

Vernique Whitten

What inspired you to get involved in the programme?

Initially it was an intervention measure in aid of helping the learners with learning barriers and empowering myself with new information to assist learners using different strategies. After the first session of facilitation training my inspiration then became the parents, as this was a great need in our community in which parents are unable to assist their children at home. It was the perfect solution to all our problems: teachers having lack of parental support at home, and parents having the lack of knowledge to assist their child. As the saying goes, it is “killing two birds with one stone”.

What motivated you to stay involved?

Definitely the parent and the progress within the learners. The Home-school Partnership Programme is a very inspirational programme that instils a number of skills within an individual and develops individuals holistically. It establishes better relationships between parents and children, teacher and parents and children and teachers. In addition to the development of skills it also establishes the motivation to study further. We had a grandparent who then decided to complete her Early Childhood Development training as it was always her dream to become a teacher. In majority of the cases the certificate issued at the end of the eight sessions was the only certificate these parents achieved and the sense of pride that came herewith was phenomenal and inspiring to me as a facilitator. All the above mentioned, indicated positive results and I thought if all this could be done after one successful programme, how many more parents could be reached in such a positive manner? After a number of years of successfully running this programme our numbers of attendance have grown miraculously demonstrating that there is even more work to be done within our community.

What are the top things you have learned while being involved in the programme?

Firstly, that good ideas can come from anyone (Each one-teach one). There were so many great ideas that came from these sessions that I am currently implementing within my classroom, intervention classes as well advice given to parents who seek support in assisting their child at home. Secondly, it's never too late to dream and set realistic goals. As we had a grandparent who then decided to complete her Early Childhood Development training as it was always her dream to become a teacher. Thirdly, the most influential learning takes place when individuals feel comfortable and at ease with whom they are communicating with. Parents have thanked the facilitators for making them feel comfortable and at ease with giving feedback and sharing their experiences to the groups. This was evident in the vibrant sessions we had when individuals could not wait to give their feedback. In addition, I have also learnt the best information and guidance comes from day to day experiences.