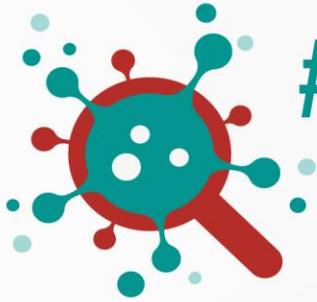


RESEARCHERS BOOTCAMP



#OPENUPYOURTHINKING

READY, SET, THINK!

Education Researchers Respond to The COVID-19 Pandemic

Research Report

Theme 1:

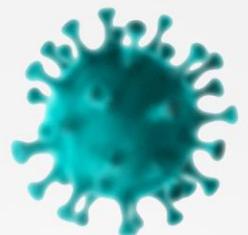
Education at Home

Project Lead: Nick Taylor

Date: 23 April 2020

Standard Bank
tutuwa
COMMUNITY FOUNDATION


JET EDUCATION
SERVICES



Contents

List of Figures.....	3
List of Tables.....	3
Acronyms	3
Background.....	4
Covid-19: Challenges and Opportunities	4
Purpose of the study.....	4
Method	5
Findings.....	6
Demographics of the Case Study families	6
Family routines before lockdown.....	11
Family responses to the lockdown.....	12
External support to families during lockdown.....	14
Home educational practices and challenges	17
Responses from the children	24
Conclusion	29
Recommendations.....	32
References.....	34
Appendix A: The Research Team.....	35
Appendix B: The Household Education Questionnaire	36
Appendix C: Ethical procedures	43



List of Figures

Figure 1: Age distribution of adults most involved in children’s education.....	7
Figure 2: Locations of dwellings of case study families.....	8
Figure 3: Resources available to the families studied.	8
Figure 4: Grade distribution of participants	9

List of Tables

Table 1: Demographic characteristics of the case study families	10
Table 2: Responses of caregiver and oldest child interviewed on guidance from the school	16

Acronyms

CEM	Council of Education Ministers
DBE	Department of Basic Education
WCED	Western Cape Education Department



Background

The onset of COVID-19 on the African continent is still reportedly small but appears to be increasing at a rapid rate. There is also a concern that the statistics are probably underestimated, largely as a result of inadequate testing infrastructure in many countries. There are fears that the worst is yet to come. There is a window of opportunity for developing countries in Africa to further their preparation and to consider the tactical options for countering COVID-19.

The research reported below addresses one of 12 themes comprising the Researchers' Bootcamp initiated by JET Education Services that began at the start of the South African lockdown on 27 March which, at the time of writing, had experienced a first extension to 30 April 2020. The Researchers' Bootcamp represents a real-time contribution to influence and support the decisions of policy makers and funders at a time when evidence-based and agile decision-making is paramount. This document represents a work-in-progress, and as such, the research team welcomes contributions and comments, and even more, active participation in any of the 12 themes currently in motion.

The products of the Bootcamp are based on the contributions of more than 150 educational researchers, comprising a combination of seasoned local and international experts, government and university representatives, and a pool of volunteers from all parts of South Africa as well as a few currently based abroad in countries such as China, the United States, Japan, Ethiopia, Hungary and the Netherlands. A capacity building element is also included to allow novice researchers from various backgrounds seeking experience in the research field to meaningfully contribute.

Covid-19: Challenges and Opportunities

A report issued on April 2 by the NPO hundrED, in partnership with the OECD, emphasises the challenges and opportunities posed by the crisis into which the COVID-19 virus has dumped the world (Petrie et al, 2020). Within the space of weeks the pandemic has precipitated a situation from which a chrysalis will emerge, the shape of which we are collectively struggling to imagine.

The greatest danger posed by the crisis is that it will exacerbate the inequalities in wealth and life opportunities which have emerged as one of the greatest problems of the twenty-first century. Since schooling plays a central role in facilitating or inhibiting upward mobility, the closure of schools across the world is of particular concern. In this context, the present study aims to make a small contribution to providing insights into ways in which home educational practices may be enhanced.

Purpose of the study

The main purpose of Theme 1 was to study the home educational experiences of families during the lockdown in South Africa precipitated by the onset of COVID-19. A subsidiary purpose was to provide young researchers with experience in conducting a qualitative investigation and to develop their skills in the relevant techniques.



Method

The study commenced on 31 March, just two days into South Africa's lockdown, which was initially scheduled to end on 17 April. The target was to complete the study by the end of the initial lockdown period, providing the team with just over two weeks to undertake the work. The school term closed earlier because of COVID-19, and the start of the holiday was brought forward by three days. Thus the school holidays occurred within the initial lockdown period, and only five days of schooling would have been lost; with the extension to 30 April a further eight days is scheduled to be impacted by the pandemic.

A qualitative, case study method was adopted. The families identified for the case studies comprise a convenience sample, selected by researchers as South African families they are familiar with. This sampling technique was adopted in view of the compressed timeframe, which did not provide a lengthy period in which to build trust among the subjects. A total of 16 families were interviewed by telephone. Although the sample is not representative of the South African population, it is relatively large for a qualitative study (Charmez, 2014).

The team consisted of 11 researchers, two quality assurers and the team lead (Appendix A). In line with the second aim of the project, the team consisted of a mix of experienced and younger, less experienced researchers. It is worthwhile noting that the team had an international flavour as well, including team members from South Africa (10) and the United States (two).

Four team meetings were held using Google Hangouts: 31 March, 3 April, 7 April and 17 April 2020. The collaboration enabled through the web-based platform, supplemented by the WhatsApp group chat facility worked well and is something that can be taken into further activities of this nature in the future. A paucity of data¹ frustrated the efforts of three members of the team periodically but generally, these electronic forms of communication enabled the full team to be actively engaged from the outset; this enabled the research task, the research approach, the research instruments and the research report to be collaboratively developed. At the first meeting of the group, the following five tasks were identified and team members were asked to volunteer to undertake them: instrument development, development of a data capture system, administration by telephone of a questionnaire, data management and analysis, and report writing.

The Google platform was used to develop a Household Education Questionnaire containing both open-ended and multiple-choice items, and consent forms were developed and used to undertake the case studies (Appendix B). Researchers identified a family they knew, but did not live with, obtained written consent (by WhatsApp) and administered the questionnaire, telephonically interviewing the caregiver² in the family who played the biggest part in the education of the children. Data was captured in real-time by each interviewer, a procedure which was successful, although two researchers said that they had some difficulty writing down everything that was said in response to some of the open-ended questions. In future

¹ Data in this sense refers to data bought from a service provider to access the internet or communicate over a cellular telephone network.

² Caregiver is used to refer to the parent assuming most of the responsibility for the children's education during the lockdown.



studies of this kind, provision should be made to record the interviews. A translation protocol was made available, although it was not utilised, and all interviews occurred in English, a fact which underlines the non-representative, largely urban nature of the sample.

A maximum of two children per family were interviewed, commencing with the oldest and moving to the next oldest in those families with more than one child. The caregiver was present during the child interviews. All researchers in the team completed at least one case study, while three completed two each and one completed three, resulting in a total of 16 case studies.

The data was collated in two forms using the Google platform. One form was a meta-questionnaire in which the multiple-choice responses were summarised in pie charts and the open-responses listed. The second form in the data was produced was an Excel spreadsheet. This data was divided into four sections, and small teams of two to four researchers were assigned to analyse the respective sections. During the analysis, researchers focused on categorising the data and illustrating the results by means of quotes from interviewees. Following this process, a small team of report writers was appointed, consisting of at least one member from each of the analytical teams, to collate the data analysis. During the report writing, the categories identified during the analysis were again illustrated with numerous quotes, given in italics below. The team leader then finalised the research report with assistance from the two quality assurers. All team members were given the opportunity to comment on a penultimate draft.

Researchers completed two questionnaires – one halfway through the process and one at the end – to gain their insights into how the process had proceeded, what they felt they had learnt from the project and how the design of the study could be improved.

Findings

Demographics of the Case Study families

Sixteen adult participants and nineteen child participants took part in this study. The families were predominantly from Gauteng (10), but also included families from Kwazulu-Natal (4), Western Cape (1) and the Free State (1). All the adult participants who identified as most involved in the child's education were female. Sixty-nine per cent were formally employed and 31% were unemployed. Of the employed participants, the majority worked in the administrative (5) or education (4) sectors, but the sample also included a monitoring and evaluation specialist, a hairdresser and a sales representative.

Their **age distribution** is demonstrated in the graph below, with the largest proportion of caregivers being between 31 and 40 years.



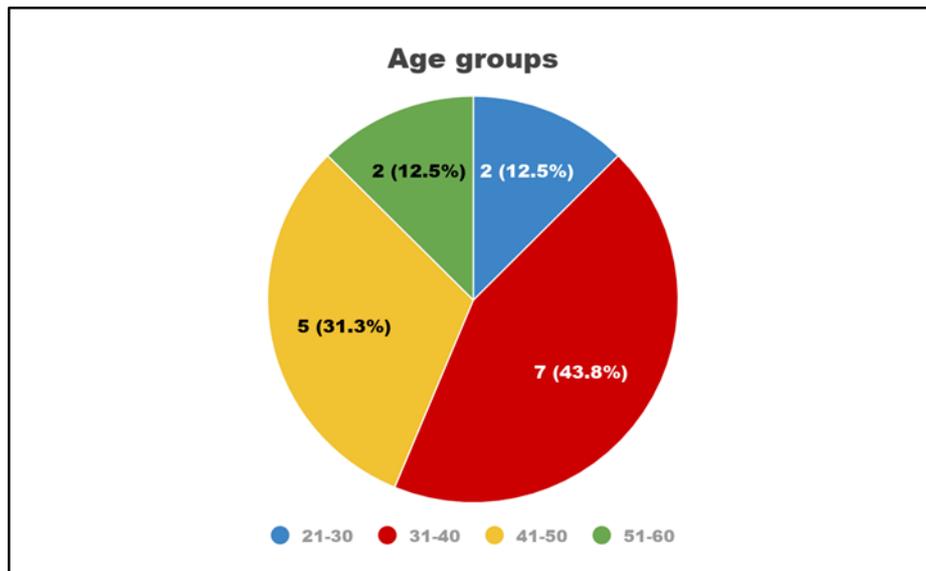


Figure 1: Age distribution of adults most involved in children's education

The **race distribution** of the adult participants was as follows: 62.5% of participants were black, 18.8% coloured, 12.5% white and one participant chose to not disclose her race.

The results for the **highest level of education** attained by the 16 caregivers interviewed are as follows: Only one had not completed high school, while 9 had a tertiary qualification (one post-graduate); six had completed high school, of which one was studying for a degree. High levels of education is one characteristic in which the subjects of the study differed markedly from the general population, and it is therefore likely that the home educational practices described below represent something of a 'best-practice' scenario in the country.

The **ages** in the rest of the families interviewed ranged from 1 to 87 years. The families varied from having three members up to 13, with an average of 5.25 members per family. Nine of the families were made up of parents living with their children and seven families included extended family or other members. Most of the families occupied free standing houses. The locations of the families are given below.



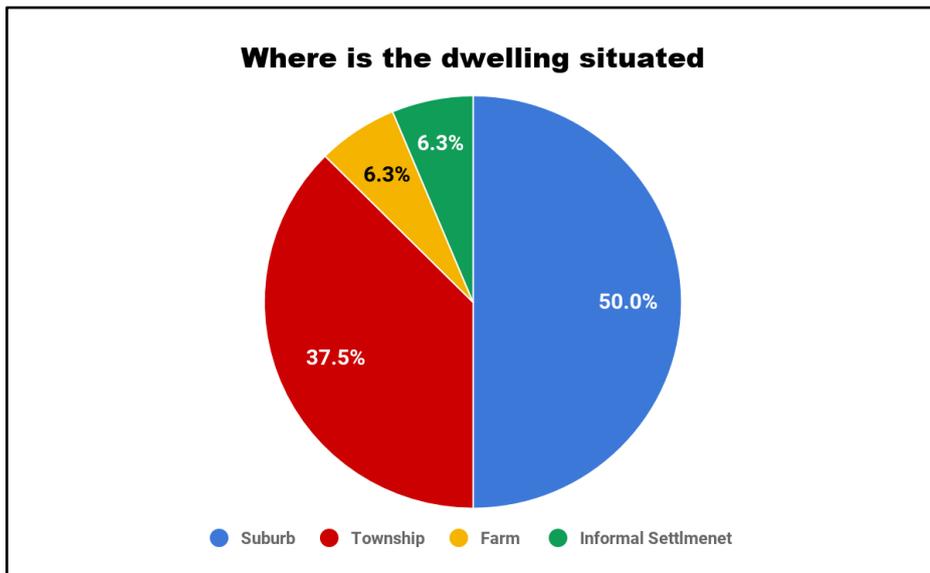


Figure 2: Locations of dwellings of case study families

Eight (50.0%) of these dwellings were **located** in suburbs and six (37.5%) in townships. One family lived on a farm and one in an informal settlement.

All families had access to a smartphone and the majority had access to regular electricity supply, television and radio. Less than half of the families had access to a regular internet connection. See the graph below for more detail on **what resources were available** to the families studied.

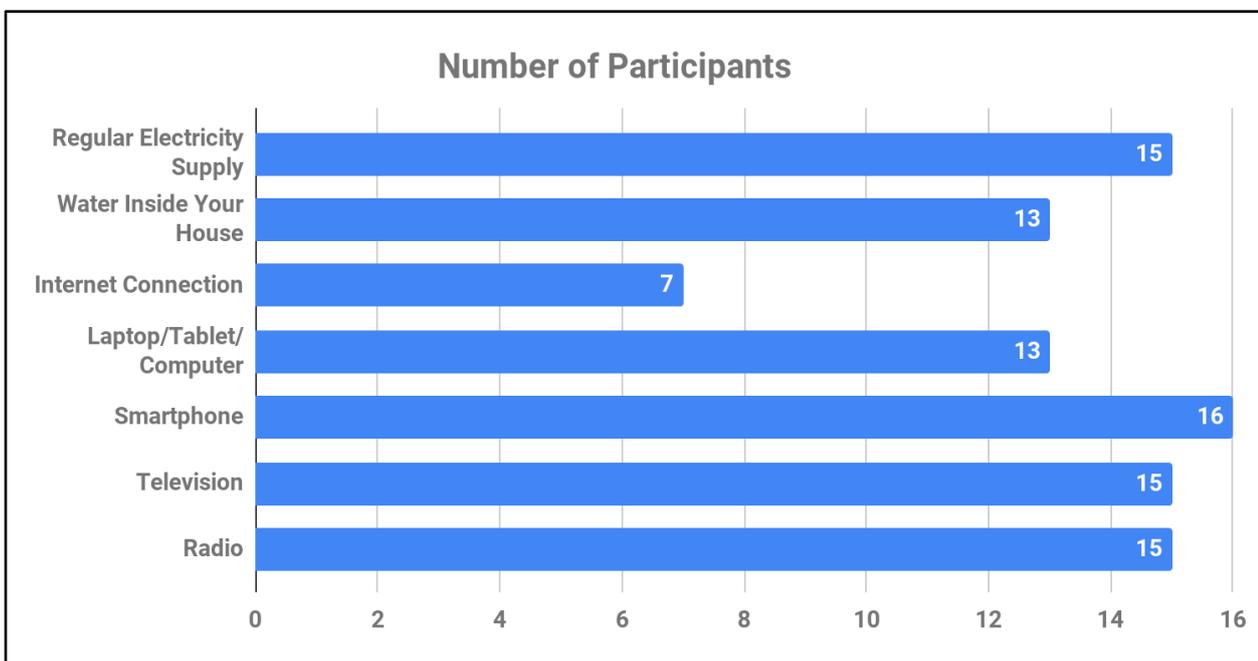


Figure 3: Resources available to the families studied.



Characteristics of the children in the families surveyed

Although only 19 children were interviewed, the families sampled contained a total of 37 children aged 18 and under. The children from six families were enrolled in independent schools: two of these are classified as low-cost and two as pursuing an explicitly Christian education³. The children from 10 of the families were in public schools, with three of the latter specifying that they were in Model C⁴ schools. Grade 7 had the most participants (4) and there were no participants from Grade 1 in this study. For a detailed breakdown of the grade distribution of participants, see the graph below.

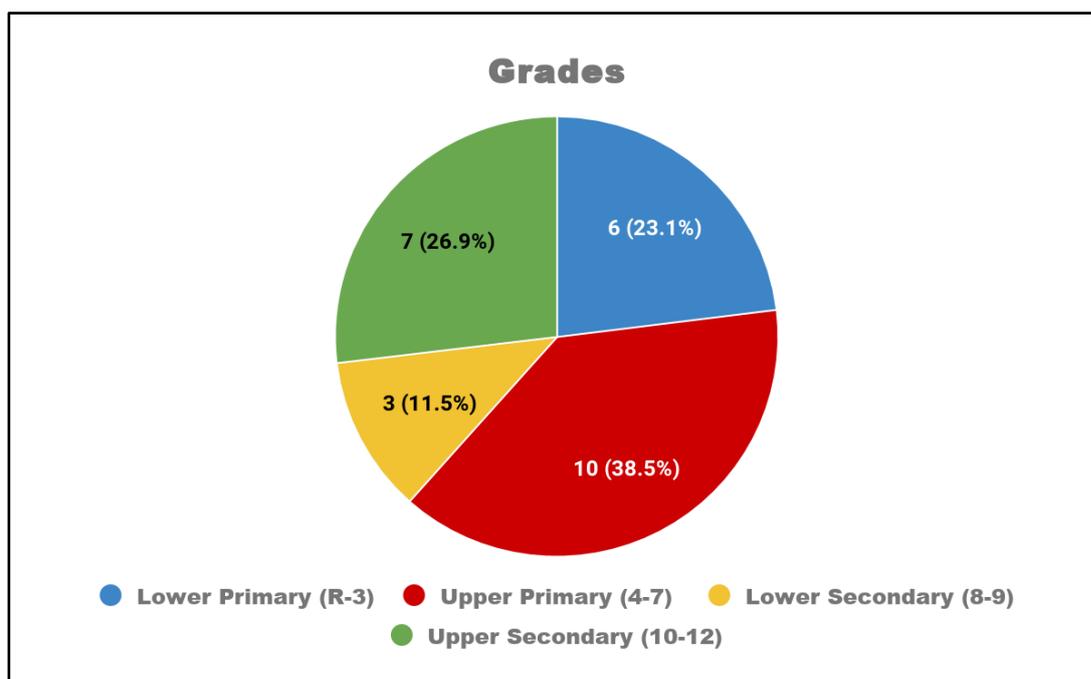


Figure 4: Grade distribution of participants

Six of the caregivers interviewed stated that the children do school work in their rooms, and ten indicated that they work in other areas around the house (lounge, kitchen, dining or living room). Three caregivers indicated that their children had **medical conditions** that affect their education. These conditions were, respectively, sinusitis, concentration difficulties and seizures. The biggest impact of their disabilities for these children was missing school due to medical conditions or battling to concentrate in class. The child with concentration difficulties was not in a special needs school but the caregiver felt he/she had special education needs since the child was repeating grades.

³ Independent schools in South Africa cater for just 3% of learners, but are made up of a variety of types. A key distinction in this sector is between those which charge fees below R20 000pa (low cost) and those which charge fees in excess of this figure.

⁴ Towards the end of the apartheid era, those schools reserved for white children were given the option of adopting one of four forms of privatisation or partial privatisation. Model C refers to those public schools which opted for partial privatisation (96% of formerly white-only schools), in which government continued to pay teacher salaries and supply a certain level of funding, and the governing body was allocated a higher level of autonomy. These schools continue to be called Model C schools and are generally better resourced than the majority of public schools.



Summary

All the interviewees (caregiver most responsible for education of the children) were females with the majority aged between 31 and 40 years. The majority of caregivers were black, had completed high school and, in most cases (9), had a tertiary qualification. The majority were employed and living in either suburbs or townships. Most families had access to all the needed facilities, except less than half had access to regular internet. More details are summarised Table 1.

Table 1: Demographic characteristics of the case study families

Family	Race	Ed	No in house	Ages of children	Dwell	Loc	School	Water	Inter-net	Com-puter
1	C	HS	3	14	Complex	Sub	Indep Christ	x		x
2	C	Tert	4	15	FS	Sub	Mod C	x	x	x
3		Tert	5	18	FS	Sub	Indep high-fee	x	x	x
4	B	HS	6	13	FS	Ts	Pub	x		x
5	B	HS	7	10, 6	Plot	IS	Pub			x
6	W	Tert	3	17, 15, 13	FS	Farm	Pub	x	x	x
7	W	HS	3	18	FS	Sub	Mod C	x	x	x
8	B	Tert	10	18, 14, 12, 9, 9	FS	Ts	Pub	x		
9	B	PS	13	16, 14, 8, 7, 4, 2, 1	SD	Ts	Pub			
10	B	Tert	4	8, 2	Flat	Sub	Indep high-fee	x		x
11	B	Tert	2	6	Flat	Ts	Indep low-fee		x	x
12	B	Tert	4	10, 2	FS	Ts	Pub	x	x	x
13	C	HS	4	7, 3	FS	Ts	Indep Christ	x	x	x
14	B	Tert	5	17, 17, 5	FS	Sub	Mol C	x		x
15	B	Tert	4	17, 12, 11	Flat	Sub	Pub	x		
16	B	HS	3	10, 1	FS	Sub	Indep low-fee	x		x

Key

Race: B – black; C – coloured; W – white. **Ed:** the highest education achievement of the caregiver interviewed: Tert – tertiary; HS – completed high school; PS – completed primary school. **Dwell:** Dwelling: FS – Free-standing house; SD – Semi-detached house. **Loc:** Location: Sub – suburb; Ts – township; IS – informal settlement. **School:** Pub – public; Mod C – Model C; Indep Christ – independent Christian; Indep high fee – independent high fee; Indep low fee – independent low fee. **Water:** water in the home.

Categorisation of the families according to a combination of characteristics such as where they live, highest education level of the caregiver and access to facilities was not easy. Of the participants who stated that



they had access to all facilities, the majority lived in the suburbs, but two participants lived in free standing houses in townships. Of the participants who reported not having access to regular internet, three were from townships, one from an informal settlement and five were living in suburbs (majority of the last group in flats or semi-detached dwellings). The three participants who reported not having access to water in their houses or computers/laptops lived in the townships (2) or an informal settlement (1).

The families of the children enrolled in independent schools were predominantly from suburbs, but two were from townships. All Model C children resided in suburbs. Of the children enrolled in public schools, four resided in townships, one in an informal settlement, one on a farm and one in a suburb. There appeared to be no clear relationship between the caregivers' education level and the type of school they selected for their child.

Family routines before lockdown

The interviewees were asked to describe a typical weekday before lockdown. Families throughout the study detailed busy schedules, with consistent involvement with their children from the time they woke up through to bed time. Most families (63%) woke between 5:00 and 6:30. Reported school start times ranged between 07:15 and 07:45. Half of the families stated that they normally dropped their children at school themselves, while the other half organised transport to drop their children at school. School days ended between 13:30 and 14:30. Most children (56% of families) proceeded directly home at the end of the school day, whereas three (19%) were involved with after school sports, and four (25%) were in after-school care at the school.

Most caregivers (69%) stated they were employed, and all reported they assisted their children with homework. Learners from 15 (79%) families did homework at home, and five (33%) also did homework at aftercare. Families who reported a set dinner time (25%) ate between 18:00 and 19:00 with all caregivers preparing the meal. Several respondents (50%) reported children viewed television as a leisure activity during the week, while two (12.5%) stated no television viewing was allowed during the week. Other caregivers highlighted that educational activities were also scheduled on Saturdays, including tutoring, sport team practices and extra musical instruction. It is important to highlight again that all respondents were female, and all were the primary overseers of the child's academic activities.

All 16 families reported responsibility in some form for the education of their child(ren) before the lockdown. Five (31%) stated that the father and the mother shared responsibility for the education within the family, and seven families (44%) stated the mother had sole responsibility. Three families (19%) stated that the children were responsible for their own education. In addition, five families (31%) highlighted that siblings played an important role in educating the other children in the home.

Those responsible for education within the family assisted in many varied educational activities, with 81% being involved in all of the following: helping with specific homework exercises; organising school calendars; preparing children for assessments; and motivating them to learn. Some caregivers mentioned other ways of assisting their children, for example, teaching younger children how to read (7%), transporting children to extra lessons (13%) and giving children freedom to work independently on homework (19%).



The majority of caregivers (75%) stated that they used the internet as a resource to educate their children using a computer, iPad or smartphone before lockdown. Fourteen (88%) families stated that they used resources from school, with nine (56%) specifying textbooks. Other resources used to a lesser degree included: library books (25%); television (13%); newspapers; tutoring books; and educational materials already in the house (6%).

Although 69% of caregivers were employed, 81% of them still assisted their children with homework, prepared them for assessments and checked their school schedules. It is interesting to note that 81% of caregivers noted motivating their children as a way of helping them, indicating that the focus is not merely on skills development when it comes to education but also on support. Although less than half of the families (44%) had a stable internet connection, 75% of caregivers identified the internet as a resource to support their child's education. Since all families had a smartphone, it may be that this device is often used for children's education or used to create a hotspot for the 81% of families who reported having a computer, laptop or tablet. Although 94% of families had a television, only 13% reported using it as an education resource.

Summary

Under normal conditions there was a high level of involvement of caregivers and other family members, particularly fathers and siblings, in the children's education across the 16 families. A majority (81%) reported their involvement included: assisting the children with homework; preparing the children for assessments; checking school schedules; and motivating the children to learn. Resources from the school (88%) and the internet (75%) were stated as the main resources used in the children's education.

Family responses to the lockdown

Family routine during lockdown

Although families were interviewed during what would have been the school holidays, they were aware that schools would not resume as normal, but that children would continue to be at home for as long as the lockdown lasted. The Minister of Basic Education had made a public statement to this effect: the Department of Basic Education (DBE) website was loaded with material, and many schools provided children with guidelines and resources to be used while at home. As a result, the majority of families in the sample had begun to exercise additional home schooling practices.

All families reported that their daily routines changed during the lockdown period. The majority of caregivers reported waking up at 7:00 and the children waking up between 8:00 and 10:00, with the majority waking up at 9:00. Thirty seven per cent of caregivers reported that children assisted them with family chores, which could range from fetching water and wood to cleaning their rooms. The majority noted that their children were involved in physical activity, with 25% describing the activity as playing outside. Other physical activities reported included: playing with pets; playing soccer or netball; dancing; and online karate lessons. Caregivers report that children were spending time on school work, but the time allocated to this ranged from short periods in lower grades (30 minutes a day for Grade 2 children) to longer periods for higher grades (five to six hours per day for Grade 12 children). One caregiver mentioned that her Grade 12 child received more work and support from the school than the Grade 10 child, and the



school indicated the main focus for teachers would be on the Grade 12s for now. Grade R children were more engaged in play activities than formal school work.

Over two-thirds (69%) of caregivers reported that they watched television with their children or that the children were watching Netflix or series on their phones every day. One caregiver stated that television rules had been relaxed during lockdown, and she allowed the children to watch television from 18:00. No caregivers noted this activity as educational and described it more as family time or relaxation.

Caregivers who commented on working from home said they tried to have a schedule and specific working hours. One caregiver commented that her child disrupted her work for short periods, but that she enjoyed this interaction and saw it as bonding time. Thirty one per cent of caregivers explicitly mentioned spending time during the day to socialise or bond with their children, through, for example, reading or conversations.

Change in caregivers' roles during lockdown

A majority of caregivers (69%) stated that their roles had changed since the lockdown. Many reported that they now had more time to bond with their children, to teach them how to read and to keep them busy in other ways. On the other hand, 19% of the caregivers whose roles had not changed reported that this was because their children were receiving communication from school.

Ways in which caregivers' roles have changed since lockdown:

- In five families, caregivers felt they needed to occupy/stimulate their child/ren more, either through reading tasks or actually teaching them.
- In three families, caregivers said that their presence at home had enhanced their children's productivity and that they no longer needed to push their child/ren to do school work as they were now able to keep a watchful eye.

On the other hand, three caregivers have received excellent communication from their child/ren's schools which has been highly effective, thus not requiring them to drastically change their roles during the lockdown.

Two caregivers said that their roles had not changed since they were already highly invested in their child/ren's education and were continuing in this vein.

How do caregivers feel about the added responsibility⁵ for their children's' education?

In regard to this question, the respondents' views varied. While caregivers in 37.5% (6) of families expressed a negative view of their roles during lockdown, 50% (8) had a positive outlook, and 18.1% (2) were neutral.

Negative responses included:

- No work was being done and the caregiver was concerned that her child would not progress to the next grade.

⁵ Many caregivers felt obliged to take a more active role in the educational activities of their children during the lockdown period. As such the 'added responsibility' was self-imposed.



- One caregiver was not sure whether she was covering all the/correct work at home with her child/ren.
- Another felt unsure because she was not a teacher and therefore did not know the curriculum and what is expected.

Positive responses included caregivers feeling that:

- She had more time now to aid in educating her child.
- She was now closer to her child, child and that brought her joy.
- She intended becoming a teacher, and this is a good opportunity for her to practice.

Only two respondents were neutral in their feelings, both explaining that their children were independent, and they thus did not play a big role in their children’s education.

With regard to how their children felt, caregivers also shared differing views. Some stated that their children loved this learning environment because it gave them more freedom and they now had time to focus on school work, compared to the learning time they had before lockdown. Some children also expressed concern that they would end up repeating grades and experience increased pressure when schools re-open. This concern was corroborated by half the caregivers (8) reporting that their children were feeling anxious as a result of the lockdown. Almost as many caregivers (7) thought their children were happy.

Summary

A majority of caregivers (69%) stated that their roles had changed since the lockdown, and that they felt the need to provide more support to their children regarding their school work (5) or emotionally (3) or both. Three caregivers felt that they had no need to play a greater educational role because the school was doing an excellent job of communicating with and providing a structured programme for their pupils. Two respondents felt no need to change their roles as they were already providing a great deal of support to their children before lockdown.

Half the caregivers (8) had a positive response towards these changed roles and felt closer to their children and able to provide more support now that families were being thrown together in this way. Two caregivers felt neutral towards these changes, while the balance (6) were anxious because they felt they were not adequately equipped to support their children or felt uncertain about their children’s future because of this hiatus in their schooling.

External support to families during lockdown

Minister of Education briefing and access to DBE resources:

On 26 March 2020 the Minister of Education, Angie Motshekga, addressed the nation about the Council of Education Ministers (CEM) plans being put in place to support children during the lockdown period due to commence the following day. The Minister pointed out that the CEM’s primary aim is to ensure that children remain engaged and continue their education at home during this time. The focus is to encourage programmes that enhance efforts directed towards the “promotion of learning and teaching in homes, and to the preparation for catch up when the children come back to schools” (Motshekga, 2020).



In collaboration with key partners, the DBE made the following resources available to the public:

1. Lessons broadcast on SABC TV, E.TV, DSTV and mainstream and community radio channels;
2. Electronic readers, made available on different platforms by the cell phone companies MTN, Telkom and Cell-C;
3. Free access to Siyavula Maths and Science support, in partnership with MTN;
4. Free access to Vodacom Virtual Classroom;
5. Access to resources (past papers) on the DBE website.

Seven of the 16 participating families were aware of the Minister's address, while nine were not. Of those that were aware of the Minister's address:

- Five families lived in suburbs and their children attended independent or Model C schools.
- Two families lived in the townships.
- Of the two participants that lived in the townships, one had child attending a public school and the other an independent school.

Nine of the 16 participants were not aware of the Minister's address. Of these:

- Three participants lived in the suburbs: one participant had a child in a public school, one had a child in a low cost independent school, and one had a child in a Model C school.
- One participant lived on a farm and had two children attending a public school and one child attending an independent school.
- Four participants lived in a township: three had children attending a public school, and one had a child attending a low cost independent school.
- One participant lived in an informal settlement with a child attending a public school.

There seem to be no clear association between knowledge of the Minister's address and demographic factors such as the educational levels of caregivers, the areas in which they live, or the type of school their children attend.

Guidance from the school

When asked if they had received any guidance on what to do during lockdown, there was a marked difference in the respective responses of caregivers and their children (Table 2, which reflects only the Child 1 interview responses). Whereas 9 children answered positively (and a further 2 from the Child 2 interviews), only 5 caregivers said yes and one of the latter said her advice had come *from TV* and not the school.

There was also a marked difference in the responses of public schools, on one hand, and their independent and Model C counterparts, on the other. In only one case did a public school provide advice to the child or caregiver (family 6), whereas in only one case (family 11) did a Model C or independent school not offer advice to the child and in the latter case the child was in grade R.



Table 2: Responses of caregiver and oldest child interviewed on guidance from the school

No	School	Gr	To caregiver: Have you received any guidance on how to educate your child during lock down?	To Child 1: Has your school given you work to do at this time? Tell me how it happens?
1	Indep Christ	9	<i>No nothing I've just tried to google myself and see what can be done at home</i>	<i>They give holiday assignments and homework. So before school closed they gave us a number of papers and assignments to do and they gave us due dates of when they must be in. My work isn't checked by anyone</i>
2	Model C	10	<i>No I have just used my initiative to keep schooling going</i>	<i>They uploaded their school website under the resources and select which grade you in with the different work, the work is not checked by anyone</i>
3	Indep high-fee	7	<i>Parents have been instructed to contact the teacher if needed.</i>	<i>We use Google Classroom so I just have to go to the site and get my work, but it's all the same like before because we had it before too.</i>
4	Public	7	<i>No, there was no guidance</i>	<i>No</i>
5	Public	10	<i>No. Nothing from Maswazi, nothing from his teacher.</i>	<i>No</i>
6	Public	12	<i>Yes, the school.</i>	<i>Some teacher gave us some work on a paper before the schools closed. Like pages to do revision work on and prescribed books to read. One teacher sent us a video on WhatsApp and we have to do an oral video as well.</i>
7	Model C	12	<i>I've just received from the school the importance of signing onto Google Classroom of them signing into google classroom. Apart from that I've had two letters, like D6 communicators - email</i>	<i>On Google Classroom. All the teachers from the different subjects are on the group for that subject, and then the teachers on the group send the work through that needs to be done for the week, or until we come back to school. If we have issues we can email the teachers between 8 and 2, or get help from our friends. Some work has to be handed in before a certain time. There's a little tab in Classroom where you take a picture of your work, and then you submit it and it goes to your teacher. They then feedback that they've received the work. I had to hand in my Afrikaans oral and prepared reading and then the teacher gave me suggestions on what I could fix up, and the teacher confirmed that she had received it.</i>
8	Public	9	<i>No</i>	<i>No</i>
9	Public	9	<i>No</i>	<i>No</i>
10	Indep high-fee	2	<i>Not really, the school simply shared videos but not much has been shared on how as a parent I can teach certain topics.</i>	<i>I use my mother's phone to watch videos from my teachers.</i>
11	Indep low-fee	R	<i>No, I believe other grades did but not for grade R</i>	<i>No</i>
12	Public	5	<i>No</i>	<i>Child was out and not interviewed</i>
13	Indep Christ	2	<i>No nothing</i>	<i>I do Math, English, Afrikaans</i>
14	Model C	11	<i>Yes, from the school. The Google Classroom platform</i>	<i>We are required to log into an online service known as Google Classroom. Work and other updates are posted on this platform weekly.</i>
15	Public	12	<i>No</i>	<i>No</i>
16	Indep low-fee	5	<i>Yes, from TV</i>	<i>I do the homework with my mum</i>



The kinds of guidance provided by schools varied widely across the sample. Two of the Model C schools and one high-fee independent school made use of Google Classroom to keep children occupied. Although the modality of support and advice offered by schools was not clear in all cases, it seems that the majority used a combination of electronic (internet, WhatsApp, videos) and paper-based methods to communicate with children.

Summary

While both the Ministry and national Department of Education made efforts to prepare parents for the lockdown and to assist them to support their children during the lockdown, the majority of the 16 families studied (9) were not aware of these efforts. It seems that this lack of awareness was independent of the level of education of the caregiver interviewed, the area in which they live and the type of school to which they send their children.

The majority of families whose children attended public schools (6 out of 7) were not receiving any guidance from their schools during the lockdown. In contrast, those parents whose children attended independent or Model C schools were more likely (8 out of 9) to be guided by the school as to how to support their children's education at home. Schools generally used a combination of electronic and paper-based forms of communication with children, with Google Classroom a relatively common option (3 families). The guidance provided to children and their caregivers was not always aligned: in two cases (families 1 and 2) caregivers were not aware of the support offered to their children and in the case of family 3 the caregiver was merely told to *contact the teacher if needed*.

Home educational practices and challenges

One of the aims of the interviews conducted was to understand the kinds of home educational practices of caregivers and the challenges they face regarding teaching and learning in the home environment during lockdown.

Challenges facing caregivers during the lockdown period

Given the fact that communication with parents was non-existent in the majority of public schools in the sample, and sometimes poorly aligned with the advice given by independent and Model C schools to the children, caregivers often felt confused and anxious regarding the education of their children under lockdown. The challenges facing caregivers were categorised into five main themes.

1. Lack of support

When looking at the challenges that caregivers were facing regarding educating their children during lockdown, a lot can be attributed to the haste with which the initial lockdown period was instated. Nearly two-thirds (63%) of the participants felt that there was a lack of handover from teachers and schools. Unfortunately, the lockdown was announced just two days before schools closed for the April holidays. This did not afford teachers enough time to prepare for the circumstances, leaving parents feeling ill-prepared:

Because it was so sudden, there was no handover from teacher to parent, we don't really know where to pick up or where they left off. (Family 1).



We have to continue with our little knowledge but no-one gives us guidelines. (Family 4).

2. Parental knowledge and confidence

Lack of support or guidance from schools translates into parental and caregiver uncertainty and anxiety. This seems especially true for the caregivers with lower levels of education. Clearly, their own literacy level is something that was creating anxiety among some caregivers, as they did not feel equipped to help their children with educational activities.

Because I am uneducated, I have been facing difficulties helping them with their school work. (Family 9).

We, as parents, some of us are not educated enough ... children, with non-educated parents, they don't continue with school [work] as they don't get help from their parents. The parents can't understand the books to help their children. (Family 4).

However, this challenge was not only limited to families in which caregivers did not hold tertiary qualifications. The practice of actually teaching is something that caregivers were finding challenging. In recalling experiences, caregivers spoke to this point:

I wish that I could be able to offer them more, but as I have mentioned I feel as though I do not have the adequate means or tools to help them more. (Family 8).

I quickly realised that knowing the topic doesn't mean you can teach it, and that is the difference between myself and the teacher teaching my child. I sometimes get impatient when she doesn't understand or isn't paying attention. (Family 10).

The content is way much heavier and different so we [as parents] also need to be supported [on how] to support our children ... Especially when it comes to literacy, some of the things - I am lost. When I should give the child an instruction, I am not 100% confident that I am conveying the right thing ... So that has been my biggest challenge. What I thought would be most suitable at her level I am slowly discovering it is not ... It is very hard. The content they are learning now and what we did is very different. (Family 11).

3. Lack of structure and routine at home

Not only were caregivers experiencing challenges with regards to content and teaching, but also with the planning and structuring of lessons and weekly plans. Lack of routine was highlighted as a concern:

It's a challenge because sometimes I get lost, I don't know what I am going to teach him today, tomorrow, after that. I need to sit and think and plan about what I can teach. (Family 5).

There are more distractions such as TV, online gaming and social media, whereas at school that [is] not allowed. (Family 2).

Furthermore, respondents said they had difficulty setting boundaries between the roles of parent and teacher: behaviour and discipline were mentioned as challenges that parents were facing:

"Kids do not listen at all because I am not their teacher. (Family 5).

Discipline is an issue, for him to know how long he should spend watching TV and going back to study is a challenge. (Family 14).



4. Access to resources and the expediency of resources available

Access to resources was a persistent challenge for many families. For one caregiver this was given as a pretext for not taking responsibility, arguing that she was not experiencing any challenges at all because she did not have access to educational resources to support her children. Furthermore, while the approach taken by government and schools is to drive online teaching and electronic resources, the question still remains, how applicable and accessible are these resources to caregivers? Throughout the interviews, seven of the 16 participants highlighted this concern: while they want to encourage children to keep the momentum of learning during this time, in reality this was proving difficult:

Are there any resources available? There are no resources - the libraries are closed. If you want to do any activity - where should you go? Even Google - no-one in the community has resources to buy data and go to Google all the time. It's difficult for us. (Family 4).

Again, data is very expensive and we find it hard for all of our children to join all online learning classes. (Family 15).

Everyone is worried about data and data running out. (Family 6).

5. Uncertainty and anxiety

The impact of lockdown on education and the uncertainty of the situation is a driving force causing anxiety and concern among parents. Four of the 16 caregivers expressed concerns about their children in Grade 12 and the possibility that they may not complete their matric year, which has implications for their entire futures. Grade promotion in general was causing anxiety among many parents.

The caregiver's biggest concern is that the Ministry is going to say all students have to repeat the year --- and what about the cost? Who is going to pay for all of this? (Family 2).

This Coronavirus and lockdown will have a bad effect on our children's learning opportunity. I would like them to complete their school and not end up like me. (Family 9).

I would like some reassurance from the Dept. of Basic Education on clarity on what is going to happen with the academic year. The messages going out now like "the students will pick up where they left off" are not helpful as we think about the lockdown extending -- parents have high anxiety and need reassurance that a whole year will not be lost (Family 3).

Different reactions to education at home

Only five of the families (31%) had been receiving virtual support from their children's schools. The schools providing support were predominantly independent (5 out of 6) and Model C (3 out of 3) schools, but included one public school (out of 7). Support was primarily given to higher grades, ranging from Grade 7 to Grades 10, 11 and 12. Schools were sharing resources, activities and links to online materials. In these families, it appears that more structured learning was taking place:



The high school sent us a long list of links that we can use and that is where we found Wolfskool⁶ ... YouTube videos sent by teachers, videos teachers made themselves, 31-page doc with WCED free resources (all links to helpful sites), E academy, etc. This was all sent out by the school on WhatsApp or via the D-6 school communicator. Packs of work were also given to children before the last day of school. (Family 7).

The parents have their own grade WhatsApp groups... we can discuss where we get stuck. (Family 6).

His school has provided a Google Classroom platform to enable them to do revision and next term material. (Family 14).

The school established a WhatsApp group, like everything we do nowadays. It is cost effective. Parents and teachers share activities and ideas on a daily basis. (Family 11).

Three of the participants demonstrated their own initiative, despite feeling that they had received little direction or guidance from schools. It must be noted that these participants were parents of children from Model C (2) and public schools (1):

I've just tried to Google myself and see what can be done at home. (Family 1).

I have just used my initiative to keep schooling going. (Family 2).

But because he is home more, I am focusing on teaching him reading and speaking English. (Family 5).

Access to television and educational apps played an important supplementary role in assisting those caregivers with facilitating basic educational practices at home.

We are downloading as many videos as we can. And viewing websites when we can. However, it's confusing what material to cover and how to teach it. (Family 10).

The school provides these links to watch online studies [and] YouTube videos for IT, Science, Geography, English [and] Afrikaans. (Family 2).

In summary, the majority of families (69%) had not received guidance from schools and were not fully aware of the resources made available to them by the DBE. These families were reacting in one of two ways: either they were conducting their own educational activities and doing what they thought was right (8 families), or they were not doing anything because caregivers had no idea what to do (3 families).

In the latter category were caregivers who felt overwhelmed: they did not feel equipped to facilitate learning and education at home. While they may have been encouraging their children to do work, they did not feel that they had the ability to actively engage with their children or to support them with some of the subjects and content.

⁶ Wolfskool (<https://wolfskool.co.za/>): An Online Child Platform for Grade 4-12 Learners. The Wolfskool platform includes video lessons, assessments, workbooks and worksheets that children can work through in their own time. The stated intention of the site is to promote the standard of education in Afrikaans. It is run by a non-profit organisation, but subscribers must pay for materials.



I feel bad and sad because I wish for my children and nieces to pass with flying colours as I was not able to complete school; secondly, even if I wanted to help with their work, I also do not know Grade 10 work, I do not know Geography, I try helping the little one with learning the basics. (Family 9).

Despite the challenges facing parents, there was a general sense that all caregivers were prepared to do everything that they could to support their children during this time. Even the participants facing challenges with regards to data and connectivity would still like to know where to access resources. While the idea of teaching the curriculum was daunting to some, caregivers were still demonstrating a desire to facilitate some form of educational practice at home during this time. When participants were asked what information they would like regarding their child's education during lockdown, it was unanimous that they would like more support with sourcing and accessing resources:

Tools to help me to help them do educational activities at home, so that their brains can always stay refreshed amidst all the challenges that we are facing. (Family 8)

Yes, I would like to know if they have more programs and tutoring to help with reading. (Family 14)

Access to resources. I think reading material. (Family 11)

Yes, to download videos on YouTube and also apps that suit his curricular just to keep him academically stimulated. (Family 12)

Support needed by caregivers

At the time of writing, the lockdown, initially scheduled to last three weeks has been extended by a further two weeks. At the same time, a debate among government and stakeholders, including the teacher unions, about easing the lockdown in a phased manner had arisen (DBE, 2020). However, whether children will be required to stay at home for an extended period or not, an examination of the lockdown has already begun to identify ways in which schools can provide home support to caregivers and children. In this way, lessons learnt during the COVID-19 crisis are beginning to provide opportunities to do things differently, and better, once social distancing is relaxed.

The support the caregivers were asking for under lockdown, and which could be extended past the crisis, can be broadly divided into three categories: content and curriculum; teaching and planning; and reassurance and guidance from schools and the DBE.

Content and curriculum

In terms of content and curriculum, parents and caregivers want to know more about what work and topics should be covered. Parents would benefit from guidance from schools on what aspects they should be focusing on. Eight of the survey respondents pointed to the fact that they would benefit from the provision of lesson plans, resources and materials for them to facilitate learning at home:

If the lock-down is extended, the school should at least communicate with us as to what is the way forward as to what curriculum we should focus on and what we should be teaching our children at home. (Family 12)

Maybe I should see the curriculum so I can know what he should be learning during Term 2. (Family 5)



Let's take for instance the neighbour's child; I have been assisting her in lockdown with matric work. They were looking for pace setters, past exam papers - just to put it in context. (Family 11)

However, the nature of this support needs to be simplified and must be something that parents can understand and implement:

I don't think everybody has the ability to interpret what is written in the CAPS document. A simplified version would be to put out a document that outlines what will be the focus for numeracy. So say, for instance, we are talking about shapes and this is what we focus on in shapes. Something simplified. It makes life easier than going to the curriculum documents where you are not a subject matter expert...Simplified ways on what you can do to ensure your child when they go back to the schooling context they can transition again. (Family 11)

Some caregivers raised concerns about the level of content available on media platforms which is primarily focuses on matric children and not the lower grade levels:

The re-course available online [is] meant for Grade 12 children, and not for primary level. I think it best for Grade 12 children to get online assistance as they will be writing exams soon and as for Foundation Phase as a parent, we are responsible to educate them. (Family 12)

Also, not only for primary level, maybe even the ages for 3,4,5 - the children who go to crèche, they must have something to do. They are happy to be at home, but are doing nothing. In the TV there are no nice programmes for the children. They are not being educated about what they should and shouldn't watch during the day. Little children, they are watching silly movies, instead of education. (Family 4)

A number of caregivers believed that there should be support offered by the government specifically for lower socio-economic families. While some of the independent and Model C schools may have contingency plans for virtual teaching, this reality is more difficult for schools in low socio-economic status areas:

I would like to know how the government is supporting and catering for the underprivileged during this time, especially regarding education. (Family 7)

In our school, 95-98% of families probably have internet access, and all have TVs, but not in rural areas, anything the ministry does has to be equitable to ALL South Africans. (Family 2)

A typical child who lives in a township does not have access to your platforms like the internet. Now that they are strict and we can't move around you can't get access to books. Your nearest support is the internet - connectivity not all of us can afford. (Family 11)

We've got the smart phones, but the thing is data. If there is online education, it should be free to those who don't have money to buy data. (Family 4)

Data is expensive, I would like to know when the network service providers are reducing data charges. It's tough. (Family 15)



Teaching and planning

In terms of teaching and planning, four of the participants said that it would be beneficial to learn how to teach at home. The support parents would benefit from may include how to structure lessons, make timetables, plan the week's activities, and how to approach certain topics. Furthermore, parents may benefit from tips on what to do and what not to do during this time. Parents would find it beneficial to either have a work plan or have guidance on how to draw one up:

I'd appreciate material that focuses on how to teach these subjects because that's my biggest struggle. (Family 10)

I would like some guidance, workshops or programmes to help parents with helping with their schoolwork. (Family 9)

I would like to get information related to supporting children that are being home-schooled due to lockdown. (Family 15)

Just more structure from school and department. What is compulsory and what not? Everyone is just doing his own thing without a plan. (Family 6)

One caregiver said that she would prefer virtual teaching conducted by educators, as opposed to parents teaching lessons on topics that they are not confident to teach. Some caregivers would prefer online classes via Zoom or similar media platforms:

I think there should be daily contact with the teachers, more than google classroom -- more like one on one and group contact via something like Zoom. (Family 3)

Reassurance and Guidance

During lockdown, parents and caregivers are faced with an enormous task of trying to educate their children at home. There is a sense of general anxiety about teaching at home and the future of the academic year. Six of the participants mentioned that they were really looking to schools and the DBE for reassurance, specifically with regards to contingency plans and ways of catching up the academic year. There was also a concern expressed about the continuation of assessments and tests. It is clear that parents would like reassurance from schools that alternative plans are being made:

I would say from [me] personally, maybe to get the reassurance from the School Governing Body (SGB) contingency plan for the rest of the year for exams assignments etc. and how that will be assessed for the child to progress. My major concern is how will we assess in terms of exams. (Family 2)

If it's [lockdown] extended it worries me - when they get to the end of the year/to write their exams, it's really important that he gets the good marks to study the course he wants to at varsity. (Family 7)

I think I would dedicate much time to also help our Grade 12 child on different initiatives that could help him to pass this year in 2020. I am saying this because he has been panicking a lot. (Family 15)



Summary

Nearly two-thirds of the participants felt that there was a lack of handover prior to the lockdown from government, teachers and schools, leaving them feeling ill-prepared.

Caregivers were anxious about teaching at home and the future of the academic year. Six of the participants mentioned that they were looking to schools and the DBE for reassurance, specifically with regards to contingency plans and ways of catching up the academic year. It is clear that parents would like details from government regarding plans to catch up the year, arrangements regarding examinations, and the like.

Many caregivers, particularly those who did not hold tertiary qualifications, felt ill-equipped to help their children with educational activities. However, this challenge was not only limited to households in which caregivers were not highly educated. The practice of teaching was something that caregivers were finding challenging. While access to resources was a persistent challenge for many households, how usable these resources are to even the most highly educated caregivers is open to question.

Responses from the children

From the 16 families interviewed, nine family responses included those of one child, while five included two children per family. In two families, the child was not available to participate in an interview. Thus, a total number of 19 children, ranging from Grade 2 to Grade 12 learners, responded to the interview questions. Children were asked eight questions, seven of which were open-ended. The aim of the questions was to gain clarity on their children's experiences of, or approaches to, education at home during the initial three-week nationwide lock-down.

Daily activities during lockdown

The first question sought to gain insight into what children did during the day whilst not attending school. The phrasing of the questions, which read: 'What do you do in the day, now that you are not going to school?' deliberately avoided reference to the lockdown so as not to provoke anxiety in children. Activities identified by the children were: schoolwork and learning; housework and assisting with family chores; watching TV; chatting with friends; and playing. In the reporting of data that follows, children's actual responses to each question are indicated, after which the data is interpreted taking into account the fuller context, with reference to caregiver responses where relevant.

The majority of children (12) describing their average daily activities under lockdown referred to their schoolwork, with nine clearly dedicated to actively keeping up their learning momentum; these children made a point of creating time in their day for doing their schoolwork regularly. For three children engaged to some extent with their learning, it seems as if this was more of an afterthought. One child stated that he sometimes did schoolwork, while another commented that:

Every now and then I do some homework but I don't have the patience. As soon as I feel it gets too much I just stop so I don't do it poorly. (Child 1, family 5, Grade 10)

It is possible that this child felt out of his depth working with less guidance than at school, as he expressed concern over the potential for doing the work to a lesser standard than might otherwise be acceptable.



While four children did not mention schoolwork in their account of their daily activities, some of the activities they engaged in, for example, reading, may be viewed as educational, although the children did not express a conscious intention to do schoolwork or an awareness of the activity being educational. In the case of a seven-year-old Grade 2 female child, who cited her activities as follows:

I play with the blocks, LEGO, I play with my brother, I colour in and play games on my phone and watching TV and sometimes I play with my dolls and with my brother's cars
(Family 13)

Her mother has explained that her daughter played educational games on her phone which assisted her with her Maths. Thus, while the child mentioned “*play[ing] games on my phone*”, her mother clarified that these were educational Maths-based games. Furthermore, the other activities she mentioned (playing with blocks, Lego, colouring in) were age-appropriate learning activities. Another child shared that s/he watched some lessons on TV and read her/his books. This would provide incidental learning, but the child's intention could not be determined.

Half of the children mentioned watching TV daily, with one child specifying watching lessons on TV; another mentioned that this was something he could do a little of now during the week, which suggests that this was a recreational activity that he was not allowed or able to spend time on during term time. In addition to watching TV regularly, a quarter of the children (five) mentioned playing on the computer and playing on their phones. For children who were actively studying, according to their response, watching TV was something that could be done for relaxation afterwards; furthermore, they used WhatsApp or Facetime as tools to further their learning by sharing ideas on their schoolwork with peers.

Keeping in touch with friends

Ten of the 19 children were in touch with their friends, with eight using electronic devices to socialise with friends. Eight of the children used WhatsApp on mobile phones, and one child used Instagram as well. One child expressed excitement at being allowed by his mother to use Zoom sometimes as well. Two children living in a township played with local friends, visiting at each other's houses and playing outside in the neighbourhood daily. Of the eight children who were not in touch with their friends, four shared that this was because they did not have phones, two others said it was because they stayed at home, while two did not give a reason. A 14-year-old Grade 9 child said:

I do not usually go out because girls at home are not allowed out of the gate unless ordered by an elderly. I also do not have a phone so I cannot keep in touch. (Family 9)

This child is one of three who talked of doing housework/helping in the home as part of her daily routine.

Assisting in the home

A Grade 2 female child cited assisting family members (her parents and two older brothers) with housework until she and her brothers did their schoolwork together; another male child spoke of helping his mother more with chores before playing soccer outside with her if the weather was fine. The aforementioned female Grade 9 child spoke of house cleaning to begin her day, followed by watching some TV and caring for the younger children in the family. This was in clear contrast to her Grade 10 brother's freedom of movement in the neighbourhood and alerts us to the potential for female and male children to have to meet different family demands and, as a consequence, have less time for learning activities while



these are being conducted in the home environment. This situation was highlighted in another comment by this child (discussed later) regarding difficulties she faced with learning at home.

Lockdown as a time of learning

Eleven children stated that their school had given them work to do during the lockdown (the 9 children shown in Table 2 and a further 2 from the Child 2 interviews), while eight had not been given work. As described above the learners who were set tasks to do were predominantly from independent or Model C schools. Two children were given schoolwork tasks to be completed in hardcopy, while six children referred to using electronic sources, including a school website (1), a mother's phone on which to watch videos sent by the school (1), work done on a tablet (1), and Google Classroom (3). One of the children using Google Classroom indicated that her/his school work was checked by the teachers, and another indicated that it was not.

The number of children (11) who had work set by their schools corresponds quite closely with the 12 children who reported doing schoolwork as a daily activity; this seems to indicate that one child was voluntarily doing schoolwork although this was not a requirement of the school. Five children – two from one family – reported engaging in learning during lockdown although their schools had not given them any work. This was revealed in their responses to the question 'Are you doing any other learning?' and demonstrates their interest in and commitment to continued learning. A child explained:

I am using my mobile phone to access the Vodacom E school. This platform has all the subjects and I get to watch videos and also download content related to my subjects. I am hoping to join more e-learning schools, just that data is expensive. I also download question papers from the Department of Education website. (Child 2, Grade 7, family 16)

This is evidence that, in the absence of a school being proactive and setting work for their learners, some children have accessed state and other resources and learning channels voluntarily to ensure their learning is uninterrupted. This matric child's comment indicates an awareness of these generally available resources:

If I felt I needed extra work I'd go to that past paper website that the government hosts, so anyone can access it. My mom told me about it, her brother told her as he's a teacher. It was also mentioned last year at our talk. (Child 1, family 7)

According to the children who responded, some of the extra work was being directed by their parents. Here is an example of a child who attends a public school from a family in which the caregiver's highest educational qualification is that she has completed high school:

I am doing Mathematics and spelling with my mom [and] my mom has been helping me with reading. (Child 1, Grade 10, family 5)

Enablers and obstacles for learning at home

When exploring their experiences of learning at home, children were able to respond in some detail to the questions asking them to identify what made their learning easier or more difficult. Things that made it easier included being able to work at their own pace; concentrating better at home and just being comfortable there, including, in one instance, being able to have the constant company of a beloved pet; having help and support from family members and friends; and being able to access the internet. Not being



under time pressure or having time constraints was identified by half of the children (six) who reported doing schoolwork daily. A 12-year-old Grade 7 child at an independent school in a suburb commented:

I have a lot of time now - so it's more fun. I'm less stressed to finish everything fast,

Other children commented:

I work at my pace and I decide what I want to work on (16-yr-old Grade 10).

Knowing that there are no time constraints and that I never have to rush, so I can do everything at the best of my ability (17-yr-old Grade 11).

When I am doing my work, I have more time than in school. She does not rush me when I am doing a sum (10-yr-old Grade 5).

I learn at my own time and I stop when I'm tired (Grade 2, practices reading and watches videos shared by the school (independent) on mother's phone).

A matric pupil observed that learning at home was easy for him as he could go through the work faster because the teacher would explain it twice to a child who did not understand, and this obviously did not apply to him. This child followed a highly structured study routine, using a shared study space in the children's bedroom, and was active on Google Classroom. A Grade 9, 14-year-old female child at an independent school also found structuring her time according to a study plan and withdrawing to her own workspace in her bedroom enabled easier learning.

Several children identified support, either from their schools, internet sources or others (family members or friends) as contributing to their ease of learning at home. Four children referred to having access to the internet as being helpful, while another mentioned his tablet; a matric child at an ex Model C public school, which has implemented Google Classroom, stated that:

I've got access to internet and the YouTube video links explain the work and if it's not enough the school will send a paragraph with the video explaining what they want us to learn.

Three children identified their parents' input and support as helpful, while three children specified that they found learning with other children helpful – one specified learning with a sibling, another spoke of playing “make-believe” school with the children in the neighbourhood who play together and take it in turns to be the teacher or child, and another child discussed learning with friends using WhatsApp.

It is interesting to note that the child who mentioned make believe school with peers making learning easier had a smartphone but seemed to prefer real contact with friends to having internet access through a device. When naming things that made learning at home difficult, one child shared:

I miss seeing my friends in person.

This comment highlights children's need for real vs virtual interaction with peers. Two children stated that they had no difficulties with learning at home, while broader themes that emerged from other children were:

- Distractions, including noise within the family and from neighbours (4), interpersonal dynamics (1), TV and gadgets (3);



- Lack of teacher support/interaction (3), teachers overestimating the amount of work students could manage (1) and parents being unable to offer adequate help (2);
- Too many chores (1);
- No space to study in a household with many occupants (1);
- No data at a time when access to the library is not possible (1);
- Interruptions to the electricity supply (1 child, in a well-resourced home, probably referring to load shedding when that was taking place).

Not being compelled to engage in learning at home is a difficulty that children are having to navigate. Distractions offered by ready access to TV and gadgets, not a reality in the school environment, now need to be proactively managed by children or their parents. Thus, a Grade 11 child with a structured learning environment at home, articulated his difficulties in the following way:

The freedom, the fact that the lounge or TV is a few feet away from my bedroom or working space. And that if anything is too hard I can just leave it for later and might actually forget that I have left it for another time. (Family 14)

Some children who were actively engaging in schoolwork whilst at home were finding it challenging to work with electronic sources while not having access to 'live' teacher input. Interpreting the text, without the benefit of a teacher to provide the context and orientate them to the work implies that children have to work far more independently than before. This is factor even in the most advantaged homes: for example, a Grade 12 child who was using Google Classroom commented:

It would be nice - we can't have teacher interactions to tell us tips and tricks about how to do the work, which is a lot easier to understand than reading it off the text. It would be nice to have an interactive learning session, like a Google class, with the teacher, and with friends. (Family 7)

The environment in which the family was located as well as the composition of the household was recognised by several children as being either beneficial or challenging for them. It is difficult for children to adjust their learning to these factors over which they have no control. One child commented:

When other people are in the house they disturb us, because our house is crowded, so we can't learn. So we have to go outside. (Family 8)

This child shared a free-standing home in a township with four other children and five adults. The mother advised that while this home did not have a TV, each of her two children had a smartphone to enable them to find relevant information online when necessary. When her children had finished their work indoors, they played indigenous games in the yard outside.

A Grade 10 child living in a semi-detached house in a township with 12 other occupants (seven children and five adults), commented as follows:

There are many people living here, there is no one helping me with the work. There is noise all the time. We do not have a study room which motivate[s] me to study. (Family 9)

This child's mother, who had not completed secondary school herself, mentioned feeling inadequate as she was unable to assist her children to understand their schoolwork; she also expressed anxiety over her



children's ability to progress academically, particularly now that schooling has been disrupted by the lockdown. However, she encouraged her children to assist one another as best they could. Two of her children were repeating grades and she feared that they would not complete their schooling. The children in her family were not given work by their school prior to the lockdown, but they felt that learning should nonetheless be taking place.

Summary

The 19 children interviewed were spread across both primary and secondary schools, from Grade 2 to Grade 12. The majority of children (12) describing their average daily activities under lockdown referred to their schoolwork, with nine clearly dedicated to actively keeping up their learning momentum; these children made a point of creating time in their day for doing their schoolwork regularly. While a further four children did not mention schoolwork in their account of their daily activities, some of the activities they engaged in, for example reading, may be viewed as educational.

Ten of the 19 children were in touch with their friends, with eight of them using electronic devices to socialise with friends. Eight of the children used WhatsApp on mobile phones, with one child using Instagram as well.

All independent and Model C schools attended by children in the sample had given learners work to do during lockdown, whereas only 2 public schools had done so. Five children – two from one family – reported engaging in learning during the lockdown although their schools had not given them any work.

Learners were asked to identify what made their learning easier or more difficult. Things that made it easier included being able to work at their own pace, concentrating better at home and being comfortable there, having help and support from family members and friends, and being able to access the internet. Not being under time pressure or having time constraints was identified by six of the children who reported doing schoolwork daily.

When naming things that made learning at home difficult, one child said she missed having physical contact with friends. Other inhibiting factors included: distractions, including noise within the family and from neighbours (4); interpersonal dynamics (1); TV and gadgets (3); lack of teacher support/interaction (3); teachers overestimating the amount of work students could manage (1); parents being unable to offer adequate help (2); too many chores (1); no space for study in a household with many occupants (1); and no data at a time when access to the library is not possible (1);

Some children who were actively engaging in schoolwork whilst at home were finding it challenging to work with electronic sources while not having access to 'live' teacher input.

Conclusion

The 16 families and their home educational practices both before and during lockdown described in this report are not proportionally representative of the South African population. Although there are cases of less advantaged families in the sample – including one living in an informal settlement and six in townships – the subjects of the study tend to be highly educated, live in a suburban setting and send their children to independent or Model C schools. Nine of those who direct educational practices in each family have



tertiary qualifications and only one has not completed high school; all are women and 56% are 40 years old or younger.

Do these atypical features of the sample render the research results incapable of providing lessons for the country? The answer to this question is negative, as long as we interpret the results according to two provisos. One, the home educational practices exhibited by the sample are likely to represent 'best practices' in the population, and the task of the research analysts is therefore to recommend conditions under which such practices could be aspired to by less advantaged families. Two, the difficulties experienced in directing home schooling practices by families in the sample are likely to be experienced far more acutely by most South African families. From this perspective, the research task is to identify support measures which are likely to enable less advantaged families to overcome these difficulties. These two conditions guided the discussion of the research implications below and the recommendations contained in the final section of the report.

The first point to note is that even before lockdown, in the large majority of these families (81%), caregivers were highly involved in their children's education, assisting children with homework, preparing them for assessments, checking school schedules and motivating them. Resources from the school (88%) and the internet (75%) were stated as the main resources used in the child's education. But even the most highly educated of these parents experienced difficulties undertaking these tasks, and these difficulties have become more acute under lockdown.

These difficulties are of two types. One, more than half of the families (nine out of 16) do not have access to a regular internet connection, including five families who live in the suburbs. Furthermore, a frequent complaint from families is that downloading educational materials is data-heavy and the cost of data restricts access to these materials. The internet is therefore not the best way of communicating with even relatively highly educated families, and must therefore be a poor choice for communicating with the large majority of South African homes. All the families studied have smartphones, and WhatsApp is widely used. However, while phones present a viable form of communicating with families, the problem of data costs remains. Attempts to persuade telecom companies to zero-rate educational data have to date met with no success (Roberts, 2020). Reaching an agreement with these companies on this issue must be an urgent priority for government if educational materials are to become more widely accessible to poor families.

The second kind of problem experienced by the families in our sample relates to the changes to their home education practices demanded by lockdown. While all caregivers interviewed want to assist their children, even the most highly educated among them feel inadequate in undertaking tasks such as drawing up a work programme which lays out which topics should be addressed in which order and, even more problematic, guiding their children through these topics. This is the expert work of teachers, and parents cannot be expected to assist their children in relation to these curricular and pedagogical tasks without very clear guidance. In this regard, the research findings outlined above indicate that such guidance is being provided by most independent and Model C schools.

Eight of the 16 families in the sample are receiving support from their child's school by means of electronic platforms such as Google Classroom or D6 Communication Platforms as well as by means of printed material given to children before lockdown. Furthermore, the provision of these resources has been accompanied by advice from the schools on how to use materials, commonly by means of WhatsApp chat groups. In such families there appears to be a more structured learning programme occurring in the home



during the lockdown. While these practices among well-resourced schools is commendable, their general absence in most homes is likely to exacerbate the stark inequalities which already exist in the South African school system if a way cannot be found to assist schools serving poorer children to do the same.

The majority of public schools serving families in the sample are not providing educational resources and advice to homes, and it is clear that they require guidance on how to do so. This is another task for the DBE and its provincial counterparts. It is not known how many provinces are gearing up to provide such guidance, and for those that have not yet commenced this task, the Western Cape Education Department (WCED) has established a model which may provide lessons to other provinces (Schäfer, 2020)⁷.

However, widespread utilisation of the WCED model will run into the same IT-related problems described above, namely internet access and the cost of data⁸. While the use of electronic forms of communication and resource provision should be utilised wherever possible, these modalities are not as easily available among poorer families. It seems that the best way to overcome these difficulties is to provide printed materials to families, both for use by children in their daily tasks and to guide parents in supporting their children. And the most effective way of getting such printed materials to families is for parents or children to collect them from their schools, provided this can be done while maintaining adequate social distancing protocols. And once the lockdown is ended, they should be provided as a matter of routine in order to enhance the important role played by parents in supporting their children's education.

One of the most important functions in regard to parental support is establishing a routine for doing schoolwork, whether this is for a substantial part of the day during lockdown, or for undertaking homework after school when things return to normal. Many children find it all too easy to be distracted even in the most advantaged homes, and for children in crowded homes in which space and quiet time are restricted this is even more of a problem.

Interviews with caregivers and their children indicate that the educational uses of television are not being exploited nearly as well as they could be. A wealth of material, pitched at all levels of schooling, is available for broadcast and low cost access to TV is widely distributed across the country. And while SABC does broadcast educational programmes daily and while the Minister did exhort families to access these programmes in her broadcast to the nation, the families described above make little use of the medium for educational purposes. Perhaps what is required is not only stronger advocacy but also a higher degree of coordination between daily broadcasts and the rollout of the curriculum.

Finally, a major source of anxiety among parents and children arises from uncertainty: Will children have to repeat the school year? Will the mid-year holidays be cancelled in order to make up time lost due to the lockdown? While it is too soon to answer questions of this kind, government is beginning to formulate a plan for phasing out the lockdown (DBE, 2020) and communicating the decisions in a timely and effective manner, and indeed to keep communicating regularly and frequently with parents, is another urgent priority for government.

⁷ The materials may be accessed from <https://wcedportal.co.za/eresource/92236>

⁸ Although the website contains much material that is useful to teachers, it is very busy and complex to navigate, and is probably not useful to parents without very clear guidance.



In this regard, the experience has not been entirely positive. While both the Ministry and DBE did make efforts to prepare parents for the lockdown and to assist them to support their children during the lockdown (Motshekga, 2020), the majority of the 16 families studied (9) were not aware of these efforts. It seems that this lack of awareness is independent of the level of education of the caregiver interviewed, the area in which they live and the type of school to which they send their children. It would be unfair to blame government for the fact that this message did not get through to many families, given the speed with which the lockdown was instituted. Nevertheless, the message is clear: communication with families is not achieved by means of a one-off national announcement, and more effective channels are required. Here too, it would seem sensible for schools to direct such messages to parents by means of WhatsApp and other forms of phone communication.

Parental involvement in the education of their children is known to be a major factor contributing to enhancing performance at every grade level. If they are successful in improving parental involvement, the educational support measures to families suggested above will be beneficial, whether the lockdown is extended, phased out over the next few weeks or months, or scrapped altogether. If the kinds of support to and communication with parents recommended below are implemented by the Ministry, the DBE, provincial departments and schools, then the crisis precipitated by COVID-19 may have had some benefits amid the world-wide devastation the pandemic is causing.

Recommendations

1. To the Ministry, Department of Basic Education and provincial departments of education

- 1.1. Finalise the **plan to phase out the school lockdown**.
- 1.2. Provide **policy on communication** between schools and parents. This is as urgent as 1.1 as the decisions taken in that regard must be communicated directly to every parent within days of being taken. Such communication is probably best done by as many channels as possible, including WhatsApp, and directed by schools to every parent.
- 1.3. Provide **policy on the curriculum content** of communications between schools and parents. This is probably best done by class, with teachers sending monthly messages to parents regarding the work to be covered, sources to be used, guidance on how parents can contribute, dates of tests, etc. In the primary grades, the best way of promoting work at home by learners is by means of the DBE workbooks issued annually to learners by grade level and subject, together with a simple month/term/year plan. Lesson plans are probably not suitable for use by parents, while simple guidelines in the use of the Workbooks are likely to provide a significant boost to learners for those families who implement the recommended procedures. At high school level, this task is best achieved by making provision for learners to take their textbooks home, with a workplan providing guidance to learners and their parents on tasks to be undertaken.
- 1.4. Engage with telecoms companies with a view to **zero-rating educational data**.
- 1.5. Engage with the **SABC to coordinate broadcasts** of educational materials with the rollout of the curriculum.

2. To schools



- 2.1. Set up **communication systems with parents** following national policy: see 1.2 and 1.3 above.
- 2.2. Lead teachers in formulating simple weekly/monthly/quarterly **workplans** for communication to parents.
- 2.3. Compile **sets of printed materials** for learners to use at home, should lockdown continue in full or reduced forms, together with workplans which include daily activities. These materials should be prepared for collection by parents at the school in a manner that maintains adequate social distancing.
- 2.4. Compile sources of **electronic materials** which may be accessed by phone or computer. In the interests of not excluding the most disadvantaged learners, these should be designed to be supplementary to the print materials described in 2.3.
- 2.5. Compile **guidelines for parents** to assist their children with educational tasks at home, both during lockdown and when routines return to normal. See 1.3.

3. To families

- 3.1. **Engage with the school** regarding regular communication on how to assist their children at home.
- 3.2. Ensure **regular time** for daily study in the home.



References

Charmaz K. (2014) Constructing grounded theory. Sage.

DBE. (2020) Framework for a curriculum recovery plan – post COVID-19, Heads of Education Departments Committee (HEDCOM), 11 April 2020. (as yet unpublished)

Motshekga A. (2020) Minister of Basic Education Angie Motshekga on national lockdown. Speech streamed live on Mar 26, 2020. Retrieved from: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1bjA_mb-m9c

Petrie C, Aladin K, Ranjan P, Javangwe R, Gilliland D, Tuominen S, Lasse L. (2020) *Spotlight: Quality education for all during Covid-19 crisis*. hundredED, in partnership with the OECD. Retrieved from: https://hundred-cdn.s3.amazonaws.com/uploads/report/file/15/hundred_spotlight_covid-19_digital.pdf

Roberts N. (2020) Remote learning: Telecom providers must come to the party, *Daily Maverick*, 20 April 2020. Retrieved from: <https://www.dailymaverick.co.za/article/2020-04-20-remote-learning-telecom-providers-must-come-to-the-party/>

Schäfer D. (2020) MEC Debbie Schäfer on launch of a new lesson planning platform, Western Cape Education Department. Retrieved from <https://www.gov.za/speeches/mec-debbie-sch%C3%A4fer-launch-new-lesson-planning-platform-17-apr-2020-0000>



Appendix A: The Research Team

Name	Institution	Position
Nick Taylor	JET Education Services	Team lead
Whitty Green	Dept Higher Education & Training	Quality Assurance
Lori Foster	North Carolina State University	Quality Assurance
Aifani Tahulela	North Eastern University, China	Researcher
Chosi Mtoba	JET Education Services	Researcher
Freda Walters	Save the Children South Africa	Researcher
Gail Robinson	Ushaka Education	Researcher
Gino Garach	JET Education Services	Researcher
Mthandazo Khumalo	Phakamani Young Minds Academy	Researcher
Kimberleigh Bodley	JET Education Services	Researcher
Neo Letsoalo	Soweto Theatre	Researcher
Nonjabulo Makhowane	University of KZN	Researcher
Stacy Kratz	University of Southern California, USA	Researcher
Zonke Mpotulo	African Consciousness Learning Centre (ACLC)	Researcher
Maureen Mosselson	JET Education Services	Editor



Appendix B: The Household Education Questionnaire

The adult family member who plays the largest role in the children's education was interviewed.

1. General Questions

1. Name of Interviewer:

2. Date of Interview:

3. Gender of interviewee:

- Male
- Female
- Other
- Prefer not to say

4. Race of interviewee:

- White
- Black
- Indian
- Coloured
- Other

5. Age:

- 15-20
- 21-30
- 31-40
- 41-50
- 51-60
- 61+

6. Highest Level of Education:

- Incomplete Primary School
- Complete Primary School
- Incomplete High School
- Complete High School
- Certificate Diploma
- Degree
- Postgraduate Degree



- Prefer not to say
- Other

7. Employment Status:

- Employed
- Unemployed
- Studying
- Learnership/Internship
- Volunteering
- Stay at home and look after household

8. If Unemployed, What is your occupation?

9. Can you tell me more about the other members of your household? (age, gender, and occupation)

10. Please say which of the following you have access to:

- Regular electricity supply
- Water inside your house
- Regular internet connection
- Computer, tablet, laptop
- Smartphone
- Television, radio

11. What kind of dwelling does your family live in?

- Free-standing house
- Semi-detached house
- Flat
- Non-brick structure
- Other

12. Where is this dwelling situated?

- Suburb
- Township
- Village
- Farm
- Informal settlement



13. What area do you live in? (Place name, province)

14. How many children live at home and what are their ages and genders?

15. What does your child's workspace look like? (Interviewer to select appropriate option, without reading them out)

- Separate "homework" room
- Desk in their room
- Works in dining room
- Works on their beds
- Works in living room
- Other

16. What type of school is your child enrolled in? (Interviewer to match the multiple choice option with the respondents answer)

- Private
- Public
- Model C
- Home school
- Other

17. School's name(s): _____

18. What grade are they in?

- Grade R
- Grade 1
- Grade 2
- Grade 2
- Grade 4
- Grade 5
- Grade 6
- Grade 7
- Grade 8
- Grade 9
- Grade 10
- Grade 11
- Grade 12



19. Are there any health or medical conditions that impact your child's/children's education?

- Yes
- No
- Maybe
- Other

20. If yes, please give more information as to how it impacts your child's/children's education:

21. Does your child/ren have special educational needs?

- Yes
- No
- Maybe
- Other

22. If yes, please provide more information regarding these needs:

2. Case Study Questions⁹

23. Tell me about an average weekday in your household, before the lockdown period, from when you got up till when you went to bed:

24. Before the lockdown, who was responsible for education within the household? What role did they play? (helping with homework, educational activities etc.)

25. On a scale of 1-5, where 1 is 'not at all', and 5 is 'very': Before the lockdown, how involved were you or another member of the household in your child's education? (Use the down arrow to select an option between 1 and 5.)

- 1
- 2
- 3

⁹ The parent assuming most of the responsibility for the children's education during the lockdown. Referred to as caregiver.



- 4
- 5

26. What are the reasons for your answer? (give examples of involvement)

27. Before lockdown, what resources did you use in educating your child/ren?

3. Education during Lockdown

28. Tell me about a weekday in your household, under lockdown, from when you get up till when you go to bed:

29. Do you think your role in your child/ren's education has changed during this time of lockdown? Please explain

30. How do you feel about this role?

31. How does your child/ren feel about his/her learning at the moment?

32. Regarding your child/ren's schooling, are you doing anything differently now, that you weren't doing before the lock-down? (Invite them to share details if necessary, to go beyond yes/no.)

33. How is that going?

34. What resources are available for you or your child/ren to use in their education during lock-down?

35. Have you received any guidance on how to educate your child during lock down? If so, from whom?

36. (If the answer to the previous question was no, skip this question) Do you think this guidance is helpful? If yes, how?

37. What difficulties or challenges have you experienced in educating your child/ren during lock-down?



38. If the lock-down is extended beyond the 16th April, is there anything you can think of that would be helpful for you regarding your child's education?

39. Are you aware of the Minister of Basic Education, Me Angie Motshekga, media briefing on 26 March 2020 outlining the current position and available resources?

- Yes
- No
- Unsure

40. Do you know anything about the Department of Basic Education (DBE) providing resources to learners while they are at home?

- Yes
- No
- Other

41. Briefly, what have you heard or read, and how do you feel about this?

42. Is there any more information you would like regarding your child's schooling during lock-down?

43. Are there any other thoughts this discussion brought up for you that you would like to share?

4. Case Study Questions (Child/Learner) Child #1

44. What do you do in the day, now that you are not going to school?

45. Do you keep in touch with your friends during this time? How does that happen?

46. Has your school given you work to do at this time?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

47. (If yes to above question) Tell me how it happens? (Explore how work is sent, completed, supervised and checked).

48. Are you doing any other learning activities?



49. Have you been using anything to help you learn?

50. What makes it easy for you to learn at home?

51. What are some things that make it difficult for you to learn at home?

5. Case Study Questions (Child/Learner) Child #1

52. What do you do in the day, now that you are not going to school?

53. Do you keep in touch with your friends during this time? How does that happen?

54. Has your school given you work to do at this time?

- Yes
- No
- Don't know

55. (If yes to above question) Tell me how it happens? (Explore how work is sent, completed, supervised and checked).

56. Are you doing any other learning activities?

57. Have you been using anything to help you learn?

58. What makes it easy for you to learn at home?

59. What are some things that make it difficult for you to learn at home?



Appendix C: Ethical procedures

Instruction to researchers

ETHICAL PROCEDURE TO OBTAIN INFORMED CONSENT AND ASSENT

As researchers, it is very important that we obtain informed consent (adult) and assent (child/ren) from the participants in this study. No participant should be interviewed until this process is completed. Please read the full procedure, and forms, before contacting the family so you have a good understanding of the process. The correct documents must be saved on your phone to share on WhatsApp.

ADULT PARTICIPANT: (use the “Consent Form” document)

You will interview one adult in the family you have identified to investigate. This will be the adult who is responsible for/most involved in the child/ren’s education. This could be the mother, father or even another adult, e.g. the grandmother. It needs to be a family in South Africa but can be from any region, background, age, etc. The only exclusion criterion is that it cannot be your family you live with. It can be your relatives, but then they must reside in their own house.

1. Contact this person and ask if they would be interested in taking part in a study on the families’ role in education, especially during the lockdown period. If they express interest and want to know more, send them a PDF/picture of the document marked “consent form” via WhatsApp. Other modes of communication (e.g. email) can be used too if WhatsApp is not an option but WhatsApp is the preferred choice.
2. Check if they understand or have any questions.
3. Indicate to the adult that they must respond if he/she agrees to take part in the study on WhatsApp below the picture. He/she should indicate clearly that they agree to take part.
4. Please ask for a written response in WhatsApp, and not a voice note or verbal consent on a phone call.

CHILD PARTICIPANT(S): (use the “Assent Form” document)

5. You will request to interview up to two children in the family you have identified to investigate. You will interview the eldest child in the family, if they agree. If there are other children in the family you will request to interview the one younger than the eldest, i.e. request to interview the two eldest children in the family.
6. After you complete the consent process with the adult, request to obtain assent from the child/ren. The adult will already be aware that the child/ren is/are included in the study since their permission to interview the child/ren was requested in the Consent Form. Always use the adult’s phone number for all communication with the child/ren (and not the minor’s number). Request that the parent is always present while you are communicating with the child/ren. Ask the parent to have the child/ren join the WhatsApp conversation the adult is having with you.



7. If the child/ren expresses interest in the study and want to know more, send them the PDF/picture of the document marked “assent form” via the adult’s WhatsApp. Other modes of communication (e.g. email) can be used too if WhatsApp is not an option but WhatsApp is the preferred choice.
8. Check if they understand or have any questions.
9. Indicate to the adult that the children must respond if they agree to take part in the study on WhatsApp below the picture. They should indicate clearly that they agree to take part. Please ask for a written response in WhatsApp and not a voice note or verbal consent on a phone call.
10. Agree with the participants when a good time would be to interview them according to the interview schedule.



Consent letter: printed on JET Letterhead

4 April 2020

RE: CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN EDUCATION RESEARCH STUDY

Dear Caregiver,

A group of researchers is, in partnership with JET Education Services, exploring families' experiences related to their child/ren's education. We are interested in the period before and also during 'lock-down', as education has been disrupted due to covid-19, the Corona virus. We would like to conduct an interview, via telephone, with you and up to two of your school-aged children who are willing to take part in the study. We will ask a series of questions and your answers, as well as your children's answers - if they are willing to take part, will be recorded on a form. There could be a follow-up telephone conversation a few days later to expand on some thoughts shared in the first conversation.

We will not share your personal details with anyone. You, or your children, are free to withdraw from the study at any point without any consequences. There are no possible risks when you take part in this study. There are no questions dealing with sensitive issues in the interview. The interviews conducted will take place in the next three days, at a time convenient for yourself. You will not be asked for, or given money, to take part in this study. Please indicate if you agree:

1. To take part in this study and be interviewed on the phone
2. For your child/ren to be interviewed on the phone in your presence
3. To the results of this study to be written up in a report that will be shared with you before publication, but will contain no personal information that could identify you.

You are welcome to contact the study coordinator, Dr Nick Taylor, if you have any questions or concerns. Thank you for considering taking part in this study. Please indicate on WhatsApp that you have read the invitation, understand what the study is about and agree that you and your children can take part in this study. If you are happy as an adult to take part in an interview, but would prefer your children not to, please let us know.

Sincerely

JET RESEARCH TEAM

STUDY COORDINATOR: DR N TAYLOR (M: +27(0)82 491 8821)



Assent notice: printed on JET Letterhead

4 April 2020

RE: ASSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN EDUCATION RESEARCH STUDY

Dear Learner,

I want to talk to you and find out your experience and thoughts about ways you are learning. We will be chatting on the phone and you will be asked some questions while your caregiver is present. There are no right or wrong answers. Say everything that you think and feel honestly. Your name won't be shared with other people and all the information that you share will be used for research only. You will not be given anything for taking part in this study. It is your decision if you want to take part or not. If you don't feel comfortable at any stage, and don't want to answer a question you don't have to. It is your choice. Feel free to ask me questions anytime during our discussion. You may also talk to your family about this study before you decide to take part. Please let your family help you indicate on WhatsApp that you understand and agree to help in this research study about the different ways children learn.

Sincerely

JET RESEARCH TEAM

STUDY COORDINATOR: DR N TAYLOR (M: +27(0)82 491 8821)

