

**In- service teacher training for parent involvement:
teachers' experiences in South African schools**

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Parent involvement in South African schools has been primarily limited to financing schools, parent volunteering and mandatory participation in schools governance. In order to train practising teachers to implement comprehensive school, family and community partnerships, a Certificate Course in Parent Involvement is currently presented at the University of South Africa through distance education. The curriculum is based on Epstein's model and an assignment requires the implementation of a parent involvement project by students. A qualitative inquiry explored the success of students' projects in their schools. A document analysis was made of portfolios submitted by teachers as part of their course work. Rich data was elicited by the assignment which required teachers to describe the implementation of one type of parent involvement in their schools. Findings show how teachers adapted the model in pre-primary, primary and high schools in very diverse communities in South Africa. Teachers created family friendly environments for parent encounters; used various strategies to communicate with the home; demonstrated an expanded view of parents and the community; introduced innovative volunteering; and illustrated positive results for teachers, learners and parents.