PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN LEARNING AT RURAL MULTIGRADE SCHOOLS IN SOUTH AFRICA: A SCHOOL, COMMUNITY AND FAMILY PARTNERSHIP PROGRAMME

by

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DECLARATION

I, Nicolaas van Loggenberg Venter, declare that the contents of this thesis represent my own unaided work, and that the thesis has not previously been submitted for academic examination towards any qualification. Furthermore, it represents my own opinions and not necessarily those of the Cape Peninsula University of Technology.

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Signed   **Date**

ABSTRACT

Parental involvement in rural multigrade schools in South Africa is poor. This is mainly due to a lack of support for and insufficient knowledge regarding the development of a programme that would increase parental involvement at rural multigrade schools in South Africa. The context of multigrade education in South Africa reflects the reality of a lack of parental involvement. South African rural multigrade education is beset by a variety of internal and external challenges which have a detrimental effect on effective parental involvement.

However, in the rural multigrade school context, parents have untapped potential that needs to be identified and acted upon in order to empower parents; this could provide the rural marginalised children with meaningful access to quality education. Research has proved that parental involvement has a positive effect on the quality of education. According to research, the six types of parental involvement are *parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision-making* and *collaborating with the community.* In this study the focus was on involving parents in learning and allowing them to become active partners in education.

To increase parental involvement in learning at rural multigrade schools in South Africa, an intervention was needed. This intervention came in the form of a school, community and family partnership programme. The core elements of a school, community and family partnership programme (SCAF partnership programme) were the creation of partnerships and communication channels between the school, community and family, as well as the utilisation of existing community resources. These core elements had a specific focus on learning. This study used Bourdieu's (1986) theory on capital and Epstein's (1995) theory of overlapping spheres of influence. The purpose of this study was to determine the characteristics of an effective school, community and family partnership programme that would increase parental involvement in learning at rural multigrade schools in South Africa.

Design-based research was employed in order to design, develop and test the proposed programme. Research was conducted in two phases. During the preliminary phase, a needs and content analysis, review of literature, and the development of a conceptual or theoretical framework for the study were conducted. This was followed by a prototyping phase which is an iterative design phase consisting of iterations, each being a micro-cycle of research with formative evaluation as the most important research activity, and which is aimed at improving and refining the intervention. Summative evaluation was conducted during the prototype phase in order to determine whether the solution or intervention met the pre-determined specifications.

Data gathered during this study indicated:

1. The SCAF partnership programme can increase parental involvement in learning at rural multigrade schools if certain product and process characteristics are active.

2. The SCAF partnership programme allows utilising school, home and community capital through interaction and collaboration to increase parental involvement in learning.

3. A SCAF partnership programme should focus on learning through creating partnerships and opportunities for communication, and utilising community resources.

4. A SCAF partnership programme should be employed through a specific process.

5. Design research offers an appropriate and powerful approach to design, develop and implement a SCAF partnership programme that increases parental involvement in learning at rural multigrade schools.

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GLOSSARY

Abbreviations	Explanation
ISSA	International Step by Step Association
OSI	Open Society Institute
UNESCO	United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization
FAO	Food and Agricultural Organization of United Nations
IIEP	International Institute for Educational Planning
UN	United Nations
UNICEFF	United Nations Children's Fund
EdQual	Education Quality in Low Income Countries particularly Sub- Saharan Africa
EFA	Education for All
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
WCED	Western Cape Education Department
INRULED	International Research and Training Centre for Rural Education
SASA	South African Schools Act
NNPS	National Network of Partnership Schools
ATPs	Action Teams for Partnerships
TDA	Training and Development Agency for Schools
OFSTED	Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills
SCAF partnership programme	School, Community and Family Partnership Programme
SPSS	Statistical Package for Social Science

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION AND OVERVIEW

> *"Foremost among the challenges facing rural South Africa is the task of improving the quality of education. What is often overlooked, however, is the immense, untapped potential of rural communities to take the lead in shaping a better future for themselves. We have to work together to ensure that decision-makers targeting poverty alleviation and social development have access to the voices of the very people who are supposed to benefit from these policies"* (Samuel, 2005:7).

The untapped potential of parents at rural multigrade schools in South Africa needs to be determined and acted upon in order to empower parents and to provide the rural marginalised children with meaningful access to quality education. Motala and Deacon (2011:1) maintain that the involvement of parents in education is perceived to be instrumental in improving children's access, attendance and retention in school, but it also has the potential to improve parents' sense of empowerment, and support the greater achievement of valued educational outcomes. Parental involvement is seen as crucial, both locally and internationally (McDermott & Rothenberg, 2000; Soudien, 2007).

Epstein (2009:12) indicates that:

- most families care about their children, want them to succeed and are eager to be good partners in education; and

- most teachers and administrators would like to involve families, but many do not know how to build positive and productive programmes effectively and affectively.

According to Epstein's (2009:10) model of overlapping spheres of influence (see Chapter 3), three major contexts exist in which learners learn and grow – the family, the school and the community. Therefore there is a need for a school, community and family partnership programme that will increase parental involvement and participation in rural multigrade schools for these parents to become active partners in the learning process.

However, it is also crucially important that the external and internal challenges that currently exist within the multigrade milieu in South Africa (see Chapter 2) need to be determined and recognised in order to design and develop an effective school, community and family partnership programme for rural multigrade schools. If the context of rural multigrade education and schools is understood, it follows that an applicable parental involvement programme can be developed. This research intends to increase parental involvement in learning at rural multigrade schools in South Africa. The focus, however, will not specifically

be to prove that learning took place, but to provide the empowerment of and opportunities for parents of children at rural multigrade schools in South Africa to become active partners in their children's learning and education.

This chapter serves as an orientation to the study. It provides the framework for the research project. The chapter also outlines the problem statement, the rationale and aim of the study. Parental involvement in rural multigrade schools in South Africa is a complicated problem and needs to be addressed. A possible solution to this problem might be a parental involvement programme through a design-based research approach.

1.1 Problem statement and rationale

Within the multigrade milieu there are numerous role-players who are unaware of the potential and untapped capital they possess, and therefore the possible role that they could play as partners in education. The parents of these learners are among the most important role players and it is imperative that they participate in learning and teaching. Jeynes (2011:165) highlights the importance of parental involvement in his meta-analysis and states that nearly every study examining the effects of parental involvement concludes that it considerably influences the lives and education of children (Wallace & Walberg, 1993; Spera, 2005), regardless of race, gender, and socio-economic status (Jeynes, 2003, 2007). In reality parental involvement in rural multigrade schools in South Africa is poor; the role of parents is limited to the provision of food and security. Parents and teachers tend to miss the vital link between education at home and education at school and within the community. Currently learning at school, learning at home and learning in the community takes place separately owing to external and internal challenges in the multigrade milieu. Utilising the capital at home, school and in the community might allow the parents of multigrade learners to play an important role in their education. However, the lack of a practicable, effective and sustainable research-based parental involvement programme for rural multigrade schools in South Africa hinders this potential.

Quality education through effective teaching and learning is the ultimate goal for every school. Reaching this overarching goal is extremely difficult in rural multigrade schools in South Africa because of the following unique challenges:

- Insufficient training of principals and teachers in multigrade education.

- Language difficulties and poor learner performance.

- Insufficient support from educational authorities.

- Lack of resources and learner material for multigrade education.

- The use of monograde methodology in multigrade schools.

- Lack of parental and community involvement.

- A constantly changing curriculum (Joubert, 2010:9-13).

Parents of multigrade learners also face numerous challenges (Boozaaier, 2008:51; Adendorf and Ortell, 2011:65) that exacerbate the problem. Some of these external challenges include:

- Poverty and crime

- Unemployment

- Long working hours

- Illiteracy

Despite all these internal and external challenges, parents still want the best education for their children. As an intermediate-phase teacher at a combined rural school, the researcher has developed empathy for rural multigrade schools and role players. Effective parental involvement might have an impact on quality education in rural multigrade schools. Parents of learners in multigrade schools should therefore be empowered to play a bigger role. The researcher believes that the parents of rural multigrade learners do have the potential to become more involved in their children's education. Taking into account the unique circumstances of these schools, as well as the external and internal challenges that exist, and by utilising the capital in school, at home and in the community, might lead to the development of practicable ways to involve parents in learning. In this study the researcher intends to enhance parental involvement in learning through designing, developing and evaluating an effective, practicable and sustainable parental involvement programme for rural multigrade schools in South Africa.

1.2 Concept clarification

1.2.1 Parental involvement

There are a variety of definitions for parental involvement. For the purpose of this study, parental involvement is defined as "the participation of parents in school or home-based activities, which aim for the development of learners' social, emotional and cognitive skills" (Van Wyk & Lemmer, 2009:14).

1.2.2 Parent

A parent is anyone who has children in his or her permanent care, and who is obliged to take an interest in their education (Van Wyk & Lemmer, 2009:8).

1.2.3 Rural multigrade school

Most of the primary rural and farm schools in South Africa are multigrade schools. It is acknowledged that multigrade schools are also found in urban areas, but this is beyond the scope of this thesis.

Rural multigrade schools are:

- geographically isolated and situated outside the boundaries of urban areas;   and/or

- characterised by learner-centred classrooms where at least two or more grades are taught; these learners have different abilities and levels and receive their education in one classroom with the same teacher for two or more years (Jordaan & Joubert, 2008:7).

1.2.4 Multigrade teachers and principals

It is a common phenomenon in multigrade schools in South Africa, in areas where there are not enough learners to justify the appointment of more teachers, that the principal is also a fulltime teacher.

1.2.5 Educational design research

Educational design research is perceived as the systematic study of designing, developing and evaluating educational interventions, such as programmes, teaching-learning strategies and materials, and products and systems as solutions to such problems, which also intend advancing our knowledge about the characteristics of these interventions and the processes to design and develop them (Plomp, 2009:9).

1.2.6 Design principles

The aim of design research is to produce knowledge about whether and why an intervention works in a certain context. This type of output is called 'design principles' or 'intervention theory'. This research will use the term 'design principles' in this thesis. Design principles comprise 'how to do' guidelines or heuristics that enable a person to discover or learn something by themselves (Plomp, 2009:13, 20). According to Van den Akker (1999) design principles can refer to characteristics of a planned learning design (what it should look like) or

its procedure (how it should be developed) and usually take the form of a heuristic statement (Herrington et al., 2009).

1.2.7 Design guidelines

These are specific and usually context-dependent rules that should be followed in order to achieve the design principles.

1.2.8 Prototype

This is the first or preliminary form or version of interventions from which other forms are developed or copied (Plomp, 2009:13).

1.3 Background

The researcher found research of a limited extent on parental involvement in rural schools in South Africa. Zangqa (2000) found that the lack of parental involvement affected learner achievement in the rural Eastern Cape negatively. In a more recent study, Hamunyela (2008) states that parental involvement is difficult to implement in rural schools, and parents are only involved in non-academic activities. Muthanyan (2000) conducted a study of 50 multigrade schools in Canada in order to determine how multigrade schools in South Africa might improve. She found that involving parents in multigrade classrooms improved multigrade teaching in Canada. These studies focused on proving that there are a number of challenges in parental involvement in rural schools. In the present study, the focus will be on improving parental involvement through the design, development and evaluation of a programme. No studies were found on the development of a parental involvement programme for rural multigrade schools in South Africa. The research therefore addresses a pertinent issue.

With millions of learners currently in rural schools in South Africa, it should be a priority of the national Department of Basic Education in South Africa to ensure quality, equity and accessibility in these schools. Joubert (2010:1) and the Education Policy Consortium (2011:8) maintain that there are almost three million primary school learners in rural multigrade schools, which comprise 30 percent of all the primary school learners in South Africa. Literature and research indicate the poor state of education and teaching in rural multigrade schools. As early as 2004, Mbelle concluded in the report on the *Forgotten Schools* project, that the South African government was failing to protect the right to basic education for children on commercial farms (Mbelle, 2004:1). In 2005, Samuel (2005:8) stated in a Human Sciences Research Council (HSRC) report, *Emerging Voices* (a study of 144 rural schools), that the majority of these children receive less than what they are entitled to in terms of education in a democratic South Africa. A recent report, *Teaching Literacy and*

Numeracy in Multigrade Classes in Rural and Farm Schools in South Africa (Education Policy Consortium, 2011:70), contended that a general neglect of multigrade education in South Africa exists. This constitutes a marginalisation of the poor and voiceless in our society, for whom multigrade education is a reality. It is questionable whether much has been achieved in multigrade schools since the publication of these reports. In 2007 the Directorate of Rural Education was formed specifically to address problems in rural and farm schools. According to Ndebele (2009:1), the directorate focuses on improving the quality of education in rural areas. Focus areas include:

- improving the quality of education and teaching in rural and farm schools;

- getting children in schools and keeping them there;

- planning and improving the infrastructure in rural and farm schools;

- improving sustainable partnerships; and

- establishing effective school management in rural and farm schools.

Two years later the Directorate of Rural Education, under the aegis of the South African Department of Education (DoE, 2009:8), stated that the situation in rural and farm schools was desperate and proposed the merging and closing of schools as a solution. The following problems were identified:

- Learners are placed in multigrade classes and this type of education should be avoided.

- Schools are inaccessible.

- The infrastructure of these schools is inadequate.

- Teachers need to travel long distances to reach these schools, and they do not remain in their teaching positions for any length of time.

- Schools are situated on farms.

Owing to the large number of rural multigrade schools in South Africa, it is axiomatic that this type of school will remain with us for a very long time. Instead of enumerating all the problems that currently exist, it might be more beneficial to rather search for solutions to improve education at rural multigrade schools. The Education Policy Consortium (2011: 70) made specific proposals to improve the situation:

- Enhanced departmental support at schools should be accompanied by greater teacher accountability in areas such as lesson planning, teaching, grading learners'

work and continuous assessment. Schools and teachers should also be accountable and report to parents and local communities also.

- District officials supporting the schools need to be introduced to best practices in multigrade schools and classes.

- Merging and closing small schools should be evaluated against the overall goal of enhancing rural development and improving the quality of local education.

A researcher at the Centre for Education Policy Development in South Africa, Tsakani Chaka, agrees that the situation in rural schools is desperate. He is cited in Marais (2009:8), contending that multigrade teaching is a neglected practice in South Africa. Marais (2009:8) reported that Chaka was managing a project that investigated the teaching of mathematics and literacy in multigrade schools. Developed countries like England use multigrade teaching for pedagogical reasons, while in South Africa multigrade teaching is used because of special circumstances. While the Directorate of Rural Education wants to discourage multigrade education in South Africa, there are developed and developing countries that use multigrade teaching with excellent results. At the first Southern African Multigrade Conference in 2010, a variety of delegates concurred that there had been some improvement using multigrade teaching in rural areas. Table 1.1 displays the improvement detected in two developing countries – India and Colombia.

Table 1.1:   Improvement in learning while applying multigrade education (Southern African Multigrade Conference, 2010)

Presenter	Country	Range	Success
Colbert de Arboleda (2010:22)	Colombia	20 000 Schools	Developed Escuela Nueva education model. The model is cost effective and community based with a multigrade approach. Literacy improved by 40.36% and Mathematics by 69% in some schools.
Rao (2010:12)	India	75 000 Schools	Developed the River Rishi Valley Project based on multigrade methodology. Basic education in rural schools for 7.9 million learners. Some schools improved with 25% - 29% in certain subjects.

Pavan (1992:22-25) concluded, after analysing 57 Canadian and American studies, that 91 percent of these studies showed that learners in multigrade classes performed at the same level or even better than learners in monograde classes – his findings show that multigrade education can be beneficial. Developing countries use multigrade teaching with success. A number of developing countries like India and Colombia have more or less similar contextual problems as South Africa does, and examining the principles of successful projects in these education systems can be beneficial to this study.

In Table 1.2 the principles of the Nueva Escuela model (Colbert de Arboleda, 2010:22-44) and the River Rishi Valley Project (Rao, 2010:12-35) are displayed:

Table 1.2: **Principles of the Nueva Escuela model and River Project Valley Project**

Nueva Escuela model
Learner-centred, active, participatory and cooperative learning.
Learning through dialogue, interaction between learners.
Different pace in learning and rhythm.
Relevant curriculum based on learners' everyday life.
New role of the teacher as a facilitator.
Improved teaching through practical in-service training.
Close collaboration between school and parents.
Interaction between teachers, parents and learners.
Children as leaders.
Parents are part of the learning process.
River Rishi Valley Project
Teachers formulate curriculum.
Self-directed learning.
Learner learning.
Everyday life experiences have a place in the curriculum.
Learners learning at their own pace.
Focus is on what is learned rather than what is taught.
Parental involvement in the classroom.
Relevant curriculum – community involved.

Both successful models placed a strong emphasis on parental involvement in the classroom. However research on parental involvement in rural multigrade schools in South Africa does not reflect the same picture. Boonzaaier (2008:385) concluded that the role that parents can play in rural multigrade schools is underestimated. Parents at rural multigrade schools should be more involved. In a study of 95 multigrade schools in the Cape Winelands Education District he pointed out that:

- 72 percent of parents said it was expected of them to help learners with their homework;

- 6.15 percent of parents were involved in the making of teaching material;

- 6.15 percent of parents were involved in classroom activities like storytelling and reading; and

- 36 percent of parents helped to decorate the classroom.

According to these statistics, it is expected of parents to help learners with homework. The research indicated a very low percentage of parents involved in classroom activities and the making of learning material. The limited statistics available on parental involvement at South African rural multigrade schools makes it difficult to compare local schools with models like

the Nueva Escuela and River Rishi Valley Project. However, it seems that parents from rural multigrade schools in the Western Cape, South Africa, are, to a lesser extent, involved in terms of partnerships in education at rural multigrade schools.

One of the biggest challenges is the socio-economic status of parents at rural multigrade schools. According to Statistics South Africa (2010), the country had an unemployment rate of 25.3 percent in 2010. Added to that, 32.2 percent of children lived in a household with a low per capita income, 22.9 percent of children lived in households that reported hunger in the Western Cape, and 28.3 percent of the people in South Africa received a social grant (Statistics South Africa, 2010:15,19). Socio-economic status is generally seen as one of the biggest challenges for effective parental involvement. Research has proved that poverty has a definite influence on parental involvement. According to Mmotlane et al. (2009:527) in a recent study of 5 734 learners, personal characteristics like age, marital status, gender and living conditions have a strong negative impact on parental involvement. However, all parents want the best possible education for their children despite their socio-economic status. Fuller (2008) and Amoateng et al. (2004) found that parents from low-income families show just as much interest in the success of their children and have a right to be involved in their children's education. The socio-economic circumstances of learners and parents in South African rural multigrade schools will not change overnight; therefore parental involvement in these schools should fit the unique circumstances that currently exist. Taking the parents' context and circumstances into consideration might lead to the development of practicable methods to enhance parental involvement.

According to Epstein (2009:14), the six types of parental involvement are *parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision making* and *collaborating with the community.* Determining which of these six types of parental involvement should be focused on would be a good starting point. However, in order to develop a practicable, effective and sustainable parental involvement programme, a set of guiding principles is needed. The International Step by Step Association (ISSA) (2010:24), states that strong partnerships among educators, families, and other community members are essential for children's learning and development. Since 1994, the Step by Step Programme, an initiative of the Open Society Institute (OSI), has been a symbol of change in preschools, primary schools, and communities in 29 countries of central, eastern, and southeast Europe and central Asia. Recognising the role of the home learning environment and family as the first educational and social setting of a child, the educator must build bridges between the school and family/community and promote on-going two-way communication. The different compositions, backgrounds, lifestyles, and characteristics of the families and communities of the children must be taken into account in order to support children's learning and

development. ISSA has been a symbol for empowering educators and, families, and whole communities to support the development and learning of each child to his or her full potential. ISSA (2010:25) declared the following principles to insure family and community involvement.

- Principle 1: The educator **promotes partnerships** with families and provides a variety of opportunities for families and community members to be involved in children's learning and development.

- Principle 2: The educator uses **formal and informal opportunities** for communication and information sharing with families.

- Principle 3: The educator uses **community resources** and family culture to enrich children's development and learning experiences.

Creating partnerships with parents and opportunities for communication, and utilising community resources, will definitely increase parental involvement in learning. It would also allow the current perspective of "separate responsibilities of schools and families" at rural multigrade schools to become a perspective of "shared responsibilities of schools and families" (Epstein, 2009:11). In creating this perspective, interaction and communication between the school and parents should improve. Thus overlapping spheres of influence (Epstein 2009:10) between the school, community and family would take shape. According to Epstein (2009:10), high-quality communication and interaction need to be implemented to bring all three spheres of influence closer together. The three spheres – school, community and family, need to interact and communicate. However for this to be realised, the capital that exists within the three spheres needs to be determined. According to Hargreaves and Fullan (2012:1), capital relates to one's own or a group's worth, particularly concerning assets that can be leveraged to accomplish goals. Determining the capital that exists within the community, the family and the school would therefore help shape practicable strategies in order to increase parental involvement in learning through interaction and communication.

The research of two noted researchers in the field of parental involvement, Dauber and Epstein (1993), shows that, regardless of parents' training, attitude, family size and learners' potential, parents will get involved if the school policy and programme are in place to involve them in learners' learning at school and at home. Taking into account the current situation of rural multigrade schools, it will be very important to design, develop and evaluate a practicable, cost-effective and implementable parental involvement programme specifically for rural multigrade schools. It will definitely be a challenge to address this complex problem in a research project. By focusing on a design-based approach, underlined by context, a parental involvement programme for rural multigrade schools might be the answer.

1.4   Research questions

In line with the findings from the preliminary literature review in the previous section, this study has one main research question and three research sub-questions.

Main research question:

What are the characteristics of an effective school, community and family partnership programme that increase parental involvement in learning at rural multigrade schools in South Africa?

Characteristics refer to the elements that should be present in a school, community and family partnership programme for rural multigrade schools in South Africa. An effective partnership programme should:

- be practicable and sustainable for the school, community and families;
- focus on getting parents involved in the children's learning; and
- promote partnerships, create opportunities for communication, and utilise resources.

In order to address the main research question, three research sub-questions were formulated.

Research sub-question 1:

What are the current needs for and requirements of a school, community and family partnership programme that will increase parental involvement in learning for rural multigrade schools in South Africa?

Research sub-question one intends to determine the current state and challenges of parental involvement at rural multigrade schools. The current state will help determine the need for and requirements of a school, community and family partnership programme to increase parental involvement in learning at rural multigrade schools. Research sub-question 1 was the focus of Chapters Two, Three and Five.

Research sub-question 2:

What are the product and process characteristics of a practicable, effective, contextually based and sustainable school, community and family partnership

programme that increase parental involvement in learning at rural multigrade schools?

Once the requirements and possible characteristics of a parental involvement programme have been determined, the programme needs to be designed and further developed. Research sub-question 2 aimed to determine the specific product and process characteristics of the programme. The product characteristics are, the 'what', that is, what are the desired opportunities that may increase parental involvement in learning, that were created through the intervention to establish collaboration between school, community and families. The process characteristics are, the 'how', referring to the processes that were used to create partnerships, informal and formal opportunities for communication, and the utilisation of resources in the community with a specific focus on learning. Research sub-question 2 was the focus of Chapter Six.

Research sub-question 3:

How did the developed school, community and family partnership programme influence parental involvement in learning at rural multigrade schools?

Research sub-question 3 investigates whether the partnership programme with its current characteristics had an effect on parents becoming more involved in their children's learning. The design principles that lead to identifying the characteristics will also be determined through this question. These principles may support other researchers in their own development of parental involvement programmes.

1.5   Research methodology

1.5.1   Research paradigm

This study fits into the pragmatism paradigm. According to Creswell (2003:11), there are many forms of pragmatism; for many of these, knowledge claims arise out of actions, situations, and consequences, rather than from antecedent conditions (as in post-positivism). The pragmatist research paradigm has a concern with applications –"what works?" – and solutions to problems (Patton, 1990). Instead of methods being important, the problem is most important, and researchers use all approaches to understand the problem (Rossman & Wilson, 1985). Tashakkori and Teddlie (1998) and Patton (1990) convey the importance of focusing attention on the research problem in social science research and then using mixed-method approaches to derive knowledge about the problem. The pragmatic paradigm allows determining the problem, and then proposing a solution (change) in order to see what really works and what the best possible solutions are.

1.5.2   Research design

Design-based research will be used in this study. The most important function of this study is to *design* and to *develop.* Design-based research, according to Plomp (2009: 13), is " ... the systematic study of designing, developing and evaluating educational interventions (such as programmes, teaching-learning strategies and materials, products and systems) as solutions for complex problems in educational practice, which also aims at advancing our knowledge about the characteristics of these interventions and the processes of designing and developing them". The current situation of parental involvement in multigrade schools in South Africa can be evaluated, changed and improved by using design-based research. Kelly (2009:76) recommends that design-based research should be used if one or more of the following are detected:

- When the *content knowledge* to be learned is *new or even being discovered by the experts.*

- When how to teach the content is unclear: *pedagogical content knowledge is poor.*

- When the *instructional content is poor* or not available.

- When the teachers' knowledge and skills are limited.

- When the *educational researchers' knowledge* of the content and instructional strategies, or instructional materials is poor.

- *When complex societal, policy or political factors may negatively affect progress.*

Currently there are no parental involvement programmes for rural multigrade schools in South Africa; there is thus insufficient knowledge of possible programmes.

In this study a mixed method approach was applied. According to Cherryholmes (1992), Murphy (1990) and Creswell (2003:12), pragmatism is not committed to any one system of philosophy and reality (the choice of paradigm is discussed in Chapter 4). This applies to mixed-methods research in that enquirers draw liberally from both quantitative and qualitative assumptions when they engage in their research. Therefore individual researchers have a freedom of choice. They are 'free' to choose the methods, techniques, and procedures of research that best meet their needs and purposes. Pieterse and Sonnekus (2003:14) agree that both qualitative and quantitative research methods are needed, owing to the nature of some studies. In this study the researcher will also use both methods: quantitative research methods, in the form of a survey through questionnaires, and qualitative research methods, in the form of focus group interviews with principals, teachers and parents. The study will be

conducted in two phases. Plomp (2009:15) states that the three phases in design-based research comprise:

- *Preliminary phase:* needs and content analysis, review of literature, development of a conceptual or theoretical framework for the study.

- *Prototyping phase:* iterative design phase consisting of iterations, each being a micro-cycle of research with formative evaluation as the most important research activity aimed at improving and refining the intervention.

- *Assessment phase:* (semi-) summative evaluation to conclude whether the solution or intervention meets the pre-determined specifications. As this phase often results in recommendations for improvement of the intervention, we call this phase semi-summative.

During the prototype phase assessment was conducted, therefore an assessment phase was not necessary.

1.6   Positionality of researcher

I have multiple roles in this research, including those of facilitator, evaluator, developer, motivator, interviewer and observer during the design research process. The role as supporter during implementation will decline in the second phase of this study. I explain these roles and their implications for this research in greater depth in Chapter Four.

1.7   Structure of the thesis

The remaining chapters in this thesis are introduced below, along with a short description of the content of each chapter.

1.7.1   Chapter 2: Literature review - Context of rural multigrade education

The aim of the chapter is to provide information about the context of rural multigrade schools. The chapter also describes the significance and extent of multigrade education internationally and in South Africa. A strong emphasis is placed on the challenges experienced in the rural multigrade education milieu. This chapter intends to address part of research sub-question 1.

1.7.2   Chapter 3: Literature review - A conceptual framework for parental involvement

In this chapter, literature from international and national studies is reviewed. Parental involvement and parental involvement programmes are described and provide a starting point for the development of a programme for rural multigrade schools. By examining the key

theories on, and the advantages of parental involvement, as well as the format of current successful parental involvement programmes, facilitated the development of a conceptual framework. The conceptual framework guided the study. This chapter addresses research sub-question 1 and 2.

1.7.3   Chapter 4: Research Design

This chapter starts with a discussion of the different research paradigms and an explanation for the choice of the pragmatist paradigm. The design research approach applied in this study is explored. An overview of the design research is discussed for each phase. Validity and reliability of the study are also discussed. The chapter concludes with a description of the ethical considerations for this study.

1.7.4   Chapter 5: Preliminary Phase – Need and context analysis

This chapter examines the problem in context and establishes the criteria for a parental involvement programme for rural multigrade schools. The chapter describes data gathered from a survey and focus group interviews. The criteria proposed by the data are then used in an idea generation process to determine proposed design principles. Research sub-question 1 was the focus of this chapter.

1.7.5   Chapter 6: Prototyping and Evaluation Phase – A cyclical approach

This chapter documents and discusses the design, procedures, data and results for the first two design cycles. Research sub-questions 2 and 3 are the focus of this chapter. The cycles aimed to develop a practicable and sustainable partnership programme in rural multigrade schools. Data collection included expert appraisals, reports, observations, focus group interviews, logbooks and journals. Four prototypes were developed and evaluated.

1.7.6   Chapter 7: Conclusions and recommendations

The final chapter summarises the findings of the research and presents the conclusions to be drawn from this study. The impact of the programme and the design principles on parental involvement, specifically on learning, at rural multigrade schools are presented. A set of conclusions and recommendations is presented, along with a discussion of the possible effects of these findings on policy, practice and research. The chapter therefore addresses the overall research question. The limitations of this study are explored, along with recommendations for further research.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW:
CONTEXT OF RURAL MULTIGRADE EDUCATION

2.1   Introduction

Chapter 2 provides an understanding of the current situation of multigrade education by describing the context and concept of rural multigrade education internationally and in South Africa. The concept of rural multigrade schools (see Chapter 1) and the context in which these schools operate are very important components of this study. The broad context of the study should provide a point of departure to determine knowledge and ideas for a possible parental involvement programme as an intervention for the specific context of rural multigrade schools. A design-based research approach is followed in this study (see Chapter 4). One of the questions to be asked is whether rural multigrade education is an appropriate, unique and complex context for design research. The concept of a 'wicked problem' will be discussed in this chapter. Research sub-question 1 will be answered in Chapters 2 – 4. This chapter will focus on the needs for and requirements of rural multigrade schools. A literature study was done to describe the context and concept of rural multigrade schools – as formulated in Research sub-question 1:

"What are the current needs for and requirements of a school, community and family partnership programme that will increase parental involvement in learning for rural multigrade schools in South Africa?"

One of the most urgent challenges that our modern world faces is the increasing number of marginalised people. Our daily news is often dominated by protest marches and terrorism. We know that inequalities feed delinquency and crime, which, in turn, frequently constitute a sign of the poor's exasperation with the world's inequalities. There are about three billion people with unmet basic needs living on incomes of less than R20 a day (UNESCO, 2012:5). These billions lack the basic requirements for a normal life. National and global economic systems fail to harness technological and organisational resources, and most importantly, the human resources, to meet unfulfilled human needs. Over 200 million people in the world today, who are willing and able to work, are estimated to be unemployed, and probably more than a billion are involuntarily underemployed (UNESCO, 2012:22). The majority of the world's poor – about 75 percent, including those with little food, as well as illiterate adults and out-of-school children, live in rural areas and have very little access to food, schools, health care, roads, technology, institutional support and markets (World Bank, 2003). Poverty increases the effects of exclusion, resulting in a cumulative disadvantage.

It is in this context of marginalised people living in rural areas, in conditions of poverty and exclusion, where we find multigrade schools. Much support is needed to try to solve this problem through education. In a personal letter to the international community the Secretary General of the United Nations (Ban Ki-moon, 2012:31) warned that:

> It is time for the international community to face the fact that we have a crisis in education. We must be clear that if children are forced out of school their governments and communities are also failing. But we cannot stop until every child, youth and adult has the opportunity to go to school, learn and contribute to society. When we put education first, we see an end to wasted potential and we unleash the human spirit.

2.2 Underlying concepts and principles

Apart from that of the Centre for Multigrade Education (CMGE) and the Education Policy Consortium, there is a paucity of research on multigrade education in South Africa. Owing to the extensive research done in other countries regarding multigrade education, it was considered applicable to use this research in the current study to understand and interpret the context of multigrade education. It is also necessary to identify and explain important concepts. The following concepts (Hoppers, 2009:21-22) and principles are considered the starting points for work in multigrade education. They are derived from the ideas that inspired the education conferences in 1990 in Jomtien, Thailand, and in 2000 in Dakar, Senegal.

a. The right to education

The right to education for children, youth and adults has been enshrined in international conventions and in the constitution of many African countries. In Dakar, it was reconfirmed by UNESCO (2000:8) that all children, particularly girls, and including children in difficult circumstances and those belonging to ethnic minorities, should have access to a complete, free and compulsory basic education of good quality.

b. Lifelong and life-wide learning

Lifelong learning as an organising principle rests upon the integration of learning and living, both vertically and horizontally (CMGE, 2012:16): vertically, by connecting various developmental stages of the learner and different levels of education; horizontally, by linking learning to all spheres of life: family, community, study, work and leisure. Lifelong learning implies the linking of different types of education (formal, non-formal and informal) in such a way that learners, of different ages, can interrupt or resume learning, or move from one type to another, at any time, depending on changing needs and circumstances.

c. Inclusive education

Inclusive education refers to the efforts of bringing all learners, regardless of background, into a common (basic) education framework. According to White Paper 6 (DoE, 2001:16), inclusion means that all children and young people have equal opportunities of learning in the same school or in different types of schools, independent of their cultural and social backgrounds, such as their differences in abilities and capacities or the circumstances under which they live. UNESCO (2000:18) concurs in proposing 'inclusive' education systems which explicitly identify, target and respond flexibly to the needs and circumstances of the poorest and the most marginalised children.

d. Democratisation

This concept refers in part to the comprehensive access, engagement, participation and attainment of relevant outcomes by all learners, regardless of socio-economic background, gender, culture, religion, household circumstances, etc. This implies the need to adapt the substance of the national curriculum and the pedagogical approach to the environment, background and diversity of the learners. According to Juvane (2010), democratisation is also about participation in decision-making in education by relevant stakeholders, including teachers, learners and parents, at local and at national levels.

e. Multigrade education

Multigrade schooling is a strategy to increase the educational opportunities of children in situations where, because of the limited size of the learner population, a teacher for each grade of primary school is impractical. In a multigrade school, teachers manage two or more classes simultaneously, and a single teacher may be responsible for all primary grades. According to Little (2007:4), researchers have found the following terms used in different countries to describe multigrade education used in a classroom – combination class, composite class, vertically grouped class, family-grouped class, un-graded class, non-graded class, mixed-year class, mixed-grade class, mixed-age class, consecutive class, double class, class multigrade and class unique. Multigrade teachers also contend not only with teaching a complete curriculum to learners of widely varying ages at the same time (for which they have not been trained), but also with the contexts of professional isolation and rural poverty which make teaching very difficult (Alexander, 2008:9). Multigrade schooling is used in isolated rural areas of both developed and developing countries (Education Policy Consortium, 2011:3). For this study, the definition of rural multigrade schools of Jordaan and Joubert (2008:7) is considered the most appropriate. They concluded that in South Africa a rural multigrade school is:

- geographically isolated and situated outside the boundaries of urban areas; and/or

- characterised by learner-centred classrooms where at least two or more grades are taught; these learners have different abilities and levels and receive their education in one classroom with the same teacher for two or more years.

f. Learning

In this study I refer to learning in a broader sense. I agree with the definition of Hill (2002) who refers to learning as follows:

> Learning occurs when experience causes a relatively permanent change in an individual's knowledge or behaviour. The change may be deliberate or unintentional, for better or for worse, correct or incorrect, and conscious or unconscious.

Disagreement on the definition of learning exists, but most would agree that learning occurs when experience causes a change in a person's knowledge or behaviour. Behavioural theorists emphasise the role of environmental stimuli in learning and focus on behaviour or observable responses.

g. Rural

Different views on the definition of rural exist; the connotation of the term 'rural' in a developed country might differ from that in a developing country. In developing countries, small populations, the agricultural milieu and poverty are considered synonymous with the term 'rural'. Rural people live in human settlements with small populations and in geographical spaces often dominated by farms, forests, water, coastal zones, mountains, and/or deserts (UNESCO, 2007).

> Most rural dwellers work in agriculture, often for low rates of compensation. They face high transaction costs and have little political clout. The government services to which they have access are generally inappropriate and of poor quality. Rural people are generally farmers, stockbreeders, fisherman and, in some cases, nomads (UNESCO, 2007:15)

In this study, 'rural' is described as geographically isolated and situated outside the boundaries of urban areas (see Chapter 1).

h. Poverty

The basic premise is that poor rural people find it very difficult to manage the multiple risks they face arising from their personal and household circumstances, the natural and climatic hazards, and economic and development situations at national and global levels. These

hazards affect rural people disproportionately, because more of them are poor (UNESCO, 2012:i).

The rural poor, the majority of the poor in most countries, therefore, cannot seize any opportunities in either agriculture or the non-agrarian economy. The extreme poverty, in which isolated rural communities live, combined with the devastating effects of economic downturns or natural disasters, heavily influences family decisions on keeping children at school.

i. Flexibility as a principle

No one would ever contend that all learners are the same; therefore we have used the analogy of "one size doesn't fit all" for years in education. Learners are different from one another in size, height, eye colour, background and experience. They learn differently and have different likes, preferences, and needs, and differ from one another in physical abilities and social development as well. The same principle is true of rural people; they cannot be assumed to be a homogeneous group. 'Rural is plural' means that there is a wide variation in the needs of different groups throughout the world and even in South Africa. Research indicates a large degree of heterogeneity both within and across countries in terms of access by rural households to essential assets and services, including education (UNESCO, 2007). The key word in any discussion of multigrade education is flexibility. Any discussion on multigrade education has to be very flexible, given the nature of multigrade education. One of the greatest difficulties in promoting multigrade education is the inflexibility of a grade-based curriculum. Berry (2007:27) supports this in his contention that every learner in a multigrade school should be given access to classroom experiences that meet their cognitive and social needs. This requires a diversity of teaching practices and approaches that are sensitive to the range of children's learning styles and preferences, and to their current level of cognitive and social development.

j. Principle of education as a solution

Ensuring that children everywhere are able to complete a full course of primary education is one of the Millennium Development Goals, and key to the global effort to reduce poverty. According to the United Nations (2009:14-15), Goal Two of the Millennium Development Goals is to achieve universal primary education with a target to ensure that, by 2015, children everywhere, boys and girls alike, will be able to complete a full course of primary education. The provision of primary education for the poorest and most marginalised learners enhances their economic, health, and social opportunities. Distance to school is a major barrier to attendance in low-income countries. Therefore reaching children in the more remote and less populated areas requires the provision of small schools, within reach of

small communities. When implemented well, multigrade education is an efficient means of providing viable schools close to the communities they serve, and produces learning outcomes comparable to and sometimes better than conventional monograde structures. (Mulkeen & Higgins, 2009).

Education improves the quality of people's lives in ways that transcend benefits to the individual and the family by contributing to economic prosperity and reducing poverty and deprivation. Countries with low levels of education remain in a trap of technological stagnation, low growth, and low demand for education. Policies and programmes for education, training, skills development and the creation of jobs therefore cannot ignore the special conditions and contexts of rural people (UNESCO, 2012:1).

k. Principles of design research in a multigrade rural contexts

The question to be asked is whether rural multigrade education is an appropriate context for design research? Kelly (2009:76) states that one of the broad goals of design research is to illuminate the nature of the problem, that is, to "tame a wicked problem" by specifying its character and making it open to intervention. In education settings (or contexts), design research is recommended when one or more of the following conditions operate to make the problem more 'wicked' and 'open' than 'simple' and 'closed' for example, when complex societal, policy or political factors may negatively affect progress. This study will try to show that multigrade education is a 'wicked' problem operating in both the above conditions.

A review of the many published examples of design research (Kelly et al., 2008) demonstrates the heavy investment of time and resources necessary to make progress in the face of sometimes daunting circumstances. Design research is recommended when the problem facing learning or teaching is substantial and daunting, and how-to-do guidelines for addressing the problem is unavailable. Further, a solution to the problem will lead to significant advances in learning, or at least a significant reduction in malfunction in the education system – specifically with reference to rural multigrade education. Design research is most suited to 'open', or more appropriately, 'wicked' problems (Kelly, 2009:75). Addressing a 'wicked' problem is to describe problems that share the features of 'open' problems, but that also engage elements that make their solutions frustrating or potentially unattainable. For 'wicked' problems (e.g. Camillus, 2008), the character of open problems pertains. Plus, there are typically inadequate resources, unclear 'stopping rules' (conditions that indicate a solution is at hand or the project should be abandoned), unique and complex contexts, and inter-connected systemic factors that impinge on progress. Most frustrating, these other factors may themselves be symptoms of problems of associated 'wicked problems' for example, attempting to teach numeracy in a society with high poverty rates.

2.3 Theory

Theoretical starting points (approaches to researching education learning, namely the human capital and rights-based approaches) will provide a basis for setting out the approach and framework to emphasise the importance of context in such a set-up. Central to the approach is recognising the complex and contested nature of the debate, including engaging with the wider historical, economic, political, cultural and discursive context within which it is situated and being suitably self-reflexive about the research process itself (Tikly, 2010:5). A number of ideological characteristics are reflected in multigrade education in countries all over the world. It is important to acknowledge that their frequency and intensity will vary between countries. However, all of these characteristics will be found to some extent in each country.

a. Postcolonial theory

A key theoretical influence in the development of early thinking around the concept of multigrade education was provided by postcolonial theory as applied to the field of comparative and international education (Chisholm, 2004). Postcolonial theory is concerned with recognising the on-going implications of the colonial encounter and of the 'postcolonial condition' for education. From this perspective, the continuing gap in the quality of education experienced by postcolonial elites on the one hand, and the majority of the population on the other, can be seen as having its roots in the highly unequal forms of provision that existed during colonial times. Key issues here include the continuing Eurocentric and irrelevant nature of many curricula and textbooks, the authoritarian and teacher-centred forms of pedagogy including the widespread use of corporal punishment, the highly gendered nature of schooling, and the complexity of the language issue (Altbach & Kelly, 1978:7).

b. Human rights approach

This approach is interested in rights to education, rights in education and rights through education (Unterhalter, 2007:10). Rights-based approaches reflect the realisation of fundamental human rights. These include the enactment of negative rights such as protection from abuse, as well as positive rights, for example celebration and nurturing of learner creativity, use of local language in schools, pupil participation in democratic structures, and debate. Teaching approaches that are broadly identified as learner-centred, as well as democratic school structures, are promoted.

The human rights discourse has become increasingly influential globally. The framework adopted by UNICEF (2007), based on a learner-centred view of education quality, have been particularly influential. It is organised around the five dimensions of:

- What learners bring to learning

- Environments (are they healthy, safe, protective and gender-sensitive?)

- Content (are curricula and materials relevant?)

- Processes

- Outcomes

Children have a fundamental right to free primary schooling of good quality. Governments have pledged to uphold this right. There is a call from parents everywhere for the schooling their children deserve — from the earliest years to adulthood, that education must be placed at the heart of social, political and development agendas.

c. Human capital approach

Within the human capital approach, the rationale for investing in education lies in the contribution that education can make to economic growth. Hanushek and Wössmann (2007) argue that there is a statistically and economically positive effect of the quality of education on economic growth. They suggest that quality is measured by learner achievement on standardised tests, and correlates more strongly with economic growth than simply years spent in school. It is also argued from a human capital perspective that countries which have the highest levels of inequality in the education sector (of any kind), also have the slowest national growth rates (Wils et al., 2005).

The role of education in relation to economic growth, however, has shifted over the years. Human capital theory has begun to complement a continued interest in rates of return with an interest in education's role in alleviating poverty and promoting social welfare, including women's welfare, as a basis for promoting growth and human security (Tikly, 2010:8). In terms of strategies to raise the quality of education, human capital theorists typically propose market-led solutions. One of the key areas that reform initiatives will have to address to raise quality is parental involvement (Hanushek & Wössmann, 2007:9).

2.4 Multigrade education

Little has been written about multigrade education in South Africa (Reeves, 1997:132). The author concurs with the following views, although they refer to countries other than South Africa.

> Multigrade Education, which has been in practice in the schooling system of most countries since time immemorial, still remains to be fully accepted into the national education system as a reliable alternative strategy to single-grade class teaching (Birch & Lally, 1995:14).

Multigrade education is no recent innovation in any country. It has been the medium of instruction in schools for almost a century prior to the advent of compulsory primary education. The history of the emergence of multigrade education is long and complex. Although multigrade education may have been displaced (in theory but not in practice) from its historical position in the education system, its retention can point to a history of service considerably more extensive than its single-grade counterpart. The critical issue is not the history, but the effectiveness of the approach. Although there is a need for more research on its effectiveness, evidence from studies like that of Miller (1994:1-8) is encouraging in pursuing this medium of instruction (Birch & Lally, 1995:4).

The 19th-century ideas and practices of classifying learners into ages and specific developmental stages were imposed in Africa. Little (2007:3) states that in most of the primary schools around the world, a single teacher is responsible for a class formed of learners from a single year grade at any given time of the school day. This is known as *monograde* education and is in contrast to settings where a single teacher is responsible for a class formed of children from two or more year grades. This is known as *multigrade* education. Alexander (2008:27) notes that the default organisational and interactive mode for monograde education is whole class teaching. Research on multigrade teaching exposes the limitations of whole class teaching and explores the learning potential for children of working in groups. Multigrade education is a "powerful pedagogic tool for promoting independent and individualised learning" (Little, 1995:31). This thinking is largely based on possibilities for social development as well as peer and cross-age learning among children aged 5 to 7 years. Such multi-age arrangements are seen as mimicking the family situation in which there are children of varying ages (Little, 1995: 33). In monograde teaching the progress of learning centres on interaction between learner and teacher, while in multigrade teaching it is based on learners' engagement with materials and on their interaction with peers.

Multigrade classes persist in almost 30 percent of South African primary schools (Joubert, 2010:1) and are likely to do so for a long time yet, because so many of the schools are too small to make monograde staffing a realistic economic proposition. Most critically, multigrade education aligns with geography and poverty, and multigrade teachers therefore contend not only with a generic pedagogical challenge for which they have not been trained – that of teaching a complete curriculum to learners of widely-varying ages at the same time – but also with the contexts of professional isolation and rural poverty which make teaching difficult in any circumstances (Alexander, 2008:28).

There are many current conditions giving rise to multigrade education. Many countries are striving to meet their commitment towards achieving Education for All (EFA) goals for 2015. Countries consider multigrade schooling a solution to reach out to children who are

impoverished, disadvantaged, and living in remote areas, and who are not yet enrolled. This kind of schooling might be a viable alternative for those children who have missed joining school at the entry age or who have dropped out for economic or social reasons. This would also help in achieving the United Nations' Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), particularly universal primary education. Because of this, enrolment in primary education in Sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) has grown rapidly, increasing by 40 percent between 1999 and 2005. However, there are still 33 million children out of school in SSA, and 600 000 out-of-school children in South Africa (UNESCO, 2007). As enrolment expands, more of the out-of-school children are the difficult-to-reach children in remote rural areas. One of the solutions is to provide very small schools using a multigrade teaching system, where teachers work with more than one grade at the same time (Mulken & Higgins 2009:1). In low-income countries the cost of travelling is high, relative to the cost of salaries, and for the poorest there is no viable alternative to finding a school within walking distance.

The reasons for multigrade education are complex and vary with context. This is acknowledged globally. There is no universal agreement as to what constitutes multigrade education among researchers and educators. For many, the concept remains deeply contested, which has made it difficult to reach consensus in respect of its meaning. Multigrade education reaches the heart of learning and radically calls into question the age-graded system of education delivery. Multigrade education is a challenge to current curricula, assessment and teacher training programmes, because all these are based on a monograde approach only. This is why multigrade education continues to compete for space, and be in tension with its single-grade counterpart. Until multigrade education is treated on par with single-grade education, the full potential of the former will not be realised. The message is clear: educators need to take multigrade education as seriously as they do single-grade education (Juvane, 2010:17).

One of the most populated countries in the world, India, adopted a positive approach to multigrade education. India is a developing country and according to Rao (2010:12), has managed not only to provide access to, but also improve the quality of education, through multigrade education. The Rishi Valley, for example, benefits 7.9 million rural learners, where some the schools obtained a 25 – 29 percent improvement in certain subjects. This is indicative of multigrade education's potential role in realising the demand for Education for All. The motivational and communal potential of multigrade education is also highlighted. Rao (2010:12-35) notes that everyday experiences as part of the curriculum, and parents' involvement in class, are two of the principles that have led to the success of multigrade education.

Although almost all countries in the world engage in multigrade education as a technique, not all share this optimism (Birch & Lally, 1995:4). Despite the sentiments expressed in the literature on the contribution multigrade education has made, is making, and can make, to both the communities and nationally, it is impossible not to miss the general note of pessimism in the discussions to date of the acceptance of multigrade education. Multigrade education has acquired an 'inferior status' classification of which it is difficult to disabuse educators, officials and politicians. The reason for multigrade education's continued disfavour has to be attributed to the dominance of the present paradigm of schooling as encapsulated in the single-grade approach. Some studies have already indicated the success of multigrade education, according to Pavan (1992:22-25), who studied 57 Canadian and American research studies; 91 percent show that learners in multigrade classes performed the same or better than learners from monograde classes. Nothing less than a paradigm change is required of multigrade education to escape the bonds of the present system and be allowed free rein as an authentic pedagogy in its own right. If this is not to happen, multigrade education will always be hamstrung by the inappropriate restraints of the present dominant paradigm. Amongst other things, it will be evaluated on traditional criteria, and continually held to be the exception, if not the inferior, pedagogy. This, in turn, given its frequent association with the disadvantaged and the poor, will only aggravate their condition. In the light of this, the following conclusion is understandable:

> It would appear that the philosophical-pedagogical advocacy of the virtues of single-grade teaching has besotted the minds of educationalists at large, as well as of parents and communities (Birch & Lally, 1995:15).

a. Use of multigrade education

Multigrade education is widely used through the world in areas of low population density. Reliable data on the extended of use of multigrade approaches are difficult to obtain (Pridmore 2004; Mulryan-Kyne 2005). However, UNESCO (2004) estimates that as many as one-third of all classes throughout the world are multigrade classes and that multigrade classes are a routine part of education in many of the world's high-income countries.

Multigrade teaching is also widely used in developing countries, and plays an important role in providing access to education for rural communities in many parts of Asia, Latin America, and Africa (Little, et al., 2006).

Multigrade education takes place in almost 27 percent of all schools in South Africa. The largest number of multigrade schools is located in Limpopo, Eastern Cape and KwaZulu-Natal. These provinces are largely rural, with extreme pockets of poverty, and agricultural activity representing a significant proportion of income.

Table 2.1: **The use of multigrade education in developed and developing countries, and in South Africa**

Developed countries	%	Developing countries	%	South Africa	%
Finland	70	India	84	Eastern Cape	26,66
Netherlands	53	Peru	78	Free State	18,09
Ireland	42	Sri Lanka	63	Gauteng	38,63
Australia	40	Pakistan	58	KwaZulu-Natal	19,69
Sweden	35	Namibia	40	Limpopo	41,35
France	34	Burkina Faso	36	Mpumalanga	25,00
New Zealand	33	SOUTH AFRICA	26,93	Northern Cape	13,83
England	26	Zambia	26	North-West	29,49
Scotland	25			Western Cape	15,35
Canada	20				

Developed countries according to Mulryan-Kyne (2005); Little (2007)
Developing countries according to Little (2007)
South Africa according to Education Policy Consortium (2011:18)

More specifically, in 2012 there were 25 826 schools in South Africa with 12 428 069 learners (Department of Basic Education, 2012:1). More than half of these schools were rural schools. According to Coetzee (2010:1) there are 13 491 rural schools in South Africa, with 2 641 of these being farm schools. Most of the primary rural and farm schools in South Africa are multigrade schools. In the Western Cape there are 1 453 schools with 991 685 learners. In the Western Cape 645 647 of these learners are in schools from Grade R – 7 (Department of Basic Education, 2012:2). The Western Cape Education Department (WCED) is divided into eight educational districts; four of these districts are considered rural districts. In this study, the researcher will focus on three of these districts: West Coast, Overberg and Cape Winelands. There are 333 primary schools in the Cape Winelands, Overberg and West Coast Educational Districts of which approximately 194 are rural multigrade schools (Boonzaaier, 2010).

2.5 A rural multigrade context

One should always take account of the context, because it encourages learners, researchers and policy makers to take cognisance of changing situations, needs and development; the kinds of schools that learners attend and the forms of educational disadvantages faced by different groups of learners when considering options. While we are developing our own conceptual understanding of multigrade education, it will always vary from country to country, province to province, district to district and even from school to school.

EdQual (Tikly, 2010) developed a framework for good quality education, which arises from interactions between three overlapping environments, namely the policy, the school and the home/community. A good understanding of the context of multigrade education also requires the right mix between the environmental and contextual components, namely:

- Policy environment – component of theoretical (e.g., theoretical, historical, political and philosophical).

- School, home/community environment – components of physical (e.g., demographic; topographic and poverty); economic (e.g. resourcing; manpower; teacher deprivation; community) and educational factors (e.g. organising the curriculum; teaching-learning strategies; material development; educational politics; and function and role of the multigrade teacher).

In the contextual discussion that follows, both the international as well as the South African perspective will be discussed. Unfortunately there is insufficient published data available to facilitate systematic evaluation of the practice in the various countries. Given the range of contexts in which multigrade education occurs, Juvane (2005) concluded that it is likely that multigrade organisational and teaching practices will vary both within, and among countries. But comparison across contexts is difficult because of the lack of relevant data and the apparent 'invisibility' of this organisational format in many countries at the administrative level (Little, 1995).

2.5.1   Theoretical starting point [Ideological characteristics]

a. Political factors

According to Jordaan (2013), multigrade education is a political consideration in providing people with the opportunity of participating more usefully in the communities and countries in which they live. It may be a liberating force in terms of enabling communities and individuals to escape from poverty and illiteracy; it may be an empowering force in enabling them to identify their needs and goals, and in making them aware of how to achieve their objectives. The context of schools also has a political dimension. Control over multigrade education may be exercised by national or provincial governments, acting separately or together, according to constitutional powers, or by the local authority and the immediate community of parents. Multigrade schools may be the responsibility of all or any of these administrative power bases.

The political pressure on multigrade education is considerable. On the one hand these schools are one mechanism expected to realise national political and social goals; on the

other hand they are often inadequately resourced to meet those goals. Despite this dichotomy, these schools are endeavouring to fulfil the task expected of them.

b. Philosophical factors

All education is inevitably underpinned by educational philosophies, whether acknowledged or not. Multigrade education too has particular philosophical bases which emerge from the literature. These are somewhat diffuse, and views cannot be attributed to particular countries. Educational philosophies range over a spectrum, at one end of which is found a strict adherence to developmental stages and readiness theories so that schooling is linked to age and grade levels. At the other end of the spectrum is the notion that the capacity to learn is open, so that there is, in principle, a capacity to teach anyone anything. Multigrade education spans this continuum. Other teaching involves whole classes with teaching occurring across several grades or a combination of grades. These practices recognise both that there is an overlap of abilities among children, but also that levels of difficulty have to be taken into account. Pincas (2007) concurs that successful multigrade classes, in order to foster pedagogy that 'enhances learning in another', must be characterised by:

- effective peer instruction;

- self-directed learning;

- the development of learning to learn skills;

- exposing learners to work at other levels;

- learners doing constructive work while waiting for the teacher's attention; and

- adequate resources to cope with the needs of different groups.

The professional teacher is a key resource person in the multigrade context. The view that any teacher trained in single-grade-level teaching could be expected automatically to be a multigrade teacher is discounted. Multigrade teaching is of its own kind and must be recognised as such. Little (2007:7-8) acknowledges the value of multigrade education that promotes quality, with her argument that for learners to learn effectively in multigrade environments, teachers need to be well-trained, well-resourced and hold positive attitudes to multigrade education. Furthermore, the concept of multigrade pedagogy is quite challenging for untrained multigrade teachers or multigrade teachers trained in a monograde pedagogy, and multigrade teachers find multigrade education difficult (Khan & Khan, 2008:1).

In the field of learning, two aspects have emerged as a particular concern in multigrade education.

- The first is the acknowledgement that learning is not merely formal but also informal and incidental. This needs to be recognised by teachers and utilised in the multigrade situation. According to Colbert de Arboleda (2010:22-44), one of the principles for successful multigrade education is when learning takes place through dialogue and interaction between learners.

- The second factor is the recognition of the competitive co-operative continuum in which learning takes place. It is not possible to establish a fixed position for multigrade education on this continuum. But there is the need for multigrade education to recognise its existence.

A position reinforced in the literature on multigrade education is the notion of the whole child as being of particular importance to multigrade education. In developing contexts, multigrade education provides an excellent opportunity for the needs of the whole child in his or her community to be recognised and addressed. In this context, multigrade education is not merely about 'academic' education but addresses the health, education and welfare needs of children – in the social and community context in which they live.

2.5.2   Physical characteristics

a.   Demographic factors

Demographic factors impinge significantly on multigrade education growth in the population to be schooled. Little (2005:4-5) states that one of the factors determining multigrade education as a necessity is when schools are situated in areas of low population density. Multigrade education has being regarded as a means of meeting the pressures of EFA. Multigrade education provides many children with their only likelihood of obtaining formal schooling. Multigrade education is utilised most often to meet the demands of the number of children or where there is a deficit in the supply of teachers.

Multigrade education is often found in association with other forms of social and economic deprivation. A multi-sectorial approach (e.g. social, welfare, economic, health, education, etc.) is required in such contexts, if the real needs are to be met. The situation is aggravated by poverty, topography and language. Often one finds multigrade education taking place in very poor circumstances.

In the context of demographic considerations, mention should be made of the dominance of centres of populations over less populous and more isolated areas, which are where multigrade education tends to be found. Where power is exercised at the centre to the detriment of local communities, multigrade education will also be affected for the worse (Birch & Lally, 1995:8).

b. Topographical factors

According to the Education Policy Consortium (2011:6), multigrade education is more prevalent in remote rural and farming areas. Multigrade education is pursued, at least in part, in disadvantaged situations, owing to topographical factors. This results in the distancing of multigrade education. The topographical interventions may be water, mountainous terrain, distance in terms of jungle conditions, or desert regions. Several of these attributes are often combined in regions.

Of all these factors, communication is among the most significant. Lack of communication or poor communication only serves to emphasise isolation. With regard to multigrade education, particular examples of such isolation are delays in receiving messages from 'headquarters', the unwillingness of teachers to accept such onerous appointments, and their inability to exchange ideas, share problems and participate in in-service courses, if available. The lack of capacity for communication is generally accepted as being a significant impediment to multigrade education, for which developments in modern technology may, at best, provide only a partial solution.

c. Poverty

Poverty has an effect on education. The socio-economic and demographic backgrounds of children are among the main factors behind disparities in school progress (Timaaeus et al., 2011:2). Poverty has attributes such as hunger, inadequate shelter, or little or no health care. Jordaan (2008:7) states that multigrade education is mostly used in rural areas where poverty and unemployment is high. Poverty is a major concern in South Africa. According to Statistics South Africa (2010), South Africa had an unemployment rate of 25.3 percent in 2010. To this may be added the 32.2 percent of children living in a household with a low per capita income, 22.9 percent of children living in households that reported hunger in the Western Cape, and 28.3 percent of the people in South Africa receiving a social grant (Statistics South Africa 2010:15,19). There is also powerlessness in social, cultural and political terms, all reflect the poverty of humankind rather than poverty in rich – poor terms.

Multigrade education is most commonly found alongside poverty and is itself impoverished. According to the Education Policy Consortium (2011:3), multigrade schools are commonly, but not exclusively, situated in black rural communities and farm areas. The excerpt below provides a sense of the poverty and neglect of rural areas in South Africa:

> 'Emakhaya' refers to remote rural areas, distant, undeveloped, and underdeveloped. Those in a different class or geographical zone can use the word in a derogatory manner; but the word 'emakhaya' also denotes home, seeming to suggest a simple, rustic existence. It is [also] where you find

'amakhosi' and 'izinduna'. 'Emaphandleni' is simply 'dust and deprivation'. The literal translation of 'kwanjayiphume' is to chase the dog out of the house. As a condition of want, it suggests and has come to mean that there is so little food, that there is not enough to share with a dog or animal, because people themselves have insufficient to eat. So the word has both a literal and figurative meaning that point in the same direction. This concept is not spatially bound, as 'emakhaya' seems to be. (Nelson Mandela Foundation 2005:31).

Multigrade education is also disregarded to the disadvantage of children, teachers and parents. Education ministries in Africa increasingly view multigrade education as "a key pedagogic tool that can assist teachers to cope with teaching" in the contexts in which many countries find themselves – of teacher shortages, absenteeism, and budgetary constraints (Juvane 2005:3-4). Multigrade education is seen as a cost-saving mechanism. In many countries there is only token provision by way of structures, materials and anyone to teach – far less trained teachers. Yet a holistic solution is beyond the reach of most governments either in political terms or in actual resource terms. But, if poverty is to be addressed even minimally, multigrade education provides one such means through the training and appointment of multi-skilled persons with competencies in health, education and appropriate technical fields. These can use multigrade education strategies to address the issue of poverty in local communities. If multigrade education fails, parents will no longer send their children to school, and this will result in the underdevelopment of such communities and eventually even more poverty (CMGE, 2012: 4).

2.5.3   Economic factors

Educationists have long paid their respects at the shrine of the school of human capital theory, given its persuasive models and compelling conclusions as to the importance of increasing educational opportunities for all citizens to the benefit of the nation as a whole. This approach has had considerable appeal, since it does serve to guarantee a respectable future for education in general and its professional practitioners in particular. Unfortunately, the theory is often embraced too uncritically, with consequences such as the assumption that almost any education will do; poor results across the world; little learned; and access vs quality (Birch & Lally, 1995:9).

This point is raised in order to heighten awareness among educators (and particularly those involved in multigrade education) of the economic theoretical underpinning to all schooling. Teaching is inevitably intertwined with local, national and even international political economics. But as Freire (2000) observes, the most important course in teacher education is the Politics of Education, which he assumed to be studies of the political economy and its impact on classroom teaching.

Multigrade teachers are most likely to work in situations involving local communities. As such there may be conflict between the political or economic views they import – either of themselves or as agents of their employers (usually governments) – and the communities they serve. Education flows from, occurs within and has outcomes for the political economy in place at any given time (Birch & Lally, 1995:10).

Teachers in multigrade schools have enough demands made on them and the persistent plea in the literature is for more materials to be made available to them along with more practicable training. It is ultimately a disservice to such teachers not to raise these issues and to suggest they need not be addressed. One such example, affecting all countries, is the language designated as the language of instruction.

The above has opened up a macro-economic discussion of characteristics impinging on multigrade education – it is proposed in what follows to concentrate on the four most featured economic factors mentioned in the various studies, namely the resourcing of multigrade education and the family economic unit.

a. Resourcing multigrade education

Although resourcing as a problem may be applicable to education at large, it is important to emphasise the provision of resources for multigrade education is a quantum leap, when compared with the normal resourcing of schooling (Birch & Lally, 1995:11).

The lack of provision of appropriate physical structures for multigrade education remains critical in multigrade schools. Not only is there a need for appropriate resources for housing multigrade classes (in this context it is important to note that importing what is deemed satisfactory for a single-grade class is not necessarily suitable for multigrade classes, and is unlikely to be – fixed seating, for example, if seating is provided at all); there is also the need to provide basic health facilities such as toilets. According to Boonzaaier (2008:50), some of the South African multigrade schools lack basic amenities such as toilets and electricity (1273 farm schools do not have toilets). In 2008, virtually no schools had libraries or specialised classrooms for science or home economics, and the provision of learning materials was poor. When schools are small, only one or two teachers serve them. Teachers are often poorly qualified and often may not benefit from in-service courses, despite their requiring additional skills to manage multigrade classes. According to Motala and Vally (2010:105), the educational system in South Africa is characterised by gross inequalities, especially noticeable in relation to poor communities, and even more so in rural communities, since there are considerable backlogs from the discriminatory and racist history of South African education and the deliberately distorted distribution of educational expenditures to favour white people.

One positive future direction has been the attempt in several countries to engage the local community in such a way that it provides the facilities, while the government provides the remaining infrastructures of multigrade education. As important as it is to involve the local community in this way, the outcome will always be one in which the facilities can only reflect the wealth of such communities. In unequal situations, equity will only be served with some form of equalisation policy.

Too little attention has been given to providing multigrade teachers with appropriate resources. The Education Policy Consortium (2011:26) concurs that the struggle to provide quality education to rural communities, has been to provide equitable resources – of infrastructure, of services, of learning materials – and to ensure a supply of adequately trained teachers. This may be result of the entirely mistaken view that what is available can be readily adapted. This is untenable, given teachers' stressful teaching situations and the lack of time and resources for additional tasks such as this.

Another feature of the reported inadequate provision for multigrade education is that of teacher education. The most severe criticism is directed to the lack of any such education. Other criticism is concerned with the extreme limitations of the education, when it has been provided, particularly in terms of its failure to address the needs of multigrade teachers. Owing to the lack of pre-service and in-service training programmes to provide adequate guidance and support for multigrade teachers on how to attain academic knowledge on the theory and practice of most multigrade education, multigrade teachers feel that they do not have the necessary skills to handle several grade levels at the same time (Little, 2005:16). Multigrade education possibly requires a different focus in teacher education, especially with regard to the concept of 'teacher'.

b. Manpower issues

Human resources or, rather, the lack of them, is a critical factor in the continued existence of multigrade education. In some countries, formulae exist which determine the staffing complement to be assigned to schools; in others it is simply a matter of appointing a given number of teachers and in the event that the number is inadequate to cover the number of grades required, multigrade education results. Sometimes, one teacher is appointed to cope with the children who attend in whatever way is possible, with a multigrade education approach being inevitable. According to the findings of the Education Policy Consortium (2011:6), multigrade education is generally viewed by governments as a cost-saving mechanism.

Such approaches are not necessarily reactive in the sense that the above description merely suggests a cheap approach by governments to the problem of education, although

sometimes this is the case. But multigrade education can also be a proactive attempt by governments confronted with limited resources to attempt to fulfil their goals with regard to Universal Primary Education. This means they at least provide a basic human resource supply that will provide as many children as can be accommodated with an initial opportunity for schooling.

The human resource question is inevitably tied to a number of factors including: the capacity of systems to require teachers to serve in muligrade education situations which are often remote in almost all senses of the word; the lowly status of teaching in government service so that teachers seek to transfer either to another service within government or to the private sector where there is one; and the incentives, if any, for teachers to take up 'hardship' appointments.

Some countries (Birch & Lally, 1995:130) – Australia, Victoria, Canada and two states in the USA – have taken a policy decision that all teaching in the first three grades as well as in others, will be undertaken on a multigrade education basis, since multigrade education is believed to be the best form of education for children.

c. Multigrade education and teacher deprivation

There is almost unanimous agreement that teachers in multigrade education situations, particularly in isolated placements, are subject to particular deprivation in terms of personal and professional status. According to Boonzaaier (2008:116), financial incentives for teachers to teach in remote multigrade schools, provision of housing, employment for spouses, and education for their own children should encourage multigrade teachers. Swarts (2010) agrees that the matters most frequently reported are:

- Salaries and promotion. There is usually no financial incentive for teachers to take positions in isolated multigrade situations, compared with similarly trained teachers offered appointments in more centrally established schools. No promotional incentives are tied to multigrade positions, and such appointments may be detrimental to promotion opportunities.

- Professional isolation and supervision. In-service opportunities for multigrade teachers tend to be limited as are the opportunities to join in professional association activities. National systems have inadequate provision for the supervision of multigrade teachers and their inspection, to the disadvantage of the system in terms of improving the quality of its education and to the teacher in terms of promotion and the like.

- Housing and dependence. Inadequate provision is made for housing, especially, but not only, when there is a family involved. This situation militates against the needs of families, especially if the spouse is employed and when the children require an education or vocation other than that immediately available.

In South Africa a lack of support from district officials and leadership adds to the deprivation. According to the Education Policy Consortium (2011:69), district support for multigrade teachers is not multigrade specific, because district officials themselves do not fully comprehend the challenges of, and have not had any training in, multigrade teaching. In a report, the CMGE concluded that principals were also currently experiencing a crisis in multigrade schools in South Africa, for the following reasons: They perform two jobs simultaneously – both principal and class teacher for a multigrade class. Principals have not been trained or prepared for their task as multigrade principals. The Department expects these principals to perform the same tasks as other principals. There are also no mentors for principals (CMGE, 2012:9).

2.5.4 Educational characteristics

a. Organising the curriculum

Most countries have, according to Juvane (2005:10), national curricula that are almost the same for both urban and rural schools. A considerable number of countries require all teaching to follow national curricula. The balance would normally expect teaching to follow provincial or other similar levels of governmental authorities' requirements. There is now a wide expectation that such curricula can only be implemented adequately where teachers' guidebooks and learners' workbooks are provided – in other words, the provision of different learning material. Since curriculum, educational materials, teacher preparation and assessment systems are predicated on monograde schools and classes, it is hardly surprising that many teachers hold negative attitudes towards their role in the multigrade class. Little (2007:340) agrees that curriculum, learning materials, teacher education and assessment are necessary components of an integrated strategy to support learning and teaching in multigrade settings. The Education Policy Consortium (2011:29) concurs that the South African schooling curriculum has remained orientated towards a monograde class. Such publications would best be activities based. Such guides should also address the question of assessment. However, not all such guidelines should be national. Teachers and local administrators also have a responsibility to prepare and utilise materials which are oriented to the local context and are environmentally based. The curriculum has to be very flexible, given the nature of multigrade teaching (Rowley, 1992:135). In the Colombia, a successful multigrade model, Escuala Nueva, focuses on a relevant curriculum based on the

child's daily life (Colbert de Arboleda, 2010:25). The key word in any discussion of an ideal curriculum model is 'flexibility'. The curriculum has to be very flexible, given the nature of multigrade education. One of the greatest difficulties in promoting multigrade education is the inflexibility of a grade-based curriculum.

In most countries, the primary curriculum prescribed is the same for both urban and rural areas. Since the minimum learning competencies are normally specifically designed for regular school situations, the multigrade teacher finds it difficult to make the content of his or her teaching meaningful for the children. Birch and Lally (1995) list one of the skills multigrade teachers should acquire as curriculum adaptation. Most often, the designed curriculum lacks relevance and is dysfunctional when applied to the socio-economic needs and cultural lifestyles of multigrade learners and their communities. Moreover, the conceptual and skill requirements of the prescribed curriculum are too great for the teacher to cope with, given the pressing problems and concerns to be addressed in the multigrade situation. For this reason, there is a need to reorganise and improve the curriculum for multigrade education – repacked (Jordaan, 2010:29).

b. Teaching-learning strategies

Teaching-learning strategies may best be described as the methods, techniques or devices used to enhance teaching and to facilitate learning. Strategies include the grouping of learners, peer-teaching, innovative teaching strategies, and of importance for this study, community involvement. Jordaan (2010:17) posits that multigrade education impacts directly and decisively on four key aspects of teacher decision-making:

- Curriculum: The common curriculum is used in monograde education, while in multigrade teaching there is a differentiated and re-packed curriculum due to the combination of grades.

- Learner organisation: Multigrade education is based on learner-centred pedagogy; the multigrade educator will need to balance whole-class teaching and emphasise collaborative group work.

- Task: Multigrade teachers need to find the balance between common and differentiated tasks through age, grade and/or the perceived ability of learners. There should also be a focus on self-study.

- Interaction: Multigrade teachers should balance teacher-led and peer-led interaction. Grouping is one of the strategies in multigrade situation which can play an important role in the teaching – learning situation.

In multigrade education, a teacher teaches more than one class in the same time or period. Various grouping techniques should be applied within any classroom situation. To do otherwise, implies that all children are the same. A skilful teacher could orchestrate a grouping pattern, and, at appropriate intervals, rearrange the groups according to regular progress tests or completion of topics. Berry (2007:9) found that multigrade teachers were more likely to encourage group work than monograde teachers. Because of this, multigrade learners are more likely to have opportunities to interact together in mixed-ability groups. This leads to a more cooperative classroom and advantages for low achievers in particular.

c. Materials development

Boonzaaier (2008:115) maintains that limited access to teaching materials and equipment may affect the motivation and activity levels of learners negatively, and consequently, their learning progress. Careful scheduling and preparation of lessons and materials are required to keep learners meaningfully occupied. To be productive on their own, learners must have access to self-teaching materials. The materials should be user friendly and allow learners to conduct research or proceed through self-correcting exercises with minimal guidance from a teacher. According to the Education Policy Consortium (2011:35), learning materials for multigrade education should be seen as one of the curriculum adaptations needed in multigrade classes, hence the suggested translation of the curriculum into self-study graded learning guides. Materials for the provision of multigrade education in the classroom are an essential aspect of any discussion of multigrade education. On the one hand, there is not a considerable amount of materials support for multigrade education in Africa, thus neither in South Africa, as opposed to monograde teaching. Curriculum reforms across countries, as well as materials development, are considered to be in the domain of central educational authorities. Materials development is considered a separate issue from teacher competencies. This is probably a useful strategy for single-grade teaching. However, it presents special difficulties for the teacher who teaches monograde classes in rural or disadvantaged areas. The poverty of many of the regions where multigrade education is found is such that collaborative development and sharing of materials are essential if the teaching is to improve in quality. Less expensive, self-devised teaching materials are very suited to multigrade schools, which are financially constrained compared with normal schools. Because of this, teachers in multigrade schools should be exposed to material-building skills in teacher education or in-service programmes.

Multigrade education is a special type of classroom teaching. Teachers of multigrade education need appropriate instructional and learning materials to maximise their learners' learning time. Boonzaaier (2008:119) claims the teacher in the multigrade classroom should

be skilled in managing instruction to reduce the amount of 'dead time' during which learners are not productively engaged in tasks.

d. The function and role of the multigrade teacher

In attempting to delineate the functions and roles of a multigrade teacher, it becomes apparent that much of the discussion related to this topic is not concerned with the roles and functions of the teacher within the classroom, school and community, but rather with the more global qualities which any person brings to the work situation. The more global qualities include the following: dedication, qualifications and commitment; competency in the language of the community; highly developed skills as a communicator; and efficient management/administrative skills. A number of functions (Jordaan, 2010) that multigrade teachers should execute have also been enunciated. These are as follows: teacher; facilitator; community liaison/resource person; social worker/counsellor; planner; evaluator; material designer; para-professional trainer; government extension worker; action researcher; quality controller; surrogate parent; financial manager; and representative of cultural, religious and political values.

The function and role of the multigrade teacher may be considerable, and appropriate training and support are essential if the tasks are to be carried out competently. By its nature, multigrade teaching encompasses teacher development, curriculum reform, language issues, learning, support materials and tutor pedagogic awareness. It is clear that a strong need exists for training in how to work effectively in multigrade schools to improve learning (Thomas & Shaw, 1992:25).

2.6 Parental and community involvement

Policy makers (Gardner, 2008:7) and planners at both national and provincial levels of government face a central question:

"How can the particular needs of rural communities and their learners be met within the overall state policy of a single educational system?"

The International Research and Training Centre for Rural Education (INRULED) promotes sustainable development in rural areas through educational research, training and extension activities. They spelled out the rationale and concept of rural transformation in the context of poverty reduction as a national development priority (UNESCO, 2012:i). The basic premises are that poor people find it very difficult to manage the multiple risks they face arising from their personal and household situations at national and global levels. The rural poor, the majority of the poor in most countries, therefore cannot seize any opportunities open to them

in agriculture and the non-agrarian economies alike. The overarching global and national challenges of fighting poverty and building the sustainable future cannot be met unless the problems facing the rural majority in the developing countries are effectively addressed (UNESCO, 2012:3).

INRULED made a plea for rethinking education in rural areas and rural people with a focus on 'rural transformation'. The term 'transformation' was used to convey a vision of a proactive and positive process of change and development in rural communities. Rural transformation is all about seeking to improve the living conditions of the farmer, the artisan, the tenant farmer and the landless in the countryside. It is about enabling the disadvantaged segments of the population to gain for themselves and their children more of what they want and require. It subsumes the core ideas of rural development concerned with improving the wellbeing of rural people by enhancing their productive capacities, expanding their choices in life and reversing public policies that discriminate against the rural poor.

Parental and community involvement might be one important aspect in the plea towards 'rural transformation'. Linking school with the community will enable teachers to improve the quality and relevance of the education they are providing (Little, 1995:240). In Colombia, the Escuela Nueva Model (Colbert de Arboleda, 2010:22) and in India, the River Rishi Valley Project (Rao, 2010:17), focus on the importance of parental involvement in the classroom, community involvement and a relevant curriculum. Little et al. (2006:285) concur that parental involvement in Escuela Nueva is high and that parents of pupils in the system help their children at home with learning. Blum and Diwan (2007:49) note in their research in the Rishi Valley that one of the key factors in schools' improvement has been the active involvement of parents and communities. Parental participation has also been encouraged in a range of activities such as conducting learning exercises with children, working as community teachers and advocates, providing help in organising classrooms and schools, and helping teachers in preparing teaching aids (Blum & Diwan, 2007:49). Fuller (2008) and Amoateng et al. (2004) state that parents from low-income families show great interest in the success of their children and have a right to be involved in their education. If you take parents' contexts and circumstances into consideration, parents can be involved via practicable methods to enhance their involvement. The socio-economic circumstances of these learners will not change over-night, and parental involvement in these schools should therefore fit the unique circumstances of each community.

Addressing the learning gap that often exists between the learning that takes place in schools and the home/community environment, requires focusing on the health and nutrition of learners and working with parents to create an enabling home environment to support learning, that is, a recognition of the home and community sites within which wider economic,

political and cultural inequalities are produced and reproduced. While the education system and schools cannot solve these problems, which have their roots in the wider dynamics of inequality, they can play a role in mediating them through fostering improved links with the community.

2.7 Conclusion

> Multigrade teaching poses a challenge to learning. Millions of learners worldwide are taught by teachers who, at any one time, are responsible for two or more school grades/years. These are the invisible multigrade teachers who struggle to provide learning opportunities for all within curriculum and teacher education systems designed for monograded classes. In many countries multigraded classes arise out of necessity and are regarded as second-class education. Yet in some parts of the world learning and teaching in multigraded settings is embraced as the pedagogy of choice, offering equivalent, and sometimes superior, learning opportunities. Multigrade teaching provides an opportunity for improved learning (Little, 2007, blurb on back cover).

The design research approach followed in this study, focuses on improving learning at school instead of attempting to prove that children are not learning. This multigrade context of isolation and poverty is a 'wicked' problem with no real solutions. Not only is it a South African problem, but all over the word countries and international institutions are uncertain how to take multigrade education forward. All indications are that multigrade education is a neglected feature of the South African education system. This neglect undermines both social justice and the transformation project in our society. Actions from both the national and provincial education departments indicate that they intend to close multigrade schools, rather than develop and support them. An important reason for this is that there is no policy on multigrade education in South Africa. The Education Policy Consortium (2011:26) concurs that no policy has been developed to address the issue of multigrade education within the South African education system.

A conceptual understanding of the rural multigrade context has helped me to realise the strong inter-relationships between rural underdevelopment, poverty and education, as well as the role that parents and the community can provide within the broad context of multigrade education. By nature of their location and size, multigrade schools tend to have greater opportunities for close relationships with communities. Communities in which multigrade schools are located often do not see the value of education. For this reason, involvement of the community in the life of the school, as a strategy to build ties with the school, is important, and it is suggested that parents be asked to visit schools as a resource, or that the school might extend the curriculum out into the community. While the need to train multigrade teachers in approaches that would help them to develop relationships between

the school and the community is recognised (Jordaan, 2010), there is a lack of empirically tested models on which to base these actions.

CHAPTER THREE

LITERATURE REVIEW: A CONCEPTUAL
FRAMEWORK FOR PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

3.1 Introduction

This chapter is a critical review of relevant literature to identify the latest research findings and opinions on parental involvement. It should lead to the development of a conceptual framework to align the key concepts and aid in providing a structure for the improvement of parental involvement in rural multigrade schools. The information will also be used as the foundation for the composition of relevant research instruments. The following themes will be addressed:

- Parental involvement.

- Parental involvement, support and programmes in South Africa and the Western Cape.

- The format of international parental involvement programmes.

There appears to be a paucity of research on parental involvement in South Africa; little research was found that focuses specifically on parental involvement in rural multigrade schools. However, in developed countries, and to lesser extent in developing countries, parental involvement is a well-researched and documented topic. The relevant and successful research in these countries will be used as a platform for thoughts on how to address the research questions of this study. Finally, a conceptual framework will be provided. The conceptual framework will align the key concepts and provide a structure for the improvement of parental involvement in learning at rural multigrade schools in the Western-Cape, South-Africa. The framework for this study focuses on three sections:

- Current reality

- Ideal reality

- Proposed intervention as process

3.2 Parental involvement

This section portrays parental involvement in general, through discussion of the definition, theories of and research done on parental involvement. This section will discuss the contribution parental involvement can make in improving quality education at rural multigrade schools in South Africa. Parental involvement is the cornerstone of this study; therefore

defining the term 'parental involvement' should help in determining how to enhance this aspect, specifically in the context of rural multigrade education. A description of the current theories of parental involvement should facilitate the choice of an appropriate theory or a combination of theories that will fit the context of rural multigrade education.

3.2.1 Definitions of parental involvement

There are a number of definitions for parental involvement in the literature. Various terms are used to define both parents and parental involvement. A new definition of parents is very important, because of the reality that the traditional meaning of parents is no longer applicable. The *South African Schools Act (SASA) No. 84 of 1996* (South Africa, 1996) defines a parent as:

1. All primary caregivers, whether the biological parents or legal guardians.

2. Persons legally entitled to the custody of a learner.

3. Any person who fulfils the obligation towards the learner's schooling.

Parents are commonly within a family structure; however the structures can also differ.

According to Van Wyk and Lemmer (2009:9), the following family structures are common in South Africa:

- Nuclear families: A husband and wife who form an economically self-sufficient unit.

- Extended families: A nuclear family living with elderly parents or relatives sharing the same house and resources.

- Single parents: A parent, who is divorced, widowed, separated or who has never married.

- Blended families: May comprise a father and mother, both of whom have been married before and have children.

- Parental cohabitation: Unmarried couples lives together as partners and raising children born from this union.

- Multiple families: Male migrant workers often leave a wife and children behind in rural areas. A male migrant worker may have a 'town wife' and a 'country wife', and children in both places.

Owing to the above-mentioned definitions and the different family structures that currently exist in South Africa, the 'parent' is a complex and very broad term. The many 'faces' and circumstances of rural parents will need to be considered when developing a parental

involvement programme. All types of parents need to be involved in order to create effective parental involvement. In this study the focus is primarily on parental involvement in learning, therefore a parent is seen as any person who fulfils the obligation towards the learner's schooling and can include any of the above-mentioned family structures.

Parental involvement is also a complex term. Some researchers use school, family and community partnerships, others use parental involvement or parental engagement. Van Wyk and Lemmer (2009:14) describe parental involvement as "the willing and active participation of parents in a wide range of school and home-based activities". For different stakeholders in education, parental involvement can be many things. Some may believe that parents are only involved in governance of the school and therefore mainly responsible for the financial wellbeing of the school. Some see parental involvement as parents helping with school activities, fund raising or the coaching of a sport at school. Others might see parents as partners in order to educate learners. Epstein (2011:43) argues that school, family and community partnership are better terms than parental involvement, in order to recognise that parents, educators, and others in the community share responsibility for learners' learning. Ferlazzo (2011:12) further contends that schools that strive for parental involvement often lead with the mouth – identifying projects, needs, and goals and then telling parents how they can contribute. Ferlazzo (2011:12) also states that schools should rather strive for parental engagement. Parental engagement leads with the ear – listening to what parents think, dream and worry about. However, a balance needs to be struck between engagement and involvement. If the parents and school can interact and form partnerships, it is likely that parents will be listened to and at the same time goals, needs and projects will also be determined.

The focus of this study will primarily be on getting parents involved in learning. Parents are part of the school and of a specific community, and in this study the school and community will play a vital role in forming partnerships. Therefore in this study the term 'parental involvement' will primarily be used; however if found that 'school', 'community' and 'family partnership' are more fitting descriptions for the intervention, these terms will be incorporated The main idea pervading various definitions of parental involvement is to bring parents and school together, and for parents to be involved at home and school in order to improve the child's learning and development. In the rural multigrade context of this study, the focus should be on how to get parents involved and motivated to play a bigger role in their children's learning both at school and at home.

3.2.2   Theories that influence parental involvement in rural multigrade schools

The literature indicates a variety of theories researchers have used to enhance parental involvement in general. Discussion of these theories would enable the generation of a combined theory that will fit the specific context of this study.

Vygotsky's theory of social development, which emphasises the importance of social interaction between parents and learners, was used as the point of departure to describe parental involvement's value (Jeynes, 2011:28) towards cognitive development. The importance of social interaction between learners and parents for cognitive development (Vygotsky, 1978) is highlighted, as the social interaction of rural multigrade learners might be enhanced if social, economic and cultural capital, as explained by Bourdieu's theory, is incorporated in the interaction and communication between school, family and community. Epstein's theory of overlapping spheres of influence (1995) is discussed in depth to indicate how the interaction and communication between school, family and community will be the vehicle to develop criteria for the application and implementation of social interaction through social, cultural and economic capital that exist at home, school and in the community.

a.   Vgotsky's social development theory

In the social development theory of Vygotsky (1978), cognitive development requires social interaction. Vygotsky (1978:57) assumed that "every function in a child's cultural development appears twice: first, on a social level and later on the individual level; first between people (inter-psychological) and then inside the child (intra-psychological)". According to Vygotsky (1978:86), higher mental processes first are co-constructed during shared activities between the child and another person. Then the processes are internalised by the child and become part of that child's cognitive development. Higher mental processes are co-constructed through interaction. Piaget and Vygotsky both emphasised the importance of social interaction. However, according to Woolfolk et al. (2008:53), Piaget believed that the most helpful interactions were those between peers, because peers are on an equal basis and can challenge one another's thinking. Vygotsky disagreed, suggesting that children's cognitive development is fostered by interactions with people who are more capable or advanced in their thinking – people such as parents and teachers (Leat & Nichols, 1997; Palinscar, 1998). Vygotsky's theory suggests that learners should be guided and assisted in their learning – so Vygotsky saw teachers, parents and other adults (who could be community members) as central to the child's learning and development (Karpov & Haywood, 1998).

b. Bourdieu's theory of social capital

The World Bank (1998:1) explains what social capital includes:

> The social capital of a society includes the institutions, the relationships, the attitudes and values that govern interactions among people and contribute to economic and social development. Social capital, however, is not simply the sum of institutions which underpin society; it is also the glue that holds them together. It includes the shared values and rules for social conduct expressed in personal relationships, trust, and a common sense of 'civic' responsibility, which makes society more than just a collection of individuals.

Cox and Caldwell (2000:49) describe social capital as "a measure of the health of group processes and interactions" and elaborate that social capital is most easily identified when it is functioning to enable people, organisations and communities to do things like work collaboratively, resolve disputes in a civil manner, and recognise the common good over competing interests.

However, in the social capital literature, there is disagreement whether or not social capital is the property of individuals, as Bourdieu (1986) and Coleman (1988a) maintain, or of the collective, as in Putnam's (2000) work. The focus of the three authors (Table 3.1) regarding 'social capital' also differs.

Table 3.1:   Views of social capital

Bourdieu (1977a, b; 1991)	Coleman (1988a, b; 1990; 1992)	Putnam et al. (1993); Putnam (1995)
• Socio-cultural roots • Social capital operates as a tool of cultural reproduction in explaining unequal educational achievement • Theory challenges deficit thinking about underachievement and differentiates resources from their distribution within the social structure	• Structural-functionalist roots • Social capital exists in the structure of relations between individuals • Formation of social relationships built up over time which enables individuals to achieve their interests over-and-above those that can only be attained independently	• Functionalist roots • Focus on social integration but furthermore influenced by notions of pluralism and communitarianism • The productive activity of social capital is manifest in its capacity to facilitate coordination and cooperation for mutual benefit

According to O'Brien and O'Fathaigh (2005:70), Coleman and Putnam claim that social capital constitutes positive social control. It is the family and community's responsibility to foster such characteristics as trust, shared information, and positive norms of behaviour for everyone's mutual benefit. However a few problems arise from Coleman and Putnam's perspectives. Regarding Coleman's approach, Dika and Singh (2002:44) write about a blurring of the distinction of resources from the ability to obtain them in the social structure. O'Brien and O'Fathaigh (2005:70) concur that the stress on the family and community in mediating social capital serves to likewise obscure the individual's agency in accessing and

utilising such resources. Because resources are viewed as essential preconditions, those with insufficient capital are in danger of being labelled powerless in their pursuit of the same desirable outcomes enjoyed by their counterparts. Regarding Putman's approach, Siisiainen (2000:4), points to an inadequate coverage of the concept of 'distrust' and its singular association with pathological forms of collective action. This treatise obscures the role of conflict in activating alternative forms of social action. Therefore according to O'Brien and O'Fathaigh (2005:70), Putnam's emphasis on voluntary associations (which are usually of a specific type) precludes consideration of those individuals who have conflicting interests or are simply uninterested in engaging with such networks.

Bourdieu's (1977a, b;) main distinction is his belief that social capital operates as a tool of cultural reproduction in explaining unequal educational achievement. According to O'Brien and O'Fathaigh (2005:71), Bourdieu's theory, specifically as a conceptual treatise, proffers socio-cultural explanations for why under-represented groups remain excluded from the educational process. It achieves this by expanding upon an analysis of cultural barriers to participation and relating subsequent investigations to actors' own lived experiences. Bourdieu's perspective of social capital is one of the most useful approaches in informing (and renewing) learning partnerships for social inclusion (O'Brien & O'Fathaigh, 2005:65).

According to Ho (2009:103), parental involvement in the schooling of their children is a practice that takes place within the social world. Bourdieu (1991) describes the social world as a multi-dimensional space that comprises intersecting fields. Such fields include social institutions (e.g., the family, the media, the medical system, the legal system, the education system), and also their trans-institutional forms or sub-fields (e.g., a particular family, hospital, law firm, or school). Ho (2009:103) states that it is within all of these overlapping fields that humans assert themselves as individuals and/or as members of a group. Their action or practice is determined by their habitus, the capital they possess, and their ability to manoeuvre within a particular field (Ho, 2009:103). According to Bourdieu (1984:11), any social practice can be accounted for by the following formula:

$$[(Habitus)\ (Capital)] + Field = Practice$$

Habitus constitutes a set of durable, transposable dispositions acquired through one's experiences in different life dimensions – the family, schools, and the wider social, economic, and political environment (Bourdieu, 1977b:72). According to Ho (2009:104), the relationship of habitus to practice is interactive; habitus is a "practice unifying" and "practice generating" principle that shapes practices according to the objective situation in the field. O'Brien and O'Fathaigh (2005:72) concur that the habitus concept is a way of explaining how social and cultural messages (both actual and symbolic) shape individuals' thoughts and actions. In the

habitus, social groups can mobilise their own beliefs on the value of, for example, education. Therefore those in higher-class groupings are more likely to realise the value of schooling both in the field of education and the occupational field, thus increasing the likelihood of reproducing their position (Rudd, 2003:7). Habitus is a form of internalised social conditioning that constrains thoughts and directs actions. People do not simply act with free will. However, freedom can be won because the habitus may be "controlled through awakening of consciousness and socio-analysis" (Bourdieu, 1990:116).

The second concept in Bourdieu's theory is that of capital. Bourdieu (1986) maintains that capital can be seen as resources which exist in three fundamental types: economic capital, cultural capital, and social capital. *Economic capital* exists only in objectified form such as income and property. Bourdieu argues that the different types of capital can be derived from economic capital, and can be transformed into one other with more or less effort (Bourdieu 1986:252). *Cultural capital* refers to embodied dispositions towards various cultural goods and practices – one part of the habitus of durable dispositions – as well as to formal qualifications that can work as a currency, and to a variety of cultural goods (Bourdieu 1986:245). The specific cultural capital that parents, teachers, farm owners, and other members of the community possess must be utilised in order to enhance the learning of learners. Here the context could have huge influence, not only on people's actions but also on learning. *Social capital* consists of networks and connections with people with social prestige, and it may be institutionalised through the acquaintance in systems of noble title or recognition as a member of some social groups in higher social strata (Jenkins, 1992). According to Bourdieu (1986:244), social capital is the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalised relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition – or in other words, to membership in a group – which provides each of its members with the backing of the collectively owned capital, a 'credential' which entitles them to credit, in the various senses of the word.

The third concept in Bourdieu's theory is *field*. A field is a structured social space, a field of forces, a force field. It contains people who dominate and people who are dominated. Constant, permanent relationships of inequality operate inside this space, which at the same time becomes a space in which the various actors struggle for the transformation or preservation of the field. All the individuals in this universe bring to the competition all the (relative) power at their disposal. It is this power that defines their position in the field and, as a result, their strategies (Bourdieu, 1998:40-41). According to Lingard and Christie (2003:324), Bourdieu viewed fields as socially constituted areas of activity. He wrote of the economic field, the political field, the fields of cultural production (the artistic field, literary

field, scientific field, etc.), the educational field, and the field of the school. Fields have their own structures, interests and preferences; their own 'rules of the game'; their own agents, differentially constituted; their own power struggles. It is in relation to particular fields that the habitus becomes active.

Bourdieu's concept of capital has been used widely to examine the disadvantages of working-class parents in their involvement (Ho, 1999, 2000, 2006; Lareau, 1989, 2001). A question to be asked is who will improve the parental involvement of the working class in learning at schools, and how will this be done.

c. Epstein's theory of overlapping spheres of influences

Epstein, the principal researcher at the Centre on Families, Communities, School and Children's Learning at the Johns Hopkins University, is generally considered an international expert in family-school partnerships, and her model has become the standard in the field of home – school partnerships (Redding, 2005:487). Her model is based on her theory of overlapping spheres of influence. Van Wyk and Lemmer (2009: 22-23) state that Epstein's theory is based on the following underlying perspectives on family and school relations:

- The separate responsibilities of families and schools.

- The shared responsibilities of families and schools.

- The sequential responsibilities of families and schools.

Some schools stress the *separate responsibilities* of families and schools, that is, the inherent incompatibility, competition and conflict between them. According to Epstein (2009:11), parents tend to say, "I raised this child; now it is your job to educate her", while the teacher would say, "If the family could just do its job, we could do our job." In contrast, phrases like "I cannot do my job without the help of my learners' families and the support of this community", from teachers, and "I really need to know what is happening in school in order to help my child", from parents, would embody the theory of overlapping spheres of influence. Epstein (2009:11) maintains that the distinct goal of parents and teachers' separate responsibility domain is considered best achieved when teachers keep a professional distance from and equal standards for children in their classrooms. This is in contrast with parents who develop personal relationships with their children at home regarding individual expectations. Learning at home will therefore differ from learning at school. In South Africa, Boonzaaier (2008:385) has stated that the roles of parents in rural multigrade schools are underestimated. Parents have the responsibility to help learners with homework at home; however, the majority of parents stated that they were not involved in the classroom with learning. Educational involvement of parents also plays an important role in

education (Seginer, 2006). In a recent study in South Africa at 126 farms in the Western Cape, Adendorff and Ortell (2011:65) observed that little happens at home in an educational sense. Interviews with parents of farm children revealed that these parents were either unable to help their children, or seemed to be apathetic towards the educational and social needs of their children. The teachers might be of the opinion that parents do not have the capability to help the learners or they, as teachers, do not know how to involve parents in learning. It seems that a degree of separate responsibility of families and schools does occur at rural multigrade schools. If parents and teachers were to interact and communicate more, it might lead to the development of contextual strategies – strategies where learners would rather show, share or demonstrate what they have learned to their parents, who might be incapable of helping them with homework. An example would be that parents are empowered through presenting a lesson on the farm where they work. Without interaction and communication, the division of family and school in respect of learning might increase and occur more frequently. The unique circumstances of these rural schools and parents can also lead to separate responsibilities. Parents that work on commercial farms have long working hours; parents might feel they do not have the time to be involved in the classroom or at home. According to Zuma (2010), an estimated 7.5 million people are farm owners, farm dwellers and farm workers; reports state that long and unpaid working hours are still the norm. Adendorf and Ortell (2011:65) concur that after a hard day's work the parents were generally too tired to give attention to their children; in the afternoons after school the learners were often left on their own at home without adequate supervision, because parents worked from early morning until late in the afternoon. However, if there is interaction and communication between parents, teachers and the farm owner, and they take the circumstances of parents into consideration, it might still be possible to get parents involved in learning. Monadjem (2003:13) found that a lack of communication often negates the beneficial roles that parents can play in their children's schooling.

The *shared responsibilities* of the school and home emphasise the coordination, cooperation and complementary nature of schools and families, and encourage collaboration between the two. Schools and families share responsibility for the socialisation of the child. These common goals for children are achieved most effectively when teachers and parents work together. According to McLeod and Reynolds (2007: 31), a shared vision is needed so that parents and teachers share the same goals for children's learning. According to this perspective, an overlap of responsibilities between parents and teachers is expected. Parents and teachers in multigrade schools might not know how they can enhance learning effectively when parents and teachers work together; there should a programme that is specifically designed for rural multigrade schools in order to create the vital link between parents and teachers.

Finally, the *sequential perspective* (Epstein, 2009:11) stresses the critical stages of parents and teachers' contribution to child development. Parents teach needed skills to children until the time of their formal education around the ages of five or six. Then teachers assume the primary responsibility for children's' education.

Currently rural multigrade schools stress *separate responsibility* and the *sequential perspective*; this might be due to the myriad challenges (Boonzaaier, 2008:54) rural multigrade parents face and/or the lack of knowledge on how to create a *shared responsibility* (Epstein, 2009:11).

Epstein's (1995) perspective of overlapping spheres of influence posits that the work of the most effective families and schools overlap and they share goals and missions. According to Epstein (2009:10-11), the model of overlapping spheres of influence includes both external and internal structures:

- The *external* model of overlapping spheres of influence recognises that the three major contexts in which learners learn and grow – the family, the school and the community – may be drawn together or pushed apart. Because of the unique circumstances of rural multigrade schools, the challenges parents face (Boonzaaier, 2008:54), and the lack of effective communication and interaction between home, school and the community, the family, community and school are pushed apart. Van Wyk and Lemmer (2009:23) state that in the model of overlapping spheres of influence there are some practices that schools, families and communities conduct separately and some that they conduct jointly to influence children's learning and development.

- The *internal* model of the interaction of the three spheres of influence shows where and how complex and essential interpersonal relations and patterns of influence occur between individuals at home, at school and in the community. These social relationships may be enacted and studied at an *institutional* level (e.g., when a school invites all families to an event or sends the same communications to all families) and at an *individual* level (e.g., when a parent and a teacher meet in conference or talk by phone). Connections between educators or parents and community groups, agencies, and services also can be represented and studied within the model. The model of school, family, and community partnerships locates the learner at the centre. The inarguable fact is that the learners are the main actors in their education, development, and success in school. School, family and community partnerships cannot simply 'produce' successful learners. Rather, partnership activities may be designed to engage, guide, energise, and motivate learners to produce their own

successes. The assumption is that if children feel cared for and if they are encouraged to work hard in the role of learner, they are more likely to do their best to learn to read, write, calculate, and learn other skills and talents and to remain in school (Epstein, 2009:10).

Epstein (2009:11) maintains that a partnership between parents and school would create *family-like* schools, and then in partnership, parents would create a *school-like* family. Table 3.2 shows the different characteristics of *family-like* schools and *school-like* families.

Table 3.2:   Characteristics of family-like schools and school-like families

FAMILY-LIKE SCHOOLS	SCHOOL-LIKE FAMILIES
Recognise each child's individuality.	Families recognise that each child is also a learner.
Make each child feel special and included.	Families reinforce the importance of school, homework and activities that build learner skills and feelings of success.
Family-like schools welcome all families, not just those that are easy to reach.	

The community also has a huge role to play. Communities, according to Epstein (2009: 11), should create *school-like* opportunities, programmes and activities that reinforce, recognise and reward learners for good progress, creativity, contributions and excellence. According to Henderson et al. (2007), when all these concepts combine, children experience learning communities or caring communities. Because of the context of rural multigrade schools, the lack of communication and interaction, and shortage of, implementable programmes, communities might not be able to play the role that they are supposed to play. According to Epstein (2009:10), there are three overlapping spheres of influence that directly affect learner learning and development: schools, families and communities. Partnerships between schools and families create family-like schools and school-like families. Rural multigrade schools are in a position where they have separate spheres of influence. Owing to different contextual factors, parents and teachers at rural multigrade schools tend to work on their own. Family-like schools and school-like families remain a distant goal. A parental involvement programme might be the answer. According to Van Wyk and Lemmer (2009:25), effective parental involvement programmes have the following principles:

1. All effective programmes acknowledge the **overlapping spheres of influence** on learner development and achievement.

2. All such programmes give attention to the various types of parental involvement, which then promote and accommodate a variety of opportunities for parents and schools to operate.

3. All programmes have a structure to coordinate school and family partnerships.

d. Impact of theories on parental involvement in the rural multigrade context

Vygotsky's theory highlights the importance of social interaction for cognitive development. The parents of learners, teachers and other adults from the community therefore have a very important role in the cognitive development of children. The type and manner of social interaction, or the lack thereof, between learners and adults of the home, school and community, will influence cognitive development. The unique circumstances and challenges that rural parents encounter daily (Adendorf & Ortell, 2011:57) can therefore also be detrimental to the child's cognitive development (Van Wyk and Lemmer, 2009:17-18). If parents have long working hours and they are often very tired when they return home, social interaction or the lack of it might be detrimental to learners' cognitive development and learning. Social interaction from illiterate parents might also be detrimental when the parent does not know how to assist the learner in learning. Therefore it would be very important to gain access to and activate the social, cultural and economic capital (Ho, 2009:103) that exists in the community, at home and at school. The development of effective interaction and communication between home, school and the community might be the vital link to enhance learners' social interaction with parents and other members of the community.

Bourdieu's theory focuses on three types of capital: economic capital, cultural capital, and social capital. (Bourdieu, 1986) believes that social capital operates as a tool of cultural reproduction in explaining unequal educational achievement. The economic capital that different members of a community have access to is an important tool in creating partnerships between the school, home and community to increase parental involvement in learning. Adendorf and Ortell (2011:58) state that rural parents who work on farms often have a lack of transport; the farm owner may have transport available for them to use for an excursion or to get parents to a parent meeting at school. However if the farm owner is uninformed, and there is a lack of interaction and communication, the economic capital remains unused.

Regarding cultural capital, Malinowski (1949) was among the first to identify the influence of different contexts on people's actions. He identified the 'context of culture' as the whole cultural history underlying a person and his/her practices and the 'context of situation' as that which is constituted by the immediate events of the environment. Pollard (1982) recognised the layers of influence that effect teaching and learning, and named three levels of context: the 'interactive context', which is the classroom social structure; the 'organisational layer', which transmits the influence of the school and the system; and the 'embracing culture', which links the individual teacher and school to the immediate local community. Teachers

from rural multigrade schools need to start thinking outside the box. McLeod and Reynolds (2007:28) note that the physical environment 'beyond the school' is a context for learning, and that quality teaching is contextualised by its environment – curriculum needs to be adapted so that the curriculum is relevant to different learners, for example, urban learners may measure area in city blocks, while rural learners may measure area in paddocks. Using issues of environment in a curriculum context supports learner engagement and higher order thinking. For example, when parents are busy pruning on farms, the school can organise an excursion to the farm and learners can communicate with parents about pruning; the excursion can therefore be linked directly to certain educational outcomes. Again interaction and communication will play a key role in integrating the excursion with academic work done at school.

Most of the rural multigrade parents work on farms where they form part of a group working at a specific section. If this is emphasised in a lesson, the learners will be able to learn from the social capital that exists in their specific context. That specific group of parents can also plan and present a section of a lesson on the farm regarding specific knowledge that they have. Hargreaves and Fullan (2012:3) concur that groups, teams, and communities are far more powerful than individuals when it comes to developing human capital. Through communication and interaction, teachers, parents and the members of the community can enhance the learners' learning by utilising the social capital that exists within their context.

Capital relates to one's own or a group's worth, particularly concerning assets that can be leveraged to accomplish desired goals (Hargreaves and Fullan, 2012). The challenges that parents of learners in multigrade schools face should not overshadow the possibility of learners enhancing their cognitive development through social interaction with members of the community with their own type of capital. A partnership programme between the home, school and community with specific strategies will tap into social, cultural and economic capital that currently exists within the community and therefore could play a role in learning. McLeod and Reynolds (2007:1) agree, and indicate that since teaching is both complex and challenging, teachers should consider not only the learner, but all interacting elements of the teaching context. The context of learning, therefore, could be beyond the classroom, like the farm where parents work. Learning occurs in different places, at different times and through different social interactions, but the school represents the first formal context for learning. What the child learns, and how the teacher can best plan for learning, is the outcome of the varied contexts that interact in each learning situation (Mcleod and Reynolds, 2007:16). Communication and interaction between the home, school, and community will therefore be a vital link that enables social interaction between learners and members of the community.

Epstein's theory of overlapping spheres (Epstein, 1995) of influence posits that the work of the most effective families and schools overlaps and families and schools share goals and missions. The model of overlapping spheres of influence includes both external and internal structures. In order to create school-like families and family-like schools in rural multigrade schools, there should be a practicable parental involvement programme that takes the unique circumstances of these parents, teachers and schools into consideration and offers support on how to develop such a programme.

3.2.3 Parental involvement: What is known?

In this section the current research findings on parental involvement, the advantages and challenges of parental involvement, and Epstein's six types of parental involvement will be discussed. This section will provide insights on what is already known and on what aspects the study needs to focus to increase parental involvement in learning at rural multigrade schools.

a. Current research findings

According to Epstein (2009:13), researchers from the United States and other nations have drawn the following conclusions from their studies of family and community involvement:

- Just about **all families care about their children**, want them to succeed, and are eager to obtain better information from school and communities in order to remain good partners in their children's education.

- Just about all teachers and administrators would like to involve families, but many **do not know how to efficiently and effectively build positive and productive programmes** and, consequently, are fearful about trying. This creates a 'rhetoric rut' in which educators are stuck – expressing support for partnerships without taking necessary actions.

- Just about all learners at all levels – elementary, middle, and high school – want **their families to be more knowledgeable partners about schooling** and are willing to take active roles in assisting communication between home and school. However, learners need much better information about how their schools view partnerships and more guidance about how they can conduct important exchanges with their families about school activities, homework and school decisions.

Research done in the United States has proved that parents, teachers and learners approve and acknowledge the importance of parental involvement. According to Epstein (2009:12-

13), the following important patterns relating to partnerships have emerged in surveys, studies and experimental interventions:

- Partnerships tend to decline across the grades, **unless schools and teachers work to develop and implement appropriate practices of partnership** at each grade level.

- Affluent communities tend to have more positive family involvement, on average, **unless schools and teachers in economically distressed communities work to build positive partnerships with their learners' families**.

- Schools in more economically depressed communities make more contacts with families about the problems and difficulties their children are having, **unless they work at developing balanced partnership programmes** that also include contacts about the positive accomplishments of learners.

- Single parents, parents who are employed outside the home, parents who live far from the school, and fathers, are less involved, on average, at the school building, **unless the school organises opportunities for families to become involved** and to volunteer at various times and in various places to support the school and their children. These parents may be as involved as other parents with their children at home.

It is axiomatic that families do care, that schools do not know and are not supported on how to develop a partnership programme, and that all types of families, regardless of their context, can be involved in learning through positive partnerships. Parents and rural multigrade schools will need to be supported on how to interact and communicate in order to build positive partnerships. By developing positive partnerships, parental involvement in learning could increase.

b. Advantages of parental involvement

The creation of partnerships between parents, schools and the community for effective parental involvement might then help in attaining the myriad of advantages (Table 3.3) for learners, teachers, schools, parents, families and communities.

Table 3.3: Advantages of parental involvement for different role players in schools

Advantages for learners:	Advantages for teachers/schools:
• Improved academic performance. • Improved attitude towards learning. • Reduction in leaving school early. • Increased emotional stability. • Improved social and emotional development. • Improved behaviour and school attendance. • Improved self-control. • Improved relationships.	• Improved relationships between parents, teachers and schools. • Knowledge of the child's home environment can have a positive influence on his/her education. • Increased commitment to teaching. • Parental involvement can reduce teacher workload. • Increased support from parents. • Teachers have increased confidence. • Schools can improve dramatically if parents are involved in learners' education.
Advantages for parents:	**Advantages for families and communities:**
• Increased confidence in school. • Increased confidence in them as parents to help their children with education. • Increased likelihood that parents will enrol themselves in programmes to improve their teaching. • Improved skills to teach children. • Reduced sense of isolation. • Improved self-esteem.	• Improved family economic success. • Development of family support systems. • Caring for a prosperous community.

Adapted from Williams and Chavkin (1989:18); Henderson and Berla (1994); Feinstein and Symons (1999); Fan and Chen (2001); Melhuish et al. (2001); and Van Wyk and Lemmer (2009:14, 15);.

Jeynes (2011:165) summarises the importance of parental involvement in his meta-analysis and states that nearly every study examining the effects of parental involvement concludes that it considerably influences the lives and education of children (Wallace & Walberg, 1993; Spera, 2005), regardless of race, gender, and socio-economic status (Jeynes, 2003, 2007). According to Jeynes (2011:165), recent meta-analysis reveals that most of the components of parental involvement have statistically significant effects. Slavin and Madden (2006) argue that parental involvement is one of the most crucial factors necessary for raising the achievement of minority and disadvantaged learners. Green (2001) avers that parental and community partnerships are absolutely essential to improving educational outcomes for minority children. Parental involvement, also in rural communities, is perceived as an approach to improve the quality of education (Singh et al., 2004). Types of parental involvement such as parental expectations, communication, parents reading to their children, and parental style, each markedly influence learner educational outcomes in their own right (Englund et al., 2004; Afifi & Olson, 2005; Jeynes, 2005). Other facets of parental involvement such as checking homework and attending school functions have less consistent influences (Jeynes, 2003; 2005). These advantages can have a huge effect on

rural multigrade schools in South Africa. However the type of parental involvement will need to fit the unique circumstances and address the current challenges in a, effective and sustainable manner. Therefore to increase parental involvement in learning at rural multigrade schools, this research project should aim to create a vital link between parents and teachers through innovative thinking in order to overcome the unique challenges these schools, parents and communities face.

c. Challenges of effective parental involvement

According to Grant (2012), parental involvement is one of the most important elements and cannot be purchased or built; he therefore strongly encourages parents to talk to their children about what they did at school, what they read, what they wrote and what sums they did each day of the school year. Soobrayan (2012) agrees regarding the importance of parental involvement, and stated in an letter to all the principals of public schools that the role of parents and guardians in supporting their children's education was vital and that many parents still believed that education was the responsibility of the school and the Department alone, and that they had no role to play. It seems educational departments quickly point out the advantages and need for parental involvement, but when it comes down to implementation and support at grassroots, it is definitely not an easy task, since there is a range of challenges that can prevent effective parental involvement. According to Van Wyk and Lemmer (2009:17-19), the following challenges need to be recognised, removed or reduced:

- Time, transportation and childcare – Most parents want to be more involved but have difficulties arranging the additional time. Many fathers and mothers work outside the home and have long working hours. Single parents find it even more difficult to make time to be involved. Transportation can be a barrier as well, as parents might not have a car, or there is no public transport to that specific school. Parents also might need to arrange childcare for their other children when visiting the school.

- Uncertainty of what to do and fear of bad news – Many parents would like to be more involved in activities with their children, but they do not get sufficient guidance from teachers. On the other hand, teachers also need guidance in order to effectively work with families; inexperienced teachers need support from experienced teachers. Parents are also only contacted when there is bad news about their child; parents tend to be reluctant to visit the school on other occasions.

- Negative school experiences and language barriers – Many parents have less than happy memories of their own school days. They feel uncomfortable just entering the school grounds. Parents find it difficult to communicate with teachers when their

language is not the language of instruction and learning. Parents who have had little education or those with negative school experiences are also less inclined to make family – school contacts. Parents from non-traditional families may fear being judged by the school.

- Lack of a supportive environment – The high incidence of poverty and the concentration of poverty, violence and crime in certain neighbourhoods limit learner opportunities at school and after school. Many neighbourhoods lack easy access to libraries, cultural institutions, health services and recreation. Fear of crime and the high cost of transportation deter committed parents to make a trip to the school after hours.

Socio-economic conditions are also seen as one of the biggest challenges for effective parental involvement. Research has proved that poverty has a definite influence on parental involvement. According to Mmotlane et al. (2009:527), in a recent study in South Africa of 5 734 learners, personal characteristics like age, marital status, gender and *life conditions* have a strong impact on parental involvement. Everson and Millsap (2004) concur that children from low-income families are placed at risk of school failure by the characteristics of the communities they live in and the schools they attend. There are several reasons why socio-economic status is closely related to parental involvement:

1. Parents with high educational and occupational attainment are likely to have high personal drive and determination. These attributes carry over to their relationship with their children and their desire to see their children succeed (Crane, 1996).

2. Another reason is that highly educated parents are often more likely to acknowledge the importance of parental support in education (Portes & MacLeod, 1996; Legutko, 1998). These parents would likely become more involved themselves.

3. Family structure and availability are considered another reason. Single parents and poor families are more likely to be faced with under-employment and must work long hours in order to make ends meet (Dixon & Rettig, 1994; Júliusdóttir, 1997).

Despite poverty, all parents want the best possible education for their children. Fuller (2008) and Amoateng et al. (2004) maintain that parents from low-income families show just as much interest in the success of their learners and have a right to be involved in their children's education. Dauber and Epstein (1993) contend that regardless of parents' education, family size, their children's ability or school level, they are more likely to become involved in their children's education if they perceive that the school has strong practices to involve parents at school and at home. If you take a school situated in a poor neighbourhood, with mostly illiterate parents, and compare it with a school in an affluent area where the

majority of parents are well educated, the difference in parental involvement will depend on the school's policy of parental involvement and the programmes the school has in place to involve parents at school and at home (Epstein, 2009:19). Wanat (1994) concurs that differences in parental involvement in schools can be explained not by family structure or socio-economic background, but by school practice.

No matter how difficult parental involvement seems to be, or how wide the range of challenges regarding parents, teachers and the school is, the policy, programmes and practice of the school will be the key to successful parental involvement. Schools and parents therefore should determine the current need for parental involvement – what type of parental involvement to focus on, the challenges that exist, and how parental involvement can be improved in terms of learning.

d. Six types of parental involvement

Epstein (2009:14) states that her six types of parental involvement are based on the results of many studies and years of work by educators and families in elementary, middle and high schools. The framework has proved useful in research, policy, and practice across school levels and in diverse communities (Catsambis, 2002; Simon, 2000; Salinas & Jansorn, 2004). The framework helps educators and schools develop more comprehensive programmes for school and family partnerships. The framework also helps researchers locate their questions and results in ways that can inform and improve practice. Table 3.4 presents the framework for the six types of parental involvement, with possible examples and possible challenges.

Table 3.4:   **Framework of the six types of parental involvement to be organised by the school (Epstein, 2009:16-18; Van Wyk & Lemmer, 2009:25-29)**

TYPE 1: PARENTING – Help all families establish home environments to support children as learners.	
Possible examples: **Programme** that explains the different developmental stages and teaches parents how to support child in each phase. **Workshops and talks** on parenting and child rearing at each age and grade. **Parent education and courses** or training for parents on various aspects of parenting. **Family support programmes** to assist with good nutrition, health and hygiene. - The **emotional and psychological development** of the child and special needs such as information about substance abuse, family counselling and HIV and Aids. - Home visits at transition points.	Possible challenges: - To provide information **to all families,** not just those attending the workshop at the school. - To create platforms for families to share information about **their needs with the school**: their cultural backgrounds and the strengths and needs of their children. - To ensure that all information for families is **clear, usable, and linked to children's success at school**.

TYPE 2: COMMUNICATING – Design effective forms of school-to-home and home-to-school communications about school programmes and children's progress.

Possible examples:	Possible challenges:
• **Conferences** with every parent at least once a year, with follow-ups as needed. • **Language translators** assist families as needed. • **Regular examples** of learners' work sent home for review. • **Effective delivery** of report cards as well as meeting to explain the curriculum and suggest ways to improve grades. • **Regular deliveries** of notices, timetables and news. • **Clear information** about choosing subjects. • **Clear communication** of school policies and regulations. •	• Review the **readability**, clarity of forms and frequency of all memos, notices, and other print and non-print communications. • **Consider parents** who do not speak the language of instruction, or need large type. • **Review the quality** of major communication. • **Establish clear two-way channels** for communication from home-to-school and from school-to-home. • School must make sure that **structures and opportunities exist for parents to contact the school.**

TYPE 3: VOLUNTEERING – Recruit and organise parent help and support.

Possible examples:	Possible challenges:
• **Design of a programme** where parent volunteers are recruited, trained and organised for a variety of activities aimed at meeting the needs of the school. • **Parents as classroom volunteers** to assist teachers with routine tasks. • A **parent room** in the school which can be used for volunteer work and meetings. • An **annual survey** of parents to determine parents' talents, interests and resources. • **Parent patrols** to assist with the safety and operation of school programmes. • **Parents as peer mentors** to other parents.	• **Recruit volunteers widely** so that all families know that their time and talents are appreciated. • **Make flexible schedules** for volunteers, assemblies, and events to enable employed parents to participate. • **Organise volunteer work; provide training;** match time and talent with school, teacher and learner needs; and recognise efforts so that participants are productive.

TYPE 4: LEARNING AT HOME – The school provides parents with information and ideas about how to help children at home with homework and other curriculum-related activities, decisions and planning.

Possible examples:	Possible challenges:
Information for families on knowledge and skills required for learners in all subjects at each grade. **Information on homework** policies and how to monitor and discuss homework at home. **Information on how to assist** learners to improve skills on various class and school assessments. **Regular schedule of homework** that requires learners to discuss and interact with families on what they are learning in class. **Calendars with activities** for parents and learners to do at home or in the community. **Family** math, science and reading **activities**. **Holiday learning packets** or activities. **Family participation in setting learner goals** each year.	**Organise volunteer work; provide training;** match time and talent with school, teacher and learner needs; and recognise efforts so that participants are productive. **School should design and organise a regular schedule of interactive homework** that gives learners responsibility for discussing important things they are learning and that helps families stay aware of the content of their children's classwork. **Coordinate family-linked homework activities,** if learners have several teachers. **Involve families with their children** in all important curriculum-related decisions. **Provide timely information** to learners and families on relevance of subjects for various careers.

TYPE 5: DECISION MAKING – Include parents in school decisions, developing parent leaders and representatives.

Possible examples:	Possible challenges:
Active parent committees for each grade level or various activities in the school. - The **statutory participation of parents** on the school governing body. - The **training of parent leaders** through workshops and talks. - Schools should give parents **information about elections** for school representatives, new educational policy and legislation. - All parents should be given information so that they can **connect and communicate** with the parent leaders and governors. **Encouraging parents to lobby** on a local and national level for school reform.	- Include **parent leaders** from all racial, ethnic, socio-economic, and other groups in the school. **Offer training** to enable leaders to serve as representatives of other families, with input and return of information to all parents. **Include** learners in decision-making groups

TYPE 6: COLLABORATING WITH THE COMMUNITY – The school identify and integrates resources and services from the community to strengthen school programmes, family practices, and learner learning and development.	
Possible examples: • **Information for all** learners and families on community health, cultural, recreational, social support and other programmes or services. • **Information on community activities** that link to learning skills and talents, including holiday programmes to learners. • **Service integration** through partnerships involving school: civic, counselling, cultural, health, recreation, and other agencies and organisations, and businesses. • **Service to the community** by learners, families and schools (e.g., art, music, drama, etc.). • **Participation** of alumni in school programmes for learners and as mentors for planning for future.	Possible challenges: • **To inform all families** of community resources and to link families in need with specialised assistance available in community. • **To encourage families** and learners of all backgrounds to make a contribution to the life of the community by offering their time, talents and expertise to the community. • **Assure equity of opportunities** for learners and families to participate in community programmes or to obtain services. • **Match community contributions** with school goals; integrate child and family services with education.

The above-mentioned examples and possible challenges do indicate certain general requirements for effective parental involvement. The schools need to:

- provide a variety of clear and useable workshops, support programmes, training and courses to all families with the consideration of parents' needs;

- establish clear information and communication channels that are effective and regular, and that consider all types of families;

- widely recruit and use parents as volunteers and peer mentors within flexible coordinated schedules;

- coordinate the provision of information regarding assistance with homework and curriculum activities;

- include all types of parents in training as active school leaders and representatives; and

- identify and integrate community resources to strengthen the school.

Salinas and Jansorn (2004) claim that research has proved the success of Epstein's six types of parental involvement. However the implementation of these six types of parental involvement in rural multigrade schools will not automatically improve parental involvement or expose the myriad advantages of parental involvement. A contextually based parental involvement programme is needed for rural multigrade schools. Therefore a strong focus on the circumstances of these schools; the illiteracy rate and socio-economic status of parents;

and the resources and capital that exist, need to be taken into account when developing such a programme. The programme should also address the specific needs of the school (Epstein, 2011:51) in respect of parental involvement; the programme should be practicable, implementable and sustainable.

3.3 Parental involvement support and programmes in SA and the Western Cape

According to Slavin (2009:98), correlation research on parental involvement has clearly shown that parents who involve themselves in their children's education have higher-achieving children than other parents. However, there has been more debate about the impact of school programmes to increase parental involvement. Many studies have shown positive effects of parent and community involvement programmes, especially those that emphasise parents' roles as educators for their own children (Sanders et al., 2002; Comer, 2005), although there are also many studies that have failed to find such benefits (Mattingly et al., 2002). Jeynes (2011:112) agrees that parental involvement programmes are school-sponsored initiatives that are designed to require or encourage parental participation in their children's education. It is therefore important to determine if these programmes have an impact, because even though voluntary acts of parental involvement may positively impact educational outcomes, the same may or may not be true of programmes in which schools require or encourage involvement. According to Epstein (2011:48), the theory of overlapping spheres of influence and framework of six types of involvement promote the view that school, family, and community partnerships should operate as an organised **programme** of structures, processes, and collaborative activities to help learners succeed in every school, not as a set of fragmented activities for parents. A planned programme of partnership with activities linked to school improvement goals establishes family involvement as a component of school improvement, part of the professional work of educators, just as the curriculum, instruction, and assessments are understood as essential school organisational components. Because many schools fail to produce quality education (see Chapter 2), parental involvement programmes for rural multigrade schools should be linked to improve learning. The requirements for, and characteristics and method of implementation are needed in order for such a programme to be practicable, implementable, sustainable and successful.

3.3.1 Policy on parental involvement programmes

In this section the policy on parental involvement in South Africa will be discussed. The information will highlight the current situation regarding parental involvement in South Africa in general. Although parental involvement is seen as a very important aspect in education, there is currently little policy on parental involvement programmes in South Africa. Parents are, however, by law part of the governing body of the specific school. According to the

South African Schools Act (SASA) No. 84 of 1996 (South Africa, 1996), there are elected parents on every school governing body. The school governing body has a number of functions. One of these functions is to **encourage parents**, learners, educators and other staff at the school to render voluntary services to the school. Volunteering is but one of the types of parental involvement. The importance of parental involvement in learning is not even mentioned. Since only a limited number of parents are elected, these parents also have more administrative tasks regarding the finances and human resources of the school, so it is also questionable how much influence these parents will have on parental involvement that focuses on learning. To this should be added the unique circumstances parents on school governing bodies at rural multigrade schools face. This is a clear indication of the support needed for effective parental involvement in learning. Schools in South Africa are not forced by policy to develop their own parental involvement programme. Schools who do take the initiative in developing a parental involvement programme do so with limited resources and support. In contrast, Epstein (2011:300-302) states that a leading country like the United States of America has **states** that develop and improve their own programmes; a few have established permanent bureaus, offices, or departments of school, family, and community partnerships with directors, coordinators, and facilitators as experts on parental involvement. Some districts in all the states implement policies to help schools improve connections with learners' families and communities. Some districts not only write policies on partnerships, but also have expert leaders who guide and support all the different schools to improve the quality of their programmes of family and community involvement for learner success. In the USA just about all schools conduct some activities to inform and involve parents in their children's education. Over 1200 schools located in more than 30 states are members of the National Network of Partnership Schools (NNPS). They use research-based approaches to establish programmes of family and community involvement that create a positive school climate and that help learners improve skills and attitudes in reading, math, and other subjects, as well as with attendance, behaviour, post-secondary planning and other outcomes. With the lack of policy on parental involvement programmes in South Africa, the importance of the development of a parental involvement programme for rural multigrade schools with a focus on learning schools should be emphasised.

3.3.2   Current programmes and support in South Africa and the Western Cape

In South Africa the Gauteng Education Department is the only education department that currently has a formal parental involvement programme. Creecy (2011) states that parenting modern children is a challenging endeavour and that they conduct family workshops every weekend in the province. According to Creecy (2011), these workshops do not hold all the answers, but are a first step in assisting families to consider the issues of family support to

school-going children. The programme is operating in 792 underperforming primary schools and 391 underperforming secondary schools. A total of 525 facilitators have been trained to facilitate the programme. In primary schools the workshops are held over weekends covering the following areas:

- Assisting parents to understand the role of the Department in supporting them to support their children.

- Sharing with parents the understanding that the home is the first and primary place of care and support.

- Engaging parents to support the education of their children.

Creecy (2011) notes that a total of 300 000 primary school parents are targeted, as well as 100 000 secondary school parents. To date 13 141 primary school parents and 19 108 secondary school parents have participated. The budget for the parent/family support programme for 2011/12 was R39 million. Although there are no reports regarding the success or failure of the programme, the budget provided and the scale on which this programme was implemented manifest the importance of parental involvement for the Gauteng Education Department.

In contrast the Western Cape Education Department (WCED) has no formal parental involvement programmes, and according to Grant (2012), parental involvement cannot be purchased or built. The WCED considers that providing pamphlets, letters and tips online for schools, teachers and parents should be sufficient. In a letter to parents from the Head of Education, Vinjevold (2010:1) states that the focus of 2011 is on improving reading, writing and math skills of every learner. Parents are asked to assist the WCED through:

- Having their children attend school every day for 200 days of the school year.

- Having their children arrive at school before the school day begins and not leave before the end of the school day.

- Discussing the academic progress with the teacher so that they can provide support and encouragement.

- Reading, writing and calculating every school day (check children's exercise books and textbooks regularly to support their efforts and progress).

- Ensuring that children do homework every school day.

- Receiving exercise books, reading books and textbooks in the first week of the school term.

The WCED (2011b) official website has "Tips for Parents" which emphasise the importance of what you as parent can do with your children and the importance of homework.

- **Chat** with your child about school – about friends, activities, teachers and assignments.

- **Set goals** – make sure they are feasible, and focus on achieving them one at a time.

- **Praise** your child for specific achievements – focus on your child's strengths and celebrate progress.

- **Encourage** your child if he/she fails a test – it's a test – your child is not a failure. With nurture and the right support your child will progress.

Homework - what can parents do?

- **Stay informed** – talk with your child's teacher. Know the purpose of the homework, and the class rules.

- **Show enthusiasm** about school and homework.

- **Help your child with time management** – set aside time each day for homework. Don't leave homework for just before bedtime. Work on big projects over the weekends, especially if they involve getting together with classmates. Break assignments into smaller, more manageable bits. Avoid rushing about in the morning before school – prepare clothes and other items the night before.

- **Provide a quiet study area** – complete with paper, markers, and a ruler, pencils and a dictionary.

- **Never do your child's homework!** Check with your child's teacher about correcting homework.

The WCED (2011a:) also has a pamphlet on "How you can help with homework" and "How much time should be spend on homework?"

- Go to the first parent-teacher evening of the year. Find out what homework for the new grade entails. Find out how you can help your child with homework.

- Ask the teacher what the homework policy of the school is.

- Praise your child for doing homework and finishing tasks.

- Help your Grade 1 and 2 children with homework. Also help your older child with homework, if asked.

- Homework must be done at a specific time each day. Decide with your child when that time will be – then stick to it.

- Ensure that your child always does homework in the same place.

- Keep all the homework equipment in a box so you do not have to look for it every day. Homework equipment includes scissors, coloured pencils, glue, magazines, a dictionary and extra paper.

- Homework time must include rules for the whole family:

    - Switch off the TV. It will distract your child.

    - No visitors.

    - No loud telephone conversations by other members of the family.

    - Use the time to read a book or plan the budget.

- Know how to contact your child's teacher.

- Talk to the teacher if your child struggles with homework.

- Remember, both you and the teacher want your child to do well.

If these tips and suggestions of the WCED were to be employed by schools and parents, they might improve parental involvement in learning. Hence the belief that these tips, pamphlets, letters and general information on parental involvement provide sufficient support; however if this kind of support is not embodied in a practicable, contextually based developed programme for a specific school with certain needs, it is questionable whether it will be implemented at all, and whether parental involvement will improve in learning. It is a one-size fits all approach. The implementation of the WCED tips and suggestions for parents will be extremely difficult for parents with children in rural multigrade schools. Factors (see Chapter 2) that may prevent their implementation include:

- Illiterate parents – Parents that are illiterate will not always be able to help their children at home with completing homework, or be able to read to them, or to play a number plate game by subtracting and adding numbers without the necessary support on how to play an active role as an illiterate parent.

- Long working hours – Most of the parents have long working hours. Who will be able to check whether children have completed their homework if nobody is at home when children come from school? Parents that work long hours have to prepare food and have other household duties when they return home, and simply do not have the time or energy to help their children with homework. How could these parents be supported to overcome these challenges?

- Socio-economic status – Poverty is a huge parental involvement barrier; parents do not have extra money to contact or visit the teacher at school.

These factors need to be taken into account when developing a parental involvement programme for rural multigrade schools. If the needs of parents are communicated to teachers, and strategies are developed through collaboration and with the necessary support, a comprehensive programme might be designed and developed. For this study it will be very important to examine current programmes used in other countries to determine the format of a possible parental involvement programme in rural multigrade schools.

3.4   Format of current programmes: International

In a longitudinal study of over 500 schools in the US, Sheldon and Van Voorhis (2003) claimed that by implementing leadership, teamwork, action plans, implementation of plans, funding, collegial support, evaluation and networking as essential programme elements, elementary, middle, and high schools had improved the scope and quality of activities for several types of involvement. It is axiomatic that the implementation of these aspects influenced the format of partnership programmes. The format of parental involvement programmes will, however, differ from country to country, region to region, urban to rural area, and school to school. Epstein (2011:394) states that good programmes of family and community involvement will differ at each site, as individual schools tailor their practices to meet the needs and interests, time and talents, and ages and grade levels of the learners. Jeynes (2011:109) concurs that it is a salient sign of sensitivity if teachers acknowledge and adapt the fact that different parts of a country possess different expectations and levels of parental engagement. Educators need to be sensitive to the challenges and obstacles that parents in their community typically face and seek to address these issues and allay parental and learner fears about these issues (Mapp et al., 2010). The support for developing partnerships between parents, the school and community will also be another vital aspect to consider in determining a format fitting the multigrade context. Hutchins and Sheldon (2013:3) maintain that stronger programme implementation is determined by the level of support for partnerships from the principal, staff, and district than it is by structural features of a school.

Countries like the United States and United Kingdom have developed different but comprehensive programmes to increase parental involvement. In the next section, Epstein's framework, developed in the US for developing partnership programmes, will be discussed first. Emphasis will be on presenting the steps taken by the framework and the characteristics of a successful programme. Parental involvement in the United Kingdom will then be discussed by presenting important characteristics of the extended services for

schools in the United Kingdom. South Africa is a developing country, hence the inclusion of a programme developed for similar circumstances. The current characteristics of a family and community partnership programme developed for countries in central, eastern and southeastern Europe and central Asia by the International Step by Step Association (ISSA) will then be discussed. A summary of the most important characteristics of the programmes will provide tentative product and process characteristics regarding the format and process of implementation for this study. For this study it is important to determine the development and the characteristics of successful programmes in order to develop a programme that will fit the rural multigrade education milieu.

3.4.1   Partnership programmes: United States (US)

According to Epstein (2011:390), underlying all the policies and programmes is a theory of how social organisations connect with one another; a framework of the basic components of school, family and community partnerships for children's learning; a growing literature on positive and negative results of these connections for learners, families, and schools; and an understanding of how to organise excellent programmes. In these partnership programmes, Epstein explains six types of parental involvement (see 3.2.3), guided by the development of a balanced, comprehensive programme of partnerships. Action Teams for Partnerships as a structure were used to employ the five steps in order to develop a parental involvement programme.

a.   Action Teams for Partnerships (ATPs)

According to Epstein (2011:403), a principal cannot be held responsible for the development of a lasting, comprehensive programme; therefore many educators and families in hundreds of schools and districts, along with clear policies and strong support from district and state leaders and from school principals, consider an Action Team for Partnerships (ATP) in each school an essential structure. The ATP, a committee of the school council or school improvement team, is dedicated to improving plans and practices of family and community involvement. The ATP guides the development of a comprehensive partnership programme linked to the school improvement goals for learner success. Using the framework of six types of involvement, the ATP integrates all family and community connections that occur in the school in a single, unified programme. Epstein (2011:403-407) states that trial and error, and the efforts and insights of hundreds of the schools across the USA, have helped identify five important steps that any school can take to develop more positive school, family, and community connections.

Step One: Create an Action Team for partnerships

A team approach is an appropriate and effective way to build school, family and community partnerships. The ATP is an 'action arm' of a school council and the school improvement team. According to Epstein (2011:579-581), there are two main ways to organise the work of an ATP (see Table 3.5). The goal-orientated approach organises plans and committees to conduct and improve involvement activities directly linked to the school improvement goals. The process-orientated approach organises plans and committees to conduct activities for the six types of involvement.

Table 3.5:   Two approaches: goal-orientated or process-orientated

Goal-orientated-approach	Process-orientated approach
• Each member of the ATP becomes a chair, co-chair, or expert member in linking family and community to one major school improvement goal for learner success. • Ensures that the school's partnership programme will focus each year on involving families and the community in improving the school climate or improve learners' math, reading, writing, attendance, behaviour or other major goals in the school improvement plan. • In the goal-orientated approach, the ATP will establish subcommittees to oversee plans and progress towards specific goals and will implement or coordinate activities that involve families and the community in all six types of involvement. • The school's improvement goals are the basis for the action plan for partnerships, and the programme is evaluated on whether progress is made towards goals.	• Each member of the ATP becomes a chair, co-chair, or expert member for one of the six types of involvement. • One or two members will then become the school's experts on Type 1-Parenting; the other members will then be experts on one of the other types. • The process-orientated ATP evaluates its progress based on whether and how well activities for the six types of involvement effectively involve all families, and whether the programme is balanced with activities that are conducted at home, at school and in the community. • The types of involvement are the basis for the action plan for partnerships, and the programme is evaluated on whether and how progress is made so that activities for all six types of involvement contribute to learner success in school.

According to Epstein (2011:583-586), an ATP has a minimum of six members; the members include at least two teachers, an administrator, and other school and family leaders who have important connections with families and learners (nurse, social worker, etc.). According to Sanders and Sheldon (2009), principals and other administrators should recognise the various leaders, participants, and successful involvement activities that are conducted throughout the school year. Small schools may adapt these guidelines to create smaller ATPs. There are many people who play important roles in organising an ATP, implementing plans, conducting activities, and evaluating results of partnership programmes:

- **The principal**. Plays an essential role in supporting and maintaining the work of an ATP.

- **Guidance counsellors, school psychologists, school social workers, assistant principals, and other social service professionals.** The school professionals have time, training, and experience to plan and conduct meetings and to guide teachers, parents, learners, and community members to work effectively together.

- **Paraprofessionals.** They may have particular strengths for leading workshops or activities that directly assist families.

- **Parents, family members, and community partners**. Parents on the ATP should come from different neighbourhoods or groups served by the school. With diverse representation, all parents in the school should see that they have a voice.

- **Business and other community partners.** Some ATPs include a business partner, librarian, police officer, city council official, scientist, medical expert, and faith-based leader as team members. Community partners bring knowledge, useful connections, and various resources to ATP committees.

- **District leaders.** Play an important role in providing professional development and on-going support for the work of school ATPs.

- **State leaders.** Need to encourage successful partnership programmes in districts and in schools.

- **Other organisations.** Teacher unions, business and labour leaders, etc., have roles to play in leading and participating in school, family, and community partnership programmes.

The members of the ATPs, regardless of the goal-orientated or process-orientated approach, have certain responsibilities (Appendix A), to increase the effectiveness of the programme. The responsibilities include necessary documentation, a detailed action plan, identification of budgets, meetings, publishing plans, reporting progress, evaluation, solving of problems and gathering of new ideas.

Step Two: Obtain funds and other support

A modest budget is needed to guide and support the activities planned by each school's Action Team for Partnerships. Recent data indicates that schools in US ATPs need at least $2500 per year to support activities in a typical, start-up Action Plan for Partnerships. Singh et al. (2004: 306) concur that a joint responsibility for resource utilisation is necessary as one of the steps to increase parental involvement.

Step Three: Identify starting points

The ATP starts by gathering information about the school's current practices of partnership, along with the views, experiences, and wishes of teachers, parents, administrators and learners. The ATP can use different methods (Appendix B) for gathering information that include presenting strengths, required changes, expectations, sense of community and links to goals. Rugh and Bossert (1998:123) concur that it is important to make parents aware of the role they can play in enhancing quality education.

Step Four: Develop a One-Year Action Plan

With the information about a school's point of departure, and with an understanding of the goals and ideas for partnerships collected from teachers, administrators, parents and learners, the Action Team for Partnerships (ATP) will develop a One-Year Action Plan for Partnerships. The annual action plan will include a set of selected goals or objectives, desired results, measures to assess results, specific involvement activities that will be implemented, improved, or maintained each year; dates scheduled; types of involvement; actions needed to prepare the activity; people responsible for implementing the activities and those assisting; funds or resources required; and other important details.

Step Five: Continue planning, evaluating, and improving programmes

The ATP should schedule an annual presentation and celebration of progress at the school so that all teachers, families, and learners know about the work done each year to build partnerships. Panels of ATP members may discuss serious challenges and solutions for reaching all families, share ideas for the six types of involvement, and gather ideas for improving programmes in the next school year. Singh et al. (2004:306) state that it is important to evaluate programmes by providing feedback on cost-effectiveness, correcting faulty communication channels, and modifying current plans by considering alternative goals if necessary. From longitudinal data at 25 states of the USA, Hutchins and Sheldon (2013:3) concur that schools that improved or sustained the quality of their programme reported greater family engagement than schools with declining programme quality. Programme evaluation could increase the quality of the programme and could lead to greater family engagement.

b. Characteristics of successful programmes

Epstein (2011:408-412) notes that hundreds of schools have taken these five steps over the years. Their experiences have helped identify some important characteristics of successful partnership programmes.

- **Incremental progress:** More families need to be included each year to benefit more learners.

- **Connections to curricular and instructional reform:** A programme of school, family and community partnerships that focuses on children's learning and development is an important component of curricular and instructional reform.

- **Redefining professional development and shared leadership:** The action team approach to partnerships changes the definition of professional development because teachers, administrators, parents and other partners are trained together, as a team, to develop, implement, and continue to improve practices of partnerships. An effective programme of family and community involvement also stretches the definition of shared leadership – an important concept in educational administration. Usually the term implies that teachers will share leadership with principals and specialists in improving school organisation, curriculum and instruction. In effective partnership programmes, shared leadership means that all members on the team of teachers, administrators, parents, and community partners take responsibility for developing, implementing, evaluating and continually improving plans and practices of family and community involvement.

- **The core of caring:** Schools need catchy, positive names for their partnership programmes to indicate that families, learners, teachers, and community partners develop relationships and carry out actions to assist all learners towards success. Synonyms for 'caring' match the six types of involvement:

   Type 1 – Parenting: Supporting, nurturing. Loving and child raising.

   Type 2 – Communicating: Relating, reviewing and overseeing.

   Type 3 – Volunteering: Supervising and fostering.

   Type 4 – Learning at home: Managing, recognising and rewarding.

   Type 5 – Decision-making: Contributing, considering and judging.

   Type 6 – Collaborating with the community: Sharing and giving.

If all six types of involvement are operating well in a school's programme of partnerships, then all of these caring behaviours could be activated to assist children's learning and development.

Epstein (2011:411) states that in the USA, partnership programmes are needed and yield significant returns for schools, teachers, families and learners. The partnership programmes are based on Epstein's six types of parental involvement and implemented through an action

team approach. The comprehensive partnership programme is a direct result of the considerable research done by Epstein at the Centre on School, Family and Community Partnerships and National Network of Partnership Schools.

These five steps and characteristics of a successful partnership programme are well documented and have proved to be successful. However the contextual differences between a First World country like the United States and a developing country like South Africa can influence the development of a partnership programme for rural multigrade schools.

3.4.2 Parental involvement programmes: United Kingdom (UK)

In this section the importance of parental involvement programmes in the United Kingdom (UK) is highlighted by presenting research findings and then discussing the promotion of extended school services. In determining the success of parental involvement in the UK, the product and process characteristics of the extended school services would provide predetermined characteristics of a possible parental involvement programme for rural multigrade schools in South Africa.

a. Importance of parental involvement in the UK

In a research report of the Department for Children, Schools and Families, Peters et al. (2008:10) contended the following, after a telephone survey of 5 032 parents:

- Around half (51%) of parents felt very involved in their children's school life: this was an increase from 29 percent in 2001, to 38 percent in 2004, to 51 percent in the 2007 survey. Women, parents with young children, parents who had left fulltime education, those from black or black British backgrounds, and parents of a child with special educational needs were all more likely than average to feel very involved. Lone parents and non-resident parents were both less likely than average to feel very involved.

- Parents felt increasingly involved in their children's school life. They were also more likely to see education as their own responsibility, as well as that of the school's, and this was likely to heighten their sense of involvement.

- **The desire to become more involved tended to be stronger among disadvantaged groups** (e.g. those in lower social grades, ethnic minorities, respondents with a long-term illness or disability). Further work may be needed to understand how to further involve these parents and understand their barriers to involvement. For instance, the survey (and previous surveys in 2004 and 2001) indicated that work commitments were a significant barrier for some parents.

According to these findings parental involvement had increased. The research suggested that disadvantaged groups, like the parents of children in lower social grades, had a desire to be more involved. The question to be asked is what was done to increase parental involvement in the UK.

b. The extended services at schools

The schools in the UK realised the importance of parental involvement and started to focus on partnerships, including the community, through the promotion of extended schools. The Training and Development Agency for Schools (TDA) strives to develop people and improve young lives by promoting extended services in schools. According to the TDA (2009:4), an extended school is a school that recognises that it cannot work alone in helping children and young people to achieve their potential and, therefore, works in partnership with other agencies that have an interest in outcomes for children and young people, and with the local community. In doing so, it helps meet not only the school's objectives but also shares in helping to meet the wider needs of children, young people, families and their communities. The Department for Education (UK. Dept for Education, 2011) in the UK concurs and states that 'Extended Services' is an umbrella term that refers to schools' extra-curricular activities or wider services provided before and after the school day to the local community. The TDA (2009:4) notes that in 2006 there were 1 250 extended schools; by 2008 there were 14 234 extended schools. According to the Department for Education (2011) by September 2010, more than 99 percent of schools were offering access to a range of extended services. Schools often find it helpful to work in partnership with their local authority, other schools (as part of clustering arrangements) and private and voluntary sector providers to develop and deliver access to extra-curricular activities and services. The increase in extended services offered at these schools clearly points towards a specific need that is addressed in a certain manner. The implementation of extended services at schools was successful. Table 3.6 presents the benefits to the role players (TDA, 2009:14).

Table 3.6:   Benefits to the role players of extended services

Pupils:	Parents:
• Fun activities, more opportunities, more sports and art • Being with friends before and after school • Parents able to help with homework • Help with school work • School safeguards pupils' wellbeing • Advice and help if they need it • Personalised learning	• Positive activities and study support • High-quality childcare • Parenting courses, advice and information • Greater involvement in their children's education • Adult and family learning • Use of school facilities
Community:	**Schools:**
• Access to school sports and IT facilities • Local base for further education courses, vocational courses and other learning opportunities • Local access to health and specialist services, and information about other local services • Promotes community cohesion	• Improved standards • School has a higher local profile • Can help boost school rolls • Helps schools meet their duties on wellbeing, ECM and community cohesion • Opportunity for income generation
Teachers:	**Support staff:**
• More motivated pupils • Better attendance and behaviour • Engaged parents • Barriers to learning are more effectively addressed • Classroom work boosted by study support	• Opportunities for career and skills development • Being part of the team around the child • Greater scope for taking responsibility • More jobs and new roles, e.g. school business managers, parent support advisers

The Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (Ofsted) regulates and inspects schools to achieve excellence in the care of children and young people, and in education and skills for learners of all ages. Ofsted (2008) reported the following key findings on the impact of extended services after a survey of 30 children's centres and 32 schools in 54 local authorities:

- The majority of the schools visited had compelling case-study evidence that extended services had made **life-changing differences to pupils** that had led to better attendance and attitudes.

- Services that were used by the **most vulnerable parents were reported to have transformed the lives of some parents and had positive effects on their children**.

- The schools with the most effective services had integrated the **development of extended provision within their school improvement plans**, with a clear focus on improving positive outcomes for children and young people.

Ofsted (2009) conducted a survey of effective extended schools in particularly disadvantaged areas to determine whether their extended provision was a significant factor in explaining their success. Ofsted (2009:5-6) found the following:

- The extended schools visited on this survey grasped the opportunities of their status to challenge disadvantage and overcome barriers to learning. They identified children and young people who might otherwise fail; they enabled pupils to stay at school, and achieve national expectations or beyond.

- The schools visited understood their pupils' needs in detail and put in place whatever was necessary to help them cope with, and learn in, school. Attendance increased, exclusions fell and achievement rose.

- Close monitoring and tracking of pupils' progress enabled support to be matched closely through the provision of activities and specialist interventions.

- In the survey schools, some parents held negative views of education, often because of their own poor experience of school.

- Extended provision in these successful schools was well managed, especially financially, to ensure the sustainability of appropriate provision and resources.

- The primary schools visited reported that transition to secondary schools often resulted in the loss of knowledge about a family and its circumstances that had been built up by extensive personal contact over time.

- The main drive for successful provision and outcomes came from within the schools themselves.

- There was no substantial evidence that the common assessment framework was a major driver for changing and improving practice at the time of the survey, although isolated examples indicated that some good practice was beginning to develop.

These extended programmes had a positive influence on at-risk learners; most schools linked the programme to the school improvement plan. Because of the circumstances that learners from multigrade schools encounter, an extended programme might be the answer involve parents and have a positive influence on learner achievement. For the purpose of this study, an overview of what the extended school programme offers (product characteristics) and how it is presented (process characteristics) might be useful in determining the characteristics of a parental involvement programme for rural multigrade schools in South Africa.

Product characteristics

The Department for Education (UK. Dept for Education, 2011) states that extended services can enable schools to provide:

- **high-quality learning opportunities** either side of the school day;

- **ways of intervening early when children are at risk of poor outcomes**, e.g. by providing access to study support, parenting support or to more specialist services (such as health, social care or special educational needs services);

- **ways of increasing pupil engagement;**

- **ways of improving outcomes and narrowing gaps** in outcomes between different groups of pupils;

- **access to childcare services and/or activities before and after school** (such as breakfast clubs, sports and arts activities, and study support) that can enable parents to take up or stay in employment; and

- **community use of facilities**, such as facilities for adult and family learning, sports and ICT.

The TDA (2009:8-12) presents five elements of the core offerings of extended school services:

- **Parenting support**: Equipping parents with the skills to support and encourage their child's education and helping them with issues that affect the wellbeing of the family.

- **Swift and easy access:** Ensuring that pupils' barriers to learning are overcome through health and preventative work, effective support for those with additional needs, and fast access to specialist services where necessary.

- **Community access:** Benefiting children, young people, parents/carers and other members of the community by offering the school's facilities as a base for positive activities.

- **Childcare**: Giving children a good start in those crucial early years, supporting working parents to the benefit of the whole family.

- **Varied menu of activities:** Giving children and young people a choice of opportunities to enjoy and excel at outside of the classroom, adding to the school offering, which can transform their attitudes to school.

These five elements are important product characteristics of the extended services for schools in the United Kingdom. However, determining how these product characteristics are employed would present the process characteristics of the extended school services.

Process characteristics

The TDA (2009:8-12) presents good practices of schools that have implemented extended services effectively (shown in Table 3.7). What the schools have implemented could help to determine the process characteristics of extended services.

Table 3.7:   Good practices linked to the elements of extended services

Elements of extended schools	Examples of good practices
Childcare:	Wrap-around childcare service. Young person's centre is a hub for childcare in the area.
Varied menu of activities:	A wide range of activities for children in partnership with other schools and local providers. Some of the activities are based at other locations and transport is provided.
Swift and easy access:	Strong multi-agency partnerships provide a broad range of services. Emphasis on health and preventative work reinforces classroom work. Community-wide impact through better and more convenient access to health services.
Parenting support:	School offers a 12-week programme designed to help parents develop language and play skills. School runs a parent volunteer programme designed to engage parents. School appoints family support workers to engage with and support parents. School sets up parent groups and family learning sessions for ethnic parent groups
Community access:	School runs a cybercafé for the local community. Sports facilities are used widely by local clubs. School offers local access to health and specialist services on its premises.

These examples of good practice are implemented differently at each setting and according to the context of the school. It is therefore difficult to determine specific process characteristics for each example. However, some general process characteristics are discussed by the TDA (2009:20-27):

- Schools with the most effective services integrate the development of extended provision within their school improvement plans with a clear focus on improving positive outcomes for children and young people.

- Teachers are not expected to run services themselves; services should be delivered by working in partnership with local authorities, statutory agencies, and other schools in the cluster to share resources and ensure services are not duplicated.

- Schools work in partnership with a wide range of agencies to ensure the wellbeing of all pupils – neither the services nor their coordination should be assumed by teachers.

- After-school activities are obligatory – children and families can opt into these as they wish.

- Budget from the Department for Education ensures disadvantaged children and families can access these services. Schools can charge for some services (but not study support) in order to ensure their sustainability.

- There is not a one-size-fits-all solution for each school. Services should be provided to meet local demand/need and to fit in with local and schools improvement-planning priorities. Schools do not have to offer the services themselves or on the school site.

It is clear that parental involvement has increased through the implementation of extended services at schools. Although the product and process characteristics fit the context of the UK and have proved to be successful, it does not mean they will fit the rural multigrade context in South Africa.

3.4.3 Family and community partnerships: central, eastern, and southeastern Europe and central Asia

Owing to the similar context, it is important to discuss effective methods employed in other developing countries to create family and community partnerships for increased parental involvement. The product and process characteristics of family and community partnerships employed in central, eastern, and southeastern Europe and central Asia will therefore be discussed.

a. Family and community partnerships

According to ISSA (2010:7), the International Step by Step Association shares the vision of early childhood as a life space where educators and families work together to ensure access to early childhood services that promote wellbeing, development, and learning for each child based on the principles of democratic participation. Since 1994, the Step by Step Programme, an initiative of the Open Society Institute (OSI), has been a symbol of change in preschools, primary schools, and communities in 29 countries of central, eastern, and southeastern Europe and central Asia. It has been a symbol for empowering educators and

other early year professionals, families, and whole communities to support the development and learning of each child to his or her full potential. Singh et al. (2004:306) concur that there should be crucial inroads made to empower parents, if education is to create a well-rounded empowered citizen. Equal access to education and care opportunities; child-centred, individualised teaching; a holistic approach to the child's development; inclusion; the significant role of families and community involvement; and culturally appropriate learning environments and approaches have been the core principles of the programme from its very beginning. According to ISSA (2010:15), the following areas are crucial to ensure high-quality support for children's development and learning. *Competent Educators of the 21st Century* (ISSA, 2010) identifies seven focus areas that reflect ISSA's main beliefs about quality pedagogy and ways to aspire to excellence:

1. Interactions

2. *Family and Community*

3. Inclusion, Diversity and Values of Democracy

4. Assessment and Planning

5. Teaching Strategies

6. Learning Environment

7. Professional Development

ISSA (2010:24) states that strong partnerships among educators, families, and other community members are essential for children's learning and development. Recognising the role of the home learning environment and family as the first educational and social setting of a child, the educator must build bridges between the school and family/community and promote on-going, two-way communication. The different compositions, backgrounds, lifestyles, and characteristics of the families and communities of the children should be taken into account to support children's learning and development. Van Wyk and Lemmer (2009:161) concur that teachers dealing with communities where there is a high level of poverty need to be aware of the impact poverty may have on the learners and the amount of parent involvement that could be expected. The educator's sensitivity and responsiveness to families is demonstrated through appreciating the multiple ways that families can contribute to the learning of their children, the life of the classroom, and the school. However, studies have proved that although most parents report that they want to be partners with educators, only some parents, particularly those with more formal education, higher incomes, and familiarity with schools, remain involved with their children's education across the grades (Baker and Stevenson, 1986; Lareau, 1989; Useem, 1992). In order to involve parents from the rural multigrade context, schools will need good guidance. By facilitating effective

communication and interaction among families, school, and community, the educator supports the shared recognition of everyone's interests in and responsibilities towards the education and future of children, and promotes social cohesion on a larger scale.

Product characteristics

ISSA (2010:25) declared the following principles to ensure family and community involvement; these are described as the product characteristics:

- Principle 1: The educator **promotes partnerships** with families and provides a variety of opportunities for families and community members to be involved in children's learning and development.

- Principle 2: The educator uses **formal and informal opportunities for communication** and information sharing with families.

- Principle 3: The educator uses **community resources and family culture** to enrich children's development and learning experiences.

These principles focus on creating partnerships, using opportunities for communication and using community resources to increase parental involvement in children's learning and development.

Process characteristics

The above-mentioned principles are further explained in terms of indicators of quality (Table 3.8) that could be seen as the process characteristics.

Table 3.8:   Indicators of quality as process characteristics

Principles	Indicators of quality
Principle 1	1. The educator invites and welcomes family members into the classroom and finds ways for all families to participate in the educational process and life of the learning community. 2. The educator involves family members in shared decision- making about their children's learning, development, and social life in the classroom. 3. The educator involves family members in decision-making concerning children's learning environments.
Principle 2:	1. The educator regularly communicates with families about their children, their learning and development, curriculum requirements, and events in the classroom. 2. The educator regularly communicates with families to learn about a child's background in order to gain insights into the child's strengths, interests, and needs. 3. The educator promotes opportunities for families to learn from and support one another. 4. The educator keeps information about families and children confidential.
Principle 3:	1. The educator takes children into the community or brings community members into the school in order to enhance children's learning and socialization. 2. The educator assists families in obtaining information, resources, and services needed to enhance children's learning and development. 3. The educator uses knowledge of children's communities and families as an integral part of the curriculum and their learning experiences. 4. The educator offers information and ideas for parents and family members on how to create a stimulating home learning environment and helps to strengthen parent competences.

Much of the responsibility of involving parents in learning rests with the teacher. When developing a parental involvement programme for rural multigrade schools in South Africa, it will be important to determine who will be responsible for what in the programme. The above principles and quality indicators were developed for poorer or developing countries in central, eastern, and southeastern Europe and central Asia. The context of these countries might be more similar to the South African context than that of First World countries. The principles and quality indicators will therefore be a good starting point, because of the emphasis on learning and the contextual similarities. However, the amount of comprehensive research done in the UK and USA should not be underestimated. Therefore the right mix between the product and process characteristics of the USA, UK and ISSA needs to be determined to provide possible characteristics that could increase parental involvement in learning at rural multigrade schools.

3.4.4 Summary of frameworks and programmes for possible use in a rural multigrade parental involvement programme

It is axiomatic that the current reality and context of rural multigrade schools will affect the proposed parental involvement programme for rural multigrade schools immensely. The different product and process characteristics of each of the frameworks and programmes presented in sections 3.4.1 – 3.4.3 are well documented and have proved very successful. If such a programme were implemented directly in the rural multigrade schools of South Africa, it would most certainly fail if the contextual reality were not taken into account. However, the plethora of research by experts on how to increase parental involvement should not be overlooked; the product characteristics and process characteristics of each programme should be extracted and refined to be part of a tailor- made parental involvement programme for rural multigrade schools. Table 3.9 illustrates the core of the product and process characteristics for each programme.

Table 3.9: **The core of the product and process characteristics of each programme**

Product characteristics		
Epstein approach	**UK – TDA**	**ISSA**
• Based on six types of parental involvement: parenting, **learning** at home, collaborating with the **community**, **communication**, decision-making, volunteering. • Some kind of action team responsible for parental involvement. • Clear steps needed to address a goal-oriented or process-oriented approach. • Characteristics include: incremental progress, connections to **curriculum**, caring and professional development.	• Parenting support – focus on skills. • Swift and **easy access** – specialist services. • **Community** access - school used as a facility • Childcare – support families. • Varied menu of activities – outside classroom.	• Promotes partnerships with families and provides a variety of **opportunities** for families and community members to be involved in children's **learning** and development. • Uses formal and informal opportunities for **communication** and **information sharing** with families. • Uses **community** resources and family culture to enrich children's development and **learning** experiences.

Process characteristics		
Epstein approach	**UK – TDA**	**ISSA**
- Create action team for partnerships – who will do what? - Obtain funds and support. - Identify starting points: current **strengths**, **needed change,** expectations, sense of community and link to goals. - Develop one-year action plan: details, **responsibilities**, **costs** and evaluation. - Continuous planning, evaluating and improving.	- Integrated the development of extended provision within their school improvement plans. - Teachers are not **expected to run services themselves**; services should be delivered by working in partnership. - Neither the services nor their coordination should be taken on by teachers. - After-school activities are obligatory – children and families can opt into these as they wish. **Budget** from the Department for Education ensures disadvantaged children and families can access these services. - Services should be provided to meet local demand/need and fit in with local and schools improvement planning priorities.	**Invites** and welcomes family members into the classroom and finds ways for all families to participate in the educational process. **Involves** family members in decision-making concerning children's learning environments. - Regularly **communicates** with families about their children, their learning and development. - Regularly **communicates** with families to learn about a child's background in order to gain insights into the child's strengths, interests, and needs. - Promotes opportunities for families to learn from and support one another. - Takes children **into the community** or brings community members into the school in order to enhance children's learning and socialisation. **Assists families** in obtaining information, resources, and services needed to enhance children's learning and development. - Uses knowledge of children's communities and families as an integral part of the curriculum and their learning experiences. - Offers information and ideas for parents and family members on how to create a stimulating home learning environment.

From these programmes, some similarities and important aspects certify the following product and process characteristics to incorporate into a parental involvement programme. The product characteristics are:

- A strong focus on learning: parents should have the opportunity to become an active academic partner in their child's education.

- The creation of a link or partnership between parents and the school.

- The provision of opportunities for communication between parents and teachers.

- Involvement of the community, through the parents.

The process characteristics include:

- Applicable steps to follow.

- Get parents and teachers together, possibly through a workshop.

- Identify the strengths that currently exist.

- Determine the need for change.

- Share good practice.

- Plan who is responsible for what.

- Develop own ideas for programme.

- Parents and teachers should be involved and there should be communication about the programme.

- A budget should be available for possible expenses.

These proposed product and process characteristics provide a point of departure for the development of a parental involvement programme; however the current reality regarding the context of rural multigrade schools and existing theories of parental involvement need to be interspersed with the characteristics. The development of a conceptual framework is therefore necessary.

3.5 Conceptual framework

The conceptual framework developed for this study intends to align the key concepts and provide a structure to understand how to improve parental involvement in learning at rural multigrade schools in the Western-Cape, South Africa. The framework identifies product and process characteristics needed in a programme to increase parental involvement, with a focus on learning for rural multigrade schools in their own context. The characteristics proposed by the framework are anchored by relevant context-bound literature. The conceptual framework developed (see Figure 3.5 for the full framework) for this study consists of three sections:

- Current reality

- Ideal reality

- Proposed intervention as process

3.5.1 Current reality

The current reality (see Figure 3.1) is a key concept of the conceptual framework that focuses on the current existing separate spheres of influence in the rural multigrade education context within schools. According to Epstein's (see 3.2.2) theory of overlapping spheres of influence, there are three perspectives:

- Separate responsibilities of families and schools

- Shared responsibilities of families and schools

- Sequential responsibilities of families and schools.

Epstein (2011:39) states that separate responsibilities stress the inherent incompatibility, competition, and conflict between families and schools. This perspective assumes that school bureaucracies and family organisations are directed, respectively, by educators and parents whose different goals, roles, and responsibilities are best fulfilled independently. However, the large number of challenges (see Chapter 2), rural multigrade schools encounter in their context, contributes even more to separate responsibilities. Rural multigrade school parents face challenges like illiteracy, long working hours, poverty and unemployment. These challenges are considered external to the school, about which the school can do little. The principal and teachers at rural multigrade schools face internal challenges (see Chapter 2) like travelling long distances to school, uninvolved parents, teaching two or more grades for all the learning areas in one classroom, a changing curriculum, and a lack of support and resources. These internal and external challenges that rural multigrade parents and teachers face, not only add to separate responsibilities, but possibly also hinder effective parental involvement. Therefore without parental involvement, learning at school, learning at home and learning in the community will also remain separate (as illustrated in Figure 3.1) and may contribute to the low academic results of these rural multigrade schools. However, if the rural multigrade schools and parents interact and develop contextual strategies learning at home, learning at school and learning in the community can overlap, which could lead to a more shared responsibility for learning.
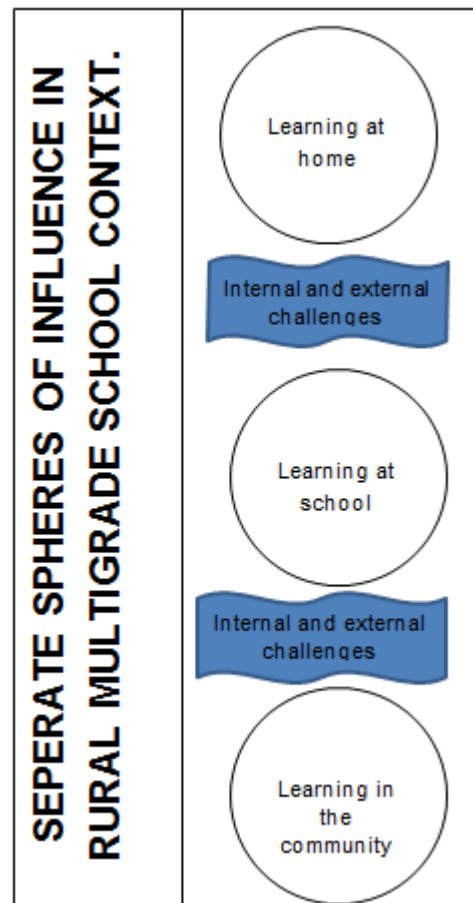
Figure 3.1:   **Current realities of separate spheres of influence at rural multigrade schools**

3.5.2   Ideal reality

For this study, an ideal reality (see Figure 3.2) is an important key concept that follows Section 1, the current reality. Owing to the role that contexts play in this study, theories of parental involvement (see 3.2.2) had to be combined for best possible findings and results. To create an overlapping sphere of influence, a rural multigrade school will need to know what kind of capital exists in their school, in the homes of learners and in the community. According to Bourdieu (see 3.2.2), capital can be seen as resources which exist in three fundamental types: economic capital, cultural capital and social capital. The capital at school and home needs to be utilised to enhance learning through parental involvement. The capital in the community, however, needs to be managed because the community will be used as resources by parents and teachers. The capital in the community will differ from context to context; the teachers and parents will therefore manage the community capital in the specific context with specific resources when needed and applicable.

In order to utilise school and home capital together with the management of community capital, interaction and communication between parents and the teachers is inevitable. The focus of this study is to increase parental involvement specifically in learning. Vygotsky's (see 3.2.2) social development theory suggests that cognitive development of learners requires social interaction and that teachers, parents and other adults are central to the child's learning and development. The interaction and communication between parents and teachers should therefore be the focus of an intervention which intends to increase learning through parental involvement.

CREATE OVERLAPPING SPHERES OF INFLUENCE THROUGH INTERACTION AND COMMUNICATION

CAPITAL
= social, economic and cultural

Utilise school *capital*

Utilise home *capital*

Manage community *capital*

Focus of intervention
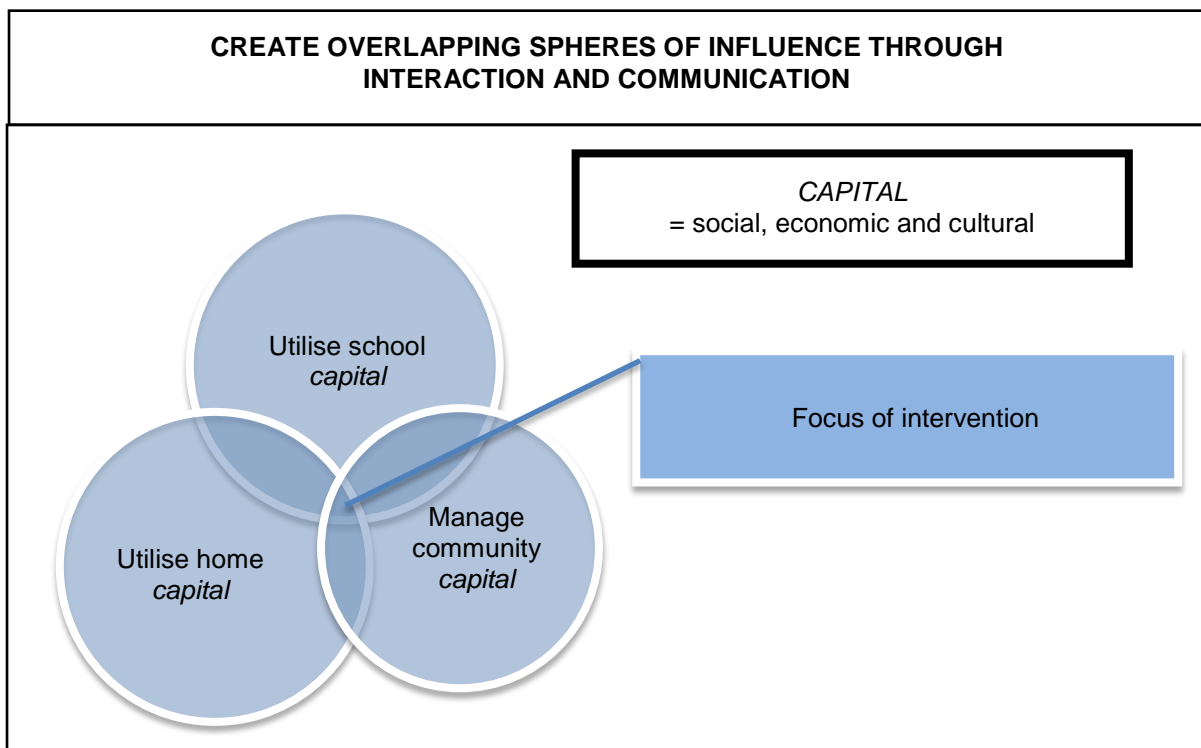
Figure 3.2:   Ideal reality

3.5.3   Proposed intervention as process

Interaction and communication for collaboration between the school, parents and the community need to be in the centre of the overlapping spheres of influence in order to develop a programme that will increase parental involvement in learning. The interaction and communication through the intervention should be seen as the proposed intervention. The proposed intervention as a process (see Figure 3.4), consists of two components: first, the workshop and second, the implementation of the programme. A workshop will allow parents and teachers to interact on an equal level. Instead of exercising *power over* families and teachers, work with them to develop relational *power to* accomplish goals of common interest (Warren et al., 2009). When parents and teachers collaborate and communicate within a framework, consisting of a set of principles, they will be able to generate contextual

strategies. The workshop is based on three fixed principles, each with a set of quality indicators, which will serve as a framework. According to ISSA (see 3.4.4), the following set of principles will ensure family and community involvement; each principle has a set of quality indicators to maintain the focus on the specific principle which also enables the role players to align practicable strategies accordingly. The principles were initially the teachers' responsibility, however, because of the context of rural multigrade school, the principles were adapted to be flexible when implementation commences.

- **Principle 1**: The promotion of partnerships of schools with families and the provision of a variety of opportunities for families and community members to be involved in children's learning and development.

  - *Quality indicator 1*: Invites family members to the classroom to find ways to participate in children's learning and development.

  - *Quality indicator 2*: Involves family members in decision-making regarding learning environments.

- **Principle 2**: The use by the school of formal and informal opportunities for communication and information sharing with families.

  - *Quality indicator 1:* Communication on learning and development of children with family members.

  - *Quality indicator 2:* Communication regarding children's background to determine needs and interests.

  - *Quality indicator 3:* Promotion of opportunities for families to learn from and support one another.

- **Principle 3**: The school uses community resources and family culture to enrich children's development and learning experiences.

  - *Quality indicator 1:* Involve community to enhance learning and socialisation.

  - *Quality indicator 2:* Assist families in obtaining resources to enhance learning and development.

  - *Quality indicator 3:* Use knowledge of family and community as part of curriculum and learning.

  - *Quality indicator 4:* Offer information and ideas for family members to create home learning environment.

The fixed principles and the chosen quality indicators will serve as the initial product characteristics for the SCAF partnership programme (School, Community and Family

Partnership programme), due to its compatibility with the product characteristics proposed by the summary (see Chapter 3). However, it is also important to remember the following 'secondary' product characteristics:

- Progress on partnerships should be incremental, including more families each year in ways that benefit more learners.

- Schools need catchy, positive names for their partnership programmes to indicate that families, learners, teachers, and community partners are developing relationships and conducting actions to assist all learners towards success.

- Goal setting, praise and encouragement, which are very important, considering the context.

The proposed product characteristics do provide a solid platform to increase parental involvement; however the process characteristics will determine the functionality of the programme. Owing the context (see Chapter 2), rural multigrade school programmes need to be practicable, feasible, manageable and sustainable to increase parental involvement in learning and be considered successful.

A set of proposed process characteristics determined by literature (see 3.4.4) include:

- Initiate a workshop with parents and teachers.

- Determine the need for change.

- Identify the strengths (capital and resources) that exist.

- Determine strategies and own ideas.

- Plan who is responsible for what.

- Determine the need for a budget.

- Share good practice.

These proposed process characteristics will comprise the core of the programme for the workshop. The outcome of the workshop will determine the process of implementation, which could differ from school to school. The implementation process needs to be practicable, feasible, manageable and sustainable. The parents, for example, may have extra-long working hours if it takes place is in season; the date, time and length of a workshop or meeting to set goals will therefore be important factors which determine the success of implementing a strategy. The developed school, community and family partnership programme will be the outcome of the developed strategies and will therefore be tailored made for the specific rural multigrade school.

During the workshop and implementation, key actors are needed to develop applicable strategies and successful implementation. According to Epstein (see 3.4.1), the principal, teachers and parents are considered the key actors in developing strategies. Van Wyk and Lemmer (2009) (see 3.2.2.4) state that effective parental involvement programmes have a structure to coordinate school and family partnerships. During the workshop there will be four key actors: a facilitator and principal, and teachers and parents from each grade in the school. Each of these key actors will have specific roles and tasks during the workshop. During implementation the key actors comprise the principal, teachers, parents and community members. Epstein (see 3.2.3) notes that most teachers and administrators would like to involve families, but many do not know how to build positive and productive programmes efficiently and effectively, and consequently are fearful of trying. This creates a 'rhetoric rut' in which educators are stuck, expressing support for partnerships without taking necessary actions. In order to take necessary actions, the role players are assigned different roles and tasks (see Table 3.10).

Table 3.10:   Roles and tasks of role players during workshop and implementation

WORKSHOP		
ROLE PLAYERS	**ROLES**	**TASKS**
Facilitator	• Organiser • Leader • Developer • Trainer	• Organises venue, material and workshop content. • Leads all sessions. • Introduction: discusses role and aim of parental involvement. • Determines challenges and positive aspects of parental involvement at specific school. • Determines capital in community. • Introduces principles and leads the development of strategies.
Principal and teachers	• Group leader	• Facilitate effective communication with parents in his/her group. • Give input regarding challenges and positive aspects of parental involvement at specific school. • Provide thoughts and ideas regarding practicability and sustainability of strategies.
Parents	• Group member	• Give input regarding challenges and positive aspects of parental involvement at specific school. • Give input regarding existing community and possible capital.

IMPLEMENTATION OF PROGRAMME		
ROLE PLAYERS	**ROLES**	**TASKS**
Principal	• Leader of programme • Monitoring • Implementation	• Implements programme. • Monitors practicability and sustainability. • Adjusts programme according to need.
Teacher	• Leader of specific strategies	• Coordinates and implements specific strategies.
Parents	• Active participants in strategies	• Participate in strategies. • Provide feedback regarding functionality of strategies.
Community members	• Active participants in strategies.	• Participate and collaborate in strategies.

Once the workshop has been conducted, substantial data should be available for the development of a manual for that particular school.

Formative evaluation will then be used to test whether a parental involvement programme increased learning because of the product and process characteristics of the SCAF partnership programme.
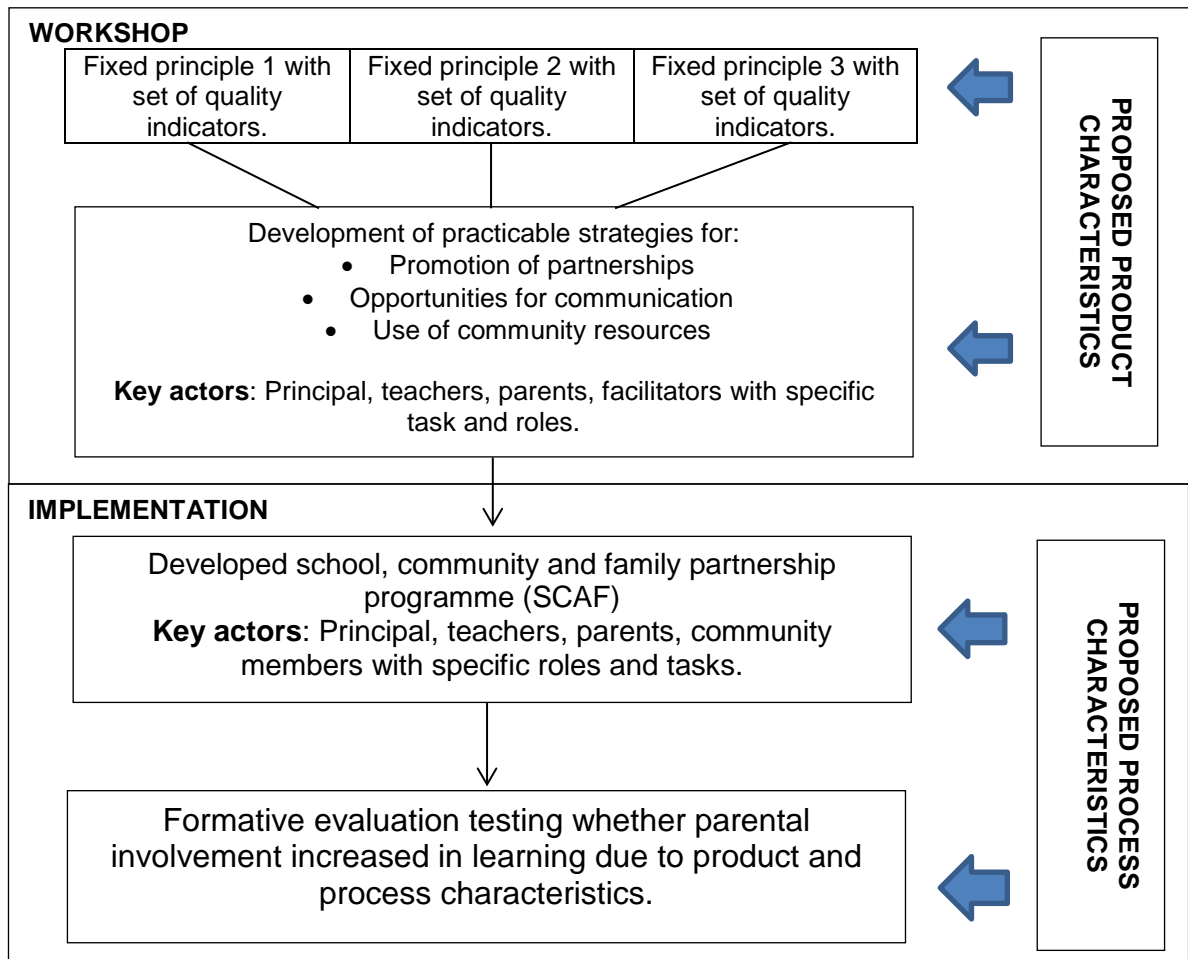
Figure 3.3: **Proposed intervention as process**

Figure 3.4: Conceptual framework
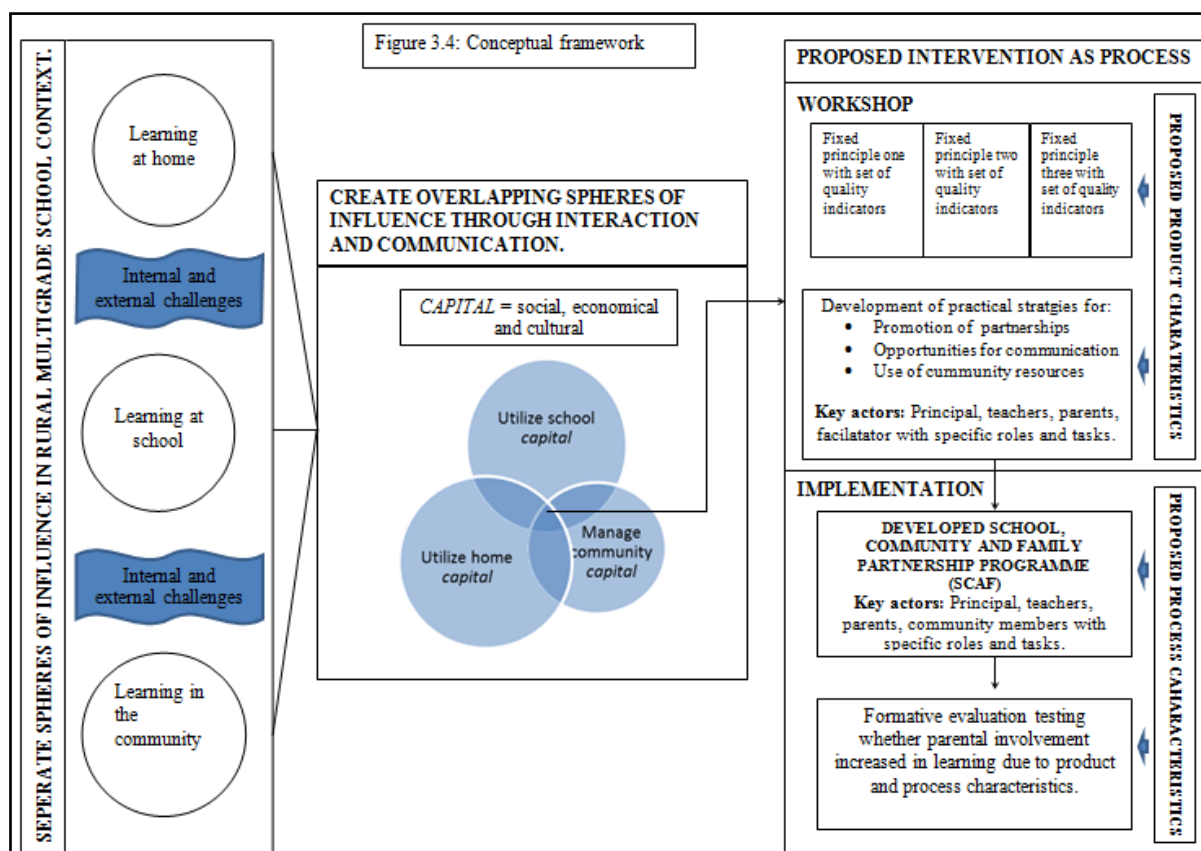
Figure 3.4: **The conceptual framework**

3.6 Conclusion

According to Schulze (2003:20), a literature review is a systematic, critical analysis and summary of current literature relevant to the specific research subject. In this chapter, the literature review focused largely on international resources, owing to the lack of these in South Africa. The aim of this study is to determine the characteristics of a parental involvement programme for rural multigrade schools through a literature and empirical study. The focus therefore will be on studying and analysing international and national research on the subject; determining the need for, as well as features and characteristics of a parental involvement programme for rural multigrade schools in South Africa; designing a parental involvement programme for rural multigrade schools; testing a parental involvement programme in rural multigrade schools; and generating recommendations from the study. According to international and national literature, parental involvement programmes are used with great success in a variety of schools. These programmes can, however, not be used as a blueprint for South African rural multigrade schools because of the myriad challenging circumstances these schools, parents, teachers and learners experience. The practicability of involving rural parents seems an almost insurmountable problem. The development of a parental involvement programme by focusing on creating partnerships, providing

opportunities for communication, and using the capital and community resources available, might be the answer.

A literature review may be considered an enriching, learning experience. According to the literature review, an empirical research approach is appropriate. In Chapter 4 the design of an empirical research project is discussed.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESEARCH DESIGN

4.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses and elaborates on the research design and methods employed to answer the research questions. The research comprises two phases with a number of cycles; therefore the research design will be discussed for each phase separately. The research paradigm underlying the research will be presented first. Thereafter, design research as the research design will be discussed, including the evaluation criteria applied for the intervention to be developed. This is followed by the research design for each phase. Finally, the multiple roles of the researcher, as well as ethical considerations, will be discussed.

4.2 Research paradigm

The main research question for this study is:

What are the characteristics of an effective school, community and family partnership programme that increase parental involvement in learning at rural multigrade schools in South Africa?

The research proposes the development of a practicable, effective, sustainable and contextually based parental involvement programme that will increase parental involvement in learning. The literature and the design research methods used in this study enable the development of a parental involvement programme and design principles for such a programme.

According to Creswell (2003:5), there are three questions central to the design of research:

- What knowledge claims are being made by the researcher (including a theoretical perspective)?

- What strategies of enquiry will inform the research?

- What methods of data collection and analysis will be used?

According to Creswell (2003:6), a knowledge claim means that researchers start a project with certain assumptions about how they will learn and what new knowledge they will learn during their enquiry. These claims are also called paradigms (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Mertens, 1998). A research paradigm comprises the researcher's philosophical assumptions,

epistemologies, and ontologies (Crotty, 1998); or (stated in other words) broadly conceived research methodologies (Neuman, 2000). Philosophically, researchers make claims about what they believe knowledge is (ontology), how we know it (epistemology), what values go into it (axiology), how we write about it (rhetoric), and the processes for studying it (methodology) (Creswell, 1994).

Four different paradigms (alternative knowledge claims positions) are presented in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1:   Alternative knowledge claim positions (Creswell, 2003:6)

Post-positivism	**Constructivism**
• Determination • Reductionism • Empirical observation and measurement • Theory verification	• Understanding • Multiple participant meanings • Social and historical construction • Theory generation
Advocacy/Participatory	**Pragmatism**
• Political • Empowerment issue-oriented • Collaborative • Change-oriented	• Consequences of actions • Problem-centred • Pluralistic • Real-world practice oriented

Description of these four paradigms guided the choice of the underlying philosophies and assumptions that best suited this study.

a. Post-positive paradigm

Creswell (2003:7) states that post-positivism reflects a deterministic philosophy in which causes probably determine effects or outcomes. The knowledge that develops through a post-positivist lens is based on careful observation and measurement of the objective reality that exists 'out there' in the world. Thus, developing numeric measures of observations and studying the behaviour of individuals become paramount for a post-positivist. Quantitative research fits the post-positive paradigm best. According to Cresswell (2003:18), the quantitative approach is one in which the investigator primarily uses post-positivist claims for developing knowledge (i.e., cause and effect thinking, reduction to specific variables and hypotheses and questions, use of measurement and observation, and the test of theories), employs strategies of enquiry such as experiments and surveys, and collects data on predetermined instruments that yield statistical data. The problems studied by post-positivists reflect a need to examine causes that influence outcomes, such as issues examined in experiments (Creswell, 2003:7). According to Phillips and Burbules (2000), the post-positive paradigm assumes that:

- Knowledge is conjectural (and anti-foundational) – absolute truth can never be found. Thus, evidence established in research is always imperfect and fallible. It is for this reason that researchers do not prove hypotheses and instead indicate a failure to reject.

- Research is the process of making claims and then refining or abandoning some of them for other claims more strongly warranted. Most quantitative research, for example, starts with the test of a theory.

- Data, evidence, and rational considerations shape knowledge. In practice, the researcher collects information on instruments based on measures completed by the participants or by observations recorded by the researcher.

- Research seeks to develop relevant true statements, ones that can serve to explain the situation that is of concern or that describe the causal relationships of interest. In quantitative studies, researchers advance the relationship among variables and pose this in terms of questions or hypotheses.

- Being objective is an essential aspect of competent enquiry, and for this reason researchers must examine methods and conclusions for bias. For example, standards of validity and reliability are important in quantitative research.

Choosing the post-positive paradigm for this study would imply examining causes (i.e. certain variables) that influence outcomes. In this research, the attempt to identify the characteristics of an optimal parental involvement programme for rural multigrade schools is not possible by separating or identifying a few relevant variables. The best possible solution might therefore not be determined by employing the post-positive paradigm.

b. Socially constructed paradigm

According to Creswell (2003:8), social constructivism knowledge is created through an alternative process and set of assumptions. The ideas originate from Mannheim and from works such as Berger and Luckmann's *The Social Construction of Reality* (1967) and Lincoln and Guba's *Naturalistic Inquiry* (1985). More recent authors who have embraced this position are Crotty (1998), Neuman (2000) and Schwandt (2000). Assumptions identified in these works hold that individuals seek understanding of the world in which they live and work. The goal of research is to rely as much as possible on the participants' views of the situation being studied. The questions become broad and general, so that the participants can construct the meaning of a situation, a meaning typically forged in discussions or interactions with other persons. The more open-ended the questioning, the better, as the researcher listens carefully to what people say or do in their life setting (Creswell, 2003:8). Qualitative

research fits the socially constructed paradigm best. Creswell (2003:18) states that the qualitative approach is one in which the enquirer often makes knowledge claims based primarily on constructivist perspectives (i.e., the multiple meanings of individual experiences, meanings socially and historically constructed, with an intent of developing a theory or pattern) or advocacy/participatory perspectives (i.e., political, issue-oriented, collaborative, or change-oriented) or both. It also uses strategies of enquiry such as narratives, phenomenologies, ethnographies, grounded theory studies, or case studies. The researcher collects open-ended, emerging data with the primary intent of developing themes from the data. According to Crotty (1998), the socially constructed paradigm assumes that:

- Meanings are constructed by human beings as they engage with the world they are interpreting. Qualitative researchers tend to use open-ended questions so that participants can express their views.

- Humans engage with their world and make sense of it based on their historical and social perspective – we are all born into a world of meaning bestowed upon us by our culture. Thus, qualitative researchers seek to understand the context or setting of the participants through visiting this context and gathering information personally. They also make an interpretation of what they find, an interpretation shaped by the researchers' own experiences and backgrounds.

- The basic generation of meaning is always social, arising in and out of interaction with a human community. The process of qualitative research is largely inductive, with the enquirer generating meaning from the data collected in the field.

It is axiomatic that a strong emphasis must be placed on understanding the context and setting of the participants as well as interaction with the participants to generate meaning in order to develop a practicable, effective, contextual and sustainable programme that will increase parental involvement in learning. The context and setting (see Chapter 2) of rural multigrade schools play an important role in this study. It is, however, questionable whether the socially constructed paradigm would lead the study towards what works and the possible optimal solution to the problem.

c. Advocacy/Participatory paradigm

Enquirers from an advocacy/participatory (or emancipatory) paradigm contend that the constructivist stance does not go far enough in advocating for an action agenda to help marginalised people (Creswell, 2003:9). Researchers like Fay (1987), Heron and Reason (1997) and Kemmis and Wilkinson (1998) believe that enquiry needs to be intertwined with politics and a political agenda, and that the research should contain an action agenda for

reform that may change the lives of the participants, the institutions in which individuals work or live, and the researcher's life. Moreover, specific issues needed to be addressed that speak to important social issues of the day, issues such as empowerment, inequality, oppression, domination, suppression, and alienation. Kemmis and Wilkinson (1998) summarise the key features of the advocacy/participatory paradigm:

- Participatory action is recursive or dialectical and is focused on bringing about change in practices. Thus, at the end of advocacy/participatory studies, researchers advance an action agenda for change.

- It is focused on helping individuals free themselves from constraints found in the media, in language, in work procedures, and in the relationships of power in educational settings. Advocacy/participatory studies often begin with an important issue or stance about the problems in society, such as the need for empowerment.

- It is emancipatory in that it helps unshackle people from the constraints of irrational and unjust structures that limit self-development and self-determination. The aim of advocacy/participatory studies is to create a political debate and discussion so that change will occur.

- It is practical and collaborative because it is enquiry completed 'with' others rather than 'on' or 'to' others. In this spirit advocacy/participatory authors engage the participants as active collaborators in their enquiries.

Rural multigrade schools and the parents of rural multigrade learners could be seen as marginalised because of the challenges they face (see Chapter 2), and they should be empowered to play an active role in the education of multigrade learners. However advocacy/participatory studies would propose an action agenda for change at the end of a study, which therefore means the problem might not be solved, and that the desired 'change' might not occur during the study.

d. Pragmatic paradigm: The paradigm chosen for this study

According to Creswell (2003:11), there are many forms of pragmatism, and for all of them, knowledge claims arise out of actions, situations, and consequences, rather than from antecedent conditions (as in post-positivism). There is a concern with applications – 'what works' – and solutions to problems (Patton, 1990). Instead of methods being important, the problem is most important, and researchers use all approaches to understand and address the problem (Rossman & Wilson, 1985). Patton (1990) and Tashakkori and Teddlie (1998) convey the importance of focusing attention on the research problem in social science research and then using pluralistic approaches to derive knowledge about the problem.

According to Murphy (1990), Cherryholmes (1992), and Creswell (2003:12), the pragmatism paradigm claims the following:

- Pragmatism is not committed to any one system of philosophy and reality. It provides the philosophical underpinning for mixed methods research in that researchers draw liberally from both quantitative and qualitative assumptions when they engage in their research.

- Individual researchers have a freedom of choice. They are 'free' to choose the methods, techniques, and procedures of research that best meet their needs and purposes. Therefore researchers adhering to this paradigm apply mixed-method research.

- Pragmatists do not see the world as an absolute unity. In a similar way, mixed-methods researchers look to many approaches for collecting and analysing data rather than subscribing to only one way (e.g. quantitative or qualitative research).

- Truth is what works at the time; it is not based in a strict dualism between the mind and a reality completely independent of the mind. Thus, in pragmatism, investigators use both quantitative and qualitative data because they work to provide the best understanding of a research problem.

- Pragmatist researchers look to the 'what' and 'how' to research, based on its intended consequences – where they want to go with it. As in pragmatism, where researchers often use mixed-methods, researchers need to establish a purpose for their 'mixing', a rationale for the reasons why quantitative and qualitative data need to be mixed in the first place.

- Pragmatists agree that research always occurs in social, historical, political, and other contexts.

In order to best answer the research question, this study fits into a pragmatic paradigm. The pragmatic paradigm allows for determining the problem, and proposing a solution (change) in order to see what really works and what the best possible solutions are. The pragmatic paradigm creates space for emphasising the rural multigrade context and setting, as well as interaction with and empowerment of participants, thus providing a broad theoretical lens. The freedom to choose different methods (often called mixed methods), techniques and procedures of research allowed the study to develop the best possible solution for the problem.

A combination of quantitative and qualitative methods was employed which would contribute to answering the research questions best. Research questions can usually be answered in

this way more appropriately than with a method that applies solely quantitative or qualitative methods (Johnson & Onwuegbuzie, 2004). Mixed-methods research involves a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods in a single research project. The research is able to capitalise on the strengths of the two research approaches while offsetting their weaknesses (Bazeley, 2004; Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007). The quantitative approach allows for the study of the breadth of a phenomenon (Patton, 1990; Bazeley, 2004), as well as allowing for useful analytical generalisability. According to Yin (2003:37), analytical generalisation allows experimental scientists to generalise from one experiment 'to another': For this reason, it was adopted to help the study analyse the context and need (problem) of parental involvement in rural multigrade schools. On the other hand, the qualitative approach makes it possible for a phenomenon to be studied in depth (Patton, 1990; Bazeley, 2004). The qualitative approach will allow a 'hands-on' study, which increases the possibility of solving the problem.

As the pragmatic paradigm focuses primarily on the problem and on 'what works', the designated research design for this study was design research. According to Plomp (2009:10), design research encompasses designing/developing an intervention to solve a complex educational problem and to advance our knowledge about the characteristics of these interventions and the processes to design and develop them. To increase parental involvement at rural multigrade schools is indeed a complex educational problem; the next section discusses research design in general.

4.3 Design research as a research design

4.3.1 Design research in general

> Educational design research is perceived as the systematic study of designing, developing and evaluating educational interventions – such as programmes, teaching-learning strategies and materials, products and systems – as solutions to such problems, which also aim at advancing our knowledge about the characteristics of these interventions and the processes to design and develop them" (Plomp, 2009:9).

Nieveen (2009:89) elaborates on this definition and states that design research projects strive after two types of main results. The first aim comprises high-quality interventions (such as programmes, products and processes) designed to solve complex educational problems. This type of output puts forward the practicable relevance of design research. "It is for that reason that design research is also labelled as being use-inspired, applied oriented and/or socially responsible research" (Van den Akker, 1999). Nieveen (2009: 89) notes that the second main output of design research is the accompanying set of well-articulated design principles (Van den Akker, 1999; Linn et al., 2004) that provide insight into the:

- purpose/function of the intervention;

- key characteristics of the intervention (substantive emphasis);

- guidelines for designing the intervention (procedural emphasis);

- implementation conditions; and

- theoretical and empirical arguments (proof) for the characteristics and procedural guidelines.

According to Nieveen (2009:89), these comprehensive design principles serve several purposes for a variety of target groups. From a research perspective, these principles show the contribution of design research to the existing knowledge base, with information on how the intervention works in practice, the effects of using the intervention, and explanation of the working mechanisms. For educational designers, these principles carry rich information on how to design similar interventions for similar settings. From the perspective of future users, the principles provide information needed for selecting and applying interventions in similar target situations and provide insights into the required implementation conditions. Plomp (2009:21-22) maintains that in design research, the researcher should strive to generalise 'design principles' to some broader theory. According to Yin (2003:37), generalisation is not automatic and design principles must be tested through replications of the findings in a second, third or in more cases in various contexts with the purpose of replicating the results. Once such replications have been made, the results might be accepted for a much larger number of similar contexts, even though further replications have not been performed. This replication logic is the same that underlies the use of experiments and allows experimental scientists to generalise from one experiment 'to another'. Yin (2003) calls this 'analytical generalisability'. Finally, for policy makers, these principles assist in making research-based decisions for solving complex educational problems.

"By its nature, design research is relevant for educational practice (and therefore also for educational policy) as it intends to develop research-based solutions for complex problems in educational practice" (Plomp, 2009:13). He adds that a starting point for design research is educational problems for which no or only a few validated principles ('how to do' guidelines or heuristics) are available to structure and support the design and development activities. Kelly (2009:73) agrees that design research is most appropriate for open, or more appropriately, 'wicked' problems. According to Plomp (2009:13), when informed by prior research and review of relevant literature, researchers in collaboration with practitioners design and develop workable and effective interventions by carefully studying successive versions (or prototypes) of interventions in their target contexts, and in doing so they reflect on their research process with the purpose of producing design principles. The challenges that exist at rural multigrade schools, the need for parental involvement, as well as the extent of these

challenges, contribute significantly to a complex and 'wicked' educational problem. The lack of research and 'how to do' guidelines regarding effective parental involvement at rural multigrade schools in South Africa also justifies the use of design research for this study.

Design research encompasses educational design processes (Plomp, 2009:13). Plomp adds that it is like all systematic educational and instructional design processes – therefore cyclical in character: analysis, design, evaluation and revision activities are iterated until a satisfying balance between ideals ('the intended') and realisation has been achieved. Figure 4.1 illustrates the design process visually.
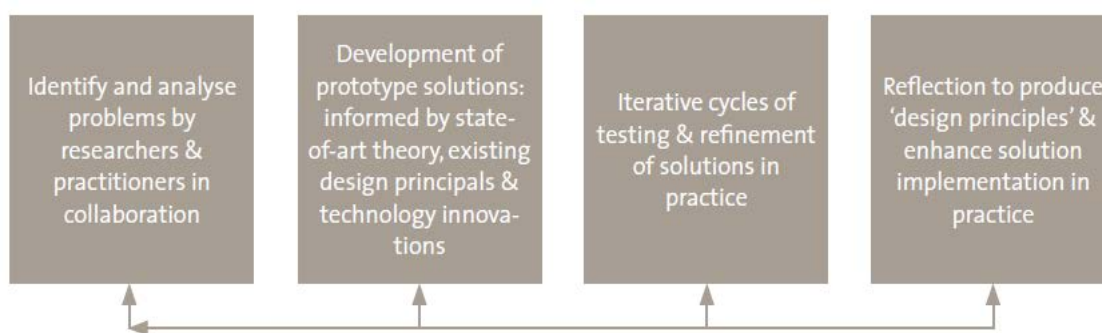
Figure 4.1:   Design approach (Reeves, 2006)

The design approach can be broadly conducted in the following steps:

- Identify and analyse problems – determining what the complex educational problem comprises (including current situation and challenges).

- Development of prototype solutions – determining a possible theory, design principles and innovations.

- Iterative cycles of testing – conduct a cyclic approach to refine and adjust solutions.

- Reflection – propose 'design principles' and enhance solutions.

Researchers may conduct the design approach differently, depending on the nature of the problem. Many researchers agree that design research comprises a number of stages (Plomp, 2009:15):

- *Preliminary research*: needs and content analysis, review of literature, development of a conceptual or theoretical framework for the study.

- *Prototyping phase*: iterative design phase consisting of iterations, each being a micro-cycle of research with formative evaluation as the most important research activity aimed at improving and refining the intervention.

- *Assessment phase*: (semi-) summative evaluation to conclude whether the solution or intervention meets the pre-determined specifications. As this phase often results in recommendations for improvement of the intervention, we call this phase semi-summative.

According to Plomp (2009:15), the phases will enable the researcher to do systematic reflection and documentation in order to produce the theories or design principles as the scientific yield from the research. Design research can strengthen the knowledge base in the form of design principles that offer heuristic advice when deliberate attention is paid to theoretical embedding of design issues and empirical evidence (Van Den Akker, 2009: 43).

Van den Akker et al. (2006) summarise a number of characteristics of design research, and Table 4.2 illustrates how each of these characteristics was applied in this study.

Table 4.2:   Characteristics of design research and their application in this study

Characteristic:	Application:
1. *Interventionist*: the research aims at designing an intervention in a real world setting.	The intervention in the form of a programme was designed for rural multigrade schools in South Africa.
2. *Iterative*: the research incorporates cycles of analysis, design and development, evaluation, and revision.	Through a repetitive process of cycles of analysis, design and development, and evaluation, the final programme as intervention was presented.
3. *Involvement of practitioners*: active participation of practitioners in the various stages and activities of the research.	The study involved teachers, parents, learners and community members in the various stages and activities of research.
4. *Process oriented*: the focus is on understanding and improving interventions (a black box model of input – only focusing on output measurement is avoided).	Improving the programme through the data gathered in different forms commenced in the prototype phase.
5. *Utility oriented*: the merit of a design is measured, in part by its practicality for users in real contexts.	The programme was utilised through a try-out and implementation in real contexts; practicability was continuously tested.
6. *Theory oriented*: the design is (at least partly), based on a conceptual framework and upon theoretical propositions, while the systematic evaluation of consecutive prototypes of the intervention contributes to theory building.	A conceptual framework for this study (see Chapter 3) was developed and theories were incorporated. The different prototypes of this study will ultimately contribute to the theoretical propositions.

These features and characteristics describe the involvement of practitioners, experts and researchers, and the application shows how the characteristics were applied in this study. Figure 4.2 (Wademan, 2005) illustrates the characteristics through the Generic Design Research Model more comprehensively.
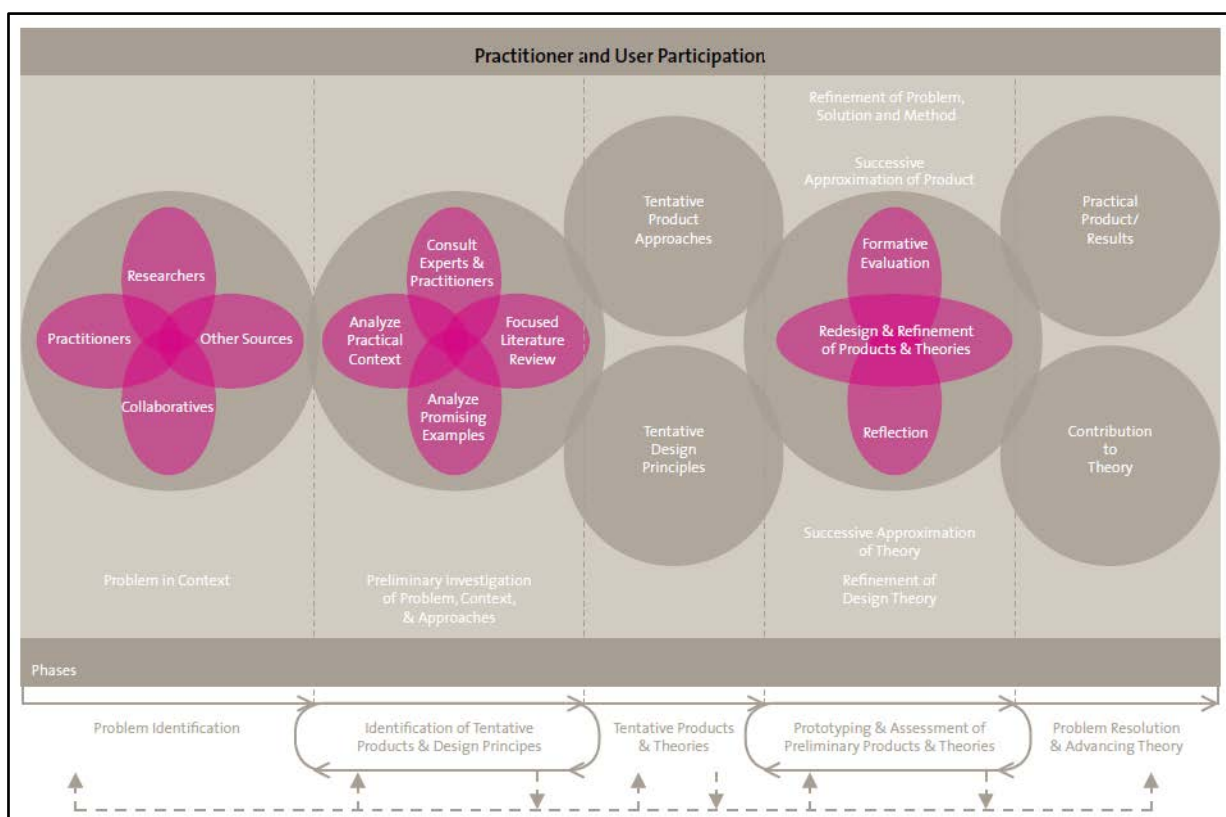
Figure 4.2:   Generic Design Research Model (Wademan, 2005)

According to Plomp (2009:16), Wademan's model illustrates that the 'successive approximation of practical products' (what we call 'interventions') go hand-in-hand with the 'successive approximation of theory' (which he also calls 'design principles'). Design principles are heuristic statements for which Van den Akker (1999) developed the following format: "If you want to design intervention X for the purpose/function Y in context Z, then you are best advised to give that intervention the characteristics A, B, and C [substantive emphasis], and to do that via procedures K, L, and M [procedural emphasis], because of arguments P, Q, and R" (Van den Akker, 1999). In this study the intervention (X) is a school, community and family partnership programme, with the purpose (Y) of increasing parental involvement, specifically in learning (see Chapter 1). The context (Z) would be rural multigrade schools in South Africa, the characteristics (A, B, and C) of the programme would be provisionally determined in Phase 1 and then further adapted in Phase 2 as would the procedure (K, L, and M). The arguments for the first prototype (P, Q, and R) are determined in Chapter 3 through relevant theoretical propositions. Plomp (2009:21) states that the heuristic principles are meant to support designers in their tasks, but cannot guarantee success – they are intended to assist (in other projects) in selecting and applying the most appropriate (substantive and procedural) knowledge for specific design and development tasks. He adds that substantive knowledge is knowledge about essential characteristics of an intervention and can be extracted (partly) from a resulting intervention itself; that procedural

knowledge refers to the set of design activities that is considered most promising in developing an effective and workable intervention.

In applying design research, the prototypes of the parental involvement programme need to be formatively evaluated. Certain criteria need to validate the intervention in terms of meeting the requirements. Nieveen (2009:94) proposes four generic criteria for high- quality interventions, as illustrated in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3:   Criteria for high quality interventions

Criterion	
Relevance (also referred to as content validity)	There is a need for the intervention and its design is based on state-of-the-art (scientific) knowledge.
Consistency (also referred to as construct validity)	The intervention is 'logically' designed.
Practicality	**Expected** The intervention is expected to be usable in the settings for which it has been designed and developed. **Actual** The intervention is usable in the settings for which it has been designed and developed
Effectiveness	**Expected** Using the intervention is expected to result in desired outcomes. **Actual** Using the intervention results in desired outcomes.

Nieveen (2009:94) explains the criteria as: The components of the intervention should be based on state-of-the-art knowledge (content validity) and all components should be consistently linked to one another (construct validity). In this study, content validity was addressed by focusing on a review of literature, the context, and collecting quantitative data (survey) and qualitative data (focus group interviews) during Phase 1, in order to determine the need and to generate ideas. The nature of the items developed through the literature and context, and data gathered through these items, would therefore illustrate relevance (content validity). The development of a sequence of prototypes in Phase 2 would allow the intervention to prove the proposed components are consistently linked to one another, and therefore prove consistency (construct validity). If the intervention meets these requirements, it is considered to be valid. Another characteristic of high-quality interventions is that end users (for instance the teachers and learners) consider the intervention to be usable and that it is easy for them to use the materials in a way that is largely compatible with the developers' intentions. If these conditions are met, we call these interventions practicable. A fourth characteristic of high-quality interventions is that they result in the desired outcomes, that is, that the intervention is effective. The criteria are very important for this particular study,

especially practicability and effectiveness which directly correspond with successful practices in terms of the context of rural multigrade school and the challenges it poses. The different phases will emphasise certain criteria. Table 4.4 illustrates how the phases of this study will emphasise certain criteria.

Table 4.4:   Phases of the study with criteria

PHASE:	CRITERIA:
Phase 1: Preliminary phase	Relevance (Content validity)
Phase 2: Prototype and evaluation phase	Consistency, Practicability and Effectiveness

In focusing on relevance in Phase 1, the need for an intervention in that specific context will be determined. Once ideas are generated in Phase 1, the intervention with the linked components should be applied through the development of prototypes, therefore consistency, practicability and effectiveness will be determined in Phase 2. Design research is developmental in nature and therefore formative evaluation will take place in every phase. Tessmer, cited in Plomp (2009:28), illustrates the variety of possible methods of formative evaluation and the resistance to revision. Formative evaluation will enable the researcher to adapt the prototypes according to the data gathered; evaluation will continue to take place until the evaluative criteria are met.
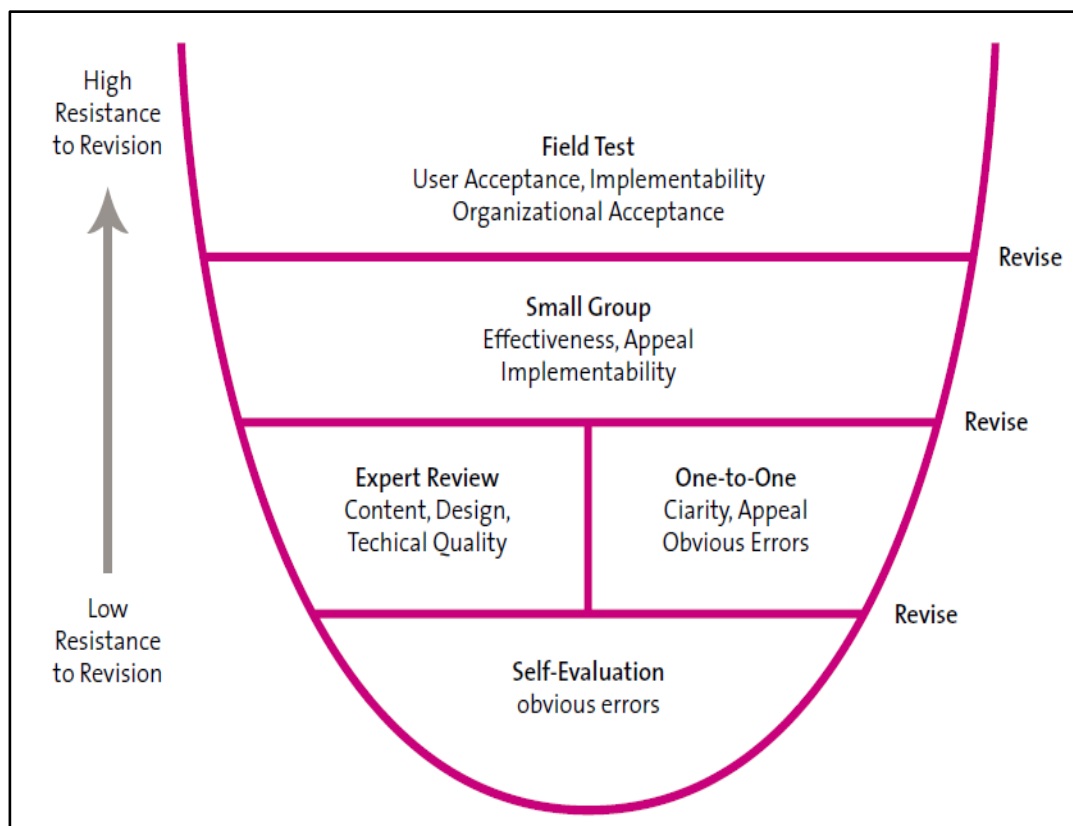
Figure 4.3:   Layers and methods of formative evaluations (Tessmer, 1993)

Initially low resistance to revision occurs. When the prototype is revised, the resistance gradually increases until a high resistance is reached; the possible formative evaluation methods would differ from phase to phase in order to reach the specific evaluation criteria. Nieveen (2009:95) describes in greater detail the following as possible formative evaluation methods:

- Screening: members of the design research team check the design with some checklists of important characteristics of components of the prototypical intervention.

- Expert appraisal: a group of experts (for instance, subject matter experts, instructional design experts, teachers, review the materials), and react to a prototype of an intervention, usually on the basis of a guideline with central questions of the design research team. Usually this is done by interviewing the respondents.

- Walkthrough: the design researcher and one or a few representatives of the target group together go through the set-up of the intervention. Usually this is carried out in a face-to-face setting.

- Micro-evaluation: a small group of target users (e.g. learners or teachers) use parts of the intervention outside its normal user setting. Here, the main activities of the evaluator are observing and interviewing the respondents.

- Try-out: a limited number of the user group (e.g. teachers and learners) use the materials in the day-to-day user setting. If the evaluation focuses on the practicality of the intervention, the following evaluation activities are common: observation, interviewing, requesting logbooks, administering questionnaires; if the evaluation has its focal point on the effectiveness of the intervention, evaluators may decide to request learning reports and/or give a test.

The above-mentioned methods should be seen as examples. As a pragmatist, appropriate methods for each phase of the study were selected to reflect the phase of the study and the specific questions. The next section describes how this design research approach was applied in order to design a school, community and family programme for rural multigrade schools in South Africa.

4.4   Application of design research for this enquiry

An overview of the research design per phase (for Phase 2 on both cycles) will be discussed briefly, with a focus on the aim of the phase, sampling, data collection strategies and data analysis, and quality criteria. Ethical considerations will be discussed with emphasis on the role of the researcher.

4.4.1 Research design for this study

In developing a school, community and family partnership programme for rural multigrade school in South Africa, this study commenced in two phases: a preliminary phase and a combination of a prototype and evaluation phase. Figure 4.4 illustrates the research design for this study.
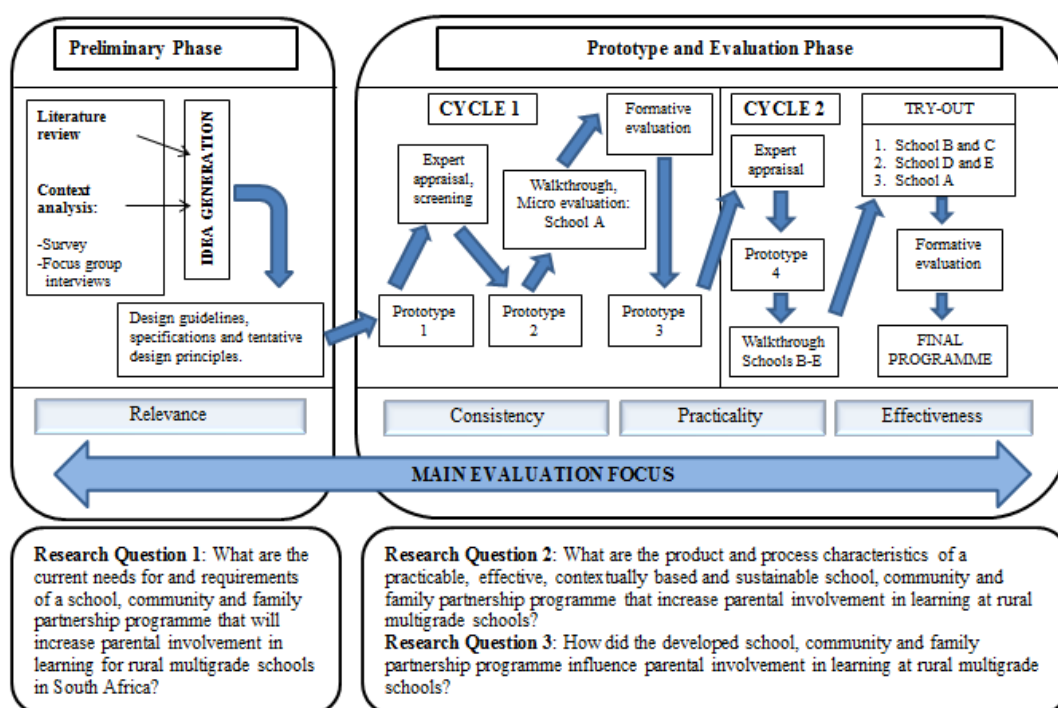
Figure 4.4: **Presents the design of the study and it will be explained and elaborated in the following sections**

4.4.2 Research design for Phase 1: Preliminary phase

High quality interventions require quality criteria. In Phase 1 the criterion for quality is relevance, because the intervention and its design should be based on state-of-the-art (scientific) knowledge. Chapter 2, the contextualisation of rural multigrade schools and Chapter 3, the literature review and conceptual framework, provide the bulk of knowledge required to describe the need for the intervention and its design. However the quantitative and qualitative data will also provide scientific knowledge regarding the need for the intervention and design.

The aim of Phase 1 was to conduct a content, context and needs analysis. The analysis resulted in specific tentative design guidelines, specifications and design principles for the intervention, which will be used in constructing the first school, community and family partnership programme for rural multigrade schools. This will be the first prototype which will then be further developed and evaluated in Phase 2.

To develop a relevant and appropriate school, community and family partnership programme for rural, multigrade schools in South Africa, it is first of all necessary to understand the needs and challenges of the target audience in greater depth and to determine the requirements of such a programme. In the preliminary phase of design research, a needs and content analysis, review of literature, and development of a conceptual or theoretical framework for the study are considered the first steps for this specific phase. The focus of this phase was to answer the following research sub-question:

Research sub-question 1: What are the current needs for and requirements of a school, community and family partnership programme that will increase parental involvement in learning for rural multigrade schools in South Africa?

Research sub-question 1 aimed to determine the current state and challenges of parental involvement at rural multigrade schools. The current state will help determine the need for and requirements of a school, community and family partnership programme to increase parental involvement in learning at rural multigrade schools. To answer the research sub-question, a review of literature and context analysis was conducted. In conjunction with the literature review, a conceptual framework was developed to align the key concepts and provide a structure to understand how to improve parental involvement in rural multigrade schools in the Western Cape, South Africa. The context analysis comprised a survey through an electronic questionnaire, and focus group interviews (see Chapter 5) to determine the current state and challenges of parental involvement, as well as the need for and the requirements of a school, community and family partnership programme. This would facilitate the generation of ideas for a possible school, community and family programme, and also aid in constructing the design guidelines, specifications and design principles for the intervention. A survey collected statistical data from principals of rural multigrade schools, as well as their opinions on the current state, the challenges of parental involvement, and the need for and requirements of a school, community and family partnership programme. The survey was conducted in three rural multigrade districts in the Western Cape. Secondly, focus group interviews were conducted separately with the teachers and parents of four rural multigrade schools in the Western Cape. The data from these focus group interviews will help in determining parents and teachers' points of view, experiences, reactions and insights. The items in the survey and the focus group interviews focused on the same specific topics, which included the current state and challenges, the need for school, community and family partnership programmes, and possible requirements for such a programme. These specific topics were determined through a literature review and contextualisation in Chapter 2 and 3. The similarity of items in the survey and focus group interviews, and the source of items,

would therefore increase content validity. Comparing the sets of data from the survey and the focus group interviews would then increase reliability.

a. Instrument development

Instrument development is vital in achieving quality data. The survey and focus group interviews conducted comprised questions measuring the current situation and challenges regarding parental involvement and the possible need for and requirements of a parental involvement programme. Questions for the survey were developed. In developing effective questions (Babbie, 1998), emphasis was placed on:

- Making items clear.

- Avoiding double-barrelled questions.

- Respondents being competent to answer.

- Questions being relevant.

- Posing short, simple questions.

- Avoiding negative items.

- Avoiding biased items.

A four-point scale (strongly disagree, disagree, agree and strongly agree) was used to elicit a response from the principals. An informal pilot test was conducted to test both the instructions and the survey questions. Semi-structured, open-ended questions were developed for the focus group interviews. The questions for the survey and focus group interviews were then discussed with a statistical expert from the Cape Peninsula University of Technology (CPUT). During the discussion, emphasis was placed on the aims of data gathering through the survey and the focus interviews, and special attention was given to language use in order to make questions understandable for the various respondents. Questions were developed in English and Afrikaans. Questions were re-developed and the statistical expert from CPUT approved the re-developed questions.

b. Sampling for Phase 1

The type and sample size depend on the research questions. The respondents of the survey were the principals of rural multigrade schools in the Western Cape, because since they are principals and fulltime teachers, they are considered 'experts' in their specific field and within the context of the multigrade education milieu. The researcher used purposeful sampling in selecting the schools, and the principals acted as respondents for the survey. Multigrade schools from three of the four rural districts of the Western Cape were selected.

Questionnaires were sent electronically to 147 primary schools: Cape Winelands District – 81 schools; Overberg District – 10 schools; and West Coast District – 56 schools. These schools were selected because they had at least two multigrade classes with a minimum of two or more grades in one class. The 147 primary schools were determined with the help of the WCED.

In order to conduct focus group interviews, four multigrade schools were selected because they were currently part of a project at the Centre for Multigrade Education (CMGE). At each school, two focus group interviews were conducted with first, all the teachers from that school, and second, with 11 - 14 parents from each school (51 parents in total).

c. Data collection and analysis for Phase 1

Through the use of electronic questionnaires for principals in Phase 1, statistical data helped to describe the current situation and the need for and requirements of a parental involvement programme in rural multigrade schools across the three districts. The questionnaire comprised statements on the principals' views on the challenges of parental involvement, and the need for and requirements of a school, community and family partnership programme for rural multigrade schools. The researcher used a four-point scale (strongly disagree, disagree, agree and strongly agree) to elicit a response from the principals. 147 questionnaires were sent electronically and followed up telephonically. 76 completed questionnaires, from 41 female and 35 male respondents were returned. The response rate of 52 percent is good, taking into account the rural context of these schools, practical problems with internet connections and the fact that all the principals of these schools are also fulltime teachers. The initial response rate was 27 percent; each principal was then reminded telephonically about completing the questionnaire and given the opportunity to receive and send the questionnaire via fax.

According to McMillan and Schumacher (2001:444), in-depth interviews of a qualitative nature will reveal the participants' meanings and thoughts. In Phase 1, focus group interviews will be used. Greeff (2002:305) states that focus group interviews focus on the points of view, experiences, reactions and insights of the participants. This enables the researcher to listen and learn from the participants. A large amount of information can be captured in a short time. An extensive literature review on parental involvement programmes resulted in a list of key topics to be addressed in the interviews. The researcher is acquainted with audio-recordings and used a Dictaphone, with the permission of participants, to record the interviews. Owing to mechanical errors that can occur, the researcher also made notes. After the focus group interviews, the interviews were transcribed to analyse the data. The data was organised into categories to identify patterns and relationships. Two focus groups

were conducted with parents and teachers at each of the four sampled rural multigrade schools in the three rural districts. Written permission (Appendix C) for research was granted by the Western Cape Department of Education and later an extended permission (Appendix D) was granted. A total of 14 teachers and 51 parents participated in the focus group interviews. Not all the schools have the same number of teachers. It was a difficult task to assemble the parents, because they all live on different farms. One of the parent focus groups was conducted at the school and the other three on farms during lunchtime. The interviews were transcribed, and the data was categorised and coded to determine similarities. Triangulation was used to increase the credibility of findings. Using data analysis triangulation in this phase allowed the identification of similarities and validation of data from the survey and the focus group interviews.

d. Idea generation, design guidelines and specifications

The findings of the survey and focus group interviews provided a deeper understanding of the needs and expectations of principals, parents and teachers. The need for and requirements of a school, community and family partnership programme are presented through quantitative and qualitative data. In using idea generation, the data, together with the literature review and the contextualisation of rural multigrade schools, would enable the researcher to decide on the tentative design guidelines, specifications and design principles for the programme. The tentative design guidelines, specifications and design principles will be key elements when constructing Prototype 1 in Phase 2.

4.4.3   Research design for Phase 2: Prototype and evaluation phase

Phase 2 is an iterative design phase consisting of iterations, each being a micro cycle of research with formative evaluation as the most important research activity aimed at improving and refining the intervention (as illustrated in Figure 4.4). The focus of this phase was to answer the following research questions.

Research sub-question 2: What are the product and process characteristics of a practicable, effective, contextually based and sustainable school, community and family partnership programme that increase parental involvement in learning at rural multigrade schools?

Research sub-question 2 intends to determine the specific product and process characteristics of the programme. The product characteristics are, the 'what', that is, what are the characteristics that may increase parental involvement in learning, that were created through the intervention to establish collaboration between school, community and families. The process characteristics are, the 'how', which refer to the processes that were used to

create partnerships, informal and formal opportunities for communication, and utilisation of resources in the community with a specific focus on learning.

Research sub-question 3: How did the developed school, community and family partnership programme influence parental involvement in learning at rural multigrade schools?

Research sub-question 3 investigates whether the partnership programme with its current characteristics had an effect on parents becoming more involved in their children's learning. The design principles that lead to identifying the characteristics will also be determined through this question. These principles may support other researchers in their own development of parental involvement programmes.

To answer these two research sub-questions, Phase 2 commenced in two cycles.

4.4.3.1   Phase 2: Cycle 1

The design guidelines, specifications and tentative design principles determined during Phase 1 were the key elements in constructing Prototype 1 in Phase 2. During Cycle 1, Prototype 1 was constructed; Prototype 1 will go through the process of screening and expert appraisal in order to develop Prototype 2. Prototype 2 will go through a walkthrough and the process of micro-evaluation at School A; Prototype 2 will then be evaluated formatively in order to develop Prototype 3. Important aspects regarding sampling, instrument development, data collection, data analysis and the role of the researcher regarding Cycle 1 of Phase 2 will be discussed next. The quality criteria will be interspersed within these aspects.

a. Sampling for Phase 2 Cycle 1

During Cycle 1 of the prototype phase, one rural multigrade school was randomly selected out of the four schools that were used in Phase 1 during the collection of qualitative data through focus group interviews. School A was chosen. School A had the following characteristics:

1. It was a multigrade school situated in a rural area, 35km from the nearest town.

2. There are three teachers (including principal) and the school has 51 learners.

3. There are three classes: Grade R, Grades 1 – 3, and Grades 4 - 6.

4. All the parents work at two farms close to the school.

b. Instrument development

The instruments developed for Phase 1, Cycle 2, were derived from the type of strategies developed at the workshop. The two reports, three logs, three observations and three focus group interviews (see Table 4.4) measured the focus of strategies, who and how many attended the strategies, and the success of implementation. The focus group interviews conducted with parents and teachers comprised semi-structured, open-ended questions (see Chapter 5), measuring the degree of effectiveness and process of implementation. The methods and questions were developed and then discussed with an expert in multigrade education at the Centre for Multigrade Education, to enhance the practicability of the method for use in rural multigrade schools.

c. Data collection and analysis for Phase 2, Cycle 1

According to Nieveen (2009:89), one of the main outputs of design research is a set of well-articulated design principles that provide insight into the:

- purpose/function of the intervention;

- key characteristics of the intervention (substantive emphasis);

- guidelines for designing the intervention (procedural emphasis);

- implementation conditions;

- theoretical and empirical arguments (proof) for the characteristics and procedural guidelines.

Nieveen (2009:89) further contends that these comprehensive design principles serve several purposes for a variety of target groups. From a research perspective, these principles show the contribution of design research to the existing knowledge base with information on how the intervention works in practice, the effects of using the intervention, and an explanation of the working mechanisms.

The data gathered during the expert appraisal will determine whether the components of the intervention are consistently linked to one another. The process of Cycle 1 will enable the researcher to adapt the programme several times and therefore contribute to knowledge about the practicability and effects of the programme. Formative evaluation will allow the researcher to access empirical data which are needed to gain insight into the quality of the tentative intervention and design principles. According to Nieveen (2009: 91), the results of the formative evaluation give grounds for both, improving the prototype of the intervention towards a high-quality final deliverable, and sharpening the underlying tentative design

principles towards an elaborated set of design principles. In this way, each prototyping cycle contributes to successive approximation of both outputs of a design research project. Therefore, after designing Prototype 1, formative evaluation will be conducted through an expert appraisal and screening process to ascertain consistency and expected practicability.

In Phase 2, Cycle 1, the criterion for quality is consistency and expected and actual practicability. According to Nieveen (2009:94), consistency describes whether the intervention is 'logically' designed. To determine consistency, Prototype 1 went through a process of expert appraisal. Prototype 1 was sent to two experts in the field of parental involvement:

1. Prof. Joyce Epstein, the Director of the Centre on School, Family and Community Partnerships and National Network of Partnership Schools, principal research scientist, and research professor of sociology at Johns Hopkins University. Prof. Epstein developed the theory of overlapping spheres of influence (see Chapter 3) and was asked to comment critically on the prototype in general. Her role was stated as that of critic and reviser.

2. Prof. Eleanor Lemmer at the University of South Africa (Unisa), who has done extensive research on parental involvement for the past 20 years in South Africa. She has a broad knowledge of parental involvement in South African schools. She was also asked to comment critically on the prototype in general. Her role was stated as that of critic and reviser.

The two experts were given the opportunity to comment on the proposed prototype, and a brief background was provided for them to understand the aim of the study. The comments by experts had to focus on:

- The product and process characteristics of the prototype.

- The proposed principles of the prototype.

- Advice on practicability and sustainability of the proposed prototype.

A screening process followed the expert appraisal. Nieveen (2009:94) notes that practicality can be divided into expected practicality, which is when the intervention is expected to be usable in the settings for which it has been designed; developed and actual practicality is when the intervention is usable in the settings for which it has been designed and developed. In order to determine expected practicability, screening and a walkthrough process were conducted during Cycle 1 of Phase 2. The prototype was discussed with the Director of the Centre for Multigrade Education, Dr Jurie Joubert. As an expert on multigrade education in

South Africa, he had to check the prototype against a checklist to determine the validity of the characteristics of the components. His role was stated as that of critic and reviser.

The data from these formative evaluations was sorted into product and process comments, which the researcher used to further develop Prototype 1, hence the construction of Prototype 2. After constructing Prototype 2, the programme went through a walkthrough process where checklists (Appendix E) were used to determine how to set up the intervention, focusing on the expected practicability of the programme. The teachers and principal of School A had both a learner role about the programme, and a critic role on the practicability of the process.

During the micro-evaluation at School A, focus group interviews were conducted separately with parents and teachers after the programme was implemented on a limited scale; the data gathered will prove whether the programme and process will determine the actual practicability. A micro-evaluation will follow the walkthrough process. Micro-evaluations are used when a small group of target users (e.g. learners or teachers) uses parts of the intervention outside its normal user setting (Nieveen, 2009:95). Here, the main activities of the evaluator are those of observing and interviewing the respondents. The micro-evaluation took place at School A, and the intervention in the form of a School, Community and Family Partnership Programme (SCAF partnership programme) was applied on a limited scale. The SCAF partnership programme had two components: the programme itself and the process of implementation. According to the conceptual framework (see Chapter 3), the SCAF partnership programme has certain principles and quality indicators; for a school to be able to address these principles and quality indicators certain strategies needed to be developed for the particular school. These strategies were developed during a workshop between parents, teachers and the principal. The methods used during the seven strategies had to provide the following data:

- Who and how many attended the strategies?

- How did the strategies focus on learning?

- What were the challenges of each strategy?

- How were partnerships on learning created through the strategies?

- How was communication on learning created through the strategies?

- How were the resources in the community utilised, with a focus on learning, through strategies?

The following formative evaluation methods (Table 4.5) were employed to evaluate the programme and its process of implementation.

Table 4.5:   Formative evaluation methods and the participants' role for Prototype 2

FORMATIVE EVALUATION: Micro-evaluation			
STRATEGY:	**PARTICIPANTS AND ROLE:**	**METHODS:**	
Strategy 1: Parent evening 1 – Focus on learning	*Educators* discuss parental involvement programme strategies with parents and learners in their own classes. *Parents and learners* complete questionnaire regarding learners' needs and interests. *Researcher* introduces the importance of parental involvement with all the teachers, parents and learners.	Report from principal. Log of researcher.	Focus group interviews with parents and teachers regarding implemented parental involvement programme at School A.
Strategy 2: Parents visits school project	*Parents* visit the learners in class, focusing on encouragement and motivation, and to observe what learners are learning.	Observation from researcher.	
Strategy 3: Family – support meetings at home	*Educators* provide resources on learning for the parents to discuss among families. *Families* discuss resources and fill in a discussion form as feedback to teachers.	Log of meetings.	
Strategy 4: Learners visit parents on farms with focus on learning	Educators plan learning visits to the farm and parents. Parents and community are used as resources for learning.	Observation from researcher. Focus group interviews with parents.	
Strategy 5: Workshop on learning at home	*Principal* invites expert on parental involvement to present workshop to parents and learners on learning at home. *Parents and learners* attend to learn how to help learners at home with learning. *Community members* convey important information (e.g., police presentation on safety).	Reports with list of questions to be addressed by parents.	
Strategy 6: Communication via SMS system	*Principal* uses SMS system in order to improve general communication with parents. *Educators* use SMS system to communicate learning activities with parents.	Log of messages sent.	
Strategy 7: Parent evening 2 – Progress and recognition	Educators discuss learners' learning done during term 1 with parents and learners in class. Principal hands out recognition certificate for each learner during awards ceremony.	Observation from researcher and focus group interviews with parents.	

Once the micro-evaluation was completed, the data gathered enabled the researcher to further develop the programme and process of implementation.

4.4.3.2   Phase 2: Cycle 2

The quality criteria for the intervention in Phase 2, Cycle 2, are practicability and efficiency. Although practicability was a criterion in Phase 2, Cycle 1, it needed to be one in this cycle as well, owing to the SCAF partnership programme being implemented (in a certain manner) at Schools B and C for the first time. However efficiency is the main criterion for Phase 2, Cycle 2. According to Nieveen (2009:94), expected effectiveness is when the intervention is expected to result in desired outcomes, and actual effectiveness is when the intervention results in desired outcomes. The expert appraisal and walkthrough process at Schools B - E will present the expected effectiveness, and the formative evaluation during and after the try-out will present the actual effectiveness of the SCAF partnership programme.

During Cycle 2, Prototype 3 will go through the process of expert appraisal to develop Prototype 4. Prototype 4 will go through a walkthrough process before implemented through a try-out at Schools A, B, C, D and E. During implementation, formative evaluation will be conducted at the five schools; the data will then be used to develop the final programme. The latter part of Phase 2 will focus on effectiveness and transferability of the programme, hence the combination of a prototype and evaluation phase.

a.   Sampling for Phase 2, Cycle 2

Prototype 4 will be implemented differently in five schools. During Cycle 1 of Phase 2, School A was randomly selected, in Cycle 2, School A will continue with the SCAF partnership programme and implement Prototype 4 fully - therefore not on a limited scale. Schools B and C were selected through random sampling out of the schools initially part of the CMGE project. Schools B and C will implement Prototype 4 for the first time. The Cape Winelands Educational District and Circuit 6 from the district were selected randomly. An email was sent to all 27 multigrade schools in that circuit, which explained the programme. The email invited schools to implement the programme at their school; the first two schools that replied would receive the programme with a budget to run it. Schools D and E were the only schools to reply, hence their participation in the implementation of Prototype 4. Table 4.6 illustrates the characteristics of the Schools B – E.

Table 4.6:   Characteristics of Schools B – E

SCHOOL	TYPE AND LOCATION	TEACHERS (including principal), LEARNERS	GROUPING OF GRADES	PARENTS' WORK
School B	Rural multigrade 6km from nearest town	104 learners 5 teachers	Grade R Grade1 Grade 2 – 3 Grade 4 – 5 Grade 6 – 7	Farm workers
School C	Rural multigrade 10km from nearest town	56 learners 3 teachers	Grade R Grade 1 – 3 Grade 4 – 6	Farm workers
School D	Rural multigrade 16.8km from nearest town	145 learners 5 teachers	Grade R Grade 1 Grade 2 – 3 Grade 4 – 5 Grade 6 – 7	Farm workers
School E	Rural multigrade 32km from nearest town	66 learners 3 teachers	Grade R Grade 1 – 3 Grade 4 – 6	Farm workers

b. Instrument development

The instruments developed for Phase 2, Cycle 2, derived from the type of strategies developed at the different workshops. The reports, logs and observations measured the focus of strategies, who and how many attended the strategies, and the success of implementation. The focus group interviews conducted with parents and teachers comprised semi-structured, open-ended questions measuring the degree of effectiveness and process of implementation. The methods and questions were developed and then again discussed with an expert in multigrade education at the Centre for Multigrade Education, thereby enhancing the practicability of the method for use in rural multigrade schools.

c. Data collection and analysis for Phase 2, Cycle 2

During Phase 2, Cycle 2, expert appraisal, a walkthrough and a field test will be conducted as part of the development and evaluation. Prototype 3 will go through the process of expert appraisal by the same experts as in Phase 2, Cycle 1. The experts will be asked to revise Prototype 3. After the process of expert appraisal, Prototype 4 will be constructed.

Prototype 4 will then go through the process of a walkthrough. Checklists were used to determine how to set up the intervention, focusing on the expected practicability and

efficiency of the programme. School A did not go through the process again, because of its involvement in Phase 2, Cycle 1. The teachers and principal of Schools B and C had both a learner role about the programme and a critic role on the expected practicability and efficiency of the process. Owing to the nature of implementation at Schools D and E, only the principal will attend the walkthrough process.

Following the walkthrough process, a try-out will commence at three different clusters of schools. According to Nieveen (2009:96), a try-out is when a limited number of the user group (e.g. teachers and learners), use the materials in the day-to-day user setting. She further states that if the evaluation focuses on the practicality of the intervention, the following evaluation activities are common: observation, interviewing, requesting logbooks, administering questionnaires; if the evaluation has its focal point on the effectiveness of the intervention, evaluators may decide to request learning reports and/or give a test.

School A continued with the SCAF partnership programme; the main objective was to prove effectiveness and sustainability, therefore the researcher will request the principal to keep a journal on implementing Prototype 4 fully. At the end of the term, focus group interviews (see Chapter 6) were conducted with parents and teachers to prove sustainability and actual efficiency. The data collection methods provided the following data:

- How successful was the continued implementation of the SCAF partnership programme?

- What strategies were developed, and how, for the SCAF partnership programme?

- What were the challenges of the strategies?

- How were partnerships on learning created through the strategies?

- How was communication on learning created through the strategies?

- How were the resources in the community utilised, with a focus on learning, through strategies?

At Schools B and C during the try-out, formative evaluation through reports, logbooks, journals, observations and focus group interviews will provide data to prove the actual effectiveness of the programme, the strategies developed, and the process of implementation. At the end of the term focus group interviews (see Chapter 6) will be conducted with parents and teachers to prove actual efficiency. The following formative evaluation methods (Table 4.6) were employed to evaluate the programme and the process of implementation at Schools B and C. The methods used during the five strategies had to provide the following data:

- Who and how many attended the strategies?

- How did the strategies focus on learning?

- What were the challenges of each strategy?

- How were partnerships on learning created through the strategies?

- How was communication on learning created through the strategies?

- How were the resources in the community utilised, with a focus on learning, through strategies.

Table 4.7: **Formative evaluation methods and the participants' role for Prototype 4 at Schools B and C**

FORMATIVE EVALUATION: Try-out			
STRATEGY:	**PARTICIPANTS AND ROLE:**	**METHODS:**	
Strategy 1: Parent evening 1 – Focus on learning (Schools B and C)	*Educators* discuss parental involvement programme strategies with parents and learners in their own classes. *Parents and learners* complete questionnaire regarding learners' needs and interests. *Researcher* introduces the importance of parental involvement with all the teachers, parents and learners.	Report from principal. Log of researcher.	Focus group interviews with parents and teachers separately regarding implemented parental involvement programme at Schools B and C.
Strategy 2: Family visits school project (School C) CPUT involved with IEP-learners (School B)	*Educators* provide opportunity for family to be involved during a lesson as a resource. *Family member* helps during the lesson. *Educators* discuss reports from CPUT regarding Individual Educational Plan for specific learners with parents and provide parents with support regarding their role at home.	Observation from fieldworker. Observation from fieldworker.	
Strategy 3: Learners visit parents on farms with focus on learning (Schools B and C)	Educators plan learning visits to the farm and parents. Parents and community are used as resources for learning.	Observation from fieldworker. Focus group interviews with parents and presenters (fieldworker).	
Strategy 4: Communication via SMS-system and communication display board. (Schools B and C)	*Principal* uses SMS system in order to improve general communication with parents. *Educators* use SMS system and communication board to communicate learning activities with parents.	Log of messages sent and information on board.	

FORMATIVE EVALUATION: Try-out			
STRATEGY:	**PARTICIPANTS AND ROLE:**	**METHODS:**	
Strategy 5: Parent evening 2 – Motivation and recognition (Schools B and C)	*Educators* write a two-fold comment on a certificate – a positive comment on academic progress, and a general positive comment. *Principal* hands out recognition certificate to each learner during awards ceremony. *Parents* congratulate learners on stage. *Motivational speaker* motivates parents and learners to engage in learning.	Observation from researcher and focus group interviews (fieldworker) with parents.	

Once the try-out has been completed, the data gathered will enable the researcher to if needed, further develop the final programme and the final process of implementation.

Schools D and E will have to implement the programme entirely on their own through an electronic manual which is an electronic version of Prototype 4. The manual will provide step-by-step instructions for implementation. The principals of these two schools were briefed in a meeting regarding the process of implementation. Each school was provided with a budget to use for implementation. The principals at these two schools will be requested keep a journal of implementation and need to provide proof with photographs of the different strategies applied in their SCAF partnership programme. At the end of the term focus group interviews (see Chapter 6) were conducted with the principal and the chairperson of the school governing body to prove actual efficiency. Therefore the researcher was able to determine whether the SCAF partnership programme is transferable and effective without the support of the researcher. The methods for data gathering will ascertain:

- How successful was the implementation of the SCAF partnership programme without assistance from the researcher?

- What strategies were developed and how were they developed for the SCAF partnership programme?

- What were the challenges of the strategies?

- How were partnerships on learning created through the strategies?

- How was communication on learning created through the strategies?

- How were the resources in the community utilised, with a focus on learning, through strategies?

4.4.4 Validity and reliability

Bostwick and Kyte (1981:104-105) claim that a valid measuring instrument has been described as doing what it is intended to do, as measuring what it is supposed to measure, and as yielding scores whose differences reflect the true differences of the variable being measured. Validity and reliability deserve special attention when conducting educational design research. This research, to ensure its validity and reliability, was designed and conducted using four generic criteria for high-quality interventions that are applicable to a wide array of educational interventions (Table 4.3).

During the preliminary research, where the emphasis was on analysing the problem and reviewing the literature, the criterion of relevance (content validity) (Table 4.4) was the most dominant. This was to ensure that the intervention indeed addressed a need and its design was based on state-of-the-art (scientific) knowledge. The items used in the survey and the focus group interviews during Phase 1 correlate and focused on:

- the state and challenges of parental involvement; and

- possible requirements for a parental involvement programme.

These focus areas derived from literature and therefore both instruments really measure the concept of parental involvement in rural multigrade schools. There are 24 questions that determine the state of parental involvement in multigrade schools, and challenges posed to teachers and parents, and five questions to determine possible requirements. Items on the state and challenges will also help in determining possible requirements. Content validation is a judgemental process (Bostwick & Kyte, 1981:105), therefore discussing the items with a statistical expert increased the content validity of these instruments used in Phase 1.

During the prototyping stage the criteria of consistency (construct validity), practicability and effectiveness were dominant, and attention was paid to formative evaluation. This was to ensure that the intervention was 'logically' designed and that it was usable (practicability) in the settings for which it had been designed and developed. It was also important that using the intervention resulted (effectiveness) in desired outcomes.

During the process of the development and evaluation of four prototypes, different strategies and activities (Figure 4.4) were used as evaluation methods, aimed at enhancing validity and reliability. In this research, screening, checklists, interviewing, observations, journals, reports, expert appraisal, walkthroughs, micro-evaluation and a try-out were used to triangulate findings and to enhance the reliability and internal validity of the findings. Taking the data and interpretations back to the multigrade educators and principals increased the internal validity of findings.

Validity was further enhanced through the following:

- Observation and interviews were conducted in the natural setting and reflect the reality of life experience accurately.

- Multi-method strategies were employed.

- Interviews were conducted in the participants' language, in this study, Afrikaans. Verbatim accounts were used to illustrate participants' meanings.

- Low-inference descriptors were used in contrast to the abstract language of a researcher.

- Observation done by a fieldworker in Phase 2.

- The use of mechanically recorded data.

Reliability refers to the consistency of measurement. Reliability was fostered by the fact that the researcher used the same instruments during the survey and focus group interviews in Phase 1, as well as the same instruments during interviews and observations at the five schools in Phase 2.

Reliability was enhanced through the following:

- Conducting the survey in three educational districts in the same time frame.

- Using heterogeneous groups as participants in the survey and all the focus group interviews.

- Having a large number of items in the survey.

- Ensuring an appropriate reading level and level of language for principals in the survey.

4.4.5 Ethical considerations

The participants were well informed about the interviews and there was no pressure on them to participate in the research. The schools form part of the Cape Winelands, West Coast and Overberg Education Districts and therefore permission was obtained from the Western Cape Education Department. Participation was voluntary and participants were informed that they could withdraw at any point in time. All the data was viewed as confidential, and participants remained anonymous. The importance of the study was stated at all times.

a. The role of the researcher

According to Plomp (2009:30), design research is conducted in close collaboration with educational practice. Plomp (2009) suggests several other methods to compensate for possible conflict of interest in the design research process. These were also employed in this study:

- Open the research to professional scrutiny to people outside the project.

- Have a good quality research design, for example, a strong chain of reasoning (Krathwohl, 1998). Each part of the research design has equal importance.

- Triangulation of methods (qualitative and quantitative), data sources (principals, teachers and parents), but also data analysis and interpretation.

- Empirical exploration of the effectiveness of the intervention.

- Systematic documentation, analysis and reflection of the design, development, evaluation and implementation process and their results.

- Application of a variety of methods; for example, use practitioners and other researchers as critical friends and a field worker.

- Ensure validity and reliability of data and instruments.

A number of challenges also exist while conducting research. McKenney et al. (2006:83-84) note the following challenges:

1. The researcher is designer and often also evaluator and implementer.

2. A real-world setting brings real-world complications.

3. Adaptability.

Table 4.8 illustrates the different roles the researcher fulfilled during the two phases and how the researcher compensated for possible challenges and threats.

Table 4.8:   Different roles of researcher and compensation.

Different roles of the researcher	Compensation
PHASE 1	
• Critical reader – The researcher needed to read relevant literature in order to write Chapter 2: Contextualisation of rural multigrade school and Chapter 3: Literature review and the conceptual framework. • Interviewer – the researcher interviewed the parents and teachers during focus group interviews.	• Survey and focus group interviews to gather applicable data. • Triangulation of data to determine similarities and validation. • Critical friends – practitioners and other researchers to control and validate analysis and interpretation of data. • Development of an explicit conceptual framework. • Being prepared and tolerant towards respondents.
PHASE 2: Cycle 1	
• Developer – the researcher had to develop the programme and process of implementation. • Supporter – the researcher had to support the teachers and principals during the process of implementation. • Motivator – the researcher had to motivate the role players to support and implement the programme. • Observer – the researcher observed the implementation of the strategies of the programme. • Interviewer – the researcher interviewed the parents and teachers during focus group interviews.	• Research open to public scrutiny and critique – presenting research at three conferences. • Triangulation of data for reliability. • Focus group interviews, observation, reports and logs to determine effectiveness. • Critical friends – practitioners and other researchers to control and validate analysis and interpretation of data. • Being prepared and tolerant towards respondents. • Collaboration between participants. • Stress the mutual beneficial activities. • Allow the study to be influenced.
PHASE 2: Cycle 2	
• Interviewer: The researcher conducted interviews with the principal and SGB chairperson at Schools D and E.	• Use of a fieldworker to conduct interviews and observations at Schools A, B and C.

The researcher gradually withdrew as an interviewer and observer. In Phase 2, Cycle 2, a fieldworker was used to conduct interviews and observation at Schools B and C. Therefore an increased validity of data was presented that will prove the actual effectiveness of the SCAF partnership programme.

4.5   Conclusion

This chapter discussed the research design and methods employed to answer the research questions. The researcher used the research questions to decide which research paradigm fits this study. The application of the design research process to the research questions was discussed.

Answering the research questions is ultimately the main goal of scientific enquiry. Table 4.9 provides an overview of the research questions for this study and a short description of how and in which chapter they will be addressed.

Table 4.9:   Research questions, description and chapters

Research question	Chapter/s	How?
Main: What are the characteristics of an effective school, community and family partnership programme that increase parental involvement in learning at rural multigrade schools in South Africa?	Chapter 7	The characteristics will be presented with the conclusions and recommendations after the development of the last prototype programme.
Research sub-question 1: What are the current needs for and requirements of a school, community and family partnership programme that will increase parental involvement in learning for rural multigrade schools in South Africa? The current state will help determine the need for and requirements of a school, community and family partnership programme to increase parental involvement in learning at rural multigrade schools. Existing knowledge through literature and the context of rural multigrade schools was the starting point in order to answer this question.	Chapter 2, 3 and 5	Chapter 2: Contextualisation highlighted the role of parental involvement in rural multigrade schools. Current challenges were discussed and successful programme in other countries were highlighted. Chapter 3: Literature review and conceptual framework provide requirements and criteria for successful parental involvement through parental involvement programmes. Chapter 5: Context and needs analysis provides data through a survey and focus group interviews. The data will be used as idea generation to provide design guidelines for the first prototype programme.
Research sub-question 2: What are the product and process characteristics of a practicable, effective, contextually based and sustainable school, community and family partnership programme that increase parental involvement in learning at rural multigrade schools? Research sub-question 2 aimed to determine the specific product and process characteristics of the programme. The product characteristics are the 'what', i.e. what are the desired opportunities that may increase parental involvement in learning, that were created through the intervention to establish collaboration between school, community and families. The process characteristics are the 'how', referring to the processes that were used to create partnerships, informal and formal opportunities for communication and the utilisation of resources in the community with a specific focus on learning.	Chapter 6	Chapter 6: Developing a school, community and family partnership programme in the prototype phase will commence through different cycles. Prototypes will be developed; during development, data will provide the needed product and process characteristics of a school, community and family partnership programme for rural multigrade schools. The data presented in this chapter will be gathered through expert appraisal, try-out, formative evaluation and field tests. Data capturing will commence in the form of journals, focus group interviews, observation, reports and logs.
Research sub-question 3: How did the developed school, community and family partnership programme influence parental involvement in learning at rural multigrade schools?		Evaluation will be an on-going process during Phase 2, after the implementation; programmes will be assessed through focus group interviews with parents and teachers.

Research question	Chapter/s	How?
Research sub-question 3 investigates whether the partnership programme with its current characteristics had an effect on parents becoming more involved in their children's learning. The design principles that lead to identifying the characteristics will also be determined through this question		

Considering the nature, the context and complexity of these questions, and how to address them, the application of design-based research allowed the researcher to answer these questions best. The research design comprised two phases with cycles – each phase and its cycle or cycles with a research process that influenced the next phase and cycle of development. In this chapter, an overview of each research design per phase was also discussed. The methodology, research procedure and data for each phase with its cycle or cycles are discussed separately and in more detail in Chapters 5 and 6.

CHAPTER FIVE

PRELIMINARY PHASE:
NEED AND CONTEXT ANALYSIS

5.1   Introduction

Chapter 4 presented and discussed the research design and methods employed to answer the research questions. After consideration of the nature, context and complexity of the research questions and how to address these questions, design-based research was selected as the research design. The research design comprised two phases with cycles, each phase and its cycle or cycles with a research process that influenced the next phase and cycle of development. In this chapter, Phase 1 will be discussed in depth. The first phase is known as the preliminary phase (Figure 5.1) and addresses Research sub-question 1: "What are the current needs for and requirements of a school, community and family partnership programme that will increase parental involvement in learning for rural multigrade schools in South Africa?" Question 1 focuses on the current state and challenges of parental involvement, as well as the need for and requirements of a possible school, community and family partnership programme for rural multigrade schools. The preliminary phase (see Chapter 4) set out to analyse the context and problem, along with the development of a conceptual framework based on the literature review.
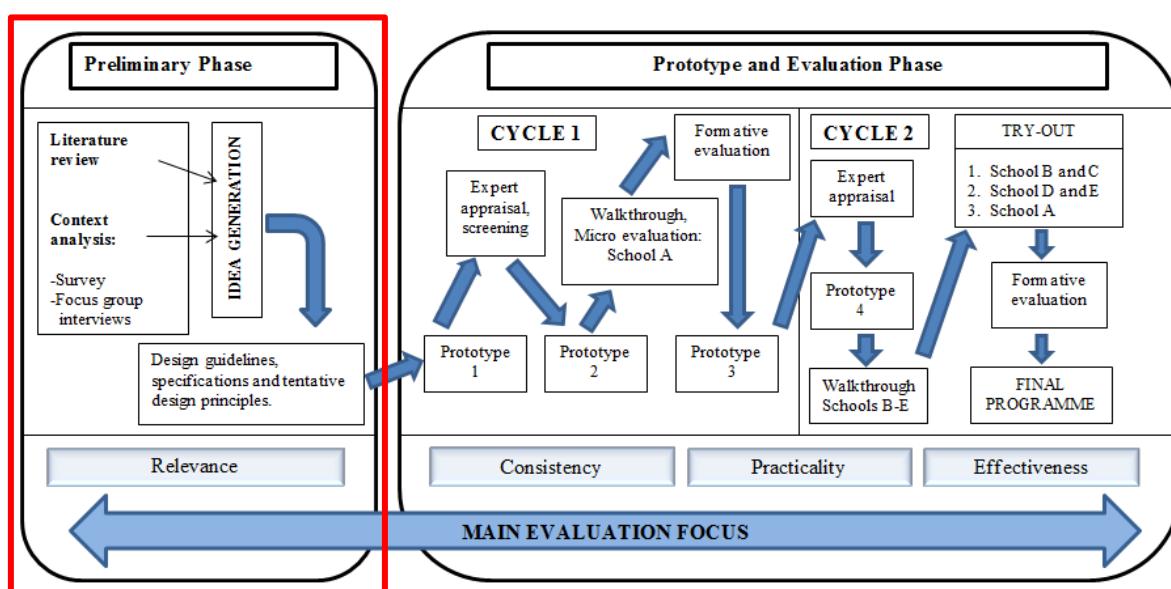
Figure 5.1:   **The preliminary phase**

5.2 Research design for preliminary phase

As a pragmatist, (argued in Chapter 4), the researcher applied mixed methods research in order to answer research sub-question 1 best. Mixed methods research allows the researcher to determine the opinions and views from different participants (principals, teachers and parents) with different methods (quantitative and qualitative) and different instruments (survey and focus group interviews), thereby developing an overarching view on 'what' the current state, need and challenges are for parental involvement in rural multigrade schools and 'how' (requirements) to create effective parental involvement. The overarching view enables the generation of ideas for a possible school, community and family partnership programme, as well as for the construction of the design guidelines, specifications and design principles for the intervention. Because a correlation exists between the items used in the survey and the focus group interviews, the data gathering methods will be discussed first, followed by the combined findings of both sets of data gathered.

5.2.1 Rural educational districts survey

A survey was conducted in three rural educational districts within the Western Cape. The survey obtained statistical data from the principals of rural multigrade schools, which helped to determine their opinions of the current state and challenges of parental involvement and the need for and requirements of a school, community and family partnership programme.

a. Sampling

Random sampling was applied in selecting the three rural educational districts. Purposeful sampling was used in selecting the rural multigrade schools in the three rural educational districts within the Western Cape. The WCED helped to determine the 147 primary schools that had combined multigrade classes with two or more grades in one class, and these were selected. As both school managers and fulltime teachers, the principals of these schools are considered 'experts' in their specific field and context, therefore the principals of these schools were selected to complete the electronic questionnaire.

b. Instrument

The researcher used a closed questionnaire with a four-point scale (strongly disagree, disagree, agree and strongly agree) to elicit a response. The items were developed through focusing on specific topics determined by the literature review and the contextualisation. These topics were developed into the four sub-aspects:

- The current state of parental involvement in rural multigrade schools.

- The challenges of parental involvement in rural multigrade schools.

- The need for a parental involvement programme for rural multigrade schools.

- Possible requirements of a parental involvement programme for rural multigrade schools.

The aspects within the research sub-questions overlap and some of the items might answer more than one research sub-question. The items in the questionnaire are presented in Table 5.1.

Table 5.1:   Questionnaire items

PERSONAL AND DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION	
Q1	Age of principal?
Q2	Sex of principal?
Q3	Years of experience in multigrade education?
Q4	Composition of combined classes?
Section 1: THE STATE AND CHALLENGES OF PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT	
Q5	My school has a parent involvement programme.
Q6	The overall parental involvement in my school is good.
Q7	It is the principal's responsibility to manage parent involvement in a school.
Q8	Education authorities expect the principal to manage parent involvement in the school.
Q9	The Education Department provides adequate support for the school to solve problems regarding parental involvement.
Q10	The socio-economic problems of the parents at my school affect parent involvement negatively.
Q11	Parents' long working hours affect parent involvement negatively.
Q12	Illiteracy of parents complicates parental involvement.
Q13	The staff members at my school do not have the necessary information to achieve effective parental involvement.
Q14	A practicable parent involvement programme that takes the parents and school's unique circumstances into account can achieve effective parental involvement.
Section 2: REQUIREMENTS FOR A PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT PROGRAMME.	
Q15	My school finds it problematic to communicate with parents about their children's progress.
Q16	Parents feel welcome when they visit our school.
Q17	Parents are involved in the extracurricular activities of our school.
Q18	Parents are provided with information on how to help their children at home with schoolwork.
Q19	Most parents cannot help their children with schoolwork owing to illiteracy.
Q20	Parents should be involved in the classroom.
Q21	Parents find the curriculum irrelevant.
Q22	Parents are involved in the management of the school.
Q23	Parents are regularly informed about activities in the community.
Q24	The school involves the community to develop learners academically.
Q25	The school's parents can play a greater role in the learners' cognitive development.
Q26	My school provides parents with information on parenting. (Underline) YES / NO
Q27	My school offers courses and workshops for parents on parenting. (Underline) YES / NO
Q28	My school has a quarterly parent's meeting. (Underline) YES / NO

One open-ended question was asked to determine principals' views regarding the importance of parental involvement.

5.2.2 Focus group interviews with parents and teachers

Focus group interviews were part of the mixed method approach of gathering data in Phase 1. Focus group interviews were conducted separately with the teachers and parents of four rural multigrade schools in the Western Cape. Focus groups allow the researcher to investigate a multitude of perceptions in a defined area of interest (Nyamati & Shuler, 1990:1282). The area of interest in this study is parental involvement in rural multigrade schools. The data from these focus group interviews will help to determine parents and teachers' points of view, perceptions, experiences, reactions and insights.

a. Sampling

In order to conduct focus group interviews, four multigrade schools were randomly selected from the multigrade schools that were currently part of a project at the Centre for Multigrade Education (CMGE). At each school, two focus group interviews were conducted separately: one with all the teachers and one with 51 randomly sampled parents comprising 11 to 14 parents across the combined grades.

b. Instrument

Semi-structured, open-ended questions were developed for the focus group interviews. The questions (see Table 5.2) correspond with the items used in the survey. During the discussion, emphasis was placed on the aims of data gathering through the focus interviews, and special attention was given to language use to make questions intelligible for the various respondents. All the respondents were Afrikaans speaking, therefore focus group interviews were conducted in Afrikaans and subsequently the questions and answers were translated into English.

Table 5.2:   **Focus group interview questions for parents and teachers**

PERSONAL AND DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION	
Q1	Number of teachers attending the focus group interview? (Teachers)
	Number of parents attending the focus group interview? (Parents)
Q2	Years of experience in multigrade education? (Teachers)
Q3	Sex of teachers? (Teachers)
Q4	Distance to travel from home to school? (Teachers and Parents)
Q5	Children's grade? (Parents)
Section 1: THE STATE AND CHALLENGES OF PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT	
Q6	Why is parental involvement important? (Teachers and Parents)
Q7	Do you currently have a parental involvement programme? (Teachers and Parents)
Q8	How do you, as a teacher, experience parental involvement at school? (Teachers)
Q9	What type of support do you get to enhance parental involvement? (Teachers)
Q10	In what manner are you currently involved at school? (Parents)
Q11	How often do you visit the school? (Parents)
Q12	How often do parents visit the school to talk about progress? (Teachers)
Q13	How do you feel when you visit the school? (Parents)
Q14	How do you think parents feel when they visit you as a teacher? (Teachers)
Q15	How do teachers treat you when you visit the school? (Parents)
Q16	How do principals treat you when you visit the school? (Parents)
Q17	What does the school do to get you involved? (Parents)
Q18	How does the school communicate with you? (Parents)
Q19	To what extent does the school involve the community to enhance academic achievement? (Parents) (Teachers)
Q20	What prevents you from being involved as a parent at school? (Parents)
Q21	What prevents parents from being involved at schools? (Teachers)
Q22	To what extent are you provided with support to help your children with homework? (Parents)
Q23	How does the school provide opportunities for getting involved in school management? (Parents)
Q24	To what extent do you understand the work that is being done by your children? (Parents)
Q25	Does illiteracy prevent parents from helping their children with schoolwork?
Q26	To what extent does the school provide courses or workshops on parenting? (Parents)
Q27	Does the school provide parents with information on parenting? (Principals)
Q28	What do you think prevents parents from helping children with homework? (Teachers)
Q29	Are there any parents, regardless of their circumstances, who still help their children academically? (Teachers)
Section 2: REQUIREMENTS FOR A PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT PROGRAMME	
Q30	How can parental involvement be improved? (Teachers) (Parents)
Q31	To what extent would a parental involvement programme that takes the parents', teachers' and school's unique circumstances into consideration enhance effective parental involvement? (Parents) (Teachers)
Q32	On which learning areas should a parental involvement programme focus? (Teachers)
Q33	What can a teacher do to enhance effective parental involvement? (Teachers)
Q34	How do you want to be involved as a parent? (Parents)

5.2.3   Data analysis for the preliminary phase

Descriptive statistics transform a set of numbers into indices that describe or characterise the data (McMillan & Schumacher, 2001:206). Descriptive statistics were used to summarise, organise and interpret the quantitative results of the survey. Personal and demographic information will be presented through frequency analysis. The answers to the closed questions were firstly categorised according to the topics. The data from the questionnaire

were analysed through the data analysis software, Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). The frequency and percentage for each question were determined and presented as a graph. As the main purpose of data analysis was to describe, and although a four-point scale was used to elicit a response, only two terms, 'agree' and 'disagree', will be presented.

The data from the focus group interviews was categorised and coded to determine similarities. The data were analysed through Atlas.ti, a qualitative data analysis software program.

Triangulation was used to increase the credibility of findings. Using triangulation in this phase allowed for a fuller and more comprehensive view of 'what' the current situation and challenges of parental involvement are and 'how' to achieve effective parental involvement in rural multigrade schools. In determining similarities in data from the survey and focus group interviews, validation of data from parents, teachers and principals is possible, but also allows the researcher to generate ideas for the first prototype programme.

5.3   Findings

The findings of data analysed in Phase 1 are presented in four sections: personal and demographic information, the state of parental involvement, challenges of parental involvement, and the need for parental involvement programmes. Percentages from the survey are interspersed with quotations from the focus group discussions. The four schools that participated in the focus group discussions will be referred to as School A, B, C and D.

5.3.1   Personal and demographic information

Personal and demographic information of the principals (Table 5.3) who were part of the survey will be presented and discussed first, then followed by personal and demographic information of the respondents of the focus group interviews conducted with parents and teachers (Table 5.4).

Table 5.3: **Personal and demographic information of principals**

ITEMS	SCALE									TOTAL
Sex *Number:*	Male 41					Female 35				76
Age *Number:*	< 31 3	31-35 6	36-40 6	41-45 17	46-50 16	51-55 18	56-60 5	60-65 4	> 66 1	76
Years of experience *Number:*	0-5 10		6-10 13	11-15 12	16-20 20	21-25 10	26-30 7	> 30 4		76
Number of combined classes *Number:*	1 13		2 36		3 25		4 2		5 0	76

The fact that 41 respondents were male and 35 female indicates a heterogeneous response group. 80,3 percent of the principals are older than 40. Since 82,9 percent of the principals have more than 10 years' experience in multigrade education, it may be assumed that the majority of the respondents are experienced in the milieu of multigrade education. All the schools had at least one multigrade class, as specified by the criteria for selection of respondents. The majority of schools (82,9%) had two or more multigrade classes, which indicated to what extent multigrade classes exist within the sampled schools.

Table 5.4: **Personal and demographic information of teachers and parents at focus group interviews**

ITEMS:	SCHOOL A:	SCHOOL B:	SCHOOL C:	SCHOOL D:	TOTAL:
Attendance at interview: *Teachers* *Parents*	*3* *13*	*3* *13*	*3* *14*	*3* *11*	*12* *51*
Gender: *Teachers* *Parents*	*Male = 2* *Female = 1* *Male = 2* *Female = 11*	*Male = 1* *Female = 2* *Male = 4* *Female = 9*	*Male = 1* *Female = 2* *Male = 3* *Female = 11*	*Male = 1* *Female = 2* *Male = 2* *Female = 9*	*Male = 5* *Female = 7* *Male = 11* *Female = 40*
Experience in multigrade education: *Teachers*	*14 years*	*8 years*	*11 years*	*18 years*	
Furthest distance to travel to school: *Teachers* *Parents/ Children*	*5km* *2km*	*5km* *5km*	*12km* *5km*	*39km* *6km*	
Grade of learners: *Parents*	*Grade R = 3* *Grade 1 = 4* *Grade 2 = 2* *Grade 3 = 0* *Grade 4 = 2* *Grade 5 = 0* *Grade 6 = 1* *Grade 7 = 3*	*Grade R = 3* *Grade 1 = 2* *Grade 2 = 1* *Grade 3 = 2* *Grade 4 = 3* *Grade 5 = 2* *Grade 6 = 1* *Grade 7 = 0*	*Grade R = 2* *Grade 1 = 2* *Grade 2 = 2* *Grade 3 = 3* *Grade 4 = 3* *Grade 5 = 2* *Grade 6 = 2* *Grade 7 = 0*	*Grade R = 2* *Grade 1 = 4* *Grade 2 = 1* *Grade 3 = 1* *Grade 4 = 1* *Grade 5 = 2* *Grade 6 = 4* *Grade 7 = 0*	

A total of 51 parents and 12 teachers (principals included) attended the focus group interviews. In both focus group interviews with parents and teachers, the groups can be considered heterogeneous. In three of the four interviews with teachers, at least one teacher had more than 10 years' experience in multigrade education. The distance parents, children and teachers had to travel to school ranged from 2km to 6km for children and 5km to 39km for teachers. The grades of the children, whose parents attended the focus group interview, were spread between Grade R – Grade 7. Not all the grades were represented but all the phases (foundation phase, intermediate phase and senior phase) were represented. The number of grades does not correspond with the number of parents attending the focus group interviews, as parents have more than one child at that specific school.

5.3.2 The state of parental involvement

What is the current state of parental involvement at rural multigrade schools?

Data regarding the importance, current existence, responsibility and format of parental involvement programmes were collected.

a. The importance and current existence of parental involvement programmes

Principals, teachers and parents agreed that parental involvement was important for academic achievement. A teacher from School B underlined the importance of parental involvement for academic achievement: "*… you get the best academic results if parents are involved.*" A parent from School B also emphasised the importance of parental involvement: "*It will help our children with their schoolwork.*" 63,5 percent of the principals indicated in the open-ended question that parental involvement increases academic achievement.

Figure 5.2 indicates that almost half the principals (46,1%) indicated that they did not have a parental involvement programme. At the four schools where focus groups were conducted, all the teachers confirmed that their school did not have a specific parental involvement programme.
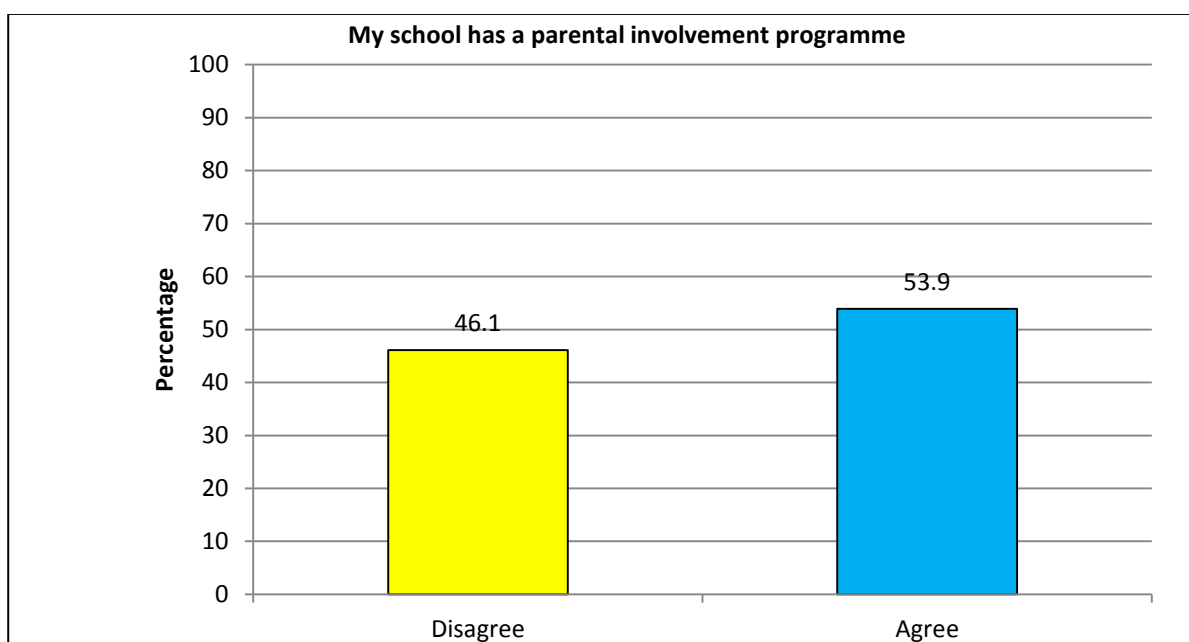
Figure 5.2: **My school has a parental involvement programme**

Figure 5.3 indicates that 46,1 percent of the principals felt that parental involvement in their school was good. However, when the teachers were asked how they experienced parental involvement at their school, the majority stated it was not good or could be better. The teachers from School D stated: "*The overall picture is not good.*" Reasons given for this discrepancy could vary. Some of them clearly thought that the current parental involvement was sufficient and that it was therefore not necessary for a specific programme, or they did not exactly know what a parental involvement programme entailed.

The overall parental involvement in my school is good
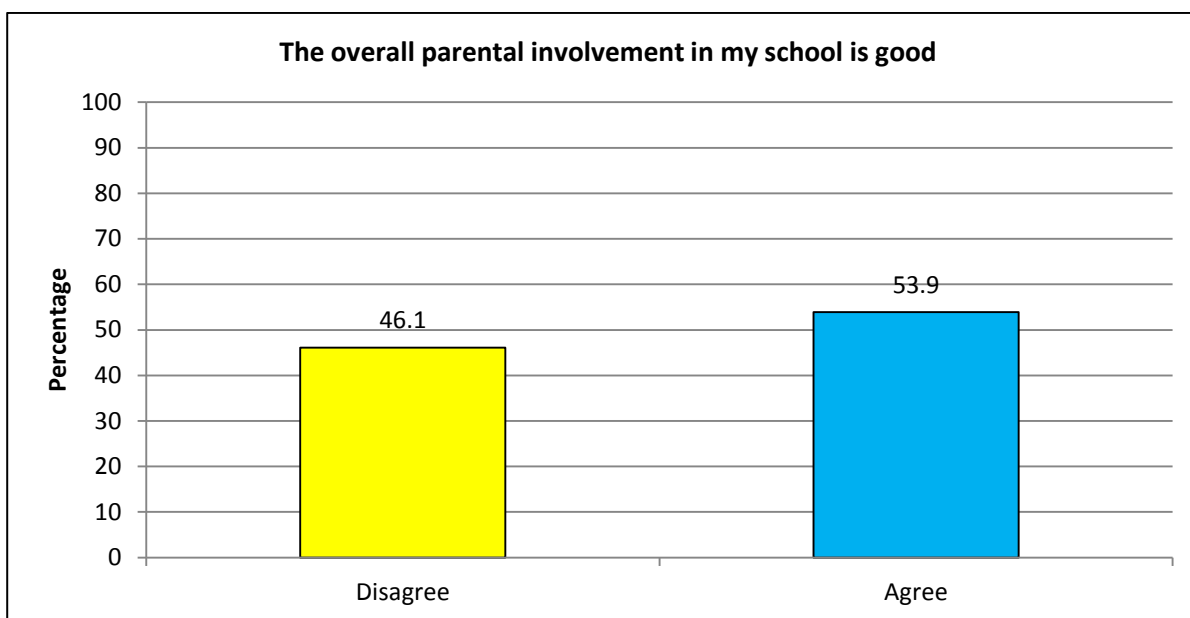
Figure 5.3: **The overall parental involvement in my school is good**

b. The responsibility of parental involvement programmes

69,7 percent of the principals claimed that it was their responsibility to take the necessary steps to develop or enhance parental involvement through a programme. Figure 5.4 indicates that the majority of principals (84,2%) also indicated that the educational authorities expected the principal to manage parental involvement at their school. 65,8 percent of principals agreed that their staff did have the necessary information to achieve effective parental involvement.

Education authorities expect the principal to manage parent involvement in the school
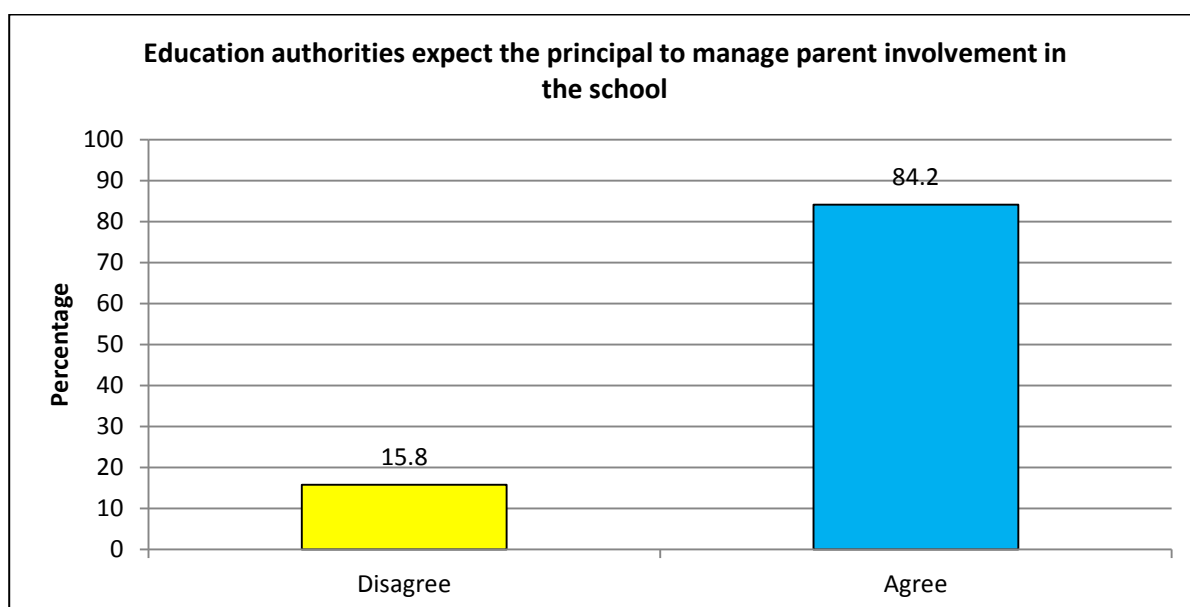
Figure 5.4: **Education authorities expect the principal to manage parental involvement in the school**

c. The format of parental involvement at rural multigrade schools

82,9 percent of the principals concurred that they conducted a quarterly parent meeting. The teachers agreed on the quarterly parent meetings held, A teacher from School A stated that: *"… there is one parental meeting per term."*

Although all the principals (100%) agreed that parents felt welcome when they visited the school, there were some teachers who felt that parents were nervous when visiting the school: *"They have a self-confidence problem, they are very nervous."* The teachers from School A agreed on the importance of how one addressed parents: *"… it depends on the manner that you address them."* Parents, however, agreed that they felt welcome when they visited the school. A parent from School C stated: *"They are very friendly and the reception is very* good*."*

The principals' responses indicated that they were applying Epstein's six types of parental involvement to some extent in their schools. Epstein's six types of parental involvement are:

1. Parenting
2. Communication
3. Volunteering
4. Learning at home
5. Decision making
6. Collaborating with the community

Parents' and teachers' opinions did not correspond regarding parenting, learning at home and collaborating with the community.

Figure 5.5 indicates that most of the principals (72,4%) indicated that their schools did not find it difficult to communicate with parents. A parent from School A claimed: "*We receive letters* and *we understand these letters.*" A parent from School B concurred: "*The communication is good.*"

My school finds it problematic to communicate with parents about their children's progress

Disagree	72.4
Agree	27.6
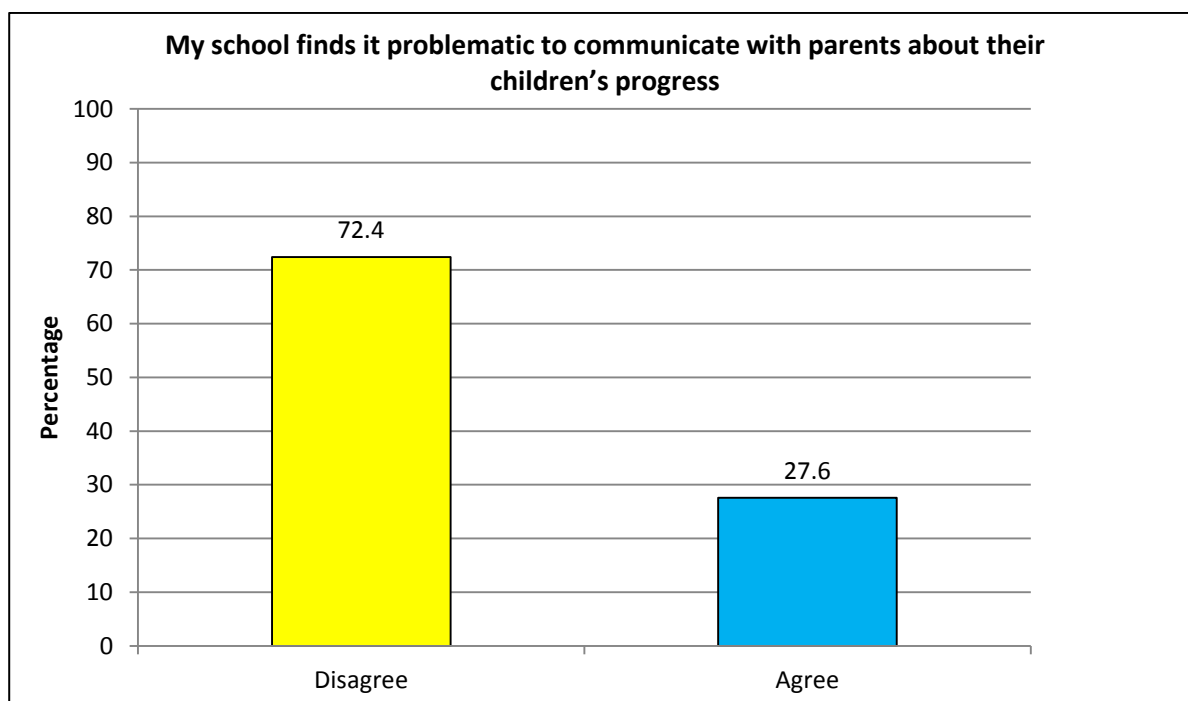
Figure 5.5:   Communication with parents

72,4 percent of the principals indicated that parents were part of the extra-curricular activities. A parent from School A stated: "*… we are involved in sport.*" A parent from School C concurred: "*… we are informed of functions.*"

77,6 percent of principals indicated that parents were involved in the management of the school. A parent from School C confirmed: "*There are opportunities to get involved; we have an annual election for the school governing body.*"

82,9 percent of principals agreed that parents were provided with information on how to help their children at home with schoolwork. A parent from School C disagreed: "*We do not get any help to support our children with homework.*"

Figure 5.6 indicates that 82,9 percent of principals indicated that their schools offered courses and workshops on parenting. However, parents' opinions varied. A parent from School B disagreed: "*No, it would really help if there was such a workshop.*"

Figure 5.6:   Workshops on parenting

75 percent of the principals agreed that the school involved the community in order to help the learners academically. Parents from the four schools indicated a lack of excursions in general and on the farm. A parent from School C indicated: "*No, the children do not go on excursions.*" Another parent from School B concurred: "*The learners have not even visited the packing shed on the farm.*"

5.3.3   The challenges of parental involvement

What are the current challenges of parental involvement at rural multigrade schools?

The principals, teachers and parents agreed that the lack of support from the Department of Education, long working hours, illiteracy, and socio-economic problems were the main challenges of parental involvement in schools.

a.   The lack of support

Figure 5.7 indicates that 80,3 percent of the principals agreed with the statement that the Department of Education did not provide adequate support to the school for parental involvement. The teachers agreed. A teacher from School A claimed: "*… we do not get any onsite support.*" A teacher from School C agreed: "*We do everything on our own; we do not get any help from the top.*"

The Education Department provides adequate support for the school to solve problems regarding parental involvement
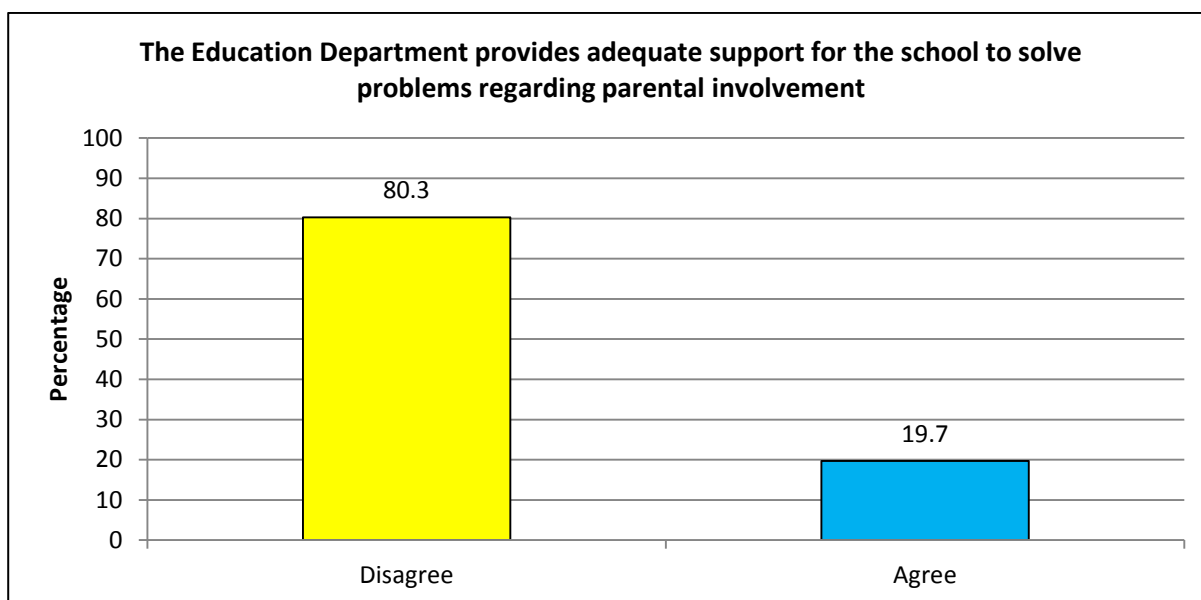
Figure 5.7:   The lack of support

b. Long working hours

Figure 5.8 indicates that 88,2 percent of the principals felt that parents' long working hours affected parental involvement negatively. All the parents said that long working hours prevented them from being involved, while a parent from School D indicated: "*Our work on the farm … we have very long working hours.*" The teachers also agreed. A teacher from school A listed the concern: "*Work conditions and long working hours.*"
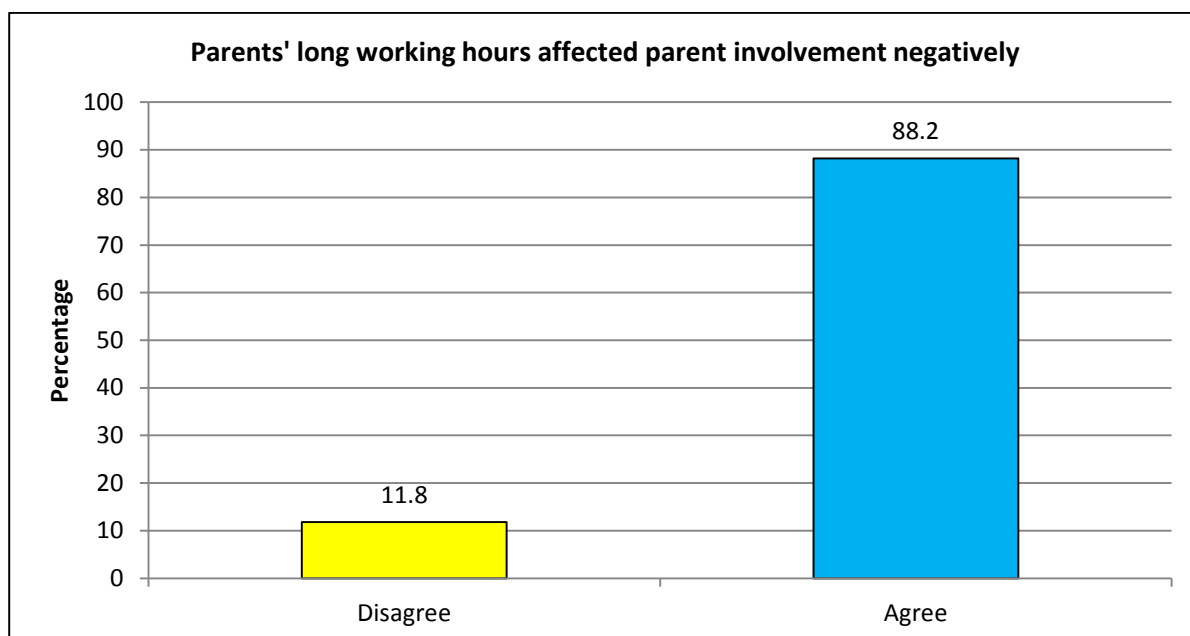
Figure 5.8:   Parents' long working hours

c. Illiteracy of parents

Figure 5.9 indicates that 76,3 percent of principals agreed that the illiteracy of parents was detrimental to parental involvement. All the teachers agreed that, "*Illiteracy is definitely a problem.*" Parents claimed that they did not understand the work the children were doing at school. A parent from School A stated: "*We don't understand the curriculum. We don't have a clue what they are doing. The school must help us understand the work the children are doing.*" According to 52,6 percent of the principals, parents also found the curriculum irrelevant.
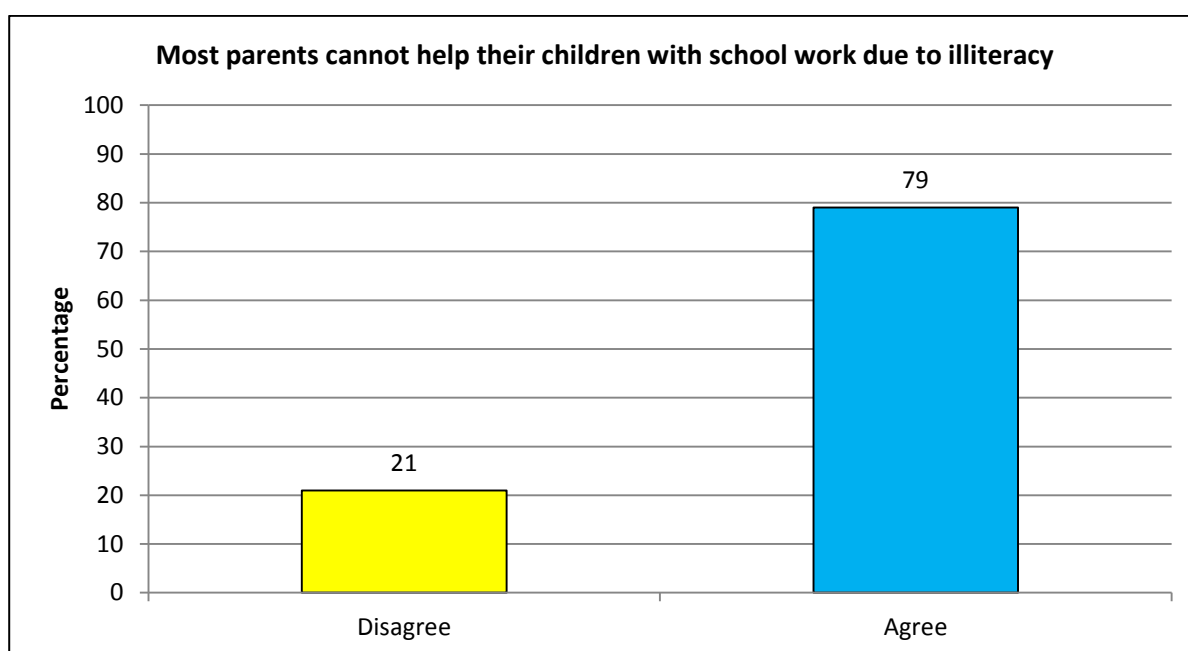
Figure 5.9:   Parents lack of support due to illiteracy

d. Socio-economic problems

Figure 5.10 indicates 80,3 percent of principals agreed that the socio-economic problems of the parents affected parental involvement negatively. The teachers agreed, while a teacher from School A stated*:* "*The parents' home circumstances play a role; there is a lot of alcohol addiction.*"
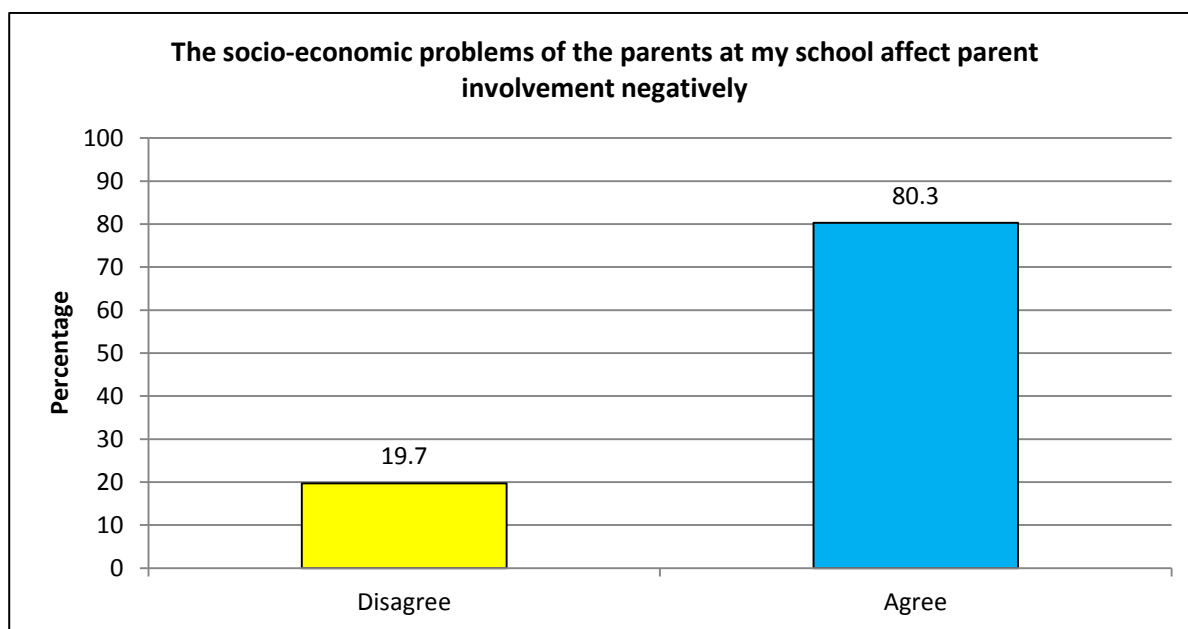
Figure 5.10: Parents' socio-economic problems negatively influence parental involvement

5.3.4 The need for and requirements of a parental involvement programme

> What is the need for a school, community and family partnership programme at rural multigrade schools?

> What are the requirements for a successful school, community and family partnership programme for rural multigrade schools?

Principals, teachers and parents were unanimous in expressing a need for programmes to involve parents and the community in the education of children, as well as in school activities. These programmes should include workshops or courses and focus on academic involvement, while taking the unique circumstances of the parents into consideration.

a. The need for a parental involvement programme

Principals, teachers and parents also agreed that parents' unique circumstances should be taken into consideration to enhance effective parental involvement. Figure 5.11 indicates that 85,5 percent of the principals agreed that a special programme was needed. A parent from School C confirmed the need for a special programme: "*Yes it would definitely help.*" A teacher from School B concurred: "*If there is somebody who could design such a programme, yes, it would.*"

A practicable parent involvement programme that takes the parents' and school's unique circumstances into account can achieve effective parental involvement
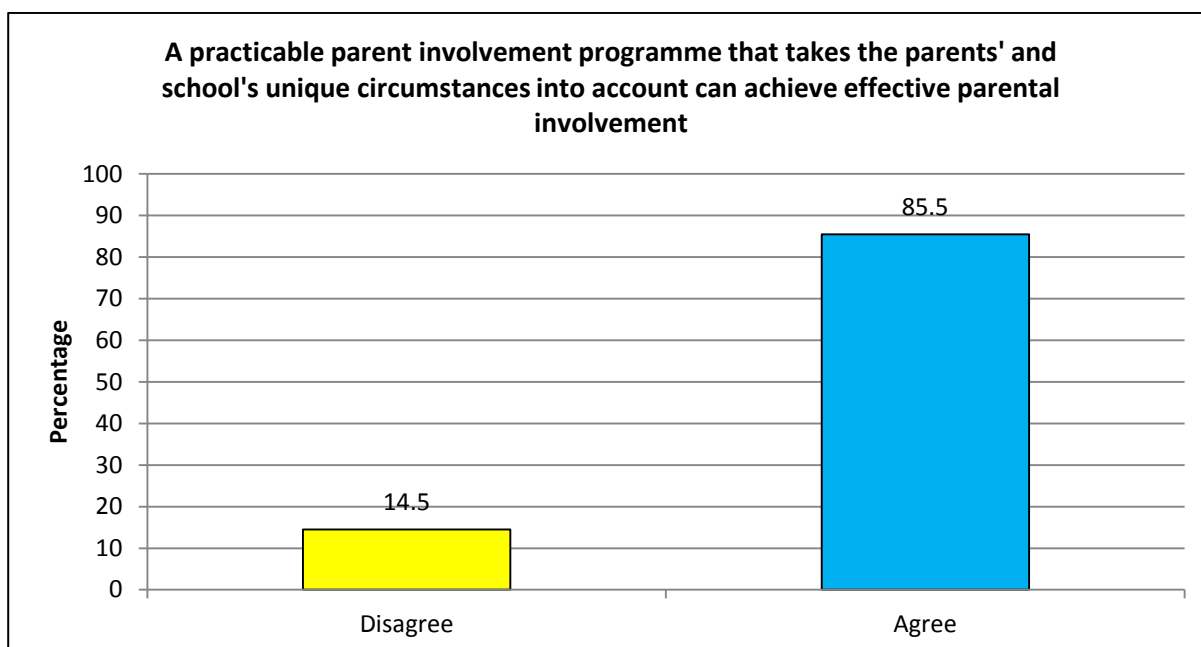
Figure 5.11: **The need for a parental involvement programme**

b. Workshops and courses

All the teachers from the four focus group schools agreed that schools should focus on workshops and courses for parents who were currently not involved. A teacher from School A indicated: "*We have to talk more about parental involvement especially to those who are currently not involved.*" A teacher from School D recommended: "… *maybe we can get the parents and children together on a Saturday or Sunday to help the parents help the children.*" A parent from School C asked for "*workshops and different courses".*

c. Academic involvement in the classroom

Principals, parents and teachers further indicated a need for parents to be more involved in children's academic work. 76,3 percent of principals stated that parents should be involved in the classroom. A parent from School B claimed: "*It will be wonderful if I could spend some time with my children at school to see what they are doing.*" A parent from School A concurred: *"It will be good if we were able to help the children with numeracy at home.*" A teacher from School D recommended: "*Organise activities that focus on academics rather than fundraisers …*" Figure 5.12 indicates that 96,1 percent of the principals also agreed and emphasised that the parents could play a more prominent role in learner cognitive development.

The school's parents can play a greater role in the learners' cognitive development
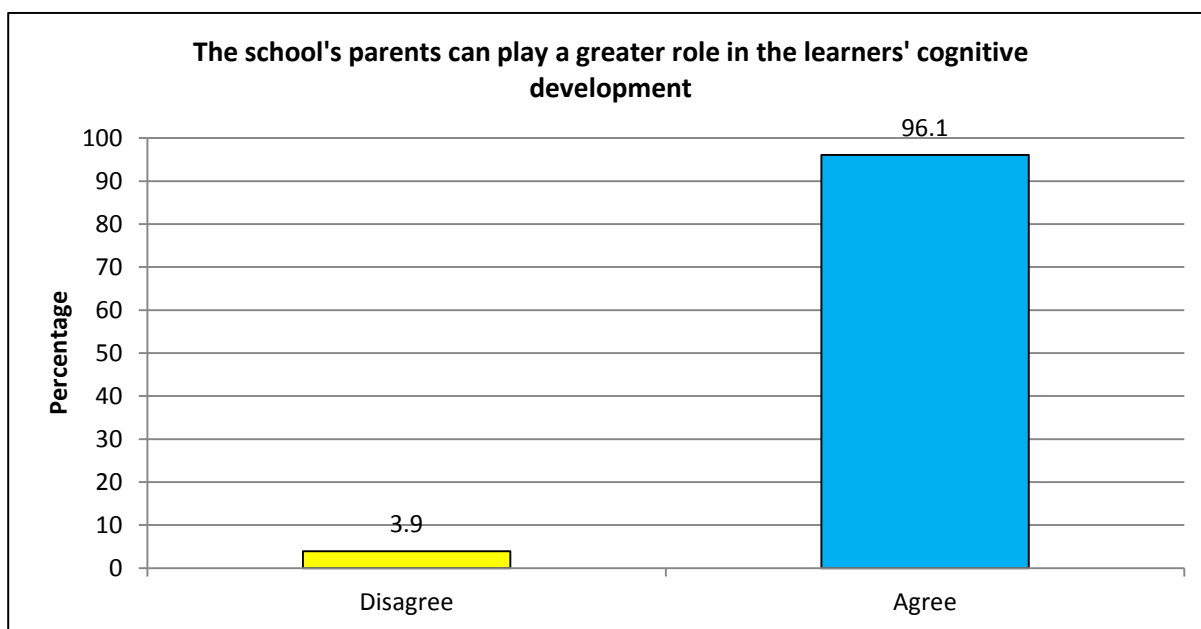
Figure 5.12:   Parents' role in cognitive development

5.4   Discussion

The above data described parents, teachers and principals' points of view, perceptions, experiences, reactions and insights regarding parental involvement. The data revealed the current state of parent involvement, challenges and the need for a parental involvement programme. The data also allowed determining possible requirements for such a programme.

The data concluded that to a certain degree parental involvement occurred at rural multigrade schools. The parents, teachers and principals agreed that parental involvement was important; although almost half of the principals indicated they had a programme to enhance parental involvement, teachers indicated a lack of such programmes. Different views of what such a programme comprised could be the reason for the discrepancy.

Although principals agreed that they were applying Epstein's six types of parental involvement at their schools, parents and teachers were not always of the same opinion. The discrepancies indicated that learning at home and collaborating with the community could be areas to focus on. The illiteracy rate, long working hours and social problems that all the participants mentioned as challenges, currently prevent effective parental involvement. That teachers and principals concurred on insufficient support regarding parental involvement should be seen as a challenge.

Van Wyk and Lemmer (2009:19) emphasise that parental involvement will not happen automatically. Coordinated planning and systemic steps need to be taken to integrate all

types of families in a parental involvement programme. A dedicated and focused partnership programme will be needed to involve parents, despite these challenges.

There is a definite need to improve parental involvement at rural multigrade schools. The findings indicate that principals and teachers are not satisfied with the level of parental involvement. Parents indicated that they wanted to be more involved, but their unique circumstances did not allow them to be involved. Parents, teachers and principals agreed that a practicable parental involvement programme that considered the unique circumstances of parents could enhance parent involvement in learning. Parents, principals and teachers need to interact to find the best possible strategies that will increase parental involvement in learning. Because of the lack of support from the Department of Education, principals and teachers will have to be trained or supported with possible programmes. That parental involvement is considered important for parents, teachers and principals, indicates that a partnership programme is needed to increase parental involvement at rural multigrade schools, specifically in learning.

5.5   Development of specifications, design guidelines and principles

The literature review and context analysis allows the researcher to generate ideas. These ideas were then sorted into tentative specifications, design principles and design guidelines. This led to the development of the first prototype to be further developed and assessed in the prototype phase.

5.5.1   Idea generation

The idea generation's main purpose is to increase parental involvement in rural multigrade school and is presented according to *what*, *who*, *why* and *when* in Table 5.5.

Table 5.5:   Ideas for increasing parental involvement in rural multigrade schools

4 W's	DESCRIPTION
WHAT?	✓ The intervention should be in the form of a programme. ✓ The programme should be practicable and easy to implement. ✓ The core of the programme should be a set of principles; this set of principles will be met by activities developed at a workshop. ✓ The format of the programme should be influenced by the users. ✓ The programme has to consider the unique circumstances of parents. ✓ The programme has to increase parental involvement, specifically in learning.
WHY?	✓ A programme is needed to increase the involvement of parents of rural multigrade schools. ✓ If the programme is practicable and easy to implement, it will increase the success of the programme. ✓ If a set of standard tested principles is used, it could also increase the success of the programme. ✓ If activities are developed at a workshop, they could be more practicable and user friendly. ✓ If the programme considers the unique circumstances of parents, the attendance of activities will increase. ✓ If the focus is on learning, it would ultimately increase academic achievement.
WHO?	✓ The family, teachers and principal should be involved in developing activities to achieve the goals (principles). ✓ One school for the micro-evaluation ✓ The principal and teachers should oversee the micro-evaluation at the school. ✓ The researcher should be involved in the development of the programme as well as the micro-evaluation of Prototype 1.
WHEN?	✓ The workshop should take place in the term prior to the try-out. ✓ The programme will be developed for one term.

The main ideas generated from literature and data suggest that a practicable, easily implementable programme developed as an intervention specifically for rural multigrade schools needs to be designed. This programme should increase parental involvement, specifically in learning. The programme will include a set of principles, which will guide parents, teachers and principals when developing activities for that specific school. A workshop, where teachers, parents and the principal collaborate, will be conducted to develop these activities. The activities will then be in operation during a micro-evaluation for one term at the specific rural multigrade school. The programme will, however, need specific specifications in order to be successful.

5.5.2   Design specifications

According to Nieveen (2009:94), design specifications are a first and general description of the intervention in which attention is paid to its substantive parts. In this study, the intervention is a parental involvement programme for rural multigrade schools. The literature review concluded that a school, community and family partnership programme would

increase parental involvement. Focusing on ISSA principles (see Chapter 3), would allow the programme to provide opportunities to create partnerships, provide opportunities for communication, and utilise resources in the community. Each of these three principles has a very strong focus on learning. The findings from the data (see 5.5.2) suggest the following specifications for a school, community and family partnership programme:

- Support is needed to develop and implement a programme.

- The focus should be on involving parents in learning.

- Parents need workshops on parenting.

- The learners need more excursions.

- The programme needs to take factors like illiteracy, long working hours of parents and social issues into consideration.

- More parents need to attend parental involvement activities.

In order to design a practicable, contextual, school, community and family partnership programme that includes the specifications would require a certain procedure and specific guidelines.

5.5.3 Design principles and guidelines

The analysis of the data gathered and the literature review help in determining the design principles for the school, community and family partnership programme. The programme should:

1. Promote partnerships between schools and families and provide a variety of opportunities for families and community members to be involved in children's learning and development.

2. Provide formal and informal opportunities for communication and information sharing with families regarding children's learning and development.

3. Utilise community resources to enrich children's development and learning experiences.

The design guidelines (procedural emphasis) for these principles are presented in Table 5.6.

Table 5.6:   Design guidelines

Principles	Guidelines
1. Promotion of partnerships	✓ Invites and welcomes family members into the classroom and finds ways for all families to participate in the educational process and life of the learning community. ✓ Involves family members in shared decision-making about their children's learning, development, and social life in the classroom. ✓ Involves family members in decision-making concerning children's learning environments.
2. Opportunities for communication	✓ Regular communication with families about their children, their learning and development, curriculum requirements, and events in the classroom. ✓ Regular communication with families to learn about a child's background in order to gain insights into the child's strengths, interests, and needs. ✓ Promotes opportunities for families to learn from one another and to support each other.
3. Utilising community resources	✓ Takes children into the community or brings community members into the school in order to enhance children's learning and socialisation. ✓ Assists families in obtaining information, resources, and services needed to enhance children's learning and development. ✓ Uses knowledge of children's communities and families as an integral part of the curriculum and their learning experiences. ✓ Offers information and ideas for parents and family members on how to create a stimulating home learning environment and helps to strengthen parent competences.

Guidelines will have no effect if they are not implemented, hence the need for a framework. The proposed framework will entail a workshop, meetings, implementation of activities and formative evaluation.

a. Workshop

A workshop is proposed where 16 parents and all the teachers (including the principal) are to be present. The 16 parents should be randomly selected across the combined classes at the school. The researcher will develop the content of the workshop and with the help of the principal, plan the arrangements needed for a smooth running of the workshop. The principal will act as facilitator and the teachers as group leaders. The workshop intends to:

- provide the opportunity for parents, teachers and the principal to collaborate;

- inculcate parental involvement and the core principles proposed;

- encourage parents and teachers to use their knowledge to design contextual, practicable activities that will increase parental involvement in learning at their school.

The programme of the workshop will include the following content:

- Welcome – What can be expected; emphasise importance of collaboration.

- Why parental involvement? – Focus on the term and then on international videos regarding successful practices of parental involvement in learning from rural schools with similar socio-economic status.

- Discus the positives and challenges regarding parental involvement at the school in groups; groups give feedback.

- Discuss the community – Who is the community? Brainstorm all the possible resources in the community in groups; groups give feedback.

- Unlock the principles and guidelines (which serve as quality indicators). Discuss each guideline and brainstorm possible activities the school could implement to operationalise the guideline. Groups use the previous session's information to create contextual activities. Groups give feedback.

- Discuss the implementation of the programme and the roles of the programme coordinators.

b. Meetings

A sufficient number of meetings will be conducted to ensure a smooth running of the programme. At the first meeting the researcher will propose a draft programme to the principal and teachers, as they will act as programme coordinators. After discussions, a final programme based on consensus will be drafted. A planning meeting will then commence where the researcher and programme coordinators discuss the appropriate dates for activities as well as planning of the activities. A meeting with the programme coordinators will be held before each activity to discuss and plan the activity.

c. Implementation and formative evaluation

Implementation will follow where the researcher will use a number of methods (reports, logs, observations, and focus group interviews) to formatively evaluate each activity. The formative evaluation will provide the researcher with data which will be used in developing the next prototype in the next phase with cycles.

5.6 Conclusion

There are currently no research-based, structured parental involvement programmes available for monograde or rural multigrade schools in South Africa. The data gathered in this

phase indicated that principals, teachers and parents agreed that a school, community and family partnership programme that considers the unique circumstances of parents is needed to improve parental involvement at rural multigrade schools. The data further emphasised that the parental involvement programme should focus on learning. Dauber and Epstein's (1993) research shows that, with the right strategy, partnership programmes can succeed in involving parents in their children's learning at school and at home. The data also exposed certain challenges that need to be addressed to improve parental involvement. In using the ISSA core principles (see Chapter 3) and quality indicators (as design guidelines), interspersed with data gathered in the preliminary phase, will provide the first prototype as a micro-evaluation at one rural multigrade school as the first cycle in the prototype phase. In the next chapter the prototype phase comprising two cycles will be discussed.

CHAPTER SIX

PROTOTYPE AND EVALUATION PHASE:
A CYCLICAL APPROACH

6.1 Introduction

Chapter 5 presented and discussed the Preliminary Phase: Need and Context Analysis. The Preliminary Phase allowed the researcher to generate ideas; these ideas were sorted into tentative specifications, design principles, design guidelines and a broad framework. Hence the development of the first prototype to be further developed and tested in the combined Prototype and Evaluation Phase. Plomp (2009:15) describes the Prototype Phase as an iterative design phase, each being a micro-cycle of research with formative evaluation as the most important research activity aimed at improving and refining the intervention. The Evaluation Phase would then conclude whether the intervention meets the pre-determined specifications. The nature of the formative evaluation methods (see Chapter 4) employed in the two cycles of this combined phase allows the researcher to determine whether the intervention meets the pre-determined specifications; hence the combination of phases. The combined phase will result in recommendations for further improvement of the intervention. This chapter takes a closer look at the research design and results for the two design cycles employed during the combined Prototype and Evaluation Phase (Figure 6.1).
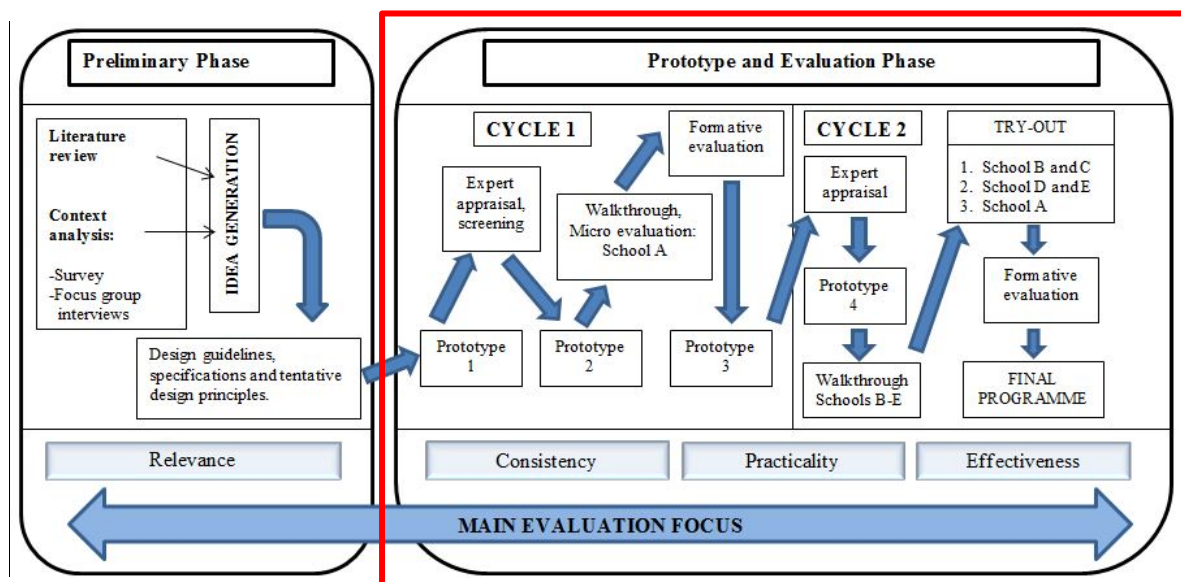
Figure 6.1:   The prototype and evaluation phase

The Prototype and Evaluation Phase will address Research sub-question 2 and research sub-question 3.

Research sub-question 2: What are the product and process characteristics of a practicable, effective, contextually based and sustainable school, community and family partnership programme that increase parental involvement in learning at rural multigrade schools?

Aspects to be investigated include:

- opportunities, which increase parental involvement in learning, created through the intervention to establish collaboration between school, community and families;

- partnerships, which increase parental involvement in learning, created between school, community and families;

- formal and informal opportunities, which increase parental involvement in learning created for communication and information sharing with families; and

- resources in the community to increase parental involvement in children's development and learning experiences.

Research sub-question 3: How did the developed school, community and family partnership programme influence parental involvement in learning at rural multigrade schools?

The specific focus for each cycle differs; however in combining the prototype and evaluation phase in this study, the cycles may address both research questions.

According to Nieveen (2009:94), certain criteria need to validate high-quality interventions. The development of a sequence of prototypes and formative evaluation methods in Phase 2 would allow the intervention to prove consistency, practicability and effectiveness.

The research procedures for each cycle examine the sampling, data collection and instruments, analysis and discussion. Each one of the two cycles will be discussed separately in the following sections.

6.2   Cycle 1: Prototype 1, 2 and 3

Cycle 1 enabled the researcher to adapt the proposed programme several times and therefore contribute to knowledge about the practicability and effects of the programme. Adapting the programme commenced through designing a prototype according to the data gathered in Phase 1. Formative evaluation methods will be employed for further

development, hence a number of prototypes. The evaluation Cycle 1 focused on consistency and practicability, although after micro-evaluation a certain degree of effectiveness of the programme emerged. **Consistency** (construct validity) is proved if the proposed components are consistently linked to one another and therefore depict a 'logically' designed programme. During Cycle 1, expert appraisal and a screening process were used to prove consistency. **Practicability** is another characteristic of high-quality interventions; if end users (for instance the teachers, principals and parents) consider the intervention to be usable, and it is easy for them to use the materials in a way that is largely compatible with the developers' intentions, practicability is proved. A walkthrough process determined the expected practicability of the intervention, while the micro-evaluation determined the actual practicability. The **effectiveness** of the intervention is determined if the desired outcomes are reached. In Cycle 1 the expected effectiveness emerged through the walkthrough process and the actual effectiveness emerged through the micro-evaluation process. The criteria are very important for this particular study, especially practicability and effectiveness, which directly correspond with successful practices in terms of the context of the rural multigrade school and the challenges it poses.

In Cycle 1 the proposed design principles and set of accompanying design guidelines will be exposed to reality in order to determine the product and process characteristics of the intervention. Formative evaluation will enable the development of an intervention that will be practicable and effective. Cycle 2 will then further enhance the intervention for it to be more effective and sustainable.

6.2.1 Prototype 1

After conducting a needs and context analysis, the researcher was able to generate possible ideas for the intervention, and also propose design specifications, design principles and design guidelines (see Chapter 5); furthermore a framework was generated for the intervention. This enabled the researcher to develop the broad framework for Prototype 1. Prototype 1 will be further developed through a workshop regarding parental involvement at School A. The adjusted Prototype 1 will then be sent to experts for appraisal and will undergo a screening process to determine the consistence and practicability of the intervention. After screening and expert appraisal, Prototype 1 will be changed to Prototype 2.

6.2.1.1 A broad framework of Prototype 1

The researcher developed a broad framework as a point of departure. The framework (Table 6.1) focused on:

- The aim of the intervention.

- Proposed product characteristics (specifications and components).

- Proposed role players and their roles.

- Proposed process characteristics.

- Where and when.

Table 6.1: Framework for Prototype 1

Prototype 1	
The aim of the intervention	To enhance parental involvement in learning at rural multigrade schools.
Proposed product characteristics	Principles: • Promotion of partnerships • Opportunities for communication • Utilising community resources Specifications: • Necessary support to develop and implement a parental involvement programme. • The focus of the parental involvement programme should be on learning. • Programme needs to consider challenges like illiteracy, long working hours and social issues (contextual). • Practicable and implementable strategies. • More parents need to attend parental involvement activities. Components: • A workshop for the development of strategies. • Meetings to ensure implementation. • Implementation of strategies.
Role players and role	Researcher: Developer, supporter, motivator. Principal: Programme coordinator. Teachers: Strategy coordinators of implementation. Parents/family: Active members of implementation. Community members: Active members of implementation.
Process characteristics	1.1 Invites and welcomes family members into the classroom and finds ways for all families to participate in the educational process and life of the learning community. 1.2 Involves family members in shared decision-making about their children's learning, development, and social life in the classroom. 1.3 Involves family members in decision-making concerning a child's learning environments. 2.1 Regular communication with families about their children, their learning and development, curriculum requirements, and events in the classroom. 2.2 Regular communication with families to learn about a child's background in order to gain insights into the child's strengths, interests, and needs. 2.3 Promotes opportunities for families to learn from and support one another. 3.1 Takes children into the community or brings community members into the school in order to enhance children's learning and socialisation. 3.2 Assists families in obtaining information, resources, and services needed to enhance children's learning and development. 3.3 Uses knowledge of children's communities and families as an integral part of the curriculum and their learning experiences. 3.4 Offers information and ideas for parents and family members on how to create a stimulating home learning
Where and when	The programme will be presented to one randomly sampled rural multigrade school. Micro-evaluation and then a try-out will commence at five multigrade schools. The micro-evaluation will commence during term 1 of 2012 and the try-out during term 3 of 2012.

The broad framework allowed the researcher to plan the intervention properly and to ensure that the programme was based on the literature review in Chapter 3 and data from Chapter 5. Since the context of this study is situated within the rural multigrade milieu, the broad framework needed to consider the contextual factors. It was therefore very important to involve the end users of the intervention in order to create a contextually based intervention. It was the opinion of the researcher that it was essential to involve the principal, teachers and parents, as they would be the most important role players in developing a contextually based intervention. Through random sampling, School A was chosen within the three rural districts in the Western Cape. School A is a multigrade school situated in a rural area 35km from the nearest town. There are three teachers, including the principal. The school has 52 learners, who are divided into three classes, Grade R, Grade 1 – 3 and Grade 4 – 6. All the parents work at two different farms close to the school. The researcher proposed a workshop where the role players and researcher could work together to plan a contextually based intervention.

Figure 6.2:   School A

6.2.1.2   The Workshop

The broad framework of Prototype 1 was used as a blueprint for the workshop. The intervention should therefore include the following elements:

- Involve the appropriate stakeholders, the principal, teachers and parents, in the design/formulation of the programme.

- Consider contextual challenges and factors. For example, the parents could have long working hours if it were held in season. The date, time and length of a meeting to set goals would therefore be an important factor in determining the success of implementing a strategy.

- Be practicable, feasible, manageable and sustainable.

According to Van Wyk and Lemmer (2009:168), most parents, regardless of their background, need information and invitations from schools on ways they could be productively involved in their children's education. For this reason the researcher held a meeting with the principal of School A to present the proposed broad framework of Prototype 1. The principal agreed to the intervention. Dates were discussed for the workshop and it was determined that the principal, teachers and 16 parents would attend the workshop. The 16 parents were randomly selected across the combined classes at the school. The principal was given the task of informing parents regarding the practicable arrangements for attending the workshop.

The researcher developed a programme for the workshop and would act as the facilitator.

The aim of the workshop was to:

- introduce parents to effective parental involvement in learning;

- learn about parental involvement and the core principles proposed;

- provide the opportunity for parents, teachers and the principal to collaborate;

- determine resources in the community;

- use their knowledge to design contextual and practicable strategies based on the ISSA principles that would increase parental involvement in learning at their school; and

- determine possible implementation methods.

The programme of the workshop included the following content:

- Welcome – What could be expected; emphasise importance of collaboration.

- Why parental involvement? Focus on the term and then on international videos regarding successful practices of parental involvement in learning from rural schools with similar socio-economic status.

- Discuss the positive aspects and challenges regarding parental involvement at the school in groups; groups give feedback.

- Discuss the community – Who is the community? Brainstorm all the possible resources in the community in groups; groups give feedback.

- Present the principles and guidelines (which serve as quality indicators). Discuss each guideline and brainstorm possible activities the school could implement to

operationalise the guideline. Groups use the previous session's information to create contextual activities. Groups give feedback.

- Discuss the implementation of the programme and the roles of the programme coordinators.

The researcher presented the programme with Microsoft PowerPoint (presentation included on enclosed DVD); the presentation contained all the information and applicable video clips as well. The workshop participants identified seven strategies (aligned with the three ISSA principles) to improve parental involvement in School A (Table 6.2).

Table 6.2: Strategies for School A

Strategies	Description	The ISSA principle and guidelines
1. A parent evening	The focus of this evening is on learning. Both parents and learners attend the evening and the teacher discusses the interests and needs of the learners.	Principle 1 and 2 Guidelines 1.1; 1.2; 2.1
2. Parents visit the school	The parents visit their child during school hours, look at the work they are doing and motivate the learner.	Principle 1 Guidelines: 1.1; 1.2
3. Family supports meetings	The parents meet to determine where they can help one another and communicate challenges to the teachers.	Principle 2 Guidelines: 2.3
4. Farm visits	Parents are used as presenters during lessons on farms.	Principle 3 Guidelines: 3.1; 3.3
5. Workshop: Learning at home and substance abuse	Discussions on how to help learners at home and the impact of substance abuse.	Principle 1 and 3 Guidelines: 1.3; 3.1; 3.2; 3.3
6. Communicating via SMS	Parents receive information regarding learning through an SMS.	Principle 1 and 2 Guidelines: 1.1; 2.1; 2.2
7. Recognition evening	Learners receive a certificate with positive remarks on their learning during the term.	Principle 2 and 3 Guidelines 2.1; 3.1; 3.4

After the identification, implementation of the strategies was discussed. The role players agreed that the school (especially the principal) should coordinate the intervention. After conducting the workshop, the principal, teachers and parents agreed to increase parental involvement, specifically in learning at School A. The parents would act as agents to spread the word to other parents regarding the programme to be implemented in the following term. The researcher then used the information gathered at the workshop to further develop Prototype 1. Prototype 1 was then sent to experts for appraisal.

6.2.1.3 Expert appraisal

Prototype 1 was now ready to be revised. The researcher could correct obvious errors, but to determine consistency (to prove that the intervention had been logically designed) expert appraisal was needed. According to Nieveen (2009:95), expert appraisal is when a group of experts (for instance, subject matter experts, instructional design experts, teachers) review the material, and react to a prototype of an intervention. Dr J. Epstein and Prof. E. Lemmer conducted the expert appraisal. The two experts were given the opportunity to comment on the proposed prototype, and a brief background was provided for them via email to understand the aim of the study. The experts were required to focus on the following, illustrated in Table 6.3:

- The product and process characteristics of the prototype.

- The proposed principles of the prototype.

- Advice on the practicability and sustainability of the proposed prototype.

Table 6.3:   Experts' comments

General remarks	
Epstein: Your project (as described below) is an important one.	**Lemmer and Van Wyk:** I am very excited about this programme.
The product and process characteristics of the prototype	
Epstein: When the school curriculum is not 'relevant', teachers can make it so – e.g., in TIPS homework, teachers design assignments so that the *parallels with school subjects and parents' everyday life* become clear. In many places, teachers *invite community partners with many different occupations* to the school to talk with the learners about how they use math, reading, etc. *in their everyday work.*	**Lemmer and Van Wyk:** I would start here by getting *key parents and teachers together* to discuss (may be just your action team) and define partnership and what the role and responsibility of a partner is. *Partnership should be the key concept* for this whole programme. It is the overarching guiding principle that should guide all interaction and future programmes. What I think is that *focus/target area for improvement should be very clear* and constantly repeated so that the whole school, families and community understand that the efforts are to: improve LEARNING (academic achievement) at the school through home-school-community partnership. Examine each of the six areas of involvement and *decide how to establish or improve parent/community involvement* in each of the six areas. The benefits in this case will relate to the type of benefits one would get for each specific area. There is a *wealth of expertise on those farms* that could be introduced to many areas of the *curriculum.* I would really target the farm managers and get 'buy in' from them.

The proposed principles of the prototype	
Epstein: Having a *formal partnership programme* to involve families and the community in the schools and at home can be well planned, well organised, and find ways to meet the needs of rural (or any) families. You seem to be going about your work in an admirable *step-by-step way* with an initial survey, a focus group discussion of current practices and challenges, analyses of these data (which could be written up for a research and/or practical journal), and a workshop focused on parental involvement to increase learner learning and identify key strategies for making outreach to families successful and effective for learner learning. Testing the approach in one location and then in a set of confirmation locations also is a good idea.	**Lemmer and Van Wyk:** Let partnership be the main goal; opportunities for interactions flow from partnership. Also most important in my view is that everyone should understand partnership – and what it entails: mutual respect for each other's abilities, cooperation, warm and cordial relations, open two-way communication and as far as possible, a relationship in which all parties share equal power, although with different roles, etc. The second strategy is to identify a problem which needs to be addressed (i.e. poor discipline) or an area of concern which needs to be addressed – (i.e. to improve learning), and then to ask how each of the six areas can be used to address this. Your approach seems to be centred on improving learning – which is the most important! You also concentrate on improving communication – again centred on learning – which I really like.
Advice on practicability and sustainability of the proposed prototype	
Epstein: Experienced researchers *start small and learn about their topics from the ground up.* We have learned that *'help' with homework* or with academic subjects is not about parents 'teaching' the learners, but can be redirected so that learners show/share/demonstrate and actually 'teach' the parents. I cannot comment on how your programme is developing as you have your own logic for the steps you are taking. Carry through to see if you have a finished *'product' or 'process' of some kind that can be explained clearly to others*, with as few complications/extra steps/stages as possible. See if you *can summarise and report your data* if they are of sufficient quality to report the lessons learned in each phase of your work.	**Lemmer and Van Wyk:** Can't *you formulate a motto and logo* to this end, which can be on all hand outs, parent education material and placed on notice boards etc.? This should literally become the *buzz word* through the school and community during this year. In other words, how can I use 'parenting' (improving parenting skills) to improve learning in the school; or how can I use 'communication' (home-to-school and school-to-home) to improve learning; or how can 'volunteers' be used to improve learning at the school? Develop a *register of community resources* and contacts to give every family. Are all parents able to fill in a questionnaire? If not *try and include the marginalised through focus group interviews.* Teachers can do the focus groups. So everyone has a voice. Parents *must not always feel that they have to come to the school in order to be involved*! One remembers a *demonstration* much more than a talk. In this process, let learners put something back into the community. For example, if the learners visit the aged to hear stories about life on the farms in the past, let the children make something to give as a gift or even just sing to the aged. *This must be a two-way giving.* Not just receiving from the community.

Most of the comments confirmed that the prototype was on the right track to increase parental involvement in learning at rural multigrade schools. The researcher analysed the comments and decided to incorporate the following into Prototype 1:

- **Emphasise partnerships**: All the role-players should be informed of the importance of partnerships. The teachers (including principal), parents and the community members should form a partnership for the intervention to be successful. The researcher developed A4 posters (Appendix F) to be posted at the school as well as on the two farms where parents worked. These posters highlighted the importance of the partnership programme.

- **Invite community members**: The strategies should emphasise the connection between what is being learned at school and how that information is used in everyday life and at work, thereby creating a relevant curriculum.

- **A formal programme**: Present a formal programme that includes steps, content, planning sheet, calendar, school and farm context, description of the principles, and goals and strategies to be employed. It is also important that within the planning the role players should be aware of their tasks and roles within each strategy; therefore describing 'the who, where, when, how' and needs is important. Assessment of the programme should also be included.

- The prototype should aim to **increase parental involvement**, thus a higher percentage of parents attending strategies is required.

- The **'product' and the 'process' should be shared** if successful.

Before Prototype 1 was revised, a screening process followed the expert appraisal process.

6.2.1.4   Screening

According to Nieveen (2009:95), screening is when members of the design research team check the design against checklists for important characteristics of components of the prototypical intervention. The screening process should also add to consistency and expected practicability. If the characteristics of the components fit, the intervention was logically designed. If the intervention is contextual, it could point towards expected practicability. A screening process followed the expert appraisal, where the prototype was discussed with the Director of the Centre for Multigrade Education, Dr Jurie Joubert. As an expert on multigrade education in South Africa, he was requested to check the prototype against a checklist (Appendix G) in order to determine the validity of the characteristics of the components. His role was stated as that of critic and reviser. The screening process concluded that all the necessary characteristics of components of the prototypical intervention were present:

- The programme is contextual.

- The programme contains practicable strategies.

- The programme focuses on learning.

- The programme has strategies that focus on learning through creating partnerships and opportunities for communication, and by utilising community resources.

- The programme has specific goals for School A.

- The programme has a strong planning section.

Once the expert appraisal and screening process was concluded, one necessary alteration was made to Prototype 1:

- Increase the visibility of the programme and partnership (using posters) to the parents, school and community.

The revised Prototype 1 therefore changed to Prototype 2.

6.2.2 Prototype 2

Prototype 2 as intervention has already demonstrated consistency and has also shown a certain degree of expected practicability. Prototype 2 will now undergo a walkthrough process to further determine expected practicability, and to a certain degree, expected effectiveness. Prototype 2 will then be subjected to micro-evaluation, where formative evaluation will determine its actual practicability, and to a certain degree, actual effectiveness.

6.2.2.1 Walkthrough

The researcher set up a meeting with the principal and teachers of School A. At this meeting each of the teachers (including the principal) received a Prototype 2 programme for School A (Appendix H). All the components of the intervention were discussed and certain decisions were made to increase the practicability of the intervention (Table 6.4).

Table 6.4   Components discussed and decisions taken

Meeting with principal and teachers of School A	
Component:	**Decisions:**
1. Context of the school.	✓ The WCED diagnostic test results were included. ✓ The exact number of learners for each grade was included. ✓ A paragraph regarding the community and surroundings were elaborated on.
2. Principles and quality indicators.	✓ Everybody agreed on the principles and quality indicators. ✓ The focus on learning was highlighted.
3. Goals of the SCAF partnership programme.	✓ Everybody agreed that the goals were aligned with the principles.
4. Strategies of the SCAF partnership programme.	✓ Everybody agreed on the strategies (developed at the workshop). ✓ The strategies aligned with the principles and quality indicators. ✓ The focus of each strategy was discussed and agreed on. ✓ Besides the strategies, posters were to be designed and posted at the school and on the two farms. ✓ After each strategy photographs will be posted.
5. Planning of the strategies.	✓ The date, venue and time of each strategy were agreed on. ✓ The needs, timeframe, and who is responsible for what was discussed and agreed to.
6. Roles of principal, teachers, family and community members.	✓ The roles of each role player were discussed in terms of each strategy. ✓ The principal (with the help and support of the researcher) was the programme coordinator. ✓ The teachers were in control of certain arrangements; in addition, they had to support the principal as well as motivate parents. ✓ Family, parents and community members were to support the programme and were also expected to help where help was needed.
7. Formative evaluation strategies.	✓ The principal and teachers agreed on participation of formative evaluation strategies to be employed by the researcher.
8. Time schedule and calendar.	✓ Each strategy was discussed in terms of specific dates for specific tasks. ✓ Each task was plotted on the calendar.

After conducting the meeting, the SCAF partnership programme, in the form of Prototype 2, was employed through a micro-evaluation process with formative evaluation at School A.

6.2.2.2   *Micro evaluation through formative evaluation at School A*

School A represents the 'small group of target users'. However, owing to the context and the developmental nature of this study, the intervention was employed at one rural multigrade school on a limited scale. Therefore some of the strategies will be conducted with, for instance, one class and not all the classes. The formative evaluation strategies will enable the researcher to measure the actual practicability, and to a certain degree the actual

effectiveness, of the prototype. The prototype will then be revised according to the results of the micro-evaluation.

a. Evaluation of the SCAF partnership programme

Formative evaluation methods were employed to evaluate the intervention and the process of implementation. To measure the practicability and effectiveness of the strategies or intervention, the researcher had to determine the following:

- Who and how many people attended the strategies?

- How did the strategies focus on learning?

- How were partnerships on learning created through the strategies?

- How was communication on learning created through the strategies?

- How were the resources in the community utilised, with a focus on learning, through strategies?

b. Data collection

The SCAF partnership programme had two components: the programme itself and the process of implementation. According to the conceptual framework (see Chapter 3), the SCAF partnership programme has certain principles and quality indicators; for a school to be able to address these principles and quality indicators, certain strategies needed to be developed for the particular school. These strategies were developed during a workshop with parents, teachers and the principal. Data collection methods were chosen according to the nature of the strategy. The strategies differ in nature, hence the choice of data collection methods (Table 6.5) that will help evaluate the prototype best.

Table 6.5:   Data collection methods according to strategy

STRATEGY:	DATA COLLECTION METHODS:
Strategy 1: Parent evening 1 – Focus on learning	Report from principal Logbook of researcher
Strategy 2: Parents visit school project	Observation
Strategy 3: Family-support meetings at home	Log of meetings
Strategy 4: Learners visit parents on farms with focus on learning	Observation and focus group interviews with parents
Strategy 5: Workshop on learning at home and substance abuse	Reports with list of questions to be addressed by parents
Strategy 6: Communication via SMS system	Log of messages sent
Strategy 7: Parent evening 2 – Progress and recognition	Observation and focus group interviews with parents
Final focus group interview with parents and teachers separately	

A brief description of each data collection method is discussed (Table 6.6) in order to portray the method's significance.

Table 6.6:   Description of collection methods

Strategy and data collection method:	Description:
Strategy 1: Report from principal. Logbook of researcher.	The principal had to write a report regarding the events of the evening by commenting on the presentation of the researcher as well as the activities that followed. The researcher kept a logbook on all the proceedings of Prototype 2. The process of strategy one is therefore well documented.
Strategy 2: Observation	The researcher observed two parent visits to the school and documented the process.
Strategy 3: Log of meetings.	A log of meetings was kept by a teacher. Two meetings were conducted where the teacher accompanied the session and had to write down what was discussed and what the parents expected from the teacher and/or school.
Strategy 4: Observation. Focus group interviews with parents.	The researcher observed a visit to the farm and documented the process. The researcher conducted focus group interviews with the parents/family members to determine the effectiveness of visit. **Questions:** 1. Did the learners enjoy the presentation? Why? 2. Did you enjoy presenting to the learners? Why? 3. What do you think the learners learned today? 4. Do you think it is important for parents to have this type of contact with learners and why? 5. What was difficult in your presentation? 6. Would you like to be part of such a lesson again in the future? Why? 7. What can we do to improve this kind of contact between parents and learners? 8. Did you feel you were part of the learning process? Why?
Strategy 5: Reports with list of questions to be addressed by parents.	Parents attending the workshop had to write down what they have learned during the workshop. **Questions:** 1. Learning at home: What have you learned during this presentation? 2. Substance abuse: What have you learned during this presentation?
Strategy 6: Log of messages sent.	The researcher had access to the log of messages sent from the sms system and could determine the nature of the sent messages.
Strategy 7: Observation and focus group interviews with parents.	The researcher observed the recognition evening and documented the process. The researcher conducted focus group interviews with the parents to determine effectiveness of the visit. **Questions:** 1. Did the learners enjoy the recognition evening? Why? 2. Did you enjoy the recognition evening? Why? 3. How did you feel during the evening? Why? 4. Was the evening successful? Why? 5. What was the purpose of the evening? 6. Do you think it is important for learners to receive recognition, and why? 7. What did the teacher discuss with you in the classes? Did it help? 8. What should change in order to improve the evening?

After data collection during the implementation of the intervention, a focus group interview was conducted with the all the teachers (3) and 12 parents separately (Table 6.7).

Table 6.7:   Focus group interview questions for parents and teachers

	INFORMATION
A.	Number of teachers attending the focus group interview? *(Teachers)* Number of parents attending the focus group interview? *(Parents)*
B.	Children's grade? *(Parents)*
	Section 1: The aim and the success of the SCAF partnership programme
1.	Which of the following describe the aim of the programme? *(Teachers and Parents)* 1.1 To get parents involved in voluntary work? 1.2 To get parents involved in learning of the learners? 1.3 To get parents involved in decision-making?
2.	Was the programme successful or not? Why? *(Teachers and Parents)*
3.	What opportunities were created through the programme to get parents more involved in their learners' learning? *(Teachers and Parents)*
4.	Was there any partnerships created between the parents and school during the implementation of the programme? Why? *(Teachers and Parents)*
5.	Did communication on learning develop between the school and the parents? Why? *(Teachers and Parents)*
	Section 2: The aim and the development of strategies of the SCAF partnership programme
6.	How did you experience strategy 1: Parent evening with a focus on learning? How can strategy 1 be more effective? *(Teachers and Parents)*
7.	How did you experience strategy 2: Parents visiting the school project? How can strategy 2 be more effective? *(Teachers and Parents)*
8.	How did you experience strategy 3: Families support each other at home? How can strategy 3 be more effective? *(Teachers and Parents)*
9.	How did you experience strategy 4: Learners visit the parents on the farm? How can strategy 4 be more effective? *(Teachers and Parents)*
10.	How did you experience strategy 5: Workshop on learning at home? How can strategy 5 be more effective? *(Teachers and Parents)*
11.	How did you experience strategy 6: Communication via the SMS system? How can strategy 6 be more effective? *(Teachers and Parents)*
12.	How did you experience strategy 7: Progression and recognition evening? How can strategy 7 be more effective? *(Teachers and Parents)*
13.	What else can be seen as an extra strategy that we did while implementing the programme? *(Teachers)*
	Section 3: The implementation of the SCAF partnership programme
14.	How did you experience the workshop? *(Teachers)*
15.	How can we make the workshop more effective? *(Teachers)*
16.	How did the implementation of the programme influence you as a teacher? *(Teachers)*
	Section 2: How to improve the SCAF partnership programme
17.	What changes should we apply to the programme with the focus on learning, in order to make the programme more effective, practicable and sustainable? *(Teachers and Parents)*
18.	What can we change in the programme to get more parents involved and motivated to be part of the learning process? *(Teachers and Parents)*
19.	What was the main contribution of the programme? *(Teachers and Parents)*

Interviews were digitally recorded and transcribed and all field notes were captured electronically.

6.2.3 Data analysis: Results of formative evaluation

The workshop and each strategy (photographs in Appendix I) will now be discussed in terms of the key success measures mentioned. A section on how to improve the prototype will conclude the data findings. The findings of the collection methods employed during the implementation of strategies will be interspersed with quotations from the final focus group discussions.

a. The workshop

Fifteen parents and four teachers attended the workshop, where group discussions allowed interaction between parents and teacher to formulate practicable and contextual strategies for School A. The teachers were unanimous in expressing the important role the workshop played in the successful implementation of the SCAF partnership programme. In the final focus group interviews, the teachers emphasised how the workshop allowed parents to be confident and to interact: *"The circumstances in which the workshop were conducted played a very important role in the buy-in you will get from the parents and teachers. Parents were more confident and that increased interaction and working together as parents and teachers."*

b. Strategy 1: Parent evening

The parent evening provided parents with an opportunity to become involved in their children's learning and development. All three teachers, all the learners (52) and 56 parents attended the parent evening. The principal wrote in his report:

> *"The teachers talked to the parents and learners about what they could expect academically in term 1, and also about general class administration. Parents and learners completed the different forms; they enjoyed talking about their needs and interests, [and] it was the first time parents and the learners simultaneously attended a parent evening. The parents were interested in what the children said."*

During the final focus group interviews parents also added what they had learned:

> *" … we learned what parental involvement is. We were told how the programme will be implemented and what will happen during the term."*

The teachers agreed with the principal and described the evening as successful:

> *"That was very good. Some of the parents that night told me that they did not know their children were interested in some of the things they said."*

c. Strategy 2: The parents visit the school

The school visit allows parents to experience first-hand what the children learn in class. Unfortunately, it is almost impossible for working parents to visit the school during school hours. Only two parents participated in the school visit. In the further roll out of the research, alternative visiting strategies will have to be developed to give all parents the opportunity to share in this experience.

> *"One of the mothers then went to sit next to her child and looked at the work she was doing. She encouraged her and praised her for her hard work."*

The teachers, including the principal, talked to the parents about their children's progress and current barriers hindering learning.

The teachers agreed on the success of this strategy:

> *"I would say it is a very good thing, if parents could come and see what the learner is doing in class and in their books. Some of the children are ashamed of their work but then the parents can see where they can help and also motivate the learner to work harder."*

d. Strategy 3: Family support meetings

The parent support meetings serve as a platform where families and community members can share information and concerns regarding learning. They support and help one another where necessary.

Two meetings were held: On farm A six parents from Grade R attended and on Farm B three parents from Grade 4 attended.

> *"One parent received a note that her daughter needs a lot of support in all the learning areas. The parents agreed to support this parent and the learner. Parent A would help the learner with numeracy (counting from 1 – 10). Parent B offered to help the learner with the writing of letters and words."*

e. Strategy 4: Farm visits

This strategy utilises community resources to enrich the children's learning experiences. Most of these parents have had very little education and, as a result, feel that they do not have anything to contribute to their children's learning. The strategy serves to build the self-confidence of parents that they indeed have knowledge that they can impart to a new generation. It also serves to make children proud of the knowledge and skills that their parents demonstrate.

Grade 4 and 5 learners participated in the visit and four parents acted as presenters.

> *"The first stop was an apple orchard where farm workers were busy with inoculation of apple trees. One of the parents explained the whole process, showing the learners how it worked and then gave one learner a chance to inoculate a tree."*

Both the learners and the parents enjoyed this activity, as one of the teachers explained:

> *"I really enjoyed it a lot and I could see it was very interesting for them as well."*

f. Strategy 5: Workshop on learning and substance abuse

Many parents do not know how to help their children with learning. In these rural areas, substance abuse is a serious social problem, exacerbating the lack of parental support to learners.

Seventeen parents attended the workshop on learning and substance abuse.

The parents found the workshop very useful:

> *"Tonight I learned a whole lot of new things on how to help my child with learning. I must give my child more attention."*

> *"Alcohol is very detrimental. Avoid alcohol and tobacco. Alcohol and tobacco are very bad for your body. Also, we must talk to other parents about alcohol abuse and spread the word to the community about the detrimental effects of alcohol abuse."*

g. Strategy 6: Communication via Short Message Service (SMS)

Since most parents have cell phones, a system was put in place to communicate information about learners' learning progress instantly to parents via SMS.

Three messages were sent to the Grade 1 – 3 parents, and five messages were sent to all the parents. The messages reminded parents about tests that the learners would be writing and what they needed to focus on when doing homework. Below are a few examples:

- *"Parents, please listen to your child reading words aloud."*

- *"Please make sure that your child studies the words for tomorrow's test."*

- *"Please make sure your child practises reading and writing the words given today as homework."*

h. Strategy 7: Recognition evening

At this event, learners received a certificate with positive remarks about their learning during the term. The aim was to give recognition and encouragement to the learners, but also to make parents proud of their children's learning achievements.

The logbook of the principal indicated that 55 parents, all the teachers, and 52 learners attended the evening.

> *"The principal welcomed the parents and learners, then directed them to their various classrooms, where the teachers spoke to the parents and learners about the learning that took place during the term. Each learner then received a certificate with acknowledgement for good work done academically. The teachers discussed numeracy and literacy challenges that the learners experienced during the term and also which aspects needed extra work and exercises. Parents were informed how they could play a bigger role in certain aspects of the work done during the term".*

The data indicated that the implementation of Prototype 2 of the SCAF partnership programme at School A could be considered successful, practicable and effective. The reasons for this are:

1. A workshop created an opportunity for parents and teachers to collaborate and interact on ways to improve parental involvement in learning at their school.

2. Contextual strategies were developed at the workshop.

3. A SCAF partnership programme was developed specifically for School A.

4. Partnerships between the school, community and families were promoted through involving parents in their children's education.

5. Opportunities for informal and formal communication were created for parents to learn about their children's learning, development, needs and interests.

6. Community resources were utilised to enrich children's development and learning.

7. There was an increase in parental involvement in learners' learning at School A.

However, to further develop the intervention to use in other multigrade schools, and for it to be sustainable, it was important to determine how to improve the SCAF partnership programme.

i. Improving Prototype 2

To be able to improve the prototype, it was important to determine how each strategy could be more effective, how the SCAF partnership programme could be sustainable, how to involve and motivate more parents, and how the programme influenced the teachers' workload. Data from the focus group interviews with parents and teachers revealed the following:

The strategies would be more effective if there were an increase in frequency and attendance.

Parents agreed that there should be an increase in attendance with Strategy five: Workshop on learning at home and substance abuse.

> *Parents: "It would be good if more parents could attend."*

Parents and teachers agreed that the frequency of Strategy 2: Parents visiting the school, Strategy 3: Family support meetings, Strategy 4: Farm visits and Strategy 6: SMS system, should increase.

> *Strategy 2 – Parents: "To get more parents to come to school to see what the children are doing in class."*
>
> *Teachers: "I would like to get more parents involved in the strategy. I would say that every parent should actually get the chance to visit the class at least once in a term."*
>
> *Strategy 3 – Parents: "… if more parents can attend such meetings."*
>
> *Teachers: "We have to get more groups running and more time for discussing work done at school."*
>
> *Strategy 4 – Parents: "More classes and parents should get the chance to be part of such a lesson."*

> *Teachers: "We only used Grade 4 and 5, so I would like to extend it to the other classes and to the other farm as well. We should also get more parents involved in presenting."*

Strategy 6 –   Parents: "We want an SMS every week or more often …"

> *Teachers: "To make it more effective I would do it more regularly ..."*

For the programme to be sustainable, the parents' circumstances should be considered (contextual), it should be practicable and they need a budget and good planning.

Parents and teachers agreed that if the parents' circumstances were considered and it was practicable, the programme would be sustainable.

> *Parents: "It should fit the circumstances of the parents."*

> *Teachers: "It was very effective and practicable; we did look at the circumstances of the parents and the school and worked according to those."*

The teachers highlighted the importance of a budget and planning.

> *Teachers: "What we can do to make it sustainable is to budget at the end of the year for next year's strategies and also plan beforehand all the strategies to get the specific dates you need for the strategies."*

In order to involve and motivate more parents, the focus of parental involvement should be on learning.

Parents and teachers agreed that the focus of the programme should be on learning, and that is how you will keep parents involved and motivated.

> *Teachers: "… the main focus will always be on the child and on learning …"*

> *Parents: "You should attend because you are interested in how to be more involved in your child's learning. The focus should always be on the children and their learning."*

Since the workload of the teachers has increased, good planning is needed to spread the strategies over the academic year and create a division of strategies.

The teacher agreed that their workload had increased, but with good planning and spreading the strategies over the academic year, it would not increase the workload of teachers significantly. The strategies also needed to be shared between the teachers.

Teachers: "The parent evenings took a lot out of me because I had children at home. But on the other hand seeing what it meant to the parents it was worth it. It was a bit much for the one month – we need to spread it more evenly across the year. Or do fewer strategies in one term. You need to plan very well ahead. It should fit into the programme of the teachers, the programme of the school and the farm. Planning is a very important aspect. It was also very good to put a teacher in charge of one strategy in order not to overload a specific teacher or principal. The principal should be in charge of the programme; the parents can't run the programme because they are not always available."

6.2.4   Prototype 3

The formative evaluation enabled the researcher to revise Prototype 2 and develop Prototype 3. Data indicated that Prototype 2 had a variety of product and process characteristics that have proved to be successful in the quest for improving parental involvement in learning at rural multigrade schools. The data also indicated certain improvements that needed to be considered in developing Prototype 3. A framework for Prototype 3 (Table 6.8) was developed, and owing to the proven practicability and effectiveness of the intervention, only minimal changes were incorporated into Prototype 3.

Table 6.8:   Framework for Prototype 3

Prototype 3	
The aim of the intervention	To enhance parental involvement in learning at rural multigrade schools
Proposed product characteristics	Principles: • Promotion of partnerships • Opportunities for communication • Utilising community resources Specifications: • Necessary support to develop and implement a parental involvement programme. A budget for sustainability. • The focus of the parental involvement programme must be on learning. • Programme needs to consider challenges like illiteracy, long working hours and social issues (contextual). • Practicable and implementable strategies. • More parents need to attend parental involvement activities. Components: • A workshop for the development of strategies. **Between 3 – 5 strategies for one term.** • Meetings to ensure implementation. • Implementation of strategies. •
Role players and roles	Researcher: Developer, support, motivator Principal: Programme coordinator Teachers: Strategy coordinators of implementation Parents/family: Active members of implementation Community members: Active members of implementation

Prototype 3	
Process characteristics	1.1 Invites and welcomes family members into the classroom and finds ways for all families to participate in the educational process and life of the learning community. 1.2 Involves family members in decision-making concerning a child's learning environments. 2.1 Regular communication with families about their children, their learning and development, curriculum requirements, and events in the classroom. 2.2 Regular communication with families to learn about a child's background in order to gain insights into the child's strengths, interests, and needs. 2.3 Opportunities for families to learn from one another and to support one another. 3.1 Take children into the community or bring community members into the school in order to enhance children's learning and socialisation. 3.2 Assist families in obtaining information, resources, and services needed to enhance children's learning and development. 3.3 Use knowledge of children's communities and families as an integral part of the curriculum and their learning experiences. 3.4 Offer information and ideas for parents and family members on how to create a stimulating home learning
Where and when	**The programme will be presented to five rural multigrade schools.** **School A:** The same school where Prototype 2 went through a micro-evaluation process. This school will continue with the SCAF partnership programme in order to prove sustainability without support of the researcher. **School B and C:** Two schools will be randomly sampled; the SCAF partnership programme will be implemented with limited support from the researcher. **School D and E:** A randomly selected school district will receive an invitation letter where two schools will be provided an electronic version of the SCAF partnership programme with a budget to implement the programme without any support from the researcher. The implementation will commence through a try-out during term 3 of 2012.

School B
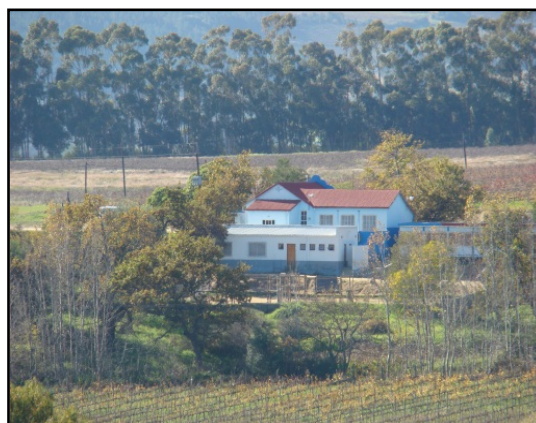
School C

School D   School E

Figure 6.3:   Photographs of School B - E

Prototype 3 was developed in the form of a manual; a hard copy (Appendix J) was developed, as well as an electronic version (see enclosed DVD). School B and C will receive a hard copy programme (Appendix K for School B, Appendix L for School C) and will follow more or less the same procedure as School A with regard to the workshop, implementation of strategies and formative evaluation; the researcher will, however, not be involved as with School A. Since School D and E will implement the whole process and **programme** on their own, a self-explanatory electronic manual is needed.

The electronic version was developed using Microsoft PowerPoint on Kiosk Mode. The components of the programme comprised:

1. An introduction to explain the term 'parental involvement', to describe the advantages of parental involvement, the need for parental involvement in learning at rural multigrade schools, the principles the programme focuses on and the three steps to be taken in order to increase parental involvement at their school.

2. Step 1: Conducting a workshop – The manual provides, through links to pre-installed documents, the means for the principal to sketch the context of the school, plan the workshop, and direct the course of the workshop. When this is done, the workshop is conducted; a PowerPoint presentation is also provided for the principal to use. The workshop provides the principal with information regarding resources and proposed strategies. All the documents are electronic, so the principals are encouraged to print these completed documents and put them in a folder.

3. Step 2: Planning meeting – The manual allows the principal to plan and conduct the meeting. At the meeting, the principal and teachers will determine 3 – 5 strategies to be employed at the school; they will also plan the various strategies at the meeting using different forms and a calendar.

4. Step 3: Implementation can now commence.

5. The success of School A is provided as an example with photographs and explanatory paragraphs of the different strategies.

6. Extra forms used during strategies.

6.2.5 Conclusion of Cycle 1

Cycle 1 concluded that the intervention proposed to increase parental involvement in rural multigrade schools could be considered a high-quality intervention. The progression of Prototype 1 to Prototype 2, and eventually to Prototype 3, showed the intervention to be consistent, practicable and, with support, effective. In Cycle 1, data through formative evaluation demonstrated that the proposed design principles and guidelines were effective in the quest to improve parental involvement in learning at rural multigrade schools. The product and process characteristics were identified through:

- Creating opportunities, which increased parental involvement in learning, through the intervention to establish collaboration between school, community and families. Contextual, practicable and effective strategies were implemented through the SCAF partnership programme at School A.

- Creating partnerships, which increase parental involvement in learning, between school, community and families. Parents, teachers and community members collaborated and interacted at the workshop and during strategies, and therefore formed partnerships to increase parental involvement in learning.

- Creating formal and informal opportunities for communication and information sharing, which increase parental involvement in learning, with families. The strategies provided parents and teachers with opportunities to communicate with one another regarding their learners' learning.

- Utilising resources in the community to increase parental involvement in children's development and learning experiences. The strategies provided opportunities for teachers to utilise resources in the community to increase parental involvement in learning.

The data also showed a definite increase in parental involvement through the micro-evaluation process at School A. However, in Cycle 1, the researcher had an extensive role, which could have influenced the effectiveness of the SCAF partnership programme. Therefore in Cycle 2, the role of the researcher will be reduced to a minimal degree at two schools and to a degree of no support at three schools during implementation in the form of a

try-out process. Cycle 2 will therefore focus on proving the effectiveness and sustainability of the SCAF partnership programme.

6.3 Cycle 2: Prototype 3, 4 and the final programme

The aim of Cycle 2 was to determine whether the designed and revised Prototype 3 and 4 would prove to be practicable and effective without the degree of involvement of the researcher. A try-out process will provide data from the three groups of schools. Nieveen (2009:95) describes the try-out as a process where a limited number of the user group (e.g. teachers and learners) use the materials in the day-to-day user setting. Formative evaluation methods will be employed in order to collect data, which will enable revision of Prototype 4 if needed, and presentation of the final programme. The data will first determine the final product and process characteristics of the final SCAF partnership programme and second present whether and how parental involvement was increased at School B – E. The data from School A will determine the sustainability and effectiveness of the programme. Expert appraisal will be conducted on Prototype 3 first, to revise it if necessary and to develop Prototype 4.

6.3.1 Prototype 3

Prototype 3 was developed in the form of a hard copy manual and an electronic version. The hard copy will be presented to Schools B and C. Schools D and E will receive the electronic version. Prototype 3 was now ready to be commented on by the same two experts in order to create continuity in the process. The two experts were given updates during the micro-evaluation of Prototype 2 via email, therefore they were considered up-to-date with the development and the nature of the intervention.

6.3.1.1 Expert appraisal

The manual (Appendix J) and the electronic version (on DVD) were sent to the experts for comments. The two experts were not asked to address specific questions, as they had already commented on the product and process characteristics, proposed principles, and practicability and sustainability of the proposed prototype. The try-out process of the last phase was explained and they were asked to comment (Table 6.9) in general.

Table 6.9: **General comments**

General comments	
Epstein: I am impressed with the clarity of purpose and points in your work that focus on sustainability. This may be the most difficult challenge of all. It will be interesting to see how you gauge the progress of the five schools that you outline below. The sets of schools are operating with different degrees of *support* and over different time periods.	**Lemmer and Van Wyk:** … in general the manual is very comprehensive covering. The implementation depends in [its] present form on the principal. I think this is good – research clearly shows that principal leadership is essential to school success. But possibly a *second in command* could be mentioned who could take over if the principal is unable for some reason. Profile of school could be more specific: SES? Language diversity? Quality indicators are important so that you have specific measures to evaluate success Principle 2: Q I1. I assume that the communication re child's development will be according to different ages/developmental stages. Think of an easy threefold division: cognitive, physical and emotional. Possibly you could develop a sheet on which parents/or an aide if parents are not fully literate could jot down things about the child that the parent would like to share with teacher. For families to share, families with similar challenges could be grouped/info taken so that they could be later put in greater contact, i.e. families with special needs children. Principle 3 Community sharing. Use this info to develop a community resource list. I like the very specific planning schedules.

In general, the two experts were satisfied with the manuals and made only a few comments. The following will be addressed in Prototype 3, after **revision**, Prototype 4 will emerge.

1. **Support**: Support during the try-out will differ in the three sets of schools. School A will receive no support during implementation, since they have already participated in Cycle 1 and in the evaluation of sustainability. However, a meeting will be held to explain what is expected. School A will also receive a budget of R3000. School B and C will receive limited support and guidance from the researcher to increase the responsibility of the principals and determine whether the intervention is successful. The CMGE will provide funds, where needed, for implementation at School B and C. Schools D and E will receive an electronic version of the intervention as well as a R3000 budget, but no support will be provided during implementation in order to determine whether the school can implement the whole process on its own. A meeting will be held with the two principals to explain the programme.

2. **Second in command**: The intervention will specify that the principal is the programme coordinator; if he/she is not available, or unable to coordinate for some reason, a teacher needs to act as programme coordinator.

3. **Language diversity**: A section on language diversity needs to be added to the context section.

4. **Communication about child's development**: Teachers need to be reminded that when they communicate with the parent, that they communicate according to the developmental stages, which include cognitive, physical and emotional development.

Some of the comments were difficult to incorporate into the intervention, as each school could have different strategies, since they developed their own strategies. Keeping that in mind, adaptations will be made to Prototype 3, which therefore changes to Prototype 4.

6.3.1.2 *Walkthrough*

To conduct a walkthrough, the design researcher and representatives of the target group together went through the set-up of the intervention, which was carried out in a face-to-face setting. A walkthrough with the three sets of schools was conducted according to the implementation of the intervention at that specific school. Therefore the **walkthrough** process differed. The researcher set up separate meetings with the principals and teachers of School B and C, the principals of School D and E, and the principal of School A. At each meeting a discussion took place according to the nature of the implementation (Table 6.10).

Table 6.10:   Description of the walkthrough process

Walkthrough process	
Schools	**Description of process**
School B and C	School B and C followed the same procedure (see 6.2.1.2) regarding the workshop conducted with School A. For convenience, the two schools attended the workshop together but in different groups. The walkthrough process commenced at each school after attendance at the workshop. The same procedure was followed as with School A; however the strategies these schools designed differed from School A and from each other.
School D and E	The walkthrough process commenced at a central meeting with the two principals of School D and E. The walkthrough process included: • Discussion on how to use the electronic version of Prototype 4. • Every step of the process of implementation was explained. • Discussion on what was expected of them as principals. • Discussion on the time frame of and budget for implementation. • Discussion on the journal that needed to be completed.
School A	The walkthrough process commenced during a meeting with the principal of School A. The walkthrough process included: • Discussion on how to incorporate the lessons learned from the previous micro-evaluation. • Discussion on expanding the implementation in terms of new strategies and frequency of older strategies. • Discussion on what is expected of them as principals. • Discussion on the time frame of and budget for implementation. • Discussion on the journal that needed to be completed.

6.3.1.3 Strategies developed for Schools A – E

Schools B to E conducted workshops to develop their own practicable strategies, linked to the design principles and guidelines (Table 6.11) in order to improve parental involvement in learning. School A had to decide during a meeting with the school governing body (SGB) on what strategies they would keep and adapt from the first term and whether they would develop new ones.

Table 6.11:   Strategies developed and decided on by Schools A – E

Strategies	Description	The design principle and design guidelines
1. A parent evening (Schools A – E)	The focus of this evening is on learning. Both parents and learners attend the evening and the teacher discusses the interests and needs of the learners.	Principle 1 and 2 Guidelines 1.1; 1.2; 2.1
2. Family part of lesson at school (School C)	The parents or family members are part of the lesson in class and act as a presenter.	Principle 1 and 3 Guidelines: 1.1; 3.1; 3.3
3. CPUT involved with IEP-learners (School B)	A current programme where students from CPUT write a report on IEP-learners will be discussed with teachers. Who will then explain these reports to the parents?	Principle 2 and 3 Guidelines: 2.1; 3.1
4. Farm visits (Schools A – E)	Parents are used as presenters during lessons on farms.	Principle 3 Guidelines: 3.1; 3.3
5. Workshop: Substance abuse (School D)	Discussions from parents on the impact of substance abuse.	Principle 1 and 3 Guidelines: 1.3; 3.1; 3.2; 3.3
6. Communicating via SMS (Schools A – E)	Parents receive information regarding learning through an SMS.	Principle 1 and 2 Guidelines: 1.1; 2.1; 2.2
7. Recognition evening (Schools A – E)	Learners receive a certificate with positive remarks on their learning during the term.	Principle 2 and 3 Guidelines 2.1; 3.1; 3.4
8. Class visits (Schools D and E)	Parents are allowed to visit the learners in class during lessons to motivate learners.	Principle 1 and 3 Guidelines 1.1; 3.1; 3.4
9. Training of parents (School A)	Parents are trained how to support learners with mathematics and language.	Principle 1 and 3 Guidelines 1.1; 1.2; 3.4

6.3.1.4 Try-out through formative evaluation at Schools A – E

According to (Nieveen, 2009:96), a try-out is when a limited number of the user group (e.g. teachers and learners) use the materials in the day-to-day user setting. She further states that if the evaluation focuses on the practicability of the intervention, the following evaluation activities are common: observation, interviewing, requesting logbooks, administering questionnaires; if the evaluation has its focal point on the effectiveness of the **intervention**, evaluators may decide to request learning reports and/or give a test. During the try-out

process the schools were grouped into clusters to provide data that would evaluate the programme according to criteria.

a. Evaluation of the SCAF partnership programme of Schools A – E

Formative evaluation methods (see Chapter 4) were employed to evaluate the intervention and the process of implementation. To measure the practicability, effectiveness and sustainability, an overlap (Table 6.12) of evaluation at the three clusters occurred.

Table 6.12:   Overlap of evaluation

Data that needed to be determined through evaluation	School A	School B and C	School D and E
1. How successful was the continued implementation of the SCAF partnership programme?	√		
2. What strategies and how were strategies developed for the SCAF partnership programme?	√	√	√
3. What were the challenges of the strategies?	√	√	√
4. How were partnerships on learning created through the strategies?	√	√	√
5. How was communication on learning created through the strategies?	√	√	√
6. How were the resources in the community utilised, with a focus on learning, through strategies?	√	√	√
7. Who and how many people attended the strategies?		√	
8. How successful was the implementation of the SCAF partnership programme without assistance from the researcher?	√		√

b. Data collection

There are three clusters of schools. Data collection therefore differs from data collection in Cycle 1. The SCAF partnership programme still had two components: the programme itself and the process of implementation. According to the conceptual framework, the SCAF partnership programme has certain principles and quality indicators; for a school to be able to address these principles and quality indicators certain strategies needed to be developed for the particular school. These strategies were developed during a workshop between parents, teachers and the principal. The role of the researcher differed at each cluster of schools, School A, D and E only received minimal support, which allowed a more validated view of the effectiveness and sustainability of the programme. Data collection methods were chosen according to the nature of the strategy, hence the choice of data collection methods (Table 6.13).

Table 6.13:   Data collection methods according to the three clusters

CLUSTER 1: SCHOOL A	
STRATEGY:	**DATA COLLECTION METHODS:**
The school implemented seven strategies in term 1 and had to decide at a meeting which strategies they would follow, change, improve or implement in term 3.	Journal by principal. Final focus group interview with parents and teachers separately (fieldworker).
CLUSTER 2: SCHOOL B and C	
STRATEGY:	**DATA COLLECTION METHODS:**
Strategy 1: Parent evening 1 – Focus on learning (School B and C)	Report from principal.
Strategy 2: Family visits school project (School C) CPUT involved with IEP-learners (School B)	Observation from fieldworker. Observation from fieldworker.
Strategy 3: Learners visit parents on farms with focus on learning (School B and C)	Observation from fieldworker. Focus group interviews with parents and presenters (fieldworker).
Strategy 4: Communication via SMS system and communication display board. (School B and C)	Log of messages sent and information on notice board.
Strategy 5: Parent evening 2 – Motivation and recognition (School B and C)	Observation from researcher and focus group interviews (fieldworker) with parents.
Final focus group interview with parents and teachers separately (fieldworker)	
CLUSTER 3: SCHOOL D and E	
STRATEGY:	**DATA COLLECTION METHODS:**
Both schools had to determine their own strategies at a workshop and implement them on their own.	Journal kept by principal. Final focus group interview with the principal and the school governing body chairperson (researcher).

A brief description of each data **collection** method is discussed (Table 6.14) in order to portray the methods' significance.

Table 6.14:   Description of collection methods

CLUSTER 1: SCHOOL A	
STRATEGY:	**DATA COLLECTION METHODS:**
Strategies determined by school.	The principal was requested to keep a journal of implementation and needed to prove with photographs the different strategies applied in their SCAF partnership programme. Final focus group interview with parents and teachers separately (fieldworker).
CLUSTER 2: SCHOOL B and C	
STRATEGY:	**DATA COLLECTION METHODS:**
Strategy 1: Parent evening 1 – Focus on learning (School B and C)	The principal had to write a report regarding the course of the evening by commenting on the presentation of the researcher as well as the activities that followed.
Strategy 2: Family visits school project (School C) CPUT involved with IEP-learners (School B)	The fieldworker observed two family visits to the school and documented the process.
Strategy 3: Learners visit parents on farms with focus on learning (School B and C)	Observation from fieldworker. Focus group interviews with teachers and presenters (fieldworker). **Questions:** 1. Did the learners enjoy the presentation? Why? 2. Did you enjoy presenting to the learners? Why? 3. What do you think the learners learned today? 4. Do you think it is important for parents to have this type of contact with learners and why? 5. What was difficult in your presentation? 6. Would you like to be part of such a lesson again in the future? Why? 7. What can we do to improve this kind of contact between parents and learners? 8. Did you feel you were part of the learning process? Why?
Strategy 4: Communication via SMS system and communication display board. (School B and C)	Log of messages sent and information on notice board.
Strategy 5: Parent evening 2 – Motivation and recognition (School B and C)	Observation from researcher and focus group interviews (fieldworker) with parents. **Questions:** 1. Did the learners enjoy the recognition evening? Why? 2. Did you enjoy the recognition evening? Why? 3. How did you feel during the evening? Why? 4. Was the evening successful? Why? 5. What was the purpose of the evening? 6. Do you think it is important for learners to receive recognition and why? 7. Do you think it is important for learners, parents and teachers to be motivated and why? 8. What should change in order to improve the evening?
Final focus group interview with parents and teachers separately (fieldworker)	
CLUSTER 3: SCHOOL D and E	
STRATEGY:	**DATA COLLECTION METHODS:**
Both schools had to determine their own strategies at a workshop and implement them on their own.	Journal kept by principal. Final focus group interview with the principal and the school governing body chairperson (researcher).

After data collection during the implementation of the intervention at School A, a focus group interview was conducted with the all the teachers (3) and 12 parents separately (Table 6.15).

Table 6.15:   Focus group interview questions for parents and teachers: School A

Section 1: The aim and the success of the SCAF partnership programme	
1.	Which of the following describe the aim of the programme? *(Teachers and Parents)* 1.1 To involve parents in voluntary work? 1.2 To involve parents in learning of the learners? 1.3 To involve parents in decision-making?
2.	Was the programme in term 3 successful or not? Why? *(Teachers and Parents)*
3.	What opportunities did the programme create in term 3 to involve parents in learners' learning? *(Teachers and Parents)*
4.	Were partnerships on learning between parents and the school created in term 3 through this programme? Why? *(Teachers and Parents)*
5.	Did communication on learning between parents and teachers develop during the programme in term 3? Why? *(Teachers and Parents)*
6.	Were resources utilised terms 3 and 4 to enhance parental involvement in learning? Why? *(Teachers and Parents)*
Section 2: The aim and the development of strategies of the SCAF partnership programme	
7.	What strategies were implemented in term 3 and the beginning of term 4? Why? *(Teachers and Parents)*
8.	Were the strategies new or a repeat of term 1? Why? *(Teachers and Parents)*
9.	Was the strategies in term 3 and the beginning of term 4 well attended? *(Teachers and Parents)*
10.	What were the challenges of these strategies? *(Teachers and Parents)*
Section 3: How to improve the SCAF partnership programme	
11.	What were the differences between the programmes of term 1 and term 3 and 4? *(Teachers and Parents)*
12.	Which term's programme was the most successful? Why? *(Teachers and Parents)*
13.	What changes to the programme would you propose in order for the programme to be more effective, practicable and sustainable? *(Teachers and Parents)*
14.	What changes to the programme would you propose in order to involve and motivate more parents to be part of the learning process? *(Teachers and Parents)*
15.	In what way were the parents involved in deciding the strategies to be implemented in term 3 and at the beginning of term 4? *(Teachers and Parents)*
16.	What else can be done in order to make the programme more sustainable in order to continue next year? *(Teachers and Parents)*
17.	How did you find the implementation of the programme in term 3? (Positive, influence on workload, collaboration, planning?) *(Teachers)*

After data collection during the implementation of the intervention at School B and C, a focus group interview was conducted with the **all** the teachers (4) and 12 parents separately at each school (Table 6.16).

Table 6.16:   Focus group interview questions for parents and teachers: School B and C

Section 1: The aim and the success of the SCAF partnership programme	
1.	Which of the following describe the aim of the programme? *(Teachers and Parents)* 1.1 To involve parents in voluntary work? 1.2 To involve parents in learning of the learners? 1.3 To involve parents in decision-making?
2.	Was the programme successful or not? Why? *(Teachers and Parents)*
3.	What opportunities did the programme create to involve parents in learners' learning? *(Teachers and Parents)*
4.	Were partnerships on learning between parents and the school created through this programme? Why? *(Teachers and Parents)*
5.	Did communication on learning between parents and teachers develop during the programme? Why? *(Teachers and Parents)*
6.	Were resources utilised to enhance parental involvement in learning? Why? *(Teachers and Parents)*
Section 2: The aim and the development of strategies of the SCAF partnership programme	
7.	How did you experience strategy 1: Parent evening with a focus on learning? How can strategy 1 be more effective? *(Teachers and Parents)*
8.	How did you experience strategy 4: Communication through the sms system and communication board? How can strategy 4 be more effective? *(Teachers and Parents)*
9.	How did you experience strategy 5: The recognition evening? How can strategy 5 be more effective? *(Teachers and Parents)*
Section 3: How to improve the SCAF partnership programme	
10.	What contribution did the programme make to enhance parental involvement in learners' learning? *(Teachers and Parents)*
11.	What changes to the programme would you propose in order for the programme to be more effective, practicable and sustainable? *(Teachers and Parents)*
12.	What changes to the programme would you propose in order to involve more parents to be part of the learning process? *(Teachers and Parents)*
13.	How did you experience the workshop where you developed the strategies? *(Teachers and Parents)*
14.	How did you experience the implementation of the programme? Example: Influence on workload, extra work and time, extra support needed, finances. *(Teachers and Parents)*

After data collection during the implementation of the intervention at School D and E, a focus group interview was conducted with both the principal and school governing body chairperson of the two schools separately (Table 6.17).

Table 6.17: **Focus group interview questions for the principal and school governing body chairperson: School B and C**

	Section 1: The aim and the success of the SCAF partnership programme
1.	Which of the following describe the aim of the programme? 1.1 To involve parents in voluntary work? 1.2 To involve parents in learning of the learners? 1.3 To involve parents in decision-making?
2.	Was the programme successful or not? Why?
3.	What opportunities did the programme create to involve parents in learners' learning? *(Teachers and Parents)*
4.	Were partnerships on learning between parents and the school were created through this programme? Why? *(Teachers and Parents)*
5.	Did communication on learning between parents and teachers develop during the programme? Why? *(Teachers and Parents)*
6.	Were resources utilised to enhance parental involvement in learning? Why? *(Teachers and Parents)*
	Section 2: The aim and the development of strategies of the SCAF partnership programme
7.	What strategies were implemented? Why?
8.	How well was the strategies meeting attended?
9.	What were the challenges of the strategies?
10.	How can the strategies be more effective?
	Section 3: How to improve the SCAF partnership programme
11.	What contribution did the programme make to enhance parental involvement in learners' learning?
12.	What changes to the programme would you propose in order for the programme to be more effective, practicable and sustainable?
13.	What changes to the programme would you propose in order to involve more parents to be part of the learning process?
14.	How did you experience the workshop where you developed the strategies?
15.	How did you experience the implementation of the programme? Example: Influence on workload, extra work and time, extra support needed, finances.
16.	How did you experience the manual?
17.	Final remarks

6.3.2   Data analysis: Results of formative evaluation (Schools A – E)

The results of data gathering will be discussed in two sections. The workshop, the success of the programme, each strategy (photographs included in Appendix M), and how to improve School B and C will be discussed first. If the data indicates sufficient attendance, a focus on learning, how partnerships and communication were created, and how resources were utilised, then the SCAF partnership programme can be regarded as successful, with limited involvement and support from the researcher. The product and process characteristics will also be derived from these findings.

In Section 2, findings regarding the opportunities, partnerships, communication, resources, strategies, and sustainability will be discussed to prove the success without the involvement and support of the researcher in Schools A, D and E. Improvements will also be discussed. The product and process characteristics will again emerge from these findings.

In both sections the findings of the data collection methods for the implementation of strategies will be interspersed with quotations from the final focus group discussions.

6.3.2.1   Results from Schools B and C

a. The workshop

A combined workshop was held for School B and C since both schools were near the same town. Fifteen parents and three teachers from both schools attended the workshop, where group discussions allowed interaction between parents and teachers to formulate practicable and contextual strategies for School B and C. The researcher organised and led the workshop with the strong support of the two principals. The teachers were unanimous in expressing the important role the workshop had played in the successful implementation of the SCAF partnership programme, and noted that parents had been active participants. In the final focus group interviews, the teachers of both schools emphasised how the workshop had allowed parents to be confident and to interact: *"The parents were very comfortable, and I personally never thought that parents would get to certain strategies like they did on that day."*

> *"The workshop was a real eye opener to me to see the brilliant practicable ideas that came forward out of discussions. The parents were for the first time not quiet, they talked a lot; usually they are very quiet."*

> Parents of both schools agreed and stated: *"It was a very nice session, we discussed a lot of things and we brainstormed ideas and possible strategies we could use. The parents are definitely more involved and we really learned a lot."*

> *"It was very successful we could speak openly to say what is good at the school and what we could do to help the school."*

b. The SCAF partnership programme considered successful

According to the teachers and the parents of both schools, the aim of the SCAF partnership programme was to involve parents in learning. They therefore knew that the aim was to involve more parents in learning. The parents and teachers of both schools also indicated that they felt the programme was successful because they realised they could play a bigger role in their learners' learning. Parents said:

> *"Successful, the programme gave you an opportunity to see that how we can help the children to learn."*

"It brought us closer to the teachers, it helped us to understand our role and what we can do academically and on a social level as well."

The teachers agreed:

"I think it was very successful, they learned a lot."

"The programme was very successful."

c. Strategy 1: Parent evening (School B and C)

The parent evening provided parents with an opportunity to become involved with their children's learning and development. All the teachers of both schools, as well as all the learners (School B: 104 and School C: 56) and most of the parents (School B: 94 and School C: 48) attended the parent evening. The two principals agreed that parents were excited, interested and willing to help, and they wrote in their reports that:

"It was very interesting to see how many parents attended, especially the dads; they never [previously] come. The parents are willing to help and want to be more involved."

"The parents were very excited, and it was so nice to see the parents with their children coming to the school. The parents were very interested in their children's interests and with what they struggle in school. It was great to see so many parents."

During the final focus group interviews, parents from both schools highlighted the importance of discussing their children's interests with them:

"It was very nice for me, the child could come with the parent and we could discuss certain things."

"That evening was a success because I understand my child a lot better now. The one child told me she likes rope skipping so I learned that night we had to use what she likes to improve learning, so I thought about it and then realised that the rope goes higher on different heights so we could then use measurement. She's in Grade 2 so I could use that to explain height."

The teachers of both schools agreed with the principals and parents about the importance of learners talking to their parents about their interests and what they struggle with:

"It was very good where the parents and the learners communicated with each other; the learners were very eager to tell the parents what they like and what they find difficult."

"We are used to [it] that the learners are not involved in parent evening and this time round we involved parents and the learners and it worked very well. It was really effective to see how these parents and learners communicated that night about their work. The children also get the feeling that their parents are interested in them and in their schoolwork."

d. Strategy 2: CPUT involved with IEP-learners (School B)

Unfortunately strategy 2 could not be implemented during the try-out period at the school; in this strategy CPUT students would write a report on the Individual Education Plan (IEP) learners in the school, and then the teachers would discuss the report with the parents in simple, understandable language in order to involve the parents in activities to be done at home with the learner. The report, however, was late and there was insufficient time to roll out strategy 2. However, the principal did mention the strategy would be employed in the next term.

e. Strategy 2: Family part of a lesson at school (School C)

The teacher of the Grade 1, 2 and 3 combined classes invited a parent to participate in a lesson where she had to talk to the learners about how things had changed since she was at school. A fieldworker observed the lesson and highlighted the following:

1. She had concrete evidence like coins from the past, and learners were given the chance to look at and touch the coins. The learners were given the opportunity to ask questions which they freely did; she answered the questions confidently.

2. The learners were very excited when she promised to visit them again and would show them how they used to bake bread in the old days.

3. She ended the lesson with a beautiful message. She said all the examples she told them about might have changed over the years but some things in life should never change … discipline, respect, love for one's fellow man, pride, and faith.

4. A very interesting and successful lesson.

During the separate interviews between the fieldworker, and the family member and teacher, it was clear that they agreed the lesson had been successful, the family member had felt part of the learning process and that this type of contact was very important. The family member said:

"Yes I enjoyed it thoroughly. In this school I have a few grandchildren and I think it is important for them to know how we lived in the past. We need to be more involved at

the school; the whole community should be more involved. This could be done if the parents ask us to come to school to be part of lessons. Yes I definitely felt that I was part of the learning process."

The teacher agreed and stated:

"According to me the learners enjoyed the lesson extremely; they were very interested in the lesson. I think it is very important for parents and other members of the family to be involved and to talk to their children. She was definitely part of the learning process; the learners learned a lot today."

f. Strategy 3: Farm visits (School B and C)

This strategy utilises community resources to enrich the children's learning experiences. Most of these parents have had very little education and, as a result, feel that they do not have anything to contribute to their children's learning. The strategy serves to build the self-confidence of parents and convince them that they indeed have knowledge that they can impart to a new generation. It also serves to make children proud of the knowledge and skills that their parents demonstrate.

Both schools had two visits, with one being observed by a fieldworker. The fieldworker interviewed the presenters and the teachers who attended. The Grade R, 1, 2 and 3 learners of School B visited an olive and animal sanctuary farm; here the owner presented the lesson. The Grade 4, 5 and 6 learners from School C visited a wine farm/grape farm where three parents presented the lesson.

The observer highlighted the following:

School B – Olive farm and animal sanctuary

1. Three teachers and 42 learners walked to the farm where they were welcomed by the farm owner. She introduced herself to the learners and described the reason for the visit, which was: "The protection of animals."

2. The learners were allowed to 'greet' the animals and also to 'talk' to the animals.

3. The teachers and learners enjoyed the visit thoroughly.

School C – Wine farm/grape farm

1. When we arrived we were welcomed by three parents who were busy working in the fields. The parents introduced themselves to us and we described the purpose of our visit.

2. The parents described how to prune the vines and how to add compost to the vines for maximum growth. During the lesson, learners started to ask more questions freely and were more at ease. The questions the learners asked were answered very proudly by the parents.

3. The parents really enjoyed presenting and answering the questions. I could see the parents were very proud.

The presenters and teachers of both visits agreed that the presenters were part of the learning process and that this kind of contact and use of community resources was important. The presenters said:

"Yes, it felt we were part of the learning process and that we were the teachers today. We would like more of this kind of contact and lessons. It was wonderful to illustrate to the learners how and with what we work, how the vines grow and what we do. We really enjoyed it a lot and the learners as well."

"I felt the learners opened up to me; they did not see me as a teacher. I think in that case they listened more than, for instance, to the teacher. They enjoyed it and learned a lot."

The teacher who attended stated:

"I think they enjoyed it. I think it is very important for learners to know what the parents are doing in their daily work, and the parents could be part of learning [sic] the learner. Yes, they were definitely part of the learning process."

"Yes, it was fantastic, it was free and relaxed and children and adults can always learn from each other. She was warm and she took some of the learners by [the] hand; she spoke to them individually. She was definitely part of the learning process."

g. Strategy 4: Communication via SMS

Since most parents have cell phones, a system was again put in place to communicate information about learners' learning progress instantly to parents via SMS.

At School B, 42 messages were sent, which included general communication and communication regarding learning; eight of these messages were academic messages. Below are a few of the examples that focused on learning:

- *"Parents, your child must please remember to make a robot model out of junk material."*

- *"Dear parents. Please send any plant with your child to school tomorrow – it is part of a lesson."*

- *"Please remember that your child is writing a mathematics test tomorrow."*

At School A, 54 messages were sent: these included general communication and communication regarding learning. Nine of these messages were academic messages. Below are a few examples that focused on learning.

- *"Dear parents. Your child is busy with assessment this week; we will keep you updated regarding themes."*

- *"Dear parents. Please motivate your child to learn; we are writing assessment tests next week."*

- *"Please support your child finding the answers; he or she must just write the answers."*

Teachers and parents from both schools found that the messages through the SMS system improved communication, not only in respect of learning, but also in general. Parents said:

"It was very nice – we understood all the SMSs – it was really nice. I felt part of what is happening in school and in the classroom."

"It is a lot better communication through the SMS system. The SMS is also easy to read."

The teacher agreed:

"A definite winner – could not have asked for something better. The communication is easier and a lot better; the parents also replied very well."

"The SMS system is a very effective system, [and] the parents like it. The parents were not really interested in the letters we send but they are really interested in the SMS."

h. Strategy 5: Recognition evening

At this event, a motivational speaker delivered a very interactive discussion regarding learning and working together. The parents, learners and teachers from School B and C attended the evening. Both schools performed items: School B had a choir singing two songs and School C had children reading and reciting poems. Learners then received a certificate with positive remarks about their learning during the term. The aim was not only to give recognition and encouragement to the learners, but also to make parents proud of their

children's learning achievements. After a meeting, the two principals organised the whole event entirely on their own.

All the learners and teachers of both schools attended the evening; a total of 208 parents also attended the evening. In the focus group interviews, parents from both schools commented that they had enjoyed the evening, and that the event had been very successful, with its focus on encouragement and motivation. Parents said:

"It was very successful; my children were there and I could motivate them; it was really a nice evening … the purpose was to motivate and to encourage our children to do better and to work harder and to recognise what they have done. Now we have the opportunities to encourage our children."

"To motivate the child and parents – to build self-confidence – to know we can make a success out of our lives. We learned that must talk to the children and recognise what they are doing. Although we have different circumstances we can still play a role. It really inspired me to be positive with my child and to recognise what they are doing."

The teacher agreed with the parents:

"I would say that was a very, very good idea. It gives the chance to recognise each learner – it is not just the learners who excel in academic work, or sport or culture; it is everyone. Who get the feeling of recognition? They feel part of the school and they feel very proud. It was a very good strategy. We also concentrated on the positive side in order to motivate them. That really meant a lot to them. Very positive, and it was great to have everybody there – a community feeling."

The data indicated that the implementation of Prototype 4 of the SCAF partnership programme at School B and C, with the researcher in a more limited role, could be considered successful, practicable and effective. Most of the findings correspond with the findings of Prototype 2, and therefore add to the effectiveness of the SCAF partnership programme. The reasons for its effectiveness could be due to the following factors:

1. A workshop created an opportunity for parents and teachers to collaborate and interact on ways to improve parental involvement in learning at their school.
2. Contextual strategies were developed at the workshop.
3. A SCAF partnership programme was developed specifically for School B and School C.
4. Fewer strategies were employed.

5. Strategies were very well attended.

6. Partnerships between the school, community and families were promoted through involving parents in their children's education.

7. Opportunities for informal and formal communication were created for parents to learn about their children's learning, development, needs and interests.

8. Community resources were utilised to enrich children's development and learning.

9. There was an increase in parental involvement in learners' learning at School B and C.

However, it was important to determine the challenges these two schools had encountered and how they thought the programme should be improved in order to finalise the SCAF partnership programme.

i. Challenges and how to improve

Parents and teachers indicated that they wanted the programme to continue, but they needed feedback from parents in order to adapt the programme if necessary. The teachers agreed that there was a need for more social activities and volunteering. Teachers did mention the extra workload, but regarded it as worthwhile.

Maintain the status quo

The parents of both schools agreed that the programme should continue just the way it was. Parents said:

"I do not have any problems with the programme – we should keep it like it is."

"No, I can't think of anything. We must go on with the programme."

Feedback regarding the programme

The teachers at the one school agreed that there should be some kind of feedback to improve the programme. Teachers said:

"The parents must come and give more feedback to the teacher regarding the programme."

Social activities and volunteering

Teachers of both school agreed that the programme should be expanded to include social activities and volunteering. Teachers said:

"The parents and learners should spend more time with each other, even if it is a game day and to bond more. We can bring in more social activities as well."

"More activities and social activities with an academic focus, in a fun way."

Extra work but worth it

The teachers of both schools agreed that the programme required extra work from them but considered it worthwhile. Teachers said:

"Everybody had to spend some extra time on the programme, but it was definitely worth it. We really learned a lot, and know now how to adapt the programme as well."

"It did put some pressure on us, but it was definitely worth it. Once the staff saw the possible outcomes of the programme, they all agreed about the positives we could get out of the programme."

6.3.2.2 Results from Schools A, D and E

The results from data gathering in Schools A, D and E overlap and will be presented together (photographs included in Appendix N). A micro-evaluation commenced at School A to test Prototype 2 and therefore School A had to continue with the programme without any support from the researcher, hence the test for sustainability. At the same time Schools D and E had to implement the whole process on their own from the workshop, to the implementation of strategies, with the support of an electronic manual, and with no support from the researcher. Both schools received a budget to cover possible expenses. Data was gathered (see Chapter 4) through focus group interviews (fieldworker) with parents and teachers separately at School A and an interview (researcher) with the school governing body chairperson and principal at Schools D and E. The three principals also had to keep a journal of what had happened and when.

The data will be presented together as follows:

- The success of the programme.
- What strategies were implemented?
- What were the challenges?
- How were partnerships created for learning?
- How was communication on learning created?
- How were resources utilised in the community?

- The sustainability of the programme.

- How did they experience the electronic manual? (Schools D and E)

a. The success of the programme

The parents and teachers at School A as well as the two principals and SGB chairpersons agreed that the programme was a success. All agreed that the aim of the SCAF partnership programme was to get parents more involved in learning. They all agreed on its success and the parents from School A even mentioned an improvement in schoolwork. Parents said:

"It was successful; there was an improvement in the learners' schoolwork and their results were very good."

The SGB chairperson of School E said:

"I would say very successful; so many parents attended it was overflowing. The parents just wanted to know more and wanted to come more and be involved; just for them to see their child in school and to be part [of it] was fantastic."

The principal of School D said:

"Yes I agree. The school does not stand apathetic from parents [sic]; they have to form a partnership – the one cannot do without the other. The programme is very contagious."

b. What strategies were implemented and how were they attended?

From the journals and focus group interviews the following strategies (Table 6.18) were decided on during a workshop held separately by School D and E, while School A scheduled a meeting between the SGB and the teachers to decide which strategies to use.

Table 6.18: Strategies decided by Schools A, D and E

Strategies		
School A	**School D**	**School E**
Strategy 1: Parent evening	Strategy 1: Parent evening	Strategy 1: Parent evening
Strategy 2: SMS on learning	Strategy 2: Communication through an SMS system	Strategy 2: Open day for visiting
Strategy 3: Training parents	Strategy 3: Evening on alcohol abuse	Strategy 3: Communication through an SMS system
Strategy 4: Recognition evening	Strategy 4: Farm visits	Strategy 4: Farm visits
Strategy 5: Farm visits	Strategy 5: Class visits	Strategy 5: Recognition evening
	Strategy 6: Recognition evening	

The strategies were very well attended.

At School A, the principal said:

"The parents really attended it very well. I would say more than 90 percent, and both parents came – the dad and the mom."

The parents agreed and stated:

"Very well attended [by] the father and the mother as well as other children."

At Schools D and E, the principals agreed on very good attendance:

"Very good, like the classroom visits. I had to stop at a certain point because the parents came too often."

"We really had great attendance – almost 100 percent attendance – it was really great. It just shows you that it works; there is interest in the programme."

c. What were the challenges?

At School A the parents said they had experienced no challenges, while the teachers felt it was a challenge getting parents trained. School E had a problem in communicating with the farms:

"One was communication with the farms."

School D decided to work with the parents who wanted to be involved:

"There weren't really any but there will always be a percentage who will not work together and you will get that anywhere. We decided we would work with the parents who wanted to work together, and that was more than 80 percent of the parents."

d. How were partnerships on learning created?

The teachers of School A and the principals of Schools D and E all believed that partnership were created in that parents accepted the programme, worked together, and were willing to help:

"Definitely, definitely, parents work long working hours during the week, and they were more than willing to give up their weekend time to be part of the programme. They showed an acceptance and wanted to take ownership to play a vital role."

"*Parents are definitely more confident to come and talk to the teachers and the principal. As you could see just now, that parent outside came from work now and she is willing to come and help.*"

e. How was communication on learning created?

The teachers and parents of School A, and the principals and chairpersons of Schools D and E all agreed that the SMS system played a substantial role in creating communication on learning. Better communication also meant a bigger input and say in learning:

"Yes parents and teachers communicated a lot more specifically on learning. Parents had a bigger say in learning."

"*Yes, I used the SMS system a lot, especially for learning, and the parents really responded well to that. At a certain time I did not send as many SMSs and the children did badly in a test; once I started sending SMSs regularly the marks improved.*"

f. How were resources utilised in the community?

The respondents all agreed that parents were used as resource in that they presented lessons; School D stated that the farm owner made a bus available to transport the learners to the farm visit:

"Yes, parents and the school were used as resources."

"Yes; we used the parents as resources, we had one group going to the dairy and cheese factory, where parents were used as presenters, and it was very practicable. I enjoyed it because I don't know how it is done. We also went to the nursery to see how they grow trees. We also had the farm owner come forward and he said we could use the farm bus with no cost at all – we just had to organise it."

g. The sustainability of the programme.

The teachers at School A and both principals at Schools D and E agreed that the focus should be on learning and that a budget was needed; the programme should also be well planned to keep it sustainable:

"I would say, keep the focus on parental involvement in learning. To make it sustainable you have to continue with the programme and you need to budget as we plan to do for next year, 2013. I always say if something works then you have to go on with it."

> *"Planning has to be very good. We have to work closely with the farm managers, and tell them what we achieved this year so that they can see it will be beneficial for them as well."*

h. How did they experience the electronic manual?

Both the principals of Schools D and E regarded the electronic manual as easy to use and very helpful. It also allowed the school to create its own strategies to get parents involved in learning:

> *"Simple and easy to use; there were enough photos, videos, illustrations. So the manual was definitely user friendly. So you can use the programme definitely at any school."*

> *"Fantastic, fantastic! You know the fact the PowerPoint was linked to the videos helped a lot and the electronic program led me to what to do when. It also helped a lot to see what the other schools had done, and to learn from them. But in saying that, we also decided that we are going to do it in our own way and not copy them. And I have to say I did not do this programme because you asked me to; I implemented this programme because we have needed such a programme for years. I always believed we needed to involve parents in learning much more in order to improve learning."*

6.4 Discussion of the results from Schools A – E

The data gathered during the try-out at Schools A to E will allow answers to the research questions posed for this phase.

Research sub-question 2:

What are the product and process characteristics of a practicable, effective, contextually based and sustainable school, community and family partnership programme that increase parental involvement in learning at rural multigrade schools?

Research sub-question 3:

How did the developed school, community and family partnership programme influence parental involvement in learning at rural multigrade schools?

This section therefore focuses on the product characteristics, process characteristics and the influence of the programme on parental involvement.

6.4.1   The product characteristics of the SCAF partnership programme

The product characteristics of the SCAF partnership programme form an integral part of developing a high-quality intervention that should help in solving a complex educational problem. During data gathering through various evaluation methods, the following product characteristics should increase parental involvement in learning through a school, community and partnership programme in rural multigrade schools.

a. A strong focus on learning

Although different in nature, the data from both cycles indicated that parents, teachers, and principals agreed a strong focus on learning was applicable in all the strategies. The strong focus on learning corresponds with the definite need to focus on learning as determined in Phase 1 and during the literature review.

b. Develop practicable strategies; considering challenges

It is clear that Schools A – E considered the challenges parents face when developing strategies to involve parents in learning. Challenges like long working hours had to be considered when the parents and teachers developed strategies; if these had not been considered, the attendance would have been poor. The data gathered at the schools where the try-out commenced indicated that attendance was very good during the implementation. That parents and teachers were allowed to determine and develop their own strategies surely had an impact on their success.

c. Creating opportunities to increase parental involvement in learning

The data showed that a number of strategies were developed at either a workshop (Schools B-E) or a meeting (School A). The workshop allowed the development or adjustment of strategies; these strategies should be seen as the opportunities created to increase parental involvement in learning.

d. Creating partnerships to increase parental involvement in learning

Data indicated that partnerships were created. First during the workshop, where parents and teachers worked together in learning about parental involvement, determining the challenges of parental involvement at school and resources in the community, and then developing strategies. The success of the different implemented strategies indicated that partnerships were created.

e. Creating formal and informal opportunities for communication regarding learning

Data indicated that that formal and informal opportunities were created through the workshop and strategies employed. At the workshop parents and teachers communicated on strategies to increase parental involvement in learning. During the strategies (see section 6.3.1), opportunities were created for all the parents to communicate regarding learning.

f. Utilising community resources to increase parental involvement in learning

It is clear according to the data that community resources were utilised to increase parental involvement in learning. The parents as community members were used as resources at the workshop to determine the challenges that exist with regard to parental involvement at their school, and then to determine strategies. Parents, family members and members of the community were also utilised through the strategies (see section 6.3.1) to increase parental involvement in learning.

6.4.2   The process characteristics of the SCAF partnership programme

Determining the product characteristics of a school, community and family partnership programme will not increase parental involvement in learning if certain process characteristics are not in place to ensure the smooth running and implementation of the programme. The following process characteristics were determined by findings during data gathering in Cycle 2 of Phase 1.

a. Important processes derived from principles and quality indicators

The strategies were considered successful as the data indicated. The strategies developed by parents and teachers had to adhere to certain quality indicators (also the design guidelines) which underpinned the principles (see Table 6.1). These quality indicators should therefore be seen as important processes:

- Invites and welcomes family members into the classroom and finds ways for all families to participate in the educational process and life of the learning community.

- Involves family members in shared decision-making about their children's learning, development, and social life in the classroom.

- Involves family members in decision-making concerning children's learning environments.

- Regular communication with families about their children, their learning and development, curriculum requirements, and events in the classroom.

- Regular communication with families to learn about a child's background in order to gain insights into the child's strengths, interests, and needs.

- Promotes opportunities for families to learn from one another and to support one another.

- Takes children into the community or brings community members into the school in order to enhance children's learning and socialisation.

- Assists families in obtaining information, resources, and services needed to enhance children's learning and development.

- Uses knowledge of children's communities and families as an integral part of the curriculum and their learning experiences.

- Offers information and ideas for parents and family members on how to create a stimulating home learning.

b. Conducting a workshop as Step 1

The data indicated that the parents and teachers enjoyed the workshop and regarded it as successful. The collaboration between parents and teachers at the workshop was an important process. Parents were comfortable and were allowed to speak and discuss issues regarding parental involvement. Content regarding what parental involvement is, the opportunity to discuss challenges, existing resources, and developing strategies, could be considered an important aspect of the success of the workshops.

c. Planning and implementation of strategies as Step 2

The data gathered from Schools A – E indicates the success of the programme and strategies employed. Teachers and principals stated that the programme did influence their workload, but it was all worth it. Before and during implementation a number of meetings were conducted in order to plan the strategies. Schools had to determine who would do what, when and how. The school received a budget and according to the data, a budget is needed for the programme to be sustainable.

d. Manual

The respondents of Schools A – E indicated the importance of the manual. In Schools A, B and C, the schools received a hard copy manual that included information on:

- The context of the school

- Principles and quality indicators of the SCAF partnership programme

- Goals of the SCAF partnership programme

- Summary of the strategies

- Planning of the strategies

- Time schedule

Schools D and E used an electronic manual that enabled them to plan and implement the programme without any support from the researcher. The electronic version included the same information as the hard copy manual, except a PowerPoint presentation to be used at the workshop as well as examples of possible strategies and extra forms to use.

6.4.3 The influence of the SCAF partnership programme on parental involvement in learning

In answering Research sub-question 3, the influence of the SCAF partnership programme on parental involvement in learning had to be determined. If the respondents agreed on the success of the programme, together with an increase in attendance, a focus on learning through strategies, and sustainability (Table 6.19), then the SCAF partnership programme could be considered effective to be used in rural multigrade schools.

Table 6.19:   Influence of the SCAF partnership programme

Influence	Description
1. Success of the programme	According to the data, all the respondents agreed that the programme was successful. Parents, teachers and principals agreed that there was an increase in parental involvement, specifically on learning. The degree of success indicated that the programme had a positive influence on parental involvement in learning.
2. Attendance	The data revealed very good attendance at all the strategies; therefore an increase of parental involvement in learning. Parents and teachers indicated that school attendance had improved as well, in comparison with previous years.
3. Practicable strategies	The fact that all the schools managed to develop and implement practicable strategies with success also reflects a positive influence on parental involvement in learning. The strategies all focused on learning, albeit through partnerships, communication or utilising community resources.
4. Sustainability	Data indicated that schools D and E were also able to develop and implement practicable strategies without the support of the researcher. Respondents from these schools indicated the same success results as Schools A, B and C. The SCAF partnership programme was sustainable, and without the support of the researcher, schools D and E could still influence parental involvement in learning positively.

6.5   Conclusion

In this chapter the two cycles of the Prototyping Phase of the design research process were documented. The emphasis of the cycle was on developing a SCAF partnership programme that would increase parental involvement in rural multigrade schools. This was done by further developing the SCAF partnership programme in cycles and employing the programme in five schools with differing degrees of support. Consistency, practicability and effectiveness were determined through the evaluation methods employed. The effectiveness allowed the researcher to consider the manual and prototype 4 as the final programme and also to determine the characteristics of a SCAF partnership programme that increases parental involvement in learning. In the next chapter a summary, conclusions, and recommendation will be presented.

CHAPTER SEVEN

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

7.1 Introduction

> *"Education is the great engine of personal development. It is through education that the daughter of a peasant can become a doctor, that the son of a mineworker can become the head of the mine, that a child of farm workers can become the president of a great nation. It is what we make out of what we have, not what we are given, that separates one person from another"* (Nelson Mandela).

The context and concept of rural multigrade education in South Africa constitutes a 'wicked' problem. However, a positive trend is that that developed, and some developing countries, have tamed this 'wicked' problem with a variety of methods and interventions. Literature revealed that parental involvement should be considered a very important aspect, especially in the rural multigrade milieu. Considerable research (Epstein, 2009; Jeynes, 2011) has proved the positive effects of parental involvement in improving quality education. Research in developing countries like Colombia and India has identified parental involvement as one of the principle interventions that has led to the success of the Escuela Nueva and River Rishi Valley Project multigrade education models. To increase parental involvement, research done in developing and developed countries focused on school, community and family partnership programmes.

Millions of learners in South Africa currently receive their school education in a multigrade setting; it is therefore imperative that this specific type of education should be supported in order for the marginalised rural poor to have any chance of personal development. In terms of the political, philosophical, physical and economic factors impinging on multigrade education, as well as the educational characteristics of multigrade education, a myriad of internal and external challenges, specifically in South Africa, currently exist. It is axiomatic that these challenges need to be considered in the quest to improve meaningful access to quality education. The reality is that multigrade education in South Africa is poorly supported. The Education Policy Consortium (2011: 70) finds a general neglect of multigrade education in South Africa; this constitutes a marginalisation of the poor and voiceless in our society, for whom multigrade education is a reality.

Because of the context of multigrade education, the internal and external challenges of the multigrade milieu in South Africa, and the lack of support, it became evident that for parental involvement to have an effect on multigrade education in South Africa, an intervention was needed. For such an intervention to increase parental involvement in learning at rural

multigrade schools, the characteristics of such a programme were needed. A school, community and family partnership programme was designed and developed through design research. The design research process followed in this study allowed the researcher to determine the:

- current need for and requirements of a SCAF partnership programme;

- product and process characteristics of a SCAF partnership programme; and

- the effect of the SCAF partnership programme on parental involvement.

The SCAF partnership programme focused on involving parents through the creation of partnerships and by effective communication between the school, community and family, by utilising resources in the community. Hence, the focus was on determining the capital that exists within the multigrade context. The SCAF partnership programme not only managed to involve parents in learning, and but also had a huge effect on the different role players (Table 7.1) that participated in this research.

Table 7.1:   SCAF partnership programme's influence on role-players

Role-players	Influence
Principals, teachers and parents	✓ Interaction and collaboration on how to increase parental involvement in learning in their specific context. ✓ Were empowered and allowed to be active partners in providing opportunities to be involved in their learners' education. ✓ Were empowered and allowed to be part of the development of informal and formal opportunities regarding communication on learning. ✓ Were empowered and allowed to be part of developing strategies that would utilise resources in the community. ✓ Principals, teachers and parents received support on how to increase parental involvement in the classroom through the SCAF partnership programme. ✓ Principals managed the SCAF partnership programme. ✓ Teachers were convenors of strategies to be employed by the SCAF partnership programme. ✓ Parents were active partners in learning.
Community members	✓ Other members of the community were utilised as resources for learning.
Learners	✓ Learners experienced their family members as active partners in their education.

This final chapter concludes the research for this thesis. The research process is summarised in Section 7.2, followed by reflections on the conceptual framework (Section 7.3) and a summary of the research findings according to the research questions (Section 7.4). This is followed by reflections on the methodology (Section 7.5) and on the role of the

researcher (Section 7.6). The conclusions and recommendations are represented in Sections 7.7 and 7.8 respectively.

7.2   Summary of the research process

In order to develop an intervention that would increase parental involvement in learning at rural multigrade schools, the characteristics of such an intervention needed to be determined; hence the focus on the characteristics in the main research question.

Main research question:

What are the characteristics of an effective school, community and family partnership programme that increase parental involvement in learning at rural multigrade schools in South Africa?

Characteristics refer to the elements that should be present in a school, community and partnership programme for rural multigrade schools in South Africa. An effective partnership programme should:

- be practicable and sustainable for the school, community and families;
- focus on involving parents in the children's learning; and
- promote partnerships, create opportunities for communication and utilise resources.

In order to address the main research question, three research sub-questions were formulated.

Research sub-question 1:

What are the current needs for and requirements of a school, community and family partnership programme that will increase parental involvement in learning for rural multigrade schools in South Africa?

Research sub-question 1 and the research sub-question aimed to determine the current state and challenges of parental involvement at rural multigrade schools. The current state will help determine the need for and requirements of a school, community and family partnership programme to increase parental involvement in learning at rural multigrade schools. This question was addressed by extrapolating existing knowledge from literature and identifying the context of rural multigrade schools. Research sub-question 1 was the focus of Chapters 2, 3 and 5.

Research sub-question 2:

What are the product and process characteristics of a practicable, effective, contextually based and sustainable school, community and family partnership programme that increase parental involvement in learning at rural multigrade schools?

Once the requirements and possible characteristics of a parental involvement programme are determined, the programme needs to be designed and further developed. Research sub-question 2 aimed to determine the specific product and process characteristics of the programme. The product characteristics are, the 'what', that is, what are the desired opportunities that may increase parental involvement in learning, that were created through the intervention to establish collaboration between school, community and families. The process characteristics are the 'how', referring to the processes that were used to create partnerships, informal and formal opportunities for communication and the utilisation of resources in the community with a specific focus on learning. Research sub-question 2 was the focus of Chapter 3.

Research sub-question 3:

How did the developed school, community and family partnership programme influence parental involvement in learning at rural multigrade schools?

Research sub-question 3 investigated whether the partnership programme with its current characteristics had an effect on parents becoming more involved in their children's learning. The design principles that led to identifying the characteristics were also determined through this question. These principles could support other researchers in their own development of parental involvement programmes.

The design research process went through two phases with cycles:

a. **Preliminary Phase:** This phase focused on research sub-question 1.

Research sub-question 1 was addressed by the literature review and context analysis. The literature review and the context of the study provided key information on what is already known about parental involvement and rural multigrade schools. The conceptual framework aligned the key concepts and provided a structure to understand how to improve parental involvement in learning at rural multigrade schools in the Western Cape, South Africa. The conceptual framework focused on three sections: the current reality, the ideal reality and the proposed intervention as a process. This information, together with a context analysis done in Phase 1, would allow the generation of ideas for tentative design principles, guidelines and

specifications, hence the first prototype. During the context analysis (Chapter 5) a survey was conducted with principals of rural multigrade schools in three rural educational districts in the Western Cape. Focus group interviews were also held with parents and teachers (separately) at four rural multigrade schools. The data gathered was used to answer the four sub-questions posed for this phase.

b. **Prototype Phase (Two cycles):** The second phase was the Prototype and Evaluation Phase. Research sub-question 2 and research sub-question 3 were focused on in Phase 2.

The combined prototype and evaluation phase focused on determining the characteristics of a practicable, effective and sustainable school, community and partnership programme that increase parental involvement in learning. If the proposed programme increased parental involvement at rural multigrade schools, it could be labelled effective.

An iterative process was followed during cycle 1 and cycle 2. In cycle 1 the first prototype developed according to the ideas generated in Phase 1, went through formative evaluation methods: expert appraisal and screening. The adapted Prototype 2 then went through formative evaluation methods: walkthrough and a micro-evaluation. During the micro-evaluation, a range of methods: logs, interviews, reports and observations (see Chapter 6) was used to formatively evaluate Prototype 2 – hence the adapted Prototype 2 became Prototype 3. During cycle 2, Prototype 3 was subjected to expert appraisal, followed by a walkthrough process; then the adapted Prototype 4 went through a try-out process where a range of formative evaluation methods was employed: journals, interviews and observations (see Chapter 6).

Owing to the success experienced and the degree of effectiveness in Phase 1, an Assessment/Evaluation Phase was not required, hence the combined phase. The third research sub-question was also answered during Phase 2.

The formative evaluation methods employed during the two cycles allowed the study to present, through the findings, how parental involvement in learning was influenced at rural multigrade schools. The data from each evaluation served to prove the tentative design principles and to inform the development of the next prototype which was again evaluated. In the next section, the conceptual framework is discussed.

7.3   Reflection on the conceptual framework

The conceptual framework (see Figure 7.1) that was used in this study was developed prior to the prototype phase by using the literature review and context of the study. A strong

emphasis was placed on the current reality, the ideal reality, and the proposed intervention as a process.

The current reality is a key concept of the conceptual framework that focuses on the current existing separate spheres of influence in the rural community context within schools. Separate, shared and sequential responsibilities of families and schools can exist; because of the large number of challenges (see Chapter 2) rural multigrade schools encounter in their contexts, separate responsibilities prevail. Rural multigrade parents face challenges like illiteracy, long working hours, poverty and unemployment. The challenges are considered both external and internal. The challenges militate against an overlapping of learning at school, at home or in the community.

To achieve the ideal, teachers and parents need to interact and develop contextual strategies so that learning at home, learning at school and learning in the community can overlap, which could lead to greater shared responsibility for learning. This, however, could not be done with a 'one size fits all approach, therefore the capital that currently exists needs to be determined. According to Bourdieu (see Chapter 3), capital can be seen as resources comprise three fundamental types: economic capital, cultural capital and social capital. The capital at school and home needs to be utilised to enhance learning through parental involvement. The capital in the community, however, needs to be managed because the community can be used as resources by parents and teachers. The capital in the community will differ from context to context; the teachers and parents will therefore manage the community capital in the specific context with specific resources when needed and applicable. In order to utilise school and home capital together with the management of community capital, interaction and communication between parents and the teachers is imperative. The proposed intervention as a process enables the parents and teachers of rural multigrade schools to interact and collaborate in a workshop environment. At the workshop, parents and teachers will determine the challenges and positives regarding parental involvement at their school; the three design principles proposed, with a set of quality indicators, will be used in order to determine practicability and contextually based strategies to be implemented through a certain process. The three design principles (see Chapter 3) were chosen in order to focus parental involvement specifically on learning:

- **Principle 1**: The promotion of partnerships of schools with families and the provision of a variety of opportunities for families and community members to be involved in children's learning and development.

- **Principle 2**: The use by the school of formal and informal opportunities for communication and information sharing with families.

- **Principle 3**: The school uses community resources and family culture to enrich children's development and learning experiences.

The key actors (parents, teachers and principals) will then be responsible to implement their own developed strategies in order to improve parental involvement in learning. Owing to the success of the workshops, the development of practicable, contextually based strategies, the implementation of the SCAF partnership programme at the five schools, and ultimately the increased parental involvement in learning at rural multigrade schools, it was necessary to adapt the conceptual framework only minimally.
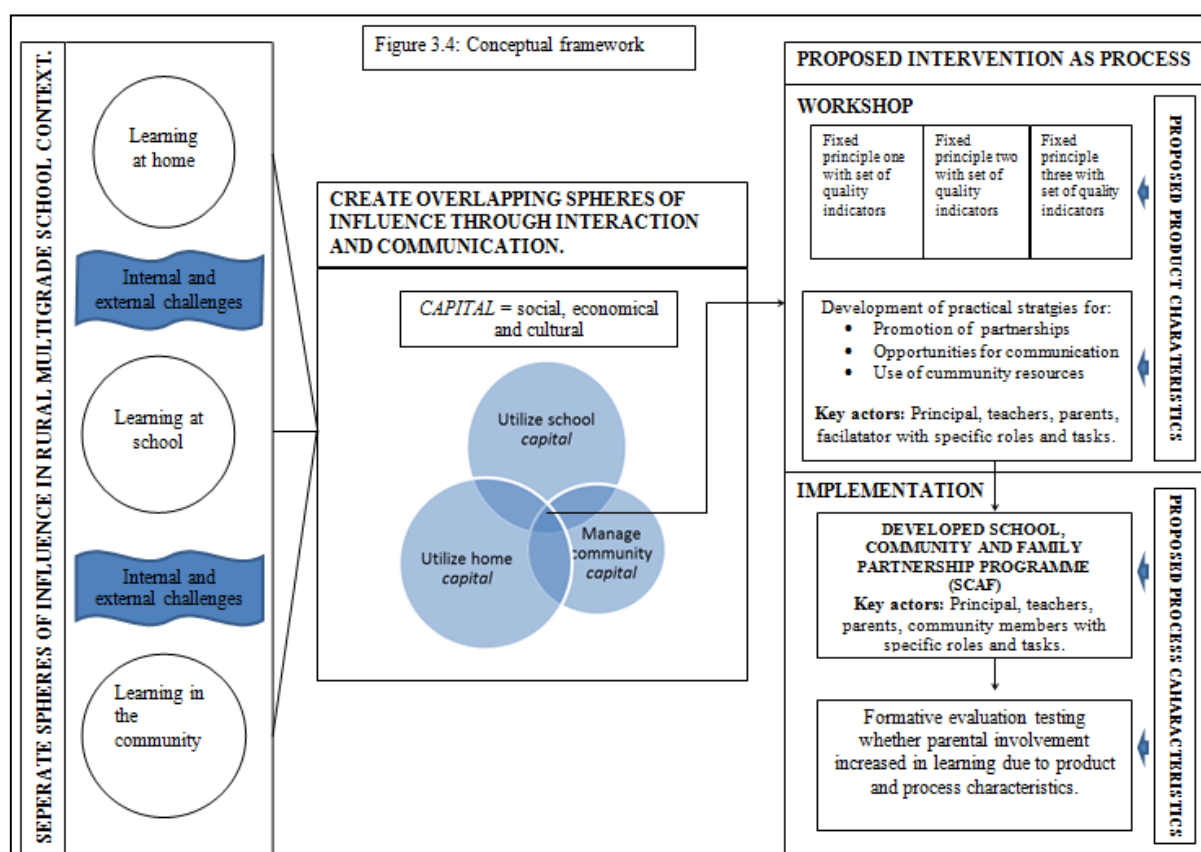
Figure 7.1:   The conceptual framework (see also Figure 3.4)

The adapted conceptual framework (Figure 7.2) incorporated Step 1, which included the workshop as a very important aspect of developing a SCAF partnership programme that was tailor made for the specific rural multigrade school. Step 2 and the word planning were added to implementation. The planning and implementation section should be seen as one, in order for the intervention to become a reality. Without proper planning, the strategies developed during the workshop would not be realised in the school, thus this was a very important aspect of the intervention.

The proposed intervention as a process should also allow for the overlapping of the product and process characteristics between the two steps. Although the two steps would be conducted separately, the product and process characteristics would be present in both sections. A focus on learning as a product characteristic would prevail at the workshop as well as the planning and implementation process – hence the overlapping of product and process characteristics in both sections.
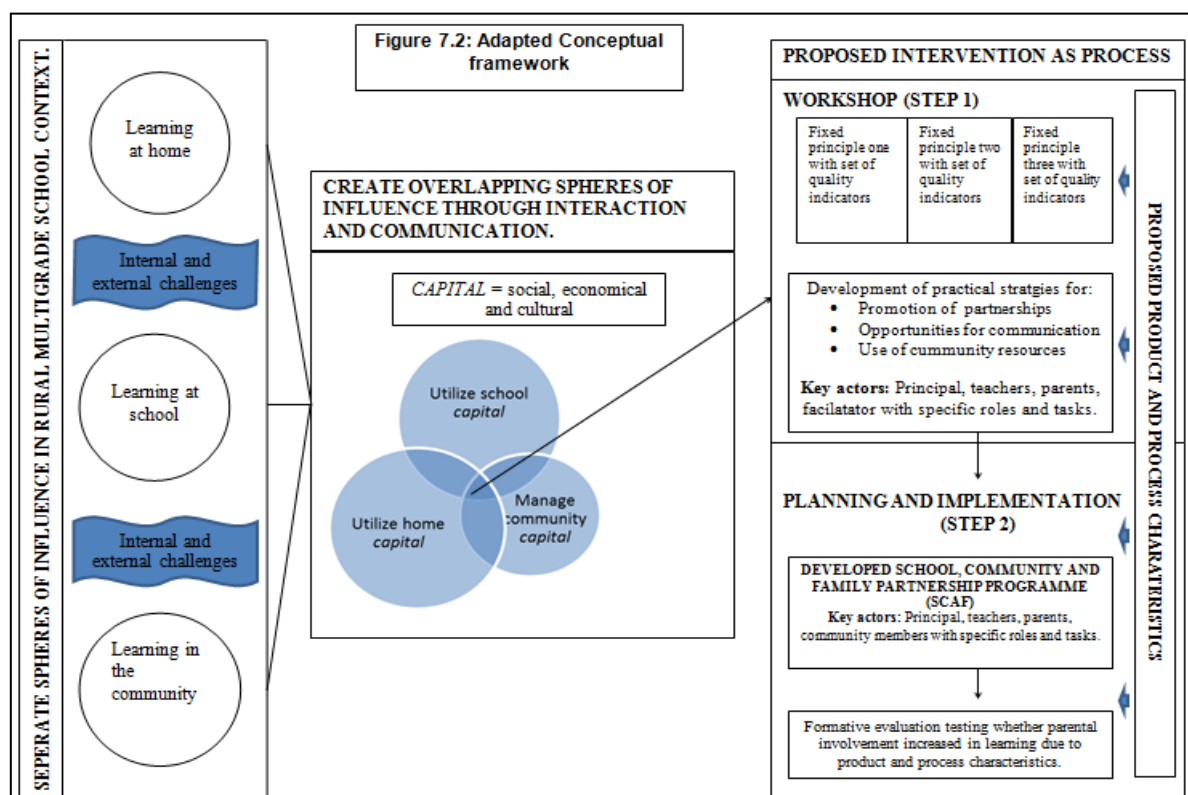
Figure 7.2:   The adapted conceptual framework

7.4   Summary of results

The research results are presented in this section according to the research questions. The complete results of the research are reported in Chapter 5 and 6.

The main research question for this study is:

What are the characteristics of an effective school, community and family partnership programme that increase parental involvement in learning at rural multigrade schools in South Africa?

Three research sub-questions were developed to answer the main research question.

7.4.1 Research sub-question 1

What are the current needs for and requirements of a school, community and family partnership programme that will increase parental involvement in learning for rural multigrade schools in South Africa?

This research question was answered through conducting a survey in 147 rural multigrade schools in the Western Cape and four focus group interviews conducted separately with 51 parents and 14 teachers of four rural multigrade schools. The survey and focus group interviews commenced during Phase 1. Research sub-question was divided into the both the state of, and challenges of, parental involvement, as well as the need for and requirements of a school, community and family partnership programme in rural multigrade schools.

a. The state of parental involvement

The respondents all agreed that parental involvement was important, specifically for better academic achievements. Almost half of the principals indicated that they did not have a parental involvement programme, and more than half indicated that parental involvement at their school was not good. All the teachers concurred that parental involvement was poor. More than half of the principals indicated that it was their responsibility to develop or enhance parental involvement through a programme. The majority of principals also indicated that educational authorities expected them to manage parental involvement at their school. Data indicated that schools conducted quarterly meetings with parents. Parents and teachers' views on the five types of parental involvement differed regarding parenting, learning at home and collaborating with the community. These findings indicated that parental involvement in general needs attention; the focus areas could be parenting, learning at home and collaborating with the community.

b. Challenges of parental involvement

Data indicated that parents, teachers and principals agreed that a lack of support, the long working hours of parents, illiteracy of parents and socio-economic problems were all challenges detrimental to effective parental involvement at rural multigrade schools. These challenges were to be kept in mind when developing a parental involvement programme.

c. The need for a school, community and family partnership programme

The teachers, parents and principals all agreed that there was a need for a school, community and family partnership programme that takes the unique circumstances of parents and schools into consideration.

d. Requirements of a school, community and family partnership programme

Parents agreed that the focus should be on involving those parents currently not involved; data indicated that workshops and courses could be possible methods for facilitating parent participation. Teachers, parents and principals agreed that there was a need for parents to be more involved in learning.

From this data, the literature review and the context of the study, tentative design specifications were suggested (see Chapter 5).

7.4.2   Research sub-question 2

What are the product and process characteristics of a practicable, effective, contextually based and sustainable school, community and family partnership programme that increase parental involvement in learning at rural multigrade schools?

This research question was answered through a wide range of formative evaluation methods which included: expert appraisals, screenings, walkthroughs, reports, logs, journals, observations and focus group interviews. These formative evaluation methods were employed during Phase 2, Cycles 1 and 2 (see Chapter 6). The research question can be divided into two sections: the product characteristics and the process characteristics.

7.4.2.1   The product characteristics of the SCAF partnership programme

The product characteristics of a SCAF partnership programme form an integral part of developing a high-quality intervention that should help to solve a complex educational problem. The following product characteristics were determined.

a.   A strong focus on learning

Although different in nature, the data from both cycles indicated that the parents, teachers, and principals all agreed a strong focus on learning was applicable to all the strategies. The strong focus on learning corresponds with a definite need to focus on learning, as determined in Phase 1 and during the literature review.

b.   Develop practicable strategies while considering challenges

During the micro-evaluation at School A and the try-out process at Schools A – E, data indicated that practicable strategies should be developed by the parents and teachers to involve parents more in learning. Challenges like parents' long working hours had to be considered when parents and teachers developed strategies; if these were ignored,

attendance would have been poor. The data gathered at the schools where the try-out commenced indicates that attendance was very good during the implementation. The fact that parents and teachers were allowed to determine and develop their own strategies certainly had an impact on the success of the strategies.

c. Creating opportunities to increase parental involvement in learning

The data showed that a number of strategies were developed at either a workshop (School A in Cycle 1 and Schools B – E in Cycle 2) or a meeting (School A in Cycle 2). The workshop allowed the development, and the meeting allowed the adjustment of strategies; these strategies should be seen as the opportunities created to increase parental involvement in learning.

d. Creating partnerships to increase parental involvement in learning

Data indicated that partnerships were created. First during the workshop, where parents and teachers worked together in learning about parental involvement, determining the challenges of parental involvement at school, and identifying resources in the community, and then developing strategies. Data also indicated the success of the different strategies, the strategies focused on creating partnerships for learning. Examples included the parents visiting the school, parent evenings focused on learning, family part of lessons, workshops on substance abuse and the training of parents (see Chapter 6). These partnerships between parents and teachers were created to improve learning.

e. Creating formal and informal opportunities for communication regarding learning

Data indicated that that formal and informal opportunities were created through the workshop and strategies employed. At the workshops, although limited in number, parents communicated on strategies to increase parental involvement in learning. During the strategies (see Chapter 6) opportunities were created for all the parents to communicate regarding learning. Strategies that were employed were communication via SMS and the recognition evenings.

f. Utilising community resources to increase parental involvement in learning

It is clear according to the data that community resources were utilised to increase parental involvement in learning. The parents, as community members, were used as resources at the workshop to determine the challenges that exist in respect of parental involvement at their school, and then to determine strategies. Parents, family members and members of the community were also utilised through the strategies (see Chapter 6) to increase parental

involvement in learning. Strategies included families participating in lessons, farm visits, and workshops on substance abuse, recognition evenings, class visits and training of parents.

7.4.2.2   The process characteristics of the SCAF partnership programme

Determining the product characteristics of a school, community and family partnership programme would not increase parental involvement in learning if certain process characteristics were not in place to ensure the smooth running and implementation of the programme. The data revealed the following procedural characteristics:

a. Important processes derived from principles and quality indicators

The strategies were considered successful as the data indicated. The developed strategies by parents and teachers had to adhere to certain quality indicators (also the design guidelines) which underpinned the principles (see Chapter 6). These quality indicators should therefore be seen as important processes:

- Invites and welcomes family members into the classroom and finds ways for all families to participate in the educational process and life of the learning community.

- Involves family members in shared decision-making about their children's learning, development, and social life in the classroom.

- Involves family members in decision-making concerning children's learning environments.

- Regular communication with families about their children, their learning and development, curriculum requirements, and events in the classroom.

- Regular communication with families to learn about a child's background in order to gain insights into the child's strengths, interests, and needs.

- Promotes opportunities for families to learn from one another and to support one another.

- Takes children into the community or brings community members into the school in order to enhance children's learning and socialisation.

- Assists families in obtaining information, resources, and services needed to enhance children's learning and development.

- Uses knowledge of children's communities and families as an integral part of the curriculum and their learning experiences.

- Offers information and ideas for parents and family members on how to create a stimulating home learning

These processes were incorporated in strategy development at the various workshops to ensure good quality strategies that focused on improving parental involvement in learning.

b. Conducting a workshop as Step 1

The data indicated that the parents and teachers had enjoyed the workshop and regarded it as successful. The collaboration between parents and teachers at the workshop was an important process. Parents were comfortable and were allowed to speak and discuss issues regarding parental involvement. Content regarding what parental involvement is, and the opportunity to discuss challenges, existing resources, and the development of strategies, could be considered an important aspect of the success of the workshops.

c. Planning and implementation of strategies as Step 2

The data gathered from Schools A - E indicates the success of the programme and strategies employed. Teachers and principals stated that the programme had influenced their workload, but that this was outweighed by the benefits. Before and during implementation a number of meetings were held to plan strategies. Schools had to determine who would do what, when and how. The school received a budget, and according to the data, a budget is essential for the programme to be sustainable.

d. Manual

The respondents of School A – E indicated the importance of the manual. Schools A, B and C received a hard copy manual that included information regarding:

- The context of the school.
- Principles and quality indicators of the SCAF partnership programme.
- Goals of the SCAF partnership programme.
- Summary of the strategies.
- Planning of the strategies.
- Time schedules.

Schools D and E used an electronic manual that enabled them plan and implement the programme without any support from the researcher. The electronic version included the

same information as the hard copy manual, except a PowerPoint presentation used at the workshop, as well as examples of possible strategies and extra forms to use.

7.4.3   Research sub-question 3

How did the developed school, community and family partnership programme influence parental involvement in learning at rural multigrade schools?

In answering research sub-question 3, the influence of the SCAF partnership programme on parental involvement in learning had to be determined. If the respondents agreed on the success of the programme, together with an increase in attendance, and a focus on learning through strategies and sustainability, then the SCAF partnership programme could be considered effective for use in rural multigrade schools.

a. Success of the programme

According to the data, all the respondents agreed that the programme was successful. Parents, teachers and principals agreed that there was an increase in parental involvement, specifically in learning. The degree of success indicates that the programme had a positive influence on parental involvement in learning.

b. Attendance

The data revealed very good attendance at all the strategies, therefore indicating an increase of parental involvement in learning at all the schools. Parents and teachers from School A – E indicated that attendance had improved, in comparison with that of previous years.

c. Practicable strategies

That all the schools managed to develop and implement practicable strategies successfully also reflects a positive influence on parental involvement in learning. The strategies all focused on learning, whether through partnerships, communication or utilising community resources.

d. Sustainability

Data indicated that Schools D and E were also able to develop and implement practicable strategies without the support of the researcher. Respondents from these schools indicated the same success results as Schools A, B and C. The SCAF partnership programme was sustainable, and without the support of the researcher, Schools D and E could still influence parental involvement in learning positively.

7.5   Reflections on research methodology

Design research applied in this study allowed the development of a high-quality intervention to solve a complex educational problem. A set of design principles was applied which provided insights into the purpose of the study, its key characteristics, guidelines, implementation, and theoretical and empirical proof. From a pragmatist point of view, design research enabled the researcher to determine 'what works' and solutions to problems. Design research allowed the researcher the opportunity to design, implement and evaluate various prototypes. Through design research, the role players, teachers and parents were able be intrinsic to the development of a SCAF partnership programme. Although the design principles were pre-determined, the process of determining strategies appropriate to their context, and participating in the process of implementation, definitely added to a feeling of ownership. A feeling of 'belonging', and of being part of one's own destiny regarding parental involvement in learning, was facilitated by the use of design research. The design research approach also allows for the use of mixed methods, as employed in the study. The combination of methods meant that the various weaknesses inherent in qualitative and quantitative methods could be supplemented with the different strengths of the methods, leading to more robust results in the preliminary phase. Owing to the inclusion of parents and teachers as respondents in the majority of the different evaluation methods, triangulation could be applied. The inclusion of experts in developing the different prototypes should enhance the validity and quality of the intervention developed.

One of the dilemmas of design research includes the complication of working in a real world setting, where you, as researcher, may be a cultural stranger; therefore the need to be adaptable (Plomp, 2009). However, in this research, the researcher was no stranger to the school environment. As a teacher, the researcher had considerable empathy with teachers and parents from rural multigrade schools. This allowed the researcher to be more sympathetic to the plethora of challenges facing rural communities, especially those confronting teachers and parents; hence better collaboration and a mutually beneficial relationship with the school, teachers and parents ensued.

Another dilemma in this study relates to the researcher's dual role as evaluator and facilitator of the school, community and partnership programme. Therefore two experts were consulted during the study, and the study was open to public scrutiny during presentations made at two conferences and two colloquiums. A strong research design was developed and each of the cycles was given the same importance. The role of the researcher eventually declined to a degree of no support.

7.6   The role of the researcher

During this study, the researcher had to fill multiple roles (see Chapter 4). During the two phases the researcher assumed roles that included developer of the programme, motivator, supporter, observer and interviewer. The researcher compensated by gradually withdrawing from implementation and data gathering. In Phase 2, cycle 2, the researcher used a fieldworker to conduct observations and focus group interviews at Schools A, B and C. During implementation the researcher was very involved in Phase 1; however in Phase 2 the researcher supported Schools B and C in conducting the workshops, but expected the principals to manage the programmes at their schools. At Schools D and E, during Phase 2, cycle 2, the researcher provided no support, and only explained the electronic manual to the two principals.

7.7   Conclusions

Five major conclusions were constructed through the research results.

a.   A SCAF partnership programme can increase parental involvement in learning at rural multigrade schools.

Data demonstrated that after the development and adaptation of a SCAF partnership programme in two cycles with four prototypes, there was an increase in parental involvement in learning. Respondents from the five schools all agreed that the SCAF partnership programme could be viewed successful. The strategies that were developed were very well attended. All the strategies focused on learning; an increase of parental involvement in learning was detected at the five schools. Data revealed that all the strategies had a strong focus on involving parents in learning.

b.   A SCAF partnership programme allows utilising school, home and community capital through interaction and collaboration to increase parental involvement in learning.

Data indicated that although numerous challenges do exist, the parents, schools and communities within the multigrade milieu do have the social, cultural and economic capital to increase parental involvement in learning. The strategies that were developed for each school during a well-planned workshop demonstrated that when collaboration and interaction between parents and teachers occurred, school, home and community capital could be utilised. Through interaction and collaboration between parents and teachers during a workshop, practicable and contextually based strategies could be developed. These strategies (see Chapter 6) were all considered successful strategies, and had a role in

increasing parental involvement in learning. It is important to note that parents were empowered through their role in the development of the strategies as well as their part in the implementation process. The fact that parents and teachers developed their own strategies made them 'own' these strategies, thereby creating a feeling of 'belonging' and 'value adding' to the SCAF partnership programme.

c. A SCAF partnership programme should focus on learning through creating partnerships, opportunities for communication and utilising community resources.

Data revealed that when the intervention focused on learning through creating partnerships, opportunities for communication and utilising community resources, an increase in parental involvement occurred. The strategies that were developed were successful according to the respondents; these strategies were all developed by the parents and teachers at workshops. The strategies had to fit the criteria of creating partnerships and opportunities for communication, and utilising community resources. All the strategies had to focus on learning as well.

d. A SCAF partnership programme should be employed through a specific process.

During the development of a SCAF partnership programme for each of the five schools, it became evident that a certain procedure had to be followed in order to develop a contextual programme that addressed the needs of the specific school. Step one was to conduct a workshop with parents and teachers. At the workshop, parents and teachers interacted and collaborated in order to design an applicable SCAF partnership programme for their own school and context. Important aspects of the workshop included the following factors:

- Determining the positives regarding parental involvement at the school.

- Determining the challenges of parental involvement in learning at the school.

- Determining the resources (capital) in the community.

- Developing practicable strategies to match the predetermined principles and quality indicators.

Step two included planning and implementation. In order for a school to implement the programme, the determined strategies had to incorporated into the programme of the current school. A meeting was scheduled for the staff of the school to choose the strategies to implement during that term; goals were also determined, as well as the specific convenors of and dates for each strategy. During implementation the following were considered important:

- The principal needed to oversee the implementation of the SCAF partnership programme.

- Each strategy decided on should be extensively and well planned in advance.

- Extra meetings should be scheduled for each strategy during the term of implementation.

- The convenor of the various strategies should ensure that each strategy focused on getting parents involved in learning specifically.

- The strategies should be visible in the school; convenors should put up posters and photographs taken during the implementation of the strategies.

- Implemented strategies should be visible to the local community through media (local newspapers) and to the education authorities in that district.

- The principal and teachers should reflect on implemented strategies in order to make strategies even more practicable and efficient.

This process was implemented at the five schools and was considered successful.

e. Design research offers an appropriate and powerful approach to design, develop and implement a SCAF partnership programme that increases parental involvement in learning at rural multigrade schools.

During this research, the importance of context, consultation and collaboration with the parents and teachers of rural multigrade schools was emphasised. Design research is an effective method of developing various prototypes in collaboration with users to ensure contextual appropriateness (Plomp, 2009). By including parents and teachers in the process, ownership of the SCAF partnership programme was enhanced. This led to parents and teachers being motivated to employ strategies that would ultimately increase parental involvement in learning. Implementing the SCAF partnership programme enabled the researcher to adapt the programme according to data gathered during the employment of formative evaluation methods. Design research enabled the study to prove the need for parental involvement in rural multigrade schools, and facilitated the improvement of parental involvement in rural multigrade schools.

7.8   Recommendations

The recommendations for this study are classified according to research, policy, and practice.

7.8.1   Research

Four prototypes were developed for this study. The design research process can be considered effective in designing a SCAF partnership programme to increase parental involvement in learning. Although Prototype 4 was implemented in five schools in the Western Cape, and considered effective in increasing parental involvement in learning and sustainable in three of the schools, further research is required to determine whether the programmes at these schools are still running; this would further prove their effectiveness and sustainability. Research at rural multigrade schools in other provinces of South Africa is, however, needed to determine whether the SCAF partnership programme is transferable to other rural multigrade schools with different contexts. Research is further needed to determine whether the SCAF partnership programme could be implemented at the traditional monograde schools. The aim of the research was to increase parental involvement in learning; research is thus needed to determine whether the implemented SCAF partnership programme had any influence on the academic achievements of learners.

7.8.2   Policy

Although parental involvement is seen as a very important aspect of education, there is currently no policy on parental involvement programmes in South Africa. Parents are by law members of the governing body of the specific school. Policy in South Africa does not require schools to develop or even have a parental involvement programme in learning; however parental and community involvement is one of the sections in the Whole School Evaluation Policy and schools are evaluated accordingly. The Western Cape Education Department does, however, value parental involvement in learning, and considers that by providing pamphlets, letters and tips online for schools, teachers and parents, sufficient parental involvement in learning will commence automatically. Letters, pamphlets and tips available online will, however, not improve parental involvement. In contrast to South Africa, in the United States of America parental involvement programmes are compulsory. If the Department of Education wants to improve parental involvement in learning, then the SCAF partnership programme is a good example of 'what' to implement in rural multigrade schools and 'how' to implement it. Policy is therefore needed to make parental involvement in learning a reality. Parental involvement programmes to increase learning should be compulsory, especially in rural multigrade schools.

7.8.3 Practice

According to data, it is imperative that when schools develop their own SCAF partnership programme, the programme characteristics should focus on learning through creating partnerships and opportunities for communication, and utilising community resources. The process characteristics allow the programme to be implemented in the best possible way. During the initial workshop it is very important that parents and teachers are well informed regarding what parental involvement in learning is. Once they understand what parental involvement is, they can determine the positives and challenges that exist regarding parental involvement in learning at their school and the resources in their community (capital). The information gathered through this process will allow parents and teachers to become active partners to collaborate and interact in order to develop the best possible practicable and contextually based strategies for implementation at their schools. The many rural multigrade schools in South Africa need to be informed of the SCAF partnership programme and included in the quest for greater parental involvement in learning. Some possibilities include:

- Implementation of the SCAF partnership programme on a larger scale at rural multigrade schools in the Western Cape and South Africa.

- Training of departmental officials, principals and teachers regarding the implementation and monitoring of the SCAF partnership programme.

- Including the SCAF partnership programme in the Western Cape Education Department's budget, in order to provide funding towards the implementation of the programme.

- Utilising the key role players of the five schools where implementation occurred as presenters during training of principals, teachers and parents at the schools where the SCAF partnership programme is intended to be implemented.

- Providing rural multigrade schools with the electronic SCAF partnership programme DVD.

- Developing a website as a support and monitoring mechanism for rural multigrade schools.

7.9 Conclusion

This aim of this study was to improve parental involvement in learning through a SCAF partnership programme at rural multigrade schools. The challenges that these schools and parents face daily are considered detrimental to parental involvement. The use of design research as a method to design, develop, implement and evaluate a SCAF partnership

programme for rural multigrade schools both facilitated and increased parental involvement in learning at these schools.

All parents want the best possible education for their children, and the parents of rural multigrade learners have proved that they can have a positive influence on learning if the capital that exists within their communities is exploited through utilising the product and process characteristics of the proposed SCAF partnership programme.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Action teams for partnership responsibilities (ATP)

- Document presents new practices of partnership, so that everyone knows how individual teachers, and the school as a whole, communicate and work with families.

- Develop annually a detailed Action Plan for Partnerships linked to school improvement plans, including activities for all six types of involvement, that include families in ways that help learners reach school goals.

- Identify the budget(s) and resources that will support the activities in the One-Year Action Plan Partnerships.

- Meet monthly as a whole team to ensure continuous progress in plans and activities and to evaluate activities that were implemented in the past month.

- Meet in small committees, as needed, to implement activities in the One-Year Action Plan for Partnerships.

- Publicise the partnership plans and practices to parents, learners, and teachers, and, as appropriate, the broader community. All teachers, parents, school staff, community members, and learners should know how they can help select, design, conduct, enjoy, benefit from, and evaluate partnership activities.

- Report its work and progress semi-annually (or on a regular schedule) to the school improvement team (or council), parent organisation, faculty, and broader community.

- Recognise and celebrate excellent participation from parents, other family members, learners, and others in the community who contribute to the success of the planned partnership activities.

- Evaluate progress in improving the quality of implemented activities and the results of various involvement activities. This includes results for the school and teachers, results for parents and other family members, and results for learners.

- Solve problems that impede progress on partnership activities.

- Gather ideas for new activities and solve problems that impede progress.

- Replace teachers, parents, administrators and other members who leave the ATP with new members so that a full team is always ready to conduct a planned programme of partnerships at the school.

- Integrate new projects, grants, and activities for home, school and community connections into a unified programme of partnerships. Many activities that enrich and extend partnerships of home, school and community come and go each year. These activities should be viewed as part of, not separate from, the school's on-going, dynamic, comprehensive programme of partnerships.

APPENDIX B

Action teams for partnerships: methods for gathering information

- *Present strengths* – Which practices of school, family, and community partnerships are, presently, working well for the school as a whole? For individual teachers and specific grade levels? For which types of involvement? On what school goals for learner success?

- *Needed changes* – Ideally, how do we want school, family, and community partnerships to work at this school three years from now? Which present practices in the school should continue, and which should change?

- *Expectations* – What do teachers expect of families? What do families expect of teachers and other school personnel? What do learners expect of their families and teachers?

- *Sense of community* – Which families are presently involved, and which are not yet engaged with the school and with their children's education? Who are the "hard to reach" families? What might be done to communicate with and engage these families?

- *Links to goals* – How are learners doing on measures of academic achievement, including test scores and report cards grades? On measures of attitudes and attendance? On other indicators of success? How might family and community connections assist the school in helping more learners reach higher goals and achieve greater success?

APPENDIX C

WCED approval of research

Navrae Enquiries IMibuzo Telefoon	Dr RS Cornelissen		**Wes-Kaap Onderwysdepartement**

Telephone (021) 467-2286
IFoni
Faks

Western Cape Education Department

Fax (021) 425-7445
IFeksi
Verwysing

ISebe leMfundo leNtshona Koloni

Reference 20100715-0051
ISalathiso

Mr Nicolaas Venter
9 La Rochelle Road
DE DOORNS
6875

Dear Mr N. Venter

<u>**RESEARCH PROPOSAL: PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN RURAL MULTI-GRADE SCHOOLS: THE POTENTIAL OF PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT FOR A RELEVANT CURRICULUM.**</u>

Your application to conduct the above-mentioned research in schools in the Western Cape has been approved subject to the following conditions:
1. Principals, educators and learners are under no obligation to assist you in your investigation.
2. Principals, educators, learners and schools should not be identifiable in any way from the results of the investigation.
3. You make all the arrangements concerning your investigation.
4. The programmes of Educators are not to be interrupted.
5. The Study is to be conducted from **13th July 2010 to 30th March 2012**.
6. No research can be conducted during the fourth term as schools are preparing and finalizing syllabi for examinations (October to December).
7. Should you wish to extend the period of your survey, please contact Dr R. Cornelissen at the contact numbers above quoting the reference number.
8. A photocopy of this letter is submitted to the principal where the intended research is to be conducted.
9. Your research will be limited to the list of schools as submitted to the Western Cape Education Department.
10. A brief summary of the content, findings and recommendations is provided to the Director: Research Services.
11. The Department receives a copy of the completed report/dissertation/thesis addressed to:
    > **The Director: Research Services**
    > **Western Cape Education Department**
    > **Private Bag X9114**
    > **CAPE TOWN**
    > **8000**

We wish you success in your research.

Kind regards.

Signed: Ronald S. Cornelissen
for: **HEAD: EDUCATION**
DATE: 15th July 2010

APPENDIX D

WCED approval of research extended

Directorate: Research

Audrey.wyngaard2@pgwc.gov.za
tel: +27 021 476 9272
Fax: 0865902282
Private Bag x9114, Cape Town, 8000
wced.wcape.gov.za

Western Cape Government

Education

REFERENCE: 20100715-0051
ENQUIRIES: Dr A T Wyngaard

Mr Nicolaas Venter
9 La Rochelle Road
De Doorns
6875

Dear Mr Nicolaas Venter

RESEARCH PROPOSAL: PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN RURAL MULTI-GRADE SCHOOLS: THE POTENTIAL OF PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT FOR A RELEVANT CURRICULUM
Your application to conduct the above-mentioned research in schools in the Western Cape has been approved subject to the following conditions:
1. Principals, educators and learners are under no obligation to assist you in your investigation.
2. Principals, educators, learners and schools should not be identifiable in any way from the results of the investigation.
3. You make all the arrangements concerning your investigation.
4. Approval for projects should be confirmed by the District Director of the schools where the project will be conducted.
5. Educators' programmes are not to be interrupted.
6. The Study is to be conducted from **30 March 2012 till 30 March 2013**
7. No research can be conducted during the fourth term as schools are preparing and finalizing syllabi for examinations (October to December).
8. Should you wish to extend the period of your survey, please contact Dr A.T Wyngaard at the contact numbers above quoting the reference number?
9. A photocopy of this letter is submitted to the principal where the intended research is to be conducted.
10. Your research will be limited to the list of schools as forwarded to the Western Cape Education Department.
11. A brief summary of the content, findings and recommendations is provided to the Director: Research Services.
12. The Department receives a copy of the completed report/dissertation/thesis addressed to:
> **The Director: Research Services**
> **Western Cape Education Department**
> **Private Bag X9114**
> **CAPE TOWN**
> **8000**

We wish you success in your research.

Kind regards.
Signed: Dr Audrey T Wyngaard
for: **HEAD: EDUCATION**
DATE: 24 April 2012

APPENDIX E

Checklist – How to set up the intervention

WALKTHROUGH: CHECKLIST

Checking whether the SCAF partnership programme for School A is practicable.

1.	The programme is contextual.	
2.	The programme contains the decided practicable strategies.	
3.	The programme focuses on learning.	
4.	The programme has strategies that focus on learning through creating partnerships, opportunities for communication and utilizing community resources.	
5.	The programme has specific goals for School A.	
6.	The programme has a strong planning section.	
7.	The programme is practicable and implementable.	
8.	The programme might increase parental involvement.	

Thank you!

APPENDIX F

A4 poster example
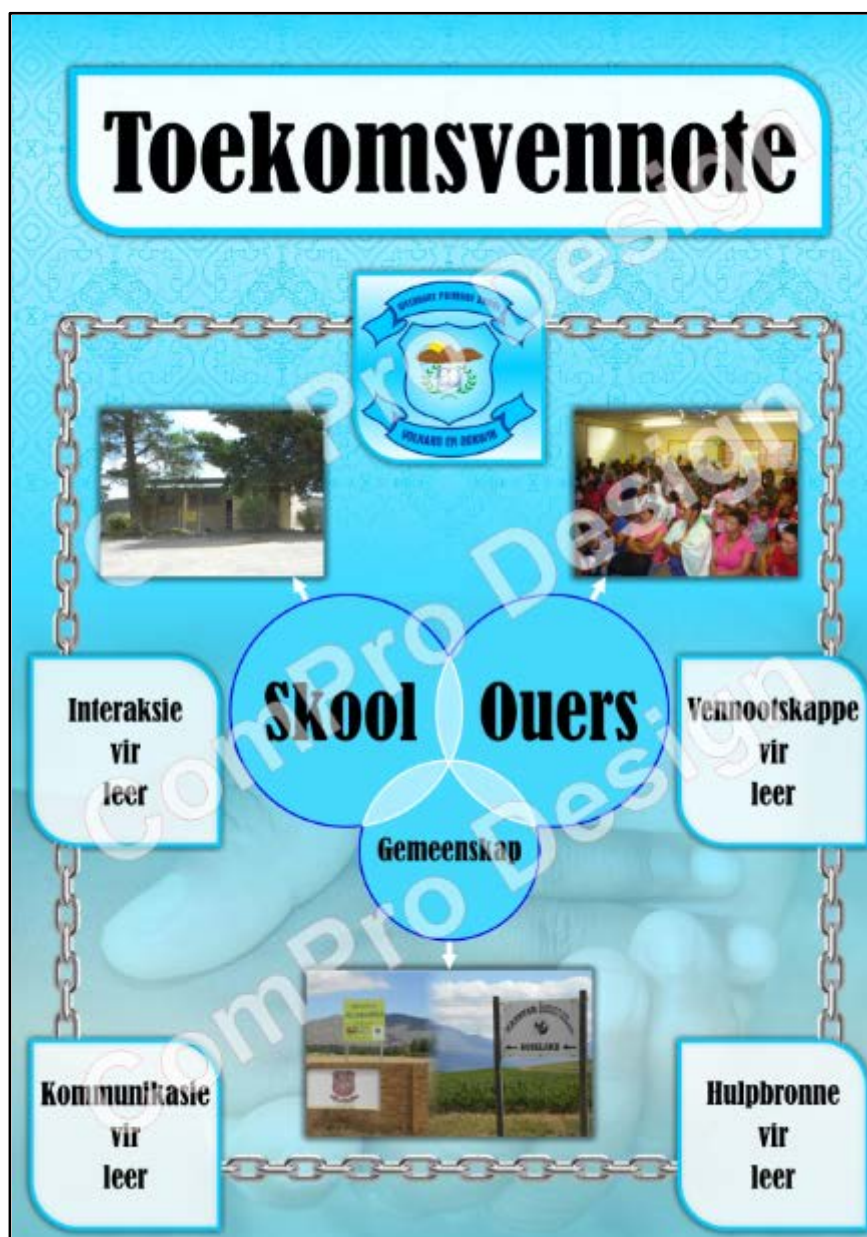
Afrikaans description	Translated to English
Toekomsvennote	Partners for learning
Interaksie vir leer	Interaction for learning
Vennootskappe vir leer	Partnerships for learning
Kommunikasie vir leer	Communication for learning
Hulpbronne vir leer	Resources for learning
Skool	School
Ouers	Parents
Gemeenskap	Community

APPENDIX G

Screening Checklist for School A

SCREENING: CHECKLIST

Check whether the SCAF partnership programme for School A validates the characteristics.

1.	The programme is contextual.	
2.	The programme contains practicable strategies.	
3.	The programme focuses on learning.	
4.	The programme has strategies that focus on learning through creating partnerships, opportunities for communication and utilising community resources.	
5.	The programme has specific goals for School A.	
6.	The programme has a strong planning section.	

Thank you!

APPENDIX H

Programme for SCHOOL A (Prototype 2)

SCHOOL – COMMUNITY – FAMILY
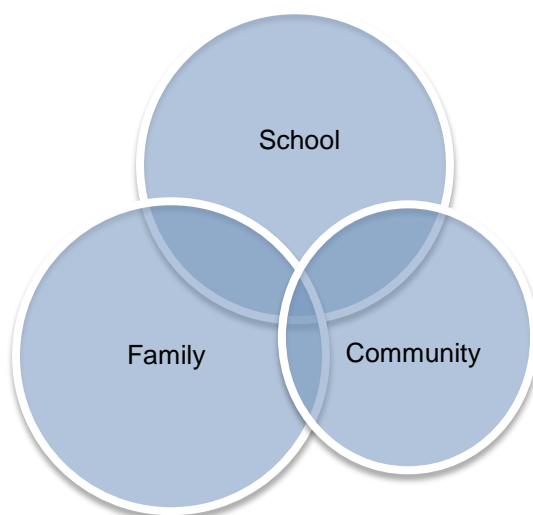
(SCAF PARTNERSHIP PROGRAMME)

JANUARY – MARCH 2012

CONTENT

1. Context of School A
   1.1 The school
   1.2 The teachers
   1.3 The learners
   1.4 The parents
   1.5 The community and environment
2. Principals and Quality indicators of the SCAF partnership programme
3. Goals of the SCAF partnership programme at School A
4. Strategies of the SCAF partnership programme at School A
   4.1 Summary of strategies
   4.2 Planning of strategies
5. Implementation
6. Formative evaluation of strategies for research purposes
7. Possible time schedule of the SCAF partnership programme at School A

1. Context of School A

1.1 The school

- School A is a rural multigrade no-fee school situated in the Warm Bokkeveld district near Ceres.
- The school is part of Circuit 4 within the Cape Winelands Educational District, Western Cape.
- Grade R – Grade 6.
- Grade R = 1 class, Grade 1 – 3 = 1 class, Grade 4 – 6 = 1 class.
- Western Cape Results 2010 (percent learners more than 50%)

  Grade 3 Literacy   _____

  Grade 3 Numeracy   _____

  Grade 6 Literacy   _____

  Grade 6 Numeracy   _____

1.2 The teachers

- There are three teachers at School A.
- The three teachers need to travel 30km to school.
- The principal is the fulltime teacher for Grade 4 – 6.

1.3 The learners

- There are 61 learners enrolled at School A.
- Grade R = 10, Grade 1 – 3 = 23, Grade 4 – 6 = 28.
- A feeding scheme provides one meal for the learners per day.

1.4 The parents

- All the parents work at two farms.

1.5 The community and environment

- A farming community that grows cherries, berries, grapes, apples and pears.
- Farmers, managers, supervisors, farm labourers.

2. Principles and quality indicators of the SCAF partnership programme

PRINCIPLE ONE:	Promotion of partnerships with families to create opportunities to involve family and community members in children's learning and development.
Quality indicator 1:	Invites family members to the classroom to find ways to participate in children's learning and development.
Quality indicator 2:	Involves family members in decision-making regarding learning environments.
PRINCIPLE TWO:	Create formal and informal opportunities for communication and information sharing with families.
Quality indicator 1:	Communicate learning and development of children with family members.
Quality indicator 2:	Communication regarding children's background to determine needs and interests.
Quality indicator 3:	Promote opportunities for families to learn from and support one another.
PRINCIPLE THREE:	Utilise community and family resources to enrich children's development and learning experiences.
Quality indicator 1:	Involve community to enhance learning and socialisation.
Quality indicator 2:	Assist families in obtaining resources to enhance learning and development.
Quality indicator 3:	Use knowledge of family and community as part of curriculum and learning.
Quality indicator 4:	Offer information and ideas for family members to create home learning environment.

3. Goals of the SCAF partnership programme at School A

3.1 To create *opportunities for interaction* to establish collaboration between schools, families and the community.

3.2 To create *partnerships* between the school, families and community.

3.3 To *improve communication* between the school, families and community, specifically on learning.

3.4 To *utilise resources* in the community for improved learning.

3.5 To *improve learning and teaching* at School A.

3.6 To *improve parental involvement* at the school focusing on learning.

4. SCAF partnership programme: Summary of strategies at School A.

Strategy 1: Parent evening 1: Focus on learning				
Focus?	Principal and quality indicator	Who?	Where?	When?
- Parents' role in teaching and learning (District O). - In grades talk about work for the term, learning environment and visits to school. - Parents and learners complete questionnaire regarding interests and needs.	- P1: QI1, QI2 - P2: QI1, QI2 QI4	- Teachers - Parents and learners - District official	- School - Class	- Term1: 1 February 2012
Strategy 2: 15 minute visit project				
Focus?	Principal and quality indicator	Who?	Where?	When?
- Parents come to school during the day to see what their children are doing and to praise them.	- P1: QI1 - P3: QI1	- Parents	- School - Class	- In Term 1: Date depends on farms.
Strategy 3: Family – support – tea				
Focus?	Principal and quality indicator	Who?	Where?	When?
- Parents get together on the different farms to support and learn from one another regarding learners learning. - Teachers provide resources parents can use at meetings.	- P2: QI3	- Parents	- Farm or home	- In term 1: Afternoons/Eve nings

Strategy 4: Learners visit parents on farms. (Focus on learning – part of work schedule and curriculum.)				
Focus?	Principal and quality indicator	Who?	Where?	When?
- Use the parents and the community as resources in different learning areas.	- P3: QI1, QI3 - P2: QI1, QI2, QI4	- Teachers - Parents and learners - Farm managers	- Farms	- Term 1: Date – Depends on the farms
Strategy 5: Workshop for parents on learning at home and substance abuse.				
Focus?	Principal and quality indicator	Who?	Where?	When?
- Parents are informed on how to help learners at home considering context. - Parents are provided with resources on learning. - Parents learn about the effects of substance abuse on learning.	- P3: QI1, QI2, QI4 - P1: QI2	- Teachers - Parents and learners. - Community members.	- School - Class	- In the early parts of term 1.
Strategy 6: Communication via SMS-System.				
Focus?	Principal and quality indicator	Who?	Where?	When?
- Communication - Messages on learning.	- P1: QI2 - P2: QI1, QI3 - P3: QI2, QI4	- Teachers, school to parents.	- School to the cell phone via internet.	- During term 1.
Strategy 7: Parent evening 2: Progress of learners during the term in conjunction with a recognition evening.				
Focus?	Principal and quality indicator	Who?	Where?	When?
- Parents informed on learners' progress. - All the learners receive some type of recognition.	- P2: QI1, QI2, QI4 - P3: QI2	- Teachers - Parents and learners.	- School - Class	- At the end of term 1: 19 – 23 March 2012

PLANNING STRATEGY 1:

Parent evening 1 – Focus on learning (P1: QI1, QI2; P2: QI1, QI2, QI4)

Date: _____   Venue: _____   Time: _____

Outcome 1: To get as many parents and learners at the meeting as possible.				
What should happen:	Who responsible:	Time schedule:	Needs:	Assessment:
E.g. Organise transport.	E.g. Teacher 1	E.g. 13/14 January 2012	E.g. Letter to the parents, speak to farm manager.	How many parents and learners attended the parent evening?
Outcome 2: Parents are informed of their role in learning in 2012.				
What should happen:	Who responsible:	Time schedule:	Needs:	Assessment:
Outcome 3: Parents and learners visit teachers according to grade the child is in. Teachers inform parents and learners of the work for the term, learning environment and visiting the school.				
What should happen:	Who responsible:	Time schedule:	Needs:	Assessment:
Outcome 4: Parents and learners complete questionnaire on learners' interests and needs.				
What should happen:	Who responsible:	Time schedule:	Needs:	Assessment:

PLANNING STRATEGY 2:

15 minutes visits: the school project (P1: QI1; P3: QI1)

Dates, Venues and Times differ.

Outcome 1: Get as many parents as possible to visit their children for 15 minutes at school.				
What should happen:	Who responsible:	Time schedule:	Needs:	Assessment:
E.g. Planning with farm managers and supervisors.	E.g. Teacher 2	E.g. 20 – 25 January Team 1 from Farm A.	E.g. Transport.	How many parents were able to visit the school?

Outcome 2: Parents visit learners in class, observe for 15 minutes and encourage them positively.				
What should happen:	Who responsible:	Time schedule:	Needs:	Assessment:

PLANNNING STRATEGY 3:

Family – support – tea (P2: QI3)

Dates, Venues and Times differ.

Outcome 1: Parents get together on different farms learn and support each other.				
What should happen:	Who responsible:	Time schedule:	Needs:	Assessment:
E.g. Parents should organise to get together on the farm at specific house and on a specific date.	E.g. Teacher 2	E.g. 20 – 25 January Grade 1 from Farm A.	E.g. Information and resources on specific topics.	Did parents come together and support each other? Were certain resources used to discuss range of topics?

Outcome 2: Communication regarding important information between school and the parents.				
What should happen:	Who responsible:	Time schedule:	Needs:	Assessment:

PLANNING STRATEGY 4:

Learners visit parents on farms with focus on learning (P3: QI1, QI3; P2: QI1, QI2, QI4)

Dates, Venues and Times differ.

Outcome 1: Teachers plan how visits can fit into lesson, learning and work schedule.				
What should happen:	Who responsible:	Time schedule:	Needs:	Assessment:
E.g. Plan specific visits that fit into lessons and learning.	E.g. Teacher 3	E.g. 20 – 31 January 2012	E.g. Completion of a "visit form" which indicates how visits fits into lessons and work schedules.	"Visit form" and observing lessons.
Outcome 2: Use parents and the community as resources in learning areas.				
What should happen:	Who responsible:	Time schedule:	Needs:	Assessment:

PLANNING STRATEGY 5:

Workshop on learning at home and substance abuse (P3: QI1, QI2, QI4; P1: QI2)

Date: _____   Venue: _____ Time: _____

Outcome 1: Parents are informed how to help learners learning at home; parents are provided with resources.				
What should happen:	Who responsible:	Time schedule:	Needs:	Assessment:
E.g. Organise an expert to speak to parents on how to help them learn at home; focus on contextual factors.	E.g. Teacher 3	E.g. Before 5 February	E.g. Finances or possible expenses.	E.g. Feedback from parents.
Outcome 2: Learners learn from the community and its members.				
What should happen:	Who responsible:	Time schedule:	Needs:	Assessment:

PLANNING STRATEGY 6:

Communication via SMS system (P1: IQ2; P2: IQ1, IQ3; P3: IQ2, IQ4)

Dates, Places and Times differ.

Outcome 1: Communication				
What should happen:	Who responsible:	Time schedule:	Needs:	Assessment:
E.g. Parents informed about 1st parent evening through the SMS system.	E.g. Person responsible organising parent evening.	E.g. 2 days before parent evening.	E.g. Internet and SMS system.	Were all the parents informed with necessary information regarding parent evening?
Outcome 2: Enhance learning at home.				
What should happen:	Who responsible:	Time schedule:	Needs:	Assessment:

PLANNING STRATEGY 7:

Parent evening 2 – Progress and recognition

Date: _____ Venue:_____ Time:_____

Outcome 1: Parents informed how learners progressed during the term.				
What should happen:	Who responsible:	Time schedule:	Needs:	Assessment:
E.g. Parents and learners are invited to the class to speak to the teachers about progress.	E.g. Person responsible for parent evening.	E.g. Plan three weeks prior to parent evening 2.	E.g. Workbooks and reports of learners.	E.g. How many parents attended parent evening two? – Feedback from parents.
Outcome 2: Every learner, together with the parent receives recognition for learning.				
What should happen:	Who responsible:	Time schedule:	Needs:	Assessment:

5. Implementation

5.1 Background

The parents and the teachers agreed that the principal should manage the implementation.

5.2 Role during implementation

- ✓ To ensure interaction and collaboration between community, the school and families.
- ✓ The development of strategies to increase and improve parental involvement at School A.
- ✓ To focus parental involvement in learning.
- ✓ To plan strategies according to contextual factors.

5.3 Weight of responsibilities for those who implement:

STRATEGIES	PARENTS	PRINCIPAL/TEACHERS
Strategy 1	Motivate other parents for attendance.	Responsible for all the arrangements.
Strategy 2	Responsible for some of the arrangements and motivation.	Responsible for some of the arrangements.
Strategy 3	Responsible for all the arrangements.	Support.
Strategy 4	Responsible for some of the arrangements.	Responsible for some of the arrangements.
Strategy 5	Motivate other parents for attendance.	Responsible for all the arrangements.
Strategy 6	Motivate other parents for attendance.	Responsible for all the arrangements.
Strategy 7	Responsible for some of the arrangements.	Responsible for some of the arrangements.

6. Formative evaluation of strategies for research purposes

<table>
<tr><td colspan="4">FORMATIVE EVALUATION: Micro-evaluation

A small group of target users (e.g. learners or teachers) uses parts of the intervention outside its normal user setting. Here, the main activities of the evaluator are observing and interviewing the respondents.</td></tr>
<tr><td>STRATEGY:</td><td>PARTICIPANTS AND ROLE:</td><td>ACTIVITIES:</td><td rowspan="8"></td></tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy 1 :
Parent evening 1-
Focus on learning</td>
<td>Educators discuss parental involvement programme strategies with parents and learners in their own classes.
Parents and learners complete questionnaire regarding learners' needs and interests.
Researcher introduces the importance of parental involvement with all the teachers, parents and learners.</td>
<td>Report from principal.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy 2:
15-minute visiting the school project</td>
<td>Parents visit the learner in class for 15 minutes, focusing on encouragement and to observe what learners are learning.</td>
<td>Observation from researcher.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy 3:
Family – support – tea</td>
<td>Educators provide resources on learning for the parents to discuss among families.
Families discuss resources and fill in a form as feedback to teachers.</td>
<td>Questionnaires to parents.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy 4: Learners visit parents on farms with focus on learning</td>
<td>Educators plan learning visits to the farm and parents.
Parents and community are used as resources for learning.</td>
<td>Observation from researcher. Focus-group interviews with parents.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy 5:
Workshop on learning at home and substance abuse.</td>
<td>Principal invites expert on parental involvement to present workshop to parents and learners on learning at home.
Parents and learners attend to learn how to help learners at home with learning.
Social services talk about the effects of substance abuse on learners.</td>
<td>Reports with list of questions to be addressed by parents.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy 6:
Communication via SMS system</td>
<td>Principal uses SMS system in order to improve general communication with parents.
Educators use SMS system to communicate learning activities with parents.</td>
<td>Reports from parents and teachers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategy 7: Parent evening 2 – Progress and recognition</td>
<td>Educators discuss learners' learning done during term 1 with parents and learners in class.
Principal hands out recognition certificate to each learner during awards ceremony.</td>
<td>Observation from researcher and focus-group interviews with parents.</td>
</tr>
</table>

Focus group interviews with parents and teachers regarding implemented parental involvement programme at School A.

7. Time schedule for SCAF partnership programme at School A

JANUARY 2012						
MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
9 School starts for teachers.	10	11 School starts for learners.	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

FEBRUARY 2012						
MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29				

MARCH 2012						
MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14	15	16	17	18
19	20	21	22	23	24	25
26	27	28	29	30	31	

APRIL 2012						
MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30						

APPENDIX I

Photographs School A

Workshop: School A

Strategy 1: Parent evening

Strategy 2: Parents visiting school

Strategy 4: Parents present a lesson to learners.

Strategy 5: Workshop regarding learning and substance abuse.

Strategy 7: Recognition evening

APPENDIX J

MANUAL (Prototype 3 / Prototype 4: Adaptations in red)

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT IN RURAL MULTIGRADE SCHOOLS

PARTNERS FOR FUTURE

SCHOOL–COMMUNITY–FAMILY

(SCAF PARTNERSHIP PROGRAMME)

PARTNERS FOR FUTURE

CONTENT

PARTNERS FOR FUTURE

INTRODUCTION:

"Parental involvement is the willing and active participation of parents in a wide range of school and home-based activities" (Van Wyk en Lemmer (2009:14).

Parental involvement is widely considered as one of the most important aspects of effective education and learning. Research has proved that parental involvement can contribute positively towards:

1. Improved learner performance.

2. Improved attitude towards learning.

3. Improved social and emotional development.

4. Improved behaviour and school attendance.

5. Improved relationships between parents, teachers and schools.

6. Reduced teacher's workload.

7. Increased confidence in school.

8. Increased confidence in parents to help their children with education.

If rural multigrade schools want to tap into these advantages, a practicable, effective and sustainable parental involvement programme is needed. Rural multigrade schools have unique circumstance with internal and external challenges. The proposed parental involvement programme takes the unique circumstances of the parents, teachers, learners, school and community into consideration. The programme also creates opportunities for parents, teachers and the community to develop a partnership with an emphasis on learning. The programme focuses on three main principles:

Principle 1: Promotion of partnerships with families and provision of a variety of opportunities for families and community members to be involved in children's learning and development.

Principle 2: Creation of formal and informal opportunities for communication and information sharing with families regarding learning and development.

Principle 3: Use of community resources and family culture to enrich children's development and learning experiences.

This manual provides rural multigrade schools with an opportunity to develop and implement a unique, effective, practicable and sustainable programme in three steps:

STEP 1: **Workshop with parents and teachers.**

STEP 2: **Planning: Meeting.**

STEP 3: **Implementation of the SCAF partnership programme.**

PARTNERS FOR FUTURE

STEP 1 – WORKSHOP

THE PROCESS:

1. The principal will complete page 5, where he/she will sketch the broad context of his/her school. The completed form will help in the development of a practicable SCAF partnership programme.

2. The principal then completes page 6: Planning the workshop. Sufficient planning will ensure smooth running of the workshop.

3. The course of the workshop is stipulated on page 7. The principal should use the proposed course and time allocated to cover all the necessary aspects. This will be done in conjunction with the PowerPoint presentation.

4. During session one, attendees will engage in group discussions about the current positives and challenges around parental involvement in learning at their school. Groups will also discuss possible resources available to improve parental involvement. These ideas will be documented on page 8.

5. Page 9 is a description of the various principles and quality indicators.

6. During session two, the groups will develop strategies the school could implement in order to attain the principles and quality indicators.

PARTNERS FOR FUTURE

(Principal completes the form to sketch broad context of the school.)

CONTEXT OF _____

THE SCHOOL:	
Type of school and where situated?	
District and circuit?	
Grades taught at school?	
Grade combinations?	
Secretary?	**Yes / No**
WCED (LITNUM) results Year: _____ (Percentages?)	**Grade 3 Numeracy:** **Grade 3 Literacy:** **Grade 6 Numeracy:** **Grade 6 Literacy:**
THE TEACHERS:	
How many teachers from Grade R?	
Home location of the teachers?	
Distance teachers travel daily?	
Principal teaches which grade/s?	
THE LEARNERS	
How many learners in school?	
How many learners in each combination of grades?	
Language of learners?	
THE PARENTS	
General description of parents and parents' circumstances. **(Workplace etc.)**	
Language of parents?	
THE COMMUNITY	
Description of the community. **(Farms etc.)** **Description of socio-economic status.**	

PARTNERS FOR FUTURE

STEP 1: WORKSHOP

NOTES

COMPLETE THE PLANNING SHEET FOR WORKSHOP	
1. **How many parents:** (10 to 15 parents sufficient, choose parents across grades)	
2. **Invite parents; write down the names of those who accepted:**	
3. **How many teachers:** (All the teachers should attend workshop.)	
4. **Groups:** (Divide parents and teachers into three groups – mix the parents and teachers.)	
5. **Place:** (Choose best practicable location – school, community hall etc.)	
6. **Date and time:** (Should take place within the first two weeks of school – duration of the workshop: 2 hours.)	
7. **Refreshments:** (Provide a light meal or refreshments for the attendees from your budget.)	
8. **Necessities for workshop:** - Paper for groups to write on. - Pens and Koki pens - Data projector or copies - Laptop and speakers for the PowerPoint presentation.	
9. **Other:**	

PARTNERS FOR FUTURE

STEP 1: WORKSHOP

COURSE OF THE WORKSHOP (In conjunction with PowerPoint)	
WHAT:	**TIME:**
SESSION 1: Parental involvement, resources and the community	
1.1 Welcome	5 min.
1.2 What is parental involvement in learning? (Video.)	
1.3 Discuss in groups the state of parental involvement in learning at school; determine challenges and what is considered good. (Allow quick feedback.)	5 min.
1.4 Discuss in groups existing resources in the community and how the school can use the resources. (Allow quick feedback.)	10 min.
	10 min.
Break (Coffee / Tea)	15 min.
SESSION 2: Principles and strategies	
2.1 Discuss the principles (video) and success at School A.	10 min.
2.2 Principle 1: Partnerships	
• Discuss two quality indicators and provide some examples (photographs).	15 min.
• Groups use information from session one and decide on possible strategies. (Allow quick feedback.)	
2.2 Principle 2: Communication	
• Discuss three quality indicators and provide some examples (photographs).	
• Groups use information from session one and decide on possible strategies. (Allow quick feedback.)	15 min.
2.3 Principle 3: Utilising resources	
• Discuss three quality indicators and provide some examples (photographs).	
• Groups use information from session one and decide on possible strategies. (Allow quick feedback.)	15 min.
2.6 Thank parents and teachers for attending; ask them to spread the word regarding the implementation of the programme.	
	5 min.
Provide a lunch or refreshment (from budget) for the parents and teachers to close the workshop.	**Decide self.**

PARTNERS FOR FUTURE

STEP 1: WORKSHOP (Session 1)

Parental involvement: Positive and challenges

COMPLETE

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT AT _____	
POSITIVE	CHALLENGES

Resources in the community and utilisation of resources:

COMMUNITY AT _____	
RESOURCES – WHO/WHAT?	HOW TO UTILISE RESOURCES?

PARTNERS FOR FUTURE

STEP 1: WORKSHOP
(Session 1: Principles and quality indicators.)

COMPLETE

PRINCIPLE ONE:	Promotion of partnerships with families to create opportunities to involve family and community members in children's learning and development.
Quality indicator 1:	Invite family members to the classroom to find ways to participate in children's learning and development.
Quality indicator 2:	Involve family members in decision-making regarding learning environments.
PRINCIPLE TWO:	Create formal and informal opportunities for communication and information sharing with families.
Quality indicator 1:	Communicate learning and development of children with family members.
Quality indicator 2:	Communication regarding children's background to determine needs and interests.
Quality indicator 3:	Promote opportunities for families to learn from and support one another.
PRINCIPLE THREE:	Utilise community and family resources to enrich children's development and learning experiences.
Quality indicator 1:	Involve community to enhance learning and socialisation.
Quality indicator 2:	Assist families in obtaining resources to enhance learning and development.
Quality indicator 3:	Use knowledge of family and community as part of curriculum and learning.
Quality indicator 4:	Offer information and ideas for family members to create home learning environment.

PARTNERS FOR FUTURE

STEP 1: WORKSHOP
(Session 2: Possible strategies to reach principles)

COMPLETE

PRINCIPLE ONE:	Promotion of partnerships with families to create opportunities to involve family and community members in children's learning and development.
QI 1: Invite family members to the classroom to find ways to participate in children's learning and development. QI 2: Involve family members in decision-making regarding learning environments.	
PRINCIPLE TWO:	Create formal and informal opportunities for communication and information sharing with families.
QI 1: Communicate learning and development of children with family members. QI 2: Communication regarding children's background to determine needs and interests. QI 3: Promote opportunities for families to learn from and support one another.	
PRINCIPLE THREE:	Utilise community and family resources to enrich children's development and learning experiences.
QI 1: Involve community to enhance learning and socialisation. QI 2: Assist families in obtaining resources to enhance learning and development. QI 3: Use knowledge of family and community as part of curriculum and learning. QI 4: Offer information and ideas for family members to create home learning environment.	

PARTNERS FOR FUTURE

STEP 2 – MEETING
THE PROCESS:

1. The principal will now plan a meeting where the planning for implementation will be discussed with the staff members. Completing page 13, Sufficient Planning, will ensure an effective meeting.

2. During the meeting general aims for the SCAF partnership programme need to be discussed and decided upon. Complete page 14.

3. The teachers and principal now need to discuss the proposed strategies developed at the workshop. In the meeting they need to decide which strategies are practicable and implementable. Choose at least four/five strategies and plan each strategy according to the format on page 15 and 16.

4. Use the calendar on page 17 – 19 to decide when the different strategies will commence during the term.

PARTNERS FOR FUTURE

STEP 2: PLANNING

COMPLETE

PLANNING OF MEETING	
1. Who? (Teachers)	
2. Place? (School)	
3. Date and time? (Conduct meeting 2 -3 days after workshop; meeting can commence after school and should not take longer than 30-45 minutes.)	
4. Refreshments? (Possible refreshments from budget.)	
5. Necessities: 5.1 Notes on strategies parents and teacher proposed at workshop. 5.2 Pens 5.3 Copies of the planning sheets that follow.	
6. Aims of meeting: 6.1 Choose 4/5 strategies for the term which focus on getting parents involved in learning. 6.2 Determine goals. 6.3 Plan strategies. • Focus on? • Principles and quality indicators? • Who? • Where? • When? 6.4 Decide who will be responsible for which strategy.	

PARTNERS FOR FUTURE

STEP 2: MEETING – PLANNING
(Goals for the SCAF partnership programme)

COMPLETE

Possible aims:	Change if needed:
1. To create opportunities for interaction to establish collaboration between the school, families and the community.	
2. To create partnerships between the school, families and community.	
3. To improve communication between the school, families and community, specifically on learning.	
4. To utilise resources in the community for improved learning.	
5. To improve learning and teaching at _____.	
6. To improve parental involvement at the school, focusing on learning.	

PARTNERS FOR FUTURE

STEP 2: PLANNING OF SCAF PARTNERSHIP PROGRAMME:
Choice and summary of strategies at _____.

Strategy 1:				
Focus on what?	Principle and quality indicator?	Who?	Where?	When?

Strategy 2:				
Focus on what?	Principle and quality indicator?	Who?	Where?	When?

Strategy 3:				
Focus on what?	Principle and quality indicator?	Who?	Where?	When?

Strategy 4:				
Focus on what?	Principle and quality indicator?	Who?	Where?	When?

Strategy 5:				
Focus on what?	Principle and quality indicator?	Who?	Where?	When?

PARTNERS FOR FUTURE

EXTENDED PLANNING OF STRATEGY: _____

Date: _____ Place: _____ Time: _____

e.g. Outcome 1: As much as possible, parents and learners at parents' evening.				
What should happen:	Who responsible:	Time schedule:	Needs:	Assessment:
e.g. Organise transport.	e.g. Teacher	e.g. 16 – 20 July 2012	e.g. Send letter with all arrangements and arrange with farm manager.	e.g. How many parents attended?
Outcome 2:				
What should happen:	Who responsible:	Time schedule:	Needs:	Assessment:
Outcome 3:				
What should happen:	Who responsible:	Time schedule:	Needs:	Assessment:
Outcome 4:				
What should happen:	Who responsible:	Time schedule:	Needs:	Assessment:

PARTNERS FOR FUTURE

STEP 2: PLANNING OF SCAF PARTNERSHIP PROGRAMME:
Summary of strategies on calendar at _____.

COMPLETE

MONTH AND YEAR:						
MONDAY	**TUESDAY**	**WEDNESDAY**	**THURSDAY**	**FRIDAY**	**SATURDAY**	**SUNDAY**

PARTNERS FOR FUTURE

STEP 3: IMPLEMENTATION

THE PROCESS:

1. The principal needs to oversee the implementation of the SCAF partnership programme. Second in command – the head of department.

2. Budget of R3000-00 for implementation.

3. Each strategy decided on should be well planned in advance; use page 15 and 16 to plan the strategy extensively.

4. Extra meetings should be scheduled for each strategy during the term of implementation.

5. The convenor of the various strategies should ensure that each strategy focuses on getting parents involved in specifically learning.

6. The strategies should be visible in the school; convenors should put up posters and photographs taken during the implementation of the strategies.

7. Implemented strategies should be visible to the local community through media (local newspaper) and to the education authorities in that district.

8. The principal and teachers should reflect on implemented strategies in order to make strategies even more practicable and efficient.

9. Pages 21 – 27 display a successful implementation at School A

PARTNERS FOR FUTURE

SUCCESS AT SCHOOL A

Parents and learners came to school to discuss what will happen during the term regarding learning. Parents and learners discuss learners' interests and needs; this was written down and teachers were able to use this information.

PARTNERS FOR FUTURE

STRATEGY 2:
PARENTS VISIT THE SCHOOL

Parents visited the school during lessons. Parents sat next to their child and browsed through their work. Parents were encouraged to motivate learners and to show interest in what the child is learning.

PARTNERS FOR FUTURE

STRATEGY 3:
PARENTS MEET AT HOME

Parents with learners from the same grade meet at the house of one of parents, to discuss what the children are learning and what they can do to help one another and the learners. They also identified certain challenges and reported these to the teacher.

STRATEGY 4:
LEARNERS VISIT THE FARM

Learners visit the farm where their parents work. Parents / family were used as presenters during the lesson on the lifecycle of an apple.

PARTNERS FOR FUTURE

**STRATEGY 5:
WORKSHOP ON LEARNING AT HOME
AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE.**

School presented a workshop for parents on how to help learners to learn at home and on the negative effects of substance abuse.

PARTNERS FOR FUTURE

**STRATEGY 6:
COMMUNICATION THROUGH A SMS –
SYSTEM.**

The school implemented an SMS system. Parents received messages on their cell phones regarding what the learner is learning, homework and extra support needed.
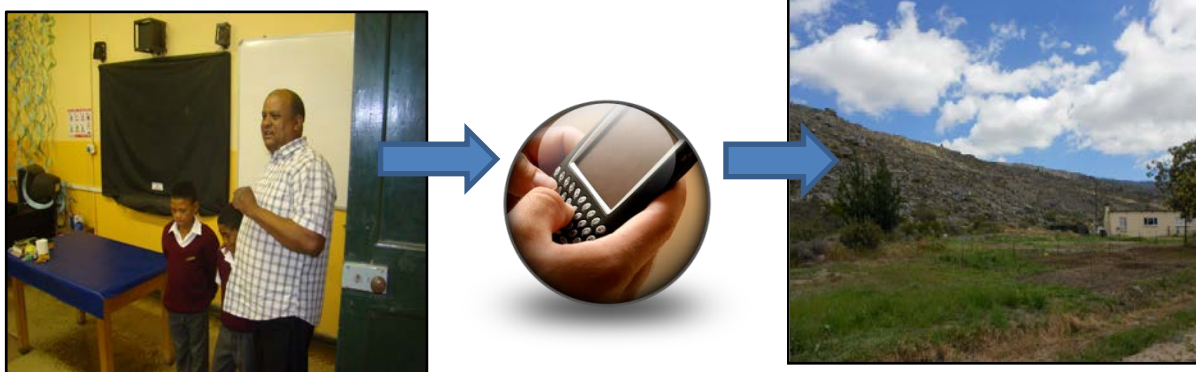
STRATEGY 7: PARENT EVENING 2 - PROGRESS AND RECOGNITION.

Parents and learners went to the classroom where teachers discussed the term's work that had been covered. Learners receive a certificate with positive remarks regarding learning and general behaviour. The evening was combined with a dinner.

PARTNERS FOR FUTURE

APPENDIX K

Programme for SCHOOL B (Prototype 4)

PARTNERS FOR FUTURE

SCHOOL – COMMUNITY – FAMILY

(SCAF PARTNERSHIP PROGRAMME)

SCHOOL

FAMILY

COMMUNITY

JULY – SEPTEMBER 2012

PARTNERS FOR FUTURE
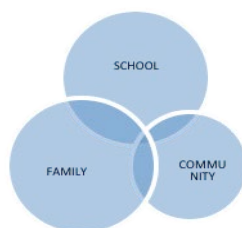
CONTENT

1. Context of School B

    1.1   The school

    1.2   The teachers

    1.3   The learners

    1.4   The parents

    1.5   The community and environment

2. Positive aspects and challenges at School B

3. Resources and how to use them in School B

4. Principles and quality indicators of the SCAF partnership programme

5. Goals of the SCAF partnership programme at School B

6. All strategies to achieve principles (Workshop)

7. Strategies of the SCAF partnership programme at School B

    7.1   Summary of strategies

    7.2   Planning of strategies

8. Implementation

9. Formative evaluation of strategies for research purposes

10. Possible time schedule of the SCAF partnership programme at School B

11. Extra forms to use during strategies

PARTNERS FOR FUTURE

1. Context of School B

1.1 The school

- School B is a rural multigrade no-fee school situated in the Wellington/Paarl district.
- The school is part of Circuit 3 within the Cape Winelands Educational District, Western Cape.
- Grade R – Grade 9
- Grade Composition: Grade R = class

  Grade 1 = 1 class

  Grade 2 – 3 = 1 class

  Grade 4 – 5 = 1 class

- Western Cape Results 2011 (percent learners more than 50%)

  Grade 3 Literacy   _____

  Grade 3 Numeracy _____

  Grade 6 Literacy   _____

  Grade 6 Numeracy _____

1.2 The teachers

- There are five teachers at School B.
- The five teachers need to travel 5km to school.
- The principal is the fulltime teacher for Grade 6 and 7

1.3 The learners

- There are 104 learners enrolled at School B.
- Grade R = 12, Grade 1 = 20, Grade 2- 3 = 28, Grade 4 – 5 = 26, Grade 6 – 7 = 18.
- A feeding scheme provides one meal for the learners per day.
- Language of learners: Afrikaans

1.4 The Parents

- All the parents work at 15 farms nearby.
- Language of parents: Afrikaans

1.5 The community and environment

- Area in farming community.
- High poverty area with high levels of alcohol abuse.

PARTNERS FOR FUTURE

2. Parent involvement: Good aspects and challenges

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT AT SCHOOL B.	
GOOD ASPECTS	CHALLENGES
1. Majority of parents attend parent evenings. 2. Communication good. 3. Involvement in/at functions. 4. Good collaboration. 5. Sport is good. 6. Good teachers. 7. Parents want to be involved.	1. Working hours of parents are very long. 2. Communication between learners and parents. 3. Involvement in behaviour of children. 4. Illiteracy among parents 5. To get parents involved. 6. Poverty. 7. The involvement of teachers. 8. Lack of sufficient school clothes.

3. Resources and how they can be used

COMMUNITY OF SHOOL B	
RESOURCES WHAT AND WHO?	RESOURCES HOW?
1. Farms: grapes, vegetables, guavas, cattle. 2. Wine cellars 3. Guesthouses 4. Farm owners and managers 5. Police forum 6. CPUT 7. Church 8. Youth Centre	1. Providing work, housing and transport. 2. Excursions. 3. Excursions. 4. Farm visits. 5. Safety. 6. Support for learners with academic problems. 7. Spiritual development. 8. Excursions.

PARTNERS FOR FUTURE

4.   Principles and quality indicators of the SCAF partnership programme

PRINCIPLE ONE:	Promotion of partnerships with families to create opportunities to involve family and community members in children's learning and development.
Quality indicator 1:	Invite family members to the classroom to find ways to participate in children's learning and development.
Quality indicator 2:	Involve family members in decision-making regarding learning environments.
PRINCIPLE TWO:	Create formal and informal opportunities for communication and information sharing with families.
Quality indicator 1:	Communicate learning and development of children with family members.
Quality indicator 2:	Communication regarding children's background to determine needs and interests.
Quality indicator 3:	Promote opportunities for families to learn from and support one another.
PRINCIPLE THREE:	Utilise community and family resources to enrich children's development and learning experiences.
Quality indicator 1:	Involve community to enhance learning and socialisation.
Quality indicator 2:	Assist families in obtaining resources to enhance learning and development.
Quality indicator 3:	Use knowledge of family and community as part of curriculum and learning.
Quality indicator 4:	Offer information and ideas for family members to create home learning environment.

PARTNERS FOR FUTURE

5.   Goals of SCAF partnership programme at School B

5.1   To create *opportunities for interaction* to establish collaboration between the school, families and the community.

5.2   To create *partnerships* between the school, families and community.

5.3   To *improve communication* between the school, families and community, specifically on learning.

5.4   To *utilise resources* in the community for improved learning.

5.5   To *improve learning and teaching* at School B.

5.6   To *improve parental involvement* at the school, focusing on learning.

PARTNERS FOR FUTURE

## 6.	All strategies to achieve principles (Workshop)

PRINCIPLE ONE:	Enhancing partnership opportunities where parents are involved in learners' learning and teaching.
QI 1: Invite parents to class to be part of teaching and learning. QI 2: Involve parents to participate in decision-making regarding the learning environment.	1. More parent evenings to discuss learner development. 2. Parents can meet one another during weekends to discuss learners' progress. 3. Parent and child activities like team building and games. 4. After-school care. 5. Workshops with teachers. 6. To talk more to your child (opportunities). 7. Listen to your child and motivate them. 8. Recognition evenings. 9. Motivational speakers from the community. 10. Involvement in projects like gardening. 11. Walks.
PRINCIPLE TWO:	Create formal and informal opportunities for communication and sharing of information on teaching and learning.
QI 1: Communicate with family about learners, their learning and development, the curriculum and activities in class. QI 2: Communicate learners' background, strengths, interest and learning needs. QI 3: Communicate opportunities for families to learn from one another and support one another.	1. Parent evenings. 2. Family days to get to know one another better. 3. Communicate about the circumstances at home. 4. Communicate via a display board outside the school. 5. SMS messages to parents. 6. Pamphlets and posters at farms. 7. Use farm meetings. 8. Club for parents. 9. Create opportunities for communication. 10. Letter system regarding learning. 11. Message book at the foundation phase. 12. Opportunities to talk about the new curriculum.
PRINCIPLE THREE:	Use resources from the community to contribute to learners' development and learning.
QI 1: Learners are taken to the community or the community taken to learners to learn and improve socialisation. QI 2: Help parents to use information and resources essential for learning and development of learners. QI 3: School uses knowledge of communities and families as part of the curriculum and learning experiences. QI 4: School offers parents help and ideas for learning environment at home.	1. Educational excursions to cellars and farms, parents as presenters. 2. Invite professionals to come and talk about healthy living. 3. Opportunities to learn about art. 4. Use the computers at school to educate parents. 5. Students from CPUT can come and help with reading. 6. Shop on the farm – teach children about money. 7. CPUT can support parents on study methods for learners. 8. Parents and learners can do athletics together. 9. WCED can provide more reading books. 10. Police can inform parents and learners about the danger of drugs.

PARTNERS FOR FUTURE

7.   SCAF partnership programme: Summary of strategies at School B.

Strategy 1: Parent evening 1: Focus on learning				
Focus?	Principal and quality indicator	Who?	Where?	When?
- Parents' role in teaching and learning and how can learners be helped at home. - In grades talk about work for the term, learning environment and see learners' books. - Parents completed questionnaires on learners' interests and needs. - Motivational speaker from the community.	- P1: QI1 and QI2 - P2: QI1 and QI2 - P3: QI2 and QI4	- Teachers - Parents and learner Teacher 1	- School - Class	- Term 3: - 23 – 27 July 2012
Strategy 2: Collaboration with CPUT				
Focus?	Principal and quality indicator	Who?	Where?	When?
- CPUT students to come and help with reading. - Discuss learners' performance with teachers who will explain it to the parents.	- P2: QI1 and QI3 - P3: QI1 and QI2	- Parents and teachers Teacher 2	- Class	- Term 3: Date – 30 July

PARTNERS FOR FUTURE

Strategy 3: Learners visiting parents on the farms. (Focus on the learning part of the current work schedule)				
Focus?	Principal and quality indicator	Who?	Where?	When?
- Use parents and community resources in learning areas - Adjust learning programme to farm operations.	- P3: QI1, QI3 - P2: QI1, and QI2	- Teachers - Parents and learner	- Farms	- Term3: Date depends on farms.
		Every teacher		
Strategy 4: Communication through SMS system and notice boards				
Focus?	Principal and quality indicator	Who?	Where?	When?
- Communication - General and promote learning.	- P1: QI2 - P2: QI1, QI3 - P3: QI2, QI4	- Teachers and parents	- School to cellphone - Before school on posters at	- During the term
		Admin clerk		
Strategy 5: Parent Meeting on progress of learners during the quarter and recognition evening.				
Focus?	Principal and quality indicator	Who?	Where?	When?
- Parents to be informed about learners' progress - In grades - Learners receive recognition for achievement.	- P2: QI1,and QI2 - P3: QI2	- Teachers - Parents and learners	- School - Class	- In term 3: Date at end of term.
		Teacher 3		

PARTNERS FOR FUTURE

PLANNING STRATEGY 1:

Parent Meeting 1 - The beginning of the quarter

(P1: QI1 and QI2; P2: QI1 and QI2; P3: QI2 and QI4)

Date: _____ Place: _____ Time: _____

Outcome 1: As much as possible, parents and learners at parents' evening.				
What should happen:	Who responsible:	Time schedule:	Needs:	Assessment:
e.g. Organise transport.	e.g. Teacher	e.g. 16 – 20 July 2012	e.g. Send letter with all arrangements and arrange with farm manager.	e.g. How many parents attended?

Outcome 2: Parents to be informed about their role in teaching and learning - motivational speaker.				
What should happen:	Who responsible:	Time schedule:	Needs:	Assessment:

Outcome 3: Parents and learners visit teachers in grades on term's work and learning environment.				
What should happen:	Who responsible:	Time schedule:	Needs:	Assessment:

Outcome 4: Parents and learners completed questionnaire on learners' interests and needs (SMS)				
What should happen:	Who responsible:	Time schedule:	Needs:	Assessment:

PARTNERS FOR FUTURE

PLANNING STRATEGY 2:

Collaboration with CPUT

(P2: QI1 and QI3; P3: QI1 and QI2)

Dates, venues and times will vary

Outcome 1: Identify learners with poor reading ability.				
What needs to happen:	Who is responsible:	Time schedule:	Needs:	Assessment:
e.g. Identify learners	e.g. Teachers	e.g. From 30 July at school in certain periods	e.g. Test learners' reading ability.	e.g. How many learners were identified?

Outcome 2: Provide parents with sufficient support to help learners at home.				
What needs to happen:	Who is responsible:	Time schedule:	Needs:	Assessment:

PARTNERS FOR FUTURE

PLANNING STRATEGY 3:

Learners visiting parents on the farms with a focus on learning

(P3: QI1, QI3; P2: QI1, QI2, QI4)

Dates, venues and times vary:

Outcome 1: Teachers plan how visits match work schedule and learning.				
What needs to happen:	Who is responsible:	Time schedule:	Needs:	Assessment:
e.g. Plan specific visits that suit lessons and learning.	e.g. Teacher 1	e.g. 14 August 2012 Grade 1-3 to which farm.	e.g. Complete "visit form" indicating how visit fits in with work schedule and lessons.	e.g. What visits were planned?
Outcome 2: Use parents and community resources in learning areas				
What needs to happen:	Who is responsible:	Time schedule:	Needs:	Assessment:

PARTNERS FOR FUTURE

PLANNING STRATEGY 6:

Communicating through SMS system

(P1: QI2; P2: QI1, QI3; P3: QI2, QI4)

Dates, venues and times vary.

Outcome 1: Communication				
What needs to happen:	Who is responsible:	Time schedule:	Needs:	Assessment:
e.g. Parents to be informed by SMS system e.g. parents' evening.	e.g. Person responsible for organising parents' evening.	e.g. 2 days before parents' evening.	e.g. Internet and SMS system	e.g. How many messages were sent?

Outcome 2: General information and promote learning.				
What needs to happen:	Who is responsible:	Time schedule:	Needs:	Assessment:

PARTNERS FOR FUTURE

PLANNING STRATEGY 5:

Parent Meeting 2 - Recognition and progress

Date: _____ Location: _____ Time: _____

Outcome 1: Parents to be informed about learners progress in each grade.				
What needs to happen:	Who is responsible:	Time schedule:	Needs:	Assessment:
e.g. Parents are invited to talk about learners' progress.	e.g. Person responsible for organising parents' evening.	e.g. Plan evening three weeks in advance	e.g. Books of leaners	e.g. How many parents attended?

Outcome 2: Learners receive recognition for achievement.				
What needs to happen:	Who is responsible:	Time schedule:	Needs:	Assessment:

PARTNERS FOR FUTURE

8. Implementation

8.1 Background

The principal, teachers and parents agreed that the principal should manage implementation.

Second in command: Head of department.

8.2 The role during implementation

- ✓ Put focus on learning through parental involvement.
- ✓ Planning to achieve implementation strategies.
- ✓ Ensure interaction between the community, parents and the school.
- ✓ Development of strategies to improve parents' involvement in School B.

8.3 Weight of responsibilities for those who implement:

STRATEGIES	PARENTS	PRINCIPAL/TEACHERS
Strategy one	Motivate fellow parents to attend.	Make all arrangements.
Strategy two	Motivate parents to become involved in reading programme.	Make all arrangements.
Strategy three	Make some arrangements.	Make some arrangements.
Strategy four	Motivate fellow parents to cooperate.	Make all arrangements.
Strategy five	Motivate fellow parents to attend.	Make all arrangements.

PARTNERS FOR FUTURE

9. Formative evaluation of strategies for research purposes.

Formative evaluation: Try-out A limited number of the user group (e.g. teachers and learners) use the materials in the day-to-day user setting.			
STRATEGY:	**PARTICIPANTS AND ROLE:**	**ACTIVITIES:**	
Strategy 1 : Parent evening 1- Focus on learning	*Educators* discuss parental involvement programme strategies with parents and learners in their own classes. *Parents and learners* complete questionnaire regarding learners' needs and interests. *Researcher* introduces the importance of parental involvement with all the teachers, parents and learners.	Report from principal. Logbook of researcher.	Focus group interviews with parents and teachers on the implementation of the parent involvement programme at School B.
Strategy 2: Collaboration with CPUT.	*Teachers* identify learners that need support in reading. *Learners* provide parents with support.	Observation of field worker	
Strategy 3: Learners visit parents on farms with a focus on learner learning.	*Teachers* plan lessons that match visiting farms and parents. *Parents* and the community are used as resources for learning.	Observation of field worker. Focus group interviews with parents.	
Strategy 4: Communication via SMS system.	*Principal* uses SMS system to improve general communication with parents. *Teachers* use SMS system to communicate learning activities to parents.	SMS messages sent.	
Strategy 5: Parent evening 2: Progress and recognition.	*Community member* presents a motivational speech regarding learning. *Teacher and parent* hands recognition certificate to each learner regarding progress and learning.	Observation of field worker and focus group interviews with parents.	

PARTNERS FOR FUTURE

10.   Time schedule of SCAF partnership programme at School B

JULY 2012						
MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
16 School starts	17	18	19	20	21	22
23 Parents evening	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

PARTNERS FOR FUTURE

AUGUST 2012						
MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
		1	2	3	4	5
FARM VISITS	7	8	9	10	11	12
	14	15	16	17	18	19
	21	22	23	24	25	26
	28	29	30	31		

SEPTEMBER 2012						
MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
CPUT STUDENTS	11	12	13	14	15	16
	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25 ACKNOWLEDGEMENT EVENING	26	27	28 SCHOOL CLOSES	29	30

PARTNERS FOR FUTURE

S

PUPILS VISIT PARENTS ON FARMS:

GRADE:	
FARM:	
DATE:	
LEARNING AREA:	
LEARNING OUTCOME:	
ASSESSMENT STANDARD:	

EXPLAIN PROCEDURE OF LESSON AND VISIT:

PARTNERS FOR FUTURE

LEARNER'S NEEDS AND INTERESTS:

LEARNER'S NAME:	
LEARER'S GRADE:	
LEARNER'S PARENTS:	

Talk to your child and make a note of what he/she is interested in (e.g. cars, rugby, dolphins, etc.).

Talk to your child and write down what he/she found difficult at school last year? (e.g. mathematics or homework to finish)

PARTNERS FOR FUTURE

S

COMMUNICATION BY SMS SYSTEM:

SMS NUMBER:	
WHO SENDS SMS:	
FOR WHAT GRADE:	
DATE:	
ACADEMIC/NON-ACADEMIC:	

EXACT WORDS OF SMS:

S

COMMUNICATION BY SMS SYSTEM:

SMS NUMBER:	
WHO SENDS SMS:	
FOR WHAT GRADE:	
DATE:	
ACADEMIC/NON-ACADEMIC:	

EXACT WORDS OF SMS:

PARTNERS FOR FUTURE

APPENDIX L

Programme for SCHOOL C (Prototype 4)

PARTNERS FOR FUTURE

SCHOOL – COMMUNITY – FAMILY

(SCAF PARTNERSHIP PROGRAMME)

JULY – SEPTEMBER 2012

PARTNERS FOR FUTURE
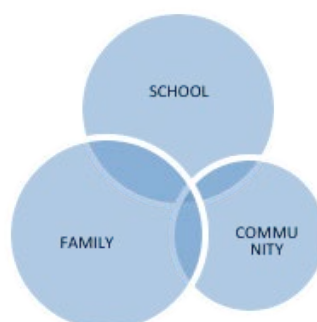
CONTENT

1. Context of School C
   1.1 The school
   1.2 The teachers
   1.3 The learners
   1.4 The parents
   1.5 The community and environment
2. Positive aspects and challenges at School C
3. Resources and how to use them in School C
4. Principles and quality indicators of the SCAF partnership programme
5. Goals of the SCAF partnership programme at School C
6. All strategies to achieve principles (Workshop)
7. Strategies of the SCAF partnership programme at School C
   7.1 Summary of strategies
   7.2 Planning of strategies
8. Implementation
9. Formative evaluation of strategies for research purposes
10. Possible time schedule of the SCAF partnership programme at School C
11. Extra forms to use during strategies

PARTNERS FOR FUTURE

1. **Context of School C**

1.1 **The school**

- School C is a rural multigrade no-fee school situated in the Wellington district.
- The school is part of Circuit 3 within the Cape Winelands Educational District, Western Cape.
- Grade R – Grade 6
- Grade Composition: Grade R = 1 class

    Grade 1 = 1 class

    Grade 2 – 3 = 1 class

    Grade 4 – 6 = 1 class

- Western Cape Results 2011 (percent learners more than 50%)

    Grade 3 Literacy   _____

    Grade 3 Numeracy _____

    Grade 6 Literacy   _____

    Grade 6 Numeracy _____

1.2 **The teachers**

- There are 3 teachers at School C.
- The three teachers need to travel 8km to school.
- The principal is the fulltime teacher for Grade 2 and 3

1.3 **The learners**

- There are 57 learners enrolled at School C.
- Grade R = 16, Grade 1 = 10, Grade 2 – 3 = 17, Grade 4 – 6 = 14
- A feeding scheme provides one meal for the learners per day.
- Language of learners: Afrikaans

1.4 **The parents**

- All the parents work at eight farms nearby.
- Language of parents: Afrikaans

1.5 **The community and environment**

- Area in farming community.
- High poverty area with high level of alcohol abuse.

PARTNERS FOR FUTURE

2. Parent involvement: Good aspects and challenges

PARENT INVOLVEMENT AT SCHOOL C.	
GOOD ASPECTS	CHALLENGES
1. Majority of parents attend parent evenings. 2. Communication good. 3. Involvement in/at functions. 4. Collection of school fees. 5. Sport. 6. Donations by parents. 7. Parental care is good.	1. Cooperation. 2. Homework not checked. 3. Involvement in behaviour of children. 4. Behaviour of learners: respect and discipline. 5. Motivation. 6. Reading: Fluent and with understanding. 7. Donations by organisations. 8. Foetal alcohol syndrome learners. 9. Illiteracy among parents. 10. To get parents involved. 11. Poverty. 12. Parents work overtime on other farms. 13. Farmer community gives little support.

3. Resources and how they can be used

COMMUNITY OF SHOOL C	
RESOURCES WHAT AND WHO?	RESOURCES HOW?
1. Farms: Grapes, vegetables, guavas, oranges etc. 2. Farming lorries 3. The Berg River 4. Vegetable gardens 5. Crèche on farms 6. Soccer field 7. Library 8. Farmstalls 9. Clinics 10. Ambulance, police etc.. 11. CPUT 12. Factories 13. Language Monument 14. Bainskloof 15. Horse farm 16. Church 17. Feeding scheme	1. Outings, market days, farm visits. 2. Transportation of pupils and parents. 3. Learn about plants, animals, water, etc. 4. Learn about vegetable gardens, plants, parents' work. 5. Supervision while parents are at work. 6. Exercises, learn, socialise. 7. Outings and read books. 8. Excursions: learning about animals, plants, etc. 9. Medical support. 10. Safety trips and presentations. 11. Assistance to schools. (Reading, art, sports.) 12. Outings. 13. Language history. 14. Vegetation outings. 15. Therapy for children. 16. Sunday School and Bible learning (Bible morals). 17. Help to feed hungry children

PARTNERS FOR FUTURE

4. Principals and quality indicators of the SCAF partnership programme

PRINCIPLE ONE:	Promotion of partnerships with families to create opportunities to involve family and community members in children's learning and development.
Quality indicator 1:	Invite family members to the classroom to find ways to participate in children's learning and development.
Quality indicator 2:	Involve family members in decision-making regarding learning environments.
PRINCIPLE TWO:	Create formal and informal opportunities for communication and information sharing with families.
Quality indicator 1:	Communicate learning and development of children with family members.
Quality indicator 2:	Communication regarding children's background to determine needs and interests.
Quality indicator 3:	Promote opportunities for families to learn from and support one another.
PRINCIPLE 3:	Utilise community and family resources to enrich children's development and learning experiences.
Quality indicator 1:	Involve community to enhance learning and socialisation.
Quality indicator 2:	Assist families in obtaining resources to enhance learning and development.
Quality indicator 3:	Use knowledge of family and community as part of curriculum and learning.
Quality indicator 4:	Offer information and ideas for family members to create home learning environment.

PARTNERS FOR FUTURE

5. **Goals of SCAF partnership programme at School C**

5.1 To create *opportunities for interaction* to establish collaboration between school, families and the community.

5.2 To create *partnerships* between the school, families and community.

5.3 To *improve communication* between the school, families and community specifically on learning.

5.4 To *utilise resources* in the community for improved learning.

5.5 To *improve learning and teaching* at School C.

5.6 To *improve parental involvement* at the school, focusing on learning.

PARTNERS FOR FUTURE

6.   All strategies to achieve principles (Workshop)

PRINCIPLE ONE:	Enhancing partnership opportunities where parents are involved in learners' learning and teaching.
QI 1: Invite parents to class to be part of teaching and learning. QI 2: Involve parents to participate in decision-making regarding the learning environment.	1. Parent evenings and functions: Talking about progress of learners. 2. Motivational speaker - To motivate parents and teachers. 3. Parent and teacher meetings - Talking about behaviour, progress and marks. 2. Support groups for parents. 3. A parents day - come to class to motivate and look at class activities. 4. Competitions among parents, children in academics, sport and culture. 5. Parents can teach children what farm work entails. 6. Child and parent meeting - parents look at art, social events. 7. Older people may be invited to talk about the past - as in the history period, etc. 8. Mentors on each farm. 9. Improve aftercare programme. 10. Present education to parents. 11. Parents help learners during lunchtime.
PRINCIPLE TWO:	Create formal and informal opportunities for communication and sharing of information on teaching and learning.
QI 1: Communicate with family about learners, their learning and development, the curriculum and activities in class. QI 2: Communicate learner's background, strengths, interests and learning needs. QI 3: Communicate opportunities for families to learn from one another and to support one another.	1. SMS system: once a day or week about work done at school. 2. Parent evenings –one each term – select days that are suitable for parents, identify specific parents whose children have specific problems. 3. Parents can also be called if necessary. 4. Assessment plan of term – parents must always be informed. 5. Signs in front of the school – focus on academic work. 6. Communication booklet – parents sign every day's work, etc. 7. Posters on farms keep parents informed about parental involvement. 8. Letter to parents at the beginning of the term to inform parents of key academic outcomes. 9. Problem cases: parents come to the school. 10. Use the admin clerk, sports assistant and cleaner for communication – they live on different farms. 11. Family and soup kitchen

PARTNERS FOR FUTURE

PRINCIPLE THREE:	Use resources from the community to contribute to learners' development and learning.
QI 1: Learners are taken to the community or the community taken to learners to learn and improve socialisation. QI 2: Help parents to use information and resources essential for learning and development of learners. QI 3: School uses knowledge of communities and families as part of the curriculum and learning experiences. QI 4: School offers parents help and ideas for learning environment at home.	1. Visit the farm: parents teach their children. 2. Ambulance services, police services, etc. to educate parents and children about safety. 3. CPUT – Parents and children help with Mathematics and Literacy. 4. Library: Can help with language development and love of reading. Also expanding the current library. 5. Elderly people: grandparents tell/read to children stories. 6. Kitchen staff – practicable lesson about food preparation and safety. 7. Broaden knowledge about environmental issues (vegetable garden). 8. People from factories can talk about knowledge of manufacturing. 9. Mosque - different religions. 10. Use environment to teach mathematical concepts. 11. Emotional support for parents and children. 12. Educate parents. 13. Learners must teach one another. 14. Use Agricultural School's learners and knowledge. 15. Interactive whiteboards. 16. Children teach their parents at home.

PARTNERS FOR FUTURE

7.   SCAF partnership programme: Summary of strategies at School C.

Strategy 1: Parent evening 1: Focus on learning				
Focus?	Principal and quality indicator	Who?	Where?	When?
- Parents' role in teaching and learning and how learners can be helped at home. - In grades talk about work for the term, learning environment and see learners' books. - Parents completed questionnaires on learners' interests and needs. - Motivational speaker from the community.	- P1: QI1 and QI2 - P2: QI1, and QI2 - P3: QI2 and QI4	- Teachers - Parents and learner Teacher 1	- School - Class	- Term 3: 23 – 27 July 2012
Strategy 2: Parents / grandfathers / grandmothers become involved in classroom.				
Focus?	Principal and quality indicator	Who?	Where?	When?
- Parents / grandmothers / grandfathers become part of lesson in the classroom. - Parents / Grandma / Grandpa are utilised as resources / help during lesson.	- P1: QI1 - P3: QI1 and QI3	- Parents / grandmothers / grandfathers Every teacher	- Class	- Term 3: Date – 30 July

PARTNERS FOR FUTURE

Strategy 3: Learners visiting parents on the farms. (Focus on the learning part of the current work schedule)				
Focus?	Principal and quality indicator	Who?	Where?	When?
- Use parents and community resources in learning areas - Adjust learning programme to farm operations.	- P3: QI1, QI3 - P2: QI1 and QI2	- Teachers - Parents and learner	- Farms	- Term 3: Date depends on farms.
		Every teacher		

Strategy 4: Communication through SMS system and notice boards				
Focus?	Principal and quality indicator	Who?	Where?	When?
- Communication - General and promote learning.	- P1: QI2 - P2: QI1, QI3 - P3: QI2, QI4	- Teachers and parents	- School to cellphone - Before school on posters at farms	- During the term
		Teacher 2		

Strategy 5: Parent Meeting on progress of learners during the quarter and recognition evening.				
Focus?	Principal and quality indicator	Who?	Where?	When?
- Parents to be informed about learners' progress - In grades - Learners receive recognition for achievement.	- P2: QI1, and QI2 - P3: QI2	- Teachers - Parents and learner	- School - Class	- In term 3: Date at end of term.
		Teacher 3		

PARTNERS FOR FUTURE

PLANNING STRATEGY 1:

Parent Meeting 1 - The beginning of the quarter

(P1: QI1 and QI2; P2: QI1, and QI2; P3: QI2 and QI4)

Date: _____ Place: _____ Time: _____

Outcome 1: As much as possible, parents and learners at parents' evening.				
What should happen:	Who responsible:	Time schedule:	Needs:	Assessment:
e.g. Organize transport.	e.g. Teacher	e.g. 16 – 20 July 2012	e.g. Send letter with all arrangements and arrange with farm manager.	e.g. How many parents attended?

Outcome 2: Parents to be informed about their role in teaching and learning - motivational speaker.				
What should happen:	Who responsible:	Time schedule:	Needs:	Assessment:

Outcome 3: Parents and learners visit teachers in grades on term's work and learning environment.				
What should happen:	Who responsible:	Time schedule:	Needs:	Assessment:

Outcome 4: Parents and learners completed questionnaire on learners' interests and needs (SMS)				
What should happen:	Who responsible:	Time schedule:	Needs:	Assessment:

PARTNERS FOR FUTURE

PLANNING STRATEGY 2:

Parents / grandfathers / grandmothers to be involved in classroom.

(P1: QI1; P3: QI1 and QI3)

Dates, VENUES and times will vary

Outcome 1: Create opportunities for parents / grandmothers / grandfathers to be part of a lesson.				
What needs to happen:	Who is responsible:	Time schedule:	Needs:	Assessment:
e.g. Determine what lessons parents / grandmothers / grandfathers can to be used for as an aid or resource.	e.g. teacher	e.g. From 30 July at school in certain periods	e.g. Information on lessons and incorporate parents / grandmothers / grandfathers.	e.g. Which lessons were determined?
Outcome 2: Parents / grandmothers / grandfathers to be involved in learning lesson.				
What needs to happen:	Who is responsible:	Time schedule:	Needs:	Assessment:

PARTNERS FOR FUTURE

PLANNING STRATEGY 3:

Learners visiting parents on the farms with a focus on learning

(P3: QI1, QI3; P2: QI1, QI2)

Dates, Venues and times vary:

Outcome 1: Teachers plan how visits match work schedule and learning.				
What needs to happen:	Who is responsible:	Time schedule:	Needs:	Assessment:
e.g. Plan specific visits that suit lessons and learning.	e.g. Teacher 1	e.g. 14 August 2012 Grade 1- 3 to which farm.	e.g. Complete "visit form" indicating how visit fits in with work schedule and lessons.	e.g. What visits were planned?
Outcome 2: Use parents and community resources in learning areas				
What needs to happen:	Who is responsible:	Time schedule:	Needs:	Assessment:

PARTNERS FOR FUTURE

PLANNING STRATEGY 6:

Communicating through SMS system

(P1: QI2; P2: QI1, QI3; P3: QI2, QI4)

Dates, venues and times vary.

Outcome 1: Communication				
What needs to happen:	Who is responsible:	Time schedule:	Needs:	Assessment:
e.g. Parents to be informed by SMS system, e.g. parents' evening.	e.g. Person responsible for organising parents' evening.	e.g. 2 days before parents' evening.	e.g Internet and SMS system	e.g. How many messages were sent?

Outcome 2: General and promote learning.				
What needs to happen:	Who is responsible:	Time schedule:	Needs:	Assessment:

PARTNERS FOR FUTURE

PLANNING STRATEGY 5:

Parent Meeting 2 - Recognition and progress

Date: _____ Location: _____ Time: _____

Outcome 1: Parents to be informed about learners' progress in each grade				
What needs to happen:	Who is responsible:	Time schedule:	Needs:	Assessment:
e.g. Parents are invited to talk about learners' progress.	e.g. Person responsible for organising parents' evening.	e.g. Plan evening three weeks in advance	e.g. Books of learners	e.g. How many parents attended?

Outcome 2: Learners receive recognition for achievement.				
What needs to happen:	Who is responsible:	Time schedule:	Needs:	Assessment:

PARTNERS FOR FUTURE

8. Implementation

8.1 Background

The principal, teachers and parents agreed that the principal should manage implementation.

Second in command: Head of department

8.2 The role during implementation

- ✓ Put focus on learning through parental involvement.
- ✓ Planning to achieve implementation strategies.
- ✓ Ensure interaction between the community, parents and the school.
- ✓ Development of strategies to improve parents' involvement in School C.

8.3 Weight of responsibilities for those who implement:

STRATEGIES	PARENTS	PRINCIPAL/TEACHERS
Strategy one	Motivate fellow parents to attend.	Make all arrangements.
Strategy two	Motivate parents to become involved in reading programme.	Make all arrangement.
Strategy three	Make some arrangements.	Make some arrangements.
Strategy four	Motivate fellow parents to cooperate.	Make all arrangements.
Strategy five	Motivate fellow parents to attend.	Make all arrangements.

PARTNERS FOR FUTURE

9.   Formative evaluation of strategies for research purposes.

Formative evaluation: Try-out			
A limited number of the user group (e.g. teachers and learners) use the materials in the day-to-day user setting.			
STRATEGY:	**PARTICIPANTS AND ROLE:**	**ACTIVITIES:**	
Strategy 1 : Parent evening 1- Focus on learning	*Educators* discuss parental involvement programme strategies with parents and learners in their own classes. *Parents and learners* complete questionnaire regarding learners' needs and interests. *Researcher* introduces the importance of parental involvement with all the teachers, parents and learners.	Report from principal. Logbook of researcher.	Focus group interviews with parents and teachers on the implementation of the parent involvement programme at School C.
Strategy 2: Parents / grandmothers / grandfathers part of lesson at school.	*Teachers* create opportunities for parents / grandmothers / grandfathers to be part of a lesson. *Parents / grandmothers / grandfathers* help teacher in a lesson as a help or resource.	Observation of field worker	
Strategy 3: Learners visit parents on farms with a focus on learner learning.	*Teachers* plan lessons that match visiting farms and parents. *Parents* and the community are used as resources for learning.	Observation of field worker. Focus group interviews with parents.	
Strategy 4: Communication via SMS system.	*Principal* uses SMS system to improve general communication with parents. *Teachers* use SMS system to communicate learning activities with parents.	SMS messages sent.	
Strategy 5: Parent evening 2: Progress and recognition.	*Community member* presents a motivational speech regarding learning. *Teacher and parent* hand recognition certificate to each learner regarding progress and learning.	Observation of field worker and focus group interviews with parents.	

PARTNERS FOR FUTURE

10. Time schedule of SCAF partnership programme at School C

JULY 2012						
MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
16 School start	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25 Parents' evening	26	27	28	29
30	31					

PARTNERS FOR FUTURE

AUGUST 2012						
MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
FARM VISITS	14	15	16	17	18	19
	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

SEPTEMBER 2012						
MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
GRANDPA/GRANDMA LESSON	11	12	13	14	15	16
	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25 RECOGNITION EVENING	26	27	28 SCHOOL CLOSES	29	30

PARTNERS FOR FUTURE

S

PUPILS VISIT PARENTS ON FARMS:

GRADE:	
FARM:	
DATE:	
LEARNING AREA:	
LEARNING OUTCOME:	
ASSESSMENT STANDARD:	

EXPLAIN PROCEDURE OF LESSON AND VISIT:

PARTNERS FOR FUTURE

LEARNERS NEEDS AND INTERESTS:

LEARNER'S NAME:	
LEARER'S GRADE:	
LEARNER'S PARENTS:	

Talk to your child and make a note on what he / she is interested in (e.g. cars, rugby, dolphins, etc.).

Talk to your child and write down what he / she found difficult in school last year? (e.g. Mathematics or homework to finish)

PARTNERS FOR FUTURE

S

COMMUNICATION BY SMS SYSTEM:

SMS NUMBER:	
WHO SENDS SMS:	
FOR WHAT GRADE:	
DATE:	
ACADEMIC / NON-ACADEMIC:	

EXACT WORDS OF SMS:

S

COMMUNICATION BY SMS SYSTEM:

SMS NUMBER:	
WHO SENDS SMS:	
FOR WHAT GRADE:	
DATE:	
ACADEMIC / NON-ACADEMIC:	

EXACT WORDS OF SMS:

PARTNERS FOR FUTURE

APPENDIX M

Photographs of School B and C

Workshop: School C

Workshop: School B

Strategy 1: Parent evening (School C)

Strategy 1: Parent evening (School B)

Strategy 2: Farm visits (School B)

Strategy 5: Motivation and recognition evening (School B and C)

APPENDIX N

Photographs of School D and E

Workshop: School D

Workshop: School E

Strategy 5: Class visits (School D)

Strategy 1: Open day visiting (School E)

Strategy 2: Farm visits (School D)

Strategy 2: Farm visits (School E)

DECLARATION OF LANGUAGE EDITING

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ACADEMIC WRITING

Linguistic proofreading and editing of:

Research proposals
Conference and journal papers
Theses, dissertations, technical reports

Bibliographies
Bibliographic citation
Literature searching

The DEd thesis by Mr N Venter

has been proofread and edited, and the candidate has been advised to make the recommended changes.

ES van Aswegen
25 July 2013