ABSTRACT

The increased number of orphaned and vulnerable children (OVC) in South Africa is thought to be serious. The dramatic increase in OVC as a result of factors such as neglect, poverty, abuse and disease places emphasis on the care which such children receive. Due to the fact that many families cannot take on the burden of an extra child, such children find shelter on the streets or are placed in institutions. Seminal research has documented the negative effects that institutionalisation has on children especially in relation to their cognitive development. At the heart of institutionalised children's development are the caregivers which attend to the children's needs, such as homework.

It is thought that homework is essential to educational achievement as well as cognitive development and requires the input of a parent or caregiver. Due to the fact that the IQ of children within institutions is thought to be lower than that of their peers in a home environment, the type of homework mediation instutionalised children receive is important. In order to gain insight into the homework involvement process within the institution, this research sought to investigate the perceptions of caregivers regarding their homework involvement with instutionalised children through the application of three level-one constructs of the Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler model (1995). The Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler model (1995) is concerned with explaining the factors which influence or affect parents' decisions to become involved in their children's education.

The primary aim of this research was to investigate the perceptions of caregivers regarding their homework involvement with institutionalised children, applying the three level-one constructs of the Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler model (1995). This research was of a qualitative exploratory nature, and placed emphasis on the in-depth insight of caregivers. Data was collected through a self-developed semi-structured interview schedule and data analysis employed a thematic content analysis whereby themes and sub-themes were identified and discussed under the three level-one constructs of the Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler model (1995).

DECLARATION

I declare that this dissertation is my own unaided work. It is submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Masters of Education in Educational Psychology by Coursework and Research Dissertation (Full-Time) at the University of the Witwatersrand. It has not been submitted before for any other degree or examination at any other University.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

The increasing number of orphans and vulnerable children (OVC) in South Africa is thought to be of major concern (UNAIDS, 2007). The African HIV/AIDS pandemic is thought to be one of the main contributors to the high rates of OVC in South Africa (AfroAids, 2007). Children are ultimately those who bear the brunt of such a pandemic as the type of parental care and support they receive is affected by the factors such as abuse, neglect, poverty and HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS, 2007). This research will therefore focus on the care that OVC children receive within institutions by investigating caregiver involvement through the caregivers' own perceptions associated with homework involvement. Although emphasis is placed on HIV/AIDS as a primary contributor to the number of OVC in South Africa, HIV/AIDS is not the focus of this research.

The increase of OVC is of major concern especially with regard to their cognitive development, as research has shown that, on average, the IQ of children placed in institutions is significantly lower than those raised outside of an institution (Van Ijzendoorn, Luijk, and Juffer, 2008). It is therefore suggested by Van Ijzendoorn, Luijk, and Juffer (2008) that institutionalisation has a negative impact on children's cognitive development. The role of mediation and homework involvement is thought to be of vital importance for institutionalised children's cognitive development. However, in order to promote positive mediation and caregiver involvement, the perceptions of caregivers regarding their involvement in homework is needed. In order to gain insight into homework involvement and caregivers' perceptions, an application of the first level of the Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler model (1995) of parental involvement will be made, and used in relation to this research. This chapter will firstly discuss the aims of this research, secondly, the rationale behind the research topic and lastly, outline the structure of this research report.

1.2 RESEARCH AIMS

The primary aim of this research is to investigate the perceptions of caregivers regarding their homework involvement with institutionalised children, applying the three level-one constructs of the Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler model (1995). Simultaneously, it is anticipated that this research would inform the following: firstly, the need for greater

awareness among South Africans and government concerning the increasing number of OVC and the type of care that they require in order to develop appropriately; secondly, to acknowledge the educational rights and needs of children within institutions in order to promote positive cognitive and intellectual development and thirdly, to highlight the importance of the caregiver role which children in institutions are so greatly influenced and dependant on and in light of promoting caregiver interaction to strengthen and promote OVC's educational outcomes, achievement and intellectual development. Most importantly, it is hoped that such research will advocate for better educational interventions within institutions and more importantly, greater communication between institutions and schools in order to promote the intellectual and cognitive development of institutionalised children.

1.3 RATIONALE

The UNAIDS (2007) AIDS epidemic update estimates that 33, 2 million people are living with HIV/AIDS globally. The Sub-Saharan region remains the most affected by the HIV/AIDS epidemic to date with an estimated 22, 5 million people living with HIV or 68 percent of the global total (UNAIDS, 2008). South Africa is highlighted as the country with the largest number of HIV infections in the world (Afroaidsinfo, 2007). Children undoubtedly bear the brunt of the HIV/AIDS epidemic as the disease affects their parents, themselves and extended family members (UNAIDS, 2004). Children survived by their parents' AIDS-related deaths are termed orphans and either cared for through community intervention or placed in institutions (UNAIDS, 2004). The estimated percentage of children orphaned by AIDS "increased from 5.6 percent of all orphans in 1995 to 43.3 percent in 2001" and it is proposed that, should such trends continue, by "2010 nearly three quarters of South Africa's orphans will have been orphaned by AIDS" (SaSix, 2008, p.1).

The majority of South Africa's orphans are located within under-resourced communities. Whilst communities have responded to such orphans in the best way possible, increased strain and need for resources direct communities to rely on government interventions such as institutionalisation. Research, however, has clearly indicated that institutions "have generally failed to meet children's emotional and psychological needs all over the world" (SaSix, 2008, p.2). Orphaned children, children cared for by foster families and

extended families as a result of HIV/AIDS are "subject to discrimination and are less likely to receive health, education and other needed services" (UNAIDS, 2008, p.1).

In light of OVC's future, much emphasis is placed on their psychological, educational and social development to assist them in becoming functional members of society (UNAIDS, 2004). Research concerning OVC has placed emphasis on their cognitive development and particularly the IQ delays which have been found (Van Ijzendoorn et al., 2008). In particular, it has been indicated by a meta-analysis on 75 studies that children growing up in children's homes showed, on average, a 20-point lower IQ score (Van Ijzendoorn et al, 2008). Findings stated clearly that "more research is needed to detect the causes of the large IQ delays and to test the ways of improving the intellectual development of millions of children in orphanages around the world" (Van Ijzendoorn et al, 2008, p.341).

The causes of intellectual developmental delays among OVC have been intertwined in research concerning genetic, physical and emotional development over the past century, documenting the impact of institutionalisation on childhood development (Maclean, 2003). Following the seminal research of Goldfarb (1943) and Spitz (1945) two areas of particular interest show the effects that early deprivation has on intellectual development and academic achievement. In response to continued findings of poor intellectual development among children that are institutionalised, researchers have stated that "studies of children's lives in different orphanage settings are sorely needed in order to identify more clearly the particular factors in the orphanage environment that have an impact on developmental outcomes" (Maclean, 2003, p. 879). In particular, research calls for emphasis to be placed on caregiver stimulation, sensitivity and interaction as caregivers play a significant role in the development of orphaned children (Maclean, 2003).

Cognitive development and academic achievement among children that are institutionalised is thought to be important in promoting their future functioning independent from the institution (Van Ijzendoorn et al., 2008). Central to the investigation of cognitive development in OVC is the role of the school and home environment in which children rely on teachers and caregivers to help them learn (Hong, Milgram & Rowell, 2004; Gianzero, 1999; Hara & Burke, 1998). A part of the learning process requires the completion of homework. Thus emphasis is placed on homework facilitation and continued cognitive and intellectual development within the home environment (Green,

Walker, Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 2007). Homework involvement can be employed outside of the home setting such as that of an institution. Thus the involvement process is not dependant on location, but on parental decisions to become involved in their child's education (Anderson & Minke, 2005). Research indicates that homework is multifaceted and helps children plan events in their lives and take responsibility (Sherbon, 2000).

Within the South African context, there are an increasing number of children who are institutionalised as a result of being orphaned by HIV/AIDS, abuse, domestic violence and the loss of family due to other diseases or natural causes (UNAIDS, 2004). The type of care experienced by these children and their overall development is central to this research. In particular, it is the cognitive developmental needs of OVC within the institutions which is of concern as well as the individuals who facilitate such needs. Unlike children reared outside of the institution, the home environment for OVC is the institution and thus the caregiver is thought to fulfill the parental role. The role of the caregiver and type of homework involvement experienced by the child in an institution is very important, because information coming from a knowledgeable other can promote cognitive development (Vygotsky, 1978).

Research regarding parental involvement in children's lives indicates that effective and dedicated time to children's educational needs is the key to improved student achievement (Hara & Burke, 1998). Work brought home from school is implicated in both parent-child interaction, cognitive development and a source of improving academic grades; thus parental involvement in homework facilitation is proposed as an effective and crucial need of a child in school (Villas-Boas, 1998; Bryan & Burstein, 2004; Tam & Chan, 2005). Bronfenbrenner (1979) has highlighted the importance of understanding human development within distal and proximal social systems. In particular, it is thought that "the dynamic variables implicit in parent's thinking and behavior choices related to involvement may help us understand more precisely why parents make their involvement choices" (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997, p.8).

In the South African institutional context, an understanding of why and how caregivers choose to involve themselves in children's homework would help to address an area of research which seems to be neglected. The starting point for promoting cognitive development among OVC within institutions is thought to be grounded in the very people who care for the children. Thus the reasons why caregivers within institutions choose to

become actively involved in OVC's educational development is thought to be dependant on their personal beliefs, like that of parents and outlined in the Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler model (1995).

The promotion of both facilitation and education in developing children's cognitive and intellectual abilities is dependent on three psychological constructs as proposed by Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (1995). A parent's fundamental decision to become involved in their child's education especially homework is "a function of three constructs: a) the parent's construction of his or her role in the child's life, b) the parent's sense of self-efficacy for helping her or his child succeed in school and c) the general invitations, demands and opportunities for parental involvement presented by both child and the school" (Hoover-Dempsey, Sandler, Walker, Whetsel, Dallaire & Wilkins, 2002, p.8-9). It is proposed that, in order to promote parent-child interaction, increase educational outcomes and overall development, research "must focus at least in part on the parent's perspective in the process" (Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2002, p.36). Thus the perceptions of caregivers regarding their homework involvement is the central aim of this research in order to promote the role of mediation and cognitive development among OVC within an institutional setting in South Africa. It has been stated that, within the South African context, the need for effective cognitive and intellectual developmental facilitation among children that are institutionalised is paramount; therefore caregivers, "policymakers, researchers, educators, students, families and community leaders" should be "equally challenged to make education a genuine community enterprise" (Gianzero, 1999; Hara & Burke, 1998,p.9). This would enable the promotion of OVC's education, and interventions would be able to target the underprivileged such as OVC and promote community growth and economic success.

Limited research on caregiver involvement among institutionalised children in South Africa calls for insight into caregiver homework involvement. Caregiver homework involvement and mediation efforts ultimately influence the children's cognitive development, and therefore their academic achievement. Caregiver involvement and a functional environment extend past the here-and-now into institutionalised children's future developments.

This section has discussed the rationale for the research, and placed emphasis on the caregivers and the type of homework involvement that institutionalised OVC receive. In

order to assess caregivers' perceptions regarding their homework involvement, this research sought to ask four primary research questions of participants. The research questions will now be stated and the methodology of the research discussed.

1.4 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1. What are the perceptions of caregivers regarding their homework involvement with institutionalised children?

2. What are the perceptions of caregivers regarding their role construction associated with homework involvement among institutionalised children?

3. What are the perceptions of caregivers regarding their self-efficacy associated with homework involvement among institutionalised children?

4. What are the perceptions of caregivers regarding general opportunities, invitations and demands associated with homework involvement among institutionalised children?

1.5 METHODOLOGY

This research aimed to investigate the perceptions of caregivers regarding their homework involvement among institutionalised children through the application of three level-one constructs of the Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler model (1995). This research, therefore, sought to employ an exploratory qualitative method as previous research on such a topic was absent.

The research design was classified as a qualitative exploratory design. A qualitative approach was the primary method of investigation as this research highlighted an "attempt to capture the sense that lies within the human experience" as viewed from the human perspective and phenomenological field (Parker, 1994, p.3). A qualitative exploratory method places direct emphasis on exploring interpretations of the research context and particular insight of the participant as the research progresses (Larkin, Watts & Clifton, 2006; Parker, 1994). Therefore, the research was located within an idiographic interpretivist framework as deeper understanding was sought from the data, whereby the amount of data was less important than the depth of data (Parker, 1994; Neuman, 1994). Emphasis was primarily placed on the psychological constructs located within the first level of the Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler model (1995). The research was therefore deductive in nature by moving from theory to the specific context of caregiver homework

involvement among children that are institutionalised within a South African context and required systematic interpretations as the research continued (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The data instrument was the researcher keeping in line with the emphasis on a qualitative human experience which could be interpreted by an individual whom could make meaning out of verbal and non-verbal communication (Larkin et al., 2006).

Data collection took the form of a self-developed semi-structured interview consisting of four questionnaires (Appendix F) consisting of a total of 22 questions. Questions were developed in relation to accessing information about a) caregiver demographics, b) caregiver perceptions of their role construction associated with homework among institutionalised children, c) how caregivers perceive their self-efficacy associated with homework involvement among institutionalised children and d) how caregivers perceive general invitations, demands and opportunities associated with homework involvement among institutionalised children.

Semi-structured interviews were a means by which participants could answer questions in an insightful informative manner as required by qualitative methods whilst enabling the researcher to implement interview guidelines (Del Barrio, 1999). A self-developed semi-structured interview schedule was thought to be the best form of enquiry considering the exploratory and qualitative nature of this research and, more importantly, the context-specific nature of the sample. The development of the interview questions was based on an interactional process of systematically assessing relevant literature and incorporating guided supervision input. Once the interview questions were finalized by the researcher and the supervisor, they were employed accordingly.

Data obtained from the seven semi-structured interviews had undergone a qualitative data analysis. Thematic content analysis was the primary means of data analysis. Thematic content analysis was given preference as the data analysis method because it was a qualitative approach that placed emphasis on an in-depth interpretation of the content of data and recurrent themes (Golding, 1999). Themes that emerged from the data analysis were analyzed accordingly in light of supervisor suggestions, until a participant's perceptions were accurately reflected by the data presented by according themes.

This research was classified as a non-experimental design based on the fact that there was the absence of an independent and dependent variable (Whitley, 2002). Therefore,

there was no manipulation whatsoever, the absence of a control group and no randomization (Whitley, 2002). It was not the aim of this research to make causal conclusions. It was intended, however, that, through the data collection and analysis strategies, a descriptive and exploratory account of caregivers' perceptions would be obtained (Whitley, 2002). Themes emerging from data analysis were outlined in a number of broad categories relating to the participants' perceptions of homework involvement, their role construction and self-efficacy. Sub-themes were analyzed and discussed accordingly.

1.6 STRUCTURE OF RESEARCH REPORT

The following is an outline of the structure of the research report:

Chapter one - Highlights and discusses the aims and rationale of this study.

Chapter two – Will focus on an in-depth discussion and overview of relevant literature and research concerning the research topic. This section provides the grounding and rationale for the research topic and questions posed.

Chapter three - Outlines the theoretical framework for the research, and offers insight into the role of mediation and cognitive development from a socio-cultural perspective. Thus Feuerstein's Mediated Learning Experience (MLE) and Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) will be discussed in light of showing the importance of homework involvement as employed by caregivers and experienced by the children.

Chapter four - Highlights the research finding's and discusses them according to a) the overarching construct, b) the overarching questions, and c) the overarching themes. All findings are discussed according to overarching themes.

Chapter five - Outlines the research design and methodology, including information on the qualitative nature of this study, how participants were selected and ethical considerations that were taken into consideration.

Chapter six - Examines and discusses the overall strengths and limitations of the research. Following such a discussion, recommendations are made to the institution concerned as well as to areas of further research. The chapter is then concluded with a critical overview of the research.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The aim of this research is to investigate the perceptions of caregivers regarding their homework involvement with institutionalised children, applying the three level-one constructs of the Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler model (1995). In the previous chapter the rationale, aims and structure of the report were outlined. In this chapter, pertinent literature will be reviewed in order to motivate for and demonstrate the significance of this research.

Firstly, this chapter shall discuss and locate the orphan and vulnerable children (OVC) crisis within a Sub-Saharan Africa context, whilst highlighting the factors which are responsible for the large numbers of OVC such as abuse, neglect and, particularly in South Africa, HIV/AIDS. This research is therefore not on HIV/AIDS, but on OVC placed in institutions as a result of factors named above. Emphasis is, however, placed on HIV/AIDS as a core perpetuator of the OVC situation within South Africa and is addressed in-depth.

Secondly, the role of the institution in providing a place of safety for OVC will be discussed, whilst investigating the influences that institutionalisation has on OVC development. In section 2.5 intellectual developmental delays and academic achievement will be explored. Research highlights the negative influences that institutionalisation has on children's cognitive development and relevant literature will be explored and discussed. Having discussed the effects of institutionalisation on cognitive development, this section then highlights the role of adoption and intervention in promoting positive development. Thus this suggests that, within the South African context, intervening at an institutional level to help improve cognitive development would be a more amenable way of promoting OVC's cognitive development.

In section 2.7, homework is highlighted and discussed as a key area in which cognitive development and parental involvement intersects and can be used as a primary site for intervention. Section 2.8 elaborates on the key influences of parental involvement on cognitive development, specifically highlighting the positive influences that parental involvement may have on the academic outcomes for children.

The last section of this chapter introduces and discusses the Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler model (1995). The reasons why parents decided to become involved in their children's education are proposed at the first level of the model. Specifically it focuses on the three psychological constructs which influence the process of involvement, namely: a) personal construction of the parental role, b) personal sense of efficacy for helping children succeed in school and c) opportunities and demands for involvement presented by children and school. In order to promote the intellectual and cognitive development of children in institutions and to advocate for better educational interventions, research on caregiver involvement in homework among institutionalised children is needed and this hypothesis will be extrapolated on through the presentation and discussion of relevant literature.

The first section that will now be discussed relates to OVC within the South African context and factors that increase the number of OVC. This is done in order to contextualize the literature and, more specifically, situate the reader in terms of the boarder context in which OVC's cognitive development is placed at risk.

2.2 Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVC)

Worldwide it is reported that the number of OVC is dramatically increasing as social, economic and health issues place strain on the type of care parents, guardians and the state can provide for children (UNICEF, 2003). South Africa is one such country in which inequality, unemployment, disease and poverty are some of the major social challenges affecting the lives of many children and placing them at risk (Padayachee, 2006). It is therefore thought that the effects of poverty, inequality and disease are felt most significantly by the children of South Africa. A large sector of the South African population is comprised of vulnerable and at risk children as a result of factors such as poverty, disease, inequality and HIV/AIDS (UNICEF, 2003). It is estimated that "three out of every four children in South Africa are living in poverty" (UNICEF, 2003, p.4).

The legal definition of a child in South Africa, according to *Policies for Orphans and Vulnerable Children,* is a boy or girl aged 18 years and who can give medical consent to treatment at the age of 14 years without parental consent (Smart, 2003). It has been stated that "key role players in the children's rights arena felt that the most significant challenges facing children in 2003 were poverty, child abuse and violence, HIV/AIDS and lack of access to services" (Smart, 2003, p.4). The South African government has started

to focus its efforts on the alleviation of poverty within the last decade. However, the effects of poverty are far-reaching and further insight and effort are needed if the children of South Africa are to be protected (UNICEF, 2003). Following more than a "decade of inadequate action, there is now an absolute imperative that the global community and every individual nation urgently mount large-scale, multifaceted responses to secure the future of all orphans and vulnerable children" (Smart, 2003, p.1). Urgent action is required universally in order to promote the development of children and prevent them from bearing the brunt of society's challenges. Thus, it is thought that research in general and, more specifically, in relation to promoting OVC individual capacities, such as their cognitive development, is needed. Not only is research needed in order to gain insight and knowledge about OVC, but also about the people that care for them and how their development can be promoted through positive intervention.

There is no single agreed upon definition for the term 'Orphan and Vulnerable Children' (OVC), as the difficulty with defining OVC is that such a term is viewed as encompassing all social phenomena which may pose a risk to children or as a result of such factors leave them vulnerable (Smart, 2003).

In South Africa, the HIV/AIDS epidemic is significantly related to literature on OVC and highlights the seriousness of children being directly and indirectly affected by the epidemic (SaSix, 2009; UNICEF, 2003; Smart, 2008, UNAIDS, 2008; Journaids, 2009). It is proposed by Hunter and Williamson (2000) that HIV/AIDS presents itself as a family disease whereby the impact of the pandemic results in generations of OVC being left behind and thus reshaping the dynamics of the South African population (as cited in Mohangi, 2008). Not only is a generation of OVC left behind by the HIV/AIDS pandemic, but the "scale of the OVC problem is masked by the time lag between HIV infection and death if all HIV infections were to stop today, it's likely that the number of orphans would continue to rise for at least the next ten years" (Journaids, 2009, p.2).

Statistics estimate that 1.9 million people were newly infected with HIV in Sub-Saharan Africa in 2007, bringing the total infection rate of people living with HIV to 22, 5 million (UNAIDS, 2008). Sub-Saharan estimates account for two thirds (68%) of the global total, whilst 75% of all AIDS deaths were also reported in Sub-Saharan Africa (UNAIDS, 2008). As a result of sub-Saharan Africa's HIV/AIDS pandemic, millions of children are faced with the uncertainty of their future and the death of their parents and extended family

(UNICEF, 2008). Worldwide, it is estimated that there are 133 million children who are orphaned (children aged 0-17), of which 15 million were orphaned as a result of AIDS (UNICEF, 2008). Of the 15 million children orphaned by AIDS, 12 million are living in Sub-Saharan Africa (UNICEF, 2008). It has been projected by UNAIDS (2004) that, by 2010, the number of orphans in Sub-Saharan Africa will dramatically increase to 18.4 million.

It is estimated that there are five million people living with HIV in South Africa. This in an estimate which has placed South Africa as one of the leading countries of HIV infection in the world (Kaiser Family Foundation, 2007; National Department of Health, 2008). It is evident that the "full impact of the AIDS epidemic hits the hardest in the lives of young children" (Roby & Shaw, 2006, p.199). It is therefore significant that 80 percent of the world's AIDS orphans come from Sub-Saharan Africa. Data collected by UNICEF (2008) has estimated that, in South Africa during the period of 2007, a total of 2.5 million children lost one or both parents due to all causes of death, of which 1.8 million children were orphaned due to AIDS. Such statistics cannot be ignored as the lives of South Africa's children are placed at risk and their health and safety is being overlooked.

2.3 Orphans and institutionalisation

The word orphan is derived from the Greek word *orphanos* which means to be without parents (Oxford, 2009). The modern use of the word orphan denotes a child whose parents have both died. However, there are, in fact, different uses of the word orphan which vary from country to country (Grassly & Timaeus, 2003; Smart, 2003). The publication by UNAIDS (2002) '*Children on the Brink'* has highlighted a universal conceptualisation of the term orphan to include at risk and vulnerable children. For the purpose of this research, however, the term orphan is defined by UNIADS (2002) as a child under the age of 15 who has lost either their mother (maternal orphan) or father (paternal orphan) and a vulnerable child is one who may or may not have parents.

In the face of the HIV/AIDS epidemic in South Africa and the world, it is not uncommon for a child to be orphaned due to both parents dying, and thus the term double orphan is given (Skinner, et al, 2004; International Adoption, 2008; Thokomala, 2008). Research in South Africa has shown that communities form definitions independent of government jargon which incorporate the lived experiences of individuals within the community, thereby adding meaning to the abstract westernised terminology of an 'orphan' (Skinner et al, 2004). Although the UNIADS (2002) definition is most popular, Skinner et al (2004)

found that, within their sample, the definition of an orphan was extended to include children who had lost a parent as a result of being deserted by that parent or the child's parents were not willing to care for them and, therefore, incorporates the experience of vulnerability.

The global response to Africa's orphan crisis has been anything but productive. According to Bellamy (2001), the Executive Director of UNICEF, this perceived unresponsiveness has been labeled as "the conspiracy of silence" (as cited in Roby & Shaw, 2006). Awareness since such statements were and have been made, resulted in the United Nation's General Assembly's acknowledgment and commitment to fighting the orphan crisis (Roby & Shaw, 2006). Thus a model for orphan care was developed which aimed to a) strengthen the capacity of families, b) mobilise and strengthen community-based responses, c) ensure access to services, d) strengthen government's role in protecting children and lastly, e) raise awareness in developing countries like Africa and across the world (Roby & Shaw, 2006). In light of decades of research on OVC, it is clear that such children continue to face many challenges on a micro and macro scale.

Research has shown that OVC are "more deprived than their national peers of education, socialization and nutrition" whilst simultaneously experiencing different degrees of "isolation, prejudice, crime, abuse, neglect, child labor, prostitution, exploitation and HIV infection" (UNICEF, 2003 as cited in Roby & Shaw, 2006, p.200). Psychologically, the effects of experiencing the death of a loved one whilst simultaneously becoming an orphan are grave (Journaids, 2009). It is thought that the loss of a parent or both "can deprive a child from a family environment which is crucial in the development of a positive self-identity and self-esteem" (Journaids, 2009, p.3). It has been proposed by Foster (2002) that orphans are most likely to experience the psychological effects of "depression, guilt, fear, and possible long-term mental health problems" (as cited in Roby & Shaw, 2006, p. 200).

The fate of a child who is orphaned or vulnerable is usually dependant on multiple factors namely: the ability of extended family to care for them, available resources, age, government policy and community-based interventions. When possible, the traditional African practice of caring for an orphan or vulnerable child is practiced whereby a relative of the parent's extended family will assume the parent role and take on the child and try to care for them in the best possible way (Mohangi, 2008). However, this type of inner-family

adoption places a large burden on the adoptive family and usually alternatives are sought (Mohangi, 2008). According to research by Kodero (2001) on a Kenyan sample, the needs of orphans were perceived to be best met by institutions, then followed guardian care and lastly the care of extended family (as cited in Mohangi, 2008). In an unfortunate case, which is more common than not, children are placed in an institution by overburdened family members or child welfare (Roby & Shaw, 2006).

An institution is defined as "an organization providing residential care for people with special needs" (Oxford, 2009, p.1). According to Maclean (2003), institutions have been a topic of interest for both researcher and psychologist alike throughout history. The quality of care within institutions is thought to be inconsistent, and thus the type of care and environment a child experiences can vary from one facility to another. The sentiment towards placing a child in an institution is mixed (Mohangi, 2008; Maclean, 2003). According to Christian Aid and UNICEF (2006), whilst "institutions for orphan and vulnerable children might be perceived as the most recent symbol of modernization, researchers and aid organisations generally consider institutions as the 'last resort' for the placement of children" (as cited in Mohangi, 2008, p.49). It is thought that children encounter "inadequate sanitation, nutrition, medical care and an ineffective nurturing environment" and are "at a high risk for impaired health, developmental difficulties, behavioural aberrations and attachment problems" in institutions (Groza, Ryan and Thomas, 2008, p.186).

The effects of institutionalisation on child's development and attachment have historically been documented by Golfard (1943), Spitz (1945), and Bowlby (1953). Seminal research, like that of Golfard (1943), Spitz (1945) and Bowlby (1953), continues to highlight the negative effects that early deprivation and institutionalisation has on a child's overall development as indicated by more current research (UNICEF, 2004; Maclean, 2003; Van Ijzendoorn et., 2008). In general, research shows that institutionalised children experience health problems, developmental delays and mental health problems (UNICEF, 2004; Maclean, 2003; Roby & Shaw, 2006; Van Ijzendoorn et al., 2008; Beckett, Maughan, Rutter, Castle, Colvert, Groothues, Kreppner, Stevens, O'Connor and Sonuga-Barke, 2006; Fisher, Ames, Chisholm and Savoie,1997; Astoints, 2007).

Research by Maclean (2003), Roby & Shaw (2006) and Van Ijzendoorn et al (2008) suggests that there are many negative consequences for a child placed in an institution.

Such findings are independent of the child's age, culture or location of the institution (Maclean, 2003; Roby & Shaw, 2006; Van Ijzendoorn et al, 2008). The British scientist, White (1999) stated that institutionalised children "are different from other children as a consequence of a large number of various stigmatizing processes which they experience in school, in relation with neighbours, in relation with the 'public world' of social services, evidently because they are physically or psychologically separated from their families" (as cited in Astoints, 2007, p.24).

Research on the positive aspects of child development are not so prevalent, but are worth noting. Authors such as McKenzie (1996), Vorria, Papaligoura, Sarafidou, Kopakaki, Dunn, Van Ijzendoorn and Kontopoulou (2006) as well as Moulson, Westerlund, Fox, Zeanah, and Nelson (2009) have researched the effects of institutionalisation on childhood development longitudinally and found positive factors of institutionalisation and adoption. Vorria et al (2006) researched the development of adopted children after institutional care and found that children's initial attachment and behavioural problems had decreased which is in direct contradiction to the seminal research of Spitz (1945) and Golfard (1943). Further research by McKenzie (1996) showed that, through the results of a survey on accomplishments of alumni from three orphanages, alumni orphans had achieved success in their lives despite their institutionalisation as a child. Such findings indicated that "while institutional care may not be desirable for all disadvantaged children, it was helpful for many" and therefore it suggested that "at least some if not many orphanages in the country appear to have known how to break the cycles of poverty, neglect, and abuse for hordes of children" (McKenzie, 1996, p.104).

Children, by nature and by situation, are thought to possess an innate capacity for resilience which allows them to adapt to the institutional environment and protect themselves from further threat (Mohangi, 2008). According to Fergus and Zimmerman (2005), resilience generally refers to "the process of overcoming the negative affects of risk exposure, coping successfully with traumatic experiences and avoiding the negative trajectories that are usually associated with risk" (as cited in Mohangi, 2008, p.24). Although resilience is a positive aspect of child development within the institution, it cannot single-handedly prevent the negative effects that institutionalisation has on cognitive, physical, emotional and psychological development. Although there are few positive effects that institutionalisation may have on child development, the overwhelming literature on the negative effects of institutionalisation on child development cannot be

ignored. If children are to receive the best care possible in the institutional environment, research needs to investigate what the causes are of these negative responses to the institution so that interventions can be developed. In order to gain such insight, the next section aims to discuss OVC development within the institution in an attempt to conceptualize the scope and negative impact of institutionalisation on OVC's cognitive development.

2.4 Institutionalisation and orphan development

Psychologists have, for a number of decades, paid special attention to child development within institutions as a result of ethical parameters and experimentation restrictions in laboratory settings (Maclean, 2003). Data obtained from childhood development studies within an institution has been viewed as providing invaluable information about childhood development and, in turn, has been used to "inform theory, research and social policy with respect to both normal and atypical development" (Maclean, 2003, p.853). Ultimately, the institution has been used by researchers to provide the following: Firstly, a research setting that allows for the effects of deprivation on development to be studied in-depth and secondly, a setting in which the roots of particular pathologies, presented in behaviours which may emerge as a result of the environment context can be examined (Maclean, 2003).

Romanian and Canadian orphanage research over the past 15 years has focused on a cause and effect relationship among environmental deprivation and future outcomes of children placed in orphanages (Van Ijzendoorn et al., 2005).Valuable empirical and qualitative data can be referred to in order to highlight the negative effects of deprivation on child development within an atypical environment, as well as the positive aspects which promote development within the institution (Van Ijzendoorn et al, 2008). Both seminal and current research highlights key areas of which institutionalisation has had a significant effect. Key areas are a) intellectual development, b) academic achievement, c) attachment, d) behaviour problems and lastly e) indiscriminant friendliness (Roby & Shaw, 2003; Van Ijzendoorn, et al 2008; Maclean, 2003; Fyhr, 2000).

Seminal research concerning the effects of deprivation on infant development began in the 1940's and 1950's with the work of Golfard (1943), Spitz (1945) and Bowlby (1953) according to Van Ijzendoorn et al (2008). Spitz (1945) studied the intellectual development among children in institutions and reported a significant decline an in infant's

developmental quotients (DQ's) during early periods of institutionalisation. In total, Spitz (1945) reported that, by the end of the second year, an infant's DQ had declined to a low of 45 when compared to assumed normal infants' DQ of 100. Infants' decline in DQ, according to Spitz (1945), was independent of environmental improvements within the institution, thus he concluded "children were irreparably damaged by institutionalisation in the first years of life" (Spitz, 1945, p. 65).

Like Spitz (1945), Golfard (1943) also studied the effects of deprivation in infants who were institutionalised. Golfard (1943), however, studied children who were reared for the first three years of their life in an institution and then placed in foster care. Results stated that "early institutional rearing resulted in developmental deficits that were not overcome once children were placed in more stimulating and loving environments" (Golfard, 1943, p.260). In some seminal research, such as Spitz's (1945) and Golfard's (1943), it has been claimed that children in institutions are intellectually compromised as a result of becoming orphaned and being institutionalised at an age when cognitive stimulation is most needed (Maclean, 2003).

Physical development research on OVC children living in institutions provides a similar pessimistic outlook. Ultimately, the majority of studies on children's physical development agree that "children adopted from orphanages tend to be poor in health, malnourished, and small" whilst it is predicted the " longer they remain in the orphanage the shorter they are for their age" (Maclean, 2003, p.863). The third and most frequently studied effect of institutionalisation is that of behavioural problems which are most often linked to the absence of parental figures, a moral up bringing and educative social environment (Fisher et al., 1997). An in-depth study of Canadian OVC, who had since been fostered, found that the most prevalent behavioral problems children displayed were a) eating problems, usually overeating, b) stereotyped behaviour problems which involved repetitive behaviours and lastly c) peer relationship problems (Fisher et al., 1997). In some "findings across time and studies are consistent in showing the negative impact of institutionalisation on all aspects of children's development (intellectual, physical, behavioural, and social-emotional)" yet such results show that institutionalisation as the "risk factor for less optimal development, does not doom a child to psychopathology" (Maclean, 2003, p.853).

Of major concern in literature highlighting institutionalised children's development is their cognitive and intellectual development (Groza et al., 2008; Fisher et al., 1997; Maclean, 2003; Vorria et al., 2006). Such research highlights that orphaned children have a significant delay in their cognitive functioning when compared to non-adopted children (Vorria et al., 2006; Groza et al., 2008; Maclean, 2003; Van Ijzendoorn et al., 2008). It is thought that this proposed delay in institutionalised children's cognitive development should be taken seriously as cognitive development plays a vital role in a child's overall development and ability to function in society (Cockcroft, 2002).

Cognition refers to "how people perceive, learn, remember and think about information" which is a vital part of human functioning (Sternberg, 2006, p.25). Cognitive development is not thought to occur in isolation, and, in fact, is influenced by one's socio-cultural environment. It is viewed as a developmental process that can be promoted by the interaction of an adult with a child in a meaningful way (Karpov, 2005; Feuerstein, 1990; Vygotsky, 1978). The future of orphans within society once they have reached the legal age of adulthood is dependent on their ability to function according to societal rules and norms. OVC's independence will require the ability to earn money in order for them to eat, be clothed and find shelter. Economic security is thus dependant on the ability of one to work in exchange for a wage.

It is thought that for OVC, whom have not mastered an average cognitive functioning level, the job sector will be very limited and money would be sought through theft and drugs which would perpetuate an already fragile social system. Both intellectual development and academic achievement are thought to be two factors which can influence an orphan and vulnerable child's future. Therefore insight is needed into how OVC are viewed in light of both.

2.5 Intellectual development delays and academic achievement

Research warns that the intellectual development of children within institutions is at great risk (Groza, et al., 2008; Maclean, 2003; Van Ijzendoorn et al., 2008). In a recent study, Van Ijzendoorn et al (2008) carried out a meta-analysis of 75 studies on more than 3,888 children in 19 different countries in order to investigate the intellectual development of children living in institutions in comparison to children living in foster families (Van Ijzendoorn et al., 2008). Results drawn from the meta-analysis concluded that "children growing up in orphanages showed a substantial delay in IQ compared to children reared

in (foster or biological) families" and when the absolute IQs and DQs were compared between the two groups of children, a difference of almost 20 IQ points was found (Van, Ijzendoorn et al., 2008, p.355).

Van Ijzendoorn et al (2008) hypothesized that the cause of intellectual delays in institutionalised children's development is thought to be the result of multiple factors. Most commonly cited factors, however, are the large numbers of children in a particular institution, poor developmental environments, caregiver insensitivity issues and lack of cognitive stimulation (Smyke, Koga, Johnson, Fox, Marshall, Nelson, Zeanah, 2007). Dennis (1973), a researcher in this field of enquiry, researched exactly how much of a delay was present in children who are institutionalised by comparing children in institutions and fostered children in Lebanon (as cited in Van Ijzendoorn et al., 2008). Results showed that, at the age of 11, fostered children received a normal score on intelligence. However, the same aged orphaned children received a diagnosis of mental retardation (Van Ijzendoorn et al., 2008). Van Ijzendoorn et al (2005) have reiterated such findings in a meta-analysis on six studies including 253 participants whereby fostered children outperformed their orphaned counterparts in IQ tests.

Although Van Ijzendoorn et al's (2008) meta analysis excluded studies assessing academic achievement, school competence and learning problems, research by Maclean (2003) has provided insight into the effect of intellectual delays among institutionalised children. Emphasis was specifically placed on academic achievement. Vorria, Rutter, Pickles, Wolkind and Hobsbaum (1998) reported a significant difference in academic performance in 9-year-old orphaned children when compared to same gender and aged peers living at home. Additionally, a study conducted by Le Mare, Vaughan, Warford and Fernyhough (2001) on a sample of Canadian orphans that were adopted, reported that 60 percent of orphaned children adopted after two years of age had repeated a grade. In some research, it has been shown that "poor academic achievement has been found in both children in orphanages and children after adoption" (Maclean, 2003, p.859). Taking the above into account, the role of adoption is then brought into question. Although research has highlighted the negative effects of institutionalisation on children even after adoption, adoption is still considered the best intervention for promoting normal development.

However, the vast number of OVC in South Africa cannot rely on adoption as an only means to promoting positive development. Therefore, interventions need to be employed in the institutions themselves in order to promote child development. Thus such research aims to gain insight into the perceptions of caregivers within institutions in order to recommend future interventions to promote cognitive development.

2.6 Intervention versus adoption: the South African reality

Minimal improvements in cognitive and intellectual delays among OVC placed in institutions have been reported and thus highlight adoption as a primary intervention (Vorria et al., 2006; Groza et al., 2008). Research shows that an orphan's "transition to an adoptive home certainly stimulates their physical development, sociability, and assertiveness, as well as their behavioural adjustment" (Vorria et al., 2006, p.1252). Although adoption is the best intervention for aiding orphan development, unfortunately the number of orphans in South African and Sub-Saharan Africa jeopardizes the availability and number of willing adoptees significantly, especially when children themselves are perceived as possibly being infected with HIV from their mothers (Roby & Shaw, 2006). In the case of South Africa and many developing countries, the option of intervention at an institutional level is best suited in order to promote child development. It is therefore suggested that cognitive development be improved and promoted through intervening at the institutional level. This implies that institutions should provide the necessary means for promoting such development.

The institution typically comprises of children and caregivers and thus any form of intervention requires the participation of both especially when interventions are targeting the cognitive and intellectual development of OVC (Fulcher, 2005). According to research by Dennis (1973) and Carlson and Earls (1997), the "possibility of enhancement in cognitive abilities" may occur though "radical improvement in environmental circumstances" (as cited in Beckett et al, 2006, p.1). Research has shown that the more stimulating and supporting the environment provided by the caregiver is, the better the child will develop and, in turn, it is hypothesized that an increase in their cognitive development will occur (Smyke et al, 2007). It is a fact that "children do better if they are reared in better quality institutions" or in "institutions in which perceptual or social environments have been enriched" (Maclean, 2003, p.860).

It has been proposed that "children living in residential institutions need the same sort of care as children living in families" and thus a family type environment may be beneficial to children and their development (Fyhr, 2000). The 'artificial family institution' requires that caregivers fulfill the parental role and thus such institutions "are able and capable of providing physical care and a psychological parent-child relationship as well as a model of morally sound behaviour" (Fyhr, 2000, p.62). A model for caregiving of adopted children after institutionalisation is based on similar principles related to the parent-child interaction based on congruent care (Gribble, 2007). This may seem utopian as research shows that institutional rearing is characterised by "rotating shifts, large child to caregiver ratios, and limited social, cognitive, and language stimulation" (Smyke et al., 2007, p.211). Not only is the environment of the institution characterised by instability, but caregivers themselves may be overwhelmed due to limited or no training and the challenging conditions of such work and therefore there are numerous factors which may contribute to the type of involvement the institutionalised children receive (Fyhr, 2000).

This has led to multiple explanations for the delays in intellectual development among institutionalised children. Specific factors for such delays point towards malnutrition related to brain development and lack of cognitive stimulation in the orphanage environment (Smyke et al., 2007; Van Ijzendoorn et al., 2008; Maclean, 2003). Due to the fact that the future of many children's success in institutions is somewhat placed on their intellectual development and academic achievement, it is proposed that cognitive stimulation and caregiver support rather receive the most attention in promoting children's development within institutions, particularly in South Africa.

Piaget's (1952) constructivist theory on child development places direct emphasis on interaction between innate objects and people in order to stimulate cognitive development. It is thought that such interaction between orphaned child, object and caregiver is lacking within institutions. Therefore, emphasis needs to be placed on the facilitative capacity of caregivers in the institution in relation to a child's cognitive development. The training of caregivers to engage with the child in a cognitively stimulating manner is crucial (Gribble, 2007; Fyhr, 2000). Research concerning the caregiver environment within the institution showed that "even after controlling for a number of child characteristics and percent of life raised in an institution, observed caregiving quality was associated with cognitive development and competence in young children" (Smyke, 2007, p.215).

It is thought that the means for caregivers to engage with the children in order to promote cognitive development, are often limited in institutions unlike the home environment where educational resources are made available by the parent. It is therefore suggested that, within an institution, emphasis is placed on the role of the school in providing the domain for cognitive development and associated learning materials. Homework is considered to be a means whereby learning material from school is brought home with the child to the institution and thus requires and creates a domain for cognitive interaction and development. It is proposed that homework assigned by schools acts as an important medium in which education, intellect and cognitive development coincide. This is particularly relevant especially when homework requires assistance from a knowledgeable figure external to the school environment (Cooper, Robinson & Patall, 2006). Taking the above into account, homework may be viewed as an appropriate activity through which a caregiver could address intellectual and cognitive development within the institutional environment which is similar to what would happen in a non-institutionalised child's life (Fyhr, 2000; Sherbon, 2000). The role of homework, especially in lower grades, places emphasis on the need for a parent to interact with their child during homework time and engage in educational activities that promote cognitive development. It is therefore assumed that parental involvement is extremely important in promoting cognitive development through the means of homework.

2.7 Homework and parental involvement

A vast amount of research on primary and secondary school children's intellectual development has highlighted the role that parents and homework play in a child's educational development, as well as in their cognitive and intellectual development (Hara & Burke, 1998; The Children's Aid Society, 2003; Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2002; Walker et al., 2004; Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997; Gianzero, 1999; Tam & Chan, 2005; Villas-Boas, 1998; Cooper et al, 2006; Sherbon, 2000; Bempechat, 2004). In particular, homework has been identified as an important function and process in a child's cognitive development which incorporates interaction from both the home environment and school environment (Sherbon, 2000).

The home and school play a central role in a child's life. In fact, it is thought that the home plays a crucial role in the child's preparation for life (Sherbon, 2000). It can be assumed that for the orphaned child the institution may be the closest association of a home and

therefore the role of the caregiver is viewed in a parental sense, even if not functional as research has highlighted. In this research it is intimated that the boundaries between home and school are intersected by homework. Homework is defined as "any task assigned by school teachers intended for students to carry out during non-school hours" (Cooper, 1989 as cited in Cooper et al., 2006, p.1). Excluded from this definition of homework is " a) in-school guided study, b) home-study courses delivered through the mail, television, audio or videocassette, or the Internet, and c) extracurricular activities such as sports or participation in clubs" (Cooper et al., 2006,p.1). Variations in homework can be classified according to " a) amount, b) skill area, c) purpose, d) degree of choice for student, e) completion of deadline, f) degree of individualisation and, g) social context" (Cooper et al., 2006, p.1). All of these promote skills in cognition and may be dependent on help from a knowledgeable individual within the home environment such as the parent or caregiver.

Homework for children has a multitude of purposes. Some of these are obvious but nevertheless have an impact on numerous aspects of school life and beyond (Walker et al, 2004). The primary academic purpose of homework is to implement instructional means of learning. According to Becker and Epstein (1982) the student is therefore "provided with an opportunity to practice or review material that has already been presented in class" (as cited in Cooper et al., 2006, p.1). Research by Tam and Chan (2005) found that homework fulfilled two major functions: Firstly, homework was viewed in light of learning-related functions including "consolidating learning, preparing for tests and examinations, developing learning skills, assessing learning and improving teaching and secondly, major functions that homework performed were not related to learning but actually important to "developing self-esteem and responsibility, encouraging collaboration, and enhancing teacher-student communication" (Tam & Chan, 2006, p.3). Homework, therefore, appears as a multifaceted activity in which learning occurs in order to promote academic achievement as well as personal characteristics, such as responsibility and the concept of time.

It has therefore been argued that homework goes far beyond its academic function and is a "vital means by which children can receive the training they need to become mature learners" and therefore plays a "critical long-term role in the development of children's achievement motivation" (Bempechat, 2004, p.189). It is thought that homework encompasses motivational factors in learning whereby achievement motivation reflects a

child's beliefs, attitudes and emotions which, in turn, influence a learner's performance in school (Bempechat, 2004). Student beliefs and motivation are thought to originate from their parents' and teachers' beliefs and it is therefore hypothesized that "parents' and teachers' beliefs have a profound influence on the development of children's own beliefs about what it takes to do well in school, as well as their efforts to learn and apply themselves" (Stipek & Gralinski, 1991,p. 363). In summation, research indicates a positive relationship between parental attitude and beliefs and what students believe about homework and how they perform (Bempechat, 2004).

Taking into account the intellectual delays, low IQ and DQ scores presented in the above literature as well as the role that homework plays in educational and cognitive development, it is necessary to understand the relationship between parental involvement, homework facilitation and academic achievement as the future of most orphaned children within institutions is dependant on such factors for the development of their intellect. The intersection between school, home and mediating influences on a child's educational development directly highlights the role of parental involvement in tasks such as homework and school activities. This requires further investigation within the domain of the institution.

2.8 Parental involvement and academic outcomes

Epstein (1994) defines parental involvement in such a way that allows for the presence of a non-biological parental figure to be involved in educational activities, such as a caregiver. Parental involvement is defined by Epstein (1995) as "families and communities who take an active role in creating a caring educational environment" for their children (as cited in Hara & Burke, 1998). More specifically, parental involvement incorporates "any of a variety of activities that allow parents to participate in the educational process at home or in the school" (Elman, 1999, as cited in The Children's Aid Society, 2003, p.1).

Research highlights that parental involvement in children's education is correlated with higher academic achievement, improved school attendance, increased cooperative behaviour and lower drop out rates (Bryan & Burstein, 2004). Research by Gianzero (1999) reiterates the positive effects that parental involvement has on improved student attitudes, achievement and attendance. It has been proved that an education-promoting home environment affects "not only children's achievement levels but their interest in

learning and future educational plans as well" (Gianzero, 1999, p.4). Clark (1993) reported that, among low-income African-American families and their high-school children, higher achievers were associated with families that promoted educational involvement through parental engagement (as cited in Gianzero, 1999). Similarly, Henderson and Berla (1997) reported that, among 1,400 Southeast Asia refugee families, family values and home environments facilitated their children's academic success (as cited in Gianzero, 1999). This then shows that socio-economic status had a limited effect on promoting their children's educational and intellectual development.

It is proposed that parents socialize their children for learning in two fundamental ways: firstly, through their cognitive socialisation practices and secondly, through their motivational socialisation (Bempechat, 2004). According to Rogoff (1990), through parents' socialisation practices, they help develop their children's intellectual development by guiding their learning. Such activities include reading and household tasks. On the other hand, it is intimated that parent motivational socialisation practices influence "the development of attitudes that foster school success, including a belief in the value and effort and a tolerance for mistakes and setbacks (Bempechat, Drago-Severson & Boulay, 2002, as cited in Bempechat, 2004, p. 192). Parental involvement takes different forms of which most identifiable are a) overt behavior, b) personal investment, and lastly c) cognitive and intellectual support (Bempechat, 2004). A parent's overt behaviour consists of intentional homework activities which may or may not require their personal investment or involvement but which may simply require supporting one's child for test or examinations in which involvement would help to promote their achievement. As the effects of homework on academic achievement have been reviewed above, it is clear that parental involvement and homework influence and develop a child's adaptive motivational skills. Thus, parental involvement in turn aids the development of a child's a) responsibility, b) persistence, c) confidence, d) goal setting, e) planning and lastly f) the ability to delay gratification (Bempechat, 2004). In sum, the function of homework is multifaceted and, with adequate interaction with a parental figure, the development of a child's thought, self concept and achievement can be promoted, which are skills thought to be related to success in later life.

Tam and Chan (2005) examined primary school students' actual and preferred involvement in homework and their respective relationships with regard to educational development from which two types of parental involvement were reported: a) "involvement

that was directly related to homework and learning, including checking homework, explaining learning materials, supporting learning, collaborating on projects and doing homework for children" whilst the second form of involvement was" b) "indirect involvement which included comprising establishing daily routine, setting up rules, assigning extra homework, and seeking additional help and learning opportunities" (Tam & Chan, 2004, p.4). Such research indicated the dimensions of parental involvement with homework tasks and it is thought that, in relation to caregivers, the type of parental involvement they engage in may also play a factor as indirect homework involvement may be thought of as an adequate way of promoting cognitive development.

Research showed that parents were identified as the primary and preferred source of homework support and that parents who spent time with their child doing homework had a far greater academic advantage over children whose parents declined their role in homework facilitation (Tam & Chan, 2004). Tam and Chan (2004) state that such results motivate for greater parental involvement as well as parental education and intervention in their child's education. This is particularly important, especially when considering child development in light of promoting educational and intellectual development. In particular, it was stated that "parent education on involvement in homework should be directed towards socially disadvantaged families to help them familiarise themselves with the local school system and to understand the developmental and learning needs of children" and that "educational development of children can indeed be enhanced through improved designs and delivery of homework, as well as through the enthusiastic and proper involvement of parents" (Tam & Chan, 2004, p.12-13). In summation, this research suggests that educational development can be improved through educating parents about the positive effects that their homework involvement could have, and, more importantly, teach effective ways in engaging in homework with children especially if parents are from a disadvantaged background.

Research has thus shown that children seek parental involvement and therefore parents themselves and, by association, caregivers need to take activities such as homework that are aimed at promoting educational development, seriously. For this reason, Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (1995) have proposed a model of the parental involvement process. This model can be used to gain further insight into parents' and, by association, caregivers' decisions to facilitate homework and schooling activities. It is stated that "specific variables create patterns of influence at critical points in the parental involvement

process" and that psychological constructs which are dynamic in nature are the epicenter to gaining knowledge about parental involvement in children's education (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997, p.3). This suggests that, although parental involvement may appear to be a behaviour driven activity, it is actually a process which is informed by personal belief systems internalised from youth. Parental involvement thus is a complex task and process that incorporates personal beliefs about a parent's own abilities regardless of their child's needs. It is for this reason that this research has placed emphasis on an application of this model in relation to caregivers within an institution as caregivers are fulfilling a parental role that is determined by personal belief systems. Therefore, in order for future interventions to be developed concerning the promotion of cognitive development within institutions, caregivers' perceptions concerning their involvement will prove vital in promoting homework involvement and by association cognitive development.

Figure 2.8.1 A diagrammatical representation of the Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler model (1995)

LEVEL 5: Child/Student Outcomes	
Skills and Knowledge	Efficacy for Doing Well in School

⬆

LEVEL 4: Tempering/Mediating Variables	
Parents' Use of Developmentally Appropriate Involvement Strategies	Fit between Parents' Involvement Actions & School Expectations

⬆

LEVEL 3: Mechanisms through which Parent Involvement Influences Child/Student Outcomes

Modeling	Reinforcement	Instruction	
		Close-Ended	Open-Ended

⬆

LEVEL 2: Parents' Choice of Involvement Forms Influenced by:				
Specific Domains of Parents' Skills & Knowledge	Mix of Demands on Total Time & Energy from:		Specific Invitations and Demands for Involvement from:	
	Other Family Demands	Employment Demands	Child(ren)	School/Teacher(s)

⬆

LEVEL 1: Parental Involvement Decision (The Parent's Positive Decision to Become Involved) Influenced by:			
Parent's Construction of the Parental Role	Parent's Sense of Efficacy for Helping Child(ren) Succeed in School	General Opportunities and Demands for Parental Involvement Presented by:	
		The Parent's Child(ren)	Child(ren)'s School(s)

2.9. Parent's involvement in their children's education: the three level-one constructs of the Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler model (1995)

Emphasis has been placed on proper parental involvement by Tam and Chan (2004). This indicates that parental involvement needs to be productive in order to promote and facilitate a positive relationship between parental involvement, homework facilitation and academic achievement. In order to promote parental involvement, it is proposed that a critical understanding of why parents become involved in their children's education is needed (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1995; Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler 1997). Central to gaining insight into why parents participate in their child's education is investigating the involvement process from the parent's perspective. This requires focus on psychological constructs and places emphasis on determining "mechanisms most important to parents' thinking, decision-making, and behaviours underlying their decisions to become involved in their children's education" (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997, p. 5). In relation to this research, it is therefore important to gain insight into how caregivers think about their role and, in particular, what they think about fulfilling the parental role of facilitating homework in order to promote future interventions for cognitive development within the institutional environment.

It is the opinion of Bronfenbrenner (1979) and Jessor (1993) that human development "cannot be adequately understood without significant reference to proximal and distal social systems that work to limit or enhance both developmental processes and outcomes" (as cited in Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997, p. 5). Thus research needs to look at how and at what distance parents or caregivers involve themselves in a child's education either directly or indirectly, especially in relation to homework involvement. Mothers are thought to be the primary caregivers involved in children's education which is a pattern "related to traditional beliefs about gender roles, socio-cultural perspectives, and gender-linked patterns of power distribution in society" (Smith, 1985; as cited in Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997, p.7). In light of the above, it should be noted, however, that due to social and economic changes in traditional work and gender roles, fathers too are known to provide educational support in the absence of the mother. Therefore, the term 'parent' reflects both mother-child involvement and father-child involvement or both parent involvement (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997). Parental involvement has been related to family status variables such as income, education, ethnicity and marital status. However, research has shown that family status variables "do not explain fully parents' decisions to become involved in their children's education" (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997, p.7).

The parental involvement model proposed by Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (1995) suggests that parents' decisions and choices to be involved in their child's education are dependant on several constructs taken from their own experiences as well as constructs developing from environmental demands and opportunities. The Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler model (1995) consists of five levels which each have specific constructs associated with factors that influence parents' decisions to become involved in their child's homework (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1995). At the first and most basic level, the model suggests that three constructs form the basis for parental involvement decisions which are important when deciding to become involved in a child's education. Thus, construct a) is related to role construction "the parent's construction of his or her role in the child's life, b) sense of self-efficacy "the parents sense of efficacy for helping his or her child succeed in school" and lastly c) "the general invitations, demands, and opportunities for parental involvement presented for both the child and the child's school" (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997, p.8-9).

According to level two of the model if "parents choose to become involved, parents select specific involvement forms based primarily on the combination of (1) parent's specific skills and knowledge, (2) the mix of total demands (particularly from employment and family) on their time and energy, and (3) the specific demands and invitations for involvement they receive from their children and their children's school" (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1995, p.326). Level three of the model highlights the mechanisms through which parental involvement influences child outcomes. Therefore, parental involvement "works to influence children's educational outcomes primarily through the mechanisms of modeling, reinforcement, and instruction, as tempered or mediated by parents selection of developmentally appropriate involvement strategies and the fit between parental involvement activities and the schools expectations for their involvement" as indicated by Level 4 (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1995, p.326). Level five is then the culmination of levels 4, 3, 2, and 1 concerning parental involvement. The complete view of the model and its outlined processes reiterate the complexity of parents deciding to become involved in their children's education, especially their homework.

In the process of parental involvement, it is anticipated that, if done adequately, children may develop skills and knowledge which will continue to promote their educational development and increase their academic achievement. As a result of experiencing positive feedback from teachers and increased marks, the child might gain a sense of self-efficacy (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1995). Just as "the parents' sense of efficacy for helping the child succeed is developed through the operation of personal experiences, vicarious experiences, verbal persuasions, and emotional arousal, the parent's involvement in the child's education experiences offers significant and powerful sources of efficacy development for the child" (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1995, p.326). It is thought, therefore, that through parental involvement, children develop a sense of their own worth and abilities which, in turn, promotes their self concept and academic achievement.

As previously stated, the cognitive development of children within institutions is of vital importance. Thus, the role of the caregiver has been implicated as a means of intervening to help promote their development through adequate involvement. Caregiver involvement within the institution is thought to be a key intersecting point for intervention at a cognitive level. For this reason this research will only apply the first three constructs of the first level of the Hoover- Dempsey and Sandler model (1995). In order to gain insight into the most

basic and pivotal aspects of caregiving related to cognition, only the first level constructs will be applied as they are constructs which require a qualitative analysis and form the foundation for future research of the entire process of caregiver involvement related to homework and cognitive development. The following three sections will discuss each level-one construct in more detail in order to gain further insight into their significance when related to this research.

2.9.1 Construct one: personal construction of the parental role

According to the Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler model (1995), a parent's decision to become involved in their child's education is influenced by how they view their parental role. In essence, parental involvement concerning a parent's role construction seeks to understand what it is that parents believe they are supposed to do in relation to their child's education (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler model, 1997). Parental role construction "appears important to the involvement process primarily because it appears to establish a basic range of activities that parents construe as important, necessary, and permissible for their own actions with and on behalf of their children" (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler model, 1997, p. 9). Parental role construction is thought to emerge before the child enters school and continues for years after the child completes their education (Green et al., 2007).

Role construction is derived from theory in social psychology which explains the influence of role concepts on human behavior. How individuals view themselves in light of a task presented to them and how they act accordingly to fit that task is thought to be pertinent. Developmental psychology has embraced such a construct in the realm of educational development and has researched the associations between parents' beliefs about child development, as well as child-rearing in relation to children's school performance and behaviour (Walker et al., 2004). Roles are thought to be "sets of expectations held by groups for the behaviour of individual members" (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997, p.9). In relation to parental involvement role construction includes both "the expectations that parents and those in their significant group hold for their behaviours in relation to children's schooling and the behaviours they enact in relation to their children's schooling" (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997, p.9).

The defining of a role is thought to be a process whereby interactions between parent, child and others shape a parent's belief system over time. Such a process suggests that

role construction may be exposed to periods of change and stability (Grossman, 1998). Three aspects of role stability and change have been implicated: a) "structurally given demands, or the groups' expectations and norms for an individual member's behavior, b) personal role conception, or an individual member's ideas about what he or she is supposed to do as a group member and (c) role behavior, or the actual behaviors of individual group members, which usually conform to, but may at times violate, the expectations of the group" (Harrison & Minor, 1978, p. 801). The conceptualisation of a role and its related behaviour is therefore multifaceted and can be consistent or change depending on the above mentioned factors such as general beliefs of individuals in a group. According to Wheelan (1994), the more a group and its members are in agreement with an individual's roles and associated behaviours, the more productive the group will be. However, the more "ambiguity associated with a members' roles (i.e. lack of clarity in expectations associated with roles) or the more conflict among the varied roles held by an individual, the more likely are negative outcomes for the group and its members" (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997, p.10).

In taking the above into account and relating it to a parent's involvement in their child's education, the "basic tenets of role theory suggest that the groups to which parent's belong (i.e. the family, the child's school and the work place) will hold expectations about appropriate parental role behaviors, including behaviors related to involvement in children's educational processes, and will communicate their role expectations to parents" (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997, p.10). This is especially significant when understanding the caregiver's role construction in light of their involvement with the children's education, as both the institute and the caregiver have their own role expectations. These role expectations may or may not be in agreement with one another which may influence the child's education. Within the institution, it is thought that through a consensus on the expectations of the caregiver involvement tasks are made clear and agreed upon by both parties. When a consensus is not shared by both parties concerning their role, conflict may arise. Examples of such conflict may be when a "family or school expects parental involvement activities, but the parent's workplace expectations preclude active involvement in conferences (e.g. no time off policies) or home work supervision" (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997, p.10).

It is proposed that "parent's role construction is distilled from parents ideas about the parental role, learned largely through observations and modeling of their own parents'

school-related involvement, their friends involvement in children" and perhaps in the given context or other caregivers involvement (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1995, p.313). Research has shown that "parents' beliefs in the importance of developing conformity, obedience and good behaviour in children for example have been related to poorer school outcomes" whilst "beliefs in the importance of developing personal responsibility and self-respect have been associated with better school performance" (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997, p.12). It is argued that "parents become involved because they construe the parental role as including personal involvement in their children's education" (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1995, p.313). Role construction is important because the caregiver is required to actively facilitate and act out a particular role. However, such action is rooted in the beliefs that they possess concerning their skills and knowledge to facilitate that particular role (Grossman, 1998).

Social class has been highlighted in literature as a factor influencing parental involvement, especially relating to parents' beliefs about home-school support of the child's education. Research by Lareau (1987; 1989) compared the beliefs of parents from working-class schools to the beliefs of parents from upper-class schools concerning their home-support roles in their children's education and interesting results where found. Parents from the working-class schools held a separate view of school and home, and thus fulfilled minimal duties at home and relied on the school to make decisions for their children whilst parents from the upper-class schools shared an interconnected approach to their child's education and collaborated with the school (Lareau, 1987; 1989). Research by Clark (1983) and Segal (1985) have contradicted such findings when looking at parents' beliefs from a lower income bracket by suggesting such a variable does not have a significant effect on parent's home-support.

Theoretical and empirical research in the area of role construction proposes that "parents develop beliefs and understandings about the requirements and expectations of the parental role as a function of their membership and participation in varied groups pertinent to child-rearing" and, as a result, parents' actions related to their children "including their decisions about educationally related involvement in their children's lives, will be influenced by parents' role constructs and by the dynamic processes that involve them in confronting complementary (or competing) parental role expectations held by varied groups in which they hold membership" (Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler, 1997, p.17). Although role construction offers some insight in understanding why it is that parents

become involved in their children's education, it is not all-inclusive and therefore the construct of self-efficacy needs to be explored.

2.9.2 Construct two: personal sense of efficacy for helping children succeed in school

The second influencing factor of parental involvement in homework and their children's schooling has been identified as parental self-efficacy (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1995; Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997). In particular, it is the belief that parents hold in their own ability to help the child succeed in school which underpins the construct of self-efficacy in this research. Thus the question of whether parents perceive themselves and their involvement as having a positive or negative effect on their children's educational outcomes is determined by their self-efficacy. Research has shown that a parent's sense of self-efficacy is drawn from three domains: personal efficacy theory, attributions made about school success and personal theories of intelligence (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997). Parents' efficacy beliefs are thought to comprise of three main variables, "parents' confidence that they can help their children with their homework, parents' views of their competence as their children progress to higher grades, and parents' beliefs that they can influence the school through school governance" (Eccles & Harold, 1994,p. 75). It is proposed that parents' sense of self-efficacy comes from four sources: "the direct experience of success in other involvement or involvement-related activities; the vicarious experience of others' success in involvement or involvement-related activities; verbal persuasion by others that involvement activities are worthwhile and be accomplished by the parent; and the emotional arousal induced when issues of importance to the parent are 'on line'" (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1995, p.314).

Influenced by the theory of Bandura (1977), it is thought that parents' sense of self-efficacy for "helping their children succeed in school has been set within the general body of literature examining the power of self regulation or thoughts about one's own role and influence in a situation in determining one's behavior choices within that situation" (as cited in Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997, p.17). Thus, parents rely on self-assessments in relation to a particular task and evaluate the task in relation to themselves as to whether or not they are capable of performing the role correctly. Self-efficacy is thought to be influenced strongly by beliefs about one's "abilities to exercise and maintain some level of control over events" that may affect one's life (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997, p.17). In relation to parental involvement, self-efficacy theory suggests that "parents will

guide their actions (i.e. make involvement choices) by thinking through, in advance of their behavior, what outcomes are likely to follow their actions they may take" and therefore they will "develop goals for their own behaviors based on these anticipations and will plan actions designed to achieve these goals" (Bandura, 1989 as cited in Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997, p.17-18).

In the realm of caregiving, it can be assumed that self-efficacy is a vital construct which governs how caregivers view their own competency with regard to how they care for the children. Caregiver efficacy is not only considered a personal trait, but is also considered in relation to the efficacy of others whether other caregivers view themselves in a positive manner as well as the children. It is thought that caregivers would be sensitive as to how they view their efficacy when caring for the needs of institutionalised children. Caregivers' sense of self-efficacy in relation to the children's education is thought to be a sensitive domain especially in South Africa where caregivers have experienced a completely different curriculum and schooling experience under the apartheid regime.

It is not unusual for parents to feel like their efforts regarding their child's school work are not good enough and persistent beliefs are thought to be detrimental which result in avoiding the situation, giving minimal input, or, in the worst scenario, stopping their efforts altogether (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997). Individuals with low self-efficacy in a "given domain (such as maths) who experience failure will experience drastically reduced motivation to become involved" (Bandura, 1989 as cited in Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997, p.18). Thus they "tend to give up and are slower to recover because they perceive their failure as caused by personal deficiencies" (Bandura, 1989 as cited in Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997, p.18). In light of children's education, parents with low self-efficacy for helping their children in school "would likely find this low efficacy in itself interfering with involvement intentions aimed at achieving even highly desired goals, such as improved performance for their children" (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997, p.18). Parents who believe in their own abilities when helping children with their school work for example, experience a satisfaction that aids the child's learning. It is thought that high self-efficacy results in functional parental behaviours. Parents want to be involved in their children's schoolwork and take interest in their children's concerns and needs (Green et al., 2007). Research by Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (1992) sought to investigate the relationship between parents' self-efficacy for helping children succeed in school and their involvement. Results revealed "positive linkages between parents' sense of self-efficacy

and involvement with children in educational activities at home and volunteering time at the school" (Hoover-Dempsey et al, 1992, as cited in Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997, p.19). Not only did Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (1992) research highlight the positive relationship, but it also highlighted that parents who had completed school themselves showed more self-efficacy. Other than parental education, self-efficacy was not significantly related to "income, employment status, or martial status" (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997, p.20). By contrast, research by Lareau (1987) shows that parents who had less education where actually more involved with their children's education than parents from higher educational backgrounds.

In relation to parents' self-efficacy, beliefs and the influences they may have on children's success in school, two other factors have been found to help explain efficacy beliefs (Anderson, 2005). Firstly, "parent's beliefs or attributions about the roles of ability, effort and luck as causes of children's school performance" and secondly, "parent's implicit theories of intelligence" are thought to be important (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997, p.21). Attribution is thought to be a central element to understanding self-efficacy. How parents or caregivers attribute their own efforts in aiding a child in their schoolwork is central to how they view their potential to help. It is proposed that "parental attributions to child effort are often associated with higher levels of school success among children, while parental attributions to child ability or luck are often associated with poorer school performance" (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997, p.21). Parents who attribute their actions to be meaningful and then continue to act on them inevitably promote their involvement in their child's schooling. It is thought that parents who have a low self-efficacy and negative attributions will affect their child's learning process, and thus intervention is needed at this level (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997).

Considering the role of caregivers within institutions who are over-burdened, such a factor could influence the type of homework involvement the child receives and therefore the type of cognitive development they acquire. A cornerstone of a child's education is their cognitive and intellectual development. Parents' beliefs about the nature and function of intellect, generally and more specifically relating to their child, are very important (Grossman, 1998). It is thought that how and what they believe about intelligence, specifically their child's intelligence, can influence their decision to become involved in their child's education (Green et al., 2007).

According to Henderson and Dweck (1990), individuals hold either an entity theory of intelligence or an incremental theory of intelligence. An entity theory "assumes that intelligence is fixed and not easily changed, while an incremental theory assumes that intelligence is malleable and subject to change, most notably through persistence" (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997, p.24). What type of intelligence theory a parent adopts is important to this enquiry, as parents who believe that their child is not clever will thus believe that nothing can be done about it and therefore the amount of effort or parental involvement to increase academic achievement will be limited. By association, it is therefore thought that the type of theory held by caregivers will influence their involvement activities and overall their involvement with the child.

By contrast, a parent who believes that their child's intellect can develop and improve with effort and time, will invest their efforts in the involvement process. Should the child receive better marks as a result of parental involvement, the parent will feel rewarded and responsible for this positive change thereby feeling they can help to promote the child's intelligence (Walker et al., 2004). Parental self-efficacy can be challenged at times by the type of demands a child makes. An aspect of self-efficacy is the ability to overcome such challenges and enlist strategies that will help a child to solve their school-related problem. It is proposed that high efficacy parents "would seem likely to generate strategies to solve current problems, anticipate problem situations in which they might become productively involved and persist when faced with difficulties in solving problems" and, in contrast, low efficacy parents "seem much less likely to step in to the problem solving arena in the first place. Doubting their own ability to have an impact, they seem much more likely to rely on the child or the school to deal with the problems, and to trust in other's intervention or luck to ameliorate difficult situations for their children" (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997, p.26). The third construct which is implicated in the understanding of why parents become involved in their children's education is linked to both a parent's role construction and self-efficacy. The following construct refers to the actions of the child in relation to the parent when seeking help which enlists the help of the parent. How the parent responds to the opportunities and demands presented by the child is very important and shall be discuss further.

2.9.3 Construct three: opportunities and demands for involvement presented by children and schools

The third construct influencing parents' involvement decisions, as proposed by Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (1995), consist of the general opportunities, invitations and demands for children make concerning parental involvement. This construct is concerned with whether or not parents perceive that the child and school want them to be involved. Invitations for involvement, on behalf of the child, are thought to be intertwined with emotional factors based on the parent-child relationship, whilst invitations made by the school are thought to be intertwined with power relations and authority (Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler, 1997). The parental involvement model shows that "the extent to which parents believe themselves to be invited to participate actively in the educational process will exert important influence on their basic decisions about involvement" (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997, p.31).

Opportunities, invitations, or demands from the child or the child's school may influence parents' involvement decisions because "the demand or opportunity characteristics created tend to elicit and often reward (selected) involvement behaviours" (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1995, p.315-316). Such opportunities, invitations and demands made by children and their schools help to elicit active parenting and engagement with their school work which, in turn, may result in academic achievement. Thus a child achieving better marks through this process is thought to initiate further invitations for parental involvement (Green et al., 2007). It is thought that this third construct may be of particular interest in light of caring for institutionalised children as such invitations may be perceived as overwhelming and add more to their job than required or that such invitations may be welcomed as caregivers may feel rewarded by the invitation of the child to help them succeed. It is through eliciting positive emotions, such as being asked by a child to attend a prize giving or help them with a project, that caregivers' self-efficacy is influenced in a positive way (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1995).

There are numerous factors which may influence the child's decision to invite a parent to help them with school work. Such factors may include the child's age, their developmental stage and even their level of performance at school (Anderson & Minke, 2007). In relation to parental involvement and a child's level of performance at school, research shows conflicted results. Research by Dauber and Epstein (1993), for example, reported that parents of elementary and middle school children who were doing better academically

reposted more school-related involvement than parents of children who were doing less well. Research by Delgado-Gaitan (1992) reported, "that parents of better elementary readers, when compared to parents of poorer readers, were more likely to undertake specific involvement actions with and on behalf of their children" (as cited in Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997, p.28). By contrast, research found that "mothers of lower-performing young adolescents used more involvement strategies than mothers of higher performing students" (Baker & Stevenson, 1986, p. 158). These varied patterns of findings suggest that the developmental stage of the child may be central to construct three as young children may require more help than adolescents. Although the type of invitation, opportunity or demand made to the parent may differ depending on the child's age, it is proposed that invitations made by a child are relative to their grade and therefore should be addressed in such a light.

Apart from a child's age, their personal qualities have been implicated in their invitations and demands towards their parents. In particular, it is thought that "aspects of personality, learning style, and preferences may also influence parent's general predisposition toward involvement in their education" (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997, p.29). This is significant when taking into account institutionalised children and the factors that influence their advances towards caregiver involvement, especially in view of their hardships. It is thought that trust may play a central role for children in institutions, especially with regard of trusting caregivers and asking them for help. Thus emphasis is placed on the relationship that the caregiver has with the child. It was hypothesised by Eccles and Harlod (1993) that positive relationships are more likely to encourage involvement whilst conflicted relationships are likely to discourage involvement. With a sample of 1,400 seventh and eighth graders, Eccles and Harold (1993) validated this hypothesis related to the relationship of quality and involvement.

School and teacher invitations also play an important role in a parent's decision to become involved in their children's education. Research by Epstein (1986) compared teachers who "engaged in many parent involvement activities (high-involvement teachers) with teachers who engaged in few activates (low involvement teachers)" and found that "high-involvement teachers were more positive about school and more aware of teachers interests in their involvement than were parents with low-involvement teachers" (as cited in Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997, p.28). The relationship between caregiver and teacher within the institutional field may be significant as the teacher would be able to

help the caregiver in their efforts to increase their involvement in the child's school work, thereby aiding the child to achieve positive results. It is hypothesised that the school's involvement with the parent and vice verse is very important and aids the child's educational development. The institution is, however, a different environment to that of an average child's and therefore the school's involvement with institutionalised children and their caregivers may need to be thought about more carefully so that both institution and school act in the child's best interests. Research by Comer and Haynes (1991) highlights the influence that schools may have on the parental involvement decisions and it was found that "school organisations oriented toward understanding student's families often experience success in increasing parent's involvement in improving student's performance" (as cited in Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997, p.28).

Literature suggests that "the value of intentionally creating a climate of opportunities and demands for parent involvement in school work and activities is also supported by role theory" thus group members such as parents, school staff and students that formulate and agree on their own role expectations will in turn increase their own role performance as well as that of the groups (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997, p.30). Overall it is reported that "a school climate of invitations to become involved influence parent's understanding of teachers' interests in parental help and support, parent's feelings of being needed and wanted in their educational process, and parent's knowledge about their children's schoolwork" (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997, p.30). Similarly it is hypothesised that teachers invitations towards parental involvement could be applied to caregiver as such invitations for involvement would significantly influence their involvement and help create an optimal structure in which the child's educational development can be addressed by both the institution and school equally.

The parental involvement process, as described by Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (1995), places emphasis on the core constructs that are vital in gaining insight into how and why parents choose to become involved in their children's education. Taking into account the literature presented, the role of educational facilitation and the importance of parental involvement, emphasis needs to be placed on caregivers within institutions. Research needs to focus on caregivers who act as parental figures in the absence of the child's biological parents. This should be done in order to investigate constructs such as self-efficacy, role construction and invitations which may influence the type of involvement the child receives and in turn the type of cognitive development.

Focusing on constructs that influence caregiver's involvement decisions, it is hoped that institutionalised children's intellectual and cognitive development can be addressed and interventions can be promoted such as cognitive stimulation through homework facilitation. If the future of children placed in institutions is to be taken seriously, there is a need for research of this nature. Such research roots itself at the primary level of caregiver beliefs in order to understand and gain insight into caregiver processes that influence their homework involvement decisions. It is recommended that this should be done so that the educational development of children is understood in context and the promotion of educational interventions within institutions as well as support for caregivers can be explored and implemented.

CHAPTER THREE: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.1 Introduction

This chapter will serve as a basis to ground the proposed research within a theoretical framework. In order to gain insight into the significance of the caregiver-child interaction on cognitive development, the theories of Feuerstein and Vygotsky will be applied as a theoretical underpinning to this research through a discussion thereof. In relation to this research, the theoretical constructions from such theories will be used to inform the positive influences of a mediated interaction on cognitive development and, in turn, highlight the importance of intervention at an institutional level.

The theoretical framework of this research will be applied further to highlight and discuss the importance of the role of the caregiver, especially as a mediator of institutionalised children's cognitive development. The chosen theory will serve to motivate for and place emphasis on the caregiver-child interaction, specifically during homework time. It is one of the aims of this research to gain insight from caregivers in order to promote such interaction, and therefore promote cognitive development through homework involvement.

It is also intended, through this research, to increase an understanding of caregivers' involvement from their perspective which in turn can be used to inform theory relating to mediation from the perspective of the adult. Lastly, it is also intended to investigate how caregivers perceive their involvement and influences on the homework involvement process with institutionalised children, specifically focusing on the children's cognitive development according to the Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler model (1995). This chapter will a) briefly discuss cognitive development and the role of mediation in order to situate the theory, b) discuss Feuerstein's theory of the Mediated Learning Experience (MLE) and c) discuss Vygotsky's construct of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) as it applies to this research and the role of a mediating caregiver.

3.2 Cognitive development and the role of mediation

The branch of psychology that focuses on the mental structures and processes of the mind is known as cognitive psychology (Sternberg, 2006). It is the opinion of cognitive psychologists, in general, that the brain "hosts or embodies the 'mind' whose mental processes allow you to remember, make decisions, plan, set goals and be creative" (Santrock, 2003, p.12). The cognitive approach to psychology emerged as an alternative

way of understanding child development from that of the psychoanalytic and behaviouristic approaches (Robinson-Riegler, 2004). The understanding of cognitive processes in childhood which involve thought, language and intelligence were first proposed and explained by Swiss epistemologist Jean Piaget (1952). Piaget insisted on "the structural character of the child's thinking, wherein each individual element is embedded in the organisation of the whole" (Kozulin & Presseisen, 1995, p.67). Piaget proposed that children are active agents in constructing their world through the use of schemas which are concepts or frameworks that already exist in a given moment in a person's mind that organizes and interprets the information (Trehub, 1991). Piaget's theory of cognitive development proposed that a child's cognitive capacities developed as a function of their age and abilities through four developmental stages. Namely, the sensorimotor stage, preoperational stage, concrete operational stage and formal operational stage (Anderson, 1992).

Like most theoretical tenets, Piaget's conception of cognitive development was not free from criticism. Thus "despite its revolutionary innovation, Piagetian theory left many questions unanswered or answered in ways that were not entirely satisfactory" (Kozulin & Presseisen, 1995, p.67). It is thought that Piaget neglected to take into account two very important factors of cognitive development: firstly, the socio-cultural influences on cognition and learning and secondly, the absence of acknowledging the mediating factors of learning within the child's environment (Hook, Watts & Cockcroft, 2002).

The theorists, Vygotsky and Feuerstein, assessed the limitations of Piagetian theory and reworked them according to their conception of a child's cognitive development. Thus, Vygotsky and Feuerstein independently focused specifically on the socio-cultural influences of cognition and learning, as well as the role of a knowledgeable other in the processes of a child's learning and cognitive development (Kozulin & Presseisen, 1992). According to Sternberg (1990) both theorists "underline the importance of socialization for intelligence and its development" (as cited in Kozulin & Presseisen, 1992, p.5).

Placing emphasis on the importance of socialisation practices and culture on a child's cognitive development led Vygotsky and Feuerstein to observe the role of individuals (caregivers, parents and teachers) external to that of the child and their surrounding environment (Tzuriel & Shamir, 2007). They especially focused on how such socio-cultural factors would influence a child's cognitive development (Klein, Weider & Greenspan,

1987). Vygotsky and Feuerstein developed different theories concerning cognitive development. However, the theory of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) and Mediated Learning Experience (MLE) both highlight the role of mediation (although termed differently) in a child's development (Deutsch, 2003).

The term 'mediation' is historically significant and has developed over time and, only in most recent decades, has been adopted by psychology. Thus, mediation is rooted in philosophical, sociological and linguistic planes (Kozulin & Presseisen, 1992).

Philosophically, mediation is understood through the works of Hegel who explained that "the very existence of human type activity depends on the transition from the immediate, animal type of satisfaction of needs, which coincides with the ability of the individual animal, to the human satisfaction of needs dependent on the activity of others" (as cited in Kozulin & Presseisen, 1992, p.7). Mediation, in this sense, describes the relationship between an individual's needs and people in their environment who can promote such needs. From a sociological perspective, the theorist Mead (1974) postulated that humans do not merely perceive and respond to stimuli, but that objects in the environment are, in fact, constructed (Ritzer, 1996). It is thought that "the construction of objects becomes possible only because stimuli of the environment take on certain meanings in the course of human activity which is social in nature" and ultimately the "interaction between the individual and the environment is never immediate, it is always mediated by meaning which originate 'outside' the individual- in the world of social relations" (Kozulin & Presseisen, 1992, p.8).

Interestingly, this conceptualization of mediation highlights the role between individual, object and culture through which meaning is made and the individual progresses. The third significant discipline in which mediation has been investigated is that of linguistics. Linguistically, Bakhtin (1986) argued that it was necessary to look at the literary text in order to gain insight into the role of mediation, as language is presented in a literary discourse (as cited in Kozulin & Presseisen, 1992). Mediation, through a literary discourse, "offers a paradigm for any human action to the extent that this action is addressed and interpreted" (Kozulin & Presseisen, 1992, p.9). Mediation is thought to occur in the exchange of language, the linguistic expressions between humans and through writing.

Psychologists, such as Feuerstein, adopted the concept of mediation in aid of understanding cognitive development as a result of the parent - child interaction (Deutsch,

2003). The parent's role is central to that of a child's development, especially in relation to their cognitive development. Thus, the parental role is thought to involve mediation of schoolwork which promotes cognitive development as Feuerstein has hypothesised. The following sections will discuss the relevance of parental involvement and mediation and thereby highlight the role of the caregiver in this research and the importance of mediation with instutionalised children in order to promote their cognitive development from a Feuersteinian perspective.

3.3 Feuerstein's theory of Mediated Learning Experience (MLE)

The process of human learning, cognitive development and intelligence has been at the forefront of cognitive developmental research in the past and present. In relation to this research and the emphasis which is placed on the caregivers' interaction with the children, a discussion of Feuerstein's theory of MLE is imperative. Feuerstein's theory concerning learning and cognitive development is thought to be important in relation to this research as it helps to highlight the role of mediated learning on cognitive development and therefore the importance of the interaction between institutionalized children and caregiver, especially during homework time. According to Deutsch (2003), the learning process and the parent-child relationship are thought to be cornerstones to promoting a child's cognitive development and ability to achieve in school. It was proposed by Feuerstein that learning take the form of two modes: namely, Direct Learning Experience (DLE) which is the interaction between learner and stimuli and Mediated Learning Experience (MLE) which is the second mode of learning and is "directed by human intervention" (Deutsch, 2003, p. 31).

Prior to Feuerstein's conceptualization of mediation, and the role it plays in a child's cognitive development, he proposed the theory of Structural Cognitive Modifiability (SCM) which aimed to explain intelligence (Skuy, 1997). Feuerstein's (1979, 1980) theory of SCM proposes that intelligence is a product of cognitive structures and processes, which through the aid of mediated learning, can be modified and developed. Feuerstein had a dynamic understanding of intelligence which did not doom the below average achiever to mental retardation. Instead, Feuerstein proposed a theory of cognitive development that would allow for the manipulation, development and modification of a child's intelligence (Murry, 1988). In relation to this research, the cognitive abilities of the sample are not known, and in light of the SCM theory, such measures are not important as each child

within the institution has the ability to grow cognitively. However, this process is dependant on the involvement of their caregiver.

Cognitive modification was thought to occur through the process of working with children's (and adults') cognitive structures. Such a process constituted of a task that required learning to occur in relation to another person through mediation (Skuy, 1997). It is understood that Feuerstein viewed intelligence as a combination of cognitive structures and processes that could be modified. He suggested that intelligence could be developed through special types of learning practices (Skuy, 1997). Thus, Feuerstein proposed that "the extent of modifiability of which any individual is capable, or differential cognitive development is determined by the quality of the Mediated Learning Experience (MLE) undergone by that individual" (Skuy, 1997, p.119). MLE is defined by Feuerstein, Klein and Tannenbaum (1991) as "a quality of interaction of the organism with its environment via a human mediator. The quality is ensured by the interposition of an initiated, intentional human being who mediates the stimuli impinging on the organism" (as cited in Deutsch, 2003, p.31). In essence, it is thought that the ability to undergo cognitive change and development and the type of interaction and learning experience needs to be of a certain standard and quality. Thus Feuerstein is ultimately highlighting a central aim of this research by stating the importance of a quality mediated experience received by children. It is a secondary aim of this research to highlight the need for intervention and training among caregivers in terms of mediating homework in order to promote cognitive development. Therefore, the theory of MLE is highly significant and will be explored further.

In theory and practice MLE is a "special type of mediated interaction between the child and environmental stimuli" (Kozulin & Presseisen, 1995, p.69). It is this 'special' type of interaction between the child and their environment that will be investigated in this research. Theoretically, the quality of the MLE is therefore extremely important as a child's cognitive development and modifiability is, to a large extent, dependent on the external environment. The main question that MLE attempts to answer is: "what is the cause of the individual differences in cognitive development?" (Kozulin & Presseisen, 1995, p.69). It is at this stage that Feuerstein (1979;1980) implicates the importance of a child's environment as a child's environment is thought to be one factor which contributes to the child's cognitive development. It is evident, however, that no two children are alike and that two children from the same environment can be at different levels of cognitive

development, which then creates a paradox for theorists. This implies that mediation needs to be adjusted to the child's needs. In relation to this research, mediation within the institution therefore requires much thought as all children would have been exposed to different upbringings and differ both cognitively and emotionally from one another. However, the challenges that caregivers in institutions face highlight the institution's ability to meet the overall needs of the caregivers and children in order to provide an environment conducive to both caregiver and child in order to promote a MLE. The institutional environment is of great importance to the MLE and motivation of the caregivers to employ a MLE. Thus, such theory highlights a secondary aim of the research to promote the institutional environment through intervention and training in order to promote caregiver efficacy especially in relation to homework involvement.

It is important to look at an ecosystemic perspective which takes into account individual and social systems which affect cognitive development and can be used to investigate mediation within an environment such as an institution. An ecosystemic approach looks at the multiple systems which influence and are affected by each other as well as the presence of the individual in relation to such systems (Pilon, 2008). Bronfenbrenner's (1979) ecological theory of development, in relation to MLE, proposed that individual differences in children can be accounted for by organismic and environmental factors. The "organismic and environmental factors constitute only distal determinants of cognitive development, whereas a mediated learning experience (or lack there of) constitutes the proximal determinant" (Kozulin & Presseisen, 1995, p.69). Thus, the interaction between the caregiver and the child in interactions which promote mediation is thought to occur on the micro level affecting the child on the closest possible level (Kozulin & Presseisen, 1995). It is therefore proposed that cognitive development in relation to one's environment is significantly related to one's microsystem, which is the relationship closest to one, such as a parent or caregiver. In terms of this research, such understandings indicate that, although OVC may have experienced similar environments and may be placed in the same institution, their cognitive development may be affected due to the nature of their microsystem and thus it is hypothesised, by the type of caregiver involvement they experience.

Research by Klein et al (1987) has confirmed this understanding of MLE in relation to proximal and distal systems. In essence, proximal systems refer to individuals, actions and structures which are nearest to the individual and influence them directly whilst distal

systems refer to individuals' actions and structures which influence an individual from afar. In order to gain insight into the effects of mediation on an individual's proximal system and cognitive development, Feuerstein's tripartite model will be discussed. Feuerstein's tripartite learning partnership model is relevant to this research as it highlights parent-child interactions which promote a MLE and therefore cognitive development. It is, therefore, outlined as a basis to explore and promote caregiver-child interaction in light of promoting a MLE and thus cognitive development.

Figure 3.4 A diagrammatical representation of Feuerstein's tripartite learning partnership model
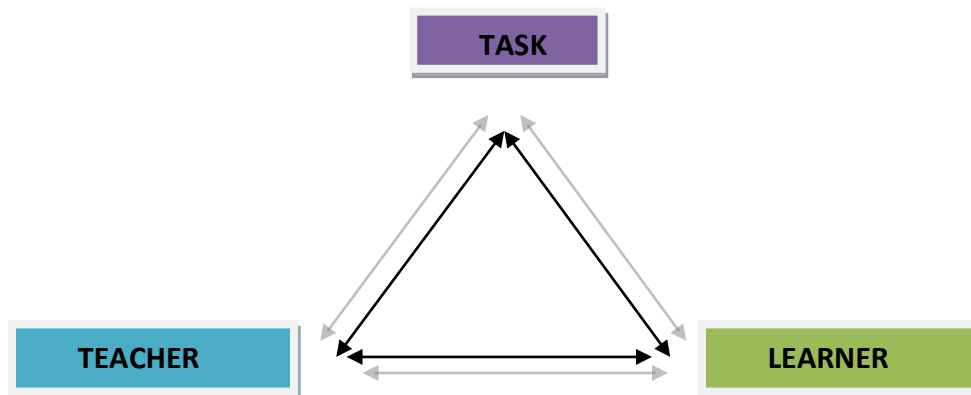
3.4.1 Feuerstein's tripartite learning partnership model and its criteria

When applying the conceptualisation of MLE within a child's environment, numerous individuals and activities could be implicated in the structural cognitive modifiability of the child. Feuerstein is clear on the type and quality of the MLE that is needed and therefore, this overview as conceptualised by him will be explained. According to Feuerstein, MLE "comprises a set of concepts that seek to describe and explain specific forms of adult-driven interventions, which are considered to account for both individual cognitive development and cultural transmission" (Deutsch, 2003, p.29). The type of interaction in which cognitive development is thought to be promoted through MLE is, in fact, dependent on a specific set of concepts predetermined by Feuerstein.

Feuerstein proposed a model known as the 'tripartite model' of the MLE which comprises of three elements: the learner, the mediator and the task (Deutsch, 2003). The tripartite model of MLE is thought to be a "tripartite learning partnership, which is interactional and

transformative" (Deutsch, 2003, p. 33). Deutsch (2003) indicates Feuerstein's tripartite model diagrammatically (as above). Initially, a task is presented to the student which requires a form of cognitive processing from the student. The student, in turn, elicits their cognitive functions which have been acquired before, such as thinking and perceiving. With a task provided to the child who requires mediation, the role of the mediator is then apparent as the student requires their help to make sense of the task (Deutsch, 2003). The mediator then needs to examine the task presented to the student and thus the mediator analyses the components of the tasks presented. The mediator's involvement requires an understanding of the task. Such an understanding is responsible for the type of input and mediation the student will receive. The task is then subsequently judged by the mediator in relation to the student's own cognitive functions and the task at hand (Deutsch, 2003). In relation to this research, Feuerstein's model highlights the role of the mediator within the institution as the caregivers are responsible for such an interaction during homework time. It is thought that a caregiver's ability to assess the task as well as the child's cognitive abilities are central to promoting a quality MLE and therefore, it promotes cognitive development.

The role of the mediator and, by association, the caregiver, is therefore important and the quality of mediation is once again reiterated. For the MLE to be conducive to the child's cognitive development, the mediator/caregiver has to possess knowledge of the stimuli or task presented as well as knowledge of the child's abilities regarding their cognitive functioning and their understanding of the task presented. The mediator "interposes him/herself between the learner and the world of stimuli, as well as between the learner and his/her responses and mediates to the child" (Tzuriel & Shamir, 2007, p.145). Mediation is thought to be carried out by different types of strategies such as "arranging, organizing, and sorting out of stimuli, giving them meaning and expansion so they can be absorbed and assimilated by the child" (Tzuriel & Shamir, 2007, p.145). Mediation strategies are therefore thought to be like building blocks and help to promote the learning experience. But they require the knowledge of the mediator in order to promote their effectiveness. Caregivers are thought to employ their own strategies when conducting homework with the children and therefore, it is thought that the type of strategies that they employ may affect or promote their mediation efforts, which is important and needs to be investigated.

The aim of the MLE is twofold. Firstly, it is to help the child modify their current cognitive structures and processes and develop them through the role of mediation and secondly, to teach the child to be able to mediate their own cognitive processes and apply them to new stimuli and situations. In this research, the interview schedule wishes to explore caregivers' perceptions of their mediation abilities and strategies employed as well as the quality of the MLE, and how such mediation could be seen as promoting the children's cognitive development and the children's overall self-investment in their own development. The tripartite aim of MLE is conceived in theory and practice to be universally applicable and independent of culture or content (Tzuriel & Shamir, 2007). In light of the institution, it is thought that a MLE which encourages the child to become their own mediator is essential as it is hypothesised that this should enable the children to learn through experiencing a mediating environment. It is thought that, within the institution, quality mediation would therefore aid in promoting the children's ability to help themselves and others, thus promoting a peer mediated learning experience (Tzuriel & Shamir, 2007)

It is necessary to distinguish MLE from other interactive interventions which have been developed from the conseptualisations of Feuerstein and Vygotsky. According to Feuerstein (1990), the construct of a MLE is dependent on twelve general criteria of which the first four primary criteria will be discussed as they are central to this research. The four primary criteria for a MLE to occur are: intentionality, reciprocity, transcendence and meaning (Kozulin & Presseisen, 1995; Deutsch, 2003). Intentionality and reciprocity highlight that the role of the mediator is to use the interaction in an intentional and meaningful manner. Then it is conceptualised that the child, in response to the mediator, gains insight into the mediation task and problem at hand, thus reciprocating an involvement and investment in a MLE (Kozulin and Presseisen, 1995; Deutsch, 2003). Transcendence is the third criteria and is thought to be one of the most important factors of MLE as the interaction between child, task and mediator "always includes identification of the underlying principle and its transfer to a wide range of other situations and tasks" (Kozulin & Presseisen, 1995, p.70). Meaning is the fourth primary criteria and only "becomes possible when stimuli, events, or information are infused with meaning by the mediator" (Kozulin & Presseisen, 1995, p.70).

In essence, MLE is not simply any interaction between an adult and child. It is understood that the MLE is intentional and requires the input of both mediator as well as the commitment of the child.

This section has addressed the criteria and function of MLE in relation to this research and will now discuss a contrasted, yet similar understanding of mediation through Vygotskian theory and the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). The ZPD, like the MLE, is thought to be relevant to this research as it highlights the type of mediation experience that promotes cognitive development and further reiterates the importance of mediation in cognitive development.

Figure 3.5 A diagrammatical representation of Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD)
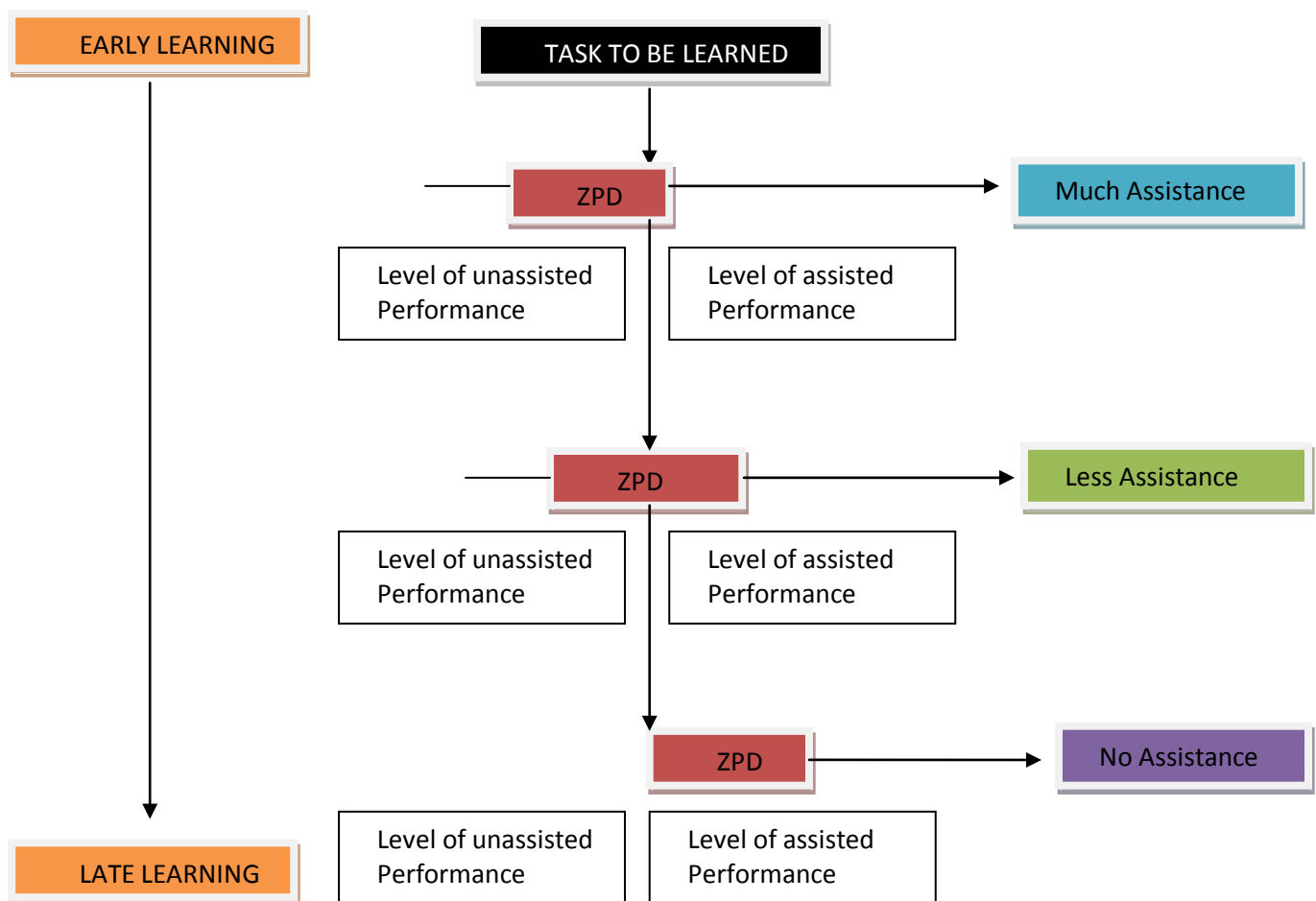
3.5.1 Vygotsky's approach to mediated learning and the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD)

Like Feuerstein, Vygotsky felt that Piaget overlooked the impact that social relations and culture had on cognitive development, and therefore proposed a theory of cognitive development that was highly influenced by the works of Marx (Robinson-Riegler, 2004).

It was Vygotsky's (1956) belief that cognitive development originated through the social interaction of the child with their environment. Vygotsky held that "patterns of social interactions do not just assist cognitive development as Piaget believed, but that social interaction determines the structure and pattern of internal cognition" (as cited in Cockcroft, 2002, p.191). If one is to accept this understanding of cognitive development, it becomes obvious that the child's social context is of vital importance to the development of their cognition and therefore highlights the role and impact of the institutional environment on a child's cognitive development.

According to Vygotsky, the cognitive abilities and strategies that allow us, as humans, to adapt the knowledge that we possess at any given time to everyday situations, is termed psychological tools (Kozulin & Presseisen, 1995). It is thought that babies do not possess psychological tools from birth. Instead, through interactions with others, children acquire psychological tools and learn to master them (Karpov, 2005). In turn, psychological tools like signs, symbols, language and concepts when mastered, are then used to mediate mental processes and, more specifically, higher mental processes (Karpov, 2005). It is proposed that a psychological tool such as a sign "alters the entire flow and structure of mental functions. It does this by determining the structure of a new instrumental act, just as a technical tool alters the process of a natural adaption by determining the form of labor operations" (Vygotsky, 1981, p.137). Vygotsky proposed that people possessed psychological tools to help them "master their behaviour and their thoughts" which in turn would help "to mediate their psychological processes" (Cockcroft, 2002, p.191). It is therefore thought that children, even within the institutional environment, have psychological tools which are responsible for their ability to acquire new information. The promotion of these psychological tools and the acquiring of knowledge is then dependant on the mediation that the child receives from the environment which, in turn, reiterates the role of the caregiver as a mediator and promoter of a child's knowledge and psychological tool development.

From a developmental perspective, Vygotsky, like Winnicott, believed that infants do not exist in isolation and an immediate interaction between baby and their caregiver or environment is needed to ensure the infant's survival (Watts, 2002; Doolittle, 1995). This highlights the dependence of children within institutions on their caregivers and, once again, places emphasis on the type and quality of care they receive. From birth, children experience socialisation practices through the internalisation of information about their

socio-cultural environment (Doolittle, 1995). According to Vygotsky (1978), children develop "lower mental functions such as simple perceptions, associative learning, and involuntary attention" through social interactions "with more knowledgeable others, such as more advanced peers and adults" (Doolittle, 1995, p.2). Therefore, children eventually develop higher mental functions such as language, counting, problem-solving skills, voluntary attention, and memory schemas" (Doolittle, 1995, p.2). Once lower mental functions have been mastered in childhood, they are not simply neglected. Instead they undergo a transformation to higher mental functions through the process of internalization, whereby external stimuli and process are incorporated into every day functioning and become automatic (Kozulin and Presseisen, 1995; Anderson, 1992 ; Doolittle, 1995). Thus, Vygotsky (1978) suggests that "children in their earlier years think the way they perceive and remember, while in subsequent years children perceive and remember the way they think" (as cited in Doolittle, 1995, p.3).

According to a Vygotskian outlook of cognitive development, children should develop their lower mental processing abilities into higher ones (Kozulin & Presseisen, 1992; 1995). The importance in the development of mental processes is that such development is thought to come about as the result of mediated activity (Tzuriel & Kaufman, 1999). It is proposed that there are three major classes of mediators namely: psychological tools, material tools and other human beings (Kozulin & Presseisen, 1995). It is the mediation of human beings as a function of converting lower mental processing to that of higher processes which is central to this research, as instutionalised children are thought to rely on the human contact they receive from the caregivers. Within this contact, the nature and quality of exchange is thought to affect the children's cognitive development.

It is proposed that mediation, through another individual, is strongly related to Vygotsky's conceptualisation of symbolic function meaning "the human mediator appeared first and foremost as a carrier of signs, symbols and meanings" (Kozulin & Presseisen, 1995, p. 69). Vygotsky did not further his thoughts on human mediation. Instead, the role of mediation, in relation to cognitive development, was further developed by Feuerstein.

Although Vygotsky did not elaborate on the human role of mediation as a function of higher mental functioning, he did propose a theoretical construct of the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD). Vygotsky proposed that a child's "immediate potential for cognitive growth is bounded on the lower end by that which the child can accomplish on their own

and on the upper end by that which the child can accomplish with the help of a more knowledgeable other, such as a peer, tutor, or teacher" (Doolittle, 1995, p.3). The immediate potential for cognitive growth is therefore termed the ZPD by Vygotsky (1978). The ZPD is defined as " the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem-solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more knowledgeable others" (Vygotsky, 1978, p.86). In essence, the ZPD helps to explain the development of cognitive functions which have not matured as yet from lower to higher cognitive processes. Thus it is through the involvement of a knowledgeable other that the potential for cognitive maturation is created and increased (Doolittle, 1995).

The ZPD of a child is not proposed to be a "naturally existing phenomenon" which "arises itself every time an adult helps a child achieve greater independence" as it is, in fact, a "special form of interaction in which the action of the adult is aimed at generating and supporting the child's initiative" (Zuckerman, 2007, p.43). Thus, the ZPD describes an intentional interaction between a child and knowledgeable adult, such as a caregiver, who promotes the use of their psychological tools at a particular point in time to develop the higher mental processes of the child. It is thought that a ZPD "is not described in the language of the content of the tasks but in the language of the kinds of help that to a greater or lesser degree aid the child in solving a task" (Zuckerman, 2007, p.43). Emphasis is placed on the quality and type of help the child receives if the interaction is to be classified in the terms of Vygotsky's ZPD. From empirical research on school teaching, "it is already clear that it should be determined to a much greater extent not by what the child knows how to do himself but by what he knows how to do under guidance with help, according to instruction, or in collaboration" (Vygotsky, 1991, p.402-403). This quote clearly highlights the emphasis that the ZPD places on the knowledge of the mediator and reiterates the quality of mediation received by a child within an institution.

In essence, it is a function of the adult and the knowledge they possess, which in collaboration with the child and the knowledge the child possesses, that promotes cognitive development. This highlights that cognitive development is not necessarily dependant on the task at hand, but rather on the type of interaction experienced (Vygotsky, 1991). The question that is posed is then "who or what develops in a zone of proximal development?" (Zuckerman, 2007, p.47). Essentially it is the child and their mental functions in the ZPD which undergo a developmental process. Specifically, it is

thought that it is not "the reconstruction of individual mental functions, but their systemic reorganisation that marks age- related developmental events" (Zuckerman, 2007, p.48). It is this re-organisation of mental functions within the child that Vygotsky postulates as occurring in the ZPD, whilst located within the child's socio-cultural context.

Vernon (2004) explains the connection between the social elements of Vygotsky's theory and his conception of mental functioning, suggesting that "social relations and interactions are a space or conditions for development but the very flesh of the interpsychic function, which exists between people, without belonging to either of them" (as cited in Zuckerman, 2007, p.48). The social context of the ZPD "suggests that the zone must be viewed as not solely relative to the child, nor the teacher, but of the child immersed in a cooperative activity within a specific social environment" and thus the essence of the ZPD "is the social system in which the child learns, a social system that is actively constructed by both child and the teacher" (Doolittle, 1995, p.5).

It is this outlook which informs the conceptualisation of how mediation should be conducted within an institution. The environment in which mediation occurs is thought to be important and dependant on adults such as caregivers. There is a need to explore caregivers' perceptions regarding mediation in order to assess the complexities of a bi-directional process such as mediation which is important for instutionalised children's cognitive development. The interpsychic relations between child and adult within a specific social environment is thought to be itself a relation and not a function of the exchange.

The dynamic nature of the ZPD can be understood diagrammatically as highlighted above in section 3.5 by Doolittle (1995). In the early stages of a child's learning, a child is thought to require assistance from a knowledgeable other regarding tasks that are located in the upper end of their zone. Following continuous interactions, which promote the re-organisation of their mental processes, a child in later years of learning achieves on their own what they previously could not (Anderson, 1992; Doolittle, 1995). In light of the above, the evidence suggests that there is a meaningful and important function of caregiver interaction with a child regarding their cognitive development. Thus, the role of mediation from a Feuerstein perspective, and the role of cognitive development in relation to Vygotsky's ZPD, has highlighted the importance of the caregiver and their role in promoting a quality mediated learning experience. It is not a given that parents, teachers or caregivers assume the mediator role or fulfill the interpsychic relation with their children,

and if they do, it is evident that the quality of such an interaction is more important than the quantity of such an interaction. In order to addresses the quality of such an interaction, it is important to gain insight into why parents, teachers or caregivers become involved in interactions which may or may not promote cognitive development.

The context of the institution and the role of homework have been proposed as important factors for the cognitive development of institutionalised children. In relation to Feuerstein and Vygotsky, as addressed in this chapter, it is thought that the role of the caregiver as a mediator in an orphaned child's cognitive development cannot be overlooked. Research needs to understand mediation and homework involvement from the caregiver's perspective in order to promote future interventions that will address the ZPD and MLE from both sides. An application of the three level-one constructs of the Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler model (1995) shall be used to research influencing factors of caregiver's homework involvement among institutionalised children.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

This chapter will discuss and explain the research design and methodology employed in this project. Emphasis will be placed on the qualitative nature of the research design and the associated procedures which governed the qualitative investigation of caregivers' perceptions regarding their homework involvement among institutionalised children, according to the three level-one constructs of the Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler Model (1995).

4.2 PARTICPANT SELECTION

Participants were obtained via non-probability, purposive sampling. A non-probability sampling strategy allowed the researcher to select the sample from which the participants could be obtained for convenient reasons (Whitely, 2002). Purposive sampling was employed as a means of actively selecting a sample based on the goals of the research. Therefore, participants were purposively selected with regard to their role as a primary caregiver in the institution and their involvement in homework with the children who are institutionalised (Whitely, 2002).

As there were only twelve caregivers in the institution, all twelve participants were approached by the researcher and addressed face-to-face regarding the nature and purpose of the research. Only seven participants were, however, available at the time of interviewing, as others had to watch over the children and could not be interviewed.

The public relations officer (PRO) was contacted first via written means, thus informing the institution of the research and what the research sought to investigate. The PRO replied to the research student showing interest in the research, and requested that further communication be conducted with management. Following this, management was contacted via written means (Appendix A) and informed of the study. Management responded positively and expressed their interest in the study. A meeting was then arranged with management at a time suitable for them at the institution in order to explain to them verbally what the study was all about.

It was requested by the researcher to management in writing, that access to a maximum of twelve (n=12) caregivers be granted in order to approach the caregivers and inform them of the research. It was proposed that all participants were to be employed as caregivers at the institution and that the employment period at the site could vary. The definition of a caregiver in the context of this study was adapted from the definition of a caretaker provided by Skinner et al (2004). Thus a caregiver is "a person who plays a key caretaking role" in the child's life, whereby the person provides all aspects of care and is responsible for the child under their care (Skinner et al., 2004, p.13).

A meeting was then arranged in which all caregivers attended, and the research student informed them verbally of the research. She then proceeded to hand out a written version of the research details, requirements and ethical considerations that would be upheld (Appendix C, D and E). Within the week, the research student then approached the caregivers during the morning when the children were at school to volunteer for the research. Seven participants agreed and signed the informed consent letters, whilst the remaining five participants were required to watch over the children.

4.3 BIOGRAPHICAL DETAILS

In order to gain insight into caregivers' perceptions regarding their homework involvement with institutionalised children, emphasis was placed on miscellaneous details, especially with regard to the participants' age, experience and employment period at the present institution. An analysis of demographic factors regarding the seven participants involved in the research will be discussed in order to indicate factors which may influence research findings.

Seven caregivers were approached and invited to participate in this research. After all seven participants had given their signed consent to be participants, interviews commenced. The interview questions centered on asking questions pertaining to caregiver perceptions concerning their homework involvement in light of the three level-one constructs of the Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler model (1995). Basic demographic questions were also asked in order to assess demographic variables in relation to caregiving as a vocation.

Table 4.3.1 Tabulation of participant's biographical details

Participant	Age (in years)	Job title	Employment period at institution
1	49	Caregiver	6 years
2	34	Caregiver	1 1/2 years
3	40	Caregiver	1 month
4	51	Caregiver /supervisor	2 years
5	35	Caregiver	1 month
6	46	Caregiver /Co-coordinator	8 years
7	40	Caregiver	9 years

On average, all participants were older than thirty four years of age, and were of an African culture. The time period that they had spent at the institution varied among participants ranging from one month to nine years. It is thought that such variety in experience would be valuable to the research as the perceptions of the less experienced caregivers could be contrasted with the perceptions of those who were more experienced. In terms of gender, there were six females and one male participant. Each participant was assigned to a particular house by the institution, which housed a set number of children of varied ages. All female participants worked among the younger aged children, whilst the male participant worked with children of an older age in an 'independent' house within the institution grounds. In the 'independent' house, children are taught to be independent in order to facilitate an easier transition from institution to community once their schooling has been completed. In order to assess participants' roles in relation to the reliability and validity of their input in the research, participants were asked demographic questions concerning their job positions and their associated education. The findings are discussed below.

4.3.2 Position and associated education

All participants were classified as caregivers at the time of this research. However, two participants had been promoted to house co-ordinator and supervisor prior to the research.

Although these two participants viewed their promotion as an achievement, they primarily viewed themselves as caregivers first and foremost, as their job still required them to care for children as they previously had. Numerous participants had fulfilled caregiving roles elsewhere. In fact, four participants had all worked for the same children's institution for no less than six years prior to seeking work at the present institution.

When participants were asked about their educational background and qualifications associated with childcare work, the majority of the participants did not possess a degree or diploma. However, two participants were previously auxiliary nurses, of which one was trained in England and had training in working with children with learning disabilities. All participants had mentioned that they had obtained a certificate in childcare. Participant six volunteered the following information when asked about her level of education regarding caregiving:

> No I just have a child care certificate. It's a basic
> qualification of child care and I've done a lot of training
> concerning the job I'm doing (Participant 6).

Like participant six, all other participants highlighted that they had received training relating to numerous areas of childcare work. Participant seven highlighted the following training areas:

> Childcare certificate, SANCA, HIV, stress
> management, um behaviour management and I can't
> remember there are so many (Participant 7)

Overall, participants' demographic variables appeared to be akin in respect of their age, job location, job title, qualifications and training. The variables which varied between participants were cultural background, home language, and duration at the present institution.

This section has described and discussed the demographic details of the research participants in order to gain insight into the sample and their validity to the study. The following section will discuss emerging themes related to the first level-one construct of the Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler model (1995), namely a caregiver's role construction.

4.4 PROCEDURE

The institution located in Gauteng region was contacted via verbal and written means with regards to information about the proposed study (Appendix A). Permission to conduct research at the institution was requested via verbal and written means. A letter was sent by the researcher to the manager and other relevant personnel about the research and rationale (Appendix A and B). Included in the facility information letter forwarded to management was the commitment to ethical issues of confidentiality and consent Following permission from management to begin the research process, caregivers were initially addressed at a meeting held at the institution in which the researcher introduced the research and handed out written information concerning the research (Appendix C). Caregivers were then asked to volunteer for the research.

Within the week, during the morning, all twelve caregivers at the institution were approached individually by the researcher and asked to volunteer for the research. Seven caregivers agreed to participate and thus made up the research sample (and, from here on, will be called participants). Subject information sheets, as well as informed consent forms, were given to each participant in private by the researcher, in order to inform them of the nature and purpose of the study once again before commencing with the interview. Ethical considerations of recording and transcribing were also highlighted and all participants agreed to both (Appendix C, D and E).

Once participants had given their signed consent to the researcher, the researcher asked each participant at what time and where they would like the interview to commence. All participants agreed to be interviewed immediately after being approached and requested that the interview take place in the house in which they worked. Interviews thus only commenced when signed permission was given and at a time and place most suitable for the participant (Appendix D and E). It was requested by the researcher that the interview be recorded and transcribed in order to assure accuracy of documented answers. However, participants were made aware that they had a right to say no to both being recorded and their answers being transcribed. This, however, was not the case and all participants agreed to both the recording and transcription of data via a signed informed consent form (Appendix D and E). Once all seven participants were interviewed, the researcher transcribed all seven interviews. All seven transcriptions underwent data analysis.

4.5 DATA ANALYSIS

Data analysis began with the transcription of all seven audio recordings by the researcher herself. The audio recordings were transcribed directly in the manner in which the participants spoke and emotionally expressed themselves. Thus, grammar and colloquial language of participants were transcribed as such and no omissions were made. On completion of transcription, the researcher checked the accuracy of the transcribed data against the original interview recordings. Thematic content analysis was then chosen by the researcher as the primary means of analysing the data acquired from the interview transcriptions because it allowed the researcher to "discover lawful relations between events in messages and process transpiring in individuals who produce them" (Osgood, 1959, as cited in Holsti, 1969, p.32). By definition, content analysis refers to a "research technique for the objective, systematic, and quantitative description of the manifest content of communication" (Berelson, 1952, as cited in Golding, 1999, p.115).

The data analysis began by systematically categorising data into broad themes based on answers provided by the participants. Categories were initially developed by the researcher and her supervisor separately then matched to ensure accuracy of initial analysis. Once data categories were derived, emerging themes were then identified and analyzed according to major categories. Categorical themes were ultimately derived from a single classificatory principle which ensured themes to be mutually exclusive and exhaustive (Holsti, 1969).

Data was then categorized according to their thematic interpretations and located under the three level-one constructs of the Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler model (1995).

4.6 RESEARCH DESIGN

The research design was classified as a qualitative exploratory design. A qualitative approach was the primary method of investigation as this research highlighted an "attempt to capture the sense that lies within" the human experience as viewed from the human perspective and phenomenological field (Parker, 1994, p.3). A qualitative exploratory method placed direct emphasis on exploring interpretations of the research context and particular insight of the participant as the research progressed (Larkin et al., 2006; Parker, 1994). Therefore, the research was located within an idiographic interpretivist framework

which seeks deeper understandings of data whereby the amount of data is less important than the depth of data (Parker, 1994; Neuman, 1994).

Emphasis was primarily placed on the psychological constructs located within the first level of the Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler model (1995). The research was, therefore, deductive in nature by moving from theory to the specific context of caregiver homework involvement as it required systematic interpretations as research continued (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

4.6.1 Data collection and instrumentation

The data collection instrument was the researcher herself which stayed in line with the emphasis of a qualitative human experience which could be interpreted by an individual who can make meaning out of verbal and non-verbal communication (Larkin et al, 2006).

Data was collected by the administering of a self-developed semi-structured interview consisting of four questionnaires (Appendix E) with a total of 22 questions. Questions were developed in relation to accessing information about a) caregiver demographics, b) caregiver perceptions of their role construction associated with homework among institutionalised children, c) how caregivers perceive their self-efficacy associated with homework involvement among institutionalised children and d) how caregivers perceive general invitations, demands and opportunities associated with homework involvement among institutionalised children. In order to make an application of the Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler model (1995), the interview schedule required participant answers to be grouped according to the construct in order for effective thematic data analysis to occur. At first glance, this method may appear to lead and inform the answers received. However, on further analysis, the variability of answers indicates that such a factor should not be of concern as all questions where thoroughly checked and supervised.

Semi-structured interviews were a means by which participants could answer questions in an insightful informative manner as required by qualitative methods whilst enabling the researcher to implement interview guidelines (Del Barrio, 1999). A self-developed semi-structured interview schedule was thought to be the best form of enquiry considering the exploratory and qualitative nature of this research and more importantly the context-specific nature of the sample. The development of the interview questions was based on an interactional process of systematically assessing relevant literature and incorporating

guided supervision input. Once the interview questions had been finalized by the researcher and the supervisor, they were employed accordingly.

4.6.2. Data analysis

Data obtained from the seven semi-structured interviews had undergone a qualitative data analysis. Thematic content analysis was the primary means of data analysis. Thematic content analysis was given preference as the data analysis method because it is a qualitative approach that places emphasis on in-depth interpretation of the content of data and recurrent themes (Golding, 1999). Themes that emerged from data analysis were analyzed accordingly and, in light of supervisor suggestions, until participants' perceptions were accurately reflected by the data and presented according to themes.

This research was classified as a non-experimental design based on the fact that there was the absence of an independent and dependent variable (Whitley, 2002). Therefore, there was no manipulation whatsoever, the absence of a control group and no randomization (Whitley, 2002). It was not the aim of this research to make causal conclusions. It was intended, however, that through the data collection and analysis strategies, a descriptive and exploratory account of caregivers' perceptions be obtained (Whitley, 2002). Themes emerging from data analysis were outlined in a number of broad categories relating to the participants' perceptions of homework involvement, their role construction, and self-efficacy and general opportunities, invitations and demands they experience.

4.7 ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

Exploring the perceptions of caregivers regarding their homework involvement with institutionalised children required an acceptance and sensitivity for the demanding and emotionally draining work such caregivers do. It is for this reason that this research was committed to all relevant ethical considerations. Interviews only commenced once the University of the Witwatersrand had issued an ethical clearance certificate and permission was granted in writing by the manager and relevant participants at the institution.

Participants were notified about the nature of the study through written means via a participation information letter and informed consent forms (Appendix C, D and E) as well as verbal means. The information letter and informed consent forms contained the following information: a) the exact nature and purpose of the study, b) the right to withdraw

from the research at any stage, c) the right to confidentiality when anonymity cannot be guaranteed and all other associated rights and relevant details (see Appendix A, B, C, D, and E). Participants were also requested to allow for certain quotes to be used directly in the research report anonymously but did have the right to decline such a request yet remain in the research. It was made explicitly clear that participants did not have to participate in the study if they did not want to, and that, should the participant feel uncomfortable at any stage of the interview, they had the right not to respond to the question or withdraw from the interview entirely without experiencing any negative consequences. A duplicate of the signed agreement and consent forms was made and one copy was given to the participant and management so that they had all the information at hand, or if they needed the researcher or researcher's supervisor's contact details.

In the event of the interview resulting in personal unease, counselling details would be provided on request at no cost to the participant. Termination of an interview was permitted at any time and participants were made aware that interviews were being recorded, and that recording would only commence once signed permission was obtained. All interview transcripts and audiotapes were kept safely during the research period and will be destroyed on completion of the research or otherwise as directed by the ethics board. Interview data was safeguarded by a password only accessible to the researcher. The researcher and supervisor's contact details were provided in light that participants may have had any questions.

Lastly, it was made explicitly clear to the institution and the participants that participation was entirely voluntary. Participants were invited to participate. If they chose to refrain from participating, they were made aware that their decision would not have any affect on their presence at the institution. Similarly, if participants did partake in the study, it was made clear that involvement would not be related in any way to the institution and therefore their role and vocation within the institution would not be affected in any way whatsoever. Should management have requested feedback, a summary of the research would be provided on request and on completion of the report. The same would apply to participants.

It is important to reiterate that the management's involvement in this research was merely to allow the researcher to conduct research at their institution with the caregivers themselves and only if the caregivers had agreed. Management had no right to coerce

caregivers or to be involved in this research, as the caregivers were the focus of the research and not the institution. The researcher would have addressed any issues concerning caregivers' apprehensions to be involved due to concern of management decisions verbally and caregivers were thus reassured through sound ethical practices.

It should be noted that the researcher was a volunteer at the research site in the past for a time period of a year (two hour per week visits). However, contact with caregivers was minimal as interaction was primarily with the children. The researcher kept a personal journal during the research process in order to reflect on any biases which may have surfaced, although none did. Direct consultation with the researcher's supervisor was also incorporated in order to address any biases. Taking into account the nature and rationale of qualitative research, the researcher's involvement with the institution was viewed as adding significant value to the cause of this research.

CHAPTER FIVE: RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

5.1 Introduction

This chapter will present and discuss the interpretation and findings of this research thematically. Results which have emerged will be discussed in relation to overarching questions and presented in terms of overarching themes. Interpretation and discussion of such themes will be presented and discussed under the three level-one constructs of the Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler model (1995). The three constructs of the Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler model (1995) allowed for the exploratory nature of this research to be structured around the application of such constructs. Although themes are related to an overarching construct of the model, it is important to highlight here that questions did not address the construct directly and engaged with generalised questions so that the participants were not led to give correct answers. Specific words such as role construction, self-efficacy and mediation were never used in questions and allowed for questions to be answered in a general manner. This allowed for a qualitative content analysis to be employed regardless of the structuring of the interview questions under the Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (1995) model constructs.

The discussion of the research findings will be structured according to the three level-one constructs of the Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler model (1995). Therefore, results will be discussed in three sections. Section one will be titled 'role construction' and will discuss emerging themes related to caregiver role construction and how participants perceived their role in light of homework involvement. Section two will be titled 'self-efficacy' and will discuss findings related to participants perceptions regarding their own competencies in relation to homework involvement. Section three will be titled 'general opportunities, invitations and demands' and explore the findings of the research related to participants' views on the demands and invitations made by the children. Each section will initially explore the construct and then report the findings of the research in relation to relevant theory and literature in order to gain a thorough understanding of the research findings.

The diagram below is a graphic organisation of the research findings and highlights a) the three overarching constructs of the Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler model (1995), b) the questions that were asked in relation to the three constructs and c) the over aching themes and sub-themes that were found.

Table 5.2 Graphic organizer of Constructs, questions, themes and sub-themes

Over arching Construct	Questions	Themes and Sub-theme's
1. Role Construction	1. Could you describe what your job title requires you to do as outlined by the institution, but also on a more personal level what you think your job requires? 2. Working with children that do not have parents may seem like you have to fit that role? How do you view your role concerning the children you care for? 3. Do you feel that what you do is only a job or that it makes you feel more responsible for how well the children do in school and how they behave outside of school? 4. Do you help the children with homework? Being the adult you may feel like you can help them because you know more, do you think that your help is good enough? 5. Do you think doing homework with the children should be your responsibility? Please explain answer. 6. Do you feel like other caregivers feel the same as you when it comes to doing homework with the children?	**THEME 1: DEFINING THE CAREGIVER ROLE** Sub-theme 1.1 Parental sentiments towards caregiving Sub-theme 1.2 Responsibility and personal investment associated with the role of caregiving **THEME 2: SELF PERCEPTIONS IN COMPENTENCY OF HOMEWORK INVOLVEMENT** Sub-theme 2.1 Homework involvement beliefs Sub-theme 2.2 Shared sentiments towards homework involvement
2. Self-efficacy	1. Do you feel confident or sometimes stressed when doing homework with the children, if so why and what are your experiences? 2. Do you think your help with homework will make the children do better in school and go further in life? If so in what way do you think so? 3. Sometimes when you really do not know how to help the children what do you do? And how could you help them differently? 4. What do you think makes children clever? 5. Do you ever feel like you need more help and training? If yes what kind of things would you like to know and be trained in?	**THEME 1: KNOWLEDGE OF HOMEWORK SUBJECTS** Sub-theme 1.1 Attributions about school success **THEME 2: COPING STRATERGIES** Sub-theme 2.1 Growth Areas **THEME 3: PERSONAL THEORIES OF INTELLIGENCE**

	1. Do the children ask you for help with schoolwork and other activities like going to prize giving's? How does this make you feel when they ask you?	**THEME 1**: INVITATIONS AS A POSITIVE REINFORCER
3. General opportunities, invitations and demands	2. How do you make sense of being asked by the children and school to go beyond what your job requires? 3. How do you deal with children that ask you for help when its not homework time?	Sub-theme 1.1 Efforts that go beyond
	4. Some parents think school is very important for children to succeed in life, what do you think could be done for these children to help them learn more and do better in school?	**THEME 2**: BOUNDARIES

5.3 CAREGIVER ROLE CONSTRUCTION

This section presents the results relating to participants' perceptions regarding their role construction and was selected as a theme in response to six overarching questions relating to how caregivers perceive their job, the role in homework involvement and their overall influences on children's achievement which can be viewed above in the graphic organisation of this section.

Themes obtained from all participants' responses were interpreted and placed under two overarching themes with two sub-themes; each of which shall be discussed accordingly. These themes and sub-themes are:

Theme	1.	Defining the caregiving role.
Sub-theme	1.1	Parental sentiments towards caregiving.
	1.2	Responsibility and personal investment associated with the role of caregiving.
Theme	2.	Self perceptions in competency of homework involvement.
Sub-theme	2.1	Homework involvement beliefs.
	2.2	Shared sentiments towards homework involvement.

Figure 5.3.1 A diagrammatical representation of the themes and sub-themes for the 'Role Construction' construct
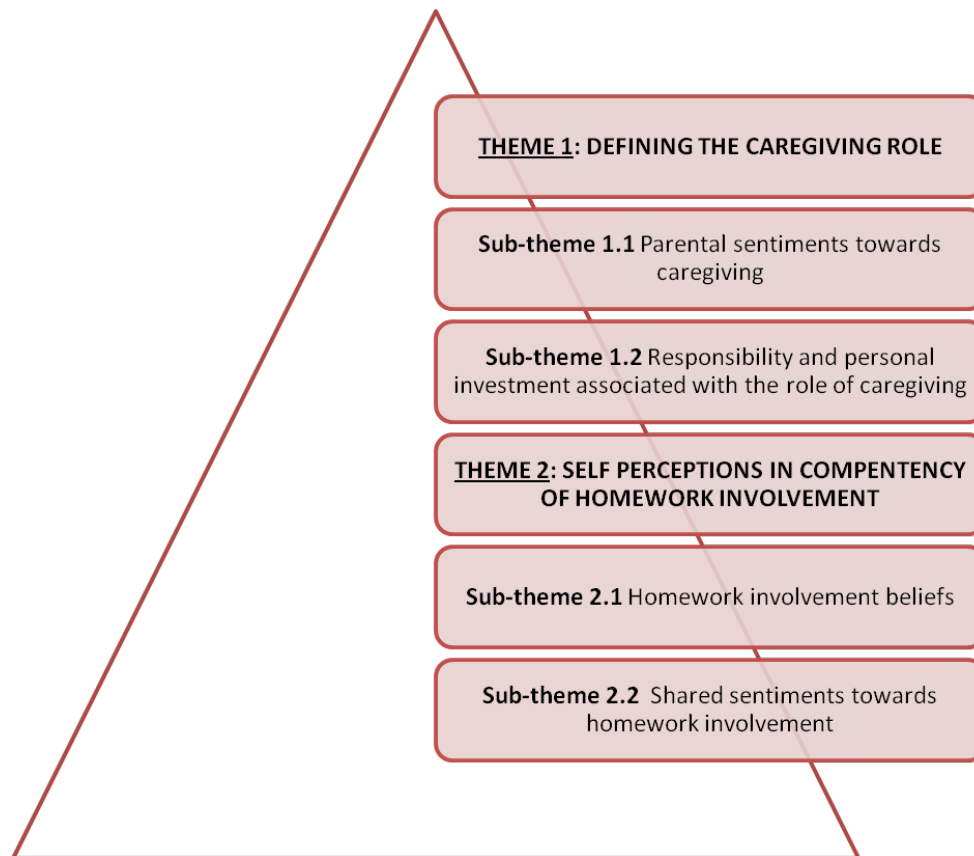
THEME 1: DEFINING THE CAREGIVING ROLE

Sub-theme 1.1 Parental sentiments towards caregiving

Sub-theme 1.2 Responsibility and personal investment associated with the role of caregiving

THEME 2: SELF PERCEPTIONS IN COMPENTENCY OF HOMEWORK INVOLVEMENT

Sub-theme 2.1 Homework involvement beliefs

Sub-theme 2.2 Shared sentiments towards homework involvement

According to the Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler model (1995), a parent's decision to become involved in their children's education is influenced by how they view their own personal role. Parental role construction is a complex construct and is defined by personal and group beliefs related to how parents views themselves and their role in caring for their child which can be consistent or change over time as Harrison and Minor (1978) suggest. Role construction is, in essence, a perception held by the parent as to what they are supposed to do in relation to the child's education (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997). In this research, the caregiver role construction is thought to be dependant on the same tenets mentioned above as caregivers are responsible for children and fulfill a pseudo parental role for institutionalised children (Mohangi, 2008). The perception of participants regarding their role construction was thus investigated on the basis that they fulfilled the parental duties and were involved in the child's educational development (Epstein, 1994).

In order to assess participants' perceptions of their role construction, they were asked numerous questions (which can be viewed in the graphic organizer – table 5.2) such as a description of what their job title required them to do and then, from a personal capacity, to

discuss what they actually believe their job as a caregiver constitutes of which ultimately taps into their personal beliefs about their role as a caregiver. Participants' perceptions of their role as a caregiver are then explored in terms of homework involvement with the children. The first theme presented below will discuss participants' sentiments towards their understanding of their role construction as dictated by the institution as well as their personal understanding. Under this first theme will be two sub-themes which will be discussed accordingly.

5.3.2 THEME 1: DEFINING THE CAREGIVING ROLE

Roles are thought to be "sets of expectations held by groups for the behaviour of individual members" (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997, p.9). It is important, within the context of an institution, that the role of a caregiver be explored from the caregivers' own perspective as well as from the perspective of the institution. It is thought that the groups to which parents/ caregivers belong such as an institution/family will "hold expectations about appropriate parental role behaviours" and thus may influence beliefs about role behaviours such as homework involvement (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997, p.10). Caregiver perceptions are generally personal beliefs expressed about the views they hold and can be influenced by background history and experience (Fulcher, 2005). Therefore the relevant background information of each participant is highlighted and discussed in chapter four.

Participants' role construction was investigated through the first question: "Could you describe what your job title requires you to do as outlined by the institution, but also on a more personal level what you think your job requires?" Such a question aimed to explore participants' perceptions about the institution's expectations of them as well as their own personal views of their roles as caregivers. Results showed that all participants were clear as to what their job as a caregiver required. There was, however, variation between responses as some participants highlighted the physical aspects of caregiving whilst others emphasized the emotional and psychological aspects of caregiving (Gribble, 2007).

This highlighted the diversity in participant beliefs which is thought to be associated with parental role construction sentiments highlighted in the Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler model (1995). Participants one and seven highlighted their caregiving role as follows:

> My job is to take care of the kids, to teach the kids responsibility, to teach them to do things on their own, to monitor them, to teach them actually everything that concern's life (Participant 1)

> My job should be like looking after the kids, make sure they clean, they ate, they up on time for school and homework is done, what they eat (Participant 7)

Participant one and seven clearly referred to the institution's role requirements and thus highlighted the physical aspects of the job description related to caregiving. When interpreting the results it was clear that all participants alluded to their role as a caregiver being more than what was required of them by the institution. Participants therefore highlighted that caregiving was not only being a vocation, but a vocation which required parental-like investments (Gribble, 2007). Participants felt that their role as a caregiver actually surpassed the institution's job description of a caregiver. Participant four and one explained in this regard:

> You must be there for them, physically, mentally, spiritually, emotionally you must be a mother this is a home you must be a parent to those you are looking after (Participant 4).

> My job is to take care of the kids to teach the kids responsibility, to teach them to do things on their own, to monitor them, to teach them actually everything that concern's life, responsibility (Participant 1).

Participants were parents themselves and explained that their job as a caregiver at the institution was a continuation of this parental role (Astoints, 2007). For this reason, it was noted that participants' role construction was, in fact, influenced by their own parenting construction and highlighted the complexity of role construction and the beliefs which promote positive involvement especially within an institutional environment (Anderson, 2005). Subsequently all participants highlighted that their role as caregivers was to be parents to the children. Participant two and seven explained their role as caregivers as:

> I am trying to give what I give my kids at home, so to share, need to share, I'll give what ever I do at home to my kids so my kids are happy wearing clothes, studies, I do all these things as a father at home does at home to these kids (Participant 2).

You know im not acting as a caregiver anymore I am acting as a mother … I even forget I'm a caregiver when I am around them, Im just trying to forget about home and be here full time with them, what ever I am doing at home I just try very hard to do here as well (Participant 7).

Interpretations suggest that both participants believed that their role construction was based on more personal sentiments towards caregiving than on institutional understandings and descriptions. Considering that participants felt that they were fulfilling the parental role, research sought to investigate participants' role construction concerning their involvement in the children's education. Once participants' perceptions regarding their role construction, in general, were established, they were then asked how they perceived their role in the children's education and, particularly, their role in doing homework with the children.

So far theme one has presented participants' perceptions regarding their role construction as formulated both personally and by the institution. Results indicated that participants held a parental role construction which exceeded the caregiving role construction of the institution. Parental sentiments towards caregiving highlighted the significance of the Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler model (1995) by indicating the influence of personal beliefs when adopting a parental role construction, which, in turn, is thought to influence a parent's mediation ability (Deutsch, 2003). Participants expressed their views about caregiving in relation to their personal beliefs and experiences of being a parent and, by association, relating their vocation as an extension of their parental duties. It is thought that such beliefs are central to international caregiving models in order to promote a parent-child relationship within the institution (Gribble, 2007).

Further analysis of data highlighted that participants associated their caregiving role with the aspects related to parental concerns such as the responsibility and accountability for the children's success which is central when taking into account the criteria of Feuerstein's (1980) MLE. The following sub-theme will further discuss participants' perceptions of how they perceive their parental role in relation to caring for institutionalised children as well as what they actually perceive the parental role to constitute. Such insight is thought to validate the application of the Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler model (1995) in this research due to the fact that participants actually view themselves as parents to the children.

Therefore, the type of homework involvement they receive can be addressed in relation to the normal parent child relationship and the role of a positive MLE.

5.3.3 Sub-theme: Parental sentiments towards caregiving

Parental role construction is thought to be influenced by the beliefs that parents may hold about themselves and their ability to help their child. Such beliefs are thought to be influenced by people and structures around them (Grossman, 1998). The extent to which parents feel responsible for their child's development is also thought to play a role and thus influences a parent's role construction (Smyke et al., 2007). Participants were questioned with regard to the amount of responsibility they felt towards the children especially in relation to their school achievement and behaviour. Participant two explained that, in her view, caregiving was not a job but rather it was a state of being. This statement highlighted the degree to which parental role construction can be adopted and influenced by personal beliefs.

> To tell you the truth to be a caregiver it is not a job, to me to be a caregiver is not a job it's what I am, this is what I want to do. It is in me, in me I am not here for the money, I am not here for the status. (I am here) To give love, to give them courage to give them, to show them that it is not the end (Participant 2).

It was evident that participant two felt strongly about fulfilling a role which exceeded that of a caregiver which supports the role description as outlined by Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (1995). It is thought that such beliefs and sentiments shape the role construction of a parent. Participant six shared the same opinion and stated:

> Ja I do feel more responsible to be honest because it's not about being here doing my job and going home it's about seeing them doing something for themselves, especially to get job's because our kids are struggling when we take them back to the community, ja they struggling to build relations, they struggling to get job's (Participant 6).

The responsibility expressed by all participants towards the development and success of the children was evident in the aspirations and concerns they held for these children. It was evident that participants felt obligated to extend their concerns to further areas of the children's development such as relationships with others and employment opportunities for

the children when they had completed their schooling careers. Thus it highlights the critical role a parent plays in a child's preparation for life as indicated by Sherbon (2000).

Participants' sentiments towards the responsibility, achievement and wellbeing of the children were perceived as a positive influence and highlighted the significance of the parental decision making process concerning homework involvement as highlighted by Walker et al (2004). Following the above mentioned findings, the research sought to investigate whether or not participants did homework with the children and whether or not they felt their help was good enough.

5.3.4 Sub-theme: Homework efforts and associated perceptions

Research by Bryan and Burstein (2004) has shown that parental involvement in a child's education is correlated with variables such as higher academic achievement. This suggests that a parent's decision to become involved in their child's education is very important and influenced by factors such as role construction as discussed above (Walker et al., 2004). Central to a child's education is the role of homework and parents' perceptions concerning their involvement in homework (Bempechat, 2004). Participants were therefore asked about their homework involvement with the children and how they perceived their efforts in light of the influence their involvement may have in relation to the children's educational achievement.

All participants stated that they were required to do homework with the children daily. Participants expressed that their involvement concerning homework was related to helping the children develop and grow through such interaction. It was implied through interpreting participants' answers that a sense of self-efficacy and responsibility was associated with their homework involvement with the children. This is highlighted in research by Eccles and Harold (1993). Although participants highlighted their homework involvement, this did not highlight their personal sentiments towards whether they felt like their involvement was effective. Research thus sought to gain further insight into what participants felt about their homework involvement. When participants were asked about whether they felt that the help that they had provided to the children was sufficient, all participants agreed that their efforts were indeed sufficient.

A contradiction, however, surfaced among participants' responses regarding their perception of the adequacy of their homework involvement. Although all participants expressed that the help they provided was good enough, they also highlighted the need for

help and an over-arching self doubt concerning the children's school subjects. This was a theme which was alluded to by Tam and Chan (2005). Participant three explained this contradiction:

> Sometimes I doubt myself with homework's because they (children) come with something I don't know then I have to battle and battle and battle (Participant 3).

Although participants expressed a sense of competency when helping the children with homework, an element of self-doubt did emerge which was viewed as affecting their homework involvement. The influence of self doubt on homework involvement highlights Bandura's (1977) theory of self-efficacy and the influences that self-efficacy may have on parental involvement tasks such as homework. A sense of frustration was interpreted by the research student when analysing participants' responses. The analysis of participants' responses also indicated that such frustrations had led the participants to question the value of doing homework with the children. According to Stipek and Gralinski (1991), such negative sentiments towards doing homework with children may indeed impact on children's own beliefs about doing homework and therefore such negative self-perceptions and frustrations need to be addressed.

The sub-theme above has discussed participants' overall perceptions of homework involvement in general. Participants' sentiments regarding their homework involvement surfaced indicating underlying feelings of self-doubt and the need for help. Due to the fact that participants were required to do homework with the children as stipulated by the institution regardless of their ability, the kind of parental involvement was thought to differ from that of the home environment parental involvement role where there is a choice to engage with their children. For this reason, participants' perceptions regarding their responsibility concerning homework involvement with the children was questioned and discussed under theme two.

5.3.5 THEME 2: PERCEPTIONS OF CAREGIVERS' COMPENTENCY RELATED TO THEIR HOMEWORK INVOLVEMENT

Although the institution makes homework involvement for caregivers a compulsory task, it does not mean that the caregivers themselves do not hold their own opinions as to whether or not homework should be their responsibility, especially since it was found that participants expressed self- doubt concerning their homework involvement. It is postulated

that the perceptions of participants regarding their beliefs as to whether or not homework should be their responsibility and was very important, as this influences the type of homework mediation the child experiences (Tam & Chan, 2004).

5.3.6 Sub-theme : Homework involvement beliefs

Parental beliefs about homework involvement are thought to dictate the type of homework experience a child receives and therefore also dictates the type of mediation they receive for cognitive development (Green et al. 2007). Considering that participants felt strongly about fulfilling the parental role, and that the experience of doing homework was central to that of a parent, it was therefore of vital importance to explore such sentiments. Participant one and three highlighted the relationship between parental role construction and the responsibility of doing homework by stating:

> It is my responsibility because as a mother when a child is with you, you have to do homework with the child when she is at home with you then when she is at school with the teacher it is the teacher's responsibility (Participant 1).

> Yes it should be because they can't do it for themselves and they can't, they can't look after themselves (Participant 3)

Although participants felt strongly about doing homework with the children as any parent would, the element of self-doubt could not be ignored. This led the research student to question the type of involvement and quality of mediation experienced by the child as the manner and beliefs parents hold regarding homework are thought to influence a child's beliefs and achievement abilities in turn (Gianzero, 1999).

When questioning participants about their sentiments towards receiving extra help regarding homework, for example from volunteers, all the participants indicated that they would gladly accept such help. This indicated that participants were able to acknowledge the need for help and thus their own incompetencies in facilitating homework.

> I really like the idea of people coming in the house and doing homework because some of the kids are struggling a lot you sit with her for an hour that's to much for you cause the other's are also waiting for you (Participant 7).

Participant seven highlighted the logistical problems related to homework time at the institution and thus highlighted the overwhelming duties of a caregiver (Fyhr, 2001). Participant responses indicated that homework time at the institution was different to that of a normal home environment. Participants thus highlighted that they had to do homework with five to nine children at a time which affected the type of attention they gave to each child. This reiterated the negative factors which decrease a child's cognitive potential as indicated by Van Ijzendoorn et al (2008).

Homework involvement of this nature was perceived to be extremely challenging for participants. Participants' responses indicated that homework involvement included doing homework with children in different grades as well as in different languages. In addition to the challenges presented with homework time, participants also highlighted their accountability to the children regarding the quality of homework involvement. Participant five explained:

> A child can bring homework which I don't know, which I cannot help you know, the child will not understand why I cant help because maybe I don't know how to help them, I don't know to do the math's or what ever their homework is maybe I don't know, for me to understand what they really want so, I think it should need a person who is qualified for that (homework involvement) (Participant 5).

A post-hoc assessment of the participants' sentiments towards their role in homework provision highlighted the need for: a) external help, b) reduced numbers when doing homework and c) more knowledge of present subjects. This highlighted factors raised by Fyhr (2001) in relation to the challenging conditions of caregiving work. On numerous occasions, participants spoke of the education they had received and how it differed to that of the more modern curricula. Participants found that the inability to understand the new curricular was extremely frustrating. Participants suggested that, if they were to receive training in modern school subjects, it would help them significantly when doing homework with the children as they would feel more competent in their own abilities. This, in accordance with Bempechat (2004), would help to promote their own beliefs in relation to their competency when helping the children with their homework and therefore the type of mediation the children receive.

5.3.7 Sub-theme : shared sentiments towards homework involvement

The shared sentiment towards gaining extra help regarding homework involvement helped to highlight participants' overall perceptions regarding their role construction. Although participants highlighted their parental role, they had also highlighted their need for help. Role construction, as mentioned before, is often influenced by those around us and the opinions, expectations and sentiments they hold concerning the individual and self-efforts (Walker et al., 2004). For this reason, it was important to gain insight into how the participants viewed other caregivers in their homework involvement role and whether or not other participants felt the same as they did. All but two participants felt that other participants shared similar sentiments when doing homework with the children. Participant one highlighted why it is that she believed others share a similar experience:

> I think they feel the very same as me because during homework time when they come back from school there is a lot to do, you must check whether their uniform is clean, they must make sure their uniform is washed and then they must make sure that they get lunch and they must go and fetch supper from the kitchen, and then sometimes they need something which is from school, eh the homework or the things off the internet, you must by that time you must run up and down so you wont be able to do all these things of homework without having anyone help you (Participant 1).

Participant one indicated that other participants held the same beliefs regarding homework involvement as she did based on the physical constraints of doing homework and fulfilling all other job requirements. Participant one explained the daily tasks of looking after the children's other needs impeded on tasks such as homework involvement. The priority of other caregiving tasks alluded to issues surrounding the lack of commitment to children's cognitive development within institutions based on the complexities and demands of caring for such children (Maclean, 2003). The multitude of caregiving tasks highlighted the type of resources and methods that participants relied on in order to cope with the complexities of child care.

Different opinions were thought to be insightful as not all participants held the same opinion concerning homework involvement and the shared beliefs of other participants.

Thus it was interpreted that participants' coping mechanisms related to homework involvement varied or were entirely different. Such differences were interpreted as discrepancies relating to role construction and participants' individual styles of coping. This indicated the importance of socialisation practices and the way in which the participants taught the children to cope with difficulties in their homework through their own personal strategies of coping, as highlighted by Rogoff (1990). Participant six explained:

> Never mind others they think they need some help
> from outside ja but from me I learn a lot sitting with
> the kids around the table doing homework, you know
> to me it gives me knowledge that I don't know but for
> other people they think okay I cant do it so let
> somebody who can do it (Participant 6).

Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (1997) and Walker et al (2004) indicate that parental role construction is complex and affected by numerous factors such as self belief, coping abilities and responsibilities towards helping children as well as the shared beliefs of others. It is surmised that participants' specific beliefs about their responsibility and role construction impacted on their homework involvement abilities. This indicates the importance of self-efficacy and the effects that such beliefs may have on the process of engaging in homework as well as the actual decision to become involved (Eccles and Harold, 1993).

Thus far, research findings have been discussed under the first level-one construct 'role construction' of the Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler model (1995). Findings have been discussed under two main themes and two sub-themes, as highlighted in figure 5.2.1. Results indicate thus far that participants' perceptions concerning their role as caregivers and particularly their homework efforts is primary for application of the three level-one constructs of the Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler model (1995). Further investigation shall place emphasis on self-efficacy which is the second level-one construct of the Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler model (1995), as participants alluded to issues of self doubt which are thought to influence the type of homework involvement the children will receive (Zuckerman, 2007).

5. 4. SELF-EFFICACY

This section presents the results relating to participants' perceptions regarding their self-efficacy and therefore the second level-one construct of the Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler model (1995). Research findings are discussed under three over-arching themes and sub-themes. Themes and sub-themes arose in relation to five overarching questions (as highlighted in the graphic organizer table 5.1) concerning a) participants' confidence levels in homework involvement, b) their beliefs about their help and its relation to success, c) their ability to ask others for help in order to help the children, d) their perceptions regarding further training and lastly, e) their perceptions about what makes a child intelligent.

Theme	1.	Knowledge of homework subjects
Sub-theme	1.1	Attributions about school success
Theme	2.	Coping strategies
Sub-theme	2.1	Growth area's
Theme	3.	Personal theories of intelligence

Figure 5.4.1 A diagrammatical representation of the themes and sub-themes for the 'Self efficacy' construct
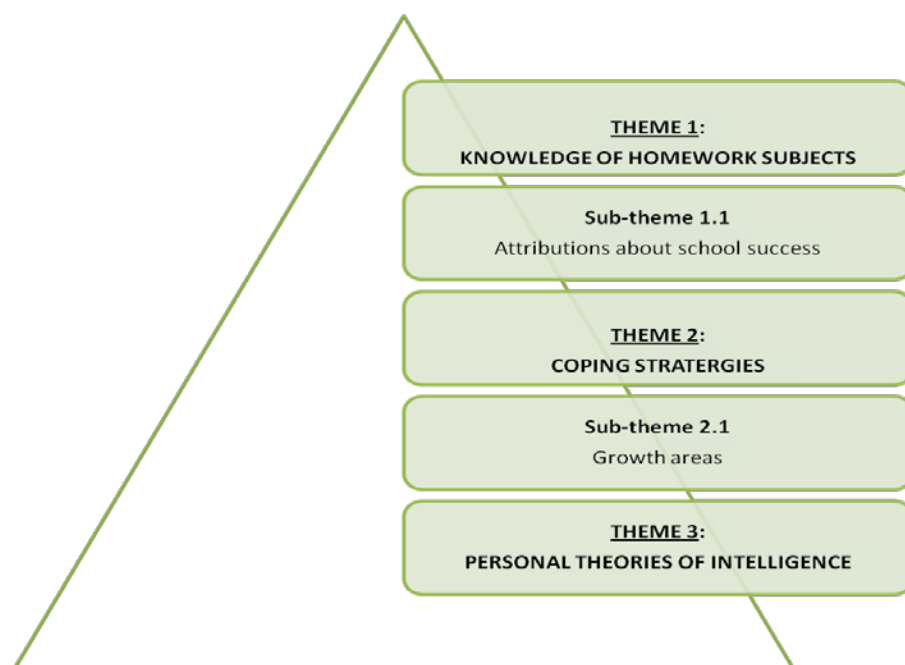
According to Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (1997), parents who express positive sentiments regarding their own competencies in helping children with their schoolwork promote and facilitate positive homework involvement and therefore cognitive development. In relation to this research, it is thought that participants who express positive sentiments towards their own competencies will promote parental involvement and therefore cognitive development. However, it is postulated that parents who hold negative sentiments towards their own homework involvement abilities will avoid involvement and seek outside assistance (Grossman, 1998). In relation to this research, it is thought that such theorizing could be applicable and thus it needed to be investigated.

According to Walker et al (2004), parents who seek help in order to cope with homework involvement are viewed in a negative light as it is perceived that the actual mediation of homework is not being conducted in a manner that will promote a direct MLE as highlighted by Feuerstein (1980). Thus the quality of the help sought may not be adequate thereby reinforcing a system in which the child is left to fulfill their own homework requirements.

The themes that emerged under the construct of self-efficacy will now be discussed and refer to participants' responses concerning: a) knowledge associated with helping the children with homework, b) the attributions they hold about children's success, c) the coping strategies they employ when self-efficacy is perceived to be low, d) growth areas and lastly, e) theories participants held concerning intelligence and the effect that that intelligence may have on the type of involvement efforts they engage in.

5.4.2 THEME 1: KNOWLEDGE OF HOMEWORK SUBJECTS

Children are expected to go to school in order to acquire knowledge (Cooper et al., 2006). This knowledge is mediated through teachers and subject areas such as mathematics, science and biology (Feuerstein, 1990). At school, children are surrounded by knowledge mediators. However, the same mediation may be absent at home or exist to a lesser degree. Children who request help with their homework are dependant on a caregiver to fulfill the role of the teacher and mediate knowledge in a meaningful way. In an ideal situation, the caregiver should be equipped for this type of interaction and should possess the knowledge related to the subject that the child requires help with. However, this is not

always the case and the parent may in fact have absolutely no knowledge of the subject, and thus cannot help the child.

Self-efficacy is essentially the beliefs about one's own abilities, and in relation to this research, beliefs about being competent at a task such as homework (Bandura, 1977; Hoover- Dempsey & Sandler, 1997). Taking into account the relationship between participants' perceived ability to perform the task of homework and how such beliefs influence the type of mediation the child experiences, this research sought to further investigate the self-efficacy of participants.

One of the five questions which investigated participants' self-efficacy was related to how they viewed their efforts regarding homework with the children. This question was "Being the adult you may feel like you can help them because you know more, do you think that your help is good enough?" Participants were therefore asked whether they felt confident when engaging with children's homework or stressed by the process. Five participants stated outright that they felt stressed when it came to doing homework with the children. Participants' responses when interpreted indicated that their perceived lack of confidence in their own ability was related to their perceived inadequate knowledge of the children's school subjects. Due to the fact that participants felt that they themselves did not possess adequate knowledge of the children's school subjects, it was expressed that they felt that they could not, in turn, fulfill the role of homework mediators sufficiently. This situation led the participants to feel stressed about homework. Participants stated the following:

> Ja I get stressed when I have to help them with something I don't know or something I am not sure of mmm you see but I like to help them but when they tell me something different , the syllabus changes every now and then I get stressed you know cause I don't know how to help them(Participant 3)

Participant three alluded to a possible understanding of the relationship between personal competency beliefs and the ability to help with homework as highlighted by Bryan and Burstein (2004). Participants indicated that, if they themselves did not possess the knowledge of the child's work, they felt incompetent to help the child adequately even though they are required to do so as stipulated by the institution.

Results indicated that participants felt a sense of guilt related to not being able to help a child adequately with homework. The guilt that participants referred to was interpreted in relation to how participants thought the children and school viewed them. According to Hara and Burke (1998) a parent's perception of how their child and their child's school views their abilities significantly influences the parent's self-efficacy and therefore their decision to become involved in children's homework. Participant three explained further:

> It stresses me a lot because when you help them you want to give them the right thing that you sure of that is going to be right and be good you know. So they come with something different now and we don't know you see and I get stressed and it's wrong if I give him or her wrong information to take it to school and then the teachers says we are wrong and she'll never trust me or aunty failed me you see… You see they say they say aunty got it wrong, you know that means I didn't do my job I didn't help him (Participant 3).

A sense of helplessness and guilt was found to be associated with participants' perceived incompetence as highlighted by participant three. Interpretations made about participants' sense of helplessness and guilt indicated that such perceptions arose when participants felt that they were unable to meet the needs of the children. Therefore participants highlighted the importance of self beliefs when fulfilling parental roles such as homework which coincides with views expressed by Gianzero (1999). Participant six explained:

> Ja sometimes I feel stressed, especially Afrikaans I'm not good at Afrikaans the child comes to me and asks for help you know and now I need to find somebody and sometimes there is no one to help and this is kinda like getting hopeless you see ' you said I must come and do homework and now you can't even help me' (Participant 6).

Participants' responses indicated that their self-efficacy beliefs were strongly related to the perceptions of their own knowledge base and experience, especially in relation to current subjects taught in school. Findings of this research highlighted that participants had voiced on numerous occasions that their education and knowledge was not adequate to assist the

children with their homework and therefore lower levels of self-efficacy were found among participants. Lower self-efficacy is thought to prevent adequate mediation and parental involvement and thus is of major concern when investigating the type of homework involvement that instutionalised children receive (Hara & Burke, 1998).

Two participants, however, felt confident in their efforts to help the children with their homework. Their confidence seemed to indicate that they felt a higher sense of self-efficacy compared to the remaining participants. Although these two participants felt confident in their abilities, they also expressed similar concerns to participants with a lower sense of self-efficacy especially in relation to unfamiliar knowledge areas. Participant five and two explained:

> No I feel confident I know what I'm doing … If I don't then I feel stressed because the child will not understand why (Participant 5)

> I can tell you I feel confident when I understand what I'm doing. Stressed when I don't understand the answer (Participant 2)

The self-efficacy of participants was perceived to be central to facilitating a more positive experience of homework involvement for the child, especially in relation to how the child would perform at school (Walker et al., 2004). A sense of high self-efficacy is thought to be crucial when promoting parental involvement (Anderson & Minke, 2007). This is because parents who feel competent in their own abilities are willing to help their children with homework which, in turn, could help the child achieve in school (Bryan & Burstein, 2004; Gianzero, 1999; Hara & Burke, 1998).

Due to the fact that participants were required to do homework with the children regardless of the sense of self-efficacy, the effectiveness of this interaction was perceived to be influenced by the participants' beliefs about their own ability to help and therefore their overall motivation to promote effective homework involvement (Bempechat, 2004). In summation, this theme has indicated the perceptions of participants regarding their sense of self-efficacy when engaging in homework with the children. It was found that participants felt a sense of guilt and helplessness related to not being able to meet the needs of the children and this was related to lower perceptions of self-efficacy. Participants

expressed that their incompetencies related to their poor knowledge of the current subjects taught at schools.

In light of these findings, it was necessary to investigate how participants viewed their overall influence on the child's ability to achieve at school as a result of their involvement efforts even if such effort were perceived as poor. The following sub-theme will discuss participants' perceptions regarding their beliefs about their role in helping the children achieve at school. Such beliefs are deemed critical as they are fundamental to the mediation experiences and a parent's decision to become involved in their child's education (Zuckerman, 2007; Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler, 1995).

5.4.3 Sub-theme: Attributions about school success

Parental attributions about a child's school success are thought to be related to a parent's sense of self-efficacy (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1995). Green et al (2007) explain that, even if a parent expresses a low sense of self-efficacy relating to homework involvement, their overall beliefs about the influence they have on the child's school success could still have a positive effect on their decision to become involved in their child's homework. The second question which sought to investigate the self-efficacy of participants, when taking into account the above, asked participants whether or not they thought that their efforts in helping the children with homework would help them do better in school and later on in life.

The emerging sub-theme that formed as a result of the question indicated that all participants felt strongly about the fact that their efforts, although not always adequate, did help the children achieve at school and that such efforts would continue to help them later in their lives. This alluded to research findings by Sherbon (2000) which indicated the role that parents' beliefs have on a child's preparation for life. Participants' responses were interpreted in terms of a high sense of self-efficacy with regard to their homework involvement. Participant seven highlighted this relationship between personal efforts, their aspirations and beliefs about the children's success at school and in later life as a result of their help with homework:

> That's what I wanna see because life is hard outside. You know what I can say from that one I think if they really taking from me will help them maybe to go and help others in the future (Participant 7).

Participant three attributed her sense of self-efficacy to her own experiences in her childhood. Thus participant three highlighted the fact that self-efficacy may in fact be related to past experiences. This finding could therefore indicate how previous experiences of homework involvement are perceived and internalised by a parent and may influence their present motivations and self-efficacy beliefs as highlighted by Karpov (2005). Participant three explained:

> You know I was raised like that, what I'm doing is
> what I got from my mother ja my mother brought me
> up like that, helping me with my homework that's
> why I respect this so the way I was grew up and I
> want to help them grow like me (Participant 3)

Participants' responses indicated that the task of doing homework goes beyond the here and now and influences children later on in life. For this reason, all participants felt that their efforts would help the children that they did homework with. In particular, one participant highlighted the role of helping the child to understand that homework could extend past the school requirement and have an influence on their independence through achievement which is highlighted by Cooper et al (2006):

> If you help that child to do their homework
> themselves not you doing if for her when she comes
> to school the results will be tomorrow she's much
> better (participant 4).

Participants' overall perceptions of their efforts were interpreted in a positive light. Although such results were perceived in a positive light, it was evident that concern still needed to be placed on the type of homework involvement that the children received.

In order to investigate the quality of homework involvement whilst simultaneously investigating participants' self-efficacy, participants were questioned with regard to the means they employ when they themselves could not engage with the homework task. Participants' ability to overcome obstacles and seek alternative help was thought to be related to their sense of self-efficacy. Anderson (2005) explains that parents can increase their sense of self-efficacy through finding alternative means for helping their children with homework. The following theme will discuss findings related to participants' coping strategies.

5.4.4 THEME 2: COPING STRATERGIES

It is thought that when parents become despondent about their homework involvement with their child, they may decrease their involvement or even completely stop such efforts (Bempechat, 2004; Grossman, 1998). Within the institutional environment, as stated before, homework time is a set rule and thus whether or not caregivers are desponded or content, homework assistance still needs to take place. Although homework involvement for caregivers and homework time for the children is compulsory, there are no regulations as to how homework should be carried out. Therefore, caregivers do not have to be physically seated at the table with the children and may supervise from afar. The type of involvement that the caregiver decides on, both physical and emotional, is dependant on their personal beliefs regarding their efficacy (Bryan & Burstein, 2004; Hara & Burke, 1998). Caregivers who may feel disengaged and incompetent may choose to distance themselves from the child and the homework task or choose to seek help externally.

In order to further investigate participants' self-efficacy, participants were questioned about how they coped with situations in which they could not help a child with their homework. Participant responses were perceived to be indicative of their self-efficacy beliefs and placed emphasis on homework involvement which sought completion of the child's homework task regardless of their involvement. It is thought that, within the institutional environment, participants who sought alternatives were promoting a positive influence on the child's overall academic achievement and cognitive development (Cooper et al, 2006; Hara & Burke, 1998).

Responses formed in relation to this theme indicated that all participants engaged in help seeking behaviours when they themselves could not fulfill the homework task. Such behaviours were interpreted as coping strategies and are thought to be specific to the institutional environment. Participants indicated that such strategies were employed in order to deal with homework issues when their knowledge was not adequate and therefore a quality MLE could not be experienced (Feuerstein, 1980).

Not only did participants highlight their efforts to ask for help, but they inadvertently highlighted that they were also not embarrassed to ask for help. By asking for help openly, participants indicated that they had the ability to place the need of the child before their own embarrassment in order to promote their learning which is indicative of positive parental involvement (Villas-Boas, 1998; Walker et al., 2004). Results indicated that

participants felt confident that they could ask for help, especially from management and other caregivers. Participants one and three highlighted their coping strategies:

> I just phone the office and ask one of the management to help me, like Afrikaans if I'm having a problem with it I just call M and then… Ja I make a plan I don't give up, I don't just leave it (Participant 1)

> I ask for help. There are other caregivers, from other caregivers as we are not equal we are not the same we have different experiences you see, if I don't know something I'll go to another one and ask (Participant 3)

The fact that participants were willing to engage in strategies that would help the child regardless of their involvement was, viewed in a positive light. Participants' responses highlighted that they were able to act in the best interest of the child and seek help when they perceived their self-efficacy to be low.

In light of the institution and the need for children to receive adequate mediation of homework, participants' perceptions concerning their need for help was investigated further. Thus the following sub-theme took into account previous responses by participants regarding their self-efficacy concerning homework involvement and posed the question of whether or not they would like to receive training in relation to homework involvement. A discussion of participants' responses will follow.

5.4. 5 Sub-theme : Growth areas

According to Bandura (1977), self-efficacy as a construct is thought to be influenced by one's self beliefs and abilities. It is suggested that, if an individual was to engage in any activity to promote self knowledge, an individual's self-efficacy would in turn experience a positive shift. In order for self-efficacy to be influenced, the individual concerned would need to be open to engaging in activities that could increase their motivation and competency beliefs (Bempechat, 2004). As discussed above, participants had indicated their weaknesses and need for help when doing homework and therefore are thought to have initiated a process of conceptualizing their incompetencies in relation to the children's overall needs.

It is hypothesised that, should participants be willing to engage in rectifying their knowledge gaps, in order to promote their self-efficacy, this would in turn promote homework involvement and mediation efforts through promoting through an MLE and ZPD (Kozulin & Presseisen, 1995; Zuckerman, 2007). Participants' willingness to engage in training programs was explored in relation to the fourth question relating to self-efficacy. Participants were therefore asked whether or not they would like to receive further training relating to homework involvement.

Research findings indicated that six out of seven participants answered yes to the question highlighting that they would want further training, especially in relation to knowledge about school subjects like Mathematics, Natural Science and Afrikaans. Participants once again highlighted that school subjects had changed since their era and they found it extremely difficult to help a child with their homework, when they themselves had no knowledge of the subject. Participant five stated:

> Yes I really need training and I was also thinking if I could ask anyone at the office that are there any trainings that we can take to up grade you know where we are (Participant five).

Participant five's acknowledgement of her need to upgrade her knowledge and skills was thought to be significant, as such advances were suggested to be valuable for the development of their self-efficacy and the decisions they make when involving themselves in their homework involvement with the children (Grossman, 1998). One participant in particular felt very strongly towards the advancing of her skills and compared her role to that of a mother, thus reiterating the prior theme of parental sentiments.

In contrast, participant four highlighted that mothers are not perfect and therefore seek help as well thereby normalizing her inadequacies and promoting the best interests of the children through help seeking behaviours, which, in light of this research, is thought to be a positive factor (Gianzero, 1999; Hara & Burke, 1998):

> I do need help with homework. I think relevant studies for that helping with homework like a mother, may be mothers to be trained to know how to help their kids with homework that kinds of stuff (Participant 4).

Participants' responses indicated a common underlying concern regarding their own skills and how these skills do not serve the best interests of the children. Participants expressed that modern ways of teaching seem to be different to that of the past and thus the ways that they themselves were taught as children and adolescents. Participant six highlighted the areas in which she sought further knowledge by stating:

> Especially (help) with reading, I think reading. Also me I also need training on how to read because if I can understand because now they teach them to say 'n' 'ame' so then we don't know we just want to go straight and say 'name', ja and the child is stuck ja but the way we teaching them to say the alphabet then say their name. So if we not aware of those things we end up saying 'n' ah uh no no not like that and the child it's how they taught at school (Participant 6).

The majority of participants highlighted areas in which they felt they needed to acquire more knowledge in order to help the children with their homework. The emphasis participants placed on the need for knowledge growth was interpreted as significant and highlighted that the participants would like the institution to provide forums in which they could express their concerns and receive training. This appears to be a documented need of caregivers in general (Fulcher, 2005).

The current theme highlighted the fact that, although participants felt some sense of self-efficacy towards the overall success of the children they helped, on a more personal level they felt that they required more knowledge. The participants' request for more knowledge indicated that they wished to develop their own skills in light of helping the children. Such requests were viewed as growth areas and a means to promote a MLE (Feuerstein, 1980).

Following participants' responses concerning their self-efficacy, the last theme shall discuss a central tenet of self-efficacy and its relationship to homework involvement and the decisions parents make in becoming involved in their child's education. It is proposed by Walker et al (2004) that, central to homework involvement, is a parent's beliefs about their child's development of knowledge and intelligence. Participants' beliefs about intelligence were therefore explored and discussed via the following theme.

5.4.6 THEME 3: PERSONAL THEORIES OF INTELLIGENCE

Central to this research is the perceptions of caregivers regarding their beliefs about homework involvement and therefore it incorporates elements of school success and beliefs about children's cognitive development. Associated with self-efficacy theory and homework involvement are the beliefs that a parent will possess in relation to their child's intelligence (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1995). In relation to this research, it is thought that how a participant views a child intellectually may influence the type of mediation they offer to the child. According to Henderson and Dweck (1990), individuals hold either an entity theory of intelligence or an incremental theory of intelligence. The difference between an entity versus incremental perspective of intelligence is the degree to which intelligence is believed to be malleable (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997). An entity theory holds that intelligence is fixed and cannot be changed whilst an understanding regarding an incremental theory holds that intelligence is malleable, meaning that, through quality mediation, a child's intelligence can be positively influenced. This point of view is reiterated by Feuerstein's conception of structural cognitive modifiability that suggests children's cognitive structures can undergo a change based on a quality MLE (Feuerstein, 1990).

In relation to this research, participants' views on intelligence should be understood in light of the above in order to gain insight into the type of homework involvement they offer to the children. The relationship between intelligence and self-efficacy is thought to be an interesting one as the Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler model (1995) as well as Henderson and Dweck (1990) highlight the relationship between parental intelligence beliefs and their efforts to help their child with homework. It is proposed that parents who think their children are not intelligent will maintain the belief that nothing can be done to help them and therefore the amount of effort the parent commits in assisting the child will be limited. On the other hand, parents who believe that their child's intellect can develop and improve with effort and time, will invest their resources into promoting homework involvement (Walker et al., 2004). Taking this perspective into account, participants were asked the fifth question concerning their personal beliefs about the origin of intelligence and, in particular, what it is that contributes to a child being intelligent. The word 'clever' was substituted for intelligence within the interview question as it is thought to be a common word which would not discriminate against participants' understanding of the question.

The majority of participants explained that a child's ability to be intelligent is dependant on the type of care they receive. Participants therefore expressed that the type of care that a child receives both impacts on and promotes their intelligence which is indicative of their beliefs about the children placed in the institution. Participants' explained to the research student that, if the children were in a happy environment where they could be active and play, they would be more inclined to develop cognitively. Therefore, a relationship between deprivation and cognitive development was inferred and suggested that cognitive development was thought of in a linear manner whereby the type of environment would affect their intelligence. This has been highlighted by Maclean (2003) and Van Ijzendoorn et al (2008).

A number of participants referred specifically to activities which were related to school that were thought to promote a child's intelligence such as reading. Participants explained:

> When they are reading some magazines and news papers by that they can understand life actually, you get it from reading books you know (Participant 2).

> Like by giving them CD's to watch for their ages, give them books (Participant 5)

Participant two and five referred to educational resources and materials when suggesting ways in which children develop their intelligence. Unlike the above participants, other participants believed that things which contributed to developing a child's intelligence were dependent on the affection they receive. It is believed that caregivers who promote positive stimulation and have an emotional investment in a child's development will positively affect their development (Gribble, 2007; Mohangi, 2008; Smyke et al., 2007; Van Ijzendoorn et al., 2008). Participant three, six and seven explained:

> I think the child gets clever when you play with the child and see the child does the right thing, give the child love and teach him what is wrong and what is right, give the child the right exact information and don't beat around the bush (participant 3).

> You must know to be patted and to be always support you know when they come back you told

them that it's good and least encouraging them (Participant 6)

You know what makes children clever is their environment, their happiness must come first that can make them clever cause if the child is not happy or getting what ever she will not be clever, she will also stress even though she can't say ' I am stressed' they do stress (Participant 7).

Although participants highlighted that the environment and educational means such as reading were responsible for contributing to a child's cognitive development, when asked if children were born clever and stayed clever or whether they thought that children had the ability to develop cognitively throughout their life, the majority of participants stated that children were born clever. Participants therefore adopted an entity theory of intelligence (Henderson and Dweck, 1990).

One participant clearly stated that the ability to be clever was associated with intelligence. Participant four indicated how important personal beliefs about a child's intelligence are by stating:

I think it's the IQ. It depends what is the level of that person's IQ (Participant 4).

The sentiments participants held regarding a child's intellect were evident and emphasised the importance of personal theories of intelligence on self-efficacy as highlighted by the Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler model (1995). The majority of participants believed that children were either born clever or not and thus promoted the entity theory of intelligence (Henderson & Dweck, 1990). Within an institution, it is thought that participants' perceptions concerning intelligence and cognitive development were more pessimistic than usual, as children were thought to be compromised by virtue of their placement in the institution, even if they were intelligent and thus highlighted the construct of deprivation on intelligence (Maclean, 2003).

This theme has discussed participants' beliefs concerning their personal theories of children's intelligence. Participants expressed a negative sentiment towards the children's intelligence when interpreted according to the Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler model (1995). It is therefore thought that such negative perceptions may impact significantly on

the type of homework involvement the children may experience. Participants perceived that children are born clever, and through deprivation, do not developed adequately and therefore they themselves will not be able to influence their intellect. This, in turn, is thought to decrease the participants' motivation and self-efficacy and therefore their homework involvement as highlighted by Anderson and Minke (2007) and Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (1997).

The overarching theme of self-efficacy was addressed under three main themes and two sub-themes which were discussed accordingly in relation to homework involvement and the application of the Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler model (1995). The third and final level-one construct of the Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler model (1995) will now be highlighted and discussed according to emerging themes and sub-themes.

5.5 GENERAL OPPORTUNITIES, INVITATIONS AND DEMANDS

The third level-one construct of the Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler model (1995) was used in relation to investigating participants' perceptions concerning their homework involvement. The primary theme will be discussed accordingly and it emerged in relation to four questions posed to participants concerning the sentiments they held towards the general opportunities, invitations and demands made by the children. In particular, questions focused on a) participants' sentiments towards invitations to engage in school activities, b) how participants make sense of being asked to go beyond their duties by the children, c) how participants deal with demands and lastly, d) what participants' beliefs are concerning the role of school in the child's life.

Two primary themes emerged. Under theme one there is a sub-theme, which will be discussed accordingly.

Theme	1	Invitations as a positive reinforcer
Sub-theme	1.1	Efforts that go beyond
Theme	2.	Boundaries

Figure 5.5.1 A diagrammatical representation of the themes and sub-themes for the 'General opportunities, invitations and demands' construct
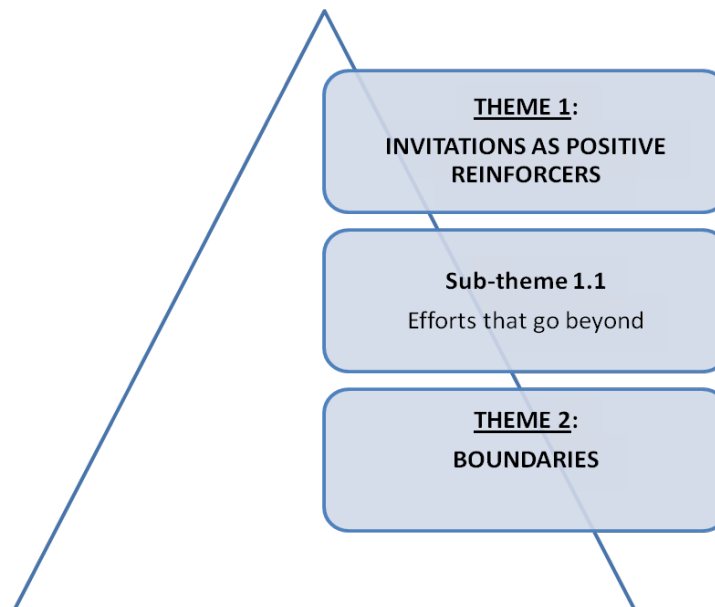
According to Hara and Burke (1998) and Walker et al (2004), parental involvement decisions are influenced by whether the parent perceives the child as wanting them to be involved or not. Thus, the extent to which a parent perceives that their child needs help will ultimately elicit and govern their involvement (Green et al., 2007; Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler, 1995). This relationship between perceived need for parental support from a child and homework involvement is thought to be governed by the parent-child emotional relationship and influenced by developmental stages (Cooper et al, 2006; Tam & Chan, 2005). Parents engaging in the involvement process are thought to feel validated and rewarded by their children's invitations, which, in turn, elicits more involvement. Emerging themes and sub-themes which will be discussed are: a) invitations made by children who act as a positive reinforcer for involvement, b) demands placed on caregivers to go beyond their duties and how they respond and lastly, c) the boundaries that participants place in order to maintain control over their involvement practices.

5.5.2 THEME 1: INVITATIONS AS POSITIVE REINFORCERS

Parents who believe that their children need their help and expertise feel validated by invitations for involvement, whereby invitations are thought to be any advancement a child makes towards a parent in order to acquire their help or input and may be both formal and

in-formal (Green et al., 2007; Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1995). In the realm of school work, especially homework, it is thought that parents who are invited by their child to help them with homework will experience a sense of satisfaction (Tam & Chan, 2005). The satisfaction a parent experiences can be thought of as a reward, which elicits further involvement practices by the parent. Invitations directed towards the parent are thought to act as a reinforcer and promotes homework involvement and therefore cognitive development (Walker et al., 2004).

The findings of this research have indicated that participants hold a particular perception of themselves as parents caring for institutionalised children. Therefore the third construct which is 'general opportunities, invitations and demands' is evident in influencing homework involvement decisions. The general opportunities or demands a child makes are similar to that of invitations made by a child in that the child seeks involvement from the parent by either demanding it or generally asking for help (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997).

Although participants felt that they were fulfilling the parental role, as discussed in section one under the first-level one construct 'role construction', participants highlighted that the institution governs their involvement. Therefore, invitations and demands made by the children can only be carried out if the institution permits such invitations and demands and, therefore, the opportunities to promote a MLE is thought to be extremely complex and dictated by institutional regulations. An example of this would be a child requesting a caregiver to attend a prize giving or sports event. The decision for honouring the invitation would be placed in the hands of management which complicates the direct relationship between caregiver and child and places a strain on the child's motivation to achieve because their caregivers cannot witness their achievements.

Participants were asked whether the children made such invitations and what such an experience felt like. All but one participant highlighted that the children had invited them to help with schoolwork on a daily basis. Participants also highlighted that they had also been invited to sport competitions and end of year prize givings and that these invitations brought them great satisfaction. In particular, it was found that the participants felt rewarded for their efforts when the children received rewards which promoted their sense of motivation and achievement through their involvement (Bempechat, 2004). An example of this was outlined by three participants when they indicated the following:

Yes they do (ask for help with school work). It makes me feel like a real real mother (Participant 4).

Yes they do. Ja when the child asks me to go to the prize giving I feel so special, so special so I can see the role I am playing. You know it means the relationship I'm having with the child the sometimes know's I achieved this because Aunty A was always there for me (Participant 6).

Yes they do. I feel good … Because to me they kids they my kids they my children, and its nice to watch them and me … Because.they show you that you helped them achieve that (Participant 7).

It is clear from the statements made above that invitations made by the children acted as a positive reinforcer for the participants thereby promoting their future involvement decisions. Participants felt proud that their work with the children had a positive influence on the children's achievements, which is thought of as a positive reinforcer for parental involvement with homework (Bryan & Burstein, 2004).

In contrast, invitations made by a child and school may not always be manageable and may depend on extraneous variables such as time and available resources. It is thought that continuous invitations of a complex kind may challenge parents' abilities to cater for such demands, and therefore act as negative reinforcers when contemplating homework involvement. Participants, within the institution, are already thought to be fulfilling the needs of the children to the best of their ability without the extra demands and invitations that a school and child can make. Therefore such factors need to be taken into account and managed correctly by the institution in order to promote motivation for homework involvement.

This theme has discussed participants' positive sentiments towards being invited by the children to help them and attend functions. The following theme, however, will take into account invitations made by the children that exceeded the participants' job description. It is suggested that how caregivers and, in particular the participants of this research, react to such demands is important as it indicates the type of coping strategies they employ, the willingness or lack thereof they display and the limits they set in relation to their involvement . Insight into such factors is indicative of the lengths to which caregivers will

go to involve themselves in the children's homework and ultimately the decisions they make to become involved.

5.5.3 Sub-theme: Efforts that go beyond

The degree to which invitations made by children can be honoured by parents is thought to influence parental involvement decisions (Walker et al, 2004). Thus, if parents feel that they are capable of meeting the child's needs, the invitation will be experienced as a positive experience. However, invitations which may exceed the parents' capabilities made by the school and child are thought to challenge the parent and their ability. Participants were asked to explain how they felt when requested by the school or child to go beyond what their job required. Five out of the seven participants felt that such demands and invitations were permissible and that, no matter how strenuous such demands were, they were committed to the children's needs. In particular, participant seven explained that her role as a caregiver was not dependant on a job description and therefore, when children demanded more from her, she was willing to fulfill these needs:

> You know what I believe, in childcare there is no job description yes we can say there is but it doesn't work cause if something comes up like you say 'it's not in my job description' and they asking for it and if its something I can do I don't mind (Participant 7).

> When they want more I have to give more (Participant 3).

The two participants who did not hold the same opinion as the other participants clearly felt that such demands made by the children or school exceeded their abilities and therefore could not cater for such need which then left participants frustrated and disengaged. Participant one and six stated:

> I don't feel good in that because sometimes we talk with the other caregivers that, it's like teachers are putting pressure on us they no longer doing their job (Participant 1).

> Ja sometimes it's stressing in the job we do to be honest because if I have to go beyond , sometimes I need to go home with my own stuff I don't have time you know (Participant 6).

Participant one highlighted that she perceived a huge demand to be placed on caregivers by teachers, especially with regard to the amount of homework that is assigned to the children. In the normal home setting a parent with one child would perhaps be able to help their child complete all their homework. However, in the case of the institution, participants may feel overwhelmed by a teacher's requests, as participants were dealing with more than one child. Participant six explained that caregiving is taxing and that personal sacrifices need to be retained for their own home environment apart from the institution as well.

This theme has highlighted participants' views that invitations made by children have been understood in relation to schoolwork and a certain time period such as homework time. Outside of such timeframes, invitations are thought to be demands, which according to the institution, does not require caregiver involvement although participants did highlight that they would be willing to help. Participants indicated that boundaries need to be developed so that children know when it is appropriate to make invitations and when it is not appropriate. In light of participants highlighting the role of boundaries, the following theme will address participants' reactions to demands made by children. It is hypothesised that it will add valuable insight into how and why participants become involved in the children's homework.

5.5.4 THEME 2: BOUNDARIES

Parenting often requires boundaries to be instilled to help the child develop a sense of order and reality (Bryan & Burstein, 2004). Although parents may have a clear understanding of where their boundaries may be placed, children have a tendency to push these boundaries and seek involvement when the time is not appropriate (Anderson and Minke, 2007; Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1995). Within the institution, boundaries are preset and every caregiver is required to establish and maintain the rules and regulations that are established. One such regulation governed by a boundary is homework time. Therefore, every afternoon from three to four children are required to do their homework.

Participants were questioned with regard to their experiences of children requesting involvement outside of homework time and how they dealt with such situations. The majority of participants explained that the children do request help with their homework outside of homework time. Two participants clearly stated that they had not experienced this as they had not allowed the situation to occur.

All participants were clear in defining their boundaries in terms of their involvement, even if they did agree to help the child outside of homework time. Participants had criteria which dictated their involvement outside of homework time. Participant three explained:

> It depends it depends it depends what time she wants help because homework time has it's own time so its better if he or she wants it earlier than late , because if he wants it late I get angry because there was a homework time (Participant 3).

Participants felt strongly about maintaining their boundaries. Although this may seem appropriate, children may experience parental boundaries as a rejection of their invitation and may therefore refrain from eliciting future invitations. Such findings have been highlighted by Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (1997). Therefore, it is thought that the manner and type of boundaries which are set are important in promoting the relationship in which homework can be mediated and knowledge acquired.

The position of a caregiver in this respect is more challenging than that of a biological parent who is assisting a child in his/her own home. This is due to caregivers needing to engage with the children in a manner which is dictated structurally by the institution. This theme has discussed the issues participants have experienced in relation to children's demands and invitations.

5.6 Conclusion

This chapter has discussed the interpretation and findings of this research thematically. Results which emerged were discussed in relation to overarching questions and presented in terms of overarching themes. Interpretation and discussion of such themes was presented and discussed under the three level-one constructs of the Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler model (1995). The three constructs of the Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler model (1995) allowed for the exploratory nature of this research to be structured around the application of such constructs.

The discussion of the research findings were structured according to the three level-one constructs of the Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler model (1995) and therefore results were discussed in three sections. Section one was titled 'role construction' and discussed emerging themes related to caregiver role construction and how participants perceived their role in light of homework involvement. Section two was titled 'self-efficacy' and

discussed findings related to participants' perceptions regarding their own competencies in relation to homework involvement. Section three was titled 'general opportunities, invitations and demands' and explored the findings of the research related to participants' views on the demands and invitations made by the children.

CHAPTER SIX: STRENGTHS, LIMITATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Introduction

This chapter will critically reflect on the entire research report in order to explore the relevant strengths and limitations of this study. Firstly, this chapter will identify and discuss the strengths of this research. Secondly, the limitations of this research will be identified and discussed. Following such insight, recommendations and areas for future research will be suggested. This chapter will then conclude with a reflection and discussion of the entire research report.

6.2 STRENGTHS OF THE RESEARCH

Strengths of this research were identified and are highlighted below:

- The qualitative nature of this study allowed for an in-depth analysis of caregivers' perceptions regarding their homework involvement with institutionalised children. It appeared as though research was lacking in this field of enquiry and therefore, this research appears to add a wealth of knowledge to the field of enquiry.

- The research methodology employed was viewed as a further strength, based on the fact that limited research has been conducted in this field of enquiry. An exploratory focus allowed the researcher to investigate areas concerning caregiving and homework involvement that had not previously been researched in such a manner and which sought to draw on any relevant literature available.

- The decision not to stipulate a hypothesis at the onset of the study allowed the researcher to focus on themes that emanated from the participants' perceptions. In addition, thematic content analysis allowed the researcher to explore emerging themes under the three level-one constructs of the Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler model (1995) accordingly. Although the interview schedule was structured according to the three constructs, participants were not led to answer questions in accordance with the three constructs. Therefore, words such as self-efficacy, intelligence and role construction were supplemented.

- This research highlighted and gave insight into the experiences of caregivers who provide nurturance for the neglected, abused and unwanted children of South

Africa. It is thought that the qualitative nature of the research data will aid further research on caregivers within institutions even if special focus is not placed on the cognitive development of children within institutions.

- The research data highlighted the needs of caregivers in relation to their vocation which should be taken seriously by institutions as they are fulfilling extremely important roles. It is, therefore, a strength of this research, that the needs of caregivers were identified, especially in relation to the cognitive development of institutionalised children. In turn, it is thought that such insight could be used to address and promote areas of positive development within the institution.

- An application of the three level-one constructs of the Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler model (1995) was viewed as a strength as it allowed for the research be structured according to the first three main constructs which influence a parent's decision to become involved in their child's homework. This research, therefore, simultaneously focused on a context-specific environment whilst locating participants' responses within a wider body of knowledge.

- This research ultimately highlighted the need for positive caregiver involvement relating to institutionalised children's cognitive development through efficient homework involvement. Therefore, this research sought to highlight the need for homework mediation within the institutional environment in order to promote the cognitive development of the children.

6.3 LIMITATIONS OF THE RESEARCH

The following limitations were found to be present in the research and are highlighted below:

- The sample size was thought to be a potential limitation of the study despite the fact that the seven participants yielded in-depth and insightful information. It is noted, however, that for the purpose of qualitative research, the sample size did suffice.

- It was kept in mind that the participants' responses could have been altered in either a positive or negative manner, as to reflect their personal views about

management and the institution. The researcher took this into account and interpretations were thus made with insight and caution. The research student kept note of any issues and used supervision as a forum to address any inconsistencies.

- The qualitative nature of this study called for the researcher to interpret data according to her own perceptions. This fact may be considered a limitation as data gathered may be interpreted differently according to another researcher. The qualitative process, however, did require subjective interpretation and therefore was not perceived as a significant limitation. In order to guard against self-biases, the research student kept a journal of the research process and consulted with her supervisor continuously.

- The fact that the researcher had volunteered at the institution for a period of a year during her undergraduate studies was taken into consideration. However, due to the fact that the participant had not been at the institution for more than a year prior to this research and that she had not been involved with the participants that were interviewed, this limitation was thought to be minimal.

6.4 RECOMMENDATIONS

Taking into account the research findings, strengths and limitations of this research, it is thought that recommendations could be made to the institution and in relation to future areas of research. Both shall be discussed accordingly.

6.4.1 Recommendations for the institution

Participants' responses indicated a primary need for the institution to acknowledge their need for further training and input regarding homework involvement and subject knowledge. It is therefore recommended that the institution:

- Further investigate caregivers' perceptions regarding their involvement with the children in terms of all areas of involvement and not just homework. Thus, a needs analysis is thought to be crucial in such an assessment in order to promote the development of institutionalised children.

- Reduce the amount of children to caregiver ratio, especially during homework time or possibly employ more caregivers for the homework period.

- Caregivers receive monthly training regarding their skills development, especially in relation to children's education.

- In light of the perceived lack of knowledge regarding current school subjects, it is thought that the institution could communicate with the schools in order for workshops to be set up to address caregiver knowledge gaps.

- In relation to the research findings, it is thought that caregivers should receive training on mediation and homework involvement in order to help promote a quality mediated learning experience and therefore children's cognitive development.

- Should financial constraints limit training within the institution, it is recommended that more volunteers be accepted into the institution in order to focus on doing homework with the children.

6.4.2 Recommendations for future areas of research

Taking into consideration the importance of this research topic and the effects that homework involvement has on institutionalised children's cognitive development, it is proposed that future research is needed. In particular, it is proposed that research should focus on:

- Caregiver motivational factors regarding homework involvement.

- Children's self-employed homework strategies.

- A focus on the second, third, fourth and fifth levels of the Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler model (1995) in order to gain a complete understanding of caregivers' decisions to become involved in children's education.

- The factors which impede on a caregiver's ability to fulfill the role of a homework mediator.

- Research regarding the actual mediation experience as perceived by both the caregiver and child simultaneously.

It is proposed that further research should focus on the development of intervention, in order to promote homework involvement and mediation among caregivers and parents. A mediation type intervention could thus form part of a quantitative study whereby a pre-test post-test research design could be employed in order to measure the benefits of such an intervention. It is proposed that such an intervention, informed by theory and research, could serve as the basis for a training program, whereby caregivers in all institutions across South Africa could attend and receive knowledge about children's cognitive development and the importance of the caregiver role.

6.5 CONCLUSION

This research set out to explore the perceptions of caregivers regarding their homework involvement with institutionalised children through the application of three level-one constructs of the Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler model (1995). Data analysis has provided a wealth of information concerning caregivers' perceptions towards homework involvement and the factors that influence their decisions to become involved in the children's education.

Research findings highlighted the importance of the caregiver role in the lives of institutionalised children, and how caregivers perceive their role as a parent instead of a caregiver. Caregivers are clearly aware of the issues that prevent adequate homework mediation and, therefore, requested further training. Such sentiments indicated that institutions within South Africa, need to equip caregivers, like those of this research with the necessary skills and training to promote the positive development of orphaned and vulnerable children in South Africa.

The three level-one constructs of the Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler model (1995), namely role construction, self-efficacy and the general invitations, demands and opportunities children make, were used to structure the research in order to access the perceptions of caregivers regarding those areas which influence the decision making process in homework involvement. Research findings indicated overall that caregivers are receptive towards the needs of the children and are willing to fulfill the role of homework mediator. However, their knowledge of current school subjects appears to be inconsistent with

modern curricular subjects and therefore, they perceive their own efforts as limited. Such perceptions are thought to affect their self-efficacy and therefore affect their decision to promote positive homework involvement.

The role of a quality mediation experience cannot be ignored among the OVC population of South Africa. Cognitive development should be the right of children regardless of colour, creed or home environment. Thus, government and institutions should take the training and career development of caregivers seriously in light of promoting the cognitive development among children within institutions in South Africa. Considering the limited availability of research in this field, it is hoped that such a study would promote further enquiry into orphaned children's cognitive development, the role of mediation and homework involvement as employed by caregivers.

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Appendix A: Facility Subject Information Sheet

The University of the Witwatersrand
Department of Psychology
School of Human and Community Development
Private Bag 3,Wits 2050,Johannesburg South Africa
Tel: (011) 717-4500 Fax: (011) 717-4559

Dear Sir or Madam

Good day

My name is Val-Lyn McQuade. I am currently a Masters student in Educational Psychology at the University of the Witwatersrand. In order to fulfill the requirements for my degree I wish to conduct research about how caregivers at your institution perceive their homework involvement with the children. The title of my research is 'Exploring the perceptions of caregiver's homework involvement with institutionalised children: an application of three level-one constructs of the Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler model (1995)'. Through researching caregiver's perceptions about homework involvement it is hoped that valuable insight will be gained about how caregivers perceive their work with children in terms of their homework involvement abilities. Secondly it is also hoped that emphasis placed on caregivers themselves will highlight a perspective that is uniquely important in the care of children institutionalised.

I intend on taking a qualitative approach to my research, thus data shall be obtained through the means of an interview. I would like to invite your organisation to participate in my research. Participation requires ten caregivers of your organisation to partake in a self-developed semi-structured interview carried out by myself for a period of 40 minutes to an hour, at your institution at a time most convenient for the participant. If permission is granted by the participants the interview will be audio- recorded and transcribed for further analysis. Transcriptions shall be made of the audio-recordings and subjected to thematic content analysis in order to interpret the results. All results shall be presented in terms of a research report keeping to requirements set out by the department of psychology.

Should your organisation wish to participate in this research please note that due to the nature of the interview anonymity cannot be assured however confidentiality will be guaranteed, as no identifying details of the participants or the organisation will be used whatsoever. It should be noted that due to the sensitivity surrounding personal beliefs and perceptions the interviewee will be at liberty to answer only those questions that he/she is

comfortable with. Audio-recordings of the interview will only commence once the participant grants permission, it should also be noted that only my supervisor and I will have access to the transcripts and recording tapes. Transcripts and recordings shall be kept safely on the premises of the university in a designated location assigned by the course coordinator of the Masters in Educational Psychology program and any data kept on the researchers computer will be given a password. On completion of this research all transcripts and tape recording shall be destroyed according to ethical requirements. Results will be made available to your organisation on request in the form of a final summary only and no interview material will be shared with management. Likewise no information regarding the participants recordings or transcripts will be made available for any legal proceedings or arbitration.

The development and future of many orphaned children in South Africa is placed in the hands of institutions and care facilities that do the best they can with limited resources. The perspective and experiences of the caregiver are often neglected thereby preventing the development of environmental interventions. It is hope that through researching caregiver's role in homework involvement research can promote caregiver support and educational interventions to promote cognitive development.

Your participation in this study would be greatly appreciated, should you choose to participate in this study please fill in and sign the attached form. Do not hesitate to contact me or my supervisor with any questions you may have.

Kind regards

Val-Lyn McQuade

Tel: 0723912151

Email: mcquade@megabits.co.za

Supervisor

DR. D. Alexander
Lecturer \ Registered Psychologist
U221
Tel: 011 717 4526

Appendix B: Informed Consent From For Facility Participation

I_____of _____ and superior of caregivers of this facility have read the above letter (facility information letter) and acknowledge both the nature and purpose of the research in relation to this organisations involvement and the involvement of ten caregivers at this organisation.

In agreement of this organisation partaking in the study I understand that:

- Participation in this research is voluntary

- There will be no benefits or negative consequences should this facility choose not to participate.

- Ten members of this organisation shall be interviewed following their permission.

- Interviews shall be recorded and transcribed once the participant grants permission.

- The participant may refuse to answer any questions that they do not feel comfortable answering.

- The organisation and participant have the right to withdraw from the study at any time.

- No information that may lead to identifying the participant or organisation will be included in this research report, and responses will remain confidential.

- Direct quotes used from participants will first require permission.

- A summary of the report will be provided only on request at the end of the research

Date _____

Signature _____

Appendix C: Subject information sheet for participant

The University of the Witwatersrand
Department of Psychology
School of Human and Community Development
Private Bag 3,Wits 2050,Johannesburg South Africa
Tel: (011) 717-4500 Fax: (011) 717-4559

Dear Sir or Madam

Good day

My name is Val-Lyn McQuade. I am a Masters student in Educational Psychology at the University of the Witwatersrand. In order to complete my degree I would like to do a study about how caregivers (like you) at this children's home experience doing homework with the children. By doing this study I would like to find out how you experience and see things when doing homework with the children.

In order to understand how you do homework and what you feel about doing homework with the children I will focus on a qualitative approach. I will collect my information through having an interview with you if you agree. I would do the interview myself at the children's home at a time that is right for you which would take about 40 minutes to 1 hour. I would like to invite you to participate in this study.

In order for me to understand what you have said in-depth I would like to record what you say so that I can remember your responses and then type them up to make sense of how you feel about doing homework with the children .I would like to tape record the interview, however tape-recoding is entirely up to you and I will need your permission before I do record your answers. I will know who you are on appearance but will not ask you for your name unless you state otherwise. This will ensure that no one else knows that I have interviewed you. Should you agree to tape-recording I would then like your permission to transcribe your answers, this would allow me to analyse your interview more thoroughly.

My supervisor and I will be the only people that can access the tapes and transcripts, not this institution. The tapes and transcripts will be kept safely and destroyed once the study is complete and I will protect any computer documents with a password. You do not have to answer any questions that make you feel uncomfortable, you have the right to stop the interview at any time as well. If you would like to withdraw from the research you can, and there will be no negative consequences for it. I would like to use things you have said word for word in my report in order to make my research strong, for me to do this I need your permission. If permission is granted and I choose to quote you in my research I will

never use your name or identify you in any way. Should you wish to view the results of this research they shall be made available to you on request in the form of a summary.

Your participation in this study would be greatly appreciated. This research will contribute to understanding how caregivers like you influence the lives of children placed in institutions and help to develop interventions in order to promote caregiver-child interaction and educational development. Participation is entirely voluntary if you choose to participate there will be no benefits in doing so as this institution is in no way involved in the research process. Should you choose not to be involved there will be no negative consequences either.

If you would like to participate in this study please would you complete the consent form below. If you have any questions do not hesitate to call contact my supervisor or me as I will happily answer your questions or concerns.

Kind regards

Val-Lyn McQuade

Tel: 0723912151

Email: mcquade@megabits.co.za

Supervisor

DR. D. Alexander
Lecturer \ Registered Psychologist
U221
Tel: 011 717 4526

Appendix D: Participant Informed Consent Form For Interviewing.

I _____ caregiver at_____have read the above letter (participation information letter) and understand both the nature and purpose of the research conducted and therefore agree to being interviewed by Val-Lyn McQuade for her study on caregiver homework involvement with institutionalised children .

In agreement of partaking in this study I understand that:

- Participation in this interview is voluntary

- That I may refuse to answer any questions that I do not feel comfortable answering

- I may withdraw from this study at any time

- No information that may lead to identifying me will be included in this research

  report, and my responses will remain confidential.

- I will allow direct quotes to be used if no identifying information is present

- Should I request to see the results they will be made available to me in summary.

- I will not benefit from this study, or experience negative consequences should I

  choose to withdraw or not be involved.

Signed   _____

Date   _____

Time   _____

Appendix E: Participant Consent Form For Audio- Recording and Transcribing

I _____ caregiver at _____
consent to partaking in this research and therefore agree to what I say during the
interview being recorded and transcribed by Val-Lyn McQuade for her study on caregiver
homework involvement with institutionalised children.

In agreeing to allow the interview to be tape-recorded I understand that:

- o The tapes and transcripts will not be seen or heard by any person (except the researcher and her supervisor) at the researchers university at any time, and will only be processed by the researcher herself.

- o All tape recordings will be kept safely and destroyed after the research is complete according to department regulations.

- o No identifying information will be used in the transcripts or research report.

Signed _____

Date   _____

Appendix F: Interview Schedule

Part 1: Demographic Information

1) How old are you?

2) What is your cultural background?

3) How long have you been a caregiver for at this institution?

4) What is your job position in this institution?

5) Do you have a degree or diploma?

6) Have you been a caregiver anywhere else? If yes where and for how long?

7) Have you received training for the work you do?

Part 2: Role construction questions

8) Could you describe what your job title requires you to do as outlined by the institution, but also on a more personal level what you think your job requires?

9) Working with children that do not have parents may seem like you have to fit that role? How do you view your role concerning the children you care for?

10) Do you feel that what you do is only a job or that it makes you feel more responsible for how well the children do in school and how they behave outside of school?

11) Do you help the children with homework ? Being the adult you may feel like you can help them because you know more, do you think that your help is good enough?

12) Do you think doing homework with the children should be your responsibility? Please explain answer.

13) Do you feel like other caregivers feel the same as you when it comes to doing homework with the children?

Part 3: Self efficacy questions

14) Do you feel confident or sometimes stressed when doing homework with the children, if so why and what are your experiences?

15) Do you think your help with homework will make the children do better in school and go further in life? If so in what way do you think so?

16) Sometimes when you really do not know how to help the children what do you do? And how you could help them differently?

17) Do you ever feel like you need more help and training? If yes what kind of things would you like to know and be trained in?

18) What do you think makes children clever?

Part 4: General opportunities, invitations and demands questions

19) Do the children ask you for help with schoolwork and other activities like going to prize giving's? How does this make you feel when they ask you?

20) How do you make sense of being asked by the children and school to go beyond what your job requires?

21) How do you deal with children that ask you for help when its not homework time?

22) Some parents think school is very important for children to succeed in life, what do you think could be done for these children to help them learn more and do better in school?