

Agnes's literacy learning. She said "Agnes is a fluent reader but she didn't always understand what she reads. She is confused with vowel sounds". She also experienced some difficulty with standardized tests. Her reading accuracy score on the Neale Analysis Reading Ability was approximately two years below her chronological age. Her comprehension score on this test was about one year below that expected for her age. Her overall score on the Stanford Diagnostic Reading Test was below the class average.

The reason for the discrepancy between her results on the standardized tests and the teacher's evaluation may be found in the following explanation. Ms F prepared her class very thoroughly for most reading exercises. She acknowledged the varying home experiences of the children in her class. Before the children read she engaged in extended oral discussion and supplied them with extensive background information. When they encountered the text all the children knew a great deal about the topic. The children were assigned ratings largely on material that had been carefully prepared by Ms F. On the other hand Agnes wasn't specifically prepared for the standardized tests and performed very poorly on these. She had no background information and specific training on these tasks.

Agnes's behaviour also indicated that she was experiencing some difficulties. She looked confused during verbal explanations. She didn't ask questions or make any verbal display of knowledge. She couldn't answer questions that were directly addressed to her. Agnes had no exposure at home to conversations which developed the typical cycle of getting attention, asking questions, providing an answer and giving feedback. She was therefore unfamiliar with the most common pattern of verbal interaction in the classroom.

Although the first goal in the Junior Primary phase of schooling was on becoming technically proficient in reading and writing, there was also an emphasis on comprehension. The children were given numerous listening comprehension tasks to complete. The level of difficulty that these tasks was very different for children with different home experiences. It was previously discussed how thoroughly the teacher prepared her class for listening comprehension exercises by discussing both the genre and the relevant background information before she read the story. One story which was prepared in this way was a folk-tale set in Mexico.

Most of the group of five Grade Two children in the study, had no difficulty with the listening comprehension exercises. In the example given above, the preparation for the story supplied by Ms F was unnecessary for Michael. He was familiar with the folk tale genre from work Ms F had completed earlier that year. He knew as much as she told the class about Mexico from home experiences. Lindiwe, Nina and Ephraim were also familiar with the folk tale genre. Some of the information supplied to them about Mexico was new to them, but they were able to incorporate the information into their existing schema and use it to help them understand the story. Agnes could not understand the explanation about Mexico supplied by Ms F. A subsequent conversation with her revealed that she did not have any concept of defined countries with unique practices and customs. Agnes found it difficult to complete this exercise. For the children who had numerous home experiences with decontextualized knowledge and various literary forms, this was a much easier task than it was for Agnes, who had almost no home experience of this nature.

A further explanation for the varying performance of the children may be found in the direct assistance offered by their parents with their schoolwork which will be discussed in the next section.

6.2.1.2 The Senior Primary Phase

In the Senior Primary phase children are expected to have reached a high level of competence in the technicalities of reading. With the introduction of specific content subjects they are expected to read to learn. The content of the oral and written material that children have to deal with in the classroom becomes increasingly abstract and decontextualized. As discussed previously certain literacy practices followed in middle-class families are associated with long-term success at school. Storybook reading and the discussion around the text exposes the children to the form and content of classroom conversation. These book readings provide opportunities for the children to display their knowledge, an important element of classroom interaction. Children can discuss the story and respond to a variety of questions posed by the reader. Conversations around literacy events, including storybook reading, are more abstract and decontextualized than everyday talk.

Joshua and Taryn's families adopted these typical middle-class practices. Their parents were highly literate. Apart from practical and leisure reading and news-related reading, reading and writing were aspects of their jobs. Print was regarded as the

most significant way of getting new information. Parental modelling of literacy was extensive. Decontextualized conversations occurred, frequently stimulated by literacy events such as newspaper reading and other literacy events. Picture-book reading and storybook occurred and this was accompanied by the patterns of conversation discussed in sections 1.2.3.7 and 1.2.3.8. Diketso's guardians also adopted these practices but she was also influenced by the practices adopted by her grandmother.

Joshua and Taryn were among the top achievers in their year group. However Lisa also achieved very good results. Lisa's parents did not follow middle-class literacy practices. Lisa's mother engaged in practical and leisure reading but she had no interest in reading to acquire new knowledge and reading and writing were not important dimensions of her job. Lisa's father had to write up student's notes for the computer course that he taught and read what he needed to for practical purposes but other than that he did not read or write. Storybook reading was sporadic and the parents did not discuss events or ideas which were not linked with their immediate experience unless it was required for schoolwork.

Thus Joshua and Taryn, whose parents followed middle-class behaviours achieved as predicted by the literature. On the other hand Lisa and Diketso deviated from the expected pattern. In spite of the fact that Diketso was exposed extensively to typical middle-class practices, she only achieved average results. Lisa on the other hand was not exposed to middle-class literacy practices and values and her results were on a par with that of Joshua and Taryn. Thus this was not the only set of factors which affected school achievement. In Diketso's case, school achievement was affected by identity issues which will be discussed in the next chapter. Lisa's results may have been affected by the assistance she received at home.

6.2.2 Home Assistance and School Achievement

The relationship between the nature of assistance with schoolwork and school achievement was very direct. Children who received indirect assistance achieved above average results. With the exception of Lisa, who achieved above average results, children who received direct assistance achieved average results. Children who achieved limited assistance achieved below average results. The explanation for this may be found in the work of Vygotsky and Scribner and Cole.

Vygotsky (1962) places mediation at the centre of the development of systematic

thinking. Cognitive development depends on the social interaction between the child and his teacher or peers who function as teachers. During this interaction children learn scientific concepts which are organized into a set of systematic, organized relations. They are acquired when a mediator deliberately imparts knowledge to the child. For Vygotsky they develop as a result of classroom instruction. On the other hand spontaneous concepts are formed out of personal, everyday experience.

In this study many of the parents functioned as teachers at home. The style of assistance offered by the group of parents giving their children direct help was very similar to the teaching that occurred in the classroom. In fact three of the five parents in this group were school teachers. Thus these children had the benefit of direct one-on-one mediation which was congruent in form and content to that received at school for a few hours each day. In Michael's case nearly all his interaction with his mother took this form. An attempt was made by his mother to systematize all his everyday experiences.

Vygotsky (in Tulviste, 1991) generated two hypotheses concerning the factors that transform thinking in school. The first factor is the transforming effect of becoming literate. The second factor is presented by implication. He connects changes in the structure of thinking to the specific content of what is taught.

As discussed previously, research conducted by Vygotsky and Luria in Central Asia supported his theory of the significance of literacy in the development of systematic and abstract thought. Luria observed that traditional, illiterate, non-technological people responded to deductive reasoning problems on purely concrete and situational thinking. They found that in people who had been exposed to some schooling, direct graphical-functional thinking was replaced by at least the rudiments of theoretical thinking. Thinking became more abstract and free from immediate experience.

Thus Vygotsky and Luria proposed that major differences exist between literate and non-literate subjects in the uses of abstract reasoning processes. However in the Vygotsky/Luria study it was unclear whether the results were caused by literacy, by schooling (Wertsch, 1985). A series of studies conducted in the late sixties and seventies by Cole and his associates served to separate the confounding effects of schooling and literacy. They undertook replications of the experimental procedures followed by Vygotsky and Luria amongst the Vai in Liberia (Scribner and Cole 1981,

Cole 1988).

Scribner and Cole (1981) found that among the Vai, literacy and schooling were not always contiguous. They found that three different literacies operated among the Vai only one of which was school-linked. They replicated to a remarkable degree Luria's observations on syllogistic reasoning and classification. However these changes in thinking were only associated with the school-linked literacy. Their results indicated that literacy in itself did not in changes in thinking. Only school-based literacy was associated with the changes in thinking required on these tasks.

Furthermore they found that seemingly minor variations in content or procedures in many cognitive tasks could lead to substantial qualitative and quantitative differences in performance. Superior performance of educated people depended strongly on particular content and procedures. This is in accordance with Vygotsky's (In Tulviste, 1991) second hypothesis about the origin of scientific concepts. Thinking changes in the course of schooling because school children master specific knowledge and methods of solving problems. Thus the claims for substantial and universal skills and global changes in thinking resulting from literacy in itself was brought into question. Rather, it seems that specific procedures and knowledge that is imparted during formal schooling results in changes in cognition.

These findings have implications for the school performance of the children who receive direct assistance with their schoolwork. With the exception of Michael, none of the families in the group of parents who supplied direct assistance with schoolwork adopted typical middle-class literacy practices. The parents did however, provide their children with extensive, organized individual exposure to the school curriculum at home. This intensive practice helped the children to master the specific knowledge and methods required at school and strengthened schemas. According to Scribner and Cole (1981), this input would produce specific, distinctive changes in thinking which are not transferable to other situations.

The limitations of direct assistance

Families who give their children direct assistance focus very narrowly on the school curriculum. This form of assistance will result in success at school provided the children are evaluated very narrowly and directly on the syllabus. Increasingly, however the children will be presented with questions that require them to apply and

to draw inferences from their knowledge. Children who do not have a broader knowledge base to draw on may be less able to cope with their school work under these circumstances.

An examination of the Standard Three results which were collected after the main data collection phase of this study was concluded, indicated that this is the case. Lisa's results started declining relative to the other top students in her group. For example her overall average has dropped to 74% while Joshua and Taryn were still maintaining an average of over 80%.

A further limitation of this mode of assistance lies in the fact that the parents took the responsibility for organizing and planning their children's work. Planning and organization are essential elements of systematic thinking. Although these children were given sustained assistance with the specific content they do not have an opportunity to develop these important metacognitive skills. The process of taking increasing self-responsibility for learning was consequently stunted. Macdonald, (submitted for publication) has discussed another difficulty associated with "other-regulation" as opposed to "self-regulation". Other-regulated children will learn skills, but they may not take ownership of them.

Chapter 7

IDENTITY

7.1 Congruency in Value Expectations

One of the stated values of the school was the "recognition of the rich diversity of cultures and religions" (School Policy statement). It will be recalled from Chapter Three there are many instances in the broader life of the school where "the rich diversity of cultures and languages" were recognized. The staff respected the values, beliefs and norms of the different cultural groups at the school. Nevertheless the values and practices at the school where this study was conducted to a large extent still reflect those of the formerly white-only schools.

Ferdman (1990) has explored how a person's identity as a member of a ethnocultural group is intertwined with the meaning and consequences of becoming literate. Each of us maintains an image of the behaviours, beliefs, values and norms of culture to which we belong. Ferdman (1990) defines this as a person's cultural identity. For the white parents in the group the literacy practices confirmed their cultural identity. They experienced the same system when they were at school and they engaged in home literacy practices which made their children's school learning easier. For both the parents and children the school literacy practices affirmed their identity.

All the parents in the group that I saw, both black and white, supported the educational goals of the school. For the white parents this support did not come at the expense of loss of any identity. The literacy practices that were followed at the school were practices to which they were exposed when they were at school themselves and affirmed their identity. As far as the black parent were concerned, some stated their explicit support of the school but they did not adopt the literacy practices which are typical of the mainstream families in the school. Ferdman (1990) has argued that particular literacy behaviours that affirm the individual's sense of cultural identity will be acquired more easily and with more personal involvement than those that serve to deny or devalue his cultural identity. It is possible that the practices that have not been assimilated did not serve to affirm some of the black families identities and hence were not easily adopted. Acceptance of these practices would occur at the expense of their own implicit understanding of the meaning of literacy and would have involved a loss of identity.

Agnes, Thandi and Ephraim's mothers had not integrated with the school. They had not formed friendships with the other parents at the school and did not interact with the other parents at the school. In their home lives the charismatic churches to which they belonged formed the centre of their social lives and was the pivotal point around which their identity was structured. Their extended families and friends all belonged to the church and the church defined their values. The central significance of reading was that it enabled them to read the Bible and other Christian literature.

Christianity and education was also linked with the value of *ubuntu*. The importance of sharing was stated explicitly several times on each visit to these homes. On one occasion I had already eaten and did not want to join Thandi's family for their evening meal. They stated that they could not eat if I did not join them. They said they did not had much but they shared whatever they had. For Ephraim's mother, sharing was part of her definition of an educated person. She said, "A well-educated person is person who is in a position to help other people and to share".

Bruner (in Tulviste, 1991) believes that value orientations are one of two factors that significantly affect thinking, the other being language and it's use. For Bruner the most significant value is collective versus individualistic orientation. The collectivist orientation is associated with traditional values and individualistic values are associated with modern values. According to Bruner it is generally accepted that a collectivist orientation accompanies an individual's lack of power over the outside world. The cognitive consequences of the sense of a lack of power is the individual's consciousness of self is weaker. He is less able to separate himself from others and from the physical world. One of the consequences of this inability to separate self from physical world is that words had nominal realism. Things are not separated from words. Words are not symbols, they are not things that occur in a person's head. Schooling on the other hand results in individualization. A change in thinking occurs at school, resulting in the separation of words and their symbols and the overcoming of nominal realism. This results in the development of self-consciousness in Bruner's terms. In Western child-rearing practices this process may begin even before schooling begins.

As opposed to the people Bruner investigated, the parents under discussion all had some schooling and did not show the lack of self-consciousness or nominal realism that Bruner claimed. They did however show some traditional values in that they reflected a communalistic orientation. Whereas Ephraim's family was coping, the other

families, namely Thandi and Agnes's parents, were not fully integrated with the school as previously discussed and also showed a lack of power over the outside world. They were passive about finding assistance for their children and delegated to the school the responsibility for addressing the learning difficulties experienced by their children.

This non-assertiveness was also observed in their own children at school. The value orientation which the children had learnt at home was carried over to the school and negatively affected their school performance. In the classroom, the teachers expected children to indicate their needs by asking questions, whereas Thandi and Agnes remained passive, seemingly expecting delivery of knowledge. This mismatch between the expectations of the school and those of the children and their parents revealed a lack of congruence in basic value orientations associated with the educational process.

Although Ephraim's mother's value expectations relating to education were very similar to that of Thandi and Agnes's mother, there were also some significant differences in the family dynamics. Firstly, his older sisters had been to the school for a number of years and shifts had occurred in their literacy practices as well as in their friendship patterns. The girls didn't have many friends in the neighbourhood and the friends they did had also went to suburban schools. They spoke a combination of English and Sotho. Ephraim spoke English and had no friends in his neighbourhood. He said the children "from the streets" used to be his friends but they stopped being his friends when he went to school. He only played with his cousin when he came to visit. He found the township a frightening place and suffered from nightmares. On the other hand his older brother, who had been educated in the townships, associated with other students from the University. He participated in township events, was often not at home and spoke Sotho all the time. He also seemed to resent my presence in the home.

The communalistic orientation also influenced reading practices. Nearly all the reading that Thandi's mother engaged in was public rather than private. Bible reading, for example was conducted in a group. The text was read aloud and the meaning of the text discussed and negotiated by the group. It was also Mrs Z's task to read notices and official letters for the rest of the family for collective discussion and interpretation (such as the reading of the letter on pensions).

Heath (1983) also noted that in the Trackton community that circulars or letters to individuals were read aloud and the meaning then jointly negotiated. In this study these

practices were noted in many families and they were not restricted to any group. The significant issue was the nature of the material, rather than the group of people. The news was frequently read aloud and shared with other family members. Reading for educational purposes, leisure reading and was done privately. Since some groups did not engage in this form of reading, it would seem that they favoured communal reading.

A further caveat however is that the parents of Thandi, Agnes and Ephraim were not attracted to solitary reading. The communalistic orientation of most of the black families might partially account for the popularity of television viewing. Television viewing was communal and public.

These families' values were not reflected in the school's own value expectations. Although each day started with a religious event, it was not a pervasive value at the school, but rather a matter of form, duty and respect. Moreover the religious teaching was not specifically Christian since one of the more significant school values was to embrace religious and cultural diversity. Although the children were encouraged to be charitable and considerate of others, the predominant value was individual achievement and personal responsibility for that achievement.

7.2 A Cultural Transition

While Thandi, Agnes and Ephraim's mother maintained their identity, Lindiwe's mother was in a transitional position. In her case her identity was changing and this was accompanied with changes in literacy practices. Mrs SM initiated literacy practices which were not part of her own childhood. Some rituals and routines conserved family traditions, while some changed the patterns of the past. These practices have been discussed in some detail in previous chapters. For example Mrs SM started storybook reading with her children on the advice of her son's speech therapist. Some of the other black parents were also given this advice but they did not follow it because it did not form an intrinsic part of their identity and they did not internalize its value. However for Mrs SM it formed part of the new identity she was creating and was therefore adopted readily.

This transition was accompanied by conflict which was not expressed as a conflict between the school and parents, or the school and the children but rather between the children and their parents. Mr LM, Lindiwe's father was deeply concerned that the children were losing their cultural identity and turning their back on their tradition.

Areas of conflict included language, relationships with the extended family and the children's interests. He had tried to establish a ruling in his home that the children only speak Zulu on Saturdays. Mrs SM explained that they spoke Zulu very badly. Their domestic helper spoke Sotho and a poor combination of Zulu and So. When they used the vernacular. She stated that for her, as opposed to Lindiwe's father, the fact that the children preferred to speak English and had greater mastery of this language was not a major issue.

Lindiwe's father was concerned that the children did not interact easily with the extended family, such as when Lindiwe refused to stay with her grandmother overnight. Mr LM explained how upsetting this was because the tradition was for children to stay permanently or for long periods of time with their grandparents. The grandparents were very upset that their grandchild did not even want to spend a night with them. Mr LM broadened the discussion to include the whole South African society in the loss of an African identity. He said that even in the post-apartheid South Africa this was the trend and mentioned beauty contests as an example. Although the winners of these contests were black, they had the features that conformed to white ideals of beauty.

Mrs SM was amused by LM's viewpoint. She pointed to her hair and told me that Mr LM disapproved of the fact that she straightened her hair. She also informed me that she did not see this as a loss of her black identity. She believed there was a new culture developing which was a combination of Eurocentric values and interests and African culture and that she identified with this fusion.

Black consciousness was not an important issue for Mrs SM and it would seem that in this she determined the values for the children. She did not enforce Mr LM's rule concerning language and she was instrumental in organising their extra-mural programme which had an Eurocentric orientation (ballet, drama, swimming, computers). The children adopted their mother's stance and were out of step with Mr LM.

Mr LM was faced with conflicting needs. On the one hand he wanted his children to be educated in a system which represented a break from that to which he was exposed. Adopting the literacy practices of the school was seen as a strategy for academic achievement or vertical mobility. On the other hand he wanted his children to maintain traditional values and beliefs. Changing literacy practices produces inevitable changes in values so his quest to change the one without the other was problematic. Lindiwe's

father's views were not unlike that of a high school student in Zola who expressed it as follows, "Education advantages, it gives you the green light. It disadvantages, it makes you forget your tradition" (In Prinsloo, 1996 pg 197).

7.3 A Child in Conflict

In Diketso's case identity conflicts were also an issue. Diketso was not overtly in conflict with the school, her guardians, or her granny but she seemed to be in internal conflict. Diketso lived in a number of different worlds. She lived in Mrs and Mr H's white, middle-class home during the week and some weekends. Mrs H was referred to by Diketso as her "white" mother. She also had a lot of contact with her grandmother who lived on the property during the week. Over some weekends she went with her grandmother to visit friends in the townships. She also had another family and community with which she identified. When she went "home" to Lichtenberg she lived with her extended family who all gathered there at Christmas time.

This raises the question of Diketso's cultural identity, an issue which was of great concern to Mrs H. When I arrived at Diketso's household for the first time Diketso was there with her grandmother. Mrs H was still at work. Diketso greeted me and immediately escorted me around the house without my requesting her to do so. She took me into Mrs H's study where there were a number of family photographs. Diketso proudly showed me the photographs and explained the family relationships to me. She explained these in relation to herself as a member of the family. For example she pointed to Mrs H's brother and said "this is my uncle", to Mrs H's father she said, "this is my grandfather". She showed me pictures of Mr and Mrs H's biological children and said they were her brother and sister who were living in England and Germany.

There is some indication that Diketso experienced some identity confusion. Mrs H was regarded as her white mother but when I observed Diketso in Mrs H's home and during school lessons she was passive and seemed to be depressed. When she joined her friends at break or when she did group work with them she was much more animated. Unlike most of the black children who lived in the suburbs, Diketso didn't have any friends amongst other black or white children who lived in the suburbs, but found her friends amongst the township "taxi" children. She seemed to be much happier with this group. Mrs H told me that Diketso's grandmother had informed her that Diketso was much more lively in Soweto when she played with the children there. Thus she seemed to identify with the township children but part of her "family" was white middle-class.

The contrast between the way Diketso responded to information she received in Mrs H's household, and the township was very marked. Diketso seemed to be remote from the issues discussed in the household and she didn't remember these events. On the other hand she internalized the information she received in the townships. She responded strongly and could talk about a current event that was being discussed in the townships.

Diketso didn't assimilate the literacy practices to which she had ample exposure in Mrs H's home. Diketso had about 100 children's books in her room. Fairy tales, children's classics, fables, contemporary storybooks were all present. These books used to belong to Mrs H's children and were handed down to Diketso. Diketso said she didn't enjoy most of them and hadn't read them. She preferred reading "Sweet Valley" books. She said that Mrs H had read some of the Roald Dahl stories to her and she enjoyed those.

This suggests two questions. First, why did Diketso not adopt the literacy practices which were extensively modelled and encouraged in Mrs H's household? Second, why was Diketso more receptive to information received in the townships than she was to information raised in Mrs H's household?

Ferdman's (1990) assertion that individual's adopt literacy practices which affirm their identity could provide the answer to both these questions. Ferdman specifically made this statement in connection with literacy practices but it could apply equally to information received orally. Information which is of interest to one's cultural group or which affirms one's identity will presumably be assimilated, and remembered with greater ease than information which is not of any interest and which disconfirms one's identity. The fact that she adopted the practices which were typical of the cultural group to which she was born, rather than the one in which she had most exposure, suggests that she identified more readily with the former.

I felt there was a strong affective component in Diketso's choice of identity. Diketso felt the approval of her own family and sensed that Mrs H and Mr H were disappointed in her. In her biological family, which was mainly illiterate, she was regarded as being very well-educated. The family had very high expectations of her, expectations which extended to the whole community in Lichtenberg, including the local chief. They all expected her to become a doctor and come back to the village to serve them in this

capacity.

Mrs H and Mr H had made a commitment to care for Diketso and try to treat her like one of their own children. However, although Mrs H was extremely kind to Diketso I got the impression that she was disappointed in her. She said, for example, "Diketso is an incredibly good child, but I wish she would argue more. I wish she would be more responsive. I wish she would be a bit more rebellious. It's very worrying". She also compared Diketso to her own children. She spoke specifically about Diketso's behaviour on the school tour for the Standard Two group. Mrs H gave Diketso the maximum amount of pocket money the children were permitted to take. Before they left Mrs H told Diketso that they would had to do a project when they came back from the trip. She suggested that Diketso buy some postcards and some other souvenirs which they could use for the project. Diketso spent all her money on sweets. Mrs H thought back on how her children had bought souvenirs, postcards and small gifts back from their tours.

Several weeks after my visits to the H's, the school had an open day. Some of the children's work was on display and included were the best journals that the children had to write about their tour experience. Included in this top selection of journals was Diketso's. Her journal was beautifully written and resplendent with postcards, cotton samples and other interesting little bits and pieces. Mrs H had obviously done a lot of homework.

7.4 Advocacy Role of Parents

In spite of the school's commitment to multi-culturalism, the interests and values of many of the black parents were not represented at the school. The likelihood that they will be in the future are remote. None of the parents whose values were least congruent with the school were participants in the power structures of the school where they could hope to influence the existing practices and values. In the Governing Body survey, many black parents reported difficulties with attending the meetings of the parents' association (held in the evenings), such as lack of transport and problems with babysitters (especially single parents). This was contrasted with the position with the white parents. Four of the five parents had served or were currently serving on the school governing body or other lobby groups. If they were not happy with any aspect of the school practice, they were in a powerful position to promote change.

Taryn's mother was not supportive of the general ideological stance taken by the school, being much more radical than that dictated by the general school ethos. She and a number of like-minded parents started an educational interest group to try and represent their standpoint. With the support of this group she managed to get elected to the governing body of the school. In this capacity she tried to produce the changes which she believed were important. Matters that she had taken issue with included gender, the fact that there was only one black teacher on the staff and assessment procedures. Nina's parents belonged to the same group and they too were concerned with gender issues at the school, such as poor support for girls' cricket.

Michael's father was a member of the governing body of the school. He was concerned with the quality of teaching and lobbied in this regard. Joshua's father was also on the governing body and felt that it was a privilege to work for the school and a privilege for the children to attend the school. He wished to maintain the status quo at the school and played a role in trying to maintain it.

Furthermore these parents all lent practical assistance to the school and in so doing became known to the staff. This too enabled them to represent their children's interest. Most of the black parents did not lend any practical assistance to the school so they did not initiate a closer, less formal relationship with school staff. Many of them lived in the townships which made it difficult to render assistance or they were not aware that this was the expectation of the school. Lindiwe's mother was an exception to the general trend in that she had helped at the school from time to time.

In summary, it is clear that the extent of congruence between home and school literacy practices and values is crucially dependent on the extent to which the parents and the children could affirm their identity and values in relation to the dominant ethos and milieu of the school. The values and practices at the school where this study was conducted to a large extent still reflected those of the formerly white-only schools. The white parents had been educated in very similar school systems and identified with the ethos and practices in the school. For many of the black parents the values of the school conflicted with their central value of *ubuntu* which encompasses communalism and non-assertiveness.

Chapter 8

CONCLUSIONS

This thesis has attempted to explore congruence between home and school literacy practices and the relationship between this congruence and school achievement. Accordingly it examined the school environment and then traced individual children in the domestic environment in an attempt to identify congruence or lack of congruence between these two environments.

Three broad findings emerged from the research which indicate key areas of congruence and non-congruence namely:

- the socio-cultural values operating in the school and home environments;
- the specific educational and literacy practices evident in the home and the school;
- the nature and extent of parental support which emerged from the previous two key areas.

Each of these areas will be discussed by looking at the school and then the home and finally examining the congruence between them. In each case the impact that congruence has on the child's school adjustment and/or achievement will be assessed.

8.1 Congruence in Socio-cultural Values

The official policy of the school was to value and foster the development of a rich diversity of cultures and this policy was implemented by the staff. In the classroom, during extra-mural activities and even while teachers had private conversations in the classroom, there was no indication of discrimination against any child on the basis of group membership. The attitude displayed by the teachers when they weren't acting in their official roles was an indication of real respect. The values, beliefs and norms of the different cultural groups at the school were respected. Although cultural diversity was encouraged in the general ethos of the school, this policy had little impact on teaching and learning in the classroom. Cultural diversity was accepted as long as it did not interfere with the notion of learning. Multiculturalism was recognized to some extent in the classroom in that teachers made minor adaptations in their teaching

methods and nature of their explanations to accommodate different racial and cultural groups. Nevertheless the values and practices which were directly associated with curricular learning, to a large extent still reflected those of the formerly white-only schools.

The fact that the teachers had a predominantly middle-class Western orientation was reflected in many of the practices adopted in the classroom and the values of the teachers. The practices were most influenced by the teachers' emphasis on assertiveness, which was expressed in knowledge and competency displays, and individualism as opposed to non-assertiveness and communalism. There was an implicit understanding that the children would actively participate and assert themselves in the dominant conversational cycle which occurred in the classroom, namely the teacher asked a question, the children responded and then the teacher gave feedback. The central dimension of this cycle assumed that the children were keen to display their knowledge both to their peers and the teacher. The other implicit assumption held by the teachers was that the children would have sufficient confidence to ask questions if they did not understand the classroom discourses.

A further manifestation of the emphasis on individualism was demonstrated in the fact that evaluations of the children were always individual and that very little group work was done. Most of the teachers paid lip-service to the significance of group work, but in reality very little group work was actually completed. Apart from the fact that group work was not consistent with their values, it is likely that they did not engage in it because they were primarily concerned with coverage and mastery of content, and control of classroom processes.

A broad generalization can be made from this limited sample of children in this study. The white children were generally assertive and eager to display their knowledge and competence. They asked questions when they did not understand the work. The black children on the other hand participated far less frequently in conversational cycles. When they did not understand the work they did not make explicit their lack of understanding (Macdonald, 1998). Instead they either looked around the classroom for social or cognitive cues for the expected responses or in some cases withdrew from the classroom interactions. This behaviour along with a failure to take responsibility for their learning, an excess of respect for the teachers and a failure to see the long term consequences of not understanding impaired the learning of these children.

The question which needs to be examined is whether home practices contributed to the mismatch between the teacher's expectations and the children's responses. In the homes of all the white children, they were encouraged to participate in conversations, their parents valued individual effort and expected the children to be assertive. Attempts were actively made to draw children into their conversations and the children were encouraged to display their knowledge. This was not the case in the black homes, where conversation was mostly sparse. Family members spent a great deal of their day passively watching television. When the adult family members spoke attempts were not made to draw the children into the conversation. In some cases it was stated that the children should be protected from the issues the adults were discussing.

The dominant ethos of the homes of black children was communalistic which was reflected for example in sharing wages and mutual support in child-rearing across extended families. These communal values have clearly shaped the values and behaviours of most of the children in the classroom, particularly their greater involvement in and enjoyment of group work.

The implication of this value difference was that congruence existed between home and school for the white children but for black children this was generally not the case. In most cases the children's broad values reflected those of their homes and communities in which they lived. However, two of the black children deserve closer analysis because they no longer lived in the township milieu. These two cases, namely Diketso and Lindiwe, highlight the possibility that many black children to be found in the middle-class school environment may be confronted with conflicts and choice between competing value systems which could be affecting their school performance. In Diketso's case, she did not take ownership of the values that were presented to her in her white home, but rather identified with and assumed the values of the township children and her rural family. Lindiwe on the other hand withdrew from her father's values and seems to have taken on the dominant cultural ethos of the formerly white schools and middle-class homes.

The effects of the lack of socio-cultural value congruence in respect of values on school achievement were difficult to assess in any direct manner. The question of communalism/passivity as opposed to individualism/assertiveness was clearly demarcated along racial lines, while school achievement was not quite so clearly

defined. In this study white children all performed above average while the black children's results fell into the average to below average range. Throughout the school, the top achievers were white but the average group represented the overall racial distribution of children in school. Black children were, however over-represented in the below average group. Nor was it possible to make generalizations along racial grounds if one observed the children's overall adjustment at school. Most of the children appeared to be happy at school and those that were not were equally distributed across the races. However for some particular black children the fact that there was non-congruency between the value orientations to which they were exposed at home and at school meant that they were not fully understood by their teachers. Their passivity, for example, was seen as non-interest. In addition because teaching methods were not employed which suited their general orientation they may not have performed as well as they were able.

8.2 Educational and Literacy Practices

The second main area of inquiry was the congruence between home and school education and literacy practices. A number of key findings emerged in the classroom. First text was central to most classroom interactions and second most of the interactions that occurred in the classroom were decontextualized.

Firstly, centrality was given to text in classroom processes. Print was found all over the classroom in the form of posters, samples of the children's work and books. Nearly all the classroom interactions were stimulated or organized around print. The most frequent procedure was the teacher would hand out worksheets and ask questions related to the worksheet. Alternatively she read either from storybooks or extracts from other texts and asked questions based on these. The questions were generally of the type for which the teacher knew the answer and which frequently required the child to isolate discrete elements of the environment. The questions often required the children to label events, objects or processes.

Secondly, classroom discourses were frequently of a decontextualized nature. This process of decontextualization became increasingly apparent as the children progressed up the school. In Grade Two many of the lessons were rooted in the children's everyday experience. In addition if the teacher had to deal with content which she expected was removed from the children's experience she went to great pains to contextualize the knowledge by providing the children with relevant formal and

content background schema. However, by the time the children had reached Standard Two the content the children had to deal with was much more abstract and decontextualized. A great deal of background knowledge was assumed and very little time was spent developing background schemas.

In the home environment, educational and literacy practices were closely linked to the parents' view of education, namely those which adopted an extended view of education and those who adopted an instrumental view of education. The extended view, as defined earlier, regarded education as a broader pursuit, going beyond the school curriculum, and requiring adaptability and informed judgements. The instrumental view saw education as confined to the school curriculum and was needed only to fulfill global undifferentiated goals.

The parents' view of education was adopted as an organizing principle in this study for the following reasons. Families could be categorized into two clear groups in terms of literacy practices and values. One group of families was clearly defined in terms of literacy behaviours and factors such as class and professional status. The other parents who followed very similar literacy practices, represented a very heterogeneous group in terms of socio-economic status and were not easily categorized in terms of these factors. In this latter group most of the families were non-professionals but in some cases one of the parents were professionals. Some of the families lived in the suburbs and some lived in the townships. The families were also a mixed group racially. The one factor they had in common was their view of education, namely they held an instrumental view of education.

The parents who adopted an extended view of education were middle-class professionals. The parents' view of education affected many of their home literacy practices. These parents developed labelling behaviours in their children by both reading picture-books and by isolating elements of their environment during oral interactions. They engaged in storybook reading as part of their family tradition. Questioning during storybook reading often served as a precursor to the type of questioning the children experienced at school. They extensively modelled reading and writing for work purposes and print formed part of their behavioural systems. Resources for children were also extensive. Conversations were frequently decontextualized and these conversations were often stimulated by print. These practices were remarkably similar to those described by Heath (1982, 1983, 1986). This

group of parents corresponded to Heath's Maintown group. The similarity of these practices in homes in Johannesburg South Africa and Piedmont Carolinas points to the universality of the middle-class.

On the other hand all the families which adopted an instrumental view of education demonstrated literacy practices and values which were in opposition to those of the professional families. They read storybooks sporadically to their children, and did so usually only when advised to by another agent. They didn't have many resources and if they did they were not specifically for children. Conversations were mainly eventcasts where family members commented on things they were doing or described what had happened to them during the day. Thus most conversations were contextualized.

The congruency between home and school literacy practices was clear between middle-class parents and school. Picture-book reading, storybook reading and labelling practices helped the children prepared the children for early literacy learning. These practices also helped children develop the explicit language to which they were exposed at school. The children had to deal with discrete items of information at school and this ability was developed in middle-class homes during the children's exposure to print and the conversations that accompanied these interactions. At school and at home many activities were organized around print and it stimulated verbal interactions. Most significantly the children had extensive exposure to decontextualized information. This not only provided them with background schemas which helped them slot in new information but presumably also developed a more abstract mode of thinking.

In contrast there was non-congruence between school and home literacy practices of the other families. These families did not engage in literacy practices such as picture-book reading and storybook reading which play a role in developing labelling behaviours, analytic thinking and higher order schemas necessary for early reading. Print was not incorporated into the behavioural systems of these parents and reading and writing were not essential activities for their upward mobility. At school, on the other hand, print was part of nearly all the tasks and mastery of print was essential to achieving success at school. The children rarely engaged in decontextualized conversations which increasingly dominated classroom discourse.

The relationship between school achievement and congruence between home and school literacy practices was not clear. When there was congruence between home

and school literacy practices the children did very well at school. However, there were instances of non-congruence and average or above average school achievement. These different patterns of school achievement can best be accounted for in terms of the third theme, namely the nature and extent of parental assistance with schoolwork.

8.3 Parental Assistance with Schoolwork

Three categories of assistance emerged, namely extended support, direct assistance and limited assistance. In the "support" group parents amply provided educational resources and were available to assist their children when requested to do so, but they did not take responsibility for organizing their children's schedules. They tried to develop independence, planning skills and responsibility in other contexts so that the children could take control of their schoolwork. These parents could be described as doing "Home-Work" in a broad sense. Parents who provided direct assistance took responsibility for their children's homework and organized their work schedules. They did the prescribed school "homework". In the "limited" assistance group parents supported the notion that their children should get an education but did not provide any practical assistance with schoolwork. They believed that their children's education was solely the responsibility of the school.

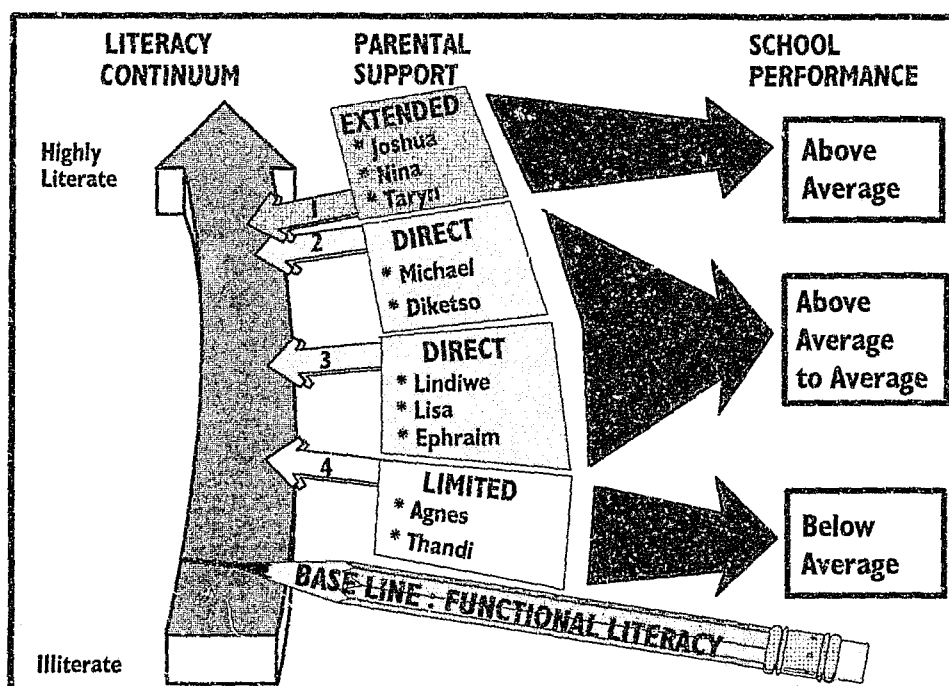
Children who received support and who were expected to be responsible for their own learning, all achieved above average results. With the exception of Lisa, who achieved above average results, children who received direct assistance achieved average results. Children who achieved limited assistance achieved below average results.

Figure 2 below summarizes the previous discussion. Three gradients are presented, namely

- literacy levels in the households
- the level and extent of parental support for schooling
- general levels of school achievement.

Figure 2 shows that all the families were at least functionally literate. The arrows labelled 1-4 show the household's positions along the literacy continuum. Families at the highly literate end of the continuum adopted typical middle-class literacy practices which were congruent with school practices.

Figure 2
The relationship between literacy levels, parental support
and school performance



Towards the illiterate end, the literacy practices were increasingly less like those applied at school. These levels of literacy corresponded largely to different forms of parental support. Highly literate families tended towards doing "Home-Work", that is they provided support and extended their children's education beyond the confines of the school curriculum. The parents who provided direct support, the "homework group", fell in the middle-range of literacy levels. Those who provided limited assistance were the least literate group in this study. However Michael and Diketso's families formed an exception in that their households were highly literate and they did "Home-Work" and homework.

Not surprisingly, the children who lived in highly literate homes and who had extended support for their schooling all achieved above average results at school. It was also anticipated that children whose households were at the least literate end of the continuum and who received limited support from their parents, were also the least

successful at school scholastically. On the other hand a number of anomalies also emerged. '

The most significant anomaly was the **unexpected finding** that children who experienced non-congruence between school and home literacy practices, and who lived in homes where literacy levels were not high, could obtain average or even above average results at school. This has relevance for the debate about whether literacy, as a means of acquiring decontextualized understandings beyond lived experience, causes global and widespread changes in thinking or whether it is schooling alone which produces specific changes in thinking.

As discussed previously, research conducted by Vygotsky in Central Asia supported his theory of the significance of literacy in the development of systematic and abstract thought. However in the Vygotsky/Luria study it was unclear whether the results were caused by literacy or schooling (Wertsch, 1985). The studies conducted in the late sixties and seventies by Cole and his associates amongst the Vai in Liberia served to separate the confounding effects of schooling and literacy. Scribner and Cole (1981), Cole (1988), found that among the Vai, literacy and schooling were not always contiguous. They found that three different literacies operated amongst the Vai, only one of which was school-linked. Their findings indicated that literacy in itself did not result in changes in thinking. Only school-based literacy was associated with the changes in thinking required on these tasks.

Furthermore they found that seemingly minor variations in content or procedures in many cognitive tasks could lead to substantial qualitative and quantitative differences in performance. Thinking changes in the course of schooling because school children master specific knowledge and methods of solving problems. Thus the claims for substantial and universal skills and global changes in thinking resulting from literacy in itself was brought into question. Rather, it seems that specific procedures and knowledge that are imparted during formal schooling results in changes in cognition.

The present study has found that children could perform well at school even if they did not have extensive literacy experiences at home but were provided with direct assistance. Thus depending on what position one takes in this debate, two explanations can be presented for the finding. These are:

- The direct assistance provided by parents leads to the development of systematic thinking. Mediation of the specific content when the parents deliberately imparted knowledge to the child resulted in the development of abstract thinking. This is line with Vygotsky's (in Tulviste, 1991) viewpoint. According to Tulviste, Vygotsky's work implies that, along with literacy, changes in the structure of thinking is related to the specific content of what is mediated. This view suggests that the specific content that parents mediate while they assist their children with homework causes global changes in thinking. It leads to the development of abstract, systematic thinking.
- If one adopts the position presented by Scribner and Cole (1981), the finding that some children achieved above average results in the absence of extensive literacy experiences could be explained by the extra experience they had in school-based literacy provided by their parents. This input would not result in global changes in thinking, but would reinforce the specific, distinctive changes in thinking which occur at school and these changes are not transferable to other situations.

This study does not provide sufficient evidence to differentially support one or the other of these explanations. School achievement was assessed in terms of the marks obtained on teacher tests. Since these measures focused very narrowly and directly on the syllabus, they only indicated the child's mastery of specific school content. Accordingly it wasn't possible to assess whether those children who only received direct assistance and who had limited literacy experiences were capable of generalized abstract thought and problem-solving.

Nevertheless intuitively the latter explanation is more likely and direct assistance with schoolwork may well prepare the child only for specific content areas and not produce global changes in thinking. If this is the case children will have difficulty coping with new learning situations and with information outside of the specific content for which they have been schooled. Because of limited focus they don't have background schemas to cope with incidental new information. Increasingly, however the children will be presented with questions that require them to apply and to draw inferences from their knowledge. Furthermore as children move to higher levels in the school system more and more knowledge will be taken for granted. Children who do not have a broader knowledge base to draw on may be less able to cope with their school work

under these circumstances.

A further limitation of this mode of assistance lies in the fact that the parents take the responsibility for organizing and planning their children's work. Planning and organization are essential elements of systematic thinking. Although these children were given sustained assistance with the specific content they did not have an opportunity to develop these important metacognitive skills. Thus a broad literate orientation where new information can be obtained relatively independently through print in the long term is still desirable because the capacity for generalization and integration increases. This may in fact produce the global changes in thinking envisaged by Vygotsky.

8.4 The Sources of Non-Congruence

If it is desirable to effect congruence between home and school literacy practices as well as values, it is necessary to identify the origins or sources of non-congruence.

There are three possible sources of a lack of congruence. These are

- macro socio-economic conditions
- the school framework of first-world middle-class values which does not accommodate to the needs of children who belong to other socio-economic groups
- the home which does not provide sufficient support to enable children to learn at school.

First one could attribute the lack of congruence broadly to macro- socio-economic processes, most importantly the apartheid system. It could be argued that the apartheid legacy contributed towards some of the difficulty that the black children are experiencing. The apartheid government's separatist policy meant that there was clear division between the black townships and the white suburbs which created the basis for inequality. More specifically the apartheid history of Bantu education meant that both physical and human resources such as teaching staff were unequally distributed.

However, making apartheid responsible for the lack of congruence does not present the full picture. This research does not support this attribution. Diketso, for example, lived in a resource-rich environment and yet she experienced a lack of congruence

between her value system and that of the school. Furthermore it was not only black families that experienced a lack of congruence in respect of literacy practices at school and home. This argument is also supported by the fact that these patterns are similar in contexts which were not formally subject to the apartheid system, for example the categories described by Heath (1983).

It is apparent that there are deeper cultural values about how human beings should conduct their lives, as well as values and practices around literacy and the nature of school assistance which are important in determining congruency. It would be a danger to simply attribute the educational challenges to the apartheid regime and not recognize the enduring importance of culture and values on literacy processes.

The sources of non-congruence are to be found in the specific practices and values in the school and the home which stem from membership to different communities. It was stated at the outset of this study that I did not want to take a position in examining home and school literacy practices but rather wished to examine empirically the congruency between them. However although I do not wish to make value judgements to either school or home, it is clearly beneficial to the children if congruence can be achieved and therefore the question of how this may be accomplished cannot be avoided.

8.5 Future Strategies

In looking at future strategies three models will be presented which I have called the Assimilation model, the Radical model and the Diversity model.

The Assimilation Model holds that the minority group in a school becomes incorporated into the dominant group. The aim is to enculturate children from outside into the mainstream values and practices of the school (Auerbach, 1989). Existing systems are extended to the previously disadvantaged, or culturally different, by developing bridging and remedial programmes for both the parents and the children. The same yardstick is used to evaluate individuals. All individuals must be treated similarly, to do otherwise would be to perpetuate inequality (Ferdman, 1994). Congruency, according to this model, is achieved by changing the values and practices of the home environment.

The Diversity Model on the other hand emphasizes the differences between people,

particularly those rooted in culture and therefore in group membership. Mainstream teachers are enculturated into modes of indigenous pedagogy so that they can incorporate cultural diversity into their teaching methods and value systems. Individual merit is defined in a culturally relativistic way and fairness involves choosing a yardstick appropriate to the group and the individual. To reduce the drop-out rate attempts are made to link content and outcomes to the cultures of the participants.

The Radical Model proposes an entirely new educational philosophy and a complete break from existing mainstream practices and values to promote the needs and expectations of the non-mainstream groups. According to this model congruency is achieved, for non-mainstream children at least, by introducing far-reaching, revolutionary changes in the school.

The question is which of these models does this research support? Compromise and consensus is implicit in the notion of congruency. A tripartite understanding between the school and teachers, the parents and the child has to be reached which embraces the values and expectations of all the parties. The direction is to identify areas of existing cultural convergence and shared goals. Thus the efficacy of the models must be examined in the light of this general stance.

One of the most pervasive common goals that appeared amongst the teachers, the parents and the children was to achieve high marks. The teachers based their judgements of children on marks, the children were motivated to complete tasks that were "for marks" and parents were proud when their children obtained good results and concerned when they did not. There was a common desire on the part of all the parties to achieve scholastically.

At present the Assimilation model most closely fits the practices at the school. In terms of this common goal the Assimilation model has merit because the vast majority of the children in the school are coping at school. In this study only two of the ten children showed signs of not coping. This suggests that this model need not be abandoned altogether. On the other hand one cannot ignore the small number of children who are not coping as an unhappy phenomenon. Furthermore there are areas of non-congruency in general values and literacy practices, which although they may not have an immediate impact on school achievement, are likely to have a negative effect at a later stage. The lack of congruency in general values also means the children are less

engaged in the classroom processes than they could be. Thus it is proposed that elements of the other models are examined in order to see whether greater congruency can be reached.

The Radical model involves a complete change of the educational philosophy and practices. Existing practices are congruent with most parents' values and literacy practices. Even those families where non-congruency was experienced, felt happy with the general ethos and goals of the school. Some of them travelled great distances to bring their children to the school because they approved of the school's reputation. A revolutionary change in the school's philosophy and practices would be contrary to the wishes of most of the parents.

There are elements of the Diversity model which could be incorporated into the school without any sacrifice of the existing levels of achievement and which may in fact have an indirect positive effect on the children's scholastic performance. Classroom learning and teaching must take into account the cultural differences between the children, particularly those rooted in culture and therefore in group membership. Mainstream teachers have to develop an awareness of alternative cultural practices and the significance that these practices have for the community. In the South African context, this would involve the recognition of the significance of *ubuntu* and the implication that this has for teaching practices. One such teaching practice would be the incorporation of structured group work on a regular basis.

Another aspect of the Diversity model that could be partially implemented is the linkage of content and outcomes to the cultures of the participants. There are some ways in which the content of the curriculum has already been changed on a national level to reflect the culturally diverse nature of South Africa. The History syllabus has been revised so that it is more representative of all the peoples of South Africa. Literature that reflects a broader scope of African themes and cosmologies has also been introduced. There are however, a number of problems associated with increasingly incorporating African literature into the curriculum because written resources are fairly limited. Although the first steps have been taken on a national level to make the content more reflective of the cultural diversity in the country, there are further measures that could be implemented at the school. Project work could be a significant way in which a closer linkage could be forged between content and the interests of children of different cultural groups at the school. Projects could be made more

accessible to the minority groups in the school. To exploit an oral tradition, the results of some projects could, for example, be presented in a dramatic oral format. Projects also present an opportunity to focus explicitly on cultural values and rituals. For example, members of the same cultural group in a class could together present how weddings or important festivals, are celebrated in their community.

One aspect of the Diversity model would be difficult to implement, namely relativistic evaluation. Culturally relativistic evaluation would be seen by the majority parents of the school as unfair. Furthermore it would probably not meet with the approval of the previously disadvantaged parents because it is reminiscent of Bantu education. This form of evaluation may be seen as patronizing.

Thus far the discussion has been on what changes can ideally be introduced into the school in order to achieve greater congruency. The next issue is how the home can be changed so that greater congruency can be achieved while still maintaining the common goal of high school achievement. It was found that those children who had direct assistance with schoolwork performed in the average or above average range, so instruction and assistance in this regard would be a first step. This effect may only be short-term and it may be that later in their school careers children start experiencing difficulties but it is a starting point.

There are a number of difficulties to overcome in order for this to be achieved. Firstly it is believed by some parents that education is a commodity that can be purchased. Secondly there is an expectation that paying school fees should ensure success and that parents should not be expected to help their children with schoolwork. Thirdly some parents do not have the skills to assist their children, particularly as they reach higher levels at school. Finally, they do not have the social networks to acquire information and understanding of the significant processes and practices of the school.

At present the school runs several parent education and programmes but the principal of the school noted that these were often not attended by the parents who needed them most. It may well be that the format of these programmes where the parents are essentially lectured to, are not sufficiently attractive. In addition the programmes occur too infrequently to meet the needs of some of the parents. These programmes have been useful to some parents and should not be abandoned but perhaps they could serve as a starting point for a more prolonged, intensive programme which is

organized by the parents themselves with some guidance and consultation with the teaching staff. Possibly a more informal meeting of parents where parents who are highly skilled in helping children could serve as mentors for parents with fewer skills. Regular social contact could serve to draw these parents into the school's information network and in this way the parents would become more familiar with the expectations of the school in respect of assistance with homework. This would also be a forum in which parents could possibly discuss children's study groups of the kind set up by Lisa's mother.

This study has shown that students can perform scholastically in spite of a lack of congruence between home and school literacy practices. The children who received direct assistance achieved average or above average results at school in spite of the fact that they did not have typical middle-class literacy experiences at home. It was argued that the intensive help that these children received with their homework may only have short-term effects positive effects on school achievement. This form of assistance which reinforces the content areas covered at school serves to assist with the development of very specific changes in thinking. The children do not necessarily acquire the background schemas to enable generalization and integration. It was further argued that in households where a broad literate orientation was adopted, and where the parents provided extended support for schoolwork, more generalized changes in thinking were likely to occur. They were more likely to deal effectively with new learning situations and incorporate new information into their existing schemas.

It was argued that it will be beneficial for the children and the communities if congruency between school and home can be effected not only between literacy practices and values, but also between the more general school and home values. Congruence should be achieved by compromise and consensus, keeping in mind the common goal of all the parties, namely scholastic results. Some suggestions were made for how greater congruency can be achieved in the classroom by effecting changes in both teaching and home practices and values.

Despite the problems and gaps in congruence and true multi-culturalism at the school, a foundation has nevertheless been established for a new social contract between the three critical stakeholders at the grass-roots school level. Firstly the school itself provides a quality teaching environment with clearly dedicated staff who are open to

change. Secondly the parents on the whole show substantial concern for their children's education and are slowly gaining an understanding of their supportive role. Thirdly the children are performing adequately and are not threatened but are happy and stimulated in a caring learning environment. In this study it has been shown that the familiar stereotypes of home and school learning are rather shallow and that a fine-grained analysis throws up more helpful images.

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APPENDIX 1

GUIDELINES FOR OBSERVATION: SCHOOL

1. The school

Type of school -	co-educational/single sex/private/ public
Location of school -	main road, quiet surroundings, near public transport
Premises -	grounds (gravel, grass), playing fields, swimming pool, library, computer centre, photocopier.
Print -	posters, display boards, notices
Extra-mural activities -	
Specialist staff -	social worker, psychologist, librarian, sports coaches
Parental Involvement -	<u>Contact</u>: Parent/teacher, governing body, parent information and education, workshops, newsletters, lectures, teacher parent <u>Assistance to school</u> : Catering, tuckshop, teacher's aid, library assistant, after care <u>Assistance to child</u> : Provision of home work station, provision of materials - only those required by school or additional materials, assistance with homework
Code of Conduct -	Detentions, merit system, contract system, corporal punishment

2. The Classroom

Number of children in the class.	
Typical school week -	time allocated for various activities
Physical organisation of the classroom	
	— Arrangement of desks: rows, semi-circle, clusters to facilitate group work Work stations : present, absent, type if present.

Literacy Materials

Book corner

Labels

Posters (type?)

Letters (type? - for example letterland pictograms)

Toys (type?)

Interest table (themes?)

Displays of children's work (type?)

Textbooks - school or parents supply, level of difficulty, interesting, relevancy

3 The Teacher

Qualifications

Experience

Teacher's theory of literacy

3.1 Nature of teacher talk

Explanations

Narratives

Descriptions

Questions - Type : for example questions which require labelling, what, when, who questions for which the teacher knows the answer, reason explanations - cause/effect, affective commentaries, prediction, sequencing
Feedback to correct and incorrect responses
Time given for children to respond after question posed
Chooses particular children to answer questions, addresses questions to the whole class?

Explicit classroom rules

Participation by child- What constitutes acceptable participation for different activities?

Discipline - View of the child? (orders, demands, praises, criticises, asks politely, raises voice)

3.2 Reading by children

Teaching method - phonic, whole word, whole language, teaches for a

	combination of strategies
Reading materials -	basal readers (which?), flashcards, letters, dictated stories, children's literature
Organisation -	ability groups, pairs, children read in unison, read individually to teacher
Prereading activities	
During reading -	method of assistance when child encounters difficulties

3.3 Reading to children

Prereading discussion

interaction during - Explanation, questions, invites children to present their reading experiences, labels points out features of print, layout

3.4 Written tasks

Copying, single word responses, cloze responses, open-ended responses

Emphasis on presentation, grammatical, spelling accuracy, emphasis on content

Independent work - such as projects? If yes how are these organized? (groups, individual) What criteria are used to evaluate? (creativity, presentation, logic, comprehensiveness of content)

3.5 Demonstrations/ class experiments

4. The child

Knows and follows the explicit and implicit school/classroom rules

4.1 General school rules-

Participates in extra-mural activities

Follows rules relating to school and other children's property

Follows rules relating to punctuality

Follows rules relating to absenteeism

4.2 Rules for oral participation in the classroom -

Puts up hand to answer questions

Talks out of turn

Initiates interaction

- Volunteers in group situations
- Asks for assistance appropriately
- Uses forms of address which teacher expects
- Uses polite terms (please, thank-you, etc)
- Expresses appreciation appropriately
- Asks for information appropriately
- Gives praise, affection, compliments appropriately,
- Displays appropriate sense of humour
- Answers questions correctly

"Appropriately" = the rules or norms defined by the group/ teacher/ school

4.3 Rules governing tasks -

- Completes assigned classwork activities
- Does own work without disrupting others
- Easily distracted from assigned task
- Shifts from one incomplete task to another
- Organised
- Works independently
- Follows simple oral instructions
- Follows complex oral instructions
- Follows simple written instructions
- Follows complex written instructions
- Completes homework tasks
- Speed in completing tasks

4.4 Peer interactions -

- Initiates conversations with peers
- Contributes to group work organised by teacher
- Contributes to child-initiated group activities
- Takes turns when playing
- Co-operative
- Friendly
- Accepted by peers
- Initiates physical/verbal fights

4.5 Nonlinguistic acts -

Acceptable -specify

Unacceptable - specify (child can't sit still when story is read)

Difficulty sitting still, wriggles in seat

Appropriate physical contact

Appropriate eye contact

4.6 Reading (bottom-up) -

Child knows print direction

Attends to punctuation

Knows concepts of letters, words and sentences

Knows print not pictures carry message

Knows letters by name

Knows letters by sound

Can make letter/sound correspondence

Can discriminate letter forms

Can discriminate words

4.7 Cognitive functions/ process skills -

Identifies objects by name

Refers to objects by name

Identifies events by name

Understands word meanings (objects, place, substances, location, possession, quantity, verbs etc)

Can identify the main idea of a story

Can remember details

Can relate a story

Can express ideas

Ideas scattered

Presents isolated facts

Relates ideas meaningfully

Decontextualization - talk about books, information gained from books, used in different contexts, for different purposes - which?

Can select appropriate information to solve a problem

Able to describe a problem clearly, that is can define a task

Can construct a logical plan to solve problems

Looks for explanations to solve problems and can solve problems logically
Can solve problems mentally without any concrete aids (predict future events, use alternative approaches, think abstractly)
Can make comparisons
Able to sequence
See similarities and differences
Able to construct a plan
Able to comprehend a total social situation

4.8 Written tasks -

Language level (alphabetic, word, word group, sentence, punctuated story, paragraphed story)
Message quality (concept of signs - uses letters, invents letters, uses punctuation, has a concept that a message is conveyed, copies a message, repetitive use of sentence patterns, attempts to record own ideas, successful composition)
Directional principles

4.9 Content knowledge -

Enjoys content subjects (which?)
Achieves well in content subjects (which?)

4.10 Attitudes, feelings, beliefs -

To school in general and literacy in particular
Stated attitudes congruent with practise?

APPENDIX 2

GUIDELINES FOR OBSERVATION : HOME

1. Family values and Identity

Individualism encouraged

Communalism/ sharing encouraged

Assertiveness and knowledge displays encouraged

Reticence and passivity rewarded or encouraged

Value placed on being literate

Value placed on books and book knowledge

The extent to which print is incorporated into the behavioural systems of the family members

The extent to which information contained in print may be disputed, doubted

2. Parental support and involvement in the school

Participation in administrative bodies (Parents association, governing body)

Participation in parent education programmes

Participation in parent-teacher conferences

Assistance to school (catering, tuckshop, transport for sports events and outings)

Assistance to child with schoolwork

Provision of homework space - desk, book shelves

Direct assistance with homework

3. Verbal interactions

Times when most discussion occurs (mealtimes, lifts, bedtime)

Discussion about books and literacy events, to whom?

Questions - type?

Decontextualized discourse

Conversation stimulated by print

Other topics of conversation - schoolwork, interests problems, financial, duties, rules, news, sport, nature, family and other social events

4. Direct Literacy Events

4.1 Storybook reading - Reading to the child

Frequency

Over what time period did story book reading occur?

Who read to the child? (parent, sibling, other adult)

Circumstances - place and time

Discussion and/or other participation during reading

Questions posed by children during reading :

Is the child permitted to ask questions during reading?

What type of questions are asked by children?

Adult's responses to children's questions

Questions posed by adults during reading :

Does the adult pose questions during reading?

Types of questions asked - closed questions where the parent knows the answer, questions requiring reason explanations, affective commentaries

Child's response to questions

Types of books read to child :

Alphabet, counting, nursery rhymes, children's poetry, storybooks, folk tales, comics, non-fiction, Bible stories, sports books

4.2 Children reading to adults

Set school reading

Material other than set school books. Purpose?

4.3 Independent literacy acts by children

4.3.1 Reading

News

Recreation - games instruction, TV games

Leisure reading - novels

Information

Education

Religious

4.3.2 Writing

Stories

Letters

School work

4.4 Parental Modelling of Literacy Events/Purposes for which family members read

4.4.1 Reading

Practical - recipes, instruction manuals, street maps, bus schedules

Shopping

Money management

Work related

News

Recreation - games instruction, TV games

Leisure reading - novels

Information

Education

Religious

4.4.2 Writing

Forms

Letters - personal - keeping in touch

Letters - work

Letters - organization of daily life

Memory aids

Buying and selling

Cards

5. Resources and Exposure to print

5.1 In the home:

Printed materials in the home :

Newspaper(s) weekly/daily, magazines, books (how many and type), encyclopedia, Bible, dictionaries, circulars, brochures, recipes, maps, dressmaking patterns, letters

Television : Preferred programmes - sit coms, nature, soapies, news, sport, movies

Radio :

Computer : Games, educational games and programmes (maths, spelling, reading, word), encyclopedia, drawing programmes.

Children's room decorations:

Toys : Construction (Lego, blocks, mechano), mechanical, jigsaw puzzles, realistic (dolls, trucks, tea sets)

Writing materials : Paper, crayons, pens, markers

5.2 Outside the home:

Environmental print: Street signs, advertisements, product labels

Do parents draw child's attention to the print?

Library : Proximity to home
Membership, which family members?
Frequency of use
purposes for which library is used

APPENDIX 3 BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION : STANDARD TWO P

PUPIL (Name = case study)	DATE OF BIRTH	HOME ADDRESS	HOME LANGUAGE	PARENT'S WORK	COMMENTS
1.	17:3:86	Roosevelt Park	English	F=musical director	2 children in school
2.	24:7:86	Emmarentia	English	F= computer manager M=housewife	2 children in school
3.	3:5:86	Emmarentia	English	F= director, Black Investigation M=social worker	2 children in school
4. Lisa	15:12:86	Roosevelt Park	English	F= Computer lecturer M= Bookkeeper	2 children in school
5.	1.3.86	Emmarentia	Serbian	F= Economist M=Dentist	1 child in school
6.	22.8.86	Brixton	English	F= Prof, Botany M=Nursing sister	3 children in school
7.	19:2:86	Meadowlands	No data	F=self-employed M= ?	2 children in school
8.	5.11.86	Emmarentia	English/Heb rew	F=factory manager M=accountant	1 child in school
9.	8:11:86	Greenside	English	F=Director, Sonic Aircom M = Admin manager, Sonic Aircom	1 child in school
10.	13:6:86	Westdene	English	F=Company director M=Lecturer	1 child in school
11.	21.10.86	Northcliff	English	F=Financial consultant M=Housewife	-
12.	27:5:86	Greenside	English	F= Attorney M=Housewife	

13. Diketso	20.5.86	Parkhurst	Tswana/ Sotho/ English	Guardian - production manager GM=Domestic	
14. Joshua	17.8.86	Emmarentia	English	F= Business Consultant M=Occupational therapist	
15.	14.2.85	Orlando East	South Sotho	F=Admin clerk, Trust Bank M= Housewife	1 child in school
16.	5.11.85	Diepkloof, Soweto	Southern Sotho	F=Unemployed student M=Nurse	1 child in school
17.	21.10.86	Northcliff	English	F=Director M=Housewife	2 children in school
18.	218.86	Meadowlands	North Sotho	F= Traffic Officer M= Administrator	1 child in school
19.	8.1.86	Emdeni Ext Soweto	Zulu	F= No data M=Conveyancing	2 children in school
20.	27.7.86	Protea North Chiawelo	Tswana	F = Teacher M = Clerk	Religion=Dutch Reformed
21.	17.8.85	Diepkloof	Tswana	F=Mechanic	
22.	28.6.86	Emmarentia	Zulu/English	F=Refrigeration engineer M=Deceased (was hairdresser)	Lives with granny, indigent, 1 child in school
23.	27.10.86	Lyme Park Ext. Sandton	English	F=Accountant M=Works for dad?	2 children in school
24.	9.1.86	Bellevue	Xhosa	F=Pilot M= Teacher	3 children in school Lives with paternal aunt - father works for Transkei Airways, mother works in the Transkei, both parents frequently away
25.	11.8.86	Emmarentia	English	F=Manager, Sanlam M=Housewife	2 children in school

26.	11.6.86	Emmarentia	English	F=TV sports editor M=Housewife	1 child in school
27. Taryn	16.1.87	Auckland Park	English	F=Development consultant M=Policy development in Gauteng Education department	2 children in school
28.	17.2.87	Emmarentia	English	F=Engineer, Anglo Vaal M= ?	3 children in school
29.	18.2.86	Dobsonville	South Sotho	M=Teacher F=Teacher	Religion=Jehovah's witness
30.	21.9.86	Greenside	English	F=Jewellery producer M=Manager of jewellery shop	2 children in school
31.	6.12.86	Emmarentia	English	F=Attorney M=?	2 children in school
32.	1.12.86	Victory Park	English/Afrik	F=Teacher M=Teacher	2 children in school
33.	31.5.86	Emmarentia	Chinese	F=Trader, self- employed M=Housewife	
34. Thandi	25.7.87	Soweto	Zulu/English	M=Receptionist	1 child in school

APPENDIX 4 BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION : GRADE TWO F

PUPIL (Name = case study)	DATE OF BIRTH	HOME ADDRESS	HOME LANGUAGE	PARENTS' WORK	COMMENTS
1.	24:8:88	Emmarentia	English	F = Clinical psychologist M = Executive secretary	1 child in school, lives with mom but sees lots of dad, parents may live on same property (?)
2.	15:12:87	Northcliff	English	F = Printer M = Estate agent	
3.	26:1:89	Martindale	English	F = Programmer M = Clerk	1 child in school
4.	7:2:88	Melville	English	F = Restuaranteer M = Housewife	2 children in school
5. Michael	21:5:88	Greymont	English	F = Lecturer (RAU) M = Teacher	2 children in school
6. Agnes	28:9:88	Emmarentia	Zulu	M = domestic	1 child in school
7.	13:8:88	Emmarentia	English	F = Lecturer, architect, UOFS M = Accountant	2 children in school
8. Lindiwe	25:4:89	Emmarentia	English	F = Journalist, Sowetan M = Teacher DET	2 children in school
9.	2:12:88	Emmarentia	English	F = Engineer M = Housewife	1 child in school
10.	25:10:88	Westdene	English	F = Systems analyst M = Administrator	2 children in school Lives with mom, sees dad occasionally
11.	26:9:88	Chiawelo Soweto	Zulu	F = Chef ,de Beers M = Credit controller	1 child in school
12.	26:9:87	Protea North Soweto	Zulu	F = Teacher DET M = Teacher DET	2 children in school

13.	25:4:88	Auckland Park	English	F = Financial Director M = Cosmetic planner - Edgars	1 child in school
14.	15:12:88	Westdene	English	F = TV Producer M = Computer support	2 children in school
15. Nina	20:6:88	Auckland Park	English	F = Doctor - national centre OCC M = Doctor- Research Director - Soul City	2 children in school
16.	30:8:88	Emmarentia	English	F = Specialist physician M = Remedial therapist	2 children in school
17. Ephraim	14:8:88	Diepkloof Soweto	North Sotho	F = Deceased M = Dental nurse	2 children in school
18.	23:9:87	Riverlea Ext 2	Zulu	F = Journalist M = Teacher DET	
19.	1:5:87	Dobsonville Soweto	Other	F = Teacher M = Student teacher	1 child in school
20.	18:1:89	Greenside	English	F = Accountant Coopers & Lybrand M = Housewife	1 child in school
21.	10:5:88	Ridgeway	English	F = Electronics technician M = Admin. asst	1 child in school
22.	17:8:88	Emmarentia	Chinese	F = Trader, self-employed M = Housewife	2 children in school
23.	20:12:88	Emmarentia	Chinese	F = Manager M = Housewife	1 child in school
24.	30:7:88	Roosevelt Park	English	F = Self-employed M = Secretary, Video Town	2 children in school

APPENDIX 5
TEST RESULTS: STANFORD DIAGNOSTIC READING TEST-
STANDARD TWO

PUPIL	STANFORD		
	LITERAL	INFERENTIAL	TOTAL
1.	24	20	44
2.	14	7	21
3.	19	19	34
4. Lisa	22	21	43
5.	20	19	39
6.	23	17	40
7.	13	10	23
8.	17	19	36
9.	20	20	40
10.	23	19	42
11.	22	17	39
12.	20	21	41
13. Diketso	20	16	36
14. Joshua	21	22	43
15.	7	5	12
16.	n/r	n/r	n/r
17.	22	17	39
18.	16	14	30
19.	20	22	42
20.	18	18	36
21.	n/r	n/r	n/r
22.	17	13	30
23.	23	20	43
24.	17	12	29
25.	21	18	39
26.	19	16	35

27. Taryn	21	18	39
28.	18	14	32
29.	n/r	n/r	n/r
30.	21	20	41
31.	21	20	41
32.	24	21	45
33.	15	10	25
34. Thandi	10	11	21
TOTAL	588	516	1100
AVERAGE	19,0	16,6	35,5

n/r = No results were available because the children were absent from school when the test was administered.

APPENDIX 6
TEST RESULTS: STANFORD DIAGNOSTIC READING TEST-
GRADE 2

PUPIL	STANFORD		
	SENTENCE READING (28)	PARAGRAPH READING (20)	TOTAL (48)
1.	16	16	32
2.	7	5	12
3.	25	5	30
4.	22	10	32
5. Michael	28	18	36
6. Agnes	25	8	33
7.	26	19	45
8. Lindiwe	28	17	45
9.	26	15	41
10.	27	18	45
11.	17	0	17
12.	21	13	34
13.	8	13	21
14.	n/r	n/r	n/a
15. Nina	26	18	44
16.	26	14	40
17. Ephraim	28	17	45
18.	23	15	38
19.	24	16	40
20.	28	18	46
21.	28	17	45
22.	26	11	37
23.	26	18	44
24.	26	20	46
TOTAL	565	341	848
AVERAGE	24,6	14,8	36,9

APPENDIX 7
TEST RESULTS: NEALE ANALYSIS OF READING ABILITY-
STANDARD TWO

NAME	NEALE			
	ACCURACY SCORE	COMPREHENSION SCORE	ACCURACY: AGE EQUIVALENT	COMPREHENSION: AGE EQUIVALENT
Lisa	88	35	12.08	13+
Diketso	49	17	8.07	8.05
Joshua	88	36	12.01	13+
Taryn	70	32	10.10	12.06
Thandi	34	10	7.03	6.09

APPENDIX 8
TEST RESULTS : NEALE ANALYSIS OF READING ABILITY -
GRADE TWO

NAME	NEALE			
	ACCURACY SCORE	COMPREHENSION SCORE	ACCURACY: AGE EQUIVALENT	COMPREHENSION: AGE EQUIVALENT
Michael	39	25	7.08	10.06
Agnes	25	11	6.05	6.11
Lindiwe	38	12	7.07	7.02
Nina	35	16	7.04	8.02
Ephraim	41	11	7.10	6.11

APPENDIX 9 SCHOOL RECORD : STANDARD TWO

KEY : GRADE 1 - STD 1

A = Afrikaans
 E = English
 M = Maths
 Wr = Writing
 En = Environmental Studies
 H = History
 G = Geography
 S = Science

KEY : STD 2
 E = English
 M = Mathematics
 A = Afrikaans
 H = History
 G = Geography
 S = Science

Junior Primary Phase: Evaluated on a rating scale 1-5

Senior Primary Phase: Percentages allocated for most subjects

PUPIL	GRADE 1						GRADE 2						STANDARD 1						STANDARD 2							
	A	E	M	W	E	n	A	E	M	W	E	n	A	E	M	W	E	n	A	E	M	A	H	G	S	Ave
1.	3	2	2	3	2	2	3	2	3	2	2	2	3	3	3	3	3	3	72	68	74	74	74	71	72	
2.	3	3	2	4	2	2	3	3	3	4	3	3	3	2	3	4	3	58	56	51	49	55	55	54		
3.	3	2	2	2	3	3	4	3	2	3	3	3	3	3	2	3	3	61	65	67	67	78	75	69		

APPENDIX 10

SCHOOL RECORD : GRADE 2

A = Afrikaans

E= English

M = Maths

Wr = Hand-writing

En = Environmental studies

Junior Primary Phase:

Evaluated on a rating scale 1-5

PUPIL	GRADE 1					GRADE 2				
	A	E	M	Wr	En	A	E	M	Wr	En
1.	1	3	2	n/r	2	n/r	2	2	n/r	1
2.	3	3	2	4	2	n/r	5	5	n/r	3
3.	3	3	2	3	3	n/r	3	2	3	3
4.	3	2	3	3	2	n/r	3	3	3	2
5. Michael	3	2	2	2	1	n/r	1	1	2	1
6. Agnes	3	3	3	2	3	n/r	3	3	1	3
7.	Roseneath, no records, promoted					3	2	1	3	1
8. Lindiwe	3	3	3	n/r	3	n/r	2	2	1	3
9.	4	3	3	4	n/r	1	1	1	1	1
10.	2	2	2	3	n/r	2	2	2	2	2
11.	3	3	2	2	2	3	4	4	1	3
12.	Foundation School, no records					4	4	3	4	3
13.	3	3	3	2	2	n/r	4	4	2	2
14.	2	2	1	2	1	3	2	1	2	2
15. Nina	3	3	3	4	2	3	5 2	3 1	4 3	3 2
16.	No records					n/r	3	1	n/r	2

17. Ephraim	Bernard Isaacs Primary (Coranationville)					n/r	3	2	n/r	2
18.	5	3	2	1	n/r	4	4	4	3	3
19.	No records					3	3	2	1	3
20.	3	2	3	n/r	n/r	3	2	3	3	1
21.	No records					n/r	1	1	n/r	2
22.	3	3	3	3	n/r	3	3	2	3	2
23.	3	2	2	2	1	3	3	2	2	3
24.	No records					1	1	1	n/r	1

nr = no records available

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