Utilising parents' funds of knowledge to enhance literacy amongst foundation phase learners

by

Tanya Lee Greenhalgh

Submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree

MAGISTER EDUCATIONIS

in the Faculty of Education

at the

UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA

February 2020

Declaration

I declare that the dissertation titled *"Utilising parents' funds of knowledge to enhance literacy amongst foundation phase learners"*, which I hereby submit for the degree Magister Education at the University of Pretoria, is my own work and has not previously been submitted by me for a degree at this or any other tertiary institution.

Tanya Lee Greenhalgh

February 2020

Ethics certificate

UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA
Faculty of Education

RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE

CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE	CLEARANCE NUMBER: **EM 18/10/01**
DEGREE AND PROJECT	MEd Utilising parents' funds of knowledge to enhance literacy amongst foundation phase learners
INVESTIGATOR	Ms Tanya Greenhalgh
DEPARTMENT	Education Management and Policy Studies
APPROVAL TO COMMENCE STUDY	05 December 2018
DATE OF CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE	25 November 2019

CHAIRPERSON OF ETHICS COMMITTEE: Prof Liesel Ebersöhn

CC
Ms Bronwynne Swarts
Dr Talita Calitz
Prof Chaya Herman

This Ethics Clearance Certificate should be read in conjunction with the Integrated Declaration Form (D08) which specifies details regarding:

- Compliance with approved research protocol,
- No significant changes,
- Informed consent/assent,
- Adverse experience or undue risk,
- Registered title, and
- Data storage requirements.

The author, whose name appears on the title page of this thesis, has obtained, for the research described in this work, the applicable research ethics approval. The author declares that he/she has observed the ethical standards required in terms of the University of Pretoria's *Code of ethics for researchers and the Policy guidelines for responsible research.*

Acknowledgements

The completion of my dissertation would not have been possible without the support and encouragement of those around me. I would like to express my sincere gratitude to:

- My Heavenly Father, who provided me with the necessary strength, health, knowledge, wisdom and perseverance to complete this study;
- My family, who has cheered me on and continuously supported me.
- Dr Talita Calitz, my research supervisor, and Professor Chaya Herman, my co-supervisor, for their invaluable advice, guidance and inspiration.
- Margaret Linstrom, for editing my work.
- My colleagues, for taking on additional responsibilities to support me and allow me the time to complete my dissertation, and for their kind and uplifting words of encouragement.
- Last, but not the least, my two dear friends, Rene and Avital, for being a part of this journey with me and for their continuous encouragement in the process.

Abstract

This dissertation builds on and contributes to work in the field of parent-school collaboration and the funds of knowledge approach. In South Africa, policies have been developed to promote collaboration between schools and parents. These policies, however, do not fully recognise or aim to use parents' funds of knowledge in this collaboration. In addition, numerous studies have examined the challenges associated with collaboration amongst working-class households, however, little attention has been given to the lower middle-class in South Africa in particular. This study therefore explores the funds of knowledge of lower-middle class parents, and ways in which schools and parents manage these 'funds' to enhance the literacy development of foundation phase learners. The dissertation draws strongly on the work of Moll, Amanti, Neff and Gonzalez (1992) whose funds of knowledge approach holds a transformative perspective on people with a lower socio-economic background. The data for this qualitative study was collected through 30 semi-structured interviews. I argue that parents accumulate various knowledge, skills and abilities through their life experiences that could significantly enhance the literacy development of their children. The findings suggest that, while parents possess these skills, there is a lack of transmission of the skills and knowledge amongst their children. Factors that influence the collaborative use of these funds of knowledge are discussed and explored in this study. I conclude with a discussion on the dynamics of a South African classroom and existing policies on collaboration and how this affects the collaborative use of parents' funds of knowledge to enhance the literacy of foundation phase learners.

Key Terms:

Funds of knowledge, collaboration, literacy, socio-economic status

MARGARET LINSTRÖM

LANGUAGE PRACTITIONER

Honours degree (Language Practice), Master's degree (Communication Science) (UFS)

Member of the Professional Editors' Guild

13 November 2019

CONFIRMATION OF EDITING

I, Margaret Linström, hereby confirm that I language edited the Master's thesis of Tanya Greenhalgh entitled, *Parent-school collaboration: utilising parents' funds of knowledge to enhance literacy amongst foundation phase learners.*

The editing was done electronically, using Track Changes, to enable the candidate to accept or reject the suggested changes; thus, retaining her authorial discretion and right to assert authorship.

Margaret Linström

082 777 3224
linstromme@ufs.ac.za

List of abbreviations

F.O.K	Funds of Knowledge
SES	Socio-economic status
NECT	National Education Collaboration Trust

Table of contents

List of figures

List of tables

Chapter 1

Background and context

For many schools, collaboration between the various members of the school community remains an elusive goal, both nationally and internationally. Despite the development and implementation of numerous strategies and initiatives, the concerning lack of collaboration between parents and the school persists (Crozier & Raey, 2005; Fataar, 2012; Hornby & Lafaele, 2011; Lemmer, 2007; Murray, McFarland-Piazza & Harrison, 2014; Tatto, Rodriguez, Gonzalez-Lantz, Miller, Busscher, Trumble, Centeno & Woo, 2001).

Cox (2005) describes collaboration as an agreement between parents and the school to promote the overall well-being of the child through a partnership of joint efforts. Collaboration therefore involves mutual investment into the holistic development of the child by the school and the parents (Cox, 2005). Studies conducted in Canada (Deslandes, 2006), Ohio in the United States of America (USA) (Anderson-Butcher, Lawson, Lachini, Bean, Flaspohler & Zullig, 2010), Texas in the USA (Cox, 2005), Australia (Murray *et al*., 2014) and the United Kingdom (UK) (Tatto *et al*., 2001) have proven that such collaboration is significant in the development of the child and often results in improved academic performance and socio-emotional skills (Anderson-Butcher et al., 2010; Deslandes, 2006; WorldBankGroup, 2018). In particular, collaboration has proven to enhance the literacy performance of children in their foundational years of schooling. A study conducted in 2006 by Dearing, Kreider, Simpkins and Weiss suggests that high levels of parental involvement and collaboration with the school result in higher average levels of literacy performance (Anderson, 2000; Goddard & Goddard, 2007; Jeynes, 2005).

While such collaboration presents numerous advantages, a number of identified challenges impede such partnerships (Anderson-Butcher *et al.,* 2010; Cox, 2005; Crozier & Raey, 2005; Deslandes, 2006; Hornby & Lafaele, 2011). In South Africa, concepts of parent-school collaboration have been integrated into educational policies with the aim of achieving collaborative school governance (Lemmer, 2007; Ndou,

2012). According to the South African Schools Act of 1996 (Act 84 of 1996), all public schools are obligated to elect a school governing body (SGB) every three years. The composition of this governing body typically includes the principal and staff-, parent- and learner representatives. The Act was instituted to redress the imbalances of the past by encouraging democratic and equitable governance and functioning of schools and to expedite parent and community involvement in the education of learners (South Africa, 1996). In addition to this, the School-Parent-Community Engagement Framework was developed by the National Education Collaboration Trust (NECT) in 2016. This framework recognises the importance of parent, community and school collaboration in the academic success of the learner and acknowledges the lack thereof. Therefore, it was developed to guide and assist schools in their engagement with parents and the community. The outcomes of these policies, however, have proven disappointing, as the desired collaboration has not yet been achieved (Lemmer, 2007; Ndou, 2012; South Africa, 2016).

Many of the challenges identified in national and international studies are closely associated with a lower socio-economic status (SES) (Fataar, 2012; Lemmer, 2007; Murray *et al.,* 2014; Shumba, Kasembe, Mukundu & Muzenda, 2008; Tatto *et al*., 2001). Some of these challenges include low levels of parent education (Crozier & Raey, 2005; Hornby & Lafaele, 2011; Murray *et al.,* 2014); access to resources (Crozier & Raey, 2005; Deslandes, 2006; Shumba *et al*., 2008); cultural background (Crozier & Raey, 2005; Hornby & Lafaele, 2011; Murray *et al.,* 2014); language barriers (Murray *et al*., 2014); access to transportation; and time constraints (Cox, 2005; Crozier & Raey, 2005; Tatto *et al*., 2001). As indicated by the School-Parent-Community Engagement Framework (2016), factors affecting collaboration in South Africa, more specifically include poverty, job and time constraints, low literacy levels and language barriers, the effects of HIV and AIDS, single parenting, poor parenting skills, and poor treatment and lack of communication from schools.

Much research has used the theory of cultural capital to explain and justify the challenges associated with a lack of collaboration amongst populations with a lower SES (Fataar, 2012; Hornby & Lafaele, 2011; Murray *et al.,* 2014; Nahapiet & Sumantra, 2000). Bourdieu's (1986) theory of cultural capital refers to the knowledge, language and culture that families in different social classes have access to (Archer,

Hutchings & Ross, 2003). This theory states that people have access to and possess various forms of cultural capital (Archer *et al*., 2003; Murray *et al.,* 2014). According to this perspective, people with more cultural capital have higher levels of education, access to resources, and knowledge of school systems; therefore, they align well with the school code (Archer *et al*., 2003; Fataar, 2012; Murray *et al*., 2014). On the other hand, people with less cultural capital are confronted with issues of language, communication, lack of transport, and insufficient resources (Archer *et al*., 2003; Fataar, 2012; Murray *et al*., 2014). Existing research therefore suggests that a misalignment exists between the cultural capital of families with a lower SES and the school code and pedagogy, thus creating a barrier to effective parent-school collaboration (Fataar, 2012; Murray *et al.,* 2014).

In contrast to this, it has been suggested that the problem is not having more or less cultural capital than others, or that some have the 'wrong' capital, but rather that schools do not accommodate families with differing cultural capitals (Fataar, 2012). Schools therefore do not appreciate or utilise the accumulated capitals, skills and knowledge that these families from diverse backgrounds and contexts possess (Fataar, 2012). In alignment with this perspective, the theory of funds of knowledge was developed (Moll, Amanti, Neff & Gonzalez, 1992). Funds of knowledge refers to the cultural and intellectual resources (funds) that people accumulate through experience and living in a community (Moll *et al.*, 1992). This promotes the notion that all people are competent and have valuable skills and knowledge to contribute, and therefore rejects the deficit approach often associated with the theory of cultural capital (Llopart & Esteban-Guitart, 2018). The challenges are therefore associated with a lack of appreciation and recognition of the funds possessed by these families, as opposed to having fewer capitals or the 'wrong' capitals (Fataar, 2012; Moll *et al.*, 1992).

The theory of funds of knowledge is furthermore relevant and crucial in the understanding of teaching and learning literacy. According to Zentella (2005), literacy is a cultural product that is strongly influenced by family and social interactions. Moje *et al*. (2011) suggest that funds of knowledge gained outside of school through interactions with families, communities, peers and media have a direct influence on literacy learning (Moje *et al.*, 2011). These studies suggest that people use various funds of knowledge to make sense of their world and this influences the way in which

they understand oral and written text (Moje *et al*., 2001; Zentella, 2005). Thus, literacy can, therefore, not be examined in isolation, but must be explored in the context of the various funds of knowledge that influence the learning of literacy (Zentella, 2005).

While existing policies acknowledge the importance of collaboration and recognise parents as valuable stakeholders in the education of their children, this study explores the ways in which schools utilise and manage parents' knowledge, skills and abilities as they attempt to achieve this collaboration. In this study, I use the funds of knowledge theory to explore the various 'funds' that parents with a lower SES possess, and how these 'funds' shape the literacies of foundation phase learners. The study furthermore investigates the ways in which schools use these 'funds' in teaching literacy to these learners. This study is, therefore, based on the premise that schools could potentially collaborate with parents with a lower SES, who are all capable and possess valuable funds of knowledge, to enhance the literacy of foundation phase learners.

1.1. Problem statement

As previously mentioned, collaboration between parents and the school results in higher levels of literacy performance. According to Fataar (2012), this collaboration is heightened when the cultural capital of the family aligns with the school knowledge system and pedagogy. As discussed in the previous section, research has suggested that a misalignment exists between families with a lower socio-economic background, which impedes the desired collaboration. The problem, however, may not be that parents, and in turn their children, have the 'wrong' capitals, but rather that their capitals are misrepresented or erased within the middle-class culture of the school (Fataar, 2012). While these parents have valuable funds of knowledge that contribute to the literacy of their children, these funds may not be adequately recognised and appreciated within the school culture.

Moreover, much global research has been conducted regarding the capitals and collaboration of working class and middle-class families (Fataar, 2012; Hornby & Lafaele, 2011; Murray *et al.*, 2014; Nahapiet & Sumantra, 2000). However, little attention has been given to parent-school collaboration amongst the lower middle-class in South Africa, in particular. The income gap between the upper and lower

middle-class in South Africa is widening; therefore, middle-class income levels cannot always be adequately grouped together (Southall, 2016). It is, therefore, essential to recognise that a precarious lower middle-class exists that may not always experience the privileges often associated with the middle-class stratum.

1.2. Purpose of the study

The purpose of the study is to explore the ways in which parents and the school collaborate to enhance the literacy of foundation phase learners by utilising the funds of knowledge of these parents. This study, therefore, explores the funds of knowledge that parents with a lower SES possess, which could be utilised to enhance the literacy of foundation phase learners. This study was conducted in a school that is situated in a low-income area, providing access to a population predominantly characterised by a lower SES. Thus, the geographical area acts as a filter to target parents who are likely to fall within the lower middle-class.

1.3. Rationale

The funds of knowledge approach has been used to explore the funds of students within the classroom context (Barton & Tan, 2009; Llopart & Esteban-Guitart, 2018; Moje *et al*., 2011; Moll *et al.*, 1992). However, this study is unique in its approach to using funds of knowledge to explore the ways in which parents' funds influence the literacy performance of their children. It is aimed at identifying the funds of the parents in the context of collaboration with the school.

South African grade 4 learners ranked poorly in the 2016 Progress in International Reading and Literacy Study (PIRLS) (Spaull, 2017). Thus, literacy performance amongst children in their foundational years of schooling is a major concern. While high levels of parent-school collaboration have proven to improve literacy performance, this remains an elusive goal (Crozier & Raey, 2005; Hornby & Lafaele, 2011; Murray *et al*., 2014; Tatto *et al*., 2001). Bearing this in mind, policies have been developed to promote and facilitate this collaboration. The outcomes of these policies, however, have not yet proven successful. This study is therefore significant as it provides insight into the experiences and perceptions of parents with regards to

collaboration with the school. A study aimed at identifying ways in which the school collaborates with parents by managing and utilising their funds of knowledge to enhance the literacy of foundation phase learners is therefore both relevant and valuable.

This study further contributes to a transformative perspective on people with a lower SES (Moll *et al.*, 1992). Funds of knowledge promotes the notion that all people, regardless of SES, culture and background, possess valuable skills and knowledge (Esteban-Guitart & Moll, 2014). Thus, all people are regarded as bearers of cultural, intellectual and social resources that can be utilised in the school context. Hence, this approach to collaboration aims to reduce the stereotypes and prejudices associated with people with a lower SES and empower all people by capitalising on their inherent resources (Llopart & Esteban-Guitart, 2018). This study challenges the deficit approach associated with cultural capital and presents a transformative perspective that all people are capable of achieving valuable outcomes.

In addition to this, this approach to collaboration is particularly relevant to the South African context. The country is largely characterised by its diversity in culture, language and ethnicity. This study acknowledges that all people, regardless of background, contain 'funds' that can contribute to collaboration and the literacy of their children. In addition, a large percentage of the South African population has a lower SES (Southall, 2016). Thus, it is valuable to identify the skills and knowledge systems of this population and to understand how these can contribute to the formation of effective partnerships with the school to improve the literacy performance of foundation phase learners. Moreover, there is a gap in the South African literature on understanding parent-school collaboration for lower middle-class parents. While much is known about the challenges to collaboration amongst working class and middle-class parents, little is known about collaboration amongst the lower middle-class in South Africa in particular.

1.4. Research questions

Primary research question:

How could parents' funds of knowledge be utilised to enhance literacy amongst foundation phase learners?

Secondary research questions:

- What funds of knowledge do parents from lower middle-class SES possess that could shape the literacy of their children?
- How do these funds of knowledge shape the literacy of their children?
- How do parents and teachers collaborate in using these funds of knowledge to enhance learners' literacy?

1.5. Research methodology

In this study, a qualitative research approach was used. This allowed me to engage linguistically with the participants and to extract meaningful data from the thick descriptions they provided. It further provided insight into the experiences and perceptions of the participants. In line with this, an interpretivist paradigm was adopted as the study appreciates the individual experiences of the participants and holds that multiple realities exist. Thus, value is given to the interpretations that participants have of their experiences and the way these experiences shape their thinking and behaviour. Furthermore, I made use of a qualitative case study design. The boundaries of this case study are determined by geographical, institutional and group aspects. Thus, it includes parents of foundation phase learners in a primary school that is situated in a low-income area. Purposive sampling therefore allowed me to select participants according to these criteria. Data was collected through 30 semi-structured individual interviews, where participants were probed, and follow-up questions were asked. This allowed for the extraction of rich data through elaborate responses. This qualitative study, therefore, relies on the experiences, perceptions and openness of the parent participants.

1.6. Limitations of the study

This study was limited in that it only included parents as its participants. Thus, the data gathered is restricted to the perceptions and experiences of these parents and may not be an accurate reflection of teachers' contributions or existing collaboration. In addition, the interviews were the only data collection instrument used in this study, resulting in a lack of data triangulation.

For the majority of the participants, English is not their first language. While they were able to understand the questions and responded to these, several parents experienced difficulty in adequately expressing themselves. This may have caused responses to be limited or misrepresented due to a lack of vocabulary and proficiency. Moreover, I played a key role in soliciting and interpreting the responses of the participants. This may unintentionally have been influenced by the cultural, linguistic and socio-economic differences between the participants and me.

Finally, the participants were not interviewed in their home environments. While much data was obtained through the interviews, it may have been significantly beneficial to be exposed to their environments as it would have enhanced and further complemented their responses.

1.7. Outline of chapters

The chapters are outlined as follows:

Chapter 2 consists of a literature review where existing national and international studies on collaboration and literacy development are discussed. Literacy development is discussed with regards to emergent literacy, the influence of popular culture on literacy, and the concept of multiliteracy. In addition to this, issues of collaboration are debated in relation to SES and the knowledge, skills and abilities of parents.

Chapter 3 reviews the funds of knowledge approach as the theoretical framework of this study. Reference is made to the key concepts and objectives of this approach. A discussion on how this approach aligns to this study, and how it is used to guide the research, is further provided.

Chapter 4 elaborates on the methodology used in this study. This includes the methodological and epistemological paradigms, and the research design. The sampling process, research site, data collection methods and instruments, and analysis are discussed. Finally, the ethical considerations and procedures followed are explained.

In Chapter 5, the data is presented and analysed according to four major themes namely: (1) cognitive funds of knowledge, (2) cultural funds of knowledge, (3) social funds of knowledge, and (4) collaboration between parents and the school. These themes are further analysed bearing in mind issues of SES and the funds of knowledge approach.

Chapter 6 encompasses the discussion of the data. Reference and comparisons are made between the findings of the data and existing literature on collaboration, literacy development, and funds of knowledge.

Chapter 7 indicates the ways in which the research questions have been addressed throughout the study. It provides recommendations for practice and for further research.

Chapter 2

Literature review

Parents and teachers play a fundamental role in the successful development of a child's literacy. Thus, it is imperative that teachers and parents form effective partnerships to ensure the optimal development of the child. This literature review discusses the literacy development of children and the various roles that parents and teachers play in fostering this development. It explores literature on emergent literacy, multiliteracies, and the use of popular culture in literacy development. The theories of cultural capital and funds of knowledge are briefly examined in relation to this collaboration. Finally, the existence of a precarious lower middle-class in South Africa is discussed.

2.1. Literacy development of children

While literacy is most generally understood as the ways in which reading and writing are utilised in real world contexts (Perry, 2012; Zentella, 2005), it is crucial to recognise that literacy is embedded in social structures and can therefore not be examined in isolation as simply reading and writing (Zentella, 2005). Literacy is a dynamic, cultural product that is cultivated in and influenced by family, communities and social interactions (Mercardo, 2005; Zentella, 2005).

Killingsworth (1993) advocates that literacy cannot be separated from orality. If literacy is understood as simply reading and writing, it disregards historical communities that were fundamentally built on and shaped by oral history (Webster, 2006). According to this understanding, literacy is the product of the oral communication that precedes it. Historically, language and literacy have been used to transfer family knowledge, values, morals and beliefs from generation to generation (Mercardo, 2005; Zentella, 2005; Perry, 2016). Even today, language and literacy, amongst affluent and low-income families, are used to foster interactions with others. It is used as a means of obtaining knowledge, transferring religious beliefs and family values, building relationships, and expressing oneself. Thus, Marsh and Millard (2000) and Mercardo

(2005) suggest that literacy and language are embedded in and influenced by culture and context, and therefore differ amongst different families and cultures.

2.2. Emergent literacy

The term ‘emergent literacy’ refers to the various “skills, knowledge and attitudes” that are progressive antecedents to reading and writing (Whitehurst & Lonigan, 1998: 848; Roberts *et al*., 2005; Tan & Dobbs-Oats, 2013). The notion of emergent literacy suggests that children do not encounter literacy for the first time when they receive formal schooling. Rather, in the early years of their lives, children are exposed to literacy in a number of ways in their home environments (Whitehurst & Lonigan, 1998; Tan & Dobbs-Oats, 2013). Marsh & Millard (2000) propose that a child’s literacy development begins in the very first interactions between an adult and the child (see Whitehurst & Lonigan, 1998; Tan & Dobbs-Oats, 2013). In addition to this, the idea of emergent literacy suggests that language, reading and writing are developed simultaneously, and not in a progressive or sequential order. Children begin to develop these pre-literacy skills from an early age as they are exposed to social practices, and various literacy components in their community and environment (Neumann & Neumann, 2013).

Through observation, children develop a positive attitude towards literacy as necessary and beneficial (Marsh & Millard, 2000). Long before they are formally taught how to read and write, they tend to take an interest in literacy-related activities. In their home environment and through their daily activities, children make assumptions about the various purposes and functions of literacy.

Much emphasis has been placed on the value and importance of book reading with children as a means of developing literacy skills. Although shared book reading is beneficial, it should not necessarily be elevated above other types of literacy practices (Marsh & Millard, 2000). The emphasis on book reading might disadvantage poorer families who might not have access to books or educated parents. The concept of emergent literacy proposes that there are several ways to becoming literate that do not necessarily involve book reading (Bowman & Treiman, 2004; Cohen & Cowen, 2011; Neumann & Neumann, 2013). A child’s environment or community is considered

one of the most valuable sources of print, and thus literacy components. Any neighbourhood, regardless of socio-economic status, is filled with sources of environmental print. Children, from a young age, quickly become familiar with their community and their environment. Environmental print and literacy components that children might be exposed to in their community include road signs, advertisements, shop and street names, logos and slogans, flyers, and various product labels (Marsh & Millard, 2000).

Not only are children automatically exposed to print in their environment, but also the adults who surround them model reading, writing and the use of language to them. Through observation, children develop an understanding of the use of literacy long before they are taught the actual laws of reading and writing (Neumann & Neumann, 2013). They observe adults paying bills, signing papers, reading newspapers, magazines and religious texts, writing letters, working with money, reading emails, using calendars, and following instructions and recipes (Justice & Pullen, 2003). Hence, it is crucial to recognise and acknowledge that children learn through their experiences, observations and communities. They are naturally exposed to print and literacy through their daily routines and living in their neighbourhoods. Thus, exposure to literacy and the development of these pre-literacy skills (emergent literacy) are not reserved for those exposed to books and shared reading with literate parents. All children, regardless of socio-economic background, are exposed to print and the numerous functions of literacy.

In a school environment, it is important that teachers make use of learners' emergent literacy when teaching them to read and write (Marsh & Millard, 2000). As all children encounter literacy through their environment, it is crucial that teachers draw on this knowledge rather than on the assumption that they have been exposed to book reading. Thus, teachers should be aware of their learners' local communities to ensure that lessons are relevant to all the learners. When teaching these learners, it is crucial that teachers draw upon these experiences and lifestyles to link pedagogy to lived experiences and thus to enhance their learning experiences.

Home environment, parents and the development of emergent literacy

The exposure to and experiences of literacy-related activities at home refers to a child's home literacy environment (Roberts *et al*., 2005). Whitehurst and Lonigan (1998) suggest that a child's language proficiency and pre-literacy skills are influenced significantly by the home literacy environment that he/she is exposed to (see Roberts *et al*., 2005). The condition of a child's home literacy environment is important because this is where the child encounters language and literacy for the first time (Bracken & Fischel, 2008). This is where the child primarily observes and engages in literacy-related activities. Consequently, parents play a fundamental role in creating an environment that is conducive to language and literacy development. Bracken & Fischel (2008) state that the literacy abilities, practices and behaviours of parents meaningfully shape the home literacy environment of the child. This home environment and the influence of parents are crucial in the academic success of the child. Roberts, Jurgens and Burchinal (2005) propose that children, who successfully obtain pre-reading skills, tend to become and remain good readers; however, children who experience reading difficulties tend to struggle throughout their academic careers.

Through continuous verbal interaction with a child, parents can create a linguistically stimulating environment that results in successful language proficiency (Foster *et al*., 2005; Marsh & Millard, 2000). Parents can provoke and stimulate linguistic interaction with a child by asking open-ended questions, having intellectual conversations, and sharing information verbally (Roberts *et al*., 2005; Whitehurst & Lonigan, 1998). It is further suggested that shared book reading and exposure to print is an important way of developing a child's language and vocabulary.

While book reading is not necessarily more important than other literacy-related activities (as previously mentioned), there are numerous benefits attached to exposing children to books. Shared book reading between parents and children creates the opportunity for children to develop their vocabulary and language proficiency (Whitehurst & Lonigan, 1998; Foster *et al*., 2005; Bracken & Fischel, 2008). In addition, a study conducted by Bracken and Fischel (2008) proposes that a positive relationship exists between a child's pre-literacy skills and shared literacy practices between parents and children. These shared literacy practices include visits to libraries,

exposure to books at home, and reading aloud. Roberts *et al*. (2005) and Whitehurst and Lonigan (1998) further emphasise the importance of going beyond simply reading books aloud to children, but to also encourage the active participation of the children in these reading activities. These practices substantially enhance the language development and early literacy skills of children (Bracken & Fischel, 2008). Moreover, Whitehurst and Lonigan (1998) mention that shared book reading not only enhances children's language proficiency, but also introduces them to the conventions of reading and writing. These reading activities teach children to start at the top of page, to move from left to right (in English), and to start at the front of the book. They learn to distinguish between pictures and print, and they become aware of punctuation and the spaces between words (Justice & Pullen, 2003). Even though they might not be able to read or fully understand these reading conventions, exposure to this enhances their early literacy skills.

As previously mentioned, a child's environment is replete with various forms of print. This environmental print can also be used to develop vocabulary and expose children to the conventions of reading and writing (Foster *et al.*, 2005). This is particularly useful for families who might not necessarily have access to books or other reading materials. Children tend to recognise logos, product labels and signs present in their environment before they are able to read words. Recognising and pretending to read these sources of print is what Whitehurst and Lonigan (1998: 852) term "emergent reading". Through exposure to environmental print, children begin to understand the purposes and uses of print, which is later developed into grasping reading and writing conventions (Tan & Dobbs-Oats, 2013).

Exposure to print and literacy-related activities are not the only factors that influence a child's emergent literacy. Roberts *et al*. (2005) found that parents' degree of emotional support, encouragement and responsiveness towards their children substantially influence their emergent literacy. The positive relationship and interaction between children and parents supplement their language and cognitive development. Parents who are able to provide structure and routine at home, who positively respond to their children, and are sensitive to their emotions and behaviour foster a positive learning environment at home. These children feel more comfortable and confident to engage in literacy-related activities at home with their parents.

Thus, it is evident that parents play a fundamental role in the home literacy environment that they provide for their children. It is crucial that parents make an effort to encourage literacy-related activities at home through environmental print, shared reading and verbal communication. Through these activities and by providing a stable and structured home environment, children are likely to develop effective pre-literacy skills to assist them in their formal school learning.

The literacy development of a child can therefore not be explored in isolation from parental influence and the lifestyles they foster. This study recognises the significant role parents play in fostering interactions and environments that are conducive to language and literacy development. It furthermore acknowledges the potential that parents' knowledge, skills and abilities have to enhance this development when identified and utilised collaboratively with the school.

2.3. The role of popular culture in literacy development

Culture is commonly understood as the values, norms, traditions and beliefs of a specific group or society (Marsh & Millard, 2000). One is usually born into a particular culture and the transmission of these values takes place through social interaction and living in a community (Mercardo, 2005). Similarly, popular culture refers to the interests, preferences, practices, values and trends of people in a society (Morell, 2002). Popular culture, however, is largely driven by the market as products are produced to satisfy and to spark new interest in particular trends, practices or objects. This means that the popular culture of a society is continuously evolving and changing according to the needs and interests of the people. It includes magazines, newspapers, television programmes and films, music, fashion, computer programs and games, toys, and even current slang and talk (Marsh & Millard, 2000).

While popular culture includes books, various reading materials and environmental print, these will not be discussed, as they were addressed previously (see discussion on emergent literacy). Popular culture also largely encompasses technology and media in various forms and uses. Our society is increasingly becoming dependent on technology and media as forms of communication and is progressively moving away

from paper trails (Marsh & Millard, 2000). This changes the way we interact and express our opinions, thoughts and motives. Young children increasingly are being exposed to technology and digital forms of text and communication (Neumann & Neumann, 2013). This has given rise to both excitement and concern about the wellbeing of these children.

Technology and media are powerful tools that can be used to our benefit and to our detriment. Children who are exposed to multimedia could potentially be influenced and affected by strong opinions, propaganda, advertisers and cyber bullying (Hutchby & Moran-Ellis, 2001; Marsh & Millard, 2000). It therefore requires that these forms of media and technology be used with caution and supervision to ensure the safety of children. In addition to this, there is concern that children are replacing reading with television programmes and films. A study conducted by Marsh and Millard (2000), however, suggests that even with the presence of media and television, children are spending the same amount of time on reading. Television, rather, replaced activities such as going to the cinema and listening to the radio. A further concern about the use of technology and media has been that of addiction. Are children becoming 'zombies', addicted to television and digital games? While this could be true for some, it has been suggested that children generally change between the various media throughout the day and do not consistently use one type of media for a long period. For example, a child might spend some time watching a film, then play a game on an iPad, and later read a magazine or listen to music. This suggests that they are not necessarily addicted as they are not dependent on a single form of media. In addition to this, Hutchby and Moran-Ellis (2001) propose that children are not simply viewers or listeners during these activities. They engage and interact with the media, which makes them active participants, rather than passive consumers.

While it is necessary to be aware of the dangers or concerns regarding the use of technology and media amongst young children, it is also important to acknowledge the advantages it offers. Media not only has the ability to entertain, but can be used effectively to inform and to educate (Neumann & Neumann, 2013). The internet, for example, instantly provides countless sources of information, which is constantly being updated and kept relevant. Cope and Kalantzis (2009) suggest that games such as PlayStation, Xbox, Nintendo and computer games call for children to engage actively,

to create, and to make calculated decisions. In addition to this, it requires that they solve problems, follow rules, and work towards a goal by overcoming obstacles (Granic et al., 2014; Marsh & Millard, 2000). In these games, and even while watching television, children are exposed to narratives, text, and visual images and symbols. In these games, they often encounter text in the form of instructions, menus, narratives, or subtitles. As mentioned previously, exposure to these forms of texts, signs and symbols contribute to the development of their pre-literacy skills.

Not only do these digital games expose them to text and visual images, it leads to the acquisition of a number of skills. Marsh and Millard (2000) argue that these games assist in developing hand-eye coordination as children manoeuvre the controls and the figures on the screen. It develops their perceptual and spatial skills through navigation and processing visual information. It teaches them to respond quickly and to focus on multiple aspects at once. It further improves their ability to stay focussed on the task at hand for longer periods. Finally, these games are useful in scaffolding children's learning (Neumann & Neumann, 2013). The various difficulty levels in these games provide the opportunity for children to be challenged constantly, and to use their prior knowledge and skills. While there are negative connotations attached to these games, children are actively engaged, and there are skills and knowledge to be gained from these activities.

Music is another form of media that plays a role in the development of vocabulary and pre-literacy skills of children. Children are exposed to music in various settings and conditions. Music is used for religious purposes in worship and in ceremonies, in traditional dances and practices, for pleasure, and while watching television. Music, in its various forms, is relevant to all people regardless of SES, culture or background. Listening to music and becoming familiar with the lyrics, improves the vocabulary of children and assists their language proficiency (Marsh & Millard, 2000). In addition to this, music teaches them rhyme and rhythm. They easily notice the various beats and are exposed at a subconscious level to forms of poetry and ballads. Recognition of rhyming words and the rhythm attached to this assists in developing their phonetical awareness (Morell, 2002).

Popular culture is largely a reflection of what children are currently interested in, and likely exposed to. In becoming familiar with children's popular culture, teachers can incorporate these topics, discussions and objects into their lessons to spark the interest of their learners. If teachers make use of children's interests, social and cultural knowledge and various forms of media and communication, children will be stimulated and excited about learning (Marsh & Millard, 2000). It allows children to learn through mediums that are familiar and relevant to them in their daily lives. All children, regardless of their socio-economic background, engage – to some extent - with popular culture. Using popular culture in the classroom allows all children to contribute to discussions and provides the opportunity for learners to feel included and part of a community within the classroom. Popular culture is a powerful learning tool that allows teachers to engage equally with children from various cultural, ethnic and class backgrounds.

2.4. Multiliteracy

The 21st century has brought about a shift in the economy, the workplace, and in the way we communicate. Technological advances, an increasingly competitive market, and the growing recognition and appreciation of diversity in society require a shift in the understanding of literacy. Literacy needs to be understood as more than simply reading and writing.

2.4.1. The importance of multiliteracy in education

Over time, the economy and workplace has shifted from a more traditional and rigid environment to an environment that prizes creativity and innovation. In the past, the economy demanded disciplined workers who would unquestionably follow commands in a vertical hierarchy (Cope & Kalantzis, 2009). Attention was given to mass production through the labour of controlled and compliant workers (Fairclough & Gee, 1996). In the 21st century, there is a shift in the economy and workplace, which now requires workers to be active participants and creators rather than obedient delegates. In this new economy, workers are expected to be resilient, think creatively and adapt to change, be innovative and follow their intuition. The workplace is moving away from rigid top-down hierarchies to more horizontal hierarchies where the employees shape

the culture of the workplace. Employees need to be flexible, skilled in multiple areas, and competent enough to solve problems in complex work situations. Individuals are recognised for their competitive edge in the form of intellectual property and technological expertise. In addition to this, diversity has become a critical issue in the global economy and workplace, and employees are expected to communicate and participate effectively through multiple languages and the accommodation of various cultures.

This shift in the economy and the calibre of employees that are required in such an economy, calls for a consequential shift in the understanding of literacy. Literacy should be understood as more than reading and writing, and should encompass communication more broadly (Cope & Kalantzis, 2009). To produce individuals who are relevant and competent to meet the demands of this new economy and workplace, schools and educators need to adopt a new literacy pedagogy (Cazden *et al*., 1996) – a literacy pedagogy that includes communication through technology, language, visual interpretation and cultural expression. Hence, a shift in the way children are taught in schools is necessary. Educators are required to move away from traditional, authoritative teaching to facilitating and encouraging active participation amongst learners. Children should be exposed to multiple modes of communication, and thus multiple literacies, to further inspire flexibility and creativity. Educators are tasked with the responsibility of producing individuals who are resilient, confident and innovative – individuals who are equipped to flourish in this ever-changing economic and work environment.

Not only has the economy and the workplace changed, but the constant technological developments and mass media further call for a broader understanding of literacy. The speed at which technology and media are ever evolving and developing forces individuals to become familiar with these modes of communication to function efficiently in our society. Understanding literacy as exclusively reading and writing is both irrelevant and unrealistic. This is not to say that the written language is fading away, but rather that it is “closely intertwined” with other modes of communication (Cope & Kalantzis, 2009: 178). Reading and writing are integrated with technologies and media such as blogging, e-mail, instant messaging, videos, magazines and advertising (Cazden *et al.,* 1996). This influx and exposure to multimedia technologies

and various forms of text requires a literacy pedagogy that incorporates these modes of communication. These various modes and literacies change the way we communicate and interact with our environment, the way we learn, and the way business is conducted. To succeed and to be relevant, schools need to equip children to interact and engage with these various technologies and media.

Finally, the concept of diversity has increasingly become a fundamental issue in all areas of society. As our society becomes increasingly egalitarian and globalised, it is essential to embrace cultural and linguistic diversity (Cazden *et al.,* 1996). Literacy should therefore take into consideration the various cultures and languages that are embedded in the different texts and media. If schools and educators are tasked with the responsibility of preparing and equipping learners to participate fully in society, it is essential to confront issues of culture, language and gender. Literacy learning should therefore include negotiating different ethnic dialects and registers, and the iconic and linguistic meanings of various cultures. In addition, differences in the way children learn should be taken into consideration. A multiliteracy accommodates the various modes of learning as it allows the same concept to be represented in a number of ways. Some learners are more visually or kinaesthetically inclined, while others are more linguistically inclined (Cope & Kalantzis, 2009). It is therefore inclusive of all children and utilises the modes of representation or meaning making that they are most comfortable with. This multiliteracy is essential to ensure that some learners are not favoured over others, but rather that their differences (learning, culturally and linguistically) are acknowledged.

2.4.2. A pedagogy of multiliteracy

The primary purpose of a literacy pedagogy should be to prepare learners to engage actively and competently in our society. While literacy pedagogy typically has been understood as teaching learners to read and write the national language, the notion of multiliteracy aims to broaden this perspective. The pedagogy of multiliteracy more broadly encompasses the negotiation of multiple modes of communication. Cazden *et al*. (1996) suggest that a literacy pedagogy should consider two fundamental principles of multiliteracy: first, that our society is culturally and linguistically diverse; and second, that technology, media and text forms are constantly evolving and advancing. A

pedagogy of multiliteracy therefore promotes optimal engagement and embraces a variety of modes of meaning making (Cope & Kalantzis, 2009). It encourages synergy between these various modes of meaning making as a powerful learning approach that accommodates diverse learners.

With cultural and linguistic diversity becoming central issues in all aspects of society, it is crucial that a literacy pedagogy adapts and accommodates this diversity (Cazden *et al*., 1996). A pedagogy of multiliteracy aims to produce learners who are able to communicate effectively and to negotiate between various cultures, ethnic dialects and registers. It recognises and utilises these differences and experiences of learners as significant resources for learning (Cope & Kalantzis, 2009). It benefits all learners to be exposed to these various cultures, languages, perspectives, and ways of life. In addition, it allows learners to draw comparisons and similarities, and to be exposed to different literacy styles and forms of communication. It further equips learners to engage and participate in the workplace and to be valuable citizens, as they become dynamic individuals who interact and collaborate with diverse people.

Cope and Kalantzis (2009) mention ways in which a pedagogy of multiliteracy has been activated and used in some South African communities. A project was conducted in these communities where researchers used ethnic identities, experiences and multilingualism as resources for learning. In this project, students were required to engage with local communities and their traditions. Some students completed assignments based on local crafts and traditional attire, and other assignments were based on cultural fertility figures. Indigenous narratives and poems were also explored. This activation of a multiliteracy pedagogy in local South African communities has given voice to previously excluded communities. It has used cultural and linguistic diversity as a resource for learning.

This pedagogy requires educators to engage actively with each learner and to use their diversity as a resource for teaching. Educators need to include all learners by embracing their various cultures and languages (Cope & Kalantzis, 2009; Cazden *et al*., 1996). It is the responsibility of the educator to ensure that no single culture or language is considered superior to another and learners need to be taught how to

negotiate these differences amongst their peers. Learning needs to involve the experience, knowledge, perspectives and interests of all the learners.

This pedagogy of multiliteracy ultimately prepares and equips learners to be active citizens and participants in an ever-changing economy and workplace. It encourages critical thinking and efficient communication skills in a society that is culturally and linguistically diverse (Cazden *et al.,* 1996). It also takes into consideration the various modes of meaning making and utilises learners' diversity as resources in the classroom. Hence, literacy is so much more than simply reading and writing.

2.5. The effect of SES on collaboration and literacy development

As discussed, literacy is a cultural product that is influenced by one's family, community and social interactions. Thus, there are factors within the child's environment that lead to optimal literacy development, and in contrast, factors that impede such development. Foster, Lambert, Abbott-Shim, McCarty and Franze (2005) suggest that optimal development takes place in an environment where there is sufficient access to resources, continuous parental engagement, and an adequate family support structure. The quality and condition of a child's home environment, therefore, significantly influence the literacy development of the child (Foster *et al.,* 2005).

A primary factor directly influencing and shaping a family's home environment is the SES of the parents. As described by Foster *et al*. (2005), SES is typically a reflection of the parents' income, level of education and occupation. SES largely determines the quality of the home environment, the level of stability, parental engagement in academic and non-academic activities, and their access to resources. While this study is based on the premise that all families, regardless of cultural, academic and economic background, possess valuable knowledge and skills that can contribute to the literacy development of their children, several other authors suggest that the socio-economic background of families impede these knowledge and skills.

Crozier and Reay (2005), Archer, Hutchings and Ross (2003), and Murray, McFarland-Piazza and Harrison (2014) argue that parents with higher levels of education and

access to resources are better able to assist and contribute to the education of their children. These parents are able to collaborate with schools by creating an "educationally engaging environment" at home (Kochhar-Bryant & Heishman, 2010; Murray *et al.,* 2014). Thus, there is a similarity between the school and home environments amongst these families, making collaboration more viable. In addition to this, these parents tend to have an improved understanding of the schooling system, enabling them to better participate in the education of their children (Crozier & Reay, 2005; Murray *et al.,* 2014). As a result of this, schools tend to better accommodate and collaborate with these parents as they share values and an understanding of schooling and education (Murray *et al.,* 2014). Arias and Morillo-Campbell (2008) and Kochhar-Bryant and Heishman (2010), however, state that for many families, parental engagement and collaboration with the school is impeded by the vast contrast between the home and school environments (Murray *et al*., 2014). Murray *et al.* (2014) further argue that families with differing levels of education and access to resources find it challenging to engage in formal school settings, as they are unfamiliar with such educational environments.

It is further suggested that a lower level of education and experience often results in a lack of confidence amongst parents to engage academically with their children. Arias and Morillo-Campbell (2008) and Murray *et al*. (2014) propose that parents who have lower levels of education tend to feel incompetent and therefore are reluctant to participate in the education of their children or collaborate with the school. According to Crozier and Reay (2005), these parents often do not consider themselves as 'teachers' in their children's academic activities. In these families, children often do not consider their parents to be educational experts and therefore do not have any educational expectations of their parents (Crozier & Reay, 2005). Tatto *et al.* (2010), however, argue that cooperation and spontaneous collaboration amongst parents are heightened when teachers consciously involve parents in the education of their children. When encouraged and included by teachers, parents tend to feel more capable and equipped to engage academically with their children; they also develop a positive attitude towards the school (Hornby & Lafaele, 2011; Tatto *et al.,* 2010).

Moreover, it has been suggested that the academic limitations experienced by parents from a lower socio-economic background directly influence the literacy development

of their children. Foster *et al.* (2005) and Whitehurst and Lonigan (1998) propose that SES considerably influences the cognitive and language development of a young child. A child's language and literacy proficiency are fundamentally dependent on the quality of their linguistic exposure and the presence of an educationally stimulating home environment (Foster *et al.,* 2005). The linguistic interactions between a child and his/her parents, therefore, largely affect the language and literacy development of the child (Foster *et al.,* 2005). Activities such as storytelling, reading to children, and exposing them to reading material further enhance their language and literacy competence (Foster *et al.,* 2005). A study by Bracken and Fischel (2008) found that parents with higher levels of education show more interest in reading with their children and therefore instil a habit of reading amongst these children. Other studies have also suggested that families with lower socio-economic backgrounds have little access to books and other reading material, and seldom visit libraries (Bracken & Fischel, 2008; Roberts *et al.,* 2005; Foster *et al.,* 2005; Whitehurst & Lonigan, 1998). Consequentially, these families tend to spend less time reading with their children and do not prioritise or value literacy-related activities (Roberts *et al.,* 2005). These families, who experience low levels of parental education and access to resources, therefore tend to be at risk of poor language development. This limited language development is often a precursor to limited reading skills and ultimately poor academic achievement (Whitehurst & Lonigan, 1998; Roberts *et al.,* 2005; Tan & Dobbs-Oats, 2013). For this reason, studies have suggested that poor children are more likely to repeat a grade or to drop out of school prematurely (Bracken & Fischel, 2008; Mercardo, 2005). It is, however, crucial to consider that this assumption is limited as it primarily focusses on the exposure that these families have to formal learning and book reading. As previously indicated there are alternative ways of exposing children to literacy-related activities and developing their pre-literacy skills.

While education and resources do influence parental engagement in academic activities and collaboration with the school, Hornby and Lafaele (2011: 38) suggest that often a narrow approach to collaboration is adopted whereby the focus is placed on a "one-directional flow of support from parents to schools". This, however, echoes a lack of harmony, guidance and training on parental involvement. In addition, Tatto *et al*. (2010) argue that teachers tend to categorise families according to their perceptions of them and put less effort in encouraging parental involvement amongst

families with lower socio-economic backgrounds and thus lower levels of education (Arias & Morillo-Campbell, 2008; Tatto *et al.,* 2010). Moreover, Hornby and Lafaele (2011) state that parents with a lower socio-economic background often are viewed by teachers as inadequate and weaker, resulting in lower expectations from teachers. On the other hand, it is also important to be reminded that teachers are often limited by the instructional and pedagogical approaches of the school, influencing their ability to accommodate these families (Arias & Morillo-Campbell, 2008). Teachers in South Africa are challenged by overcrowded classrooms, excessive workloads and limited time (Onwu & Stoffels, 2005). Due to these limitations, despite the intentions of teachers, parent-school partnerships with these families often are based on academic remediation rather than prevention (Kochhar-Bryant & Heishman, 2010; Tatto *et al.,* 2010).

Demographic variables, such as single parenting and maternal employment, also impede collaboration with the school. Even if schools were to provide training and a guiding framework for parental involvement, parents may not have the time or means to engage in such opportunities. Many middle-class families depend on the income of both parents and increased working hours to make ends meet. In addition to this, parents with a lower SES tend to feel apathetic towards schools and the idea of collaboration. Often such parents spend the majority of their time and effort trying to provide for their families and do not have the discretionary time necessary to collaborate with schools or assist their children academically. (Hornby & Lafaele, 2011; Shumba, Kasembe, Mukundu & Muzenda, 2008).

Fataar (2012) argues that the school pedagogy in South Africa should create a bridge between “the class culture and school gap” by engaging in an educational orientation process for these families. Fataar (2012) further states that teachers should be able to create a learning environment in which all children are able to relate the learning to their own cultural context and life experiences. The closing of this gap is largely dependent on providing an environment where these children can engage meaningfully in the learning process, and where parents and teachers collaborate despite differences in culture and socio-economic backgrounds (Fataar, 2012; Hornby & Lafaele, 2011).

Misalignment between cultural capital and school code

Several studies conducted on parent-school collaboration have used Bourdieu's (1986) theory of cultural capital to explain and justify the challenges associated with such partnerships (Fataar, 2012; Hornby & Lafaele, 2011; Murray *et al.,* 2014; Nahapiet & Sumantra, 2000). According to the theory of cultural capital, individuals from various social classes embody different cultural 'habitus' or qualities based on the cultural capital that is passed down from generation to generation (Fataar, 2012). Collaboration between the school and parents is affected significantly by the cultural capital that families possess (Archer *et al.,* 2003; Fataar, 2012; Murray *et al*., 2014).

According to this perspective, the establishment of trust, reciprocal behaviour, and thus collaboration, is made possible through an alignment between the cultural capital of families and that of the school (Fataar, 2012; Hornby & Lafaele, 2011; Murray *et al.,* 2014; Nahapiet & Sumantra, 2000). Existing research, however, suggests that a misalignment exists between the cultural capital of families with a lower SES and the school code and pedagogy; thus, creating a barrier to effective parent-school collaboration (Fataar, 2012; Murray *et al.,* 2014). As mentioned above, for example, parents with a higher SES (i.e. higher levels of education and access to various resources) tend to have a better comprehension of their children's education and the schooling system as a whole. Schools typically accommodate and engage better with families who share these views and values about education. Consequently, schools often find it challenging to form partnerships with other parents, who may have different experiences and perceptions of learning and education.

Fataar (2012), therefore, suggests that schools in South Africa reproduce existing inequalities and social orders by favouring students with particular cultural capital. Schools tend to better accommodate students who have a cultural capital that is in alignment with the school code and pedagogical practices, further disadvantaging individuals with different cultural capital (Fataar, 2012). In alignment with this, Hornby and Rayleen (2011) suggest that the limited pedagogy of schools and their accommodation of specific cultural capital highlight class and ethnic inequalities. While the education system in South Africa should be promoting equal opportunities for all,

Fataar (2012) suggests that schools are instrumental in reproducing existing social class divisions and inequalities.

Moll *et al*. (1992) acknowledge this misalignment between the cultural capital of families with a lower SES and the school code. They suggest that this misalignment can be bridged by capitalising on these families' cultural, cognitive and social resources (Moll *et al.*, 1992). Hence, they developed a theory called funds of knowledge. It challenges the deficit approach often associated with the theory of cultural capital by suggesting that all people, irrespective of socio-economic background, have skills, abilities and knowledge that can be utilised within the school context (Esteban-Guitart & Moll, 2014) (the theory is discussed further in Chapter 3 as the theoretical framework of this study).

2.6. Funds of knowledge and literacy as a cultural product

Literacy learning is significantly shaped by various funds of knowledge. Funds of knowledge acquired through interaction with family, community and popular culture shape the ways in which individuals interpret reality and their understanding of oral and written texts (Moje *et al.,* 2011). As previously suggested, on the one hand, literacy is influenced and shaped by families' culture and context, and on the other hand, is used to transmit knowledge, values and beliefs amongst these families. Therefore, language and literacy are simultaneously being developed and being used by various communities and families. Mercardo (2005), consequently, proposes that language and literacy is not only a mode of obtaining social, cognitive and cultural resources (funds of knowledge), but is in fact a resource or fund of knowledge in itself. The everyday use of language and literacy amongst families reflects its use as a valuable resource. Hence, language and literacy, in its diverse forms, is a meaningful fund of knowledge.

In a school context, Zentella (2005) and Mercardo (2005) suggest, literacies are hybrid spaces that draw on formal, official literacies as well as informal, social interactions. Literacy in the form of reading and writing cannot distinctly be separated from oral communication and context (Mercardo, 2005). Academic and everyday literacies continuously develop and are influenced by social interactions in and outside of school

(Zentella, 2005). Thus, it is valuable for teachers to gain an understanding of families' household language and literacies, embedded in their culture and values, as this significantly influences their literacy learning in a formal, school setting (Zentella, 2005). In addition, Risko and Walker-Dalhouse (2007: 98) suggest that when learners' "language, ethnicity and race are not represented in the school's dominant culture", they experience persistent gaps in their reading achievement. It is therefore important and valuable to recognise the various household funds that influence the learning of literacy in a formal school context.

2.7. Conclusion

It is crucial to acknowledge the social, cultural and cognitive resources that families obtain through experience and living in community. All families, regardless of SES, possess knowledge, skills and abilities that can be used by schools and teachers in the classroom. It is necessary to consider the multiple literacies and popular culture that children are exposed to in their home environments and communities. To be optimally effective in our diverse society, teachers need to use the various literacies, popular culture and literacy-related activities that parents expose their children to. These elements, which influence children's pre-literacy skills, need to be incorporated into the formal literacy learning process. Moreover, the challenges and barriers experienced in achieving collaboration are complex and multifaceted. Multiple aspects need to be considered amongst parents, such as education and access to resources, demographic variables and family circumstances, as well as their perceptions of school and collaboration. Teachers, on the other hand, need to be considered within the context of the school culture and organisational structure, as well as the perceptions they hold of parents. Thus, collaboration is not a straightforward process, but rather a complex phenomenon whereby many aspects need to be taken into consideration.

While the literature gives much attention to the challenges experienced by working-class families, middle-class families also need to be considered. Middle-class families also experience anxiety and concern as they pursue quality education for their children (Crozier & Reay, 2005). While it is suggested that schools tend to accommodate the cultural capital of middle-class families more than that of working-class families, a

precarious lower middle-class exists that does not always experience the privileges often assumed amongst the middle-class stratum. Southall (2016) mentions that while the income and wealth of the upper middle-class in South Africa is increasing, the wealth of the lower middle-class is decreasing. Thus, the income gap between the upper and lower middle-class in South Africa is widening (Southall, 2016) and cannot be grouped together in an adequate manner. Similarly, Seekings (2004) makes a distinction between the upper and lower middle-class and classifies the lower middle-class as the "non-poor" of a country who possess a precarious lifestyle often characterised by informal employment.

Much research has explored the academic and literacy-related benefits attached to parent-school collaboration (Anderson, 2000; Goddard & Goddard, 2007; Jeynes, 2005), and the challenges experienced by working-class families (Fataar, 2012; Hornby & Lafaele, 2011; Murray *et al.,* 2014; Nahapiet & Sumantra, 2000). Little attention, however, has been given to parent-school collaboration amongst the lower middle-class in South Africa. Thus, there is a gap in South African literature on understanding parent-school collaboration amongst the lower middle-class in particular. In addition to this, much of the existing literature has explored the challenges associated with parent-school collaboration (Crozier & Reay, 2005; Hornby & Lafaele, 2011; Murray *et al.,* 2014); however, little attempt has been made to investigate alternatives or a way forward despite these perturbing challenges.

In this study, the funds of knowledge theory is used to explore collaboration between schools and lower middle-class parents. Hence, this study aims to explore the funds of knowledge of lower middle-class parents, and the ways in which these funds can be utilised collaboratively with the school to enhance literacy amongst foundation phase learners. It therefore considers what is practically possible amongst lower middle-class families within the South African context. The funds of knowledge approach, and the way in which it is utilised in this study, is discussed further in Chapter 3.

Chapter 3

Theoretical framework

Funds of knowledge is a theory developed by Luis C. Moll, Cathy Amanti, Deborah Neff and Norma Gonzalez in 1992 (Llopart & Esteban-Guitart, 2018). It was used initially to study connections between classroom practices and household skills amongst working-class, Mexican families (Moll *et al.*, 1992). Funds of knowledge challenges the deficit way of thinking about working-class families as being socially and academically inadequate (Moll *et al.*, 1992) due to economic, cultural and linguistic limitations (Llopart & Esteban-Guitart, 2018). Rather, it holds a positive, transformative view of local households as being competent and containing valuable cultural, intellectual and social resources (Moll *et al.*, 1992). All households therefore have an accumulation of knowledge, skills and abilities developed by life experiences that can be used as resources for schooling (Esteban-Guitart & Moll, 2014). According to Moll *et al.* (1992), the primary purpose of funds of knowledge is to develop innovative classroom practices that draw upon these cultural, cognitive and social resources to enhance learning.

Funds of knowledge holds three key objectives: (1) to enhance the learning and performance of working-class students who are considered less privileged (Llopart & Esteban-Guitart, 2018); (2) to establish relations of “confianza” (mutual trust) between teachers and families (Llopart & Esteban-Guitart, 2018; Moll, 2015); and (3) to incorporate these household skills and “funds” into classroom practice and curriculum (Llopart & Esteban-Guitart, 2018).

These objectives require the recognition and appreciation of the various funds of knowledge possessed by people in differing contexts (Moll *et el.*, 1992). These funds of knowledge comprise the accumulation of cultural, cognitive and social resources that people possess (Llopart & Esteban-Guitart, 2018). The resources mentioned here refer to the knowledge, skills and abilities that are obtained through life experiences and social interactions (Esteban-Guitart & Moll, 2014). Cultural resources therefore refer to the knowledge, skills and abilities obtained through cultural practices (Esteban-

Guitart & Moll, 2014) and habitus (Llopart & Esteban-Guitart, 2018), daily activities and lifestyles (Esteban-Guitart & Moll, 2014), familial obligations, language proficiencies, family and individual aspirations, and beliefs and ways of thinking (Llopart & Esteban-Guitart, 2018). Cognitive resources refer to the knowledge, skills and abilities accumulated through education and training, labour experiences and approaches to learning (Hedges, 2012). Finally, social resources refer to the knowledge, skills and abilities gained through social interaction (Hedges, 2012), participation in social networks and communities, parental involvement, and the development of relationships (Llopart & Esteban-Guitart, 2018). In these social contexts, the cultural and cognitive resources are utilised in interactions and activities, and simultaneously, more knowledge and skills are accumulated in the process. These resources (funds of knowledge) are dynamic and are continuously developed and improved through interaction with communities and environments (Hedges, 2012). Thus, this theory ascribes importance to the understanding and appreciation of the life experiences of families, and the knowledge, skills and abilities they obtain through these experiences. Through the capitalising of these resources (knowledge, skills and abilities), the objectives of this theory can be achieved (Moll *et el.,* 1992; Moll, 2015).

The funds of knowledge approach encourages teachers to enter the communities and homes of their students with the intention of learning about and learning from these families (Moll, 2015). The purpose of this is to discover and gain insight into their lifestyles and cultural histories (i.e. funds of knowledge) and to build relationships of trust with these families (Llopart & Esteban-Guitart, 2018). Teachers are meant to digest and use these household resources to amend their pedagogy in a way that optimally connects with the students by relating to their real-life experiences (Moll, 2015). Teachers should also form study groups where these findings are discussed and strategies are developed to implement these changes in the classroom (Llopart & Esteban-Guitart, 2018).

Below is a self-constructed diagram to depict the various aspects involved in the funds of knowledge approach:

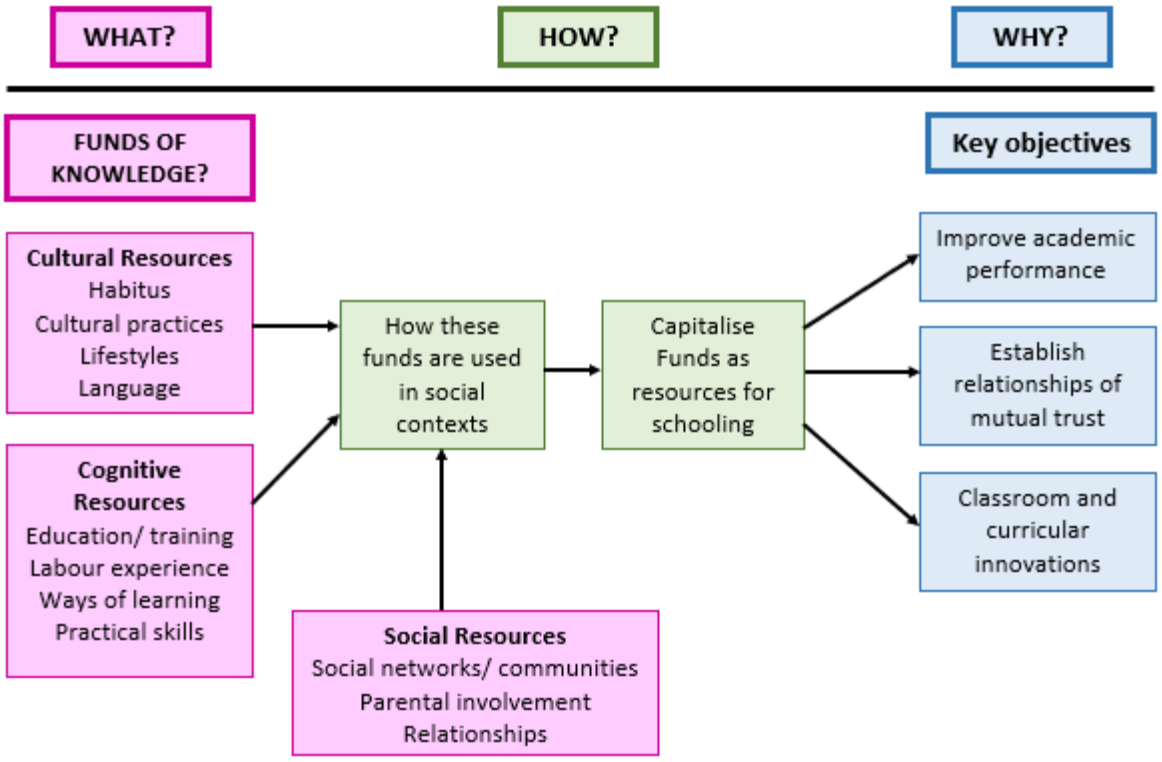


Figure 1: Funds of knowledge approach

The funds of knowledge theory has been adopted and adapted by a number of researchers (Barton & Tan, 2009; Hedges, 2012; Llopart & Esteban-Guitart, 2018; Moje *et al.*, 2011; Yasso, 2005; Zipin, 2009). In 2014, Esteban-Guitart and Moll used the funds of knowledge theory in their work on funds of identity, which they argue is the internalisation of these cultural and cognitive resources to define oneself. Barton and Tan (2009) and Moje *et al.* (2011) used funds of knowledge to discuss hybrid spaces where these funds coalesce with formal school discourse. In addition, Hedges (2012) not only acknowledges the students' funds of knowledge, but also teachers' funds of knowledge, which significantly influences the classroom practices, curriculum, and interactions. In 2009, Zipin developed the concept of "dark funds of knowledge", which acknowledges the challenging circumstances of people from poor socio-economic backgrounds. In response to this, Llopart and Esteban-Guitart (2018) challenged the concept of dark funds of knowledge by suggesting that it contradicts one of the primary principles of funds of knowledge, which holds that all people contain valuable cultural and cognitive resources despite their economic, linguistic and cultural background, as emphasised by Moll (1992 & 2015).

Alignment between funds of knowledge and this study

As applied to the study by Moll *et al.* (1992), this study holds that all people – including parents from lower socio-economic backgrounds – possess skills, abilities and knowledge embedded in their life experiences that can be used as valuable resources for schooling. Moreover, as applied to the study by Moje *et al*. (2011), this study is based on the premise that a family's funds of knowledge could coalesce with the formal school discourse; thus, parents' funds could influence and enhance literacy learning in formal schooling.

As previously mentioned, literacy ultimately is a cultural product that is cultivated in and influenced by communities and social interactions (Mercardo 2005; Zentella, 2005). Thus, literacy is embedded in and influenced by one's culture and context, and therefore differs amongst various families and cultures (Marsh & Millard, 2000; Mercardo, 2005). In addition, it has been mentioned that a child's home environment (not only culture, but also lifestyle, experiences, sense of security, etc.), significantly influences a child's literacy development. As they observe how their parents engage with the environment and other people through religious practices, grocery shopping, working with money, and reading various texts, children develop an understanding of literacy (Marsh & Millard, 2000). By engaging with their family and community members, through conversation and various daily activities, children are presented with many opportunities to learn and develop their literacy skills (Moll *et al*., 1992). It is therefore crucial to acknowledge the fact that children learn through their experiences, observations and communities.

The funds of knowledge approach aligns well with this study of literacy development as much value is given to the cultures, communities and social interactions of families. Funds of knowledge aims to recognise the various funds (i.e. social, cognitive and cultural resources) present in these families, and identifies these as valuable resources for learning. Therefore, the funds of knowledge acquired through interactions with family and community shape the way a child's literacy is developed (Moje *et al*., 2011). Bearing this in mind, one can recognise that parents – educated or uneducated, affluent or underprivileged – play a crucial role in the literacy development of their children. Therefore, parents' inherent resources in the form of

cultural, cognitive and social funds cannot be ignored or undermined. Through their daily activities and routines, parents use and accumulate funds of knowledge (Esteban-Guitart & Moll, 2014), and these funds significantly influence the literacy development of their children. Hence, it is important to identify and acknowledge these funds of knowledge and how it can be used effectively in collaboration with the school to enhance the literacy development of children.

The funds of knowledge approach further aligns well with the pedagogy of multiliteracies. As previously mentioned, in this pedagogy, literacy learning and meaning making is seen as a continuous process of transformation, rather than a product to be obtained (Cope & Kalantzis, 2009; Cazden *et al*., 1996). It further encourages optimal engagement amongst learners, exposes them to multiple modes of meaning making, and prepares them to engage competently in our society (Cope & Kalantzis, 2009; Cazden *et al.*, 1996). Similarly, funds of knowledge recognises the various funds as something that accumulates and evolves over time, and therefore can be thought of as a continuous process. In addition, the funds of knowledge approach emphasises the importance of interaction and engagement of learners in the classroom and in their various communities. A multiliteracy pedagogy further involves incorporating learners' personal experiences and environment in the learning process and encourages application of learned concepts in real-life situations (Cope & Kalantzis, 2009). It also aims to embrace ethnic, cultural and linguistic diversity in the classroom (Cazden *et al.,* 1996). Thus, this pedagogy aligns well with the key elements of funds of knowledge – to incorporate learners' cultures and life experiences in the classroom to enhance teaching and learning. Both a pedagogy of multiliteracy and the funds of knowledge approach require that teachers familiarise themselves with the communities and lifestyle of their learners. In line with this pedagogy, funds of knowledge proposes that valuable cultural resources are found in the communities of the learners, which can be used in the classroom to enhance learning (Mercardo, 2005; Cazden *et al*., 1996).

Furthermore, funds of knowledge aligns well with this study of collaboration between parents and the school. As discussed, in South Africa, the challenges involved in parent-school collaboration include parent education, poverty (and therefore, lack of resources) and a lack of discretionary time (NECT, 2016). These factors stigmatise

families with a lower SES as being inadequate, causing many of these families to withdraw from the school environment. Funds of knowledge, however, challenges this deficit approach by suggesting that all families, regardless of socio-economic background, have valuable funds that can be used as resources for schooling. Following this approach, it can be said that these parents, despite their challenges, have valuable knowledge, skills and abilities that can be used within the school environment. In addition, one of the key elements of the funds of knowledge approach is to build relationships of mutual trust between teachers and these families. In the same way, collaboration requires the development of trust and a relationship between the school and parents.

The diagram below depicts the ways in which the funds of knowledge approach is used to guide the study and address the research questions:

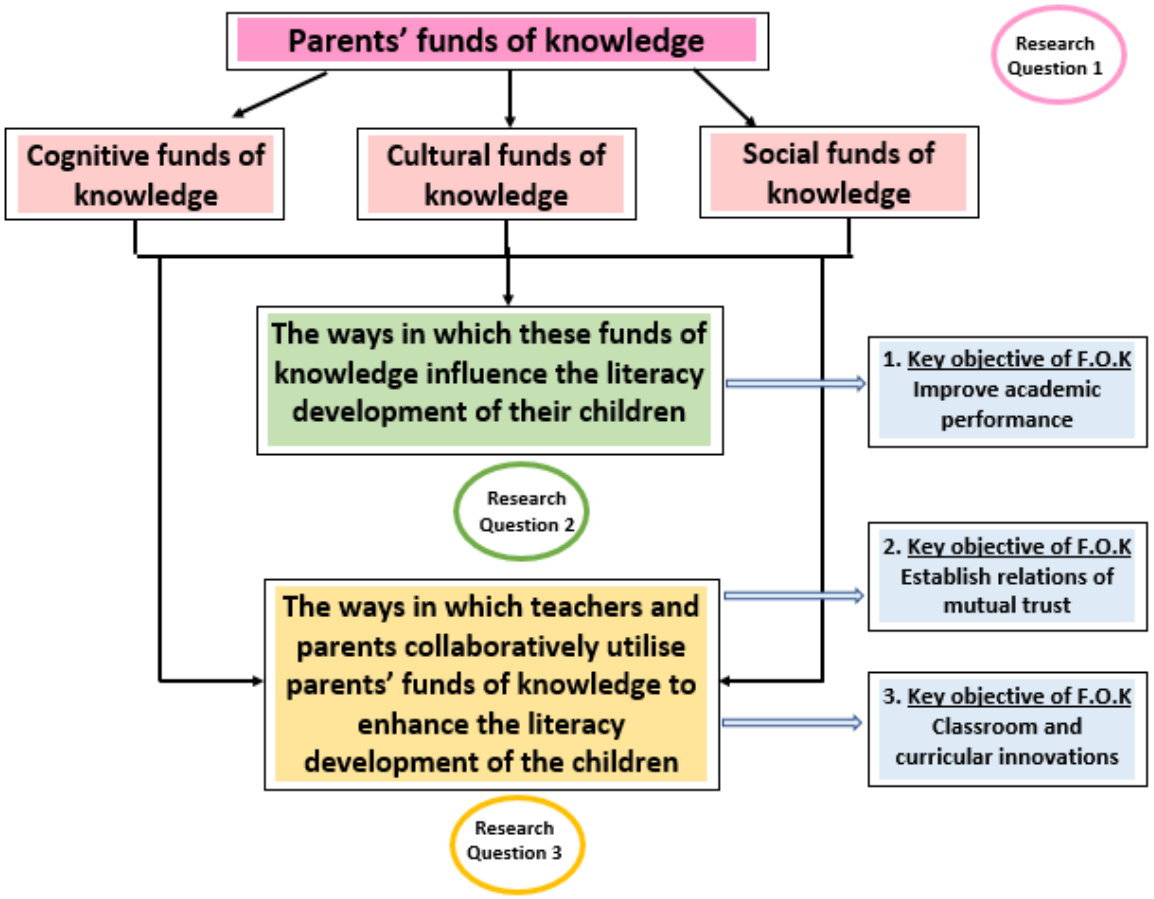


Figure 2: Use of funds of knowledge in study

Hence, the aim of this study is threefold: (1) to explore the various funds of knowledge (cognitive, cultural and social resources) that parents with a lower socio-economic background possess; (2) to explore the ways in which these funds shape the literacy of their children; and (3) to investigate the ways in which parents and teachers collaborate in using these funds of knowledge to enhance learners' literacy. The next chapter will elaborate on the methodology used in this study, bearing these aims and this theoretical framework in mind.

Chapter 4

Research methodology

In this chapter the research approach, epistemological paradigm and research design will be discussed. The chapter further details the sampling and selection of participants and the execution of the data collection process. Mention is also made of the ethical considerations and the measures and procedures followed to enhance the quality of the research results.

4.1. Research approach: a qualitative study

In this study, a qualitative research approach was used. As described by Maree (2016), a qualitative study relies on linguistic data to gain insight into the experiences and lives of the participants. This approach is therefore suitable for this study as it allowed me to gather linguistic data through individual, semi-structured interviews. A qualitative study further aims to explore the understandings and meanings that these participants attach to their experiences and practices (Atieno, 2009). The study focuses on the funds of knowledge parents acquire through their social interactions and life experiences, and the ways in which teachers and parents engage and collaborate with one another. This study, thus, fundamentally relies on the perceptions parents have of themselves, their households and communities, and of the school community. A qualitative approach allowed me to extract meaningful data from the descriptions that the participants provided about their circumstances, lifestyles, experiences and perceptions.

As described by Atieno (2009) and Maree (2016), a qualitative approach does not necessarily examine the perspectives and meanings of individuals in isolated settings, but rather seeks to understand these individuals within their natural environments and daily lives. The qualitative researcher, therefore, attempts to understand the ways in which participants integrate themselves into their environments, communities and surroundings. This approach enquires about the meanings that participants attribute to various social structures and roles, texts, symbols and practices (Atieno, 2009;

Maree, 2016). In this study, much emphasis was placed on the interactions, social structures, and communities of these participants. This study therefore attempted to understand the participants' relations to their environments and surroundings, and the values and meanings they attach to their environment. Moreover, this study paid attention to the individual experiences and perceptions of the participants, but also explored their experiences in relation to the wider community and school context.

While a qualitative approach allows one to obtain rich data through meaningful interactions with participants, it also presents some limitations. The data obtained in a qualitative study is subjective in nature as it relies on the perceptions of the participants and the interpretation of the researcher (Atieno, 2009). The data, therefore, is at risk of unintended bias through misunderstandings or misrepresentation. Thus, additional measures need to be adopted to minimise this bias and misinterpretation. These measures are discussed in Section 4.9 of this chapter.

4.2. Epistemological paradigm: interpretivism

In this study, an interpretivist paradigm is adopted. As discussed by Maree (2016: 16), interpretivism is based on the assumption that reality is "socially constructed" and cannot be "objectively determined". Thus, reality is intrinsically understood and is based on one's interpretation of life experiences (Kelliher, 2005). Hence, this paradigm proposes that multiple realities exist, and thus, several interpretations and explanations of a particular concept or phenomena (Maree, 2016). One's knowledge and understanding of life is shaped and limited by one's exposure and experiences. Therefore, recognition and appreciation are given to the numerous unique perspectives and experiences of a particular phenomenon (Kelliher, 2005).

This paradigm aligns well with this study as it allowed me to recognise and appreciate the individual experiences of the participants. I was able to enquire about and gain insight into the perspectives and realities of the participants based on their experiences. It enabled me to obtain data about the unique experiences each household is exposed to and the ways in which these experiences shape the perceptions parents have of teachers, the school, and the literacy of their children. It aligns well with the funds of knowledge approach as recognition is given to individual

households and the knowledge and insight of these households, which contribute to the study. This study extracted meaning from the explanations that participants provided about their personal experiences and how these experiences shape the way they think and behave.

4.3. Research design: case study

In this study, I made use of a qualitative case study design. As described by Creswell, Hanson, Clark Plano and Morales (2007) and Cohen, Manion and Morrison (2007), a case study design allows the researcher to investigate and explore a bounded system with specific parameters. This boundary may refer to a geographical area or context, an organisation or institution, or a specific group of people (Cohen *et al.*, 2007). As suggested by Maree (2016), it is therefore crucial to provide a thick description of these boundaries when adopting a case study design. A case study recognises the unique characteristics and dynamic interactions that exist within a particular context (Sturman, 1999). It, therefore, seeks to understand and gain insight into the perceptions that individuals or a group of people have of their interaction and participation in this specific context (Cohen *et al.*, 2007). It aims to explore participants' experiences, emotions and perspectives related to a particular situation or context. As these experiences are unique to the individual, the researcher in a case study design should consider and appreciate the differing opinions and perspectives participants have of a single phenomenon or context (Cohen *et al.*, 2007). The researcher plays a key role in soliciting the views and perspectives of the participants and in interpreting this data.

Geographical, institutional and group aspects determine the boundaries of this case study. Thus, this case study is identified and determined by the following parameters:

- Low-income area: This study specifically focuses on households with a lower SES. To access households that fall within the lower middle-class stratum and experience precarious lifestyles, this study was conducted in a low-income area (Housing Development Agency, 2013). Hence, the town acted as a filter to target lower middle-class participants.

- Primary school: This study explores the literacy development of foundation phase learners and was conducted in a primary school. Thus, this case study is further determined by the parameters of a primary school in this low-income area.
- Group characteristics: Finally, this case study is specific to the parents of foundation phase leaners.

Therefore, it can be said that this case study is specific to parents of foundation phase learners in a primary school that is situated in a low-income area.

It is vital to consider the limitations involved in using a case study design. One such limitation is that the findings may not easily be generalised as it is specific to the parameters of the study (Cohen *et al.*, 2007). Researchers therefore need to be cautious and use their discretion when applying these findings to other contexts. In addition, the findings are susceptible to researcher bias (Cohen *et al.*, 2007). As mentioned, the researcher plays a key role in the solicitation and interpretation of the data provided by the participants, and therefore, it could result in unintended bias.

To minimise the potential misuse of the findings in other contexts, a thick description of the participants and the context is provided in Chapter 5. This allows readers to use their discretion when applying these findings to other cases or contexts. Measures adopted to reduce the probability of researcher bias are discussed later in this chapter.

4.4. Sampling

In this study, I made use of purposive sampling to select my participants. As described by Creswell (2012), purposive sampling allows the researcher to select participants intentionally, based on the purpose and requirements of the study. Purposive sampling, thus, allowed me to select my participants according to predetermined criteria to ensure that the data collected is relevant to the study (Cohen *et al.*, 2007).

As mentioned above, to ensure that the data collected is relevant to the study, participants were selected from a public primary school situated in a low-income area.

This acted as a filter to families who are likely to fall within the lower middle-class. The school further provided access to parents of foundation phase learners. As discussed, the participants are selected from a primary school as the focus is on the literacy development of the children, which takes place within the foundation phase of their schooling. In addition to this, parents tend to be more directly involved in the education of their children in primary school (Hill & Tyson, 2009). As this study focuses on collaboration between parents and the school, it seemed more feasible to select participants from a primary school where there is optimal parental involvement.

I started the sampling process by contacting the principal of the school and arranging a meeting to discuss the purpose and process of the study. The principal willingly granted me access to the school to conduct my research. Then I constructed a letter addressing the parents of the foundation phase learners. Once the principal approved the letter, it was distributed to all foundation phase learners to hand over to their parents. A copy of this letter has been attached to this report as *Appendix A*. This letter explained the specific purpose and process of the study and invited parents to participate willingly in the study. Attached to the letter was a reply slip where parents could indicate their interest in the study. As not all the parents in the school have access to electronic communication, such as email, and the school is ethically prohibited from disclosing parent details, a hardcopy letter seemed to be the most appropriate option. The principal, once again, willingly accommodated and supported this study by ensuring that all the letters were sent out quickly and returned to school, where I then collected it. In addition to this, I created and distributed a flyer briefly explaining the study and further encouraging parents to participate in the study. A copy of this flyer is attached to the report as *Appendix B*.

Initially, over 100 parents responded to the letter by indicating their interest in the study on the reply slip. After engaging in brief discussions about the availability of parents and the execution of the research process, 30 parents committed to the study. Although participants were not selected based on their race, gender or specific grade of their child, this sample is relatively representative of the school's population. The table below depicts the race representation of the sample in comparison to the race composition of the learners in the school and the learners in the foundation phase more specifically (as provided by the school):

School			Foundation Phase			Sample		
Race	**No. of learners**	**% of total**	**Race**	**No. of learners**	**% of total**	**Race**	**No. of parents**	**% of total**
Black	920	84,6%	**Black**	491	90,3%	**Black**	25	83,3%
Coloured	12	1,1%	**Coloured**	3	0,6%	**Coloured**	0	0%
Indian	11	1,0%	**Indian**	6	1,1%	**Indian**	2	6,7%
White	144	13,2%	**White**	44	8,1%	**White**	3	10%
Other	0	-	**Other**	0	-	**Other**	0	-
Total	1087		**Total**	544		**Total**	30	

Table 1: Race representation of sample

The diagrams below further illustrate the race representation of the sample:

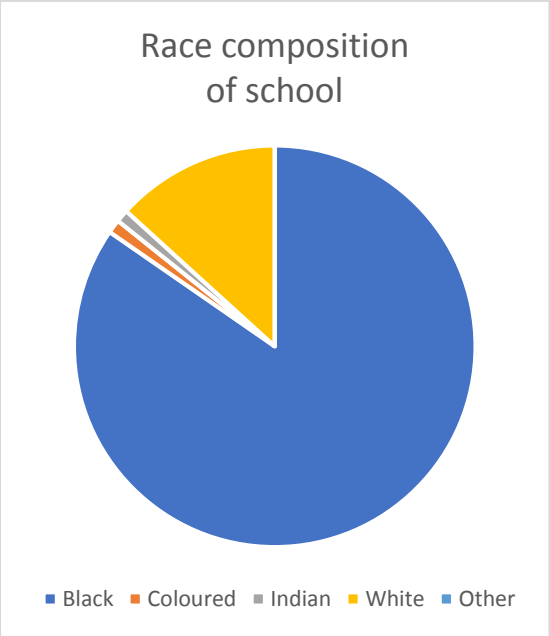


Figure 3: Race composition of the school

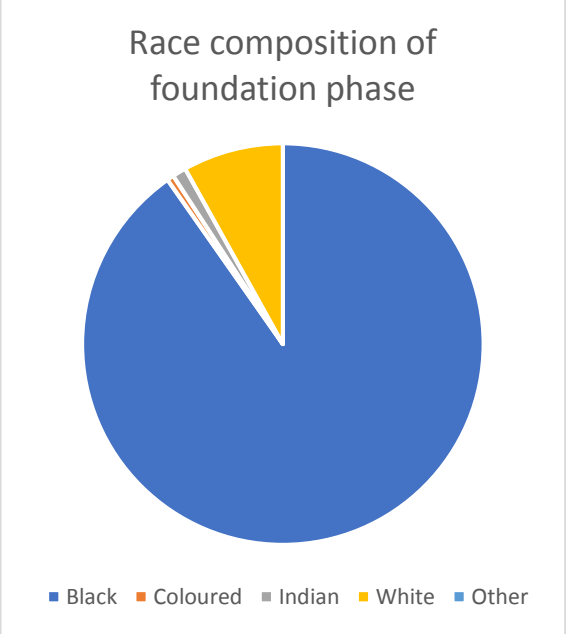


Figure 4: Race composition of foundation phase

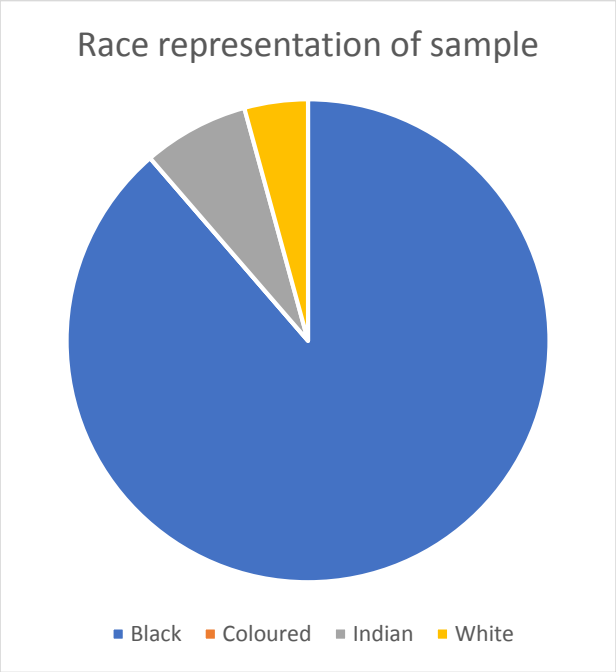


Figure 5: Race representation of sample

While the sample is somewhat representative of the racial composition of the school, it is not as representative of the various grades within the foundation phase. The sample includes parents of children in each grade of the foundation phase, but the number of parents representing each grade is not necessarily consistent with the number of learners in each grade. This representation is depicted in the table below:

Foundation Phase			Sample		
Grade	**No. of learners**	**% of total**	**Grade**	**No. of learners**	**% of total**
Grade R	107	19,7%	**Grade R**	2	6,7%
Grade 1	153	28,1%	**Grade 1**	5	16,7%
Grade 2	156	28,7%	**Grade 2**	14	46,7%
Grade 3	128	23,5%	**Grade 3**	9	30,0%
Total	544		**Total**	30	

Table 2: Grade representation

The diagrams below further illustrate the grade representation of the sample:

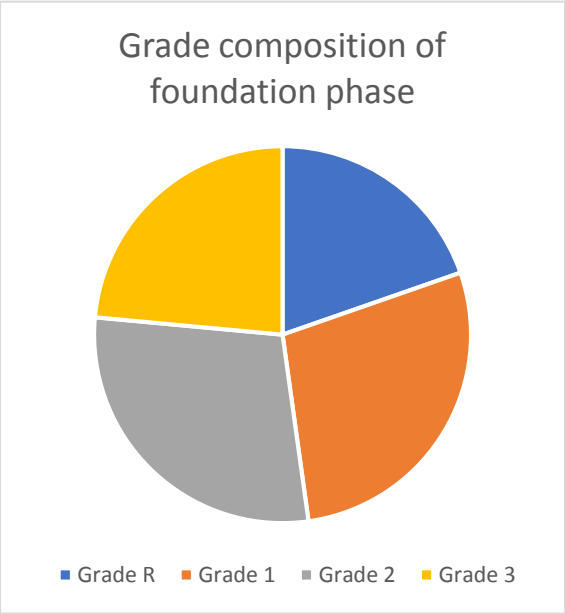


Figure 6: Grade composition of foundation phase

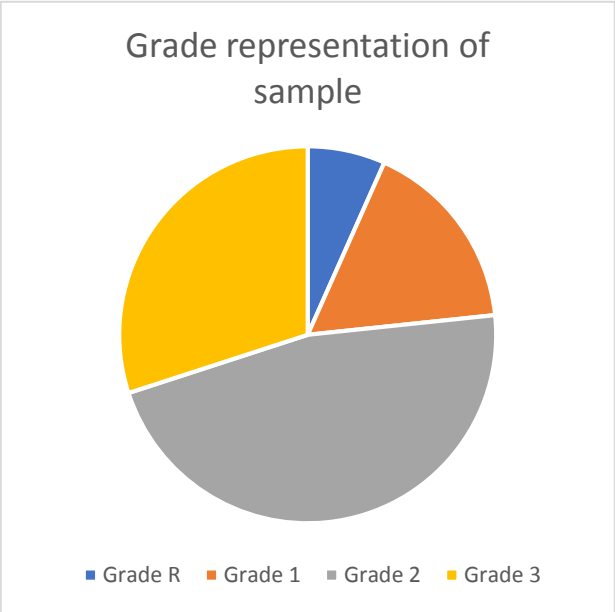


Figure 7: Grade representation of sample

Finally, the sample consists of 9 males and 21 females. These participants are all parents of children in this school.

4.5. Research site

Ideally, it would have been beneficial to interview the participants in their own environments and communities. This would have given me additional insight into the lifestyles and surroundings of the participants and would have contributed positively to study's findings and analysis. This, however, was not always a viable option. When engaging in discussions with the participants, many of them felt most comfortable participating in the interview on the school premises. They said that they were familiar with the school environment and were able to meet me there. For this reason, the majority of the interviews were conducted at the school in one of the open classrooms. The principal provided access to this classroom and allowed me to invite parents to the school to conduct the interviews. However, two participants were only available in the late afternoon when access to the school premises became difficult. While I expressed my willingness to meet these participants at their homes, they indicated that they would rather meet elsewhere. For this reason, I picked the participants up from their homes and took them to my home where the interviews were conducted.

Finally, one other participant invited me to her home to conduct the interview there. The interviews were therefore conducted at the most convenient venue, based on the preferences of the parents, the access to premises, and the time that parents were available.

The participants in the study made much effort to avail themselves to participate in these interviews. Several parents excused themselves from work for an hour to participate in the interviews, while others organised transport or walked to school for the interviews. They seemed eager to contribute to the study and to express their opinions and suggestions with regards to collaboration with the school.

4.6. Data collection

In this study, I made use of individual semi-structured interviews. In conducting these interviews, attention was given to the individual experiences, perspectives, meanings and reasoning of the participants. Interviewing participants individually provided them with the opportunity to describe their experiences openly without being intimidated or manipulated by other participants (Tuli, 2010). The use of semi-structured interviews further ensured that the interviews were focused on the topic, while still allowing me to ask follow-up questions and probe participants as the opportunity arose. This further allowed for more detailed and elaborate descriptions from the participants and was not restricted to the predetermined interview questions (Maree, 2016). This also allowed for a more personal and less structured setting where participants seemed to feel more at ease to share freely and where emotions and opinions were evoked more easily (Olsen, 2014; Tuli, 2010). It ultimately allowed me to gain detailed and elaborate explanations about their opinions, experiences and the meanings they attach to their experiences regarding collaboration with the school and their children's literacy.

On arrival of the participants, I, once again, explained the interview process to them and assured them about the confidentiality and anonymity of their responses. I also briefly introduced myself and offered some personal information to build a sense of trust between the participant and myself. This allowed them to speak freely as they openly expressed their opinions and feelings toward the school and the idea of collaboration. With the permission of the participants, I audio recorded the interviews

to ensure the accurate documentation and recall of responses. A copy of the interview schedule is attached to this report, as *Appendix D*. Below is a diagram briefly depicting the data collection process:

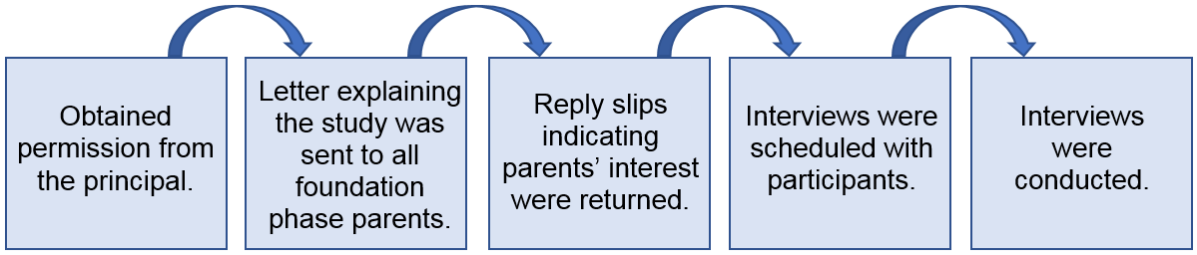


Figure 6: Data collection process

The interviews were conducted in March 2019 during the school holiday. This allowed me to conduct interviews throughout the day, over a period of two weeks. The length of the interviews varied between 40 and 60 minutes, depending on the responses of the participants, and the amount of time available.

As all 30 interviews were conducted over a short period, the interviews had to be carefully and tightly scheduled. Parents' working hours and availability also had to be taken into consideration. To accommodate parents and to complete the interviews within this timeframe, an hour was allocated per interview. On some days, four to five interviews were conducted, one immediately after the other. While the majority of the participants arrived on time, some participants arrived late. This resulted in some interviews being cut short, when the next participant arrived. This presented a limitation as more data could have been collected from these participants if they had arrived on time and if more time was available.

4.7. Data analysis

Once the interview process was completed, each interview was carefully transcribed to provide an accurate record of the data. Then, a thematic analysis was conducted using AtlasTi. Through this software, coding was used to categorise and analyse the transcribed data according to predetermined categories or themes. These predetermined themes were based on existing literature on funds of knowledge and

collaboration, and on the framework of the interview schedule. Thus, the data was analysed according to the following four themes:

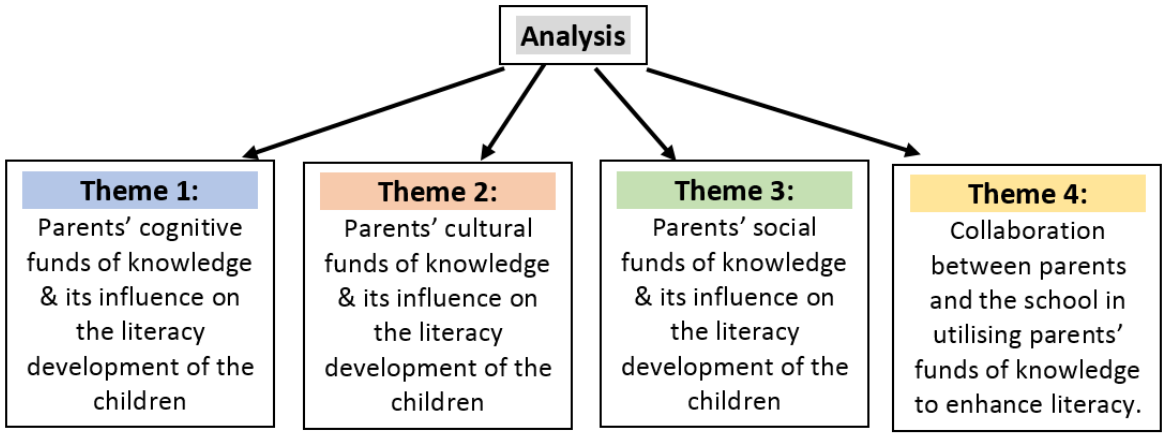


Figure 7: Data analysis themes

As I became familiar with the content of the data, several sub-themes were identified and created under each of these themes. Coding was used to divide the transcribed data into sub-themes, according to similar ideas, labelled by key descriptive words. Below is an example of how the transcribed data was coded and then categorised into sub-themes:

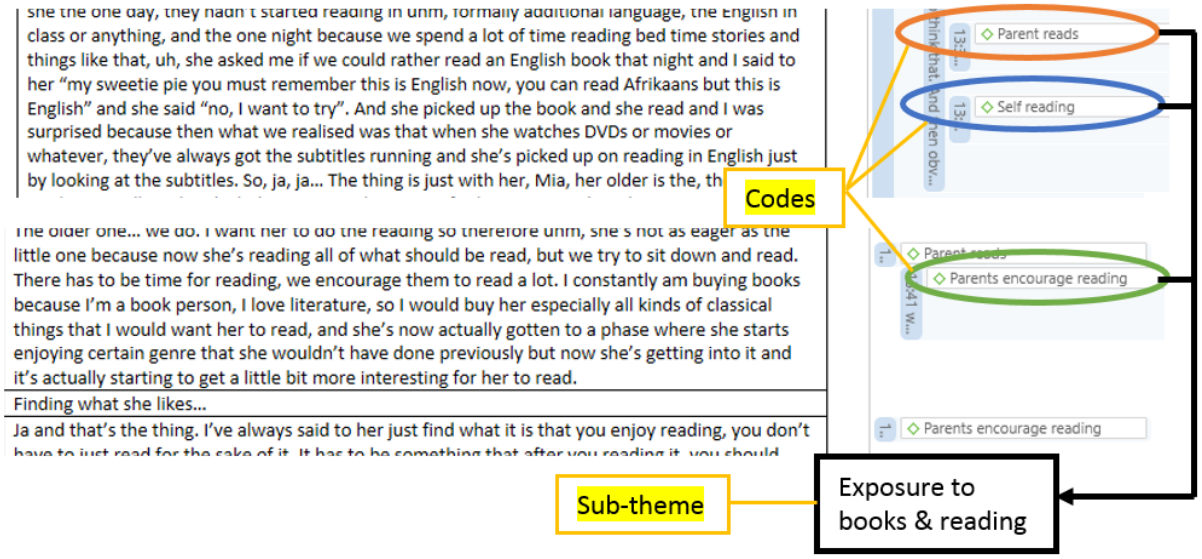


Figure 8: Example of analysis using AtlasTi

This example shows that there were various codes related to different aspects of reading amongst families (e.g. 'parent reads', 'self-reading', and 'parents encourage reading'). As the data was analysed further, some codes were grouped together to form sub-themes (e.g. exposure to books and reading), which fell under the major

themes previously identified (e.g. cognitive funds of knowledge). This allowed for all the data on the same idea to be categorised together into sub-themes in relation to the broader themes. This made it easier to identify correlations in the data. Data was further analysed by comparing findings to existing literature on funds of knowledge, literacy and collaboration between parents and the school.

When presenting and analysing the data in Chapter 5, the responses of the participants are quoted directly. No attempt has been made to correct the language and grammar of the participants' responses. This ensures that the data is authentically presented and analysed without the risk of misrepresentation, or misinterpretation of the data. The intention of this is to preserve the authenticity of the responses of the participants and is not intended to expose their language proficiency. Thus, it is important to understand that amongst the majority of these participants English is not their first (or even their second) language.

4.8. Ethical considerations

Several measures were put in place and specific procedures followed to ensure the ethical execution of the study. Prior to data collection, permission was obtained from the Gauteng Department of Education to conduct research in this community and specifically in this school. In addition to this, ethical clearance was granted by the Ethics Department of the University of Pretoria.

Permission was obtained from the principal of the school to conduct interviews with the parents in the school community. The purpose and process of the study was clearly explained to the parents before they were given the opportunity to indicate their interest to participate in the study. The principal and the participants were further assured of their anonymity and the confidentiality of their responses in the interviews. Their identity or responses were not disclosed to the principal, other participants, or teachers. In addition to this, participants were informed that they may withdraw from the study at any time throughout the interview process and participation was voluntary, as no compensation was provided. Thus, participants were not persuaded or bribed to participate in the study or to respond in a particular way. Each participant signed a consent form indicating his/her voluntary participation. A copy of this consent form is

attached to the report as *Appendix C*. Permission was requested from the participants to audio record the interviews to ensure accurate recall of their responses. Finally, these audio recordings were made available to the participants, on request.

The audio recordings of the interviews and the transcribed data have been stored on my personal computer, which has a password to restrict access. In addition to this, the data will be safely stored at the University of Pretoria for 15 years.

4.9. Enhancing the quality of the research

During this qualitative study, measures of credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability were taken into consideration. To ensure the credibility of the findings, member checks were conducted throughout the interviews by confirming with the participants that my interpretation and understanding of their responses was correct. This was done by rephrasing responses and asking additional questions to gain clarity. Transferability is achieved by providing thick descriptions of the context and the participants interviewed (presented in Chapter 5). This allows the reader to make judgements regarding the transferability of the findings in this study. Decisions made throughout the research process, including changes and decisions regarding data collection and analysis, were documented to ensure that the findings were dependable. Finally, confirmability of the data and findings was ensured through the direct quotations provided throughout the analysis. This was made possible through the audio recordings of the interviews. This gives insight into the opinions and responses of the parents and confirms the findings and conclusions made.

4.10. Conclusion

This chapter detailed the research approach, paradigm and design used in this study. The sampling, data collection and data analysis were discussed, as well as the ethical considerations. The next chapter includes the representation and analysis of the data.

Chapter 5

Data presentation and analysis

This chapter systematically presents the research data according to predetermined categories. This study aimed to gain insight into the funds of knowledge that lower middle-class parents possess, how these funds influence the literacy of their children, and how teachers and parents collaboratively utilise these funds of knowledge to enhance the literacy development of the children. Therefore, the data is analysed according to the funds of knowledge approach and considers existing literature on literacy development. As briefly mentioned in Chapter 4, the data is analysed according to four major themes, namely: (1) Cognitive funds of knowledge, (2) Cultural funds of knowledge, (3) Social funds of knowledge, and (4) Parent-school collaboration. As the data was analysed, further sub-themes were identified and discussed. This chapter first presents a demographic profile of the participants in the study. The data is further analysed bearing the demographic and SES of the participants in mind. The findings of the data are discussed in Chapter 6.

5.1. Demographic profile of participants

As previously discussed, parents have valuable inherent knowledge, skills and abilities (funds of knowledge) that can contribute to the learning of their children. These funds of knowledge are significantly influenced by and cultivated in their environments, social interactions and lifestyles. The SES of families further influences the kind of communities and lifestyles they inhabit. Therefore, it is important to consider the SES of the participants in this study.

This section of analysis provides demographic details of the 30 participants who participated in the study, with reference to their community, households, language, education and employment.

Community of participants

Place of residence:	
- In town	19
- Township	8
- Neighbouring towns	3

Table 3: Place of residence

The participants who engaged in this study reside in a small mining community in the West Rand District Municipality. Neighbouring this town is a small township where eight of the 30 participants reside. These participants travel in and out of the town on a daily basis for work, and for them to send their children to this particular school.

A third of the parents grew up in this community, and specifically in the township, where they also attended school. Therefore, these families have much of their extended family living in the same community or in neighbouring communities. Several of the other participants have relocated to this area for employment at one of the mining companies. Since then, however, the mining industry has declined, leading to retrenchments for members of some of these families. Amongst these households, many of their extended families still reside in their hometowns; therefore, they are not nearby.

Half of the parents in this study do not have their own transport. They therefore make use of public transport to get their children to school and back home every day. For this reason, these children generally are unable to attend any extramural activities or remedial classes that take place after school hours. According to these parents, having the transport collect them from school later has further financial implications, which they are unable to afford. The other half of the participants have their own transport and drop off their children at school in the morning before leaving for work. In many of these households, the children attend aftercare until the parents return from work, or they have extended family members who assist in the afternoons.

This is a close-knit community. The majority of the households has friendly relationships with their neighbours and interact with them on a regular basis. For

example, the parents mentioned that when there is an event or special occasion at one of these households, almost everyone is welcome to attend, including family, friends and neighbours. In addition, the children often can be found playing in the streets with the other children in the community. Parents have generally taken on the responsibility of keeping an eye on any children playing in their yard until late afternoon, when they are taken to their respective homes. By regularly interacting with their community peers, many of the children have acquired new languages on a conversational level.

Composition of households

Marital Status				
	Married	Divorced	Single	
			Widowed	Abandoned
Number of participants	19	2	2	7
Number of children per household				
	One child	Two children	Three children	Four or more children
Number of households	3	16	8	3

Table 4: Composition of households

Of the 30 participants in the study, 19 are married, nine are single parents, and two are divorced or separated. Of the nine single parents, two are widowed. The other seven parents were abandoned by their partners or have lost contact with them and receive no financial contribution from them. The children in these households also have no contact or relationship with them. Thus, these single parents are the sole parental figure and financial providers of their families. Several of these single parents are in relationships with new partners, but do not yet live with them, while the one parent recently remarried. In most of these families, the children seem to be open to the idea of a new ‘parent figure’ and have not, according to the parents, given signs of rejection or resentment towards their new partners. In addition, a few of these new partners have their own children who slowly are being introduced to the family. In the

two households where the parents are divorce or separated, both parents are actively involved in the lives of their children. In both cases, the children spend the weeks with one parent and the weekends with the other parent.

The majority of the households in the study has between two or three of their own children. In three different households, the parents have taken in a nephew to assist their families who are unable to take care of them. In these cases, these participants have taken on the responsibility of nurturing them and being the sole providers for them. In addition, in five different households, the grandparents live in the house with these families. In two different households, the families share a home with one of the parent's siblings and their children due to financial constraints.

Of the 30 participants, 12 parents mentioned that they have extended family members who are actively involved in the lives of the children. In most of these households, the grandparents, aunts and uncles live in the same town, in the township, or in neighbouring towns. The children often visit these family members over weekends or holidays, or frequently have dinner with them during the week. In some of these families, the grandparents play a key role in transporting the children to and from school, assisting them with homework, and taking care of them until their parents return from work. Furthermore, a number of participants mentioned that many of the extended family members have passed away, especially the grandparents of the children. In a few other households, the extended family members live far away, or in other countries, and are therefore not actively involved in the lives of the children. Finally, the parents of four different households have permanently employed helpers who take on the responsibility of cleaning the house and taking care of the children in the afternoons. In these households, the nannies (helpers) permanently reside in the homes with them.

Languages

Home language			
	Number of households		*Number of households*
Tswana	13	Zulu	3
Xhosa	4	Afrikaans	2
Sotho	4	Shangaan	1
English	4	Swati	1

Table 5: Home language of participants

While the home languages or first languages of the households are depicted above, this is not an indication of the number of languages that each parent can speak or understand. The majority of the participants are able to speak between four and seven languages, usually including English and Afrikaans. In several of the households, the families have adopted the father's language as their first language, but they are able to speak or at least understand a number of other languages. The parents mentioned that, in many cases, the different languages are essentially a matter of dialect, making it relatively easy for them to adopt several languages.

Many of the parents acquired new languages when they relocated to this town as they interact frequently with the community members. Others have made an effort to teach themselves different languages for the sake of communicating effectively with the people around them. Therefore, language and communication between community members is essential for several of these families. In addition, as previously mentioned, the children have also acquired new languages through their interaction with children in the community and their peers at school.

All the participants in the study were able to communicate effectively in English, some more fluently than others. A few of the children in these households are not fully proficient in English, which is affecting their learning at school. On the other hand, several of the other parents mentioned that they often speak English at home, mixed with their home language, to improve their children's English proficiency to assist them academically. Some parents, however, feel strongly that their families should not deviate from their first languages while they are at home.

Parent education

This includes both parents of each household and not only the participants who were interviewed*:*

Highest level of education					
	< Grade 12	Grade 12	On-the-job training	Short courses	Tertiary
Number of parents	4	3	9	9	13

Table 6: Parent education

The participants in this study varied in their level of education. Four parents did not complete grade 12 due to family and financial circumstances. For example, one participant had to drop out of school to work and assist the family financially, and since then has not had the opportunity to complete her school career. Another parent mentioned that he never attended formal schooling and has only participated in on-the-job training.

Nine parents completed grade 12 and have since engaged in on-the-job training. In many of these cases, it has been safety-related training for those employed by mining companies. Another nine parents participated in some kind of short course, such as computer literacy courses. In most of these instances, the courses have been encouraged and financed by their employers.

Eleven parents from eight households completed their degrees and two other parents their diplomas. Six parents started studying through tertiary institutions but dropped out due to circumstances, lack of finances, or lack of academic competence. Another two parents are studying part-time through UNISA.

A few parents, especially the fathers, regularly engage in self-study at home, relating to business management, finance and leadership. They consider it important to constantly improve themselves and enjoy gaining new knowledge and insight.

As many of the participants have not had the opportunity to study further, or to complete their tertiary education, their biggest dream or aspiration for their children is for them to pursue their education. Most of the parents expressed the desire to see their children perform well at school, to study further, and to find reliable employment. To them, tertiary education is the key to success, and they want to see their children achieve what they were unable to.

Employment and financial circumstances

This includes both parents of each household and not only the participants who were interviewed:

Number of incomes per household			
	No permanent income	One permanent income	Two permanent incomes
Number of households	3	12	15

Table 7: Number of incomes per household

In most of the households, where only one parent is permanently employed, the spouses are seeking employment. They have sent out their CVs but expressed frustration at finding any available posts for which they qualify. In other instances, there is only a single income because there is only one parent in the household. In four of the single-income households, the parents have taken in extended family members who they financially provide for. This makes it even more challenging to make ends meet. A few parents are unemployed due to retrenchments at the mining companies.

Six parents only have part-time or contract employment. For example, one mother was retrenched and sells chickens from her backyard because she has not yet found other employment. Another mother is a massage therapist but does not have a permanent income as she only does massages on request.

In the 30 households, taking into consideration both parents, 36 parents are permanently employed. Twelve of these parents work for one of the mining companies in the area, and seven parents are teachers. Only one of these teachers teaches at the school where the interviews were conducted. Five parents work at small, family-owned businesses, including a furniture shop, a linen shop, and a mechanic repair workshop. Some of the other jobs include construction, sales and data capturing.

Due to the nature of their employment, several of the parents find it difficult to meet their family's expectations or to enjoy family time. Some parents mentioned that they, or their spouses, only arrive home between seven and eight o'clock in the evenings – just in time to put their children to bed. In five different households, one parent works out of town. Three of these parents commute on a daily basis and arrive at home late in the evenings. The other two parents in these households do not live at home with their children during the week and are only able to visit their families over weekends. These parents have considered relocating to be closer to their work; however, it would be too expensive to live in another town. Thus, it is more affordable for them to commute every day. Some of the other parents, especially those employed by mining companies, work shifts and are not always available for their children at home. The parents who have family-owned businesses, work seven days a week. It is in these households where the parents have employed helpers or nannies to assist when they are not at home.

The participants further expressed the severity of their present financial challenges. Several parents mentioned that they struggle to pay school fees and transport costs every month. However, a few parents qualify for subsidised school fees, which assists them greatly. In addition, some households live with extended family members because they are unable to cover the cost of rent on their own. For example, one participant moved into her parents' home because she was unable to afford the rent and another participant is renting a backroom from his cousin. A single mother was forced to move from home to home because she was unable to pay rent and walks for 30 minutes every morning to take her child to school. Another participant was retrenched and, as a result, is overcome with debt and their family car was repossessed. This parent grows vegetables in his back garden to assist his wife in providing for the family. Another participant mentioned that she has been with her

partner for 14 years, but they have not been able to get married because he cannot afford the *lobola*. These are just a few of examples of some of the financial constraints that these families experience. It is important to note that although some of these parents attended tertiary education and have degrees, they still have precarious employment. For example, one participant completed an IT degree, but he still works in his family's mechanic repair workshop. Their monthly income is dependent on the number of clients, and it was mentioned that they experience financial constraints.

Some of the families are more financially stable - this tended to be the case with the families who have two permanent incomes. These families seem to have the means to go on family outings over weekends and to manage the family expenses. However, there has been some job changing amongst these families in the hope of finding better employment.

Due to the scarcity of available jobs and the financial challenges these families experience, many of the participants mentioned that they would like their children to become entrepreneurs. They want to ensure that their children are able to start their own businesses and that they do not have to depend on the fickle job market.

Conclusion

As the data is analysed with these families' socio-economic status in mind, it is crucial to understand the demographic details of these families. The data analysis therefore considers the ways in which these families' education, employment, financial circumstances and environment influence the accumulation and optimal use of the parents' funds of knowledge.

5.2. Cognitive funds of knowledge

As described by Hedges (2012), cognitive funds of knowledge are the knowledge, skills and abilities acquired through education and training, labour experiences and approaches to learning. In this study, these cognitive funds of knowledge are analysed and discussed according to the following sub-themes:

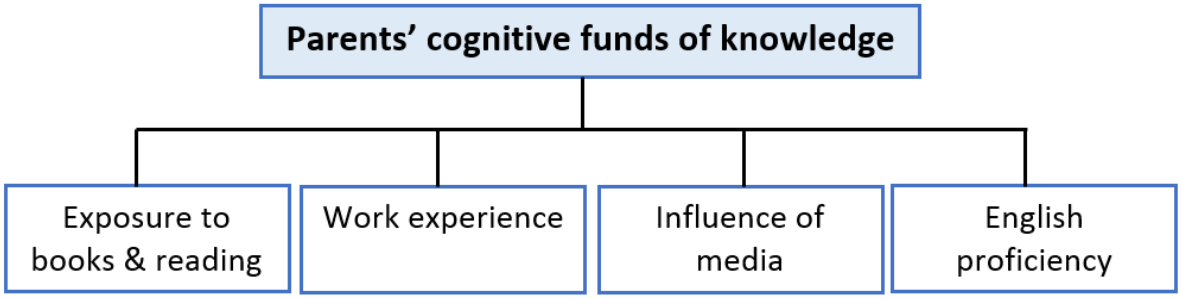


Figure 9: Parents' cognitive funds of knowledge

While parents obtain these 'funds' through education, training and labour experiences, this section discusses the ways in which the parents transfer their cognitive knowledge, skills and abilities to their children, and the influence this has on their literacy development. Thus, it discusses the utilisation of the parents' cognitive funds of knowledge through shared book reading, sharing knowledge and skills gained through work experience, mediating various forms of media, and the households' English proficiency. These are all aspects that are influenced and shaped by the parents' cognitive funds of knowledge.

5.2.1. Exposure to books

As previously discussed, there are numerous benefits attached to shared book reading, such as vocabulary development and exposure to the conventions of reading and writing. Of the 30 participants in this study, several of the parents mentioned that they read bedtime stories to their children, take them to the local library, or encourage them to read books on their own. Amongst many of these households a habit and culture of reading is being instilled.

A few parents explain how they instil a culture of reading amongst their children:

> *"[…] So, I'm constantly reading him bedtime stories, you might find that it's the same one over and over again, but nonetheless, we do read the stories."* (Participant 16)

Another participant mentions that, even though he does not necessarily read to his children, he encourages reading by taking them to the local library and telling them tales:

> *"I used to tell them tales, […] when they were young, […] I never read them a book, but when they could read at least a little, I used to take them to the library, let them choose their books […]."* (Participant 15)

One mother explains how she reads bedtime stories to her son or reads to him while he is bathing. She further encourages his involvement and tries to develop his understanding by asking him questions about the story:

> *"[…] when they go to sleep, even when they bath, I read a storybook for them. He just listens and when I ask him, 'Do you understand?', he says yes. But if I ask him, okay tell me what I've just told you now, he will be like 'yoh, mama, I forgot', […] but maybe when time goes by, he will understand better, and try to ask questions."* (Participant 27)

Another participant, whose children do additional English lessons through Kumon, and who loves to read herself, encourages her children to read. She does this by buying them sets of books and instils a habit of reading daily:

> *"[…] a big part of Kumon English […], it forces them to read. […] So, they always reading and then I love to read. […] I've started getting them more into reading as well. In fact, this holiday they bought a whole book set and they've been reading every day trying to finish it."* (Participant 5)

Finally, a father explains how his daughters have developed a culture of reading by observing him read. He does not necessarily ask them to read, but rather encourages a habit of reading by modelling it to them and stimulates them by asking them questions. He further mentions how his daughter, who is still young, pretends to read books because that is what she has learnt through observation at home and at school:

> *"[…] I got books for myself because you know what they said with children, […] they don't do things that you tell them to do, they do things that they see you doing.*

> *So, […] I read the books. So, they want to read the books […] She will take the books and go "na na na"; she's like pretending to read. […] She know how to read stories, she said, 'Dad and mom, sit here, I want to read a story like teacher at school' and she start reading […]"* (Participant 9)

It appears as if the parents who enjoy reading themselves, understand the value of reading, and aim to instil a culture of reading in their children. While not all parents may have the financial means to buy books and reading material for their children, several parents make use of the local library to expose their children to books.

There are other parents, however, who do not read to their children or particularly encourage reading at home. One parent, for example, explains that she does not read books to her child because it is not something she was exposed to when she was a child:

> *"[…] when it comes to reading bedtime stories, I've never experienced anyone reading a bedtime story for me. So, I don't do that; I don't even have a reason why I don't do it."* (Participant 7)

Another participant seems to be insecure about his reading proficiency, as he mentions that his child does not enjoy listening to him read. The response of this participant suggests that the child can read more fluently than the parent can:

> *"[…] But in taking a novel and reading to them, you will read two sentences, then the third one, it will be like, 'Ah, dad, no, you can't read. […] I will rather read myself on my spare time. Give me the book, I will read it and then come and tell you what the book was saying.'"* (Participant 17)

Some parents also have little time available to read to their children:

> *"Hardly ever, there's no time. […] When she was the only one, when she was still little, I used to. But right now, everything is such a rush."* (Participant 19)

In many of the households, the parents have instilled a culture of reading amongst their children. By participating in these activities, it is suggested that these parents are

literate; which, in itself, is a cognitive fund of knowledge. By encouraging their children to read and exposing them to books, the parents are transferring this skill to their children. It is further crucial to recognise that the parents do not have to read books to instil a love for stories in their children. Through the sharing of traditional tales and by encouraging children to pretend to read (thus developing their own stories), the children are still exposed to narratives, which enhances their literacy development. There are, however, households who are confronted by issues of time and competence. Some of the parents may not have enough time available to read stories to their children or to take them to the local library. As indicated by one of the participants, their days are rushed and busy and there is little time available to engage in reading activities. In addition, some of the parents may lack confidence to read to their children, as they are not competent readers. As expressed by one parent, this could cause their children to undermine their abilities and withdraw from such activities. These factors seem to influence the degree of exposure their children have to books and to the conventions of reading.

5.2.2. Skills obtained through work experience

As indicated by these participants, they gain knowledge and experience through their employment. Some of the parents have undergone tertiary education or on-the-job training (as discussed previously), and therefore have developed a set of skills and knowledge. Thus, these parents have obtained cognitive funds of knowledge that could be transferred to their children. While there are a few parents who share these skills and knowledge with their children through observation and participation, amongst many of the other participants there is no indication that they do this.

One participant is a journalist who specialises in education. As she gains new knowledge about education and learning, she applies this knowledge to her own children. She also mentioned how she develops innovative ways for her children to learn at home and writes articles about healthy habits for children. In this way, the children benefit from the knowledge and skills she develops through her employment:

> *"I'm a freelance journalist. I have my honours in journalism, so I freelance mostly for parenting magazines. And my niche is Education. […] I often speak to lots of*

professionals about these things and then I like to apply it with them as well." (Participant 5)

This mother also assists her husband in their family-run business. She briefly discusses how she expects her children to assist them in the shop during school holidays to encourage learning and instil values of hard work and excellence in them. As these children assist their parents in the shop, they develop skills and gain knowledge:

"[…] The kids now in the holidays, they go to the shop every single day, they pulling orders with me, helping me do things, small things that I find they capable of doing. They should learn … from small." (Participant 5)

Another mother, who is a massage therapist, allows her daughter to observe her while she is busy with some of the clients. Through observation of these activities, this child could potentially enrich her vocabulary as she is exposed to the appropriate and professional language used when speaking to clients. This participant explains how her daughter invites her friends over and practices what she has learnt from her mother:

"'Cause I'm doing the massages, she likes to take my Cutex, call her two friends, they'll do the nails. […] because sometimes my clients come home, if it's my regular client, I can talk to her, and she will sit here because she likes to watch what I am doing […]." (Participant 29)

The husband of this participant works at Mercedes and has knowledge of different vehicles. He takes the time to share this knowledge with their son, who seems to have taken an interest in this topic:

"Because my husband, he works with cars. So, most of the time, he likes to show him, this is the new what-what, ya. He will tell you, when I grow up, I am going to work at Mercedes like my dad. Ya, he's interested in cars, he's very interested. […]" (Participant 29)

Of the 30 participants in this study, a few parents are teachers. While these parents do not necessarily make any particular reference to sharing work-related skills or knowledge with their children, their experience as teachers might have an influence on the academic performance of their children, or on the support the children receive from their parents. One participant, who is a teacher, mentions how parents should be teaching their children different things at home. While one does not have to be a teacher to do this, being a teacher might influence one's perspective and competency to assist your child academically:

> *"I firmly believe that if you want to bring a child into this world you gonna teach the child everything you can. I mean, I was reading before I even went to school. And my mom did that. Okay, my mom also being a teacher and my grandmother being a teacher. Okay, but counting, reading, writing, you learnt it at home. I learnt more at home than I actually did at class."* (Participant 3)

Hence, these children benefit from the cognitive resources of their parents. Not only do they observe their parents; they engage in conversations about these skills with them. Moreover, they are exposed to different environments and interact with some of their parents' clients. These conversations, the passing on of knowledge, and the interaction with different people could contribute significantly to the vocabulary and language development of these children.

However, amongst several of the other participants there is no indication of transferring work-related skills or knowledge to their children. While the parents gain various skills and knowledge through their work experience and on-the-job training, there seems to be a lack of mediation of this knowledge with their children. Perhaps it is easier to share the skills and knowledge gained through some careers or employment, than with others. For example, it might be easier for a father to share knowledge of different cars with his son, who is most likely interested in cars, than it would be for a miner to share skills and knowledge about his job with his daughter. In addition, many of these parents work long hours and have limited time available to spend with their children. Several participants have been retrenched, are currently unemployed, or receive a meagre or intermittent income; thus, they feel pressured to make ends meet. Hence,

circumstances and the nature of the parents' jobs could influence the degree to which they transfer work-related knowledge and skills to their children.

5.2.3. The influence of media

Through exposure to various forms of media, households obtain cognitive funds of knowledge. While children may interact with media independent of their parents, parents still play a crucial role in using these opportunities to cultivate learning. Through this exposure and the ways in which parents foster this exposure, children obtain knowledge and skills that significantly influence and enhance their literacy development. This section will discuss the exposure the households in the study have to music, magazines and newspapers, videos and television, and the internet.

Music

Most of the participants in the study mentioned that they listen to music as a family. Some families listen to music throughout the day, and others only in the car, or only on a Sunday. The majority of the participants, however, said that their children become familiar with the music and are able to sing along. Thus it can be suggested that, through the learning of the words of the songs, children acquire vocabulary. A few parents discuss how their children sing along to the music played at home:

> *"I'm a ballet teacher so I like classical music, Christian music, and that's always going at home and in the car and everything, so ya. I actually caught my youngest one singing along to a Christian song the other day."* (Participant 16)

One participant explains how music is a big part of their daily lives. Listening to music and singing is something they enjoy doing together as a family:

> *"Whenever we are in the kitchen and we cooking together, the music has to be blaring […], we're singing along. […] So, they constantly singing, in the car there's always singing happening, […] we love music."* (Participant 13)

Another participant mentions how his son has learnt the lyrics to their favourite songs, and when he gets the lyrics wrong, his parents correct him. Thus, the parents could use music as an opportunity to correct the language usage of their children:

> *"Ya, he's good on that and he knows things, like the songs that I love most, the songs that the mother loves most. […] he's listening or singing together. Sometimes, we correct him here and there, 'No, it's not saying that'."* (Participant 25)

Several of the parents mentioned that they listen to music in different languages at home. While these children are exposed to the different languages through music, the parents did not particularly mention that their children pick up on the vocabulary of these languages. However, I do want to suggest that it might further encourage children to be multilingual. By playing music in different languages, the parents may be promoting and reiterating the importance and beauty of multiple languages. Nonetheless, by exposing the children to music, and encouraging them to sing along, the parents are teaching their children new vocabulary and introducing them to literacy concepts, such as poetry and rhyme.

Videos and television

As discussed in Chapter 2, videos and television do not only have the ability to entertain children but can be used to inform and educate them. Marsh and Millard (2000) propose that children are not simply viewers or listeners of television and videos, but rather active participants and consumers of knowledge. While watching videos and television programmes, children are exposed to narratives, texts, visual images and symbols, which significantly influence the development of their pre-literacy skills. Parents also play a crucial role in mediating the knowledge gained through television and videos with their children.

Most of the participants interviewed mentioned that their families watch television, especially the children. While the majority of the children only watch cartoons, some of the parents encourage their children to watch educational programmes with them, such as documentaries and the news:

"But then we watch the news, which is after 7de Laan. So, ya, […] sometimes I ask them to [watch] […]." (Participant 30)

One participant explains how his son watches the news with him and asks questions about what he sees and hears. The father uses this as an opportunity to teach his child by mediating the news with him:

"[…] they see me watch news because he knows, 'it's time for Papa's news now', […]. he watch with me, he don't have an option sometimes […] Ya, he used to ask me, […] 'Papa is he not a president? How?' That's where I always, I was listening to him asking me questions like that […] Even when you watch the news, he will ask you, 'Oh, what's going on here?' I have to explain […]" (Participant 25)

Another participant explains how her child has developed her literacy skills by being exposed to the subtitles when watching television:

"[…] she asked me if we could rather read an English book that night. And I said to her '[…] you can read Afrikaans, but this is English,' and she said 'No, I want to try'. And she picked up the book and she read and […] then what we realised was that when she watches DVDs or movies, they've always got the subtitles running and she's picked up on reading in English just by looking at the subtitles." (Participant 13)

Several of the parents encourage their children to watch television as they feel it assists in developing their English proficiency:

"I think cartoons helps as well. […] for them to speak English." (Participant 7)

"They are watching cartoons all the time. […] And I always tell him that if you listen, your English will be improved […]." (Participant 18)

In a similar manner, another parent explains how his/her children watch programmes in English and display understanding as they explain the plot. This implies that they have developed sufficient vocabulary and are proficient enough in English to follow conversations and story lines:

> *"[…] they translate it in English. […] He likes […] CDs, Pompei, Mr Bean and he concentrates very much on those things. And then he will explain to you what has just happened, ya."* (Participant 29)

For the most part, the parents try to use the children's television watching for educational purposes. For some, it involves the actual content of the programmes, and for other families, it is centred on developing their English vocabulary. Through the responses of the participants, it is evident that these children are increasing their knowledge and vocabulary as they are exposed to the news and to English programmes. There are, however, other participants who are frustrated by the amount of television their children watch and do not seem to attribute much importance to it. It is also in these households where there is little mediation of the content conveyed through these programmes. Some of the parents are wary of the dangers attached to television and videos, such as addiction, possible exposure to inappropriate content, and a sense of passivity amongst their children. Regardless of this, the majority of the children are, in some way, exposed to television programmes in English, which influence their vocabulary and pre-literacy skills.

Magazines and newspapers

Although shared book reading is beneficial and significantly contributes to the literacy development of a child, it should not necessarily be elevated above other types of literacy practices (Marsh & Millard, 2000). Apart from storybooks, the children have access to other reading materials at home, such as magazines, newspapers and pamphlets. Even though some of the children are not yet able to read fluently, by paging through these reading materials, they are exposed to the written language and to the conventions of text. The children page through these materials and ask their parents questions about what they see. The parents play a role in using their existing cognitive funds of knowledge to answer their questions and to enhance their learning:

> *"I buy it (magazines) for myself and they will go through the pictures and […] she will look at the words and you will hear her sounding it out – like 'S-u-n-d-a-y' and then she will say 'Mama, what is that word?'. Then I will say, 'It's Sunday'."* (Participant 7)

One participant explains how he makes an effort to listen to his child and to ask questions about what she sees. In this way, he stimulates the child's thinking and develops her language as they converse:

> *"The little one, if you leave her with a book, she likes to page through, see things, she wants to share with you, she wants to tell you what is this, why it is like this […] but I will like take that thing and say 'Oh, what do you see?' 'What is that?' 'Why are you asking question?'"* (Participant 21)

A mother mentions how her child pretends to complete the crossword puzzles in the magazines, based on what she has seen her mother do. She further explains how she encourages her children to consume all kinds of reading material at home:

> *"There's always magazines around. {She] imagines that she could fill out word puzzles […]. She would just write stuff in there and then I get so annoyed because that's why I buy the magazines […] Ya, but other than that, they always looking through whatever little pamphlet arrives and I always say to them, […] if you're in the bathtub, you have to read what it says at the back of the shampoo bottle. If you can read that, you've done a little bit of reading for today. […] So, there's all kinds of reading happening at home. It doesn't always have to be a novel."* (Participant 13)

These parents play a significant role in stimulating their children by asking them questions and engaging in discussions with them. However, a few of the parents do not buy newspapers or magazines as they feel the content is negative, and they do not want to expose their children to this:

> *"We don't buy newspapers at all. I think it's depressing. I don't think our kids should always be depressed about what's going on around them in this world."* (Participant 13)

> *"[…] we don't really buy the newspaper. […] It's simply just too negative and we don't have TV in our house. […] I think they're just linked together."* (Participant 3)

As indicated, the parents play a significant role in providing a variety of reading material at home and, more importantly, in inspiring and provoking learning and thinking amongst their children. Several of the parents in the study indicated that their children are exposed to reading materials such as magazines, newspapers, pamphlets and product labels. As mentioned by one of the participants, children are exposed to text and read different materials, such as the text on shampoo bottles. The parents further discussed how they engage in conversations with their children, ask their children questions about what they see, and encourage their children to interact with different reading material. In this way, the parents are using their cognitive funds of knowledge to cultivate and foster learning in their homes, which enhances the literacy development of their children.

It is, however, important to note that this is not the case for all the participants in the study. While the majority of the parents do attempt to engage with their children through these materials, other parents have not necessarily considered the importance of doing this. While a number of households have magazines and newspapers available at home, the parents say their children have not taken an interest in them. Perhaps this is where parents play a crucial role in introducing these materials to their children and stimulating interest in these literacy-related resources. As previously indicated, this absence of mediation from some of the parents may be due to a lack of exposure to resources themselves; therefore, they have not adopted a culture of reading. Limited finances could also be the reason for minimal reading material, such as magazines, available in some of the homes. However, all the families are exposed to text in their homes, whether to a lesser or greater degree. The parents who might not have the financial means to provide their children with storybooks or magazines could still expose their children to reading through various other forms of text.

The internet and electronic games

Through accessing the internet and engaging in various electronic games, children are exposed to and interact with different forms of literacy. The internet, for example, provides them with countless sources of information, which is constantly being updated and kept relevant. In addition, Cope and Kalantzis (2009) propose that electronic games encourage children to be actively engaged and make calculated

decisions and teach them to follow rules. Through these games, children encounter text in the form of instructions, menus, narratives and subtitles. Thus, the exposure to the internet and to games could contribute to the development of pre-literacy skills.

According to a few parents in this study, their children have access to and can comfortably navigate the internet. This is often done using their parents' cell phones or their own electronic devices. These participants also indicate that these devices are used to mostly watch online videos or to play games:

> *"Mostly, he likes Googling stuff. He plays games […]. What I know, if I have data, […] I'm going to lose my data because he wants to see which one is the fastest cars."* (Participant 1)

> *"My kids each have their own tablet. […] They're allowed to be and allowed to go on the internet. […] I have that YouTube kids, which is fantastic."* (Participant 3)

> *The kids just know how to put the games. Switch it on and off and put the game in and want to watch the game, yes."* (Participant 2)

One participant explains how she uses technology in her home to encourage and stimulate her children's learning. She has found ways of using their interest in technology to develop their literacy skills:

> *"[…] what we do usually at dinner time is, we'll say each person needs to come with one interesting fact that they learned during the day. And so, they would have to go onto Google and find something interesting so that they can contribute to the conversation. […] we let them email us all the time. So that way they learning how to use technology and it's forcing them to type it all out and spell properly as well. So, initially when they started, you know, their spelling, there would be spelling errors but they getting much better at it now."* (Participant 5)

While the parents, for the most part, allow the use of electronic devices and the internet in their homes, they do not necessarily attribute much importance to it. It seems that the parents grant their children access to these resources to keep them occupied, and not because there is value attached to it. Perhaps the parents are unaware that these

resources may contribute to their exposure to literacy. However, some of the parents did express their concerns regarding the use of social media and the internet:

> *"No (access to internet). Not at all. No WhatsApp. I don't allow it. All that is on his phone are just block puzzles, word puzzles. I think he is still too young to have access to that."* (Participant 8)

> *"You know internet, I'm a little bit not comfortable with internet. […] I teach them, you know what, there are websites that you don't have to visit […]."* (Participant 22)

Limited finances also restricted certain households' access to electronic devices and the internet:

> *"I don't have a tablet for them, a computer."* (Participant 20)

> *"No, not yet. I think because he hasn't got a computer, and he sometimes when he sees the other kids who do have laptops, he will ask me, 'Mommy, when are you buying me a laptop?'"* (Participant 28)

Of the 30 participants, there seems to be a divide between the families who have access to computers and the internet and households who do not have access. Amongst the families who do have access to such devices, the children seem competent in their use of these devices and the internet. They might be exposed to literacy through these resources, which could, in turn, influence their literacy development. There are many other parents, however, who do not have the financial means to provide their children with access to electronic devices or the internet. Amongst many of these households, the parents also do not have access to these devices and often are not computer literate. Furthermore, the parents do not feel at ease having their children explore the internet, despite its potential benefits. It is therefore evident that, even amongst low-income families, a divide still exists between those who have access to these resources and those who do not. This may not necessarily imply a big divide between income, but perhaps differences in family size, residence and expenses play a role in the discretionary income available to these

families. While the internet and electronic games could contribute to the literacy development of children, it is reserved for those who have access to it.

5.2.4. English proficiency

As previously discussed, for many of these households, English is not their first language. While all the participants were able to understand and communicate in English throughout the interviews, there were some who seemed restricted by their limited English proficiency as they struggled to express themselves. Nonetheless, the majority of the parents expressed the importance they ascribe to developing the English proficiency of their children so as to assist them academically. As mentioned, many of the parents do so by encouraging their children to listen to music and watch television. However, several of the other parents make an additional effort to enhance the language proficiency of their children:

> *"We speak Setswana but we mix with a bit of English here and there 'cause we are trying to create a balance at home. 'Cause as much as we are Tswana speaking, he needs this language for his education."* (Participant 8)

> *"[…] we speak isiSwati. But, because of the life that we in, we not really dwell too much in isiSwati because now the English, we must help the little one to understand the English. We must start speaking it at home so she can start grabbing here and there."* (Participant 21)

> *"[…] most of the time we are speaking Tswana, but […] I wanted him to get better with English, so we are talking even English. […] so that he cannot struggle when he comes to school."* (Participant 26)

On the other hand, the parents said that their children struggle at school because they are not exposed enough to English outside of school:

> *"It is affecting his schoolwork. […] for the fact that we don't speak it […]. Maybe in some ways he doesn't get enough practice at home because we speak Sotho."* (Participant 23)

> *"[…] for a person to know English, you need to speak it. She's not speaking it more fluent, but she's trying."* (Participant 7)

While there are some parents who are not as proficient in English as others are, for the most part, they do try to teach their children to the best of their abilities. The parents seem to understand the importance of being able to communicate effectively in English to perform well academically. Some of the parents are even willing to compromise their home language to ensure that their children adjust well to the English medium, which is used at school.

Conclusion

All the participants in the study have an accumulation of cognitive funds of knowledge acquired through their education, training and employment experiences. These parents play a crucial role in utilising the knowledge, skills and abilities obtained through these experiences to enhance the learning of their children. While this is evident amongst several of the participants, other participants indicate a lack thereof. This can be seen in the ways that parents mediate, or do not mediate, their children's exposure to various forms of media. This exposure to media presents a significant opportunity for the children to develop their literacy skills. While some of the parents use this opportunity by engaging with their children and instilling an interest in literacy-related resources, many of the parents do not. For some of the parents, their financial circumstances significantly limit their access to numerous resources, and amongst some of the other families, the parents seem unaware of the value of these resources. The parents may also undervalue their own funds of knowledge and the contribution it could make to the literacy development of their children.

5.3. Cultural funds of knowledge

Esteban-Guitart and Moll (2014) and Llopart and Esteban-Guitart (2018) describe cultural funds of knowledge as the knowledge, skills and abilities gained through cultural practices and habitus, daily activities and lifestyles, familial obligations, language proficiencies, family and individual aspirations, beliefs and ways of thinking.

In this study, the parents' cultural funds of knowledge are analysed and discussed according to the following four sub-themes:

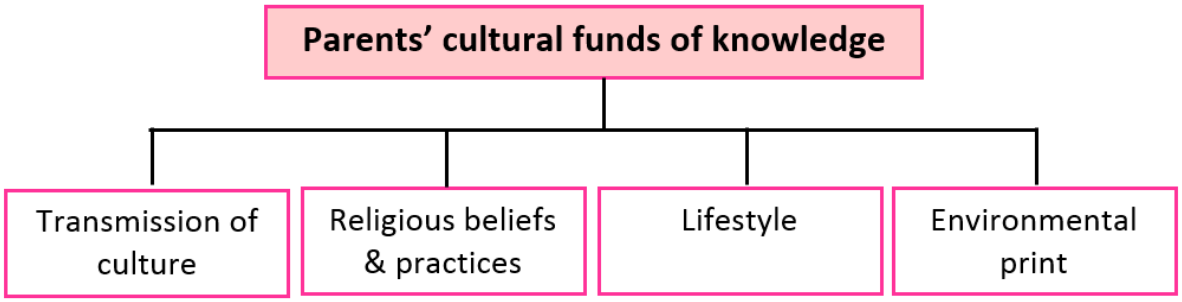


Figure 10: Parents' cultural funds of knowledge

This section discusses the ways in which parents transfer their cultural resources to their children through storytelling, religious practices, daily activities that form part of their lives, and their exposure to environmental print. Through these various activities, the parents play a key role in transferring knowledge and skills and mediating different kinds of verbal and written texts.

5.3.1. Transmission of culture through storytelling

Several participants in the study indicated that their households participate in various cultural practices through rituals and ceremonies. Many of these families believe in ancestral worship, and many of their practices are based on this belief. They seek the guidance and advice of their ancestors when they go through difficult situations or need guidance on a particular matter. They communicate with their ancestors by slaughtering an animal, usually a cow or a goat, and by visiting their graves. They further participate in ceremonies by singing traditional songs, wearing traditional attire, and enjoying traditional cuisine. This section, thus, explores the ways in which the families transmit (or do not transmit) their cultural values and beliefs through storytelling, as oral history plays a significant role in the language and literacy development of a child.

According to some of the participants, it is important for their children to know where they come from. They describe how and why they transfer this knowledge about their culture and background to their children:

"[…] I believe the past is where we come from. So, I think it's important that they must know where they come from instead of learning what is happening now. In Sotho we call them… it's always those stories that happened in the past before I was even born." (Participant 2)

"[…] I think it' very important because for you to know where you are going, you need to know where you come from. […] you need to know who were the people that went before you. […] how those that were before us play an influence in our lives even when they are not here." (Participant 8)

"I tell them stories, you know back then, my mother used to be … my father used to be … our family used to do one, two, three. Ya, I do share stories with them a lot. They love it. They would say, "Mammie, repeat that story again". […] sometimes it's important for your kids to know your family background so that they will be able to differentiate or, you know, kids are good judge of characters." (Participant 22)

One participant explains how she teaches her children the principles and values that her grandfather taught her:

"He used to go to the veld and dug up some herbs and used to cook them and sell to people. And, we used to see people getting healed through some of his herbs. I teach my kids about those things. But, the most important thing that my grandfather taught me was to pray. So, that's what I tell my kids, that my grandfather taught me a lot of good principles, good values, like to respect your elders, to respect everybody, to love people, to accept people the way they are." (Participant 7)

Another participant says her sister-in-law shares cultural stories with her children because she is more familiar with their culture:

"No, my sister-in-law, she is the one who will always tell them those stories, 'cause she will be explaining from the roots, 'cause me I don't know everything that has been done before, so they like to visit her 'cause she's the one who likes to tell stories […]." (Participant 29)

Amongst these families, much importance is ascribed to storytelling and sharing cultural histories and values with their children. They discuss the value of knowing one's background to understand one's identity, to make comparisons, to learn from past mistakes, and to make judgements. As these parents orally transmit this knowledge, the children are exposed to narratives and conversations, which have the potential to enhance their literacy development.

However, amongst some of the households, cultural practices and traditions are slowing disappearing:

> *"No, I think some of them, they are long outdated in terms of uh, how our living is now. […] life has evolved and with the evolution of the new technologies and everything, some of the cultural beliefs, they are fading […]" (Participant 17)*

Amongst these households, there is little indication that they engage in conversations about the past or pass on any cultural stories. These parents seem to attribute this lack of cultural practices to modernisation and their busy lives. Their modern lifestyle is characterised by their busy, daily routines and schedules, which leave minimal discretionary time to participate in these practices. Some of the participants suggest that their current environment and lifestyle no longer accommodates these practices. This might be a contributing factor to the lack of storytelling and sharing of oral histories.

One participant explains that he does not share certain cultural stories with his children because he does not agree with the practices; therefore, he does not want to expose his children to them:

> *"My beliefs is actually slightly changing now […] There is a lot of things that we do as Africans that are quite dangerous. So, me being their father, I think I must be the first line of protection. […] So, I don't want to subject my kids to that […]"* (Participant 10)

According to another participant, his children are not interested in stories about the history of their culture and do not take his stories seriously:

> *"[…] even if you tell them how their great grandfather or their great grandmother was living, it will be like a boring story. 'But dad, that thing is outdated, I think that that is like a story that you have seen on the movie, you are not really telling me the correct story, how can people live like that?' So, they wouldn't believe, […] 'How did people live like that?' So, actually it doesn't make sense how people lived before and how they see now, it's two different lives."* (Participant 17)

According to this participant, he does not share stories with his children because they struggle to relate to their cultural history. As their lifestyle has changed so much, these children have no reference or exposure to the lifestyle of his family from years gone by; therefore, they find it difficult to comprehend that way of life.

As the parents participate in various cultural practices, rituals and ceremonies, they acquire knowledge, skills and abilities related to these practices. These values and beliefs are transferred to their children – but only in a few of the households. According to many of the participants, there is little or no transmission of cultural principles and practices. This is due largely to breaking away from cultural practices, limited time available, and a lack of interest or comprehension amongst the children. This could suggest that these children do not have access to this particular cultural fund of knowledge. However, this does not mean that these families obtain less cultural funds of knowledge, but rather that their knowledge, skills and abilities are acquired through different experiences. While there are literacy-related benefits in the oral transmission of these cultural stories, these oral texts can also be used in the transmission of religious beliefs and practices.

5.3.2. Religious beliefs and practices

All 30 of the participants in this study belong to some religion and regularly engage in religious practices at home. The majority of these families practice their faith through daily prayer and Scripture readings. Many of these activities are done together as a family, or at least with one of the parents. Similar to the transmission of cultural stories, these children are exposed to narratives and oral texts that assist their literacy

learning. In addition, a number of the children are exposed to written texts, as their parents encourage Bible reading at home.

Some of the participants discuss how they use the Bible to instil good values and a sense of right and wrong in their children:

> *"We mostly read Bible story books to them. […] They got a theme and they got a story line that is short, concise, and it teaches a lesson. […]"* (Participant 10)

> *"In the afternoon, before we go to bed, we will just select a chapter reading from the Bible, only two or three verses […]"* (Participant 26)

Some of the households, such as the Muslim and Catholic families, also attend or participate in formal religious learning. The Muslim families, for example, learn how to read Arabic to interpret the Koran. These children follow a specific syllabus that is taught by their parents at home. The Catholic households attend Catechism classes where they are taught the foundations and principles of the Catholic faith. Two of the participants discuss how their families engage in these teachings:

> *"I'm teaching them how to read the Koran. […] So, they are basically learning to read in Arabic. […] the syllabus is quite nice because it's very child-friendly."* (Participant 5)

> *"There is Catechism classes that the kids attend an hour before church, where they just teach them about what it is to be Catholic, what we believe in."* (Participant 19)

These parents, therefore, play a vital role in mediating these religious texts and passages with their children. These children are exposed to texts and new vocabulary as they engage in religious teachings. Prayer also forms part of their daily lives, as the children are encouraged to pray in the mornings before school, and in the evenings before they sleep. Some of the families, particularly the Muslim and Catholic families, recite rehearsed prayers. Thus, these children have learnt these prayers through continuous practice. The following participants explain how they engage in specific rehearsed prayers:

"Every day we do have to pray within a specific time. […] it's five times. You have to pray in a specific manner. You have to have a prayer mat and you have to have a bath. […] there's a special way that we have to do… an ablution, before we pray every day, every time, even if we want to pray with the Koran, you have to do the special ablution." (Participant 30)

"So, we do pray together, especially in the evenings before we go to bed. I ask [him], '[…] pray Our Father' […]." (Participant 9)

Similar to the benefits of music, the children learn to recite these prayers. In doing so, they acquire new vocabulary and, to some degree, are exposed to the conventions of poetry, rhythm and rhyme. Once again, the parents play a role in teaching these prayers to their children and instilling a habit of prayer in their homes. The children are reminded to say their prayers and participate in the various religious practices every day.

Furthermore, many of these households are actively involved in their church communities. These communities are family-oriented, and both the parents and the children form valuable relationships with other members of the church community. The following participants speak briefly about their church communities:

"[…] I'm the chairperson of our church council. So, I'm very involved at church and always busy with meetings and all kinds of things at church […]" (Participant 13)

"[…] last month they gave me the books so that we can start the Sunday school. […] from now, I'm going to start attending those classes so that I can teach them. I will enjoy it 'cause last year I started a choir at church, but they only there for the small kids." (Participant 29)

"They do come to speak to my husband, mostly church meetings, they are holding them at my home. Mostly they do (bring their children with), then they play with my kids, 'cause they know each other, […] from church, yes." (Participant 29)

Through daily participation in these religious activities, the parents and their children acquire various funds of knowledge. These parents have knowledge of the different Biblical stories and gain increasing understanding of principles as they continuously read the Scriptures. They could also obtain various funds of knowledge as they interact with their church community and encounter people from different cultures, languages and backgrounds. As they engage socially with the other church members, they obtain new kinds of knowledge.

These families seem to make more effort to transfer these religious beliefs and principles, and to instil good values, than they do with cultural norms. While only some of the families frequently participate in cultural practices, all 30 of the participants mentioned that they engage in some kind of religious practice every day. This might suggest that their religion is prioritised above their cultural practices. However, for some of these families their religion and culture are intertwined and cannot be separated from one another. For example, amongst some of the families, ancestral worship encompasses both their culture and their religion, and these families regard these practices as vitally important. Some of the other families, however, separate their culture from their religious beliefs, and in these cases, it seems that their religious practices take priority.

5.3.3. Lifestyle

In their daily routines and lives, the children assist their parents with numerous activities. Their engagement in these activities and the ways in which the parents foster their participation, allows the children to obtain valuable knowledge and skills. One of the activities that the children regularly participate in, or observe, is cooking. This activity forms part of the parents' daily routine and children learn through assisting their parents or by observing them in the kitchen:

> *"I've got a huge variety of cooking books and they are forever paging through all of that trying to find something nice that we can try out. […] she knows the difference between Garma, and she knows what butter chicken is and she knows what Breyani would be […]."* (Participant 13)

> *"Most of the time when I bake cakes, she will come and assist […] and make a mess. But I believe, it's part of learning. There was one day, I was pouring some cups of flour and she was counting for me, one, two […]. And then when I was doing the measuring of the baking powder, she was counting the teaspoons for me. I can say, she is learning to follow the recipe. […] I think, when I do the baking, I will like teach her, […] put this measurement […]."* (Participant 22)

Through daily cooking, the parents acquire knowledge and skills that can be passed on to their children. The parents, for example, use these experiences as opportunities to teach them about following instructions, how to read recipes, how to convert measurements, and how to identify various ingredients. These parents seem to foster these learning opportunities by actively engaging with the children and allowing them to make valuable contributions to the meals.

Gardening is another activity that the children participate in. As these children assist their parents in the garden, they learn about different plants and the soil, how vegetables grow, and so forth. The following two participants explain how they use these chores as learning opportunities with their children:

> *"Like cleaning the garden, cutting the trees, the grass, pulling the spinach and planting and removing stuff and watering. […] A lot. Pumpkins, spinach, we tried tomatoes. […] we try different things all the time; so, now I must remove the pumpkins and cook. […] Thinking in full, there's actually so much to learn. […] whatever we learn, and whatever they ask, we explain to them. And, I think it's good for them to see the soil, actual physical soil outside the garden, the water, the mud, the different type of veggies. […] So, it's not just reading it in class."* (Participant 10)

> *"Yes, normally, if I am at home, we will do the gardening. […] the flowers, how to cut the grass, how to clean the yard. I normally teach them because I like my yard to be clean, beautiful."* (Participant 22)

These participants explain how they use their knowledge and skills to teach their children about gardening. Participant 10 makes note of the value of his children experiencing this first-hand, so that the information transferred is not only knowledge

but also experiences they can relate to. Therefore, these parents are not only transferring knowledge, but also skills and abilities. While only cooking and gardening were mentioned in this analysis, many different activities could similarly be used as opportunities for learning. As previously discussed, children benefit significantly from engaging in intellectual conversations with their parents. This increased knowledge, experiences and vocabulary assist them in their reading ability and comprehension.

5.3.4. Environmental print

Most environments and communities are replete with various forms of print. As children interact with their outside environment, accompany their parents to the shops, and drive around with them, they are exposed to numerous forms of text. Children begin to understand symbols, road signs, street names and numbers, and develop a sense of direction. Two of the parents explain how their children have become familiar with environmental print by driving around with them:

> *"[…] the signs, sometimes he is telling me, on this stop, 'Okay, mommy, let's stop. Let's watch left, right, then wait, and then again, left and right and then we go mom', […] like the robot signs, ya. He will tell me, 'Mommy, it's green, now you can go.'"* (Participant 28)

> *"Even the road, from his young age, when we take this road, he will say, 'Oh, we are going to your granny's home' […]."* (Participant 29)

According to the parents, their children observe them as they participate in their daily errands, such as paying bills and doing grocery shopping. As children do grocery shopping with their parents, they are exposed to different forms of print. They become familiar with different shop names, product brands, and logos. As part of their shopping experience, some of the parents ask them to assist in writing lists of what is needed in the house. They also observe their parents exchange money. They become familiar with the print on money notes and coins, how much the money is worth, and how buying and selling operates. They further engage with print as they receive till slips for the products purchased. The following participants describe how their children assist and observe them in these activities:

"[…] They will tell you, no don't buy Enterprise, buy Eskort. Don't buy Sasko, buy Albany." (Participant 15)

"[…] But I do try and encourage that anything that she picks up she must actually read, even if it's a till slip, read. Instead of asking me what is written on there, read it. That's another way that I am trying to initiate the reading […]." (Participant 19)

"Usually she asks me about numbers, what is two-zero-zero stand for? Then I will say, it's 200, baby. Daddy, that sign, why is it written six-zero, because it means 60km […]." (Participant 24)

"Uhm, basically we work on reward systems. So, […] they would do a chore and then I reward them in virtual gold coins and then they trade their virtual gold coins for cash later on. They now earned their money, so when they get it, they can then go to Pick 'n Pay, choose what they want by themselves. So, they also learning from a young age they need to work, and things cost money […]." (Participant 5)

As previously discussed, the parents play an important role in explaining symbols, signs and labels to their children. As the children observe their parents, they begin to understand the value and purpose of literacy. Although the children will be exposed automatically to print as they engage with their environments and accompany their parents, learning is further enhanced when the parents recognise and use this as an opportunity for learning. Several of the parents said that they feel frustrated by the numerous questions their children ask when they accompany them to the grocery store. These parents feel too tired and stressed to accommodate the interest and inquisitiveness of their children:

"Both of them, they ask so many questions, and honestly, sometimes I feel impatient to answer all those questions […] they ask about everything. […] you feel tired." (Participant 7)

"I get so angry. You'll see me in the shop. […] But when I'm stressed, yoh, I'm moody […]." (Participant 9)

While these parents may be aware of the benefits attached to answering their children's questions and may recognise the opportunity for learning, they seem to feel too tired and stressed to accommodate their children. Therefore, their frustration and responses to their children might not be a reflection of their attitude towards their children, but rather of their exhaustion and their stressful circumstances.

Conclusion

All the participants in this study have an accumulation of cultural funds of knowledge obtained through their participation in cultural and religious practices, daily activities and routines, and interaction with their environment. While children learn much by observing their parents engage in these activities and begin to understand the purpose and functions of literacy, parents still play a crucial role in mediating these resources and transferring knowledge and skills to their children. As indicated above, this is done through storytelling, reading religious passages, teaching them to pray, interacting with communities, and allowing them to be actively involved in daily chores and activities. While most of the parents aspire to include their children in activities and to pass on this knowledge, some feel overwhelmed by financial and time constraints that, in turn, influence their interaction with and responses to their children. Regardless of this, children are still exposed to multiple forms of oral and written texts, which ultimately influence their literacy skills.

5.4. Social funds of knowledge

Social funds of knowledge refers to the knowledge, skills and abilities gained through social interaction (Hedges, 2012), participation in social networks and communities, parental involvement, and the development of relationships (Llopart & Esteban-Guitart, 2018). In this study, the parents' social funds of knowledge are analysed and discussed according to the following three sub-themes:

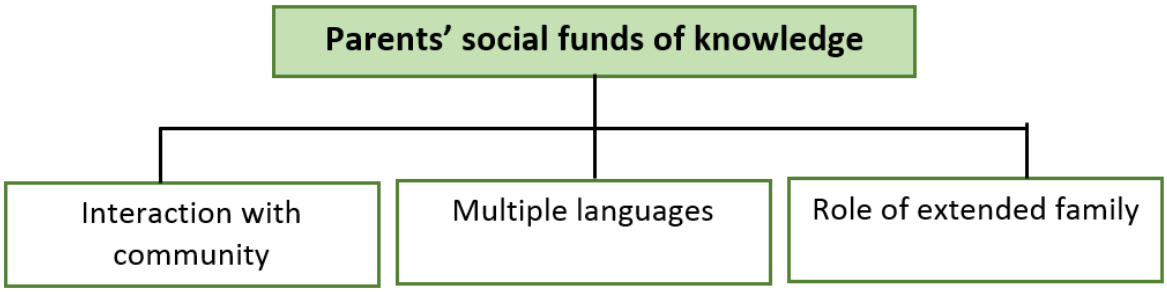


Figure 11: Parents' social funds of knowledge

This section analyses the ways in which these families interact with their communities and their extended family members. These families attribute much value to interdependent and reciprocal community living. They further encourage the acquisition of multiple languages to facilitate and foster this interconnected community living and exchange of knowledge. The section further examines the ways in which these interactions influence and enhance the literacy development of the children.

As parents interact with their communities, colleagues, families and church communities, they acquire various funds of knowledge. Essentially, cultural and cognitive funds of knowledge (knowledge, skills and abilities) are obtained through experiences and social interactions (Esteban-Guitart & Moll, 2014). In these social contexts, the cultural and cognitive resources are utilised in interactions and activities, and simultaneously, more knowledge and skills are accumulated in the process. These resources (funds of knowledge) are dynamic and are continuously developed and improved through interaction with communities and environments (Hedges, 2012).

Hence, it can be understood that the acquisition of social funds of knowledge is intertwined with the accumulation of cultural and cognitive resources. Being part of a church community, for example, results in the acquisition of cultural funds (as religious concepts and beliefs are transferred), and of social funds (through the interaction and development of relationships between church members). Therefore, social funds of knowledge cannot be separated accurately from the acquisition of cultural and cognitive funds of knowledge. While it is crucial to recognise that social funds are obtained simultaneously with cultural and cognitive funds of knowledge, to avoid redundancy, reference will not be made again to the various aspects of cultural and cognitive resources. This section, therefore, specifically discusses the dynamics of the

social interactions between the household members and their communities, and between the households and their extended family members.

5.4.1. Household interaction with their community

As previously mentioned, the participants in this study live in an environment where they generally build valuable relationships with their neighbours and frequently interact with other community members. These parents strongly advocate for living in a community and the reciprocal lifestyle that accompanies it. As these households interact with one another, knowledge and skills are exchanged. With each interaction amongst these households, learning occurs though the verbal exchanges and through the practical activities they participate in as they interact (Moll *et al.*, 1992).

One father describes the importance he attributes to community living. According to him, it is crucial to make decisions with the community in mind and, where possible, to contribute to the upliftment of the community:

> *"[…] by staying in the community they should know that they can't live on their own without other people. If they can be cultured on that, […] we are part of a society, be respectful, and all that. Education alone, it's not enough. You should know what to give back to the community, if it's going to help the community, to build the community because if you build the community then you will be building the country; so they should be the best that they can be in the community, in the society where they live."* (Participant 23)

Another participant explains that her daughter enjoys teaching the other children in the community how to draw and do mathematics:

> *"[…] she enjoys drawing and maths, it's what she does most of the time. When she's outside, she will be teaching other kids maths […]."* (Participant 4)

A mother mentions that her son often plays in the street with the other children in the community:

> *"[…] he likes playing a lot. When he's at home, he just wants to see himself in the street running around with friends."* (Participant 14)

According to another mother, she started a netball team with her friends in the community:

> *"[…] 'cause we did open a netball team, me and my friends that side, […] we were playing under those trees there."* (Participant 29)

Thus, it can be said that these families frequently interact with members of their community. The parents and their families, therefore, acquire knowledge and skills through this interaction with one another and through the shared activities. Participant 4, for example, explains how her daughter teaches the other children in the community. Thus, these children are obtaining knowledge and skills through her social interaction with them and by learning how to do mathematics. There also seems to be a transfer of values, as these families live in the community. Participant 23 explains the importance of a reciprocal lifestyle, where one gives to the community and benefits from the community. The participants are of the opinion that communal living is essential in order to be successful.

5.4.2. The acquisition of multiple languages through community interaction

According to many of the participants in this study, the members of their household are able to speak multiple languages. These parents strongly encourage their children to learn the languages of their peers and often play a role in teaching these languages to them at a conversational level. These parents ascribe much importance to being multilingual so as to be able to communicate with the people around them.

A few participants mention the different languages that they are able to speak or understand:

> *"We speak Xhosa and Tswana in our house because his father is Xhosa and I'm Tswana. So we mix both languages."* (Participant 14)

"With me, I speak many languages because I can speak Zulu, Xhosa, Tswana, Swati, Ndebele, Sepedi, Venda […] and I hear a little bit of Shona […]." (Participant 20)

"Yes, yes. I can speak Tswana, […] Sotho, […] Xhosa, […] Zulu, and but … Venda… and this other one… what do you call it, Shangani? I can hear but I am unable and Afrikaans too. I can understand but to reply, […] it's a little bit difficult but I can understand everything." (Participant 20)

Several families acquire new languages as they adapt to their new environment. According to these families, it is important to learn the languages that are spoken in a particular environment to communicate freely with all kinds of people:

"[…] but when we came to [town], you find that there is Tswana, Sotho, Xhosas, so you had to be adaptive to […]. Whilst you are on the street, you have this different languages that you use. […] My kids, they know Zulu, South Sotho, North Sotho and this ground languages […]. It's the environment, you need to adapt […] according, to be able to communicate." (Participant 17)

" […] Remember here, you got Sotho, […] Tswana, […] Zulu, […] so, for you to survive here, you must get those language right and all that stuff […] When I go to work I meet white people, they talk Afrikaans, so I must start knowing different languages so that I can create a good relationship […]." (Participant 21)

These families value the ability to communicate and form relationships with the people in their environment. They want to make connections with the people who surround them and who work with them. Participant 21 mentions that it is important to know different languages in order to survive. This suggests that he believes in an interdependent community as he aims to communicate and build relationships with the people in his environment.

The households further acquire languages through their interaction with community members. Several of the participants speak about the languages that their children acquire by playing with their neighbours and the other children in the community:

"[…] my kids play with kids who speaks Xhosa and sometimes they ask me 'Mommy, what does this word mean?'. I teach them the basics, to greet people." (Participant 7)

"I think the only languages that they understand, it's Zulu maybe and Xhosa and Tswana. 'Cause that's the only kids that they will maybe play with around there in the location." (Participant 14)

"They've already lost … they are no more speaking that of Zulu language; they are most on Tswana language and Xhosa because, uhm, I think on the street that I live, we've got eight neighbours that are Tswana and four that are Xhosas." (Participant 17)

These parents strongly encourage their children to learn and understand the languages that are spoken in the community. The parents also make an effort to acquire languages as they interact with community members:

"I just love to know other people's languages. […] because you know, we attend seminars, we attend occasions, and then you just find a friend there or a colleague […] but at least if you know, and you understand something, then you are able to communicate with that particular person." (Participant 22)

"[…] 'cause you meet different people so you don't always have to stick to one language, […] so that's why like I'm trying to learn different languages so that when I meet this person, I can communicate; yes, and learn more about maybe their culture, their language or anything. But now I'm trying to learn Afrikaans. I know it's difficult, but I am trying." (Participant 27)

These families show a particular interest in making connections with other people by being able to communicate with them. They believe it is important to form relationships with the people they encounter and those who surround them. They portray a strong sense of communal living, where members make an effort to understand and support one another. Acquiring numerous languages is centred on this communal, reciprocal lifestyle. As they interact with community members, they acquire more languages, and as they acquire more languages, they are better able to communicate with these community members. This perspective of the parents on the importance of language

and communication between people promotes a sense of social cohesion. Learning these languages is not necessarily for personal gain or self-actualisation, but rather to build a close-knit and interdependent community. These households do not live isolated or secluded lives, but depend on and cooperate with one another to survive, and language acquisition seems to be integrated in their way of life in order to make this happen.

5.4.3. Role of extended family members

Amongst a number of the households, extended families, and especially grandparents, play a key role in the lives of the children. Due to financial and other circumstances, some of these grandparents live with these households. These family members often tend to the needs of the children and assist them with their homework. As mentioned before, these children are not only exposed to the skills, knowledge and abilities of their parents, but are significantly influenced by the funds of knowledge of these other family members.

One participant explains how her mother lives on their property with them and assists her and her husband by picking up the children from school, looking after them in the afternoons, and assisting them with their homework:

> *"[…] I've got my mother that fetches them in the afternoon […] My mother does the homework and what have you with them. Five o'clock I get back home and then I've got to start supper and bath time and then bedtime."* (Participant 16)

Another participant explains how he recently sent his son to live with his grandparents because, due to circumstances, they are better able to tend to his needs:

> *"[…] I'm a single parent […]. So, now that I work shifts, I spoke to my family that they must uh, keep him there – my parents. So, it's my parents, and my younger sister who's staying with him."* (Participant 6)

One mother, who studies part-time, explains how her sisters support her and assist her in supervising the children when she is too busy to do it on her own:

> *"I have to juggle around helping my kids and doing my assignments and going to work, helping my learners with their own portfolios. I try, but I have a good support chain. I have my two sisters. Sometimes when there's too much work in the house, one of my sisters comes and helps me."* (Participant 7)

While other families might not necessarily have their extended family members living with them or assisting them with the children, there are family members who play a significant role in their lives. One participant, for example, explains how her household regularly visits the grandparents and great-grandparents:

> *"But grandparents are a very, very big part of their lives. So, they've got … their great-grandparents are still alive. Three of them actually. So, in fact, the two stay on a street behind us, so they see them every day […]."* (Participant 5)

In many of the households who participated in this study, extended family members play a significant role in the lives of the children. The parents in these households still benefit from the knowledge, skills and abilities of these family members through their continuous interaction with one another. These children are exposed to the funds of knowledge of these family members as they frequently engage with them and have built meaningful relationships with them.

Conclusion

Social interaction is the fundamental instrument in the exchange and accumulation of various funds of knowledge. These families acquire new knowledge, skills and abilities as they frequently engage in activities and conversations with their community members and extended family members. Amongst these households, shared language plays a major role in allowing them to communicate with others, and essentially gain access to the knowledge they possess. Their participation in these socially rich environments significantly influence and enhance the language and literacy development of the children. These families, therefore, benefit greatly from their community-based lifestyles.

5.5. Parent-school collaboration

Parent-school collaboration refers to the agreement between the parents and the school to promote the well-being of the child through a partnership of joint efforts (Cox, 2005). It, therefore, involves mutual investment in the development of the child by the school and the parents.

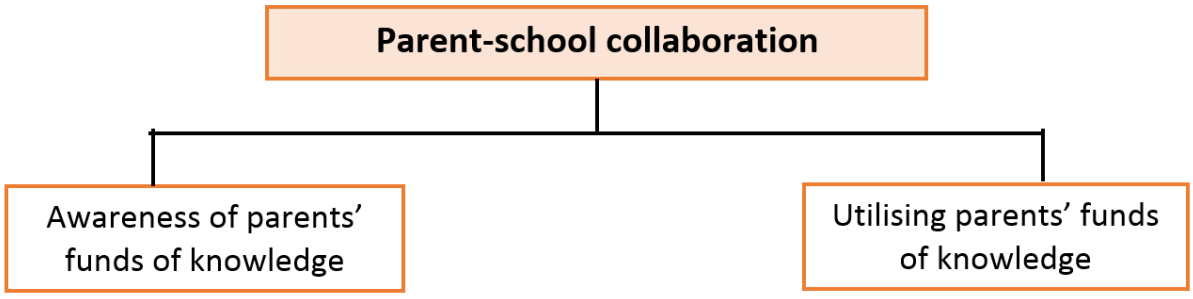


Figure 12: Parent-school collaboration

This section discusses the ways in which the parents and the teachers collaborate by utilising the parents' funds of knowledge to enhance the literacy of the children. Collaboration implies the use of the parents' funds of knowledge by both the teachers and the parents in their efforts to enhance the literacy development of the children. This is depicted in the diagram below:

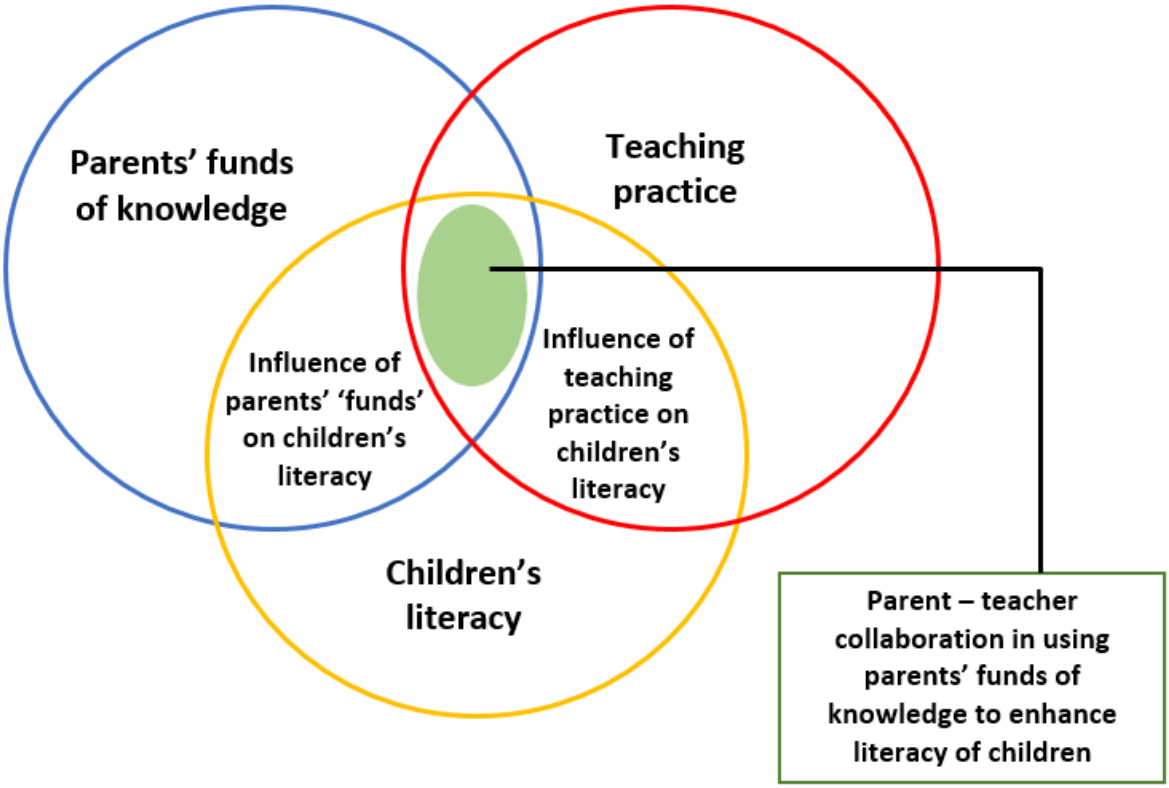


Figure 13: Collaborative use of parents' funds of knowledge to enhance literacy development

This collaboration is analysed and discussed with regards to the knowledge and awareness of the parents' funds of knowledge and the utilisation of these funds.

5.5.1. Knowledge and awareness of parents' funds of knowledge

One of the key objectives of the funds of knowledge approach is to use families' funds of knowledge in classroom teaching practice (Llopart & Esteban-Guitart, 2018). This is based on the premise that learning is enhanced when concepts are linked and related to real-life contexts and experiences. As this study focuses on collaboration, attention is paid to the ways in which the parents' knowledge, skills and abilities are used collaboratively by the teachers and the parents to enhance literacy learning amongst the children. Therefore, examination is not limited to classroom practices but includes the literacy-related efforts and practices of the parents and the teachers more holistically.

The establishment of teacher-parent relationships and mutual trust are required for teachers and schools to gain knowledge and insight into the funds of knowledge

possessed by parents. According to Moll (1992), these relationships of trust are fundamentally established through interaction and frequent communication. Without this successful communication, schools will not have the necessary insight required to use the cognitive, cultural and social resources of the parents. This subsection therefore discusses the quality of communication that exists between the parents and the teachers and the relationships that are formed between them. It, furthermore, examines the school's and the teachers' awareness and understanding of the parents' funds of knowledge and life experiences.

School communication

The parents generally spoke positively about the communication they receive from the school. They receive newsletters every Friday regarding upcoming events and extramural activities, which the participants describe as useful.

One participant, for example, explains how, through these newsletters, parents are informed about upcoming events and are invited to participate:

> *"Yes, because there is always communication from the school to say this is what will be happening. Parents are invited and it is always my choice to not be involved or to be involved. But I think they are extending invitation to us."* (Participant 8)

According to the parents, the meetings held by the school are informative and well organised:

> *"[…] They run their meetings very well, they've got a proper meeting for the voting of your board, school governing body, […] explaining their budget to us as parents. [...] get to the class and see the other parents and hear what the teacher has to say, how things should be working or expected to work, so you work around that."* (Participant 10)

Based on these responses, the school seems to make an effort to communicate with the parents regarding events, decisions that are made, and the general functioning of the school. However, it does appear as if these meetings are school- and teacher-led,

where information is simply transferred to the parents. There is no indication from the responses of the parents that they have input into these meetings or that the parents make valuable contributions. Thus, it can be suggested that communication with the school is one-sided, and that the parents' resources are not adequately being identified or used by the school.

Parent-teacher communication

To capitalise on the parents' funds of knowledge, it is crucial for the teachers to have insight into the lifestyles and experiences of these families, and to recognise the potential knowledge, skills and abilities obtained through these experiences. The funds of knowledge approach encourages teachers to engage in household visits to gain understanding of the environment and lifestyles of the families (Moll, 1992).

In this study, the participants were asked whether they think teachers are aware of their cultural background and lifestyle. For the most part, the parents indicated that the teachers will not have knowledge of this information because they have not engaged in such discussions with them. The parents generally seemed open to the idea of sharing this information with the teachers, as they understand that knowledge of this might affect their children's learning and behaviour at school.

One participant, for example, mentions that the teacher does not know anything about her child outside of school. She feels that the teacher has limited time to interact with the parents, and consequently, is not informed about the background of their family:

> *"No. I, I don't think so because I think the teachers only know kids in class, but they don't know them personally because they don't ask parents. […] if they had time for us parents, they would understand the background of the children."* (Participant 7)

This same mother further indicates that she would appreciate more opportunities to be involved at school:

> *"[…] I think maybe they give us opportunity, maybe through the homework but I think there could be something that involves parents more. […] maybe activities that we do with the kids, […] something that can bring me more often in at the school because we only come when it's parents' evening only."* (Participant 7)

This suggests that the participant wants to be more involved at school and in the learning of her child. Even though this mother has not engaged in a conversation with the teacher about her lifestyle or background, she indicated that she would like this to happen. Similar to this response, another participant explains that knowledge of their culture would allow teachers and parents to reach a mutual understanding of circumstances and expectations:

> *Honestly, I don't know 'cause I don't usually speak to the teacher […]. I would love for them to know […] sometimes it becomes a bit worrying because you think that the teacher wouldn't understand when you tell him or her about the culture thing. […] if maybe they understood more, then they will be more accepting towards that."* (Participant 12)

Another mother explains how she contacts the teacher on a weekly basis to talk about the progress of her daughter. This mother attributes value to forming a healthy relationship with the teachers; however, there is no indication that this communication goes beyond academic matters:

> *"On a weekly basis. […] I'd ask her questions. I just feel comfortable with knowing the teacher and knowing what is happening in class. So, I always believe that it's better to have a good relationship with the schoolteacher."* (Participant 19)

> *"Because I have opportunity sometimes to delay myself at work and take her to the school. […]. But it's very simple. You stand up, go to school, go to the teacher, start exchanging those words […] I mean that relationship with the teacher is a powerful thing. […] We need to meet them halfway; we need to come to them."* (Participant 21)

Even though much of the communication seems to be initiated by the parents, the teachers seem open to communication, and respond well to the parents. However,

this communication does not seem to go beyond school and academic matters. According to the parents, there is no real indication that they share their culture, lifestyle, or circumstances with the teachers. Thus, it could be suggested that the teachers have scant knowledge of the parents' funds of knowledge. In response to this idea, one participant suggests that teachers should do research on the different cultures to have a general understanding of the children in the class:

> *"If you learn about Zulus, it would be easier for you to understand the child's attitude or the child's behaviour, but to go to an individual level, I think it's a bit too much. […]. We're in South Africa, you see on TV things like that, don't be ignorant, watch and see what they do. Do your research and then, that way, you will be able to understand the children in your class. I mean, can you imagine how many children are in a classroom […]."* (Participant 19)

This parent considers the fact that teachers and parents have limited time and that, perhaps, household visits and lengthy discussions are not always an option. In addition, several other parents indicate that there is no communication with the teacher:

> *"[…] so, this year I don't have a problem. Maybe that's why I don't consult with the teacher. […] I don't even have her phone number, […] no communication."* (Participant 4)

> *"[…] [he] doesn't give me a problem. Just maybe if there is something like communication from the teacher, but I haven't received anything and to me it says, there is no problem."* (Participant 6)

There seems to be a degree of passivity amongst some of the parents, as they do not initiate any communication with the teachers. Some of the parents actually perceive no communication as a positive thing. According to them, no communication from the teachers is an indication that there is no problem and that their children are performing well. In addition, some of the parents spoke about the challenges they experience when attempting to communicate with the teachers. One participant, for example, explains that she has to go to the school to speak to the teacher, which is not a viable option for her:

> *"[…] we don't have any level of communication […] we don't have her number. Sometimes there are things that you want to ask but we have to go to school. Imagine hey, I don't even have a car. […]. It's so difficult because you have to go to school […] and if you have time maybe around ten o'clock, you cannot see her because you are not allowed to see them during school time. […] communication is difficult."* (Participant 18)

The degree of communication between the teachers and the parents seems to relate to the individual teacher and the parents involved. Some teachers willingly share their contact details with the parents and welcome their enquiries and conversations. However, according to the participants, other teachers are more hesitant to share their contact details. While the teachers generally respond well to the parents, communication appears to be more dependent on the proactivity of the parents. This communication, however, does not go beyond the child's academic performance and the behaviour of the child, suggesting limits to the existing relationships. Hence, the relationships between the teachers and the parents seem somewhat superficial, as there is no indication that the communication involves details of their personal lives or experiences. This may influence the level of trust established in these relationships.

5.5.2. Utilising parents' funds of knowledge

According to the parents, the teachers generally seem to have knowledge of the religious beliefs and SES of the parents and accommodate them in these areas. One parent, for example, explains that the school and its teachers willingly accommodate their religious beliefs and practices at school:

> *"[…] they often have 'movie and hotdog' days. And, there is another Muslim teacher at the school, so they would tell her to make [hotdogs] for all the Muslim kids so that they are accommodated as well. […] Also, they go home on a Friday at twelve o'clock so that they can go to mosque."* (Participant 5)

Moreover, the teachers seem understanding towards the limited time the parents have at home due to the nature of their employment and they attempt to assist them by taking on some additional responsibilities for the parents. One participant, for example,

speaks highly of the commitment of the teachers as they cover all the children's schoolbooks to minimise work for the parents:

> *"[…] the teachers are very committed […], We only needed to cover the homework book. […]. The teachers actually stayed at school and covered all the books for all the kids. So, there's so much dedication, things that nobody would do for you."* (Participant 5)

The teachers further attempt to assist parents by giving them all the homework for the week on a Monday. In addition, the homework is only checked the following week again. This allows parents to spend more time on homework with their children on the days they are available and gives them additional time on the weekend to catch up, if necessary. Several of the participants mentioned that this is particularly helpful for them. One participant, who is a parent and a teacher at the school, explains how she assists parents in this way:

> *"[…] what I do with my class, I tell them that on a Monday I will give them the homework […] And, then I only check the homework on the next Monday. So, those that didn't have a chance, […] I even give them the weekend, but then some people just don't even do it on a weekend."* (Participant 30)

Finally, the teachers provide literacy-related support to the families by offering additional literacy lessons to the children after school. The parents seem positive and grateful for the efforts of the teachers in this regard:

> *"[…] extra classes, it's one of the things that helps the learners."* (Participant 15)

> *"[…] there is a special class, so […] if they struggle with English, they put them in the extra English class. […] But I like the initiative [...] that helps a lot."* (Participant 19)

> *"No, she goes for an extra class after school […]. If he does it twice, it's not the same as doing it once, because now he has that advance; he understands it more better for the following day."* (Participant 28)

The efforts made by the teachers suggest that they have a reasonable awareness of the challenges facing many of the families. They seem to have insight into their lives and some of their circumstances at home. Despite the fact that the teachers may have knowledge and insight into the lifestyle and religious practices of the families, there is no evidence of a connection being made between this knowledge and the teaching practices. While the teachers assist the parents, based on their comprehension of their daily experiences, there is no indication that the teachers recognise or take cognisance of the knowledge, skills and abilities that could be obtained through the parents' experiences.

While the teachers attempt to minimise the pressures experienced by the parents, they encourage the support and involvement of the parents in the children's homework. According to a number of the parents, they are expected to sign their child's homework books every day to indicate that they are aware of the work and progress of the child. The parents generally feel positive about this notion, as it presents an opportunity for them to be involved and stay informed:

> *"[…] the homework that they give him, I can just see from that, they would want the parents' involvement somehow. […] and I must always sign to show that I was aware of everything that comes from the school."* (Participant 6)

> *"Honestly speaking, it also helps us as parents to be updated with your child's learning process. […] It's giving me time to bond with my daughter and know her and know the schoolwork*." (Participant 12)

Even though the teachers may be unaware of the funds of knowledge of the parents, and therefore are not capitalising on these knowledge, skills and abilities, the teachers accommodate and assist the families based on the knowledge they have. For example, the teachers are aware of the socio-economic circumstances of these families and adjust their methods and approaches accordingly. As mentioned, this does not necessarily reflect a positive and empowering perspective of the skills and abilities of these parents. Rather, it could be suggested that these parents are still viewed as less capable and therefore they need the assistance that is being provided. The intentions and efforts of the school and the teachers nonetheless seem well intended. On the

other hand, the teachers do encourage the involvement of the parents in homework and communication, which suggests that the teachers, to some degree, do rely on the knowledge, skill and abilities of the parents. Perhaps the teachers provide this support because they observe the lack of involvement amongst many of these families and assume a lack of interest or ability amongst the parents. This is reflected in Participant 30's (a mother and teacher at the school) response, suggesting that despite the efforts of the teachers, the parents still appear passive and disengaged. It is important, however, to further consider the possible explanations for the seeming disengagement amongst the parents.

Conclusion

Collaboration ultimately refers to a well-established partnership between the teachers and the parents with the fundamental purpose of enhancing the learning and well-being of the children. According to the parents, their communication with the teachers rarely goes beyond academic matters – if the communication exists at all. Although, the teachers and the parents seem to have good intentions and attempt to invest in the literacy learning of the children, there is no real indication that either of these parties utilise the parents' funds of knowledge. There seems to be a lack of recognition and insight into the potential knowledge, skills and abilities of these parents and the ways in which these funds of knowledge may be significantly useful in the literacy development of the children. Not only do the teachers appear to lack knowledge of these skills and abilities, but the parents also seem to undermine their contributions and may not recognise or optimise on their own funds of knowledge. Despite this, both the teachers and the parents ultimately seem invested in the well-being and learning of the children.

5.6. Conclusion

Based on these findings, it is evident that these parents possess various cognitive, cultural and social funds of knowledge. As suggested by Moll *et al.* (1992), the SES of these parents has not prevented them from accumulating various cognitive, cultural and social resources. However, it is suggested that many of these families do not consider the knowledge, skills and abilities as valuable resources for learning. Thus,

there is a lack of activation of these funds as the parents do not optimally use their knowledge and skills to assist their children academically. In addition, amongst many of the families, scant communication occurs between the teachers and the parents and there is a definite absence of discussions around the lifestyle and cultural backgrounds of the families. This, therefore, suggests that the teachers most likely are not aware of the funds of knowledge that these parents possess and, consequently, are unable to utilise it.

Chapter 6

Discussion of findings

This chapter provides a discussion on the analysis and findings presented in the previous chapter. This discussion considers the ways in which parents utilise their funds of knowledge to mediate and facilitate literacy learning amongst their children. It further discusses the ways in which schools utilise, or do not utilise, parents' funds of knowledge. These finding are discussed through the theoretical lens of the funds of knowledge approach, developed by Moll *et al.* (1992).

6.1. Theoretical lens: funds of knowledge

It is important to acknowledge that the challenges impeding collaboration with the school may not necessarily be overcome. It may not be possible to eradicate the socio-economic challenges that the families in the study experience. However, the funds of knowledge approach is valuable in the way that it presents a positive perspective, despite, and in the face of, these challenges. Rather than attempting to overcome illiteracy and economic instability to improve collaboration with the school, this approach allows one to consider the inherent resources of these families. It allows one to explore the knowledge, skills and abilities that are accumulated over time, through experience and living in community, which can be translated and utilised as resources for learning.

As discussed in Chapter 3, the fundamental objectives of the funds of knowledge approach include, (1) improving the academic performance of children from lower-socio economic backgrounds; (2) establishing relations of mutual trust between teachers and households; and, (3) enhancing learning by incorporating family funds of knowledge into teaching practice. This approach, therefore, encourages teachers to enter the communities and homes of their learners with the intention of learning about and learning from the families (Moll, 2015). The purpose of this is to gain knowledge of and insight into their lifestyle and cultural histories (i.e. funds of knowledge) and to build relationships of trust with these families (Llopart & Esteban-Guitart, 2018).

Teachers should digest and use these household resources to amend their pedagogy in a way that optimally connects with the learners by relating to their real-life experiences (Moll, 2015). Teachers should form study groups where these findings are discussed and strategies are developed to implement these changes in the classroom (Llopart & Esteban-Guitart, 2018).

This study used this approach by exploring (1) the funds of knowledge that lower middle-class parents possess; (2) the ways in which these funds influence the literacy development of their children in their own environments; and, (3) ways in which teachers and parents collaboratively utilise these funds to enhance the literacy learning of foundation phase learners. Similar to the diagram presented in Chapter 3, the diagram below depicts the findings of this study in relation to the funds of knowledge approach and the research questions:

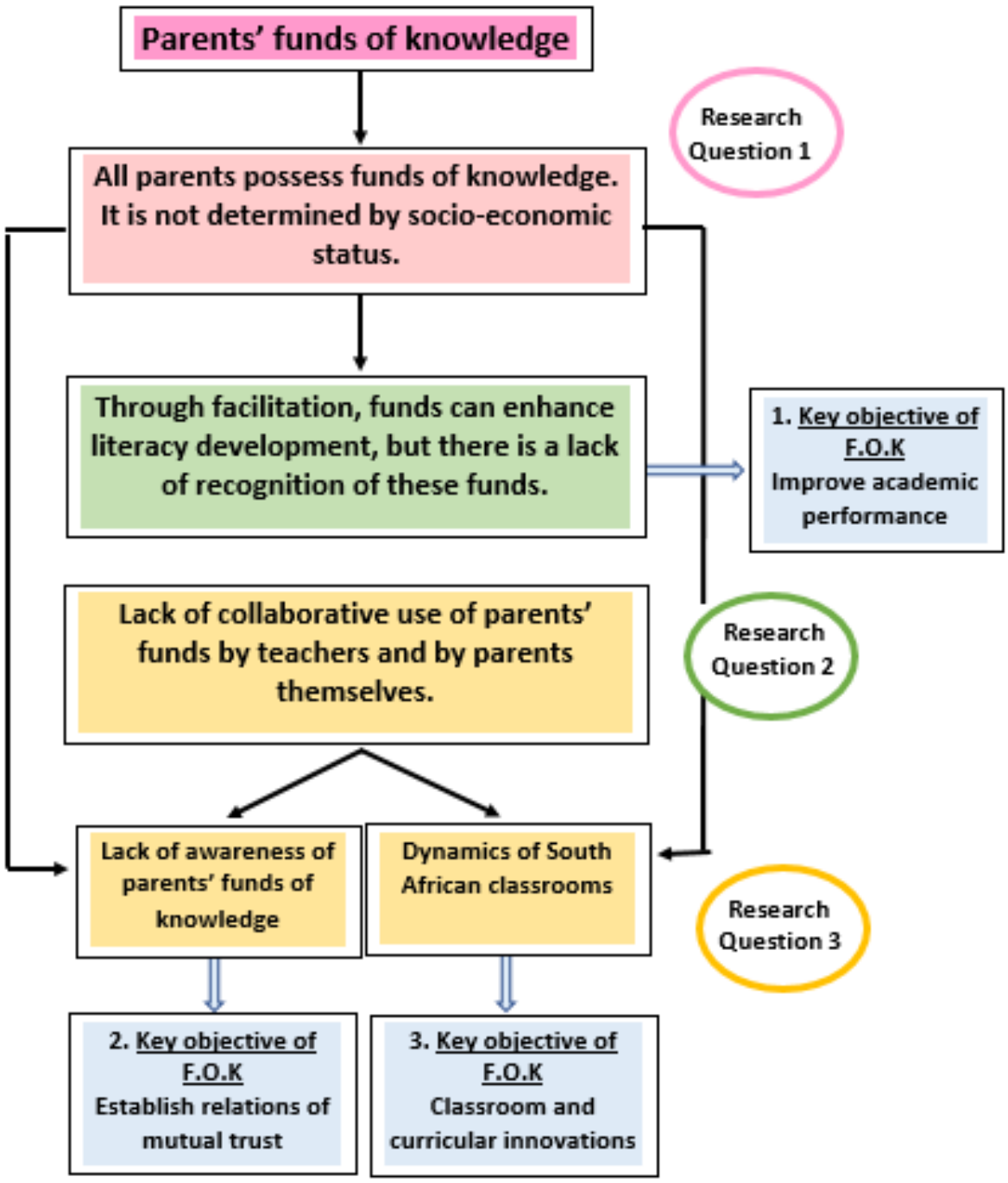


Figure 14: Use of funds of knowledge (F.O.K) in study

The findings of this study are discussed with regards to the parents' possession and use of their funds of knowledge to enhance the literacy of their children, and the collaborative use of the parents' funds of knowledge by the parents and the school.

6.2. Possession and use of funds of knowledge amongst parents

As previously discussed, the participants in this study reside in a low-income area where much of the employment is precarious. Amongst the 30 participants interviewed, several parents indicate that either they, or their partners, are unemployed. This is largely due to the lack of available jobs and the many retrenchments that have taken place. Amongst some of the other families, both parents work full-time jobs to make ends meet and often work long and unusual hours. In addition to this, there are a number of single parents who are solely responsible for the nurturing and provision of their families.

Even though many of these families confront issues of low income, precarious employment, and low or moderate levels of education, they still possess valuable funds of knowledge. As Moll *et al.* (1992) propose, this knowledge, skills and abilities are not reserved for the educated and affluent families but are obtained through all interactions and experiences. This study, therefore, advocates that all households, regardless of SES, have significant funds of knowledge that can contribute to the learning of their children. As indicated throughout the study, the parents of these households possess various valuable skills and knowledge that can contribute to and enhance the literacy learning of their children.

6.2.1. Mediation of funds of knowledge

While the possession of numerous funds of knowledge amongst the parents is undeniable, value ultimately lies in the way that these resources are transferred to their children. The parents, therefore, play a crucial role in mediating various resources to their children and facilitating opportunities for learning. As identified in the previous chapter, this can be done through the transferral of work-related knowledge and skills, participation in various daily activities, shared reading, mediating exposure to media, sharing of traditional tales and religious stories, and through interaction with community members. While the children are exposed to language and literacy in many of these activities, learning is enhanced when the parents use this exposure as opportunities for learning with their children.

Parents play a fundamental role in the language acquisition of a child. Before a child can make meaning of reading and writing, they need to develop sufficient vocabulary (Whitehurst & Lonigan, 1998). Through continuous verbal interaction with a child, parents can create a linguistically stimulating environment that results in successful language proficiency (Foster *et al*., 2005; Marsh & Millard, 2000). Thus, the act of parents verbally imparting knowledge and skills to their children is a major precursor to their literacy development.

As previously indicated, when the children participate in leisure and work-related activities with their parents, skills and knowledge are transferred to them. Not only are the children gaining knowledge and understanding of the actual activities involved, but the parents are creating a linguistically rich environment. As the parents explain different concepts to them, the children developed new vocabulary and are engaged in intellectual conversations. The parents further enhance their children's language as they provide opportunities for them to follow instructions and to apply their new knowledge. This gives insight into the level of understanding the children have of the knowledge and skills the parents transfer to them. For example, the children who assist at their family-run business during school holidays, learn to follow instructions, process information, and apply knowledge at the shop. Here the children are not only listening to their parents but are actively developing their understanding as they apply this new knowledge. The parents further linguistically stimulate their children when they ask them open-ended questions or engage in discussions where the children are expected to share their thoughts and opinions. Roberts *et al.* (2005) and Whitehurst and Lonigan (1998) support this notion by suggesting that parents provoke and stimulate linguistic interaction with their children when they ask them questions and engage in intellectual conversations with them.

Parents can further stimulate their children's language and thinking through shared and dialogical reading. As suggested by Bracken and Fischel (2008), shared literacy practices between parents and children develop certain pre-literacy skills. These shared literacy practices include visits to libraries, exposure to books at home, and reading aloud. In this study, a few parents said that they read bedtime stories to their children or encouraged their children to read on their own. The parents tended to read more to the younger children who were not yet able to read fluently and encouraged

independent reading amongst the children who were able to read. Some of the other parents indicated that, even though they did not read to their children, they regularly took their children to the local library to choose books to read on their own. In all three instances, the parents were instilling a culture and habit of reading amongst their children as they were frequently exposed to books. Even though children may not necessarily be able to read fluently, Whitehurst and Lonigan (1998) propose that this exposure to books and shared reading introduces them to the conventions of reading and writing. These conventions include reading from top to bottom and left to write, understanding punctuation, and distinguishing between print and pictures. These skills significantly assist and enhance children's literacy development.

Roberts *et al.* (2005) and Whitehurst and Lonigan (1998) further emphasise the importance of going beyond simply reading books aloud to children, but to also encourage the active participation of children in these reading activities. Parents should probe children by asking follow-up questions that stimulate thinking and forming opinions, elaborating on stories by adding insightful information and eliciting meaningful discussions (Roberts *et al.,* 2005). Of the 30 participants, only two parents indicated that they ask their children questions and engage in discussions about what they are reading. Whitehurst and Lonigan (1998) refer to this as dialogical reading when the child becomes the storyteller and the parent becomes the listener. In dialogical reading, parents play a crucial role in asking questions and encouraging responses that are more sophisticated. These practices substantially enhance the language development and early literacy skills of children (Roberts *et al*., 2005; Bracken & Fischel, 2008).

While there was some indication of the parents engaging in these advanced reading practices with their children, it was only evident amongst a few of the participants. While many of the parents were aware of the value of reading and a few parents read to their children, there was little indication that they went beyond the basics of reading. One of the two parents who engaged in dialogical reading was aware of the importance of such practices because he had done research on the topic. However, it did not seem to be common knowledge amongst the parents. Perhaps these parents were not aware of the importance of stimulating their children linguistically or had not encountered such practices before. One participant, for example, said that she did not read to her child

because no one ever read books to her as a child. While these parents might be capable and willing to engage in such reading activities with their children, it might not be something they considered because they were not exposed to it. Nonetheless, it is crucial to recognise that stimulating the thinking of children and exposure to narratives is not only reserved for shared book reading. Parents can generate a love for stories amongst their children through the telling of traditional tales and religious stories. Many traditions are upheld and passed on from generation to generation through the sharing of oral histories. Killingsworth (1993) strongly advocates for this type of oral transmission. Amongst many communities, knowledge, values, relationships and traditional expression are fundamentally established through oral communication (Mercardo, 2005; Zentella, 2005; Perry, 2016).

Moreover, parents play an important role in mediating and facilitating children's exposure to various forms of media. Children are exposed to media independently of their parents, and as indicated by the literature, there are many benefits attached to their interaction with these media. I will, however, suggest that parents still play a crucial role in stimulating the thinking of their children while engaging with media. Parents have the necessary skills and knowledge to use these media as opportunities for learning for their children. While children may develop some skills through their interaction with media, irrespective of the involvement of their parents, parents are important scaffolding mediums to link these media to valuable opportunities of enhanced learning. While learning may take place regardless, with the influence of parents, this learning could be further enhanced.

When children page through magazines, for example, they observe pictures and text and are exposed to the written language. This is, however, limited. With the guidance and interaction of their parents, the children could better grasp concepts and understand the conventions of reading and writing. One participant, for example, explained that when her daughter paged through a magazine, she was able to recognise and spell out the letters in a word, but she was not yet able to blend the letters to read the word. With some assistance from her mother, she was able to sound the word successfully. Thus, this mother was providing scaffolding to her daughter to aid her in moving beyond her existing knowledge (individual letter recognition) to reading the word.

Children have further developed crucial literacy skills through their exposure to music as they develop vocabulary and language proficiency by becoming familiar with the lyrics of the songs they listen to. As suggested by Whitehurst and Lonigan (1998) and Marsh and Millard (2000), music teaches children about rhyme and rhythm, which consequently enhances their phonetical awareness. Parents further enhance this development by using these lyrics to correct children's tenses and improve their understanding of vocabulary. Unlike other forms of media (e.g. electronic games and devices), access to music is not limited by a family's SES. All of the families in this study, regardless of their financial circumstances, listen to music from time to time. This form of media, therefore, plays a significant role in the language and literacy development of children across all families. The parents in this study also encouraged their children to listen to music in different languages, which further promoted the acquisition of multiple languages.

Moreover, children are exposed automatically to print in their environment. All children, regardless of their socio-economic background are exposed to print and the numerous functions of literacy. Moll *et al.* (1992) maintain that children's interests and their questions initiate much of the knowledge and skills that they obtain in their environment. In this study, many of the parents made special mention of the fact that their children constantly asked them questions about what they observed as they participated in these activities. This, in itself, is an opportunity for parents to encourage learning as they answer the questions posed by their children.

As previously mentioned, many of the families in the study form part of close-knit, interdependent communities. As these households frequently interact with one another, knowledge and skills are exchanged. Moll (1992) supports this notion by suggesting that as individuals interact and frequently engage with community members, a sense of trust is developed, and quality relationships are formed. With each interaction between family members, neighbours, friends or community members, learning occurs. This could be through the knowledge that is transferred with each exchange or the skills and abilities that are developed through the practical activities they participate in as they interact with one another. Several of the participants told of how their families form part of communities based on the area in

which they live and their involvement at church. These families regularly interact with their extended family members, their neighbours, community members and church community members. Through these interactions, households build relationships of trust and exchange knowledge and skills with one another.

The children in these households also obtain their own funds of knowledge as they interact with their peers at school and with other children in their communities. While much of the focus is on parents' and households' funds of knowledge, Esteban-Guitart and Moll (2014) propose that children also acquire their own funds of knowledge independent of their parents. Children form their own social communities who are separate from the social lives of their parents, and through their interaction with these social groups, obtain their own funds of knowledge (Llopart & Esteban-Guitart, 2018). The participants in this study mentioned how their children acquired new languages simply by interacting with their peers. In some of these households, these languages are further fostered by their parents as they explain certain words to their children and encourage them to be multilingual. In other households, however, these children acquire the languages and funds of knowledge independently of their parents. Some of the parents, for example, only encourage the use of their home language at home; therefore, they are not involved in their children's acquisition of multiple languages. In these instances, the children independently begin to understand the languages through their interaction with community members, the church community, and their peers at school. As proposed by Moll *et al.* (1992), children are constantly obtaining funds of knowledge in their various interactions and environments. This could be through the influence of their parents and households, or separate from them; regardless, in each circumstance and context, funds of knowledge are being acquired.

Moreover, many of the families have acquired several languages and they promote multilingualism in their homes. As previously indicated, many of these languages were acquired as the families adapted to their new environment and made an effort to learn the languages of their community. Nahapiet and Ghoshal (2000) explain that a shared language gives people the opportunity to connect with others and gain access to the knowledge they possess. Essentially, a shared language allows people to form relationships and to exchange the information and knowledge they hold. Thus, it can be said that the acquisition of languages allows one to interact better and with more

people, and the more one interacts with different people, the more funds of knowledge you obtain. Hence, language, in itself, is a means of acquiring various skills and knowledge.

The parents had acquired various funds of knowledge through their experiences of the community and living in the community. Value, however, lies in the activation of the resources as the parents engage in literacy-related learning opportunities with their children. Thus, all the participants in this study have the potential to contribute significantly to the literacy development of their children, irrespective of their cultural, linguistic or socio-economic backgrounds.

6.2.2. A lack of recognition of these funds amongst parents

While it is evident that these parents possess various funds of knowledge, there seems to be a lack of recognition of these resources amongst the parents themselves. There are those parents who engage in literacy-related activities and adequately use their knowledge, skills and abilities to further develop and enhance the learning of their children. This, however, is not true for many of the parents. A significant number of the parents do not seem to recognise their potential or the ways in which their funds of knowledge may be activated to stimulate their children. In addition, several of the parents seem to be of the opinion that their involvement and contribution towards the literacy learning of their children is limited to homework and the guidance of teachers. While homework and reading are crucial and a valuable way for the parents to contribute and to be involved, this perception limits the influence of the parents and the learning of their children. As reflected throughout the study, the parents have valuable knowledge, skills and abilities obtained through their experiences and interactions, but the activation and transmission of these funds of knowledge to their children is lacking. Thus, it can be said that the parents possess these knowledge and skills, but that they lie dormant, as they are not actively being used to their optimal potential.

6.2.3. The influence of SES on the transmission of funds of knowledge

While the SES of these families do not determine the acquisition of funds of knowledge amongst the parents, it does seem to influence the transmission of these funds to their

children. Even though the parents obtain knowledge, skills and abilities through their daily interactions and experiences, they lack the time to share this insight and competencies with their children. Several of the parents, for example, expressed their frustration with the lack of time they have available at home. Moreover, the limited time they have available is often used to assist children with their homework and to simply manage their daily lives.

It is, however, important to mention that this does not negate the funds of knowledge children acquire independently of their parents. In their daily experiences and interactions, children continuously obtain their own knowledge, skills and abilities. Although children may develop literacy-related skills through their exposure to environments, media and interactions, this learning could be enhanced with the scaffolding, mediation and transmission of parents' knowledge and skills. Based on the findings of this study, it can be stated that the influence the parents have on the literacy of their children, through the utilisation of their funds of knowledge, was limited.

6.3. Collaborative use of funds of knowledge amongst parents and schools

According to the parents, it appears that the parents and the teachers generally have a positive attitude and perception of one another. There is, however, an indication that the relationship and level of trust between the parents and teachers are somewhat facile as communication is reserved for school-related matters. In addition, much of the existing communication is dependent on the proactivity of the parents and the availability of communication modes provided by the respective teachers. In turn, parents who do not initiate contact or conversation about their child appear uninformed and passive. It is important to acknowledge that this seeming passivity does not necessarily reflect a lack of interest or commitment amongst the parents, but is, in many aspects, a reverberation of their socio-economic circumstances. It is further crucial to recognise that these findings are based on the experiences and perceptions of the parents.

Dynamics of a South African classroom

As previously discussed, the funds of knowledge approach encourages teachers to visit their learners' households to gain insight into the lives and experiences of the families. Ideally, teachers are supposed to use this knowledge and insight to adjust their teaching practice to accommodate and further stimulate the learning of the children in their classes. This notion ultimately seeks to enhance the learning of the children as they apply and relate this knowledge to their real-life experiences (Moll *et al.*, 1992).

According to the participants in this study, this did not happen. It is important to acknowledge that household visits may not be feasible within the South African context. To accomplish this task, teachers need to allocate a substantial amount of time to engage adequately with these households. This becomes unattainable as teachers are confronted with overcrowded classrooms and excessive workloads (Onwu & Stoffels, 2005). Consequently, as indicated in the study, the teachers do not seem to have the discretionary time or capacity to converse intently with each family about their lives outside of school.

This challenge is complicated further by the diversity present in each classroom. The funds of knowledge approach was initially applied to and based on Mexican families (Moll *et al.*, 1992). South Africa, on the other hand, is largely characterised by its diversity in culture, language and ethnicity. Hence, one classroom could include learners from multiple cultures, lifestyles and experiences. Thus, it is not equally achievable for teachers to have a general understanding of the cultures and lifestyles of their learners.

While a teacher could research and attempt to understand the predominant cultures in a particular geographical area, it will still not provide sufficient insight into the funds of knowledge of the families, and particularly the parents. One of the participants, who grasps that both teachers and parents do not always have the time to exchange in-depth information about their lifestyles and experiences, recommended the aforementioned notion. While it might not give teachers enough insight into the funds of knowledge possessed by parents and their families, it might allow teachers to know

and understand their learners slightly better. It will also allow teachers to adapt their lessons and pedagogy to some of the experiences that families, who belong to these cultures, are likely to have, and the knowledge and skills parents might obtain through these experiences. This does not fully accomplish the objectives of the funds of knowledge approach, but it could potentially be a more attainable goal for teachers, and it is, at least, a better option than not understanding learners' backgrounds at all.

According to the parents in this study, the teachers do not have adequate knowledge of the cultures, lifestyles, and funds of knowledge of the parents. Consequently, it can be assumed that these funds of knowledge are not being utilised by the teachers or incorporated into the classroom practice. This may not only be a result of a lack of insight, but teachers do not always have enough time to relate their teaching concepts to the experiences of their learners. Onwu and Stoffels (2005) explain that, due to limited time and the pressures of the curriculum, learners often are deprived of opportunities to engage actively in the learning process. Due to the immoderate workload of teachers, lessons tend to be rushed and impersonal. Thus, it could be suggested that, even if teachers were to visit the households of their learners and recognise and appreciate parents' funds of knowledge, incorporating the different cultures and experiences into the classroom practice could be challenging.

6.4. Existing policies on collaboration

As previously mentioned, concepts of parent-school collaboration have been integrated into South African educational policies with the aim of achieving collaborative school governance. The South African Schools Act, 1996 (Act 84 of 1996) requires that all public schools elect a school governing body that includes parent representatives. While this initiative is aimed at encouraging parent participation in the decision-making of the school, and potentially allows these parents' resources to be identified and used, it is reserved for the elected few. Only the parents who have been elected to represent the parent-body of the school are included in these decision-making processes. This, therefore, does not elicit the participation and involvement of parents more generally. While these parent-inclusive governing bodies serve a purpose in having parent representatives in the decision-making structure of the school, they do not facilitate parent-school collaboration more holistically.

The School-Parent-Community Engagement Framework was developed by the National Education Collaboration Trust (NECT) in 2016. The Framework is aimed specifically at establishing and facilitating collaboration between the school, parents and communities more holistically. Some of the strategies outlined in the Framework encourage the recognition and participation of parents as equal and valued partners. It, for example, promotes the notion that the academic performance of children is influenced by school, home and community aspects, and cannot be considered in isolation. The Framework, therefore, encourages the involvement of parents and the community to ensure the academic success of the child. In addition, the Framework aims to highlight the various strengths parents possess that could benefit the child academically. Thus, recognition is given to the potential of informal learning opportunities present at home through families' daily activities. Lastly, the Framework encourages the school to familiarise itself with the parents and their communities, with the purpose of understanding their diversity and their lifestyles. It, therefore, recognises the value that can be found in these communities and encourages healthy communication between these parties.

However, many of the strategies in the Framework still present deficit approaches and perspectives of parents with lower socio-economic backgrounds. These strategies mostly involve parent workshops, where they are informed about various aspects of schooling, child development, and parenting skills. It involves supporting parents and equipping them to provide an educational environment at home. While these initiatives may be well intended and to some degree may be useful, it suggests that these parents are oblivious and uninformed. The assumption is, once again, that these parents are less capable of and knowledgeable on the education of their children, and thus need the support being offered. While the Framework encourages communication with, and understanding of, the community, there is little indication that these strategies intend on using parents' funds of knowledge in teaching practice. Hence, collaboration with parents and communities involves healthy communication, participation of parents in events and decision-making, and empowering parents through the recognition of their opinions. The strategies are not aimed at identifying the inherent cognitive, cultural and social resources of the parents, and using them to enhance the learning of the children.

The practicality and sustainability of the strategies outlined in the Framework need to be taken into consideration. As previously indicated, communication between teachers and parents is a complex phenomenon and many different factors need to be considered. While the Framework encourages teachers to familiarise themselves with the community and families, one needs to consider the practicality of this notion. While it is ideal, as discussed previously, both teachers and parents in South Africa face challenges that complicate this possibility. The Framework further suggests that teachers should develop short-, medium- and long-term plans to engage with parents and the community and should regularly provide evidence of and feedback on the implementation of these strategies. As discussed, teachers deal with heavy workloads and overcrowded classrooms, and may not have the capacity or time to engage in such elaborate initiatives.

On the one hand, the principles of the Framework present a positive perspective of parents as containing valuable knowledge and being equal partners with the school. On the other hand, however, the strategies employed still suggest that parents are academically and economically inadequate and need the support provided by schools.

6.5. Conclusion

As indicated throughout the study, all parents possess valuable funds of knowledge that could potentially stimulate and enhance the literacy learning of their children. However, there seems to be a lack of recognition of these funds amongst both teachers and parents themselves. While teachers and parents do communicate, some more than others, and attempt to form relationships, these relations seem simplistic. There was little indication, and only amongst a few participants, that the teachers and parents mutually pursue a sincere, interdependent partnership. Instead, both the parties assist the children based on their limited scope and perception of what is needed. To some degree, the parents seem to understand their role in collaboration as ensuring the completion of their children's homework. However, parents can do much more. These parents have significant knowledge, skills and abilities that can be used to scaffold and supplement the literacy learning of their children. The teachers, on the other hand, seem to lack insight into these parents' funds of knowledge due to

limited time and communication with the parents. This is understandable, considering the dynamics and demands of overcrowded classrooms. Thus, the funds of knowledge approach whereby teachers visit households could be impractical and unattainable for both the teachers and the parents. The fundamental principles of the funds of knowledge approach (depicted in the Figure 14) are applicable and would be significantly useful and beneficial for the teachers, the parents and the children. However, the application and process of this approach might have to be revised and adapted to accommodate the teachers and the parents in the South African context.

Chapter 7

Recommendations and conclusions

This study aimed to explore the various funds of knowledge that parents from a lower SES possess, and how these funds of knowledge influence the literacy development of their children, and the ways in which these parents and the school collaborate in utilising these funds of knowledge to enhance literacy learning. This chapter discusses the ways in which each research question has been addressed and what the concluding findings are. It also explains the various limitations of the study and provides suggestions for practice and for further research.

7.1. Addressing the research questions

1. *What funds of knowledge do parents from a lower middle-class SES possess that could shape the literacy of their children?*

As suggested by Moll *et al.* (1992), it is evident that the SES of these parents has not negatively influenced their acquisition of multiple knowledge, skills and abilities. Despite the fact that many of these families may face a precarious socio-economic reality, and experience challenges regarding their educational levels, employment opportunities and financial circumstances, it is evident that they possess numerous cognitive, cultural and social resources that could potentially be utilised to enhance the literacy development of their children.

2. *How do these funds of knowledge shape the literacy of their children?*

Through observing and participating in various literacy-related activities, children develop an understanding and appreciation for the functions and importance of literacy. They are further exposed to the conventions of reading and writing, and learn to interpret oral and written texts. While children are automatically exposed to various forms of texts and literacies in their environments and through observation of their parents, the learning that occurs is limited. Parents therefore play a crucial role in

mediating this exposure and resources to their children to supplement this learning. As parents optimally use their funds of knowledge to engage in literacy-related activities with their children and actively mediate these resources to them, their literacy learning is enhanced.

While there are various literacy-related activities that the participants engage in with their children, there seems to be a lack of transmission of the parents' funds of knowledge to their children. Although the parents have abundant knowledge, skills and abilities accumulated through their life experiences and interactions, they do not use these inherent resources optimally. The parents seem oblivious of the inherent resources they possess and therefore do not optimally use them. They undervalue the funds of knowledge they possess and seem unaware of the value these funds of knowledge could contribute to the literacy development of their children. Thus, the problem is not possessing enough knowledge, skills and abilities, but rather a lack of recognition, appreciation and use of these resources amongst the parents themselves.

This lack of mediation and use of resources is augmented by the employment and financial circumstances of the parents, as they do not have enough time to engage optimally in activities with their children. This lack of transferred knowledge and skills may also be due to a limited understanding of the value and importance of these activities and how they could assist in the literacy development of their children.

In summary, the participants possess multiple funds of knowledge that could potentially enhance the literacy development of their children. However, due to circumstances, there seems to be little mediation and transmission of these cognitive, cultural and social resources.

3. *How do parents and teachers collaborate in using these funds of knowledge to enhance learners' literacy?*

According to the parents in this study, the teachers and the parents seem to have good intentions and attempt to invest in the literacy learning of the children. However, there is no real indication that either of these parties utilise the parents' funds of knowledge. There seems to be a lack of recognition and insight into the potential knowledge, skills

and abilities of these parents and the ways in which these funds of knowledge may be significantly useful in the literacy development of the children. In instances where the parents do not initiate conversation with the teachers, they could appear to be passive and not interested in their children's schooling. However, this might not be a reflection of a lack of interest, but rather the ramifications of their socio-economic circumstances. As mentioned, these families face challenges of time and capacity, impeding regular communication with the teachers or engagement in literacy-related activities. In addition, one needs to take into consideration the constraints placed on the teachers as they encounter challenges related to overcrowded classrooms and heavy workloads. This could affect their collaboration with the parents and prevent them from understanding the cultural, cognitive and social resources they have to offer. While the funds of knowledge approach presents several benefits for teachers, parents and learners, the application and process of this approach needs to be adapted to accommodate teachers and households in the South African context.

7.2. Recommendations for practice

As indicated, the existing policy (the Parent-School-Community Engagement Framework of 2016) encourages schools to support and equip parents through communication and the provision of various workshops. However, consideration rather should be given to the resources that these families already possess. These families already are capable and possess valuable resources for learning. Instead of trying to 'educate' and equip parents, schools should attempt to manage the resources that these families already possess. The workshops should rather be used as opportunities for parents and teachers to collaborate and share insights from different perspectives. In this way, teachers and parents truly become equal partners (as intended by the Framework) and one party is not considered more informed or capable than the other. Collaboration requires mutual investment from both parties, and an amalgamation of different insights, perspectives and resources.

In addition, it would be beneficial for teachers and parents to be presented with a broader perspective on collaboration and on the value of parents' funds of knowledge. Parents with a lower SES should be viewed as bearers of valuable knowledge and considered key role players in the literacy development of their children. Parents

should not be excluded from collaboration, based on their education, access to resources or available time, but should rather be recognised and appreciated for the resources they accumulate through their culture, routine, lifestyle and community. Attention and recognition should be given to the ways in which parents can use these funds to enhance the literacy development of their children.

Furthermore, parents should be presented with a new perspective on the importance of their own roles and how their existing funds of knowledge can be used to ensure optimal literacy development at home. Parents should be encouraged to be valuable contributors to the literacy development of their children, in collaboration with the school. Parents need a new understanding of how they can assist their children, for example, by not only reading to them or assisting them with homework, but also through singing songs, having conversations with their children, engaging with the community, and so forth. Perhaps if parents' funds of knowledge are acknowledged and appreciated as valuable resources by teachers, parents would be encouraged to utilise their existing funds more efficiently and effectively. As Tatto *et al.* (2010) suggest, parents tend to feel more capable and equipped to engage academically with their children and develop positive attitudes towards the school when teachers include them. Perhaps collaboration involves an understanding from the teachers that parents have funds of knowledge that can contribute to and enhance the literacy of their children.

I suggest that a broader perspective and understanding of collaboration needs to be adopted. As Hornby and Lafaele (2011) have suggested, collaboration should not only focus on the ways in which parents can support teachers. Rather, collaboration could be understood more loosely as a mutual understanding between parents and teachers – thus, to reach an agreement about the roles of the teacher and that of the parents and how these responsibilities complement one another to achieve optimal learning.

7.3. Suggestions for further research

As indicated, this study was limited to the perceptions parents have of their own funds of knowledge and of collaboration with the school and its teachers. Thus, further research should explore the perceptions teachers have of parents and their funds of

knowledge. Insight is needed into teachers' experiences and perspectives regarding collaboration with parents and how parents' knowledge, skills and abilities can be utilised to enhance literacy learning.

In addition, further research should be done to explore innovative ways of applying the funds of knowledge approach within the South African context. Teachers may not practically have the time or capacity to engage in household visits to understand and gain insight into the lifestyles and funds of knowledge of parents. An alternative to gaining this understanding and developing these relationships of mutual trust between teachers and parents needs to be explored. The funds of knowledge approach needs to be altered and adapted to suit the demands and nature of the South African schooling system.

The funds of knowledge of parents can further be explored and investigated by interacting with them in their home environments. Being exposed to their surroundings, communities and lifestyles may positively contribute and enhance a study on parents' funds of knowledge.

7.4. Conclusion

This study of collaboration between parents and the school by utilising parents' funds of knowledge to enhance literacy development has shown that lower middle-class parents accumulate valuable knowledge, skills and abilities that could contribute to the literacy development of their children. Although they possess these resources, there seems to be a lack of recognition and appreciation of these funds of knowledge amongst teachers and the parents themselves. In addition, due to a number of reasons, both parents and teachers lack the time and capacity to develop partnerships and relationships of trust. Hence, the funds of knowledge approach cannot be implemented with ease in the South African schooling system and might need to be adapted to accommodate parents and teachers.

References

Anderson-Butcher, D., Lawson, H, A., Lachini, A., Flaspohler, P., Bean, J., Wade-Mdivanian, R. 2010. Emergent evidence in support of a community collaboration model for school improvement. *Children and schools,* 32(3), 160-171.

Anderson, S.A. 2000. How Parental Involvement Makes a Difference in Reading Achievement. *Reading Achievement*, 27(2), 61-86.

Archer, L., Hutchings, M. & Ross, A., 2003. *Higher education and social class: Issues of exclusion and inclusion.* London: RoutledgeFalmer.

Arias, M.B. & Morillo-Campbell, M. 2008. Promoting ELL parental involvement: Challenges in contested times. Arizona University: Education and the Public Interest Center.

Atieno, O.P. 2009. An analysis of the strengths and limitation of qualitative and quantitative research paradigms. *Problems of education*, 13, 13-18.

Barton, A.C. & Tan, E. 2009. Funds of knowledge and discourses and hybrid space. *Journal of research in science teaching*, 6(1), 50-73.

Chung, L., Marvin, C. & Churchill, S. 2005. Teacher factors associated with pre-school teacher-child relationships: teacher efficacy and parent-teacher relationship. *Journal of early childhood teacher education,* 25(2), 131-142.

Cohen, L., Manion, L. & Morrison, K. 2007. research methods in education. 6th ed. London & New York: Routledge.

Cox, D.D. 2005. Evidence-based interventions using home-school collaboration. *School psychology quarterly,* 20(4), 473-497.

Creswell, J., Hanson, W.E., Clark Plano, V.L. & Morales, A. 2007. Qualitative research designs: selection and implementation. *The counselling psychologist*, 35, 236-264.

Crozier, G. & Reay, D. 2005. Activating participation: Parents and teachers working towards partnership. London: Trentham Book.

Dearing, E., Kreider, H., Simpkins, S. & Weiss, H.B. 2006. Family involvement in school and low-income children's literacy: Longitudinal associations between and within families*. Journal of educational psychology*, 98(4), 653-664.

Dempsey, N., Bramley, G., Power, S. & Brown, C. 2009. The social dimension of sustainable development: Defining urban social sustainability. *Sustainable development,* 19(5), 289-300.

Deslandes, R. 2006. Designing and implementing school, family and community collaboration programs in Quebec, Canada. *The school community journal,* 16(1), 81-106.

Esteban-Guitart, M. & Moll, L.C. 2014. Funds of identity: A new concept based on the funds of knowledge approach. *Culture & Psychology*, 20(1), 31-48.

Fataar, A. 2012. Pedagogical justice and student engagement in South African schooling: Working with the cultural capital of disadvantaged students. *Perspectives in education,* 30(4), 52-63.

Feilzer, M.Y. 2010. Doing mixed methods research pragmatically: Implications for the rediscovery of pragmatism as a research paradigm. *Journal of mixed methods research*, 4(1), 6-16.

Goddard, Y.L. & Goddard, R.D. 2007. A Theoretical and Empirical Investigation of Teacher Collaboration for School Improvement and Student Achievement in Public Elementary Schools. *Teachers College Record,* 109(4), 877-896.

Hall, R. & Giese, S. 2009. Addressing quality through school fees and school funding. *South African child gauge*, 35-40.

Hedges, H. 2012. Teachers' funds of knowledge: A challenge to evidence-based practice. *Teachers and teaching: Theory and practice,* 18, 7-24.

Hill, N.E. & Tyson, D.F. 2009. Parental involvement in middle school: A meta-analytic assessment of the strategies that promote achievement. *Developmental psychology*, 45(3), 740-763.

Hornby, G. & Lafaele, R., 2011. Barriers to parental involvement in education: an explanatory model. *Educational review,* 63(1), 37-52.

Housing Development Agency. 2013. Merafong Local Municipality: Municipal profile. *[Online]*. Available: http://www.citysolve.co.za/hda/files/pdf/merafong-local-municipality.pdf .

Ivankova, N.V., Creswell, J.W. & Stick, S. 2006. Using mixed methods sequential explanatory design: from theory to practice. *Field Methods*, 18(1): 3-20.

Jeynes, W.H. 2005. A meta-analysis of the relation of parental involvement to urban elementary school student academic achievement. *Urban education*, 403, 237-269.

Justice, L.M. and Pullen, P.C. 2003. Promising interventions for promoting emergent literacy skills: Three evidence-based approaches. *Topics in early childhood special education*, 23(3), 99-113.

Kelliher, F. 2005. Interpretivism and the pursuit of research legitimisation: An integrated approach to single case designs. *The electronic journal of business research methodology*, 3(2), 123-132.

Kochhar-Bryant, C.A. & Heishman, A. 2010. *Effective collaboration for education the whole child*. Thousand Oaks: Cornwin Press.

Llopart, M. & Esteban-Guitart, M. 2018. Funds of knowledge in 21st century societies: Inclusive educational practices for under-represented students: A literature review*. Journal of curriculum studies*, 50(2), 145-161.

Ndou, N. 2012. Challenges Facing School Governing Bodies in the Implementation of Finance Policies in the Vhembe District. University of South Africa.

Neumann, M.M. and Neumann, D.L. 2014. Touch screen tablets and emergent literacy. *Early childhood education journal*, 42, 231-239.

Moje, E.B., Ciechanowski, K.M., Kramer, K., Ellis, L., Carrillo, R. & Collazo, T. 2011. Working toward third space in content area literacy: An examination of everyday funds of knowledge and discourse. *Reading research quarterly*, 39(1), 38-70.

Moll, C., Amanti, C., Neff, D. & Gonzalez, N. 1992. Funds of knowledge for teaching: Using a qualitative approach to connect homes and classrooms. *Theory into practice*, 31(2), 132-141.

Moll, L. 2015. Tapping into the “hidden” home and community resources of students. *Kappa Delta Pi Record,* 51, 114-117.

Morell, E. 2002. Toward a critical pedagogy of popular culture: Literacy Development among Urban Youth. *Journal of Adolescent and Adult Literacy*, 47(1), 72-77.

Morgan, D.L. 2007. Paradigms lost and pragmatism regained. *Journal of mixed methods research*, 1(1), 48-76.

Morgan, D.L. 2014. Pragmatism as a paradigm for social research. *Qualitative inquiry*, 20(8), 1045-1053.

Murray, E., McFarland-Piazza, L. & Harrison, L., 2014. Changing patterns of parent-teacher communication and parent involvement from pre-school to school. *Early child development and care,* 185(7), 1031-1052.

Myende, P.E. 2013. Sustaining school-community partnerships through effective communication. *Communitas*, 18, 76-94.

Nahapiet, J. & Sumantra, G. 2000. Knowledge and social capital. Boston: Butterworth-Heinemann.

Olsen, W. 2004. Developments in sociology. (ed.) Holborn, H. Ormskirk: Causeway Press.

Perry, K.H. 2012. What is Literacy? A Critical Overview of Sociocultural Perspectives. *Journal of language and literacy education,* 8(1), 50-71.

Risko, V.J. & Walker-Dalhouse, D. 2007. Tapping students' cultural funds of knowledge to address the achievement gap. *The reading teacher*, 61(1), 98-100.

Roopnarain, C. 2017. Quintile system outdated, useless. PressReader. *[Online]*. Available: https://www.pressreader.com/south-africa/post/20170517/28162900199327

Seekings, J. 2004. Trade unions, social policy and the political economy of class compromise in post-apartheid South Africa. *Review of African political economy*, 31(100), 299-312.

Senechal, M. & LeFevre, J. 2002. Parental Involvement in the Development of Children's Reading Skill: A Five-Year Longitudinal Study. *Child development*, 73 (2), 445-460.

Sénéchal, M. 2006. Testing the Home Literacy Model: Parent Involvement in Kindergarten Is Differentially Related to Grade 4 Reading Comprehension, Fluency, Spelling, and Reading for Pleasure. *Scientific studies of reading*, 10(1), 59-87.

Shannon-Baker, P. 2016. Making paradigms meaningful in mixed methods research. *Journal of mixed methods research*, 10(4), 319-334.

Smith, J., Wohlstetter, P., Kuzin, C.A. & De Pedro, K. 2011. Parent involvement in urban charter schools: New Strategies for increasing participation. *The school community journal*, 21(1), 71-94.

South Africa. National Education Collaboration Trust. 2016. *School-Parent-Community Engagement Framework.*

Southall, R., 2016. *The new black middle class in South Africa.* Johannesburg: James Currey.

Spaull, N. 2017. The unfolding reading crisis: The new PIRLS 2016 results. *[Online].* Available: *https://nicspaull.com/2017/12/05/the-unfolding-reading-crisis-the-new-pirls-2016-results/*. [Accessed on 16 September 2018].

Tatto, M.T. *et al*. 2001. The challenges and tensions in restructuring teacher-parent relations in the context of school reform: A case study. *Teachers and teaching: Theory and practice,* 7(3), 315-333.

Tuli, F. 2010. The basis of distinction between quantitative and qualitative research in social science: Reflection on ontological, epistemological and methodological perspectives. *Ethiopian Journal of Education and Sciences*, 6(1), 97-108.

Van Staden, S. & Bosker, R. 2014. Factors that affect South African Reading Literacy Achievement: evidence from prePIRLS 2011. *South African Journal of Education*, 34(3), 1-9.

Wanat, C.L. 2010. Challenges balancing collaboration and independence in home-school relationships: Analysis of parents' perception in one district. *The school journal*, 20(1), 159-186.

Webster, A. 2006. Keeping the word: on orality and literacy (With a sideways glance at Navajo). *Oral Tradition*, 21(2), 295-324.

WorldBankGroup, 2018. *World Development Report: Learning to realise education's promise,* Washington, DC: World Bank Publications.

Yosso, T.J. 2005. Whose culture has capital? A critical race theory discussion of community cultural wealth. *Race Ethnicity and Education*, 8(1), 69-91.

Zentella, A.C. 2005. *Building on Strength: Language and Literacy in Latino families and communities*. New York: Teachers College Press.

Zipin, L. 2009. Dark funds of knowledge, deep funds of pedagogy: Exploring boundaries between lifeworlds and schools. *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education,* 30, 317-331.

Appendix A

Invitation letter to participants

Dear Parent,

I am a Master's student at the University of Pretoria and over the next few weeks, I will be doing research in this school. The purpose of this letter is to give you information about my study, and to find out whether you would be willing to be a part of this study.

The purpose of this study is to find out what knowledge, skills and abilities parents have that could improve the literacy of their children. This study also aims to find ways in which teachers and parents can work together by using parents' existing knowledge, culture and lifestyles to improve the literacy performance of foundation phase learners.

If you agree to participate in this study, you would be asked to participate in an individual interview of about 50 minutes. According to strict university policy, the information you share with me in the interview will **not be shared with the teachers or any other parents of the school** to respect your privacy and to ensure your protection. Your name will also not be mentioned throughout the research process.

Your participation in this study is completely optional and you will under no circumstance be pressured to participate. You will also have the freedom to withdraw from the study at any point if you wish to do so.

It would be a privilege to have your participation in this study and to hear about you and your family. If you are willing and agree to participate in this study, please complete the attached form. If you have any further questions or concerns, do not hesitate to contact me or my supervisor using the details below.
tanyaleegreenhalgh@gmail.com or talita.calitz@up.ac.za

Yours sincerely,
Tanya Greenhalgh

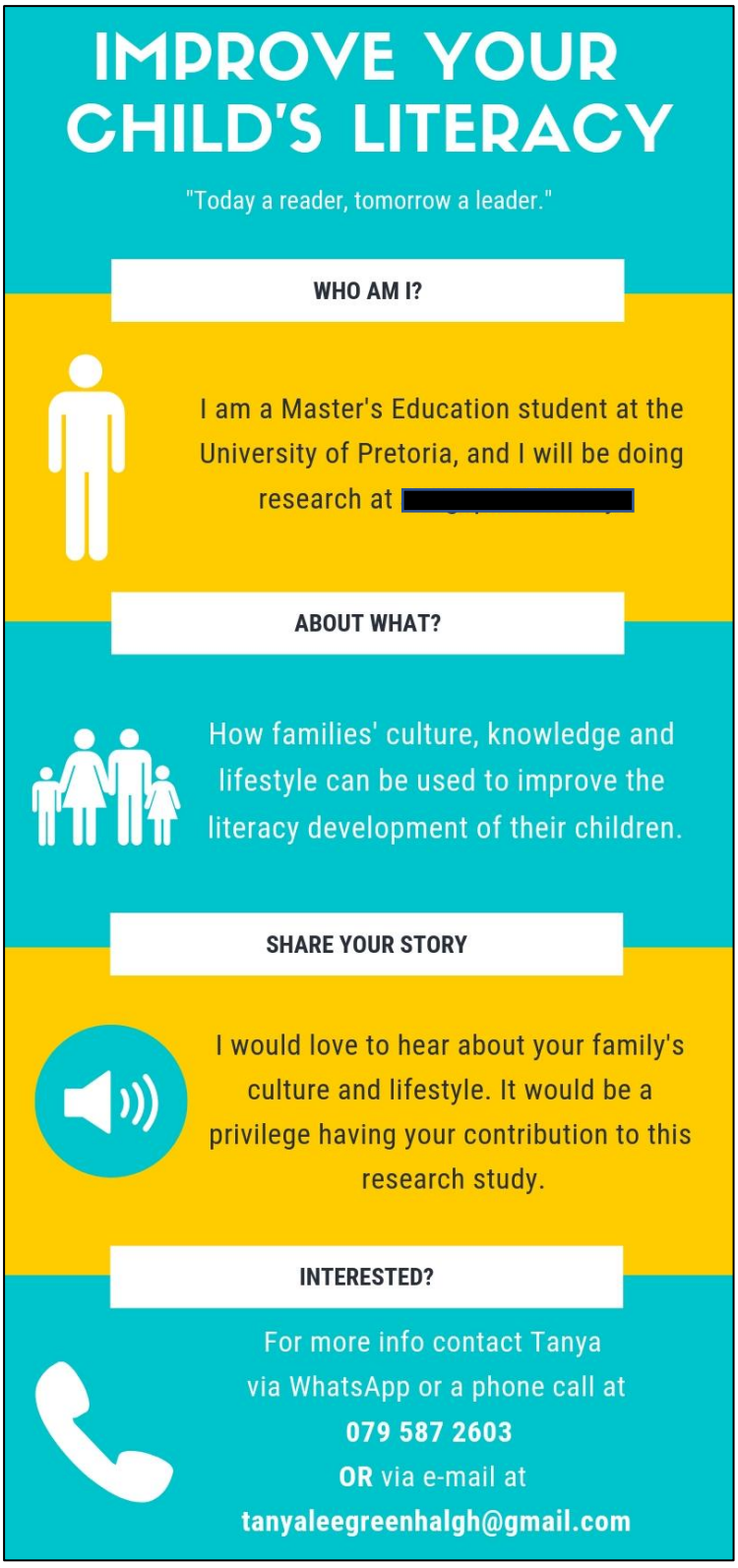
If you are willing to participate in an individual interview with me, please fill in this form and return it to your child's class teacher in the sealed envelope. I will then contact you to arrange a time, date and place that best suites you.

Your name:	
Your child's name:	
Grade of your child:	
Will you be available sometime during this school holiday (15 March – 30 March)?	Yes/ No
Is there another time, after the holiday, that you will be available? If so, please state the date(s) that you are available.	
Contact number:	

Thank you so much for your willingness to participate. I look forward to meeting you.

Appendix B

Recruitment flyer



Appendix C

Consent form

I,_____(your name), parent of _____in grade _____ agree to participate in this study with Tanya Greenhalgh. The topic of the research being: **Parent-school collaboration: utilising parents' funds of knowledge to enhance literacy amongst foundation phase learners.**

- I understand that I will voluntarily participate in an interview of approximately 40-50 minutes at the school, or an alternative venue as arranged by myself and the researcher.

I understand that the researcher subscribes to the principles of:

- *Voluntary participation* in research, implying that the participants might withdraw from the research at any time.
- *Informed consent*, meaning that research participants must at all times be fully informed about the research process and purposes, and must give consent to their participation in the research.
- *Safety in participation*; put differently, that the human respondents should not be placed at risk or harm of any kind, e.g. research with young children.
- *Privacy*, meaning that the *confidentiality* and *anonymity* of human respondents should be protected at all times.
- *Trust*, which implies that human respondents will not be respondent to any acts of deception or betrayal in the research process or its published outcomes.

Signature:_____ Date:_____

Appendix D

The parent interview schedule

As this is a semi-structured schedule, these questions therefore provide a guideline for interviews and were not strictly followed.

NO.	QUESTION
	Demographic information
1.	Can you tell me a little bit about your family?
2.	Can you tell me a little bit about your child?
3.	Where do you currently live?
	Cultural funds of knowledge
4.	What is the language that you and your household speak most often?
5.	How proficient is your household in the English language?
6.	What religious practices, if any, do you and your family participate in?
7.	Does your family have any particular cultural practices?
2.	Do you share stories with your children about your family?
9.	How regularly, if at all, do you or any other family member read books or tell stories to your child?
10.	Do you listen to music at home?
11.	How regularly does your child read or simply page through any form of reading materials such as magazines, newspapers, books, pamphlets and so forth.
12.	What do you and your family do in your free time?
13.	What does your typical family routine look like during the week?
	Cognitive funds of knowledge
14.	What is your highest level of education?
15.	Are you currently employed?
16.	Do you feel comfortable working with a computer?
17.	Are there any other specific practical skills that you have?
	Social funds of knowledge

18.	How does your child get to school?
19.	In what ways does your child regularly observe/participate in your daily activities?
20.	How regularly does your child observe or participation in adult conversation?
	Parent-school collaboration
21.	How regularly do you and your child's teacher communicate on any platform?
22.	When you and your child's teacher communicate, what is it usually about?
23.	In what ways, if at all, do you or any other family member assist your child with his/her homework?
24.	What expectations do you have of your child's teacher?
25.	How do you understand your role as the parent in your child's learning?
26.	To what extent, if at all, does your child's teacher provide opportunities for you to be involved in your child's learning at home or at school?
27.	Do you feel supported by your child's teacher?
28.	To what extent do you think your child's teacher has knowledge/ understanding of your family's lifestyle and culture?
29.	Are there any particular challenges you experience in communicating or collaborating with the school, or your child's teachers?
30.	What aspirations do you have for your child?
	General
31.	Is there anything else you would like to share about your family or the school?