PARENT-TEACHER CONTACT: A PROBLEMATIC MATTER[1]

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OPSOMMING

Doelmatige ouer-onderwyserkontak ter wille van effektiewe skoolse opvoedende onderwys word dikwels in die wiele gery deur belemmerende faktore. So kan verouderde strukture van ouerverenigings, oningeligtheid oor gesagstrukture van relevante samelewingsverbande (i.c. die ouerhuis en die skool), onaantreklike en koue skoolgeboue en negatiewe gesindhede van ouers en onderwysers teenoor mekaar doelmatige ouer-onderwyserkontak verhoed. Hierdie belemmerende faktore word in dié artikel geïdentifiseer en daar word aangetoon hoe die betrokke faktore met behulp van bepaalde komponente van 'n samelewingsteoretiese model voorkom of uitgeskakel kan word. Die fasette van die samelewingsteoretiese model waarvan daar sprake is, sluit onder andere in:

* gelykwaardigheid van samelewingsverbande;

* eie kompetensieterrein vir elke samelewingsverband;

* samewerkingsterreine tussen samelewingsverbande, en

* tyd- en ruimtelike gebondenheid van samelewingsverbande.

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Die betrokke samelewingsteoretiese model kan dien as lewensvatbare en prakties werkbare instrument om doelmatige ouer-onderwyserkontak te bewerkstellig en kan deur ouers en onderwysers met vrug in kontaksituasies toegepas word.

1. INTRODUCTION

A study of the literature on this subject (Sparling, 1980; Vernon, 1984; Fernandez, 1980; Steffy, 1985; Kruger and Krause, 1969:22; Scholtz, 1973:66; Scholtz 1976:263 and Van Loggerenberg and Jooste, 1966:22) and the analysis of a short, unstructured questionnaire (Postma, 1986:2-6) have revealed that parent-teacher contact depends in many cases on intuition rather than on an investigation of fundamental educational principles. This intuitive way of doing things often reveals a very vague idea (in fundamental educational terms) of what purposeful parent-teacher contact really is, and this is probably the cause of the matter becoming contentious. The question that arises is: How should parent-teacher contact, seen in fundamental educational perspective, take place?

The aim of this article is to investigate the matter of problematic parent-teacher contact and to decide, on the basis of that investigation, what the educational and philosophical causes of inadequate contact in this area may be. Two methods are primarily applied in the course of the investigation, viz. a study of literature and the method of philosophical reflection. The findings reached can be of use to all educationists and educators in developing countries who are in search for solutions to the problem of inadequate contact between parents and teachers, irrespective of factors like language, culture of religious commitment. The following steps will be taken to answer this problem:

- Firstly, certain particular problem areas will be identified and described - with specific reference to the United States of America, West Germany and the Republic of South Africa.

- Secondly, factors impeding purposeful parent-teacher contact will be indicated.

- In conclusion, possible solutions to the problem of ineffective parent-teacher contact will be described.

2. EXPLICATION OF TERMS

The following terms are often used: Purposeful parent-teacher contact and problem areas, which will be explained briefly.

2.1 Purposeful parent-teacher contact

"Purposeful parent-teacher contact" implies that parents and teachers should co-operate as partners in the education of children on occasions when parents get involved in the activities of the school, that they should make purposeful contact in certain fields and that they should co-operate in particular ways in the interest of education. In broad terms it also implies the involvement of parents and the fact that they should have a say in education in its widest sense, even at government level.

2.2 Problem areas

"Problem areas" indicate those areas of contact between parents and teachers where purposeful contact is impeded by various factors, e.g. ineffective interview techniques, poor communication and insufficient training of parents and teachers for purposeful contact.

3. IDENTIFICATION OF PROBLEM AREAS IN PARENT-TEACHER CONTACT

3.1 Orientation

Since the fourth century, and even earlier, parents and teachers have made contact to a greater or lesser extent where the education of the children is concerned. Augustine (354 - 430) insisted on a Christian school which would see as its purpose the education of children to become citizens of God's kingdom, just like the church and the home. The establishment of such a school necessitated the cooperation of parents and teachers (Augustine, 1952:677; cf. Coetzee, 1977:105 in this regard).

Parent-teacher contact is not only an age-old phenomenon, but also occurs world-wide (cf. Barnard, 1981; Hattingh, 1975 and 1978; Beattie, 1978 and Dekker, 1979 and 1981).

In the following paragraphs the problem areas and facets of parent-teacher contact in two overseas countries and the Republic of South Africa, will be considered.

3.2 Parent-teacher contact in two overseas countries

3.2.1 Introduction

The situation regarding parent-teacher contact and the problems impeding purposeful contact are only investigated in two overseas countries; the United States of America and the Federal Republic of Germany.

The United States of America, which is currently (1987) the most powerful country in, and leader of, the Western world, has, as such, world-wide political (as well as teaching and educational) influence. Specific attention is given to the influential Parent-Teacher Association (PTA) which has played a dominant role in USA educational practice since 1897 (Sparling, 1980:23ff; Jones, 1979:16; Steffy, 1985:1155).

The involvement of parents in education in the Federal Republic of Germany is also investigated, as this country leads Europe in this area, and the involvement of parents in education takes place in a way quite different from that in the USA.

3.2.2 Parent-teacher contact in the United States of America

According to Sparling (1980:23ff) the PTA has already been involved actively in the education, welfare and protection of children since 1897. The members of the PTA are mainly teachers and parents, and the association represents parents, pupils and teachers at local, national and government levels (Sparling, 1980:23; Kritzinger, 1984:64; Sellick, 1985:56-60 and Jones, 1978:3-16). Most schools in the USA have branches of the PTA which are managed by committees consisting of parents and teachers. Each branch has working committees for certain purposes, e.g. feeding and school guidance programmes. In most of the regional school boards one would find a PTA board which links and represents the various branches. Local educational problems and initiatives at a regional level are handled by these boards. From the various regional PTA boards a national PTA Board is selected, and this body communicates regularly with the "State Department of Education" and the "State Board of Education" on behalf of the parents, so that they can be co-determiners of educational policy and administration at government level.

The objectives and functions of the PTA consist of the following essential matters, according to Sparling (1980:25ff):

- Closer contact between parents and teachers.
- Spiritual and educational enrichment of parents and teachers.
- Making American parents conscious of the key role that they play in the education of their children.
- Fighting and preventing immoral influences.

The above exposition would seem to indicate that purposeful parent-teacher contact takes place by means of the PTA. A study of the literature reveals, however, that this is only one side of the story. Fernandez (1980:19) indicates that the PTA is outdated in structure (in 1980), which has caused the realization by parents themselves that this association does not really have an effective say in the decision-making processes. (cf.. Comer, 1986:442ff and Jones, 1978:3-16 in this regard).

It is furthermore clear that the objectives and functioning of the PTA are mainly pragmatically orientated, as the PTA aims to serve in its activities the American society first and foremost. The welfare of the American citizen is their prime concern: all education should be geared towards utility, efficacy and excellence. This pragmatic (even pragmatist) humanistic approach causes the absolutization of certain facets of reality. This in turn leads to parent-teacher contact being ineffective, to the detriment of education at school level (cf. par. 5.3).

3.2.3 Parent-teacher contact in West Germany

Parent-teacher contact in West Germany is similar in many respects to the situation in South Africa (cf. Postma, 1986:157 - 163), but differs extensively from that in the USA. For this reason it is important to mention how parent-teacher contact takes place in West Germany and the problems experienced in this regard.

The Rhineland-Pfalz is regarded as a typical example of a German state (cf. in this regard Dekker, 1986:785 and Barnard, 1981: 202,203) and is discussed as

an example of parent representation. The involvement of parents and their share in the decision-making process take place at several levels in the Rhineland-Pfalz:

- Class-parents' committees (**Klassenelternversammlung**):
  These committees see to the cooperation between the parents of a particular class and its teachers.

- School parents' committees (**Schulelternbeirat**):
  Their most important function is to discuss the educational matters of a particular school and, in so doing, further the interests of their respective schools.

- Regional parents' committees (**Bezirkselternbeirat**):
  The members of these committees are representatives of the various school parents' committees. Their function is to support and coordinate the work done by the school parents' committees and to advise school authorities on general matters regarding education, teaching and the organization of the school.

- State parents' committees (**Landeselternbeirat**):
  These committees have a say in educational matters at state level. Their functions include, among others, the following (Dekker, 1981:81):
  * the establishment of fundamental principles regarding the content of education;
  * determining the duration of the school year and of holidays;
  * exercising control over the introduction of text books, and
  * assisting with the drawing up of school and examination regulations.

- Federal parents' committee (**Bundeselternrat**):
  The Federal parents' committee represents all the states of the Federal Republic of West Germany. It is influential and can negotiate educational policy at government level, in particular with the Federal Ministry of Education and Science and the Bund-Lander-Kommission.

Although bodies representing parents in West Germany are well-organized from a local to a government level, parents' representation is still largely accountable to the state. There is good reason for Beattie (1978:4) to claim that parents' representative bodies in West Germany are often manipulated by political parties

(cf. Mohrhart, 1979:218). Although the parents have a free choice in determining the school their children will attend, there is no indication in the definition of their function, that they may or should help to determine the spirit and orientation of the school (Hattingh, 1977:98-100; Dekker, 1979:506). If parents are not allowed to help determine the character of the school, a problem arises that impedes parent-teacher contact.

3.3 Problem areas in parent-teacher contact at various educational levels

3.3.1 Orientation

Parent-teacher contact in white education in South Africa is inter alia the subject of this paragraph, but the specific problem areas that will be indicated are universal in the sense that they occur world-wide in parent-teacher contact, as will be indicated in the relevant references to literature consulted (cf. Par. 3.3.2). Three main areas of contact between parents and teachers can be distinguished:

- Micro educational level
  This indicates the level at which parents and teachers make direct and personal contact in the interest of the education of their children. The local school and all its activities are included at this level.

- Meso educational level
  In this case the organized representation of parents is implied, specifically in the case of supervision and control on a regional basis of more than one school, e.g. school boards in the RSA.

- Macro educational level
  This indicates parent-teacher contact at the "highest", organized (government) level, e.g. the Christelike Afrikaanse Ouervereniging vir Opvoeding en Onderwys in die RSA.

It must be kept in mind that we are only concerned with formal education in this paragraph, and that only two problem areas at micro educational level[2] are emphasized: poor communication and insufficient training of parents and teachers for effective parent-teacher contact. Postma (1986:201) also identifies other problem areas, e.g. ignorance of parents and teachers about the principle of partnership, insufficient and unsuitable aid with homework and lack of contact between parents and teachers regarding children with behavioural problems. However, poor communication and insufficient training are regarded as the most important problems and will be elucidated further.

3.3.2 Poor communication between parents and teachers because of negative attitudes towards one another

In the activity of parent-teacher contact, effective communication, which includes any direct or indirect contact between parents, teachers and children by means of conversation or letters, is of the utmost importance. Purposeful communication cannot take place where negative attitudes have created a distance between the two parties. For this reason it is necessary to determine how these negative attitudes came about, and to eliminate or avoid them in order to achieve positive and effective communication in the interest of purposeful parent-teacher contact.

Several educationalists (Van Schalkwyk, 1983:18-20; Brady, 1977:42; Swart 1983:5; Kritzinger, 1984:66; Vernon, 1984:274-276; Fernandez, 1980:18-19; Duvenage, 1980:3; Gorton, 1977:93; Clark, 1977:557; Scholtz, 1974: 3-11; and Kruger, 1985:28-29) have found that the negative attitude of parents towards the school, teachers and educational matters, can be attributed to, among others, the following factors:

- The school takes most of the initiative in educational matters, thus discouraging parental involvement (Epstein, 1986:280, 290).

- Parents think that they are too ignorant when it comes to educational matters, and leave everything comfortably in the hands of the school and its teachers.

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[2] The two problem areas to be examined can be found at all three educational levels, and are, therefore, valid for meso and macro educational level too.

- Parents are wary of what might result from their involvement with the school; they do not want to make any sacrifices, offer their services or apply themselves; they find it more convenient to remain uninvolved.

- Parents hesitate to make any type of critical comment, because they think they will be regarded as troublesome, with unpleasant results for their children.

- The unpleasant personal experiences of particularly less intellectual parents with their children's school and teachers, as well as the disagreeable memory of their own failure at school, have a negative influence on any idea of parental involvement (Van Schalkwyk, 1983:18).

- The self-sufficiency of schools, the bureaucratic style of principals and teachers and the impression that the school is the domain of the teacher solely and exclusively, prevent parents from becoming enthusiastic about the idea of parental involvement.

- Poor socio-economic conditions at home cause feelings of inferiority in parents, and they have little if any interest in becoming involved in educational activities at the school (Van Schalkwyk, 1983:18-20).

- Parents have no clear idea of what their role entails with regard to involvement. They don't realize that they form part of the parent-teacher-child team; they are ignorant and uninformed and, consequently, uninvolved.

- Parents can be meddlesome and overstep their sphere of competence (Duvenage, 1980:3).

- The working parent; an absent father or working mother has no time to become involved in school activities.

- The physical appearance of the school buildings and terrain; sometimes impressive, sometimes neglected or cold, can deter parents.

- According to most parents the state, school and teachers take sufficient trouble to provide Christian and national education - Act 39 of 1967 has made adequate provision for this aspect.

Teachers, on the other hand, experience negative feelings and attitudes towards parents for a variety of reasons. The following causes have been determined in investigations (cf. Van Schalkwyk, 1983:16-19; Brady, 1977:42; Blackstone, 1979:86-88; and Stone, 1984:8-9; Steffy, 1985: 1156):

- Teachers are insufficiently trained to initiate and handle parental involvement (cf. Par. 3.3.3).

- Teachers are scared that they may become trapped in a system where parents, as primary educators, can take full control of education at school level.

- Teachers regard the school and all educational matters as their exclusive terrain and parents are regarded as intruders.

- According to teachers, parents are only superficially and at a pragmatic level interested in their children. They are not concerned with e.g. the job situation, conditions of service, and other interests of their partners, i.e. the teachers themselves.

- In specific circumstances teachers experience feelings of inferiority or superiority towards the parent: inferiority when parents have a higher socio-economical standard and professional status, and superiority when they themselves have a higher socio-economical and professional status than the parents.

- Teachers cannot choose their clients (like in the medical or legal professions), and the so-called professional mystique is absent in the teaching profession; usually everybody knows "everything" about education.

- Parents do not establish and support consistently the feelings of respect that children should observe for their teachers.

- In conclusion, teachers often display basically negative styles of communication in their relationships with parents, according to Stone (1984:8-9). These negative styles include a defensive hostility, passive evasiveness, or an authoritarian dogmatism.

3.3.3 Insufficient training of parents and teachers for purposeful parent-teacher contact

In the previous paragraph it has been indicated that several investigations reveal (Van Schalkwyk, 1983:18-20; Blackstone, 1979:86-88; Kritzinger, 1984:66; and Vernon, 1984:274-276) that the most important reasons for negative attitudes between parents and teachers are ignorance and being uninformed about purposeful parent-teacher contact (cf. Dekker, 1986:974-987 in this regard).

This problem of uninformed and ignorant parents and teachers has several causes (cf. Scholtz, 1981:33-35):

- In these times, characterized by an information explosion, children and parents are looking for specific directions and orientations.

- Parents do not, as is commonly believed, know everything about the education of their children as a matter of course.

- Schools gain control of more and more facets of parental education.

- Aspiring as well as practising teachers are not always aware of all the negative attitudes of parents and teachers regarding parent-teacher contact.

The only effective solution to the problem of uninformed parents and insufficiently trained teachers seems to be well-planned enrichment courses for parents and the inclusion of subject matter on purposeful parent-teacher contact in the curriculum of teachers' training courses (cf. Par. 5.3).

4. IDENTIFICATION OF FACTORS WHICH IMPEDE PURPOSEFUL PARENT-TEACHER CONTACT

From the analysis and description of the various problem areas in parent-teacher contact in the previous paragraphs it has become clear that there are specific factors present in each of these areas which prevent purposeful parent-teacher contact. In this paragraph constant reference will be made to the particular analyses of problem areas in previous paragraphs, after which the most important factors present in each of them will be indicated and formulated.

In the case of the activities of the PTA (as described in Par. 3.2.2) the world and life view of the American society, which is to maintain the inviolable rights of the individual and to strive for efficacy, utility and excellence, is clearly noticeable (Sellick, 1985:56-60).

Factors which impede purposeful parent-teacher contact by means of the PTA, are the following:

- Outdated structures which obstruct participation in the decision-making process.

- Certain facets of reality are overemphasized, e.g. utility, efficacy and excellence. Striving for these goals is not wrong in itself, but when they are pursued at the expense of a well-balanced relationship between parents and teachers, and of a balanced life and world view, they become obstacles in attaining purposeful parent-teacher contact.

The well-organized representation of parents from local to central government level in the Federal Republic of Germany has been discussed in Paragraph 3.2.3. The single most important limiting factor to purposeful parent-teacher contact in this case is indicated by Beattie (1978:4) when he points out that the comprehensive authority of the government impedes the involvement of parents in education (cf. in this regard Mohrhatt, 1979: 218). Parents are manipulated by political parties and cannot freely fulfil their primary duties as educators. It is, furthermore, clear that parents in both the USA and West Germany may not determine the spirit and orientation (i.e. view of life, character) of the schools their children attend.

Factors on which the negative attitudes of parents and teachers are based primarily (cf. Par. 3.3), and which, consequently, inhibit the purposeful contact between parents and teachers, are:

- Man is not perfect and he lives in a sinful world. This causes negative attitudes.

- Several negative feelings of parents and teachers towards one another spring from the fact that they do not have a clear conception of the sphere of competence of the home and the school as separate societal spheres (cf. in this regard Par. 5).

- Uninformed parents and teachers are negative about contact exactly because they do not know what parent-teacher involvement entails.

- Both parents and teachers forget to keep in mind that individuals differ, that homes differ and that teachers and schools differ.

- Parents and teachers do not co-operate in all instances to create a pleasing physical environment by means of planning, decorating and architecturally enhancing the school buildings.

- Parents and teachers should not undermine each other's authority in front of children. Parents as the primary educators should respect the teachers as secondary educators and vice versa.

Paragraph 3.3.3, in which the insufficient training of parents and teachers in purposeful parent-teacher contact has been discussed, reveals the following as the most important restricting factors:

- The necessary infrastructures to inform parents and teachers on an ongoing basis about purposeful parent-teacher contact have not been created yet, with the result that negative attitudes and poor parental involvement still abound.

- Schools and tertiary institutions (i.e. teachers' training colleges and universities) are not utilized sufficiently to inform parents and teachers about their respective responsibilities regarding parent-teacher contact.

In short then, the most important impeding factors affecting purposeful parent-teacher contact, as identified in the abovementioned problem areas, are the following:

- Outdated structures for parents' associations.

- Absolutization of utility, efficacy and excellence.

- The state's domination of other societal spheres.

- Imperfect people in a sinful world.

- Ignorance about the spheres of competence of the various societal spheres.

- Parents and teachers being uninformed about purposeful parent-teacher contact.

- Unattractive, cold school buildings.

- Undermining of authority.

- Secondary and tertiary institutions shirking their responsibilities as regards equipping parents and teachers (in training) with knowledge about purposeful parent-teacher contact.

5. A POSSIBLE SOLUTION TO THE PROBLEM OF INEFFICIENT PARENT-TEACHER CONTACT

One can gather from the previous paragraphs on the problem areas in parent-teacher contact that inefficient contact is due specifically to insufficient insight into and understanding of the spheres of competence of specific societal spheres: in particular the parental home as primary and the school as secondary societal sphere - each with its peculiar educational task. Many parents do not know or understand what the sphere of competence of their home entails, (cf. Par. 3.3.2), and teachers' negative attitudes towards parents (cf. Par. 3.3.2) arise from insufficient training with regard to purposeful parent-teacher contact. Teachers do not know what the structure and destination of the school is. In other words, the problem of insufficient parent-teacher contact derives from both parents' and teachers' incomplete or distorted concept of the theory of society.

In his fundamental educational research Postma (1986:82-118) has designed a theoretical model of society[3,4] by which purposeful parent-teacher contact can be

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[3] The process which has led to the eventual design of the model and exactly what it entails is set out in Postma (1986:82-118).

[4] The substance of this theoretical model is a strongly Calvinist Christian one, which is pe-eminently relevant for reformatory educationalists, parents and

established. The components of this model which can contribute to the solution of the problem of insufficient parent-teacher contact will be described later on in this paragraph. Only then will it be determined whether the relevant components of this model can solve the problems of insufficient parent-teacher contact.

5.2 A broad outline of the theoretical model of society by means of which purposeful parent-teacher contact can be effected

- The omnipotence of God over his creation through Christ and the mercy of the Holy Spirit implies that the home (parents) may not dominate the school (teachers) or vice versa, as both the home (parents) and the school (teachers) are equipolent before God (Troost, 1970-1971:19; Schoeman, 1979:106 and Van der Walt, Dekker and Van der Walt, 1983:240). In the same way the state is not allowed to rule over the church or the school.

- The principle of sphere sovereignty applies to both the school and the home as independent societal spheres. When the educationalist acknowledges the fact that each societal sphere has its own nature and structure, he implies that each has its own sphere of existence and of competence, on which no other sphere may trespass, rule or intrude (cf. Bavinck, 1908:32; Coetzee, 1965:277-278 and Kuijper, 1870:9).

- No societal sphere exists in complete isolation, because of the concept of sphere universality, which implies that there are areas in which the school and the home have to co-operate by acknowledging the other's sphere of competence (cf. Vollenhoven, 1953:47; and Duvenage, 1983: 177).

- The parental home as a primary societal sphere has a unique structure and its own educational task which is qualified by love and care (Taljaard, 1963:90ff).

- The school as a secondary societal sphere has a unique structure as well, and a characteristic educational task which differs from that of the home. The school's concern is mainly with the development of the logical-analytical

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teachers. Allthough this is so, people working from other frames of reference may find some aspects of it useful and relevant.

function of the child in conjunction with all his other abilities and functions (Schoeman, 1979:90).

- Cooperation between parents and teachers (parent-teacher contact) may occur when neither intrudes on the sphere of competence of the other. The competence of the school has to do with the development of the logical-analytical function of the pupil and that of the parental home with moral loving care of the child (cf. Par. 5.3).

- Education in the home and at school is influenced by the passage of time (cf. Schoeman, 1979:5). Parents and teachers will have to keep in mind that this will affect themselves, their children and the educational environment.

- Education in the home and at school can only be realized in suitable homes and schools, as educational acitivities are also restricted in spatial terms (cf. Van der Walt and Dekker, 1983:60ff).

5.3 The prevention and/or elimination of factors impeding purposeful parent-teacher contact by means of the relevant components of the theoretical model of society

The factors which have been indicated in Paragraph 4 as causes of insufficient parent-teacher contact are given in Column 1 of Table 1, and in Column 2 the component(s) of the theoretical model of society (outlined above) which may prevent or eliminate that particular factor is indicated.

TABLE 1: The prevention and/ or elimination of factors impeding purposeful parent-teacher contact

Impeding factors	Components of the theoretical model of society
The outdated structure of parents' associations	Parent-teacher contact is time-bound. Parents should keep track of the demands of the times and plan ahead to prevent structures from becoming outdated.

Absolutization of utility, efficacy and excellence	According to the Christian point of view, no single aspect of reality may be absolutized, because God is omnipotent and must be served by man in all respects.
The state dominates other societal spheres	When the Christian acknowledges the omnipotence of God, he implies that the state may not dominate the school, as all societal spheres are equipolent and sovereign in their own areas of activity.
Imperfect people in a sinful world	The Christian knows that God's children of the covenant have found redemption and that the sinful world will be recreated in Christ. He knows and believes that he must fight against the corrupting force of sin and serve God and his fellow men.
Ignorance about the spheres of competence of the various societal spheres.	The home as primary and the school as secondary societal sphere each has its own structure and sphere of competence. This information must be imparted to or obtained by the relevant parties, i.e. parents and teachers.
Teachers and parents being uninformed about purposeful parent-teacher contact	Parents and teachers should be informed about all the components of the theoretical model of society which makes purposeful parent-teacher contact possible.
Unattractive, cold school buildings	Education at school will be much more effective in suitable (architecturally pleasing) schools, where parents will be more at ease and more willing to become involved in education.

Undermining of authority	By acknowledging the spheres of competence within the societal structures, parents and teachers will be able to accept and respect each other's authority in a specific structure.
Secondary and tertiary institutions do not realize that they have a responsibility to inform parents and train aspiring teachers in purposeful parent-teacher contact.	No societal sphere exists in complete isolation, because of the concept of sphere universality. This does not only imply that parents and teachers should co-operate, but also that universities and teachers' training colleges should contribute to improve purposeful parent-teacher contact by means of training or enrichment courses.

Table 1 indicates clearly that the identified factors impeding purposeful parent-teacher contact can be prevented or eliminated by means of insight into the relevant components of the theoretical model of society.

6. GENERAL CONCLUSION

Parents as the primary educators of their children are responsible not only for the education of their children at home, but also at school level, where the more formal aspects of education are presented by professionally trained teachers. This education should be in line with the spirit and character of education in the home. To achieve this parents and teachers should communicate purposefully as partners. Purposeful parent-teacher contact will only occur when parents and teachers know exactly what the fundamental educational nature of parent-teacher contact is. In this article the prevention or elimination of factors impeding purposeful parent-teacher contact was attempted by means of certain components of a theoretical model of society in order to effect purposeful parent-teacher contact.

Insight into the theoretical model of society can be of great value to authorities dealing with contact situations between parents and teachers.

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