dedicated to
my mother, Nora Van Dyk. You are my pillar of strength.
Thank you for your courage, wisdom and unselfish love.
You are the gift that keeps on giving.



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ABSTRACT

The Department of Education encourages parents to become involved in their children's education by joining the school governing bodies. However, serving on a governing body is not the ultimate form of parental involvement.

Governing bodies are involved at the macro level of planning which involves the holistic planning and management of the school, they are not involved at the micro level which deals with the day to day issues that arise within the classroom.

Teachers at the Geluksdal Primary School say that they cannot give children with learning difficulties the individual attention with an average of forty-five pupils per class. They have found that more than fifty percent of the children they teach do not understand the lessons. Teachers feel that the school day is short and the number of children struggling too great for them to intervene effectively. They welcome parental involvement and think that parents should assist their children individually at home.

This qualitative action research study is a partnership between the researcher, parents (with children who have learning difficulties) and teachers for the co-creation of community in the best interest of children's educational development. The co-creation of community between parents and teachers requires of them to meet with each other to discuss children's needs and difficulties and to attend to these needs and difficulties. The co-creation of

community refers to the joint effort of parents and teachers to better the education of children with learning problems.

The focus group consisted of five parents who committed themselves and three parents who moved in and out of the group. Seven teachers participated in this study but failed to commit themselves to the forming of community.

These teachers seemed de-motivated from disappointing past experiences to get parents involved in children's education, but to little avail. It appeared as if they did not believe that meeting with parents after school to build a relationship in the best interest of children would make a difference, and did not think it to be important. Another important factor that could be related to the teachers' reactions, was that they held an 'out-there' philosophy which suggested that the problems experienced by children with learning difficulties was caused by the home. The research was continued with the hope to raise the teachers' consciousness of their involvement in the educational progress of children with learning difficulties. Three teachers were interviewed individually on their views of parental involvement in education.

Results showed that the co-creation of community between parents and teachers do have an impact on children's educational development. Those parents who were committed to become involved in their children's education found that their children's progress at school improved considerably.

OPSOMMING

Die Departement van Onderwys moeding ouers aan om deel te neem aan hul kinders se opvoeding deur betrokke te raak by die skool se beheerliggaam. Alhoewel hierdie betrokkenheid aangemoedig word, is dit nie die enigste vorm van ouer betrokkenheid wat 'n verskil maak nie. Onderwysers van Geluksdal Primêre skool stel dit dat hulle nie kinders met 'n leergestremdheid nie die nodige aandag kan gee nie, omdat hul klasse dikwels meer as vyftig leerlinge op 'n slag moet akkomodeer. Onderwysers het bevind dat meer as vyftig persent van die leerlinge nie die betrokke les verstaan nie. Die relatiewe kort skooldag en die groot aantal leerlinge per klas, vererger die situasie en onderwysers voel dat hulle nie effektief tussen beide kan tree nie. Onderwysers moedig ouer betrokkenheid aan en is van mening dat ouers tuis aan kinders individuele hulp kan verleen.

Hierdie kwalitatiewe, aksie navorsing studie is die gevolg van samewerking tussen die navorser, ouers (met leergestremde kinders) en onderwysers by die Geluksdal Laer Skool. Die doel met die vestig van hierdie verhouding was die medeskepping van 'n gemeenskap wat die leerling se opvoedkundige ontwikkeling sal optimiseer.

Die fokusgroep het bestaan uit vyf betrokke ouers wat gereeld die groep bygewoon het, en drie ouers wat die groep ongereeld bygewoon het. Die ouers het weekliks bymekaar gekom om ouer betrokkenheid in kinders se

opvoeding te bespreek. Sewe onderwysers het deelgeneem aan die studie, maar het hulself nie verbind tot die vorming van gemeenskap met ouers. Die onderwysers het telkemale in die verlede probeer om ouers betrokke te kry by kinders se opvoeding, met min sukses. Die onderwysers by die skool was gedemotiveerd en dit het voorgekom asof hulle nie geglo het dat naskoolse besprekings met ouers 'n groot verskil kon maak nie. Hulle het dit dus nie belangrik geag om met ouers te ontmoet vir die medeskepping van 'n verhouding ter voordeel van kinders met leerprobleme nie. Nog 'n belangrike faktor wat verband kon hou met die onderwysers se negatiewe reaksies, was dat hulle die probleme ondervind deur kinders met leerprobleme toegeskryf aan instansies buite die skool, soos die huis. Die navorsing het voortgegaan met die hoop om onderwysers bewus te maak van hulle betrokkenheid by kinders se vordering op skool. Metertyd het die ouers individuele afsprake gereël met die onderwysers wat hulle kinders onderrig, om hulle kinders se vordering te bespreek. Tydens die ontmoeting het ouers ook advies van onderwysers gevra oor hoe hulle hul kinders tuis kon bystaan. Daar is individuele onderhoude gevoer met drie onderwysers. Hul siening ten opsigte van ouer betrokkenheid in opvoeding is ondersoek.

Die bevindings toon dat die medeskepping van 'n gemeenskap tussen ouers en onderwysers wel 'n positiewe impak op die kind se opvoekundige ontwikkeling het. Die ouers wat 'n blywende betrokkenheid toon in hul kinders se opvoeding het gevind dat hul kinders se skolastiese ontwikkeling tot 'n groot mate verbeter het.