THE IMPLEMENTATION AND MANAGEMENT OF CURRICULUM 2005 (OBE) IN PHOKENG CIRCUIT, RUSTENBURG DISTRICT: AN ANALYSIS OF PARENTAL RESPONSIBILITIES

By

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SUBMITTED IN PART FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF MASTER OF BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION IN THE GRADUATE SCHOOL OF BUSINESS AND GOVERNMENT LEADERSHIP IN THE FACULTY OF COMMERCE AND ADMINISTRATION AT THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH-WEST.

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DECLARATION

I, Pulimoottil K. S. Nair declare that the dissertation for the degree of Master of Business Administration at the University of North-West hereby submitted, has not previously been submitted by me for a degree at this or any other University, that it is my own work in design and execution and that all material contained herein has been duly acknowledged.



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JUNE 2003

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

My sincere gratitude and appreciation go to my promoters Ms. M. A. Mokoena and Professor M. W. A. Mwenesongole for their guidance and support that enabled me to complete this study. They were a source of encouragement at all times.

I am further grateful for the assistance and support of all in the submission of this report. In particular I wish to thank the following people:

- My wife Rema and son Renju for their constant support and understanding throughout my studies.
- My two friends, Mohan (CM Pillai) and Geo (Geo Paul) and their families for their help and hospitality at their homes during my study period.
- My friend Varghese (Manavalan TV) for his constant encouragement during my studies.
- Principals, educators, learners and their parents of sampled schools in Phokeng Circuit, without whose contributions this work could not have been completed.
- Mr. M. A. Nkotsoe, of Thethe High School, especially for his understanding and support.

ABSTRACT

The Implementation and Management of Curriculum 2005 (OBE) in Phokeng Circuit, Rustenburg District: An analysis of Parental Responsibilities.

Traditionally, education has been considered as the territory of educators and the participation of parents has been very limited. Nowadays, however, parents are considered as co-partners in the education of their children. In this regard, they have an important role to play both at home and school.

Both educators and parents now believe that effective education requires the cooperation between educators and parents without any reservation. Changes that have taken place in education in this country over the past decade require parents to assume greater responsibilities in the education of their children.

This study was aimed at analyzing the responsibilities of parents for the effective implementation and management of Curriculum 2005 in the Phokeng Circuit of Education of the North-West province. The study was further intended to find out the problems, difficulties, and challenges faced by parents, with the advent of the Curriculum 2005, the Outcome-based Education program in South Africa.

The subjects involved in this study included 240 parents and 60 educators. Two separate questionnaires (Appendix A and Appendix B) were designed and administered to the respondents.

The study revealed that parents have taken up their role in education very seriously, though it was discovered through the empirical investigation that some parents are still clinging to their traditional beliefs about education, that it is confined to educators.

Several recommendations based on literature and empirical investigations were made in an attempt to involve more parents in the education and school life of their children.

The study recommended regular and prompt communication between parents and the school, assisting parents who have difficulties in helping their children with homework and parent training.

ABBREVIATIONS

OBE: Outcomes-Based Education
PTA: Parent-Teacher Association
USA: United States of America
UK: United Kingdom

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CHAPTER 1

1. ORIENTATION

1.1 Introduction

South Africa is a complex, multicultural and heterogeneous country. The teaching and learning practice in a large number of South African schools has been very unsatisfactory in the past years. The reasons are numerous. In the opinion of Van der Horst and McDonald (1997), this country is faced with multitudes of educational problems such as lack of equitable access to schools and educational opportunities, lack of relevant curricula, lack of sufficient funds, insufficient educational facilities and study materials, and educators with inadequate teaching qualifications. The majority of the population was deprived of quality education by the then apartheid government. Teaching and learning in most of the schools have been mainly limited to activities within the four walls of the classrooms. Learners were exposed to text-book oriented, rote learning. In addition to all these, according to Abrahams (2000), the Christian-National Education of the past, encouraged all schools to teach subjects like Bible Studies and Afrikaans while other countries, developed and developing were focussing on Science and Technology.

After the democratic elections in 1994, the new educational authorities had come to realise that to address the educational inequalities and injustices of the past, it was necessary to adjust and transform the educational system. In order to rectify the past imbalances, the Government of National Unity introduced Curriculum 2005, which is based on the principle of Outcomes-Based Education (OBE). When OBE was introduced as a new approach in the education system of South Africa, it had already been introduced in many

other developed and developing countries. According to Spady[1] and Schlebusch (1999), Outcomes-based Education means Education based on outcomes. It is "Education that is based on a framework of Outcomes" (Spady and Schlebusch, 1999: 38). This empowerment-oriented approach does not only aim at increasing the general knowledge of learners but also to develop their skills, critical thinking and attitudes. It further renders the learners competent and successful in their future job opportunities once they have completed or left school.

1.2 The new curriculum

The name given to the school part of the new educational framework of Outcomes-based Education in South Africa is **Curriculum 2005**. Its introduction made some fundamental changes in the education system of this country. The 'teacher-centred' old model of education has given way to the 'learner-centred' new model. OBE is a whole-school developmental process.

Spady and Schlebusch (1999: 36) have stated the following beliefs and principles of Outcomes-based Education:

- Key beliefs
  - Learning success for all
  - Learning success is affected by schools
  - Success promotes success
- Principles
  - Focus on outcomes
  - Design back
  - Expect high standards
  - Allow more opportunities to succeed.

A lot of confusion arose among educators, parents and the public as a result of newspaper and media reports regarding the implementation and delivery of Curriculum 2005. An article in the Business Times (Mulholland, 2000), thanking the Education Minister for dumping OBE led to numerous erroneous

[1] William Spady is considered as the architect and father of Outcomes-Based Education.

comments from educators and parents. The Education Minister not only responded by stating that OBE is still alive, but also made it clear in a column published in the Sunday Times (Asmal, 2000) that there will be no going back and turning away from the path which is intended to ensure that teaching and learning become a meaningful experience for all in South African schools. Since then a number of changes were made by the educational authorities to simplify the language and implementation of Curriculum 2005. It is the very nature of OBE that makes it dynamic and open to frequent review and changes, and it can be successfully implemented through the involvement of all stakeholders in education.

1.3 Role of parents

Parents have an active role to play in the education of their school-going children if their children are to obtain optimal skills that will enable them to face the future challenges of life.

The National Education Policy Act 27 of 1996, states the rights and obligations of parents as follows:

> "The governing body of a school must inform all parents of learners admitted to a school of their rights and obligations in terms of the South African Schools Act, (Act, 84) of 1996, and any applicable provincial law. Parents must especially be informed about their rights and obligations in respect to the governance and affairs of the school, including the process of deciding the school budget, any decision of a parent meeting relating to school fees, and Code of Conduct for learners.
>
> Parents have an obligation to support their children to attend school regularly". *(Education Labour Relations Council, 1999: 1-15)*

Parents seem not to understand that they have a very important role to play in the education of their children and share the responsibility with the state. To be drawn into the new curriculum, which of course encompasses OBE, the first step for parents is to understand it. They should also get involved in the school governing bodies so that they could be more empowered to contribute positively towards the success of their children.

1.4 Statement of the problem

Like any other new feature within the education system one expected that Outcomes-based Education would come along with challenges, which everybody involved in it, will have to face and battle at all costs to overcome. This study was to find out the role parents had to play in the implementation of the new curriculum, the extent to which they were involved, and the challenges and barriers they would be facing.

One assumed that without the participation of the parents in the learner-oriented OBE, the programme might fail to achieve the desired benefits for their children. The participation of the parents is particularly important in that this new system is very expensive. Parents will be called upon to contribute financially more than before or to engage profoundly in fund-raising activities. Parents will have to help the learners do projects and assignments at home. One wondered whether the parents would really live up to these expectations. This concern emanated from the fact that as one observed and heard, parents seemed to be reluctant to take their rightful position within the educational operations that affect their children.

The study was to investigate the responsibilities of parents in the effective implementation and management of Curriculum 2005.

1.5 Specific questions related to the problem

1. What were the general opinions and the attitudes of parents regarding the new approach in the education system?
2. What were the responsibilities of parents in the implementation and management of Curriculum 2005?
3. What were the challenges parents faced in their involvement in Curriculum 2005?
4. Which areas of school management were affected negatively due to the lack of parental involvement?

1.6 Purpose of the research

The purpose of this study was to conduct an analysis of responsibilities of parents in the education of their children with the intention of finding out guidelines that would help them for the effective implementation and management of Curriculum 2005 in the Phokeng Circuit, Rustenburg district.

The specific aims were:

1. To find out the role of parents in the effective implementation and management of Curriculum 2005.
2. To investigate the difficulties and specific challenges parents face in their involvement in the education of their children due to the introduction of Curriculum 2005.
3. To investigate the general attitude and opinions of parents towards OBE and Curriculum 2005.

1.7 Rationale for the study

Lack of parental involvement in the learner's education is regarded as one of the major causes of poor quality education in the underprivileged

communities. With the introduction of OBE, there is a need for parental involvement in the educational activities of learners.

Once parental practices that are relatively successful in improving cognitive growth can be identified, one may be able to help more parents to help their children reach their intellectual potential.

The home environment, in which the child is to complete his or her homework, plays an important part for the successful accomplishment of his or her outcomes. Parents should know how to help their children and should provide a very conducive environment in which the child can study. However, there are home situations that are far from ideal. Therefore, this research was aimed at finding out the level of parental involvement in the new education system.

1.8 Limitations

This study was limited in its scope and design. It was conducted only in the population of Phokeng circuit that consisted of a sample of 240 parents and 60 educators. The study might represent the Rustenburg district in the NorthWest province, but not the entire South Africa. Therefore, a general conclusion on the involvement of parents in the teaching and learning of children might only be reached for the Rustenburg district.

1.9 Definition of terms

1.9.1 Curriculum

A curriculum is everything planned by educators, which will help develop the learner. This can be extramural sporting activity, a debate, or even a visit to the library. It is the means, the blueprint, for achieving the ends set by the society. (Department of Education, 1997)

In this study, the term curriculum includes all aspects of teaching and learning planned by the educators and to be supported by the parents and the community.

1.9.2 Curriculum 2005

The Curriculum 2005 is a new school curriculum "based on the principles of co-operation, critical thinking and social responsibility which empowers individuals to participate in all aspects of society" (Department of Education, 1997).

This new curriculum aim at equipping all learners with the knowledge, competencies and orientations needed for success after they leave school or have completed their training. The new curriculum is learner-centred. It will effect a shift from one which has been a content-based to one which is based on outcomes.

1.9.3 Implementation

Implementation (of curriculum) is a process of changing the practice (materials, teaching methods, beliefs etc.) that exists to some new or revised practice, in order to attain certain desired learning outcomes for learners (Glatter, et al. 1988).

1.9.4 Management

Management is a process of activities that are carried out to enable an organisation (such as a school) to accomplish its goals and objectives by employing human and material resources for that purpose (Cronje, et al. 1997).

School management is an integrated process that involves planning, determination of policies, organisation, financing, leadership and control.

1.9.5 Outcomes-Based Education

It is a result-oriented, learner-centred approach to learning. This approach requires teachers and learners to focus their attention on the desired end results of each learning process. (Van der Horst and McDonald, 1997)

1.9.6 Outcomes

These are the results of learning processes and refer to knowledge, skills, attitudes and values within particular contexts. In Outcomes-based Education an outcome is a successful demonstration of learning that occurs at the completion point of a set of learning experiences. (Van der Horst and McDonald, 1997)

1.9.7 Responsibility

The ability to make informed decisions and accept the consequences. A responsible person is legally or morally liable for carrying out a duty, for the care of something or somebody in a position where one may be blamed for loss and/or failure. Parents want their children to grow up to be responsible adults. (Office of Educational Research and Improvement, 1995).

The South African Schools Act (Act, 84) 1996, gives the school governing bodies the responsibility to strive for the development of the school. Parents have a responsibility to contribute towards the development of the school by rendering services to the school.

1.9.8 School Governors

According to the South African Schools Act (Act, 84) 1996, School Governors are people democratically elected to serve on a governing body of either a primary or post primary school.

1.9.9 School Governing Body

A school governing body is a structure that governs the school; it stands in a position of trust towards the school. It is made up of the School Principal, elected representatives of educators, non-teaching (administrative) staff, parents and learners in the case of secondary schools. (Department of Education, 1997)

1.10 Research design

The type of research appropriate for this study was descriptive. Descriptive studies are those studies, which are concerned with describing the characteristics of a particular individual or of a group. According to McMillan and Schumacher (2001) a descriptive research is a study that describes the current status of something.

A survey design was employed for the purpose of this research because the study of attitudes could be best understood in its natural settings by surveys. In such a research, the researcher does not survey the entire population. He/she uses a sample, which he/she trusts, will be representative of the population from which conclusion can be drawn.

The research design consisted of data collection, analysis and interpretations.

1.10.1 Empirical investigation

1.10.1.1 Population

There are twenty-nine (29) primary and intermediate schools in Phokeng circuit, all of which have introduced Curriculum 2005. The estimated population of parents (a parent to a learner) whose children attended these 29 schools in the area was about 3000.

1.10.1.2 Sampling

Out of the total number of 29 primary and intermediate schools in the Phokeng circuit, six (6) schools were randomly selected. Forty (40) parents from each of the selected schools were engaged in this study, making a total of 240 parents as the sample of this study. All parents chosen had their children attending OBE classes. Ten (10) educators from each of these schools were also selected, making a total of sixty (60) for this study. All the selected educators were involved in the outcomes-based approach, Curriculum 2005.

1.10.2 Data collection techniques

1.10.2.1 Questionnaires

Two questionnaires were designed, one for parents (Marked A) and the other for educators (Marked B); and administered to the sample of parents and educators. The aim of the questionnaire to the parents was to obtain information on the role of parents, their problems and their opinions in the education of their children. The questionnaire to the educators was to obtain information on their expectation of parents in Outcomes-Based Education.

The researcher solicited the help of the principals of the selected schools to randomly select the sample of parents and educators.

1.10.2.2 Data collection procedures

Questionnaires (Appendix A) were given to the children of the sampled parents on Friday (day 1), so that those parents who worked far away from home could get Saturday and Sunday to fill them. Children were asked to assist their parents in filling the questionnaires if their parents were illiterate. Respondents were requested to return the completed questionnaires to the school on Monday (day 4) through their children.

Questionnaires (Appendix B) to the selected educators were distributed through the principals of their respective schools. The completed questionnaires were collected from the respondents on the next working day.

1.10.3 Analysis and interpretation of data

Most of the data collected were quantitative in nature. Tables, figures and graphs were used to present and summarise the different aspects. The data was analysed using descriptive statistics.

1.11 Chapter headings

1. Orientation
2. Review of Literature
3. Research Design
4. Analysis and Interpretation of Data
5. Summary, Recommendations and Conclusion

1.12 Summary

The introduction of Curriculum 2005 (Outcomes-Based Education) came along with numerous challenges to the designers, implementers and supporters (parents).

Parents seem to be uncertain about their role in the new education system. This may be due to their ignorance, illiteracy, attitudes, and/or resistance to change. The State, the Department of Education and educators expect the parents to face the challenges and issues related to the education of their children. Parents need to be guided and empowered so that they can contribute positively and effectively for the success of the present education system.

CHAPTER 2

2. *REVIEW OF LITERATURE*

2.1 Introduction

A general view of the responsibilities of parents in the education of their children and the implementation and management of Curriculum 2005 will be presented in this chapter. Documents were selected to reflect research on the effects of parent involvement on student achievement and other student outcomes. Parents' primary responsibility is to make sure that their children are getting the best education that they can afford. For this purpose parents need to become part and parcel of the school system to make it effective and attain its educational objectives.

Researches show that parental involvement in a child's education is a strong predictor of student achievement: typically, the more involved the parent, the better off the child. Vassallo (2000) suggests that parental involvement is the key to educational excellence so critical to children's futures. Once empowered to assume the full measure of their responsibility to support their children's education, Vassallo argues that parents will become partners with educators in creating and maintaining the schools their children need.

The above views show that for effective education in schools there must be a three-way partnership among the educators, the parents and the community. Teaching in isolation from the family and community accomplishes only short-term aims, at best, and can even result in frustration for those who wish to serve favourably the interests of the learners.

The roles every one expects parents to fulfil according to Small, (1990) include:

(a) providing basic needs and protecting children from the natural and social environment,

(b) guiding physical and psychosocial development, and

(c) advocating within the wider community on behalf of children.

2.2 Reasons for the involvement of parents in their children's education

Lustberg (1999) suggests that parents are their children's first and most influential teachers regarding the value of learning, good learning habits and respect for the educational process.

Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (1997), reviewed psychological theory and research critical to understanding why parents become involved in their children's elementary and secondary education. They found three major constructs that are believed to be central to parent's basic involvement in decisions.

- *First*, parents' role construction defines their beliefs about what they are supposed to do in their children's education and appears to establish the basic range of activities that parents construe as important, necessary, and permissible for their own actions with and on behalf of children.
- *Second*, parents' sense of efficacy for helping their children succeed in school focuses on the extent to which parents believe that through their involvement they can exert positive influence on their children's educational outcomes.
- *Third*, general invitations, demands, and opportunities for involvement refer to parents' perceptions that the child and school want them to be involved.

Macbeth (1989: 4 -12) spells out the following legal responsibilities of parents in relation to their children's education. Parents are an integral part to

schooling. Parents teach their children and through that teaching they influence the extent to which the teachers can be effective.

2.2.1 Parents are responsible in law for the child's education

The United Nations Declaration of the Rights of the Child states:

The best interests of the child shall be the principle that guides those responsible for his/her education and guidance. That responsibility lies in the first place with his/her parents.

The view of the church is similar and can be seen in the Declaration of Christian Education by the Second Vatican Council, which states:

Since it is the parents who have given life to their children, it is they who have the serious duty and obligation of educating their offspring. Hence parents must be recognised as the first and foremost educators of their children.

The Basic Law of the Federal Republic of West Germany states:

The care and education of children are the natural rights of parents and the responsibility is primarily theirs. The national community shall check upon their endeavours in this respect.

As there is no basic law or bill of rights to enunciate fundamental principles in Britain, the law tends to be administrative. Section 36 of the 1944 Act states who is responsible for the education of the individual child which is as follows:

It shall be the duty of the parent of every child of compulsory school age to cause him to receive full-time education suitable of his age, ability, and aptitude, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise.

In South Africa:

> The legal bases of parents' say in South African schools date from the nineteenth century during T. F Burgers' presidency of the Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek (ZAR). In the Education Act of 1874 (18: section 28-30), provision was made for parent participation in the management of the school (18: section 54)... Modern educational legislation has confirmed and extended this principle of a say for parents in the education system (Bondesio, et al. 1995: 100).

The South African Schools Act (Act 84) of 1996 requires all children between the ages of 7 and 15 to attend school. All parents and guardians must make sure that all learners of this age are registered to go to school.

> As a parent, the relationship with the school starts on the day that the parent decides to register the child with a particular school. This relationship is defined by set of rights and responsibilities towards the school (Department of Education, 1997).

According to Moore (1995), all parents want their children to be successful in their endeavours. The school is no different! Parents want their children to learn and be accepted by their peers and teachers. The teacher's legal role has always been 'in loco parentis'. Parents have primary responsibility for their children. The teacher is offering parents their service as a professional in educating their children.

> Parent involvement is the active and willing participation of parents in a wide range of school-based and home-based activities, which may be educational or non-educational. It extends from supporting and upholding the school ethos to supervising children's homework at home. Parent involvement implies mutual co-operation, sharing and support (Squelch and Lemmer, 1994: 93).

2.3 Parents and their numerous responsibilities

Parental involvement includes varying responsibilities on the part of the parents and the community. Epstein (1995) has stated that parental involvement is composed of six types or categories, which are equally important. They are parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision-making and collaborating with the community.

- Effective Parenting:
  Effective parenting deals with all the necessary tools, skills and resources to establish supportive home environments.
- Communicating:
  Resources that identify effective ways of communicating between home and school to benefit the child.
- Volunteering:
  Schools need to solicit help and support from parents to offer their services.
- Learning at Home:
  Resources that identify ways in which parents and families can assist learners at home with various school-related activities.
- Decision-making:
  Ways in which parents can empower and advocate for themselves as well as take part in the decision-making process.
- Collaborating with the Community:
  Ways for parents and schools to actively and effectively network with community, organisations and leaders to improve education.

2.3.1 Effective Parenting

"Parenting involves taking responsibility seriously, taking advantage of every opportunity to enhance children's learning and providing children with challenges. Children absorb life experiences indiscriminately. To a large

extent these life experiences form children's character, feelings and values, and they provide the window through which they will view the world" (Villarreal (1995) quoted in Schultz, 1998: 197).

Atkin, et al. (1988: 87) suggest that parents have a more intimate knowledge of their own children than any one can ever hope to have, and it is this intimacy which develops in all the different settings of family life, and as the child changes, develops, and matures, that enables parents to develop the skills to motivate each child in a different way.

Kruger and Van Schalkwyk (1997: 148) emphasise that the primary educator of a child is his or her parent. Parents have the sole responsibility for the care, development and education of the child and not that of the school, the teacher, the community or the state. According to Kruger, et al. (1996: 54) the family home is where a child first learns what is important and what is less important; differentiate good from bad; identify what has value and what is valueless. The primary educational structure in which a child develops into an adult is the family.

These responsibilities can further be explained that parents are expected to provide their children with adequate nutritious food, a safe and secure shelter, and clothing and medical care. They also have a duty to protect their children from psychological and physical threats in the environment including harm from individuals, groups or institutions by monitoring behaviour and teaching self-protective skills. Parents are also expected to guide their children in cognitive, educational, physical, sexual, social, moral, cultural, and spiritual development by establishing limits, provide them with information and support, and modelling appropriate behaviours. Parents in their advocacy roles can promote safe neighbourhoods and communities, good schools, enough recreational facilities, and help youngsters interact with educational and economic institutions effectively.

The role of the family and parents in the education of a child from the early societies to the present are summarised as follows from Kruger, et al. (1996: 61 – 71):

- Ancient Greeks (776 – 338 BC) did not contribute much for the development of home education. They considered the state as the mother of citizens. Home education was further neglected as foster-parents and housekeepers looked after children.
- Ancient Romans (750 BC – 65 AD) gave much value to their home and family. Within the family, the father and mother shared in responsibility of educating their children themselves. The early Romans did not delegate home education of their children to any others. The mother herself was the first educator of her children. During the Hellenised Roman period some of the responsibilities of the parent were taken over by nurses slaves and schools.
- After the Greeks conquered the Romans, the Graeco-Roman education mainly took place outside the home. As the schools were better prepared than the parents were, they took over the task of the parents.
- Ancient Jews (586 BC – 100 AD) gave much importance for the education of their children and it took place within the family. The father was responsible for the education of his children; but the mother also played an important role in this regard. Rich and aristocratic families did make use of teachers, who took the responsibilities of parents.
- Early Christians (0 – 500 AD) considered life as a continuous religious process, and the education of the child took place in such a climate in the family home. Education of children was considered as a primary parental duty; and both parents took the responsibilities equally to educate the child.
- Middle Ages (500 – 1500 AD): During this period children were cared and educated by the mother up to the age of seven years. The children were then placed under the care of another family for further education. The parents did take responsibility for religious, moral and literary instruction of their children.

- The Renaissance period (1450 – 1600 AD): The education and training of a child during the Renaissance was chiefly the responsibility of the mother, sometimes with the assistance of nursemaids. The father also did contribute for home education of the child. The church emphasised the importance of home education and urged parents to accept this responsibility.
- During the 17th and 18th centuries educational thinkers like Jan Amos Comenius, John Locke and Jean Jacques Rousseau expressed their opinions on home education. They all maintained that parents must jointly take the responsibility to provide early education for their children.
  Rousseau condemned the then practice of sending children away from home to be cared and educated by others.
- In the 19th century, Pestalozzi and Froebel emphasised the role of family - parents as the centre of all education; and considered family education as the primary responsibility of the parents. The school, state and church only complemented the home education.

Kenyatta (quoted in Reedy and Woodhead, 1988: 45 – 48) narrated the system of education in Kenya, East Africa before the arrival of the Europeans in *Facing Mount Kenya* as given below:

> The child has to pass various stages of age-groupings with a system of education defined for every status in life. The parents take up the responsibility of educating their children until they reach the stage of tribal education. ... The education of very small children is entirely in the hands of the mother and nurse. ... When the child has grown beyond babyhood, the father takes charge of the boy's education, while the mother takes the whole responsibility of the girl's education and a part of the boy's education.

David (1980: 41) pointed out from early research that by 1900 the relationships between parents and children and between parents and the State, over schooling were entirely changed from the beginning of the century.

Parents were no longer entirely responsible for their children. But different classes of parents had different responsibilities: working class parents had to leave their children to education and, in return, were required to behave in particular ways towards them before, during and after schooling.

> Parents play the largest and most important role in shaping their children's sense of themselves and supporting them through the barrage of cultural and peer pressures that do so much to distract them from what is truly important: the kinds of people they are and the contributions they can make to family, friends and the world (Brody, (1997) quoted in Lustberg, 1998).

The curriculum of the home has certain specific patterns of family life that correspond with a child's success in academic learning. These family practices are listed below under three headings.

The Parent-child Relationship

- Daily conversation about everyday events;
- Expressions of affection;
- Family discussion of books, newspapers, magazines, television programmes;
- Family visit to libraries, museums, zoos, historical sites, cultural activities; and
- Encouragement to try new words expands vocabulary.

Routine of Family Life

- Formal study time at home;
- A daily routine that includes time to eat, sleep, play, work, study and read;
- A quiet place to study and read; and
- Family interest in hobbies, games, activities of educational value.

Family Expectations and Supervision

- Priority given to schoolwork and reading over television and recreation;

- Expectation of punctuality;
- Expectation that children do their best;
- Concern for correct and effective use of language;
- Parental monitoring of children's peer group;
- Monitoring and joint analysis of television viewing; and
- Parental knowledge of child's progress in school and personal growth.

Schorr (1999) emphasises that in order to succeed in life; children need supportive parents and families. In order to be successful, many parents too need support and education.

2.3.2 Communicating

"An effective parent communication system is essential to effective teaching and learning. Parents can represent a great deal of potential help and support for teachers and schools" Moore (1995: 304 – 306). It is difficult to design a system of communication that will be appropriate with all parents. Factors such as parents' and preference for reading, listening, speaking, and writing; time available to devote to school activities; parent's level of comfort in working with teachers, administrators, and counsellors; and parent's level of literacy will influence communication. Communicating with parents requires skill and tact. Parents expect teachers to be friendly but professional. According to Wade and Moore (1993: 58) the views of parents are essential to decisions about their children, because only parents have access to important information and observations about their children's needs. Parents also carry the main responsibility for helping their children's development and for maximising their potential.

Parents must be aware that the staff and teachers' need the necessary *'tools to do their job'* and must understand the difficulties that schools face.

> It is unreasonable to expect a school to succeed in producing enhanced standards in a full curriculum if it does not have enough

> specialist staff. Parents must be helped to understand the constraints under which the staff teaches. What is essential is greater openness, more understanding and, yes, more accountability (Sayer and Williams, 1989: 114).

Fullan (1991) cites a study conducted in Minnesota, where educators have developed an ongoing home-based program involving parents as tutors for their own children. Parents and grandparents of more than 50% of learners in participating schools have been trained to assist their young ones in mathematics as a supplement to the normal school curriculum. The result was a very significant improvement in learner achievement. The ways in which parents and the family can be involved in the education of a child are different. Parents can listen to their children reading, help their children to remember certain material, ask questions, test their knowledge and understanding, take them for extra classes, and help and monitor homework (Kruger and Van Schalkwyk, 1997: 149).

Carpenter, Paris and Paris (1999) conducted research in the United States in schools selected as 'exemplary' in delivering effective programs to youngsters in poverty. They compared those scored above average on state-wide tests with those that scored below average. They found reliable differences favouring the higher performing school in a number of factors, including: the number of parent-volunteers working in classrooms and the frequency of communication with homes of students.

Taylor, et al. (1999) studied 14 schools across the United States with moderate to high poverty levels, grouping the schools by learner's average reading achievement. They found that in the most effective schools, significant school factors included strong links to parents and strong home-school communication. Nistler and Maiers (2000) demonstrated how urban families in the United States could become successful collaborators in primary school children's literacy learning. Nistler and Maiers argue that urban families can provide teachers with talent, energy, and insight about children's learning. They described how parents who were scheduled to participate each Friday in

classroom literacy activities become empowered and real contributors to their children's education.

Clark (1992) states that as children move into the school system, with their environment and their opportunities no longer as closely controlled by the home, parents often begin to feel powerless. They may be unaware that they have ways to influence what is happening to their child. Both parents and educators want what is best for the child; at least, what they perceive to be the best. The most effective way to change or correct a bad situation is not by direct confrontation, in most instances, but by organised knowledgeable co-operative effort. According to Walberg and Paik (2000), learning is enhanced when schools encourage parents to stimulate their children's intellectual development. They found from various researches that co-operative efforts by parents and educators to modify alterable academic conditions in the home have strong, beneficial effects on learning. "Increasing the demand for education depends largely on persuading parents that education is valuable. Parents should also be involved in schooling. When parents are active in the educational process, their children are more likely to attend school" (Lockheed, et al. 1991: 166).

What happens at home comes to school; what happens at school goes home. Sharing and comparing their perceptions, teacher and parents together can be most effective in providing for the child. Kruger (1996) emphasises that when there is a close connection between the child's life – world space in the family, the school and the community (life outside), the child will be in a position to experience greater security and consequently achieve full self-actualisation, and thus perceive his or her school life as pleasant and meaningful.

2.3.3 Volunteering

Catron and Allen (1993: 51) suggest that by parents participating as volunteers in the school program, can gain a broader understanding of children's development, instructional strategies, and enabling care giving.

Parents can use the knowledge and skills to enrich children's experiences at home and at the school. There are several ways to involve parents in volunteering, either directly in the classroom or indirectly.

Parents can

- be sponsors for special field trips and events
- share their knowledge by leading special activity for the children based on their culture, occupation, or hobby.
- be active participants in fund-raising projects
- contribute as policy makers and child advocates.
- be active in decisions involving the policies and procedures of the school program.
- promote rights of children in local, regional and national child care issues

2.3.4 Learning at home

Fullan (1991: 228) cites the systematic research conducted by Epstein in 1988 on parent and school interaction, and argues that there is consistent evidence that parents' encouragement, activities, interest at home and their participation at school affect their children's achievement, even after the students' ability and family socio-economic status is taken into account. Students gain in personal and academic development if their families emphasise schooling, let their children know they do, and do so continually over the years. Wang, et al. (1993) found from research that parental engagement at home and engagement at school are not equally important to children's learning. At the same time, extensive research reviews find that the home environment is among the most important influences on academic performance.

A crucial parent responsibility, according to Lustberg (1999), is to help set up a realistic schedule. Most students have busy after-school involvement. Parents and their children need to work together as they plan the daily and

weekly events. This helps them establish a schedule, which allows enough time to get short and long-term assignments completed. When children collaborate with parents on this important task, they usually acquire a sense of ownership and take more responsibility in adhering to the schedule.

Wood (2002), in a study in the United Kingdom found that children who engaged in a variety of pre-school parent-child activities showed the best achievement in reading, vocabulary, memory and aspects of phonological awareness.

Analysis of more than a dozen studies of the effects of homework in various subjects showed that the assignment and completion of homework yield positive effects on academic achievement. Extending homework time is found to be a way to lengthen study time and increase achievement, although the quality of the assignments and of the completed work are also important. "Like a three-legged stool, homework requires a teacher to assign it and provide feedback, a parent to monitor it and a student to do it. If one leg is weak, the stool may fall down" (Walberg and Paik, 2000: 9).

Parents, according to Wheldall and Merrett (1984:72) for example, control some very powerful reinforces for their children at home and they will probably be just as interested as the child's teacher in helping him to progress academically or improve his social behaviour in the school situation. Finn (1998), found from various researches conducted in the United States that parents of high-achieving students had distinct styles of interacting with their children. These parents created emotionally supportive home environments and provided assurance when youngsters encountered failure. They viewed school performance as being accomplished through regular practice and work. They accepted responsibility for assisting their children to acquire learning strategies.

According to Powell (1991), children who have access to reading and writing materials, who have parents, who read frequently to them and take them to the library have been found to be more skilled readers than children who do

not experience these encouragement. Learning is enhanced by responsiveness. Teaching is most effective if provided by parents and other caregivers who are aware of and responsive to their children's specific learning patterns, needs, and capabilities. In addition, Powell and Peet (1992) found that parent's contributions to children's learning are most effective when incorporated into daily family routines.

Lockheed, et al. (1991) cites several studies that draw attention to factors in children's teachability. School learning is a joint process involving the home and the school. Family background affects the probability that children will enrol in, attend, and complete various levels of education. Children, whose homes provide a stimulating environment, full of physical objects and learning materials, consistently learn more quickly in school than children from more deprived backgrounds.

Finn (1998) identified the following types of parental engagement at home that are consistently associated with school performance of children.

- Actively organising and monitoring time
- Helping with home work
- Discussing school matters with the child
- Parents reading and being read to by their children

2.3.4.1 Home-based activities

Mortimore, et al. (1988: 255) conducted a study of school effectiveness and found that parental involvement practices represented one of the twelve factors that differentiated effective from less effective schools. Their findings show that parent involvement in the life of the school produces a positive influence upon learner's progress and development. The involvement included help in the classrooms and on educational visits, and attendance at meetings to discuss children's progress. Parent involvement in learner's educational development within the home was also found to be very beneficial. Parents

who read to their children, heard them read, and provided them with books at home, had a positive effect upon their children's learning.

Clark (1992) in his study found that parents of successful students actively helped them organise their daily and weekly schedules and checked regularly to see whether they are following the routines. Taylor (1996) found that children who are involved in regular routines at home tend to have better school performance.

Research on monitoring children's use of time (Crouter, et al. 1990; Ho and Williams 1996) identified that parents of academically successful students make sure that they are informed about their youngsters' activities in school, their school performance, and whether or not they have been assigned homework; and they make certain that place and time are allocated for homework. In addition, school performance is better among students whose parents know where they are, who they are with, and when they plan to come home. These parents also exercise reasonable control over non-school activities: television viewing in particular.

Ho and Williams (1996) also found that children whose parents converse regularly with them about school experiences perform better academically than children who rarely discuss school with their parents. Other research suggests that the nature of parent-child discussions is also important. Clark (1983) and Steinburg (1996) emphasise that parents should be willing to hear about difficulties, as well as successes, and play a supportive role, encouraging persistence when schoolwork or relationships at school are problematic. Research conducted by Taylor (1996) supports joint parent-student decision making when the situation permits, such as choosing what project to undertake or, in higher grades, what course to take. This level of parental interest is associated with higher student engagement, as well as academic achievement.

Clark (1983), Finn (1993), Ho and Williams (1996) have all stated that homework offers an opportunity for parents to show an interest and to take a

direct role in their children's schooling. Making sure that homework is completed on time, discussing the details of assignments and projects, explaining the assignments, checking accuracy, and actively helping children complete assignments have all been found to be related to children's academic performance. Children learned a huge amount from their parents before they even entered school. And, a parent's role as a 'teacher' doesn't end when the child enters school. There are a number of ways in which 'teaching' continues to be a parent's responsibility and part of a parent's daily routine. Providing time and place for doing homework, reading with the child, making sure homework is understood and finished, talking about what is being done at school, and continuing to learn how to help are just a few of the ways in which parents 'teach'.

Researchers have found that "regular reading with a parent can significantly reduce antisocial behaviour among disruptive children. The study provided clear evidence that simple, focussed parenting programmes could be highly effective in improving behaviour from a very young age" (Times, 2 September, 2002). This also shows that there is an important connection between children's reading to their parents and reading achievement; especially if the parents guide and correct the young readers.

2.3.5 Decision-making

Cotton and Wikelund (2001) found from surveys that most parents would like to play an active role in any activity, which provides them the opportunity to take part in decision-making about their children's school programs, whereas most school administrators and teachers exhibit great reluctance to encourage parents to become partners in governance.

According to Lopate, et al. (1969), when parents are involved in the decision-making process of education, their children are likely to do better in school.

This increased achievement may be due to the lessening distance between the goals of the home and the goals of the school and to the changes in

teachers' attitudes resulting from their greater sense of accountability when the parents of the child are visible in the schools. It may also be related to the increased sense of control the child feels over his own destiny when he sees his parents actively engaged in decision-making in his school (Lopate, et al. 1969: 143 – 144).

Areas in which parents may be helping to make program decisions include goal setting, development and implementation of program activities, assessment, personnel decisions, and funding allocations.

Ornstein and Hunkins (1993:351) emphasise that education involves politics. Therefore, those affected by education must be involved in some aspects of decision-making about education, including curriculum matters. Parents should not just be readers of evaluation reports or receivers of test results. They should be contributing participants of curriculum teams engaged in all aspects of curriculum.

It is a known fact that all parents are not sufficiently educated to become contributing participants of the above mentioned curriculum teams. But there are educated parents who can (on behalf of all parents) go to the classroom and ask to see the unit themes or thematic units to which their children are subjected in the course of the school year. They then need to ask to see the supplemental teaching materials and curriculum that will be used to teach the unit theme or thematic unit. If the teacher plays ignorant, parents should ask to see all materials that will be used in addressing the unit theme or thematic unit. Look at this material with a critical eye as to what it is imparting on the child.

2.3.5.1 Parents as stakeholders

Parents have a stake in the school of their children as clients, as co-educators and as taxpayers. Macbeth (quoted in Pollard & Bourne, 1994: 303) suggests that it is democratically reasonable, in a decentralised system in which important decisions are made at school and class levels, that those with a

stake in a school should influence the nature of those decisions. As parents are stakeholders on behalf of their children, they should be able to influence school policies.

2.3.6 Collaborating with the community

"Parent's involvement in their children's schooling is associated with higher academic achievement, better attendance, more positive attitudes and behaviour, and greater willingness to do homework" (Kruger and Van Schalkwyk, 1997: 148).

Participation and involvement is expected to give the participants a stake in the decision. The creative energies of teachers and parents will be engaged and they will be more knowledgeable about the decisions. This will result in a commitment to and support for the decisions. In addition, the participants will feel responsible for the decisions and will accept accountability for the decisions. "It is imperative for the future of black schools [in South Africa] that parents, the state, teachers (unions) and the private sector play a vital role. Parents are expected to fulfil their parental obligations in their own schools" (Sibande, 2001).

Research in the area of the family and education, has traditionally not concentrated on the mediation of the State. There have been two main approaches. For sociologists of education the concern has been to understand the impact the family has on the education system and, in particular, on the success and achievements of children in school. In the last forty years or so, a vast quantity of research evidence has been amassed, most of which points out that parents are far more influential than schools over their children's educational progress (David, 1980: 4-5). In 1967, in the United Kingdom, the Plowden Committee recommendations from research evidence suggested the importance of parental attitudes in the success of primary school pupils. The committee proposed that the government should find the means to encourage some parental participation within primary schools.

"Parents who are illiterate or semi-literate ... can share with the class their experiences with regard to local history, or to speak about aspects of the indigenous cultures they represent" (Jacobs, et al. 2001: 88). Parents and communities are inextricably linked to the education system. Van der Westhuizen, et al. (2002: 24) suggest that there is a need for parents and the local communities to understand what the school is trying to achieve for their children, and they must support these goals.

According to Henderson, et al. (1986), parents and educators are team members with specific roles and responsibilities. "In reality, both home and school have the same goal. They both have the interest of the children at heart.... It is helpful for parents to keep in mind that the school's general goals are the same as theirs – better education for the children" (Peterson, 1982). Henderson, et al. (1986) suggested the following roles that parents can play in their children's education.

- Parents as partners
- Parents as Co-Educators/ Collaborators and Problem-Solvers.

2.3.7 Parents as partners

Parents move from the role of primary educators to a situation in which they share this role with the schools. Much of the parents' role at this stage relates to the legal responsibility to enrol the child in school and ensure that they are properly dressed, get to school on time and attend each day. Parents are expected to purchase necessary supplies and equipment for the children's learning.

Epstein (1986) in Maryland, USA, conducted a survey involving 82 grade 3 and 5 classrooms and 1,269 parents. Many teachers "believe that they can be effective only if they obtain parental assistance on learning activities at home"

(Epstein, 1986: 277) and they believe that their responsibilities are shared if parents are involved.

Docking (1990: 23-26) suggests that parents must be regarded as participants in the mainstream events of the school's life. He used the term 'partnership' in two senses:

(i) parents to participate directly in the education of their own children as complementary educators of their own children and perhaps others;

(ii) parents to participate in policy-making and curriculum development.

Pollard and Tann cite Cullingford (1985) in considering parents as partners. The educational experiences provided by parents and teachers should not be separated by conventional boundaries of 'home' and 'school'. Parents may want to participate more fully in their child's education than in the past (Pollard and Tan, 1990: 44) by discussing the curriculum and the child's response; having open access to the classroom; and having regular informal contacts with educators. Many consider this as a welcome and positive change where parents and school work together for the greater benefit of the child.
Frederikse (1992) interviewed Janet Bowan, a primary school teacher from Zimbabwe and talked about parents- domestic workers – who were illiterate.

> And they would still sit down at the desks and page through the children's books. I even saw one paging his daughter's book when it was upside-down. I knew he couldn't read a word of it; but his face was just beaming, because his child was being given the opportunity that he never had. And his child did very well indeed, academically (Frederikse, 1992: 108).

2.3.8 Parents as co-educators/Collaborators and Problem solvers

Collinson (1996: 49) stressed that parents or guardians know their children far better and in many more ways than teachers. Most of a child's education happens outside school, especially in the home, so parents are the co-educators of children with the teachers. During the early years of the child, the emotional bonds in the family make home- learning especially effective. "Parents observe what their children enjoy doing, and they make judgements about why this is so"(Atkin, et al. 1988: 87) through constant observation. Because the parents inescapably educate their children, a professional educator cannot ignore these non-professional educators.

Topping (2000) suggests that parents can become effective tutors of their children. Tutors are not necessarily professional teachers but they can help and support the learning of others in an interactive, purposeful and systematic way. As a tutor, a parent can observe the child's performance closely, check for errors, and promote self-correction through discussion. Peterson (1989) noted that the familiarity of the home environment, in contrast to the often-congested classroom, could be a very comfortable setting for tutoring.

The following findings come from a study from Tomorrow's Men project, supported by Oxford University and funded by Top Man.

> Fathers who devote time to their sons – even as little as five minutes a day – are giving them a far greater chance to grow up as confident adults, a parenting research project has found. Boys who feel that their fathers devote time especially to them and talk about their worries, schoolwork and social lives almost all emerge as motivated and optimistic young men full of confidence and hope (The Independent, 1 February 1999).

"In the light of changes that have taken place in education in South Africa during the past [few] years, parents are now expected, more than ever before to assume greater responsibility for the day-to-day management of schools"

(Squelch and Lemmer, 1994: 92). Parents with or without academic/ professional qualifications have a role to play in the education of their children. Outcomes-based education encourages the participation of parents in the education of their children, as well as that of other members of the community (Jacobs, et al. 2001: 88).

Cotton and Wikelund (2001) suggest that parents, outside the home can serve as advocates for the school. Or they can take an active role in the governance and decision-making necessary for planning, developing, and providing an education for the community's children. For this to happen, Squelch and Lemmer (1994) advocate teachers and parents to realise that effective education requires close co-operation between teachers and parents, and positive home school relations.

Cotton and Wikelund (2001) also describe several different forms of parent participation in education and with the schools. Parents can support their children's schooling by attending school functions and responding to school obligations, such as parent-teacher conferences. They can become more involved in helping their children improve their schoolwork by providing encouragement, arranging for appropriate study time and space, modelling desired behaviour such as reading for pleasure, monitoring homework, and actively tutoring children at home.

2.3.9 Parents: Motivate

Motivation, according to Smith, et al. (1994) includes those parenting practices that promote intellectual development in children. They found that parents who take their responsibility as their children's teachers seriously, and who perform their teaching functions effectively and sensitively throughout their children's lives, are more likely than other parents to have children who become confident and skilled learners and who attain high levels of educational achievement.

Smith, et al. (1994) provide the following parent behaviours as critical component elements of Motivation:

Motivating parents...

- Teach their children about themselves, and the world around them.
- Stimulate their children's curiosity, imagination, and the search for knowledge.
- Create beneficial learning conditions for their children.
- Help their children process and manage information

2.3.10 Parental Involvement at various levels

According to Squelch and Lemmer (1994), parents can be involved in the school and the education of their children in many different ways at various levels as given below:

2.3.10.1 School management

Parents can take part in the day-to-day management of the school, as part of the formal, statutory bodies such as the school governing bodies. They can be involved in developing the school policy, planning the school budget, liasing with the general parent body and fund raising activities.

2.3.10.2 Educational activities

Parents have a right to know what their children are learning, their children's progress and performance. They can also influence certain areas of the school curriculum such as religious education, physical education and sex education.

Parents' educational activities include the following:

- Monitoring their children's progress
- Discussing the curriculum
- Involving in reading programs

- Developing programs for children with special needs
- Supervising homework
- Assisting in the classroom, such as listening to reading
- Helping their children study.

2.3.10.3 Non-educational activities

Parents can be involved in a number of non-educational activities such as:

- fund-raising
- organising social events
- assisting with extra-mural activities
- playground duties
- accompanying children on school trips
- assisting with administrative tasks like typing and duplicating
- arranging workshops for parents

The "benefits of parent involvement include improved school performance, reduced drop-out rates, a decrease in delinquency and a more positive attitude towards the school" (Squelch and Lemmer, 1994: 93). In fact, these aspects of parental involvement discussed above have become extremely important at this time in our educational planning for the future.

Fullan (1991) suggests the following forms of parent involvement in the education of a learner.

- Parent involvement at school as volunteers, teacher assistants' etc.
- Parent involvement in learning activities at home; assisting children at home with their homework, tutoring children at home etc.
- Home-school relations: School governance as advisors and council members.

The first two forms of involvement have a greater influence on student learning as they have more direct impact on instruction than the other forms.

Clark and others (in Fullan, 1991) found in their studies that successful schools were more likely to have parents in the classroom as aides, visitors and as volunteers. The parental involvement in the classroom rather than in the school in general, is associated to academic success.

Naybour (quoted in Sayer and Williams, 1989: 108) emphasises that parents have a key role in promoting and making public the good things in schools, and in representing the real issues through the media and parliament. In the United Kingdom, "the government clearly believes that parents must exercise a greater degree of influence upon the education our children are to receive" (Sayer and Williams, 1989: 108).

In many under developed countries, according to Lockheed, et al. (1991: 122-123), systems are fragmented and fail to delineate who is responsible for what and to whom. Teachers blame parents for not reinforcing the value of education at home and administrators for setting and enforcing ill-conceived rules and for lacking resources. Parents blame teachers for teaching poorly. Administrators blame politicians for providing inadequate funding and teachers for not doing their job.

2.4 Benefits of strong home-school partnerships

Teachers, administrators, parents and students benefit from the partnership of home and schools. Moles and D'Angelo (1991) listed the following benefits.

Teachers benefit through:

- Training about how to work effectively with families from diverse backgrounds.
- Tapping the knowledge, skills, and resources of colleagues.
- Maximizing limited resources and time through the co-operative development of standardized homework and home learning activities.

- Better understanding of parent expectations and closer communication with parents.
- Increased rate of return on homework and greater family involvement in home-learning activities.
- Increased parental support and co-operation.

Administrators benefit through:

- Better communication between school and home.
- Fewer parent complaints about inconsistent and inappropriate homework
- Better use of limited resources to link home and school.
- Improved school climate when children see parents and teachers as working partners.

Parents benefit through:

- Opportunity to become partners with teachers and to shape important decisions that enhance children's chances for success in school.
- Consistent expectations, practices, and messages about homework and home-learning activities.
- Increased opportunities to engage in home-learning activities with children.
- Access to school wide resources such as parent learning centres, homework hotlines, homework centres, parent workshops, and home visits.

Students benefit through:

- More positive attitude toward school.
- Higher achievement in reading.
- Better and more standardized grade-appropriate homework assignments.
- Completion of more homework assignments because of greater parental interest and support.
- Greater consistency between family and school goals.

To achieve the above benefits, educators need to foster parent involvement. Educators first of all, need to believe in the importance of parent involvement. According to Epstein (1991), parents are one available but untapped and undirected resource that teachers can mobilise to help more children master and maintain the needed skills for school and learning. This requires teachers' leadership in organising, evaluating, and continually building their parent involvement practice. There is special expertise on childhood and parenting which resides with children and parents themselves. There are huge reservoirs of knowledge and experience that rest in ordinary families that experts have yet to fully tap. We believe we should use their information, and ours, to ensure that the services we provide stand the best possible chance of working (MacDonald and Roberts, 1995: 6).

"It is almost a platitude to remark that 'not all education takes place in schools', yet beneath the platitude lies an important principle" (Reedy and Woodhead, 1988: 1). Concepts are taught, skills acquired, attitudes formed and behaviour changed in many contexts other than schools, although it must be admitted that the power of this argument depends a good deal on how 'education' is defined. Wright and Wright (2001) argue that parents are natural advocates for their children. Why? Because parents are their children's first teachers. They are the children's most important role models. They are responsible for their children's welfare. They have their children's best interests at heart.

Banks and Robertson (2002) found from researches that there is a growing awareness of the importance of parental involvement in education. The weight of the researches suggests that a child's education improves when his or her parents participate in the process. A few of the benefits of parental participation include increased school readiness, lower rates of absenteeism, fewer behaviour problems, and better grades.

Reid, et al. (1988: 128) emphasise that parents will also benefit from their association with their children's school. Their contact with the school will give

them direct information about the school, the curriculum, the task of the teacher and how things work generally in the school. The parents will have access to advice on how to help children with their learning. For some parents, the school could become the vehicle for satisfying personal needs - the need for acceptance and for the feelings of 'worth-whileness'. The school will also provide parents opportunities to meet other people.

According to Kelly (1989: 154), the influence of parents on the curriculum is very strong in the USA. Fege (2000) also highlights that results-oriented curriculum with accountability for learning means that parents become a strategic instructional resource not only for students but also for schools, educators and principals, whose performance is closely scrutinised. In fact, parents become an integral part of the curriculum. The family makes essential contributions to student achievement, from earliest childhood through high school. Efforts to improve children's academic outcomes are more effective if they encompass families.

Spady and Schlebusch (1999) point out that parents need to be involved as partners in the school's visioning, strategic planning, budgeting and support for the effective implementation of OBE. Their advice to parents: "Education isn't signing over the handling of your child at the school gates any more. Teaching, planning for learning and learning support is your ongoing rights and responsibility. Curriculum 2005 opens doors to new beginnings and new relationships" (Spady and Schlebusch, 1999: 125).

Rossmann (1999) cites a number of studies in the United States to show that there is considerable evidence that academic successes of children are linked to realistic, high parent expectations for their children's school performance. The outcomes for children in school can be seen as the best by-product of the link between home and school. Rossmann (1999) also suggests that how parents raise their children may be more important than the parent's occupation, income or educational level.

Way and Rossmann (1996) found that parents are the first and foremost educators of the future work force. They suggest that if parents model poor work attitudes, convey messages that lead to low self-esteem and meagre motivations toward employment, then employers will have less well-prepared employees, increasing the economic cost of conducting business.

Beare, et al. (1989) suggested that the parent body of any school constitutes a rich fund of skills and expertise, knowledge and experience, which goes well beyond the capacities of its teaching staff, and schools must create opportunities to enrich the experiences of their students by tapping this resource. Where this resource is not fully used, the school may be sending signals to its public that it sees learning as "closeted, esoteric, and bound by teacher possessiveness" (Beare, et al. 1989: 199). For example, when students from 12 countries outperformed American eighth graders in maths and science, Yaklin (2001) argues that the United States will not see a rise in academic achievement until the roles of parents and schools are properly aligned. The more that parents abdicate their traditional child-rearing responsibilities, the more the public school system steps in to assume those responsibilities. And, the more the schools fulfil these responsibilities, the more parents and society comes to depend on government to take actions, which were historically in the domain of the family.

According to Wright and Wright (2001), parents know their children better than anyone else. The school is involved with the children for a few years. Parents are involved with their children for life. Walberg and Paik (2000) have provided a major reason for the strong parental influence that, from infancy until the age of 18, children spend approximately 92% of their time outside the school under the influence of their parents. A 1992 study (Barton and Corey) shows that controllable factors – such as absenteeism and tardiness, the amount of TV watched, and the kinds of learning activities that are offered at home – make a huge difference in the average student's achievements. The message is clear: What goes on at home has a major impact on how children perform at school. Therefore parents should play an active role in planning their children's education.

Topping (2002) found from research that parents are now involved in mediating the learning of their children in a great many ways, in many curriculum areas, at various levels of complexity, before and during the years of schooling and beyond into lifelong learning; and the benefits can be mutual and reciprocal for both members of the pair.

Onikama, Hammond, and Koki (1998) show that there are three interconnected influences on a developing child's life. These three influences include family, school and the community. These three factors can work in concert to either negatively or positively affect the child. With this in mind parents need to play a very effective and active role in their children's school life.

The laws of the country give parents the power to make educational decisions for their children. Wright and Wright (2001), also advise parents to use their power wisely; but not to be afraid to use it. A good education is the most important gift parents can give to their children.

2.5 Parent's responsibilities: A global perspective

2.5.1 Recommendations of the Council of Europe

Serra (2000), summarises the report on the parent's and teacher's responsibilities in children's education to the Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, that amongst the many factors that influence the education of children from birth to adulthood, the family and the school play a pre-eminent role. But there is growing confusion concerning their responsibilities as a result of the upheavals in both traditional families and schools. The Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe (2001) adopted the following recommendations of the Committee on Culture and Education.

> The Assembly stresses that education is at the root of the development of every human being and of society. ... Education is, from birth to

adulthood, a mixture of factors and influences. ... Parents have always been and always will be the first educators of the child. They have the right and the duty to lay the intellectual and emotional bases for their children's lives, and to help develop their system of values and attitudes, particularly since a child's future is strongly conditioned during the pre-school period. They must also exercise their responsibilities as parents of school children. For its part, the state must run an educational system, which trains young people to be good citizens and sound professionals, providing them with the bases for life-long learning and personal development.

2.5.2 Recommendations of the European Parent's Association (EPA)

Serra (2000) reported some of the main duties enumerated in the European Parent's Association (EPA) Charter to the Parliamentary Assembly, Council of Europe. They are given below.

Parents have the *duty* to:

- raise children in a responsible way and not to neglect them;
- commit themselves as partners in education to the school of their children;
- give to their children's schools all information relevant for the attainment of the educational goals on which they work together;
- make well-informed and conscientious choices about the education their children should review;
- be personally committed to their children's school as a vital part of the local community; and
- maintain democratic representative organisations at all levels to represent themselves and their interests.

2.5.3 Recommendations of the National Congress of Parents and Teachers (USA)

The parent, as a role model and initial teacher, has a responsibility to:

- safeguard and nurture the physical, mental, social and spiritual education of the child;
- provide opportunities for interaction with other children and adults;
- lay the foundation for responsible citizenship, including instilling a knowledge of and respect of our nation's diverse cultural heritage;
- provide a home environment that encourages and sets an example for the child's commitment to learning;
- know, help and interact with the child's teachers and school administrators;
- communicate with and participate in the selection/election of school officials (e.g., school board members, ... school councils); and
- develop, through observation, a knowledge of how the child functions in the school environment (Texas PTA, 2001: 7).

2.5.4 Recommendations of the Department of Education, South Africa

In South Africa, the Department of Education (1997) expects the parents to take the following responsibilities with regard to the education of their children.

Parents of learners have the responsibility:

- for paying their children's school fees;
- to contribute towards the development of the school by rendering services to the school;
- for attending school meetings that are organised for them;
- to assist with the discipline of their children;
- to monitor their children's educational progress;

- to ensure that children completes their homework; to ensure that the child attends school; and
- liaise with the school staff (Department of Education, 1997).

2.6 Implementation of Curriculum 2005

Glatter, et al. (1988) notes that the important activity that is managed in educational institutions is the curriculum. Although educational institutions have a tendency to consolidate and conserve the practices that have developed around the curriculum over the years, changes tend to occur in those practices as a result of changes in the beliefs and views of the society and these changes lead to educational innovation.

Implementation, according to Fullan (1991) is changing practice. In Glatter, et al. (1988) Fullan describes implementation as a process of altering existing practice in order to achieve certain desired learning outcomes for students more effectively. "The terms innovation, change, and revision are all frequently used in the context of describing implementation. Change is the generic term with innovation usually referring to a more radical or thorough change than does revision. In either case, implementation is involved when a person or group of people attempt to use a new or revised program for the first time" (Glatter, et al.1988: 196).

Implementation, traditionally seen as the delivery process, "can be considered a system of engineering that takes design specifications through various channels to the teacher and classroom. Curriculum implementation depends on the level/field on which the initial design is made and for whom it is envisaged" (Schubert, 1986: 42). Successful implementation, according to Carl (1995), depends on the extent to which all consumers are informed and have been prepared for the envisaged change and whether they are also prepared to associate themselves with it. Fullan (also see Carl, 1995: 170) gives the basic reason why so many innovations have failed in the past is that

"implementation tasks have been underestimated and misunderstood" (Glatter, et al. 1988: 196).

Implementation of a curriculum guideline or document, according to Fullan, is multi-dimensional. In Glatter, et al. (1988) the following three kinds of changes or dimensions are presented in increasing order of complexity.

- Possible use of new or revised materials;
- Possible use of new teaching approaches; e.g. teaching strategies, and
- Possible incorporation of new or revised beliefs, e.g. philosophical assumptions and beliefs underlying the particular approach.

With this, implementation can now be restated: "*Implementation consists of alterations from existing practice to some new or revised practice (potentially involving materials, teaching, and beliefs) in order to achieve certain desired student learning outcomes*" (Glatter, et al. 1988: 198).

"Curriculum 2005 is the name given to the *school* part of a new educational framework in South Africa.... In South Africa the model of Outcomes-based Education is a quite particular one... Curriculum 2005, the South African (school) OBE, is a unique version" (Spady and Schlebusch, 1999: 54).
According to Brandt (1993) OBE is about preparing students for life, not simply getting them ready for tertiary institutions or employment. Outcomes-based Education is 'a still evolving movement' which designs outcomes first and then a curriculum to reach the outcomes. Outcomes are important goals, not curriculum.

Since the early 1970s OBE is used in many countries such as Canada, USA, England, Australia, Netherlands and New Zealand.

An outcomes-based approach means greater accountability between schools, teachers, learners and community:

- Learners begin to know what the purpose of their learning is;
- Teachers can be more precise in their planning; and
- Parents can be clearly informed about what is to be expected of their children" (Sunday Times, 23 January 2000).

Curriculum 2005 is regarded as a key project in the transformation of South African society. Curriculum 2005 is directed towards achieving "[a] prosperous, truly united, democratic and internationally competitive country with literate, creative and critical citizens leading productive, self-fulfilled lives in a country free of violence, discrimination and prejudice" (Department of Education, 1997).

2.7 Role of parents in the implementation of Curriculum 2005

The process of changing the education system in South Africa was very slow. "The new system has to come into a country so ingrained in old practices that the changes needed might feel almost too big for us to deal with. This is one of the reasons why parents who are fired up and well informed will be needed to make South African education stronger"(Spady and Schlebusch, 1999: 54). In South Africa, in the past there was a unilateral control of the teaching by the school and educators. "Parents were not involved in the educational process and therefore they were not partners. By not being a part of the system, you don't have responsibilities..." (De Kock, 2000: 1).

Mamary (1994) lists the following principles that involve parents, which are essential to the success of outcomes-driven schools in South Africa.

- *Parents*, teachers, administrators, and the school governing body determine the outcomes for students. This unites all those involved in a common vision and consensus of desired learner outcomes.

- The school must have an effective communication network. If teachers and *parents* are going to commit themselves to outcomes-based education, schools must have an effective communication network in place to provide for the free flow of ideas.
- *Parents*, school governors, administrators, and teachers participate. Outcomes-based education presupposes shared decision-making, open communication, consultation and teamwork. Once the desired outcomes have been agreed to, people will have to work together to ensure that they are achieved. The ultimate goal is quality education and achieving this is a shared responsibility.
- *Parents* and families must satisfy basic human needs of learners. No matter how valid outcomes-based education might be, many of the most important goals cannot be achieved unless learners' basic physiological and psychological needs, such as food, water, safety and a sense of belonging, must be satisfied. Without any doubt, many schools in South Africa fall far short of being places that are able to satisfy learners' basic human needs. Parents and families are responsible to satisfy these basic human needs of their children or youngsters.

"Parents are the primary educators and the Curriculum 2005 accords them a significant role in the schooling of their children" (Jacobs, et al. 2001: 88). The question of parent and community involvement in schools has been the subject of hundreds of books and articles over the past forty years. At first glance this literature appears to be a mass of contradictions, confusion, and hopelessness for understanding the relationship between communities and schools. Yet emerging from this research is a message that is remarkable in its consistency: *The closer the parent is to the education of the child, the greater the impact it is on child development and educational achievement.*

Spady and Schlebusch (1999) provide parents with indicators to check the teacher's successful implementation of OBE policies and practices. They demand that parents involve themselves with schools and enter the learning

process. Parents and the teacher share responsibility for the education of the child in the new system.

Spady and Schlebusch (1999: 97-117) give the following ***rules*** for parents in the new system:

- Mediate learning
  - help; guide
  - encourage; inspire
- Avoid comparisons
  - know and appreciate each child's worth
- Recognise progress; affirm the child
- Support learning
- Identify problems
- Communicate with the teacher
- Take an interest: parent as co-tutor or mentor
- Give freedom

The literature reviewed here points to specific attitudes and behaviours that, if implemented by parents, are associated with improved academic performance. These practices have been classified by many researchers and authors (for example: Squelch and Lemmer, 1994; Mamary, 1994; Epstein, 1995; and Topping, 2002) as:

- Providing structure
  - structuring routines at home and
  - co-ordinating with school when problems arise
- active involvement
  - monitoring the youngster's expenditure of time
  - teaching and explaining concepts
  - reviewing homework and
  - providing support when the child experiences difficulties.

Topping (2002) found that structured forms of parent-assisted learning have been applied to many core skills and areas of the curriculum with considerable effectiveness and relatively low cost in professional time and resources. These often also yield social, motivational, and self-esteem benefits for both the helpers and the helped.

Rossmann (1999) observed that plumbers, bookkeepers and barbers all need some kind of formal training, certificate or licence. About the only job that doesn't require some special kind of education is nurturing the young to adulthood. No job is more important to a country's future than that of a parent and no job is more challenging. It is important to acknowledge that societies benefit from parents' successes, but also suffers from their mistakes.

Fullan (1991) argued that educational reform requires the joint efforts of parents and schools. Parents and teachers may need to recognise the critical complementary importance of each other in the life of the learner. "Otherwise, as we are placing limitations on the prospects for improvement that may be impossible to overcome" (Fullan, 1991: 250).

2.8 Management of Curriculum 2005

According to Bondesio, et al. (1995: 129), the classroom is the centre of the system of education. Therefore, the school has a very important place in the education system. A number of specialised and differentiated tasks are performed in the school for the education of children. A large number of professionally qualified educators are selected to fulfil these tasks. This makes a school into a very complex organisation. An organisation can function well only when it is managed properly.

The professional leader of the school is the principal/manager who gives direction to education in the school. To a large extent, school management is influenced by a number of external factors such as the availability of funds, the education policy and the involvement of stakeholders such as parents and the community in education. According to Fullan (1991: 144), the principal is

in the middle of the relationship between educators and external factors and people. School management involves planning, determination of policies, organisation, financing, leadership and control.

> In effective schools, head-teachers were involved in curriculum discussions and influenced the content of guidelines drawn up within the school, without taking complete control. They also influenced teaching strategies of teachers, but only selectively, where they judged it necessary. This leadership was demonstrated by an emphasis on the monitoring of pupils' progress, through teachers keeping individual records (Mortimore, et al. 1988: 250-251).

Implementation of Curriculum 2005 involves radical changes to schooling, development of curricula, classroom practices assessment and the handling of learners. As the functioning of the school will be based on educators working in instructional delivery and management teams, as well as parents as partners in decision-making, a culture of teamwork should exist among all stakeholders in education.

2.9 Summary

This chapter mainly dealt with the important responsibilities of parents in the education of their children. A number of points such as effective parenting, communication, motivation, home work, home environment, and different roles of parents, family and the community that are so vital for the education and future of children were discussed. Also, implementation and management of Curriculum 2005, and the role of parents to make it a success for their children were highlighted.

A number of studies point to one important conclusion: What the family does is more important than family background (income, parental education, marital status, family size, etc.). Parents need to know that they can influence learning. And, in most cases, they need to be shown how they can do it.

Studies show that schools must take the lead in actively pursuing parental involvement. Encouraging parents to participate in their children's education is more important than family background in determining whether or not parents get involved.

Many parents and teachers are overburdened with their own work-related and personal concerns. They may also feel uncomfortable in each other's presence due to lack of mutual understanding and familiarity; and to the absence of a mechanism for solving problems that arise. In examining the literature (research) presented in this chapter, it is encouraging to observe that parent participation is effective when someone (like parents, teachers, or NGO's) take up the responsibility for organising and conducting specific activities that brought parents and school people together for a particular purpose. Parents are an integral element in their children's education. It is important for parents to work with teachers and the school to see that their children are learning to the best of their ability. Building a relationship based on this shared goal, can prevent conflicts over single issues – such as a test score or grade – and will allow both the parent and the school to be concerned with true learning.

CHAPTER 3

3. *RESEARCH DESIGN*

3.1 Introduction

This chapter explains the rationale behind the methodology employed, how the research was conducted and what steps were taken to ensure the validity and the reliability of the study. A research design can be understood as the planning of research studies from the first to the last step. As mentioned earlier in 1.10, the type of research suitable for this study was descriptive and so a survey was designed.

A survey is a research method in which a population or a sample is studied in order to reveal specific facts about it (Tischler, 1990: 43). Surveys are used for descriptive and explanatory purposes. It is mainly used in studies that have individual people as the unit of analysis.

3.2 Descriptive research

Descriptive research studies are those studies, which are concerned with describing the characteristics of a particular individual, or of a group (Kothari, 1990: 46). Studies concerned with specific predictions, with narration of facts and characteristics concerning individuals, group or situations are all examples of descriptive studies. The researcher observes and then describes what was observed scientifically. According to Babbie (1995), scientific observation is careful and accurate; and scientific descriptions are typically more accurate and precise than casual descriptions. Most of the social research comes under this category. Since the aim is to obtain complete and accurate information in the descriptive studies, the procedure to be used must be carefully planned.

Babbie (1995) suggests that surveys are particularly well suited to the study of individuals' attitudes. According to Mouton and Marais (1990), in descriptive studies, one of the most important considerations is to collect accurate data or information on the main problems, which are under investigation.

3.3 The unit of analysis

The unit of analysis is an important factor that the researcher takes into consideration when planning an appropriate research design. Bless and Higson-Smith (1997) state that the unit of analysis is the person or object from whom or which the researcher collects information or data. The data obtained from such a unit can only describe that unit, but when it is combined with similar data collected from a group of similar units, it provides an accurate picture of the group to which that unit belongs.

Individual human beings are the most common unit of analysis. Here, the researcher investigates the conditions, orientations or actions of a group of individual people. When the individual is used as the unit of analysis, the people that actually take part in the research or study are often selected because they belong to specific groups, such as parents of school-going children and educators.

In this study, parents and educators are the units of analysis.

3.4 Research tools

Research tools are measuring instruments designed for data collection from the identified units of analysis. These instruments show the methods and techniques of gathering data with enough protection against bias and maximising reliability.

3.4.1 Questionnaire as a research tool

A questionnaire consists of a number of questions printed or typed in a definite order on a form or set of forms. Babbie (1995) argues that questionnaires are essential to and most directly associated with survey research, but they are also used in experiments, field research and other data-collection activities. Huysamen (1994) also suggests that survey questionnaires can be used to obtain various kinds of information from respondents: which include biographical particulars, typical behaviour, opinions, beliefs and convictions, and attitudes.

In this research, a questionnaire as one of the essential research tools has been used in data collection and will therefore be briefly discussed.

This method of data collection is quite popular, particularly in cases of big enquiries. It is being adopted by private individuals, research workers, private and public organisations and even by governments. In this method a questionnaire is given personally or by post to the person concerned with a request to answer the questions and return the questionnaire. According to Baily (1987), the questionnaire is given to the respondents who are expected to read and understand the questions and write down the answers in the space meant for the purpose in the questionnaire itself. The respondents are also expected to answer the questions on their own.

3.4.2 Main aspects of a Questionnaire

A questionnaire is often considered as the heart of a survey operation. Therefore, it should be carefully constructed. If it is not properly set up, then the survey is bound to fail. Researcher should be aware of the main aspects of a questionnaire viz., the general form, question sequence and question formulation and wording.

3.4.2.1 General form

A questionnaire can either be structured or unstructured. Structured questionnaires are those questionnaires in which there are definite, concrete and pre-determined questions. When these characteristics are not present in a questionnaire, it can be termed as unstructured or non-structured questionnaire. Structured questionnaires are simple to administer and relatively inexpensive to analyse.

For this study, the researcher used structured questionnaire (see Appendix: A and Appendix: B) except for one item to the parents and two items to the educators.

3.4.3 Advantages and Disadvantages of Questionnaires

3.4.3.1 Advantages of Questionnaires

The researcher benefited from the following advantages of questionnaires during this study:

- It was not so expensive even when the samples were widely spread geographically;
- It was reasonably free from the personal bias of the researcher;
- Respondents had adequate time to give well thought out answers; and
- Respondents, who were not easily approachable, were reached conveniently.

3.4.3.2 Disadvantages of Questionnaires

The researcher experienced the following problems due to the disadvantages of questionnaires:

- Low rate of return of the duly filled in questionnaires;

- Not all respondents were educated to answer the questions; and
- The control over questionnaires was lost once they were given out.

3.4.4 Format and content of the Questionnaires

Two questionnaires were designed for this study, one for parents and the other one for educators.

3.4.4.1 Questionnaires for parents

Questionnaire for parents was divided into six sections; A to F. Section A was to gather biographical and demographic information about parents. This was to find out whether biographical and demographic information have any influence on parental responsibilities.

Section B to F were designed with the purpose of collecting information on their involvement in the education of their children from each respondent. The items were developed from the literature study and they covered the following areas:

- Attitudes of parents towards education;
- Parental Involvement;
- Communication between the school and parents;
- Home based activities; and
- Educational Change.

3.4.4.2 Questionnaires for educators

Questionnaire for educators was divided into three sections, A to C. Section A solicited information from the respondents regarding their teaching experience, and about the training they have received for the introduction of Curriculum 2005.

Section B and C were designed to gather information about the involvement of parents of children under their care. Open-ended questions were also included to reveal their feelings and opinions about topics related to parental involvement in the education of their children.

3.4.5 Pilot Survey

The researcher conducted a pilot study for testing the questionnaires. Pilot survey is in fact the replica and rehearsal of the main survey. According to Gay (1981) and Borg (1987), such a survey, when conducted, brings to light the weaknesses (if any) of the questionnaires and also of the survey techniques. From the experience gained in this way, improvement can be effected.

3.4.6 Final Questionnaire

The final questionnaires were carefully designed, printed and administered to 240 parents and 60 educators in six (6) selected primary and intermediate schools in the Phokeng Circuit. The respondents were selected (see 3.6) as follows:

- 240 parents, 40 per school
- 60 educators, 10 per school.

3.4.7 Covering Letter

The covering letter is an introductory statement with instructions to respondents or interviewers. The covering letter or introductory statement, according to Bailey (1987: 137) is essentially a selling or public relations job. It is important because it justifies the study to the respondent and to assure the respondent of the confidentiality and to encourage his or her response.

Bailey (1987) suggests that the covering letter or the introductory statement should:

- identify the person conducting the study;
- tell why the study is important;
- tell why it is important that the respondent answer to the questionnaire;
- assure the respondent that there are no right and wrong answers;
- assure that he or she will not be identified and that his or her answers will be treated confidentially; and
- indicate a specific date by which the completed questionnaires are returned.

Babbie (1995) views that anything the researcher can do to make the job of completing and returning the questionnaire easier will improve the study. Poor questionnaires are those that have no instructions or inadequate instructions for completing questions have unclear response categories and are too long (Bailey, 1987). A stamped and addressed return envelope along with the mailed questionnaire may make the respondent's life a lot easier and the chances of getting more prompt responses are greater.

3.4.8 Administrative Procedure

The researcher personally visited six schools in the Phokeng circuit. The purpose of the visit was to discuss the sample selection and to obtain permission from the school principals of those schools for the administering of the questionnaires. A very thorough explanation concerning the questionnaires was made to each principal. The researcher received assistance from the school principals in selecting the sample of parents and educators. Questionnaires to the selected parents were sent through their children. Each principal then distributed the questionnaires to the selected sample of educators.

A verbal arrangement concerning the date on which the questionnaires were to be collected was also made with the respective school principals.

3.4.9 Follow-ups

The researcher in most cases has no control over the completion of the questionnaires. This may result in poorly completed questionnaires and a poor response rate. Bailey (1987) suggests that the response rate can be greatly improved through follow-ups especially for mailed studies. Without follow-ups the response rate may be 50 or 60 percent or even lower, while with follow-ups one can reasonably expect a response rate of 70 or 80 percent or even more.

There are several follow-ups strategies. Sending a simple letter encouraging the non-respondents to participate or a reminder post card is sufficient for many of them to return the completed questionnaires. A better method is to send a copy of the survey questionnaire with the follow-up letter. According to Gay (1981), a second set of questionnaires with a new covering letter and another stamped envelope may encourage the participants to respond to the questionnaires. Timing of the follow-up mailing, according to Baliey (1987), is very important.

If the first follow-ups and second mailing failed in an overall acceptable percentage of return, the researcher may need to become creative and use other approaches like verbal or personal communication, until an acceptable percentage is achieved.

In this study, the researcher made follow-ups by:

- personally visiting the selected schools of respondent educators and re-emphasised the importance of their contribution to this study, two days after the requested due date;
- sending a follow-up reminder to the parents through their children (see 1.10.2.2) on the second Friday (day 8); and
- making telephone calls, to some parents, a week after the suggested due date.

These follow-up activities yielded in a higher percentage (additional 20%) of responses.

3.5 Population

All items in any field of inquiry constitute a Universe or Population. It may be a group of people, houses, trees or elephants in a game reserve etc. According to Babbie (1995: 193), a population is the theoretically specified aggregation of study elements. A study population is that aggregation of elements from which the sample is actually selected.

It is not always possible to examine every item in the population, and sometimes it is possible to obtain sufficiently accurate results by studying only a part of the total population. However, it needs to be emphasised that when the universe is a small one, it is no use resorting to a sample survey. When field studies are undertaken in practical life, considerations of time and cost almost invariably lead to a selection of respondents i.e., selection of only a few items.

The researcher usually determines the size of the population that is to be investigated. He or she would get a clear picture of the population before a sample is selected. The respondents selected should be as representative of the total population as possible in order to produce a miniature cross-section.

In this study, the researcher identified the population as follows:

- Parents of children attending schools where Curriculum 2005 has been introduced in the Phokeng circuit; and
- Educators who were implementing the said curriculum in the Phokeng Circuit.

3.6 Sampling

A special subset of a population observed for purposes of making inferences about the nature of the total population itself is a sample. Algebraically, let the population size be *N* and if a part of size *n* (which is <*N*) of this population is selected for studying some characteristic of the population, the group consisting of these *n* units is known as 'sample'.

In this study, the selected respondents – parents or educators – constitute what is technically called a 'sample' and the selection process is called as the 'sampling technique'. The survey so conducted is known as 'sample survey'.

For this research, respondents were selected as follows:

There are 29 Primary and Intermediate schools in the Phokeng circuit, and all these schools have introduced Curriculum 2005 to their learners. Six schools were randomly selected from these 29 schools as shown below:

A list of all the 29 schools was made and arranged them alphabetically. From the list, schools numbered 1, 6,11,16, 21 and 26 were chosen for this study. The sample was divided as follows:

3.6.1 Parents

40 parents from each of the six identified schools, were selected as follows:

The Class registers from each of the six schools were used to select the parents for this study. Every tenth (10^{th}) learner was identified from theses registers. With the help of the school principals, questionnaires were given out to the parents of the selected learners.

3.6.2 Educators

10 educators from each of these six schools were selected as follows:

The post numbers assigned to each educator by the school management was used to select the educators for this study. The post numbers were written down from the staff register. Every second (2^{nd}) number was identified from the list. With the help of the school principals, questionnaires were given out to the first ten (10) selected educators.

A total of 240 questionnaires were distributed to the parents. Educators were given a total of 60 questionnaires. The researcher received the co-operation of the principals of these schools in the selection of the sample of parents and educators; and in the distribution of the questionnaires to the respective selected respondents.

3.7 Response rate

Table 3.1 Response rate

Respondents	Sample Population	Number Responded	% Responded
Parents	240	172	71.67
Educators	60	47	78.33

Table 3.1 showed that:

(i) out of a sample population of 240 parents, 172 (71,67 %) returned questionnaires that was all usable for this study

(ii) out of a sample population of 60 educators, 47 (78,33 %) returned the completed questionnaires.

This good response rate may be due to the use of direct contact and the follow-up strategies.

3.8 Statistical techniques

The role of statistics in research is to function as a tool in designing research, analysing its data and drawing conclusions from them. Most research studies result in a large volume of raw data, which must be suitably reduced by editing, coding, classification and tabulation so that it can be read easily and can be used for further analysis.

The data collected in this study were analysed by using descriptive statistics. According to Huysamen (1998: 4), descriptive statistics is concerned with the description and/or summarisation of the data obtained for a group of individuals. The data collected can be summarised or described by tabulating or by drawing graphs of them or computing measures of certain of their summary characteristics. In this study, percentages were used in data presentation for they simplified numbers, to a 0 to 100 range. Through the use of percentages, the data were reduced in the standard form with base equal to 100, which facilitated relative comparisons. Graphs were also used to understand the data. After that the researcher was able to adopt the process of generalisation from small groups (i.e. samples) to population.

3.9 Summary

The research tools for data collection for this study were questionnaires. Use of questionnaires for data collection was discussed and assessed in detail in this chapter. The researcher decided to use questionnaires for data collection mainly because of the advantages associated with it. Careful considerations were also given for the Statistical techniques used in this study and used accordingly.

CHAPTER 4

4. *DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION*

4.1 Introduction

This chapter provides a report on the results of the empirical investigation conducted to find the roles, responsibilities and challenges faced by parents in the effective implementation and management of Curriculum 2005 in the Phokeng Circuit. Data collected using questionnaires is discussed in detail in this section.

The original data sheets together with the completed statistical analyses were checked thoroughly. Tables and graphs drawn from the responses obtained from the questionnaires are presented in this chapter. The tables and graphs were analysed and interpreted.

The variables included in the analysis and interpretations are from those who actually responded to the questionnaires.

4.2 Biographical and Demographical data of the respondents.

Biographical and Demographical data helps to find the age, education, employment status of parents and the number of their children attending schools.

Table 4.1 Description of biographical and demographical data: Parents

1	AGE	FREQUENCY (F)	PERCENTAGE (%)
1.1	Under 20	4	2.33
1.2	21 – 29	12	6.98
1.3	30 – 39	73	42.44
1.4	40 – 49	55	31.98
1.5	50 and above	28	16.28
	TOTAL	**172**	**100**
2	**AGE: EDUCATION COMPLETED**	**FREQUENCY (F)**	**PERCENTAGE (%)**
2.1	15 or under	6	3.49
2.2	16	4	2.33
2.3	17	31	18.02
2.4	18 – 23	104	60.47
2.5	24 or more	27	15.70
	TOTAL	**172**	**100**
3	**EMPLOYMENT**	**FREQUENCY (F)**	**PERCENTAGE (%)**
3.1	Paid job: Full time	95	55.23
3.2	Paid job: Part time	14	8.14
3.3	Self employed	10	5.81
3.4	Unemployed	51	29.65
3.5	Other	2	1.16
	TOTAL	**172**	**100**
4	**NUMBER OF CHILDREN**	**FREQUENCY (F)**	**PERCENTAGE (%)**
4.1	1	49	26.79
4.2	2	74	44.05
4.3	3	37	22.02
4.4	4	4	2.38
4.5	5 or more	8	4.76
	TOTAL	**172**	**100**

4.2.1 Age of Respondents

The respondents reported their age by selecting from one of the age groups given. Table 4.1 showed that 42.44% of the parents surveyed were aged between 30 and 49, 31.98% between 40 and 49; both of which forms the majority, 16.28% older and 6.98% younger. Only a tiny minority (2.33%) were under 20 years old.

This implies that a higher number of middle-aged parents are taking care of their young children.

4.2.2 Parent's education

According to Table 4.1, over 76% of the sample of parents completed their education aged 18 or older. Only a minority of this sample (3.49%) left education aged 15 or younger.

4.2.3 Respondent working status

Table 4.1 showed that on the overall, 55.23% of parents worked full time, a further 8.14% worked part time, and 5.81% indicated themselves as self-employed. Close to 70% of the parents surveyed were able to earn an income for their family.

4.2.4 Children in the household

Table 4.1 also indicated that 28.49%, 43.02%, and 21.51% of the parents had One, Two and Three children respectively attending schools that introduced Curriculum 2005. Only 7.14% of parents indicated that they had 4 or more children. The number of children in the household had an influence on the ability of parents to meet their children's educational requirements.

Table 4.2 Description of general information data: Educators

1	TOTAL TEACHING EXPERIENCE	FREQUENCY (F)	PERCENTAGE (%)
1.1	Less than 4 years	0	0
1.2	Between 5 – 9	8	17.02
1.3	Between 10 – 14	20	42.55
1.4	Between 15 – 19	14	27.66
1.5	20 or more	6	12.77
	TOTAL	**47**	**100**
2	**EXPERIENCE: HANDLING OBE CLASSES**	**FREQUENCY (F)**	**PERCENTAGE (%)**
2.1	1 year	0	0
2.2	2 years	6	12.77
2.3	3 years	15	31.91
2.4	4 years	18	38.30
2.5	5 or more	8	17.02
	TOTAL	**47**	**100**
3	**SPECIAL TRAINING RECEIVED**	**FREQUENCY (F)**	**PERCENTAGE (%)**
3.1	YES	47	100
3.2	NO	0	0
	TOTAL	**47**	**100**
4	**TRAINING PERIOD**	**FREQUENCY (F)**	**PERCENTAGE (%)**
4.1	1 – 7 days	21	44.68
4.2	8 – 14 days	26	55.32
4.3	15 – 21 days	0	0
4.4	22 – 28 days	0	0
4.5	29 or more days	0	0
	TOTAL	**47**	**100**

4.2.5 Experience of educators

Table 4.2 showed that all of the respondents had more than four years of teaching experience. The majority of respondents, (42.55%) had an experience of between 10 to 14 years, followed by 27.66% with between 15 and 19 years and 12.77% with 20 or more years. There was none with less than fours years of teaching experience. This indicated that the educators had sufficient experience to effectively implement Curriculum 2005 in their schools.

4.2.6 Experience of educators in handling Curriculum 2005

Most of the educators surveyed indicated that they had 2 or more years of experience in the handling of the present curriculum. Table 4.2 showed that majority of the educators, 18 (38.30%) had four years, followed by 15 (31.91%) with three years and 8 (17.02%) had 5 or more years of experience in handling OBE classes. The minority, 6 (12.77%) had only two years of experience in handling the same classes. This finding revealed that the less experienced educators needed to be exposed to various issues related to the implementation and management of the new curriculum.

4.2.7 Special training for educators

According to Table 4.2, all (100%) educators received some kind of training to assist them in the handling of Curriculum 2005. But the table also showed they all had received training for less than 15 working days. This showed that sufficient training and in-service courses were necessary for educators for the successful handling of the present curriculum.

4.3 Responsibility for education

Table 4.3 Parents' view on their responsibility for the education of a child.

1	ITEMS	FREQUENCY (F)	PERCENTAGE (%)
1.1	Education of a child is totally the parent's responsibility.	9	5.23
1.2	Education of a child is partially the parent's responsibility.	4	2.33
1.3	Education of a child is totally the school's responsibility	3	1.74
1.4	Education of a child is partially the school's responsibility	0	0
1.5	Both parents and school are Equally responsible.	156	90.70
	TOTAL	**172**	**100**

According to Table 4.3 the percentage of parents who believed that a child's education is the responsibility of both parents and the school varied widely with the other groups. 90.70% of the surveyed sample of parents indicated that parents and the school were equally responsible for the education of a child. Interestingly none had indicated that education of a child was partially the responsibility of the school. Only a tiny minority, (1.74%) suggested that the school was totally responsible for the education of a child. This revealed that although parents accepted the responsibility for the education of a child, they expected the same from the school and educators.

Table 4.4 Who are responsible for the education of a child: Opinion of Educators

ITEMS	FREQUENCY (F)	PERCENTAGE (%)
1. Parents only	0	0
2. Educators only	0	0
3. Both parents and educators	47	100
4. Don't know	0	0
TOTAL	**47**	**100**

According to the Table 4.4 above, all (100%) of the educators responded indicted that both parents and educators were responsible for the education of a child. This shows that the educators expect parents to play an active role in the education of children who are in their care.

Table 4.5 Educators' view on the most important responsibility of parents

ITEMS	FREQUENCY (F)	PERCENTAGE (%)
1. Attend parents meeting	0	0
2. Help out in class as volunteers	0	0
3. Help out during school trips	4	8.51
4. Help children in doing their homework and projects	32	68.09
5. Help with fund raising activities	3	6.38
6. Help with sports and cultural activities	8	17.02
TOTAL	**47**	**100**

Table 4.5 revealed that majority of the educators (68.09%) indicated that the most important responsibility of parents was to help their children in doing homework and school projects. 17.02% of the respondents felt that helping in

the sports and cultural activities are the most important responsibility of parents. Ironically, none of the educators indicated the importance of parents, attending parents' meetings and helping educators in the class as volunteers, which are considered very important in most of the developed countries.

Table 4.6 Importance of making sure the child attends school regularly and on time.

	NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE OF PARENTS	NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE OF EDUCATORS
1. Very important	172 (100 %)	47 (100 %)
2. Not that important	0	0
3. Not at all important	0	0
4. Don't know	0	0
TOTAL	**172 (100 %)**	**47 (100 %)**

According to table 4.6 all of the respondents, parents (100%) and educators (100%) considered it a very important responsibility of parents that they must make sure the child was attending school regularly and on time. Children who failed to attend school regularly and on time are believed to be under-achievers and regarded as a reason for the lack of discipline in many schools. Parents should be encouraged to take up the responsibility for the transport of their children if they are living far from the school.

Table 4.7 Importance of helping children with homework and other projects.

	NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE OF PARENTS	NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE OF EDUCATORS
1. Very important	164 (95.35 %)	40 (85.11 %)
2. Not that important	8 (4.65 %)	7 (14.89 %)
3. Not at all important	0	0
4. Don't know	0	0
TOTAL	**172 (100 %)**	**47 (100 %)**

Respondents were asked to indicate the importance of helping children with homework and other projects by parents. According to Table 4.7, 95.35% of parents and 85.11% of educators indicated that it was very important. A very small minority of parents (4.65%) and educators (14.89%) considered it to be not that important. These findings revealed that both parents and educators considered homework as an important component of education.

4.4 Parent – school relationship.

Table 4.8 School's attitudes towards parents

Item	Number and Percentage of Parents			Total
	Agree	Disagree	Don't know	
1. If I ask too many questions to teachers at my child's school, I will be labelled as a trouble maker	26 (15.12 %)	138 (80.23 %)	8 (4.65 %)	172 (100 %)
2. My child's school always Gives me clear information about my child's progress	135 (78.49 %)	34 (19.77 %)	3 (1.74%)	172 (100 %)
3. My child's school makes it Easy for me to be involved in his/her studies	76 (44.19 %)	87 (50.58 %)	9 (5.23 %)	172 (100 %)
4. My child's school provides Enough study materials for his/her education	54 (31.40 %)	108 (62.79 %)	10 (5.81 %)	172 (100 %)
5. My child's teachers always give me advance notice for the purchase of material for his/her Projects.	77 (44.77 %)	87 (50.58 %)	8 (4.65 %)	172 (100 %)

Item: 1 Asking too many questions may be considered as trouble making

According to Table 4.8 a large majority of parents (80.23%) felt that asking too many questions might not be considered as trouble making. Parents who

were least involved in their children's education were more likely to agree that if they asked many questions to teachers at their children's school they will be labelled as trouble makers. It is possible that they are less involved and therefore less confident about their children's progress at school and they are worried of being labelled as troublemakers.

Item: 2 School always gives clear information about the child's progress

Table 4.8 revealed that 78.49% of the parents agree that their child's school always gave them clear information about their child's progress. But 19.77% of the respondents disagreed. This feeling showed that many parents were concerned about the progress of their children at school and therefore, the school must realise the importance of giving clear information to the parents.

Item: 3 School makes it easy for parents to be involved.

Parents were asked whether their children's school made it easy for them to be involved in their children's studies. Table 4.8 shows that just over half (50.58%) of the parents disagreed with this. 44.19% of the parents agreed that their children's school made it easy for them to get involved in the studies of their children. This finding revealed that the school authorities and educators had a responsibility to invite parents and expose them to what their children were doing at the school. As most parents were not qualified like their children's educators, they might be too embarrassed to take the initiative. Usually most schools invite parents only when there are problems with their children.

Item: 4 School provides enough study materials.

According to Table 4.8 only 31.40% of the parent respondents indicated that they were satisfied with the provision of learning materials to their children by the school. 62.79% disagreed as they were not satisfied with the materials provided by the school. The finding stressed the fact that the school

– Department of Education – must find a way to get enough resources for the provision of adequate learning materials for learners, especially in the previously disadvantaged schools.

Item: 5 Teachers give advance notice for the purchase of costly learning materials

Table 4.8 showed that over more than half (50.58%) of the parents responded that they disagreed as teachers often failed to give them sufficient notice for the purchase of materials that were costly for their children's school projects. 44.77% of the respondents agreed that the notice given was sufficient. It is important for the school and educators to appreciate and understand the financial background of the parents of children in their care. This finding emphasised the importance of regular and timely home-school communication.

4.5 General involvement

Table 4.9 Most involved in the child's school life

	FREQUENCY (F)	PRCENTAGE (%)
1. Father	6	3.49
2. Mother	37	21.51
3. Both parents	74	43.02
4. Whole family	55	31.98
5. Don't know	0	0
TOTAL	**172**	**100**

According to Table 4.9 children are well supported by people close to them. 43.04% of the parents indicated that both parents were involved in the child's school life, 31.98% that the whole family was involved while 25% of the parents indicated that the child's father or mother was involved.

Table 4.10 Educators on the involvement of parents since the introduction of Curriculum 2005.

Item	Number and Percentage of educators				
	Very Involved	Fairly Involved	Not very involved	Not at all involved	Total
1. With regard to the implementation of Curriculum 2005.	9 (19.15 %)	10 (21.28 %)	21 (44.68 %)	7 (14.89 %)	47 (100 %)
2. With regard to Schoolwork.	7 (14.89 %)	8 (17.02 %)	28 (59.57%)	4 (8.51 %)	47 (100 %)
3. With regard to Homework.	4 (8.51 %)	25 (53.19 %)	11 (23.40 %)	7 (14.89 %)	47 (100 %)
4. With regard to Extra-curricular Activities	4 (8.51 %)	12 (25.53 %)	20 (42.55 %)	11 (23.40 %)	47 (100 %)
5. With regard to Discipline in the school.	2 (4.26 %)	6 (12.77 %)	19 (40.43 %)	20 (42.55 %)	47 (100 %)

Item: 1 Involvement of parents with regard to the implementation of Curriculum 2005.

Table 4.10 brought to light the involvement of parents with regard to various school activities. 40.43% of educators indicated that parents were involved in the implementation of Curriculum 2005. Majority (59.57%) of educators felt that parents were not sufficiently involved in the implementation. This finding emphasised the importance of identifying different ways to involve parents in the education their children.

Item: 2 Involvement of parents with regard to schoolwork.

According to Table 4.10 majority of educators (68.08%) revealed that parents were not adequately involved with regard to schoolwork. 31.91% of respondents felt that parents were sufficiently involved with regard to schoolwork of their children. This showed that the school must encourage parents to actively participate in school-based activities such as reading, listening to children read, volunteering etc.

Item: 3 Involvement of parents with regard to homework

Table 4.10 showed that 61.70% of educators indicated that they found that parents are involved with regard to homework. More than a third of educators (38.29%) felt that the involvement of parents in this regard was not sufficient. School and educators therefore, need to assist parents who have difficulties to help children with their homework. Homework is an extension of schoolwork. If parents can actively participate in the home-based activities of children, their academic performance can be improved considerably.

Item: 4 Involvement of parents with regard to extra-curricular activities.

Table 4.10 indicated that 65.95% of educators felt that the parents were not involved in the extra-curricular activities of their children. 34.4% of educators were satisfied with the level of involvement by the parents in such activities. Extra-curricular activities require additional manpower. As the number of educators is reduced considerably, schools must solicit the help of parents in this regard.

Item: 5 Involvement of parents with regard to discipline in the school.

According to Table 4.10 majority of educators (82.98%) indicated that parents did not get involved in the discipline of the children in the school. Only 17.03% of the respondents felt that parents were sufficiently

involved in maintaining discipline in their children's school. Educators in primary schools have usually less disciplinary problems than intermediate schools, because children in primary schools are much younger. This showed that parental involvement was necessary to maintain discipline in schools especially where older children were learning.

4.6 Home-based activities

Table 4.11 Parents help their children with homework

	FREQUENCY (F)	PRCENTAGE (%)
1. Every time	47	27.33
2. Most times	82	47.67
3. Occasionally	39	22.67
4. Never	4	2.33
5. Don't know	0	0
TOTAL	**172**	**100**

According to Table 4.11 a small minority of parents (2.33%) indicated that they never helped their children with their homework. 97.67% of parents agreed that they were helping their children with their homework. This showed that most of the parents were very serious about their children's academic achievements.

Table 4.12 Ability in helping with the child's homework

	FREQUENCY (F)	PRCENTAGE (%)
1. Always easy	34	19.77
2. Easy most of the time	49	28.49
3. Easy some of the time	72	41.86
4. Never easy	15	8.72
5. Don't know	2	1.16
TOTAL	**172**	**100**

The respondents (parents) were asked about their ability in helping with their child's homework. Table 4.12 showed that 48.26% of the parents indicated they were helping their children without any difficulties. More than half of the parents (50. 58%) responded that they were experiencing some difficulties in this regard. Therefore, it is necessary that the school give some kind of training or other form of assistance to those parents who have difficulties in helping their children with their homework

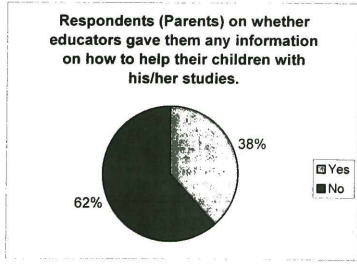


Figure 4.1 Parents received information from educators on how to help their children at home

Figure 4.1 showed that 62% of parents indicated that educators did not give them any information on how to help their children at home with their studies. 38% of parents felt that they received such information from their children's teachers. It is important to note that the majority of parents are not sufficiently educated and trained to handle the present curriculum. This finding emphasizes the importance of parent training in order to expose them to the present curriculum. Parents who are not educated can be requested to seek help from other parents or their educated neighbours.

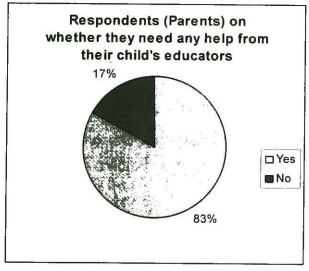


Figure 4.2 Parents need assistance from their child's educators

According Figure 4.2, majority of parents (83%) indicated that they need help and assistance from their children's educators to help their children at home with his/her studies. Only 17% felt that they are able to help their children without any help from others. This finding shows that majority of the parents are not quite capable to handle the new Curriculum and hence they need help from their children's school.

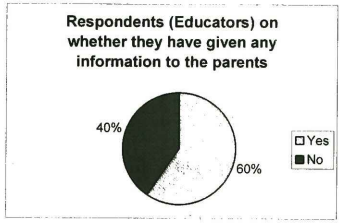


Figure 4.3 Educators informed parents on how to help their children at home

Educators were asked whether they had given any information to parents on how to help their children at home with their studies. Figure 4.3 showed that 60% of the parents indicated that they did inform parents on how to help children at home. 40% of the educators agreed that they did not give any information to parents to help children study at home.

4.7 Communication

Table 4.13 Communication of parents with their children's school

	FREQUENCY (F)	PRCENTAGE (%)
1. Regularly	59	34.30
2. Occasionally	75	43.60
3. Once or twice in a year	24	13.95
4. Never	14	8.14
TOTAL	**172**	**100**

Respondents were asked how often they communicated with their children's school. Table 4.13 showed that 34.30% of the parents communicated regularly with their children's school, whereas 43.60% indicated that they

communicated with the school occasionally. A minority (8.14%) of parents that are not a negligible number indicated that they had never communicated with their children's school. This is a serious matter. More attention should be given for the regular communication between parents and their children's school, especially in the rural areas.

Table 4.14 Written Communication from children's school

	FREQUENCY (F)	PRCENTAGE (%)
1. Every day	14	8.14
2. Once a week	34	19.77
3. Once a month	63	36.63
4. Once a term	55	31.98
5. Don't know	6	3.49
TOTAL	**172**	**100**

According to Table 4.14, 8.14% of parents indicated that their children's school communicated in writing on a daily basis. 19.77% of parents indicated that the communication took place every week and 36.63% on a monthly basis. Educators of primary school children communicated with the parents' regularly; often on a daily basis. With older children, written communication becomes less, as they are able to carry messages from school verbally. 31.98% of the parents indicated that their children's school communicated with them once every term. This finding showed that some of the schools needed to communicate more often with the parents.

Table 4.15 Nature of the written information from school

	FREQUENCY (F)	PRCENTAGE (%)
1. Very easy	67	38.95
2. Fairly easy	63	36.63
3. Fairly difficult	32	18.60
4. Very difficult	10	5.81
5. Don't know	0	0
TOTAL	**172**	**100**

Table 4.15 revealed that majority of parents (75.58%) found it easy to understand the written information obtained from their children's school. 24.41% of parents indicated that they had some difficulty in understanding the written communication from their children's school. This showed that it was important to avoid the use of jargon and too complex language from written communication to parents from schools.

4.8 Educational change

Awareness and understanding of terms

All parents were asked how much they knew about two important terms related to their children's education – Curriculum 2005 and Outcomes-Based Education. Figure 4.4 and 4.5 showed their responses.

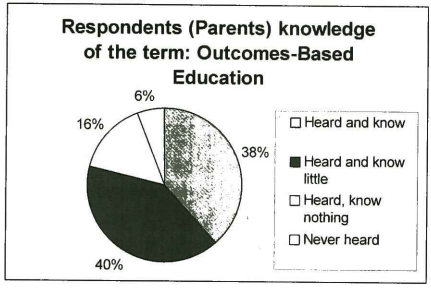


Figure 4.4 Parents' knowledge of the term Outcomes-Based Education

Figure 4.4 showed that 78% of the parents had some degree of knowledge of the term. 16% of the parents heard the term, but know nothing about it. A minority (6%) indicated that they had never heard of the term.

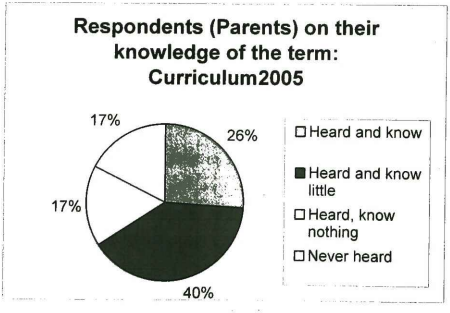


Figure 4.5 Parents' knowledge of the term Curriculum 2005

Figure 4.5 showed that 66% of the parents had some degree of knowledge of the term. 17% of the parents indicated that they heard the term, but knew nothing about it. A similar number also indicated that they had never heard of the term.

Almost all parents (94.19%) had heard of the term Outcomes-Based Education, which was better known than Curriculum 2005. But 5.81% of the parents claimed that they had never heard of Outcomes-Based Education. Three times of that number (17.44 %) claimed that they had never heard of Curriculum 2005. However, the Department of Education had introduced the term Outcomes-Based Education earlier. This finding revealed that those parents who were fairly involved in their children's education had been better informed about the terms associated with the new initiative.

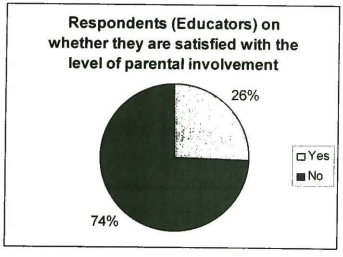


Figure 4.6 Educators' satisfaction on the level of parental involvement

According to Figure 4.6, 74% of educators indicated that they were not satisfied with the level of parental involvement in their schools. 26% of educators felt that parents were involved in the education of children in their schools. It is a known fact that though the number of students is increasing in the classrooms; the Department of Education continues to reduce the number of educators as part of the restructuring and redeployment programmes.

Therefore, this finding showed the difficult task ahead for the parents and other stakeholders in education.

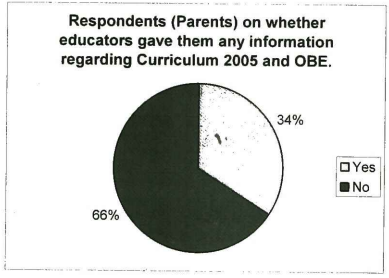


Figure 4.7 Parents received information regarding Curriculum 2005 and OBE from educators

Figure 4.7 above showed that 66% of the parents never received any information on Curriculum 2005 and OBE from the implementers of Curriculum 2005 and OBE. 34% of the parents indicated that they obtained such information from their children's educators. This finding brought to light the importance of informing all parents on time about the changes that one may find in the new education system.

Table 4.16 Availability of study materials

	FREQUENCY (F)	PRCENTAGE (%)
1. Always easy	10	5.81
2. Easy most of the time	52	30.23
3. Easy some of the time	86	50.00
4. Never easy	24	13.95
TOTAL	**172**	**100**

Respondents (parents) were asked about the availability of materials required for assignments and projects especially since the introduction of Curriculum 2005. Table 4.16 showed that 63.95% of parents had some degree of difficulty in obtaining the necessary materials required for their children's education. Just a little over one third of parents (36.04%) indicated that they found it easy to obtain the said materials. As many parents are not sufficiently educated and are living in the rural villages, it may be difficult for them to access a library or bookshop to obtain the necessary items. This finding revealed that it was important to make reference books and textbooks available in the school libraries.

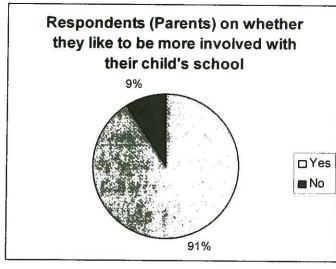


Figure 4.8 Parents like to be more involved with their child's school

When parents were asked whether they like to be more involved in their children's school, majority of parents (91%), according to Table 4.8 indicated that they agreed to it. Only 9% of the parents felt that it was not necessary. These findings showed that the majority of parents were committed to their children's education.

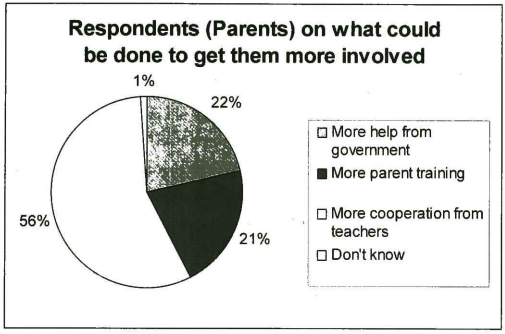


Figure 4.9 To get more parents involved

Parents were asked what could be done to get them more involved in the education of their children. Figure 4.9 showed that more than half (56.40%) of the parents indicated that they needed more co-operation from their children's educators for further involvement. 21.51% of parents felt that they needed more help from the government and 20.93% suggested more parent training. This finding showed that parents expected more co-operation from their children's educators. However, for educators to co-operate more with parents, it is necessary to look into a number of factors such as teacher-pupil ratio, number of educators in the school, number of learners in a class, free-time for both parents and educators etc, to name a few. Most parents have shortage of free time, as their place of work is quite often far from home and most of the parents reach home very late especially in the rural areas.

Training and workshops are very useful for parents when a new curriculum is introduced in their children's school. Such parent training may empower them with new techniques and ideas especially to help their children at home. Parent training is not so common in many areas. In many developed countries such as USA and Australia, parent training is conducted for the benefits of both parents and children.

4.9 Summary

Empirical investigation was carried out in order to determine the level of parental involvement, parents' attitudes, concerns, problems and challenges they were faced with in the education of their children, since the introduction of Curriculum 2005. The findings of this study indicated that there were a number of issues that needed much attention for the effective implementation and management of Curriculum 2005 in the Phokeng circuit, Rustenburg District.

Analysis of data made in this chapter brought to light the following issues that needed considerable attention to make parents more responsible and involved in the education of their children:

- Regular communication between school and parents
- More co-operation between educators and parents
- Assistance for parents who are unable to help children with their homework
- School must provide parents with clear information regarding the progress of their children.
- Parent training

The data obtained and analysed by this study also confirmed the following well-known issues:

- Participation of parents in school activities whenever and wherever possible, such as
  - Volunteering
  - Helping with sports and cultural activities
  - Helping on school trips
  - Reading to children etc.
- Providing adequate learning materials for children
- Regular help and monitoring of homework by parents

CHAPTER 5

5. SUMMARY, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

5.1 Introduction

This chapter is to provide a summary of the study, findings made and the conclusions drawn from the whole study. Recommendations to involve parents in the education of their children and the effective implementation of Curriculum 2005 will also be discussed.

5.2 Summary of the research findings

Several responsibilities of parents, which could be necessary for the effective implementation of Curriculum 2005, were analysed in the study. These could be discussed in relation to the specific questions (see 1.5) that guided this study.

5.2.1 The general attitudes and opinions of parents toward OBE and Curriculum 2005.

It was also found that the majority of the parents were aware of the changes taking place in the education system (see 4.8). They indicated that they wanted to be more involved in their children's education.

5.2.2 Responsibilities of parents in the effective implementation of Curriculum 2005.

The empirical investigation (see Table 4.3) indicated that a high percentage of parents felt that they, together with their children's school are responsible for the education of their children. Educators according to Table 4.4, also felt that parents and educators were equally responsible for the education of children.

It was found from this study (Table 4.6) that both parents and educators considered it a very important responsibility of parents to send their children to school regularly and on time.

From literature, it was found that parents could be involved in many ways to improve the education of their children. Their involvement in the educational activities and non-educational activities could help with the implementation and management of Curriculum 2005.

Some of the various educational and non-educational activities that parents can get involved are the following:

- Effective communication between home and school

  It was found from this study (see 4.7) that the communication between the home and school were not that encouraging.

- Assisting children at home with school related activities

  This investigation revealed (see Table 4.11) that the majority of parents assisted their children at home with school related activities. But more than one third of educators were not satisfied (see Table 4.10) with the level of parental involvement in this regard.

- Discussing the curriculum

  This study revealed that parents were not sufficiently involved (see Table 4.10) in the implementation of Curriculum 2005.

- Maintaining discipline in the school

  It was found from the data (see table 4.10) obtained from educators that the majority of the parents were not actively involved with regard to discipline in the school.

- Providing a supportive home environment
- Providing service and support to the school
- Day-to-day management of the school by developing school policies, drafting budget, fund raising etc.
- Monitoring their children's progress

These findings brought to light the different roles parents could play in the education of their children and what they can do to augment the efforts of the educators, school and the educational authorities.

5.2.3 Difficulties and specific challenges parents face in their involvement in the education of their children due to the introduction of Curriculum 2005.

The research revealed that parents were experiencing some difficulties and were faced with many challenges in their involvement in the education of their children such as:

- lack of knowledge (see Table 4.12) in helping their children with homework
- poor communication (see 4.7) between the school and parents
- lack of adequate learning materials (see Table 4.8) in the school
- lack of enthusiasm by the school and educators (see Table 4.8) in involving parents

5.2.4 Areas of school management negatively affected due to the lack of parental involvement.

It was found from this study that parents were not sufficiently involved with regard to extra-curricular activities and discipline (see Table 4.10) in the school.

5.3 Recommendations

The following recommendations are made to improve the level of parental involvement for the effective implementation and management of Curriculum 2005.

- The school should initiate more activities to establish a relationship between it and parents. These activities must be held at suitable or convenient times for parents who are working.
- Provide information to parents (see Figure 4.7). Schools must publish reports to allow parents to make informed decisions about their children's education.
- Schools must send regular reports to parents on their children's performance. Regular communication between the school and parents should be established. Written communication to parents should be without jargon (see Table 4.15) and complex language.
- The government must provide adequate learning materials to all schools. All schools must be equipped with reference books and reading materials in their libraries (see Table 4.8).
- Empower parents through parent training especially on how to help their children in their studies. Parental development is essential to enable parents to cope with their difficulties. Although there are practical difficulties, educators can be encouraged to invite parents to observe their children's classwork during or after teaching hours for discussions.
- Parents must be encouraged to help and monitor their children's homework regularly, because homework is the continuation of schoolwork. As most parents are not qualified like their children's educators, the latter

must encourage families to learn together. If parents are unable to help their children due to the lack of knowledge of subjects, they can solicit help from other parents or neighbours.

5.4 Further research

When further research is conducted, Researchers may:

- Assess family's needs and interests about ways of working with schools.
- Look into the socio-economic background of parents and their involvement in their children's education.
- Look into school policies that may be acting as barriers to parental involvement.
- Examine whether parents are involved differently in the education of their sons and daughters.
- Study teenage parents and their involvement in their children's education.

5.5 Conclusion

Research investigations revealed that majority of parents were fully aware of their responsibilities. At the moment, the majority of parents are fully involved in their children's school life and most of them want to increase their involvement substantially.

Although there are numerous problems and difficulties faced by both parents and educators in the education of children, with a little more effort from the two parties, these can be solved.

Educators are very highly regarded by parents. There is a need for the co-operation between educators and parents. Taking every opportunity by educators and parents to make contact with each other, be it formally or informally, will lead to the success of all children and the successful implementation and management of Curriculum 2005.

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APPENDIX: A

RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE FOR PARENTS

SECTION A: GENERAL – Biographical and Demographical

Please answer the following questions by making a cross (X) in the appropriate box.

1. What was your age last birthday?

Under 20 ☐ 21-29 ☐ 30-39 ☐ 40-49 ☐ 50 and above ☐

2. At what age did you complete your full time education?

15 or under ☐ 16 ☐ 17 ☐ 18-23 ☐ 24 or more ☐

3. Which of the following best describe your employment at the moment?

Paid job: Full-time ☐ Paid job: Part-time ☐ Self employed ☐ Unemployed ☐ Other ☐

4. How many children aged between 7 and 16 attending school live with you?

1 ☐ 2 ☐ 3 ☐ 4 ☐ 5 or more ☐

SECTION B: ATTITUDES TOWARDS EDUCATION

5. **Think about the education of children in South Africa. In your opinion, who is responsible for the education of a child? Indicate your answer by making a cross (X) in the appropriate box.**

Education of a child is totally the parent's responsibility.	
Education of a child is partially the parent's responsibility.	
Education of a child is totally the school's responsibility.	
Education of a child is partially the school's responsibility.	
Both parents and school are equally responsible.	

Please read the following responsibilities of parents. Indicate how important it is by making a cross (X) in the appropriate box.

6. Parents must make sure that their child attends school regularly and on time

Very important	Not that important	Not at all important	Don't know
☐	☐	☐	☐

7. Parents must help their children with homework and other projects

Very important	Not that important	Not at all important	Don't know
☐	☐	☐	☐

Please read the following statements about parents and education. Indicate whether you agree or disagree with each one by making a cross (X) in the appropriate box.

8. If I ask many questions to teachers at my child's school, I will be labeled as a troublemaker.

Agree ☐ Disagree ☐ Don't know ☐

9. My child's school always gives me clear information about my child's progress.

Agree ☐ Disagree ☐ Don't know ☐

10. My child's school makes it easy for me to be involved in his/her education.

Agree ☐ Disagree ☐ Don't know ☐

SECTION C: INVOLVEMENT

11. Who is more involved in your child's school life?

Father ☐ Mother ☐ Both parents ☐ Whole family ☐ Don't know ☐

12. Are you a Parent Governor at your child's school? YES ☐ NO ☐

13. Do you know any of the Parent Governors at your child's school? YES ☐ NO ☐

14. Do you like to be more involved with your child's school?

YES	NO

Why? Explain briefly:

.....
.....
.....
.....

SECTION D: COMMUNICATION

15. How often do you communicate with your child's school?

Regularly ☐ Occasionally ☐ Once or twice in a year ☐ Never ☐

16. How often do you receive any written communication from your child's school?

Every day ☐ Once a week ☐ Once a month ☐ Once a term ☐ Don't know ☐

17. How easy do you find it to understand this written information from school?

Very easy ☐ Fairly easy ☐ Fairly difficult ☐ Very difficult ☐ Don't know ☐

SECTION E: HOME BASED ACTIVITIES

18. How often does your child get homework?

Every day ☐ Once a week ☐ Once a month ☐ Never ☐ Don't know ☐

19. How often do you help your child with his/her homework?

Every time ☐ Most times ☐ Occasionally ☐ Never ☐ Don't know ☐

20. How easy do you feel helping your child with his/her homework?

Always easy ☐ Easy most of the time ☐ Easy some of the time ☐ Never easy ☐ Don't know ☐

21. I read to my children.

Always ☐ Sometimes ☐ Never ☐

22. I have reading materials such as newspapers, magazines and books at home.

Always ☐ Sometimes ☐ Never ☐

23. I listen to my children when they read.

Always ☐ Sometimes ☐ Never ☐

SECTION F: EDUCATIONAL CHANGE

A number of terms are used frequently in our schools and education. Two of them are given below. Read the terms and select an answer to indicate your knowledge of the terms by placing a cross (X) in the appropriate box.

24. Curriculum 2005

Heard and know the term ☐ Heard but know little ☐ Heard but know nothing ☐ Never heard of the term ☐

25. Outcomes-based Education

Heard and know the term ☐ Heard but know little ☐ Heard but know nothing ☐ Never heard of the term ☐

		YES	NO
26.	Did your child's teachers ever give you any information regarding Curriculum 2005 and OBE?		
27.	Did your child's teachers ever give you any information on how to help your child at home with his/her studies?		
28.	Do you need any help or guidance from your child's teachers so that you can assist your child with his/her studies at home?		

29. How easy is to find materials needed for your child's school projects and assignments?

Always easy ☐ Easy most of the time ☐ Easy some of the time ☐ Never easy ☐

30. My child's school provides enough study materials for his/her education.

Agree ☐ Disagree ☐ Don't know ☐

31. My child's teachers always give me advance notice for the purchase of materials for his/her projects if they are costly.

Agree ☐ Disagree ☐ Don't know ☐

32. Taking everything into account, what do you think could be done to get you more involved in your child's school life?

More help from government ☐ More parent training ☐ More co-operation from teachers ☐ Don't know ☐

APPENDIX: B

RESEARCH QUESTIONNAIRE FOR EDUCATORS

Please answer the following questions on the responsibilities of parents in the education of their children. Indicate your answer by making a cross (X) in the appropriate box.

SECTION A: GENERAL INFORMATION

1. How many years of experience do you have as an educator?

Less than 4 years	Between 5-9	Between 10-14	Between 15-19	20 or more
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

2. How many years of experience do you have in handling Outcomes-Based Education (OBE) or Curriculum 2005 classes?

1 year	2 years	3 years	4 years	5 or more
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

3. Did you receive any special training to assist you in the handling of Curriculum 2005?

YES	NO

4. If your answer to question 3 is YES, please indicate the total number of days training you received since the introduction of Curriculum 2005.

1-7 days	8-14 days	15- 21 days	22-28 days	29 or more days
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

SECTION B: PARENTS AND THEIR RESPONSIBILITIES

5. Most of the parents believe that they have many duties and responsibilities for the education of their children. Also, most of the educators believe that they have many duties and responsibilities for the education of their learners. In your opinion, who is responsible for the education of a child?

Parents only	Educators only	Both Parents and Educators	Don't know
☐	☐	☐	☐

6. Which of the following statements, in your opinion, is the most important responsibility of parents?

6.1 Attend parents meeting	
6.2 Help out in class as volunteers	
6.3 Help out during school trips	
6.4 Help children in doing their homework and projects	
6.5 Help with fund raising activities	
6.6 Help with sports and cultural activities	

7. **Which of the following statements, in your experience, is the most important responsibility of parents that will assist you with the education of your learners?**

7.1 Parents must make sure that their child attends school regularly and on time.

Very important ☐ Not very important ☐ Not at all important ☐ Don't know ☐

7.2 Helping with homework and other projects.

Very important ☐ Not very important ☐ Not at all important ☐ Don't know ☐

7.3 Parents must attend parents meetings.

Very important ☐ Not very important ☐ Not at all important ☐ Don't know ☐

SECTION C: PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

8. How involved are the parents of children in your care with regard to the implementation of Curriculum 2005?

Very involved ☐ Fairly involved ☐ Not very involved ☐ Not at all involved ☐

9. How involved are the parents of children in your care with regard to school-work since the introduction of Curriculum 2005?

Very involved ☐ Fairly involved ☐ Not very involved ☐ Not at all involved ☐

10. How involved are the parents of children in your care with regard to the homework of their children since the introduction of Curriculum 2005?

Very involved ☐ Fairly involved ☐ Not very involved ☐ Not at all involved ☐

11. How involved are the parents of children in your care with regard to their children's extra-curricular activities since the introduction of Curriculum 2005?

Very involved ☐ Fairly involved ☐ Not very involved ☐ Not at all involved ☐

12. How involved are the parents of children in your care with regard to maintaining discipline in the school since the introduction of Curriculum 2005?

Very involved ☐ Fairly involved ☐ Not very involved ☐ Not at all involved ☐

13. Do you give any information to the parents of learners on how to assist their children with their homework and projects?

YES	NO

14. Do you think that parents could do more to assist you with the education of their children?

YES	NO

15. If your answer to question 13 is YES, Please specify HOW?

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16. As an educator, are you satisfied with the level of parent involvement in the education of their children in your care?

YES	NO

17. Taking everything into consideration, what could be done in your opinion to get parents more involved in their children's school life?

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RESPONDENT INFORMATION

Dear Sir/Madam

This study is about parents and education. It is to analyse the role of parents and to identify their problems in the implementation of Curriculum 2005. Please bear the following in mind when completing this questionnaire:

- Do not write your name on the questionnaire – Your responses will be completely confidential.
- This is not to test your competence. I simply need your opinion in order to obtain reliable data.
- On these questions, there are no right or wrong answers.
- Answer ALL the questions to the best of your ability.
- If you are not quite certain what your answer should be, please give me the choice that appeals to you more at the moment.

Thank you very much for your valuable assistance.

Yours faithfully

P. K. S. Nair

APPENDIX: C

Interchangeable terms

Children/Learners/Students
Teachers/Educators
Principal/School Manager