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Family Literacy and Engagement: A Framework

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FAMILY LITERACY AND ENGAGEMENT:

A FRAMEWORK

A Capstone Project Presented in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree Bachelor of Science

with Honors College Graduate Distinction at

Western Kentucky Univeristy

By

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*****

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I dedicate this thesis to all my future students.

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this project was to construct a framework for a family literacy program that would inform parents of Native English Speakers and English Learners on literacy practices and allow time for families to practice literacy together. The family literacy program consists of three sessions, each comprised of a 20-minute presentation to parents and a 30-minute parent-child literacy activity. Each session covered a different topic: early literacy practices, technology and literacy, and advocating for student success. The program was implemented in an adult literacy center, where parents who attended classes at the center and parents in the surrounding community could bring their families to participate in the program.

Keywords: family literacy, literacy program, early literacy, technology, parent involvement, English Learners

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CONTENTS

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Although literacy is often thought to be synonymous with reading, there are other elements that are necessary for a balanced literacy approach. Reading, writing, speaking, and listening are all elements of literacy and are included in the Common Core English Language Arts standards. A balanced literacy approach should be implemented in the elementary classroom, but it is important for parents to work on literacy at home as well.

According to Lindsey Musen (2010), early reading profiency is a leading indicator of student achievement. Throughout elementary school, learning builds on students' prior knowledge so it is easy for students to fall behind without a foundation of early literacy skills. Musen (2010) also states that third-grade reading scores are highly predictive of academic performance; 74% of third-graders who struggle with reading are still struggling in ninth-grade, and third-grade reading scores can "reasonably predict high school graduation" (p. 1). Therefore, working on literacy skills before children enter school and throughout elementary school helps to set them up for success.

Parental involvement with literacy is especially important for Engligh Learners (EL's), who are already facing a gap upon entering school. If EL's can begin to work on literacy skills at home before entering school and continue working on literacy skills at home throughout elementary school, the achievement gap between EL's and native English speakers can shrink and EL's are better set up for success (Wilder, 2014, p. 393).

Elementary schools are always searching for ways to get parents involved in their child's education. Many schools throughout Southcentral Kentucky set up literacy nights, math nights, STEM nights, or international nights to get parents involved in their child's education. The goal of this Capstone Project was to create a family literacy program that

would involve parents and students in literacy activities. Moreover, the program utilized bilingual materials in order to promote literacy for both native and non-native English-speaking families. Because parent involvement in early literacy is so important, the program also aimed to provide parents with strategies and resources to enhance their abilies to engage in family literacy. The family literacy program was implemented in the Simpson County Adult Literacy Center in Franklin, Kentucky. The participants of the program included both EL families and Native English-speaking families. The overall goal was to get parents and children practicing literacy, together.

Rationale: This program was created to promote family literacy skills in the families of Simpson County. Specifically, working with clients from the Simpson County Literacy Center who are English Learners or low-level readers will promote literacy skills in both parents and children. In the teacher education program, experience working with families is limited; this family literacy program worked to provide the researcher with valuable experience.

Research Question: How can a family literacy program implemented in an adult literacy center work to promote literacy skills and strategies in the families of Simpson County?

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

There has been a multitude of research on the importance of early literacy, technology, and parent involvement to a child's education. Furthermore, there has been research conducted discussing the impact of various literacy practices and interventions. The following review will discuss the literature available on these various topics.

Early Literacy

Cultivating early literacy skills in young children is important in creating a foundation of literacy skills. Lindsay Musen discusses the importance of early reading proficiency as a leading indicator of academic achievement. Musen (2010) states that students who fall behind in the early grades have a hard time catching up as they move through school, especially as the curriculum shifts from learning to read to reading to learn; this shows the importance of developing early literacy skills, both inside and outside of the classroom, to increase student achievement.

Because early literacy skills are so crucial to student achievemement, they should be developed both inside and outside the classroom – making parent involvement in education imperative. Concha Delgado Gaitan (2012) discusses the significance of family-community-school relationships. Gaitan (2012) cites a case study from the National School Board Association that found student achievement improved when parent-school partnerships existed (p. 306). Gaitan (2012) explains that parents, especially bilingual parents, need to be knowledgeable about school language in order to feel connected to the school and become involved in their child's education – making partnerships between the school and parents important to promote early literacy skills in a child's education.

There are a variety of ways that parents can become involved in their child's education and specifically work on early literacy skills at home. One way for parents to interact with their children and promote literacy skills is through shared reading time; shared reading time allows parents to work on verbal communication with their child, but also work on reading skills such as phonemic awareness, vocabulary, comprehension, making connections and predictions, etc. (Han & Neuharth-Pritchett, 2013). Han and Neuharth-Pritchett (2013) discuss three specific specific strategies to improve shared reading time interactions: dialogic reading, or reading with the child and asking questions, referencing elements of the print, and going beyond the text to make connections.

Parents can also practice writing with their child to develop early literacy skills. By practicing simple scribbles or words, children are learning how to hold a writing utensil, how much pressure to put on paper, etc. But parents can go even further in writing practice by writing for a purpose. Deborah Rowe and Jeanne Gilliam Fain (2013) discuss their family backpack project in which families responded to texts using family journals; in these family journals, parents and children drew pictures and wrote responses to retell a story or make connections to the text. Rowe & Fain's program worked to practice a multitude of literacy skills involving both reading and writing. Using another strategy for writing practice, Belinda Louie and Karlyn Davis-Welton (2016) had bilingual parents and children create bilingual picture books in their family literacy program; Louie and Davis-Welton (2016) found that the creation of these picture books strengthened English Learners' writing skills, increased communication between schools and parents, promoted a culturally inclusive environment in the school, and promoted

literacy in both English and the child's native language. Louie's program is another strategy that incorporated both reading and writing to promote childrens' literacy skills.

When practicing literacy skills at home, parents can always work to incorporate learning through play. While parents can play games specifically targeting literacy and word skills, such as Scattergories or Scrabble, there are other ways parents can easily incorporate play into promoting literacy skills. Cavanaugh, Clemence, Teale, Rule, and Montgomery (2017) studied the effects of dramatic play on kindergarten students' literacy achievement; the researchers found that the students standardized test scores improved after only three weeks of intervention fifteen minutes a day (p. 842). Cavanaugh and researchers (2017) also found that the use of dramatic play and word games worked to develop students' storytelling skills, application of new vocabulary, and practice of phonemic awareness. So, parents can work on literacy skills by simply talking with their children during dress-up games or pretending with puppets. When children play, they are using their imagination, negotiation skills, and social interactions to develop linguistic abilities.

Technology

Technology is extremely prominent in today's society, and students' use of technology and development of 21st century skills is necessary to prepare them for life after school. Cathy Burnett and Guy Merchant (2015) examine 21st century literacies, stating student should be able to engage with others in a variety of ways, collaborate with others, and practice improvisation and experimentation. Technology not only works to develop traditional literacy skills such as reading and writing, but also 21st century skills necessary to prepare students for future careers. Wang, Derry, and Ge (2017) discuss the

importance of learning through problem-solving with the support of technology. Wang, Derry, and Ge (2017) state that technology-supported learning environments allow students to learn through real-world problems and authentic tasks through virtual worlds, simulations, and web-based systems. The researchers agree that learning through problem-solving results in high engagement and increased motivation in students, and technology can be used to support this type of learning. Problem-solving is especially important in today's society, as learners are "required to deal with more sophisticated real-world problems and have more exposure to authentic experience" (Wang, Derry, & Ge, 2017, p. 163). In problem-solving contexts, technology can also be used to help develop students' ability to construct knowledge from their problem-solving experiences and to collaborate with others and resolve conflicts – other skills necessary for today's learners (Wang, Derry, & Ge, 2017).

In the classroom, technology can be used to promote important skills but can also be used to improve student learning. Varying instrucitonal methods allows teachers to "motivate students, connect students' prior and subsequent learning, incorporate higher-level thinking and problem-solving skills into activities and lessons, and quickly assess student learning" (Brown, Ernst, Clark, DeLuca, & Kelly, 2017, p. 30). Technology easily lends itself to varying instructional methods and can provide students with more active learning opportunities. Specifically, technology can engage and motivate students to become active learners; when students are active in their learning, they are more likely to make connections and partake in higher-order-thinking which improves their overall learning (Brown et. al., 2017). Technology can also allow teachers to differentiate instruction based on students' abilities and interests, providing more active learning

opportunities and opportunities for mastery for all students (Brown et. al., 2017). Brown and researchers (2017) also support the conclusion that technology can provide opportunities for collaboration and real-world problem solving; technology can allow students to tackle even more complex activities and take an active role in their own learning in a real-world context.

Velasco (2018) discusses how web 2.0 technologies can be used to foster the skills discussed previously. Web 2.0 technologies refer to "web-based tools that promore and foster online collaboration and online learning communities," whereas the internet was previously only used for accessing and sending information (Velasco, 2018, p. 36). Specifically, Velasco (2018) discusses how blogs and wikis were used to foster problem-solving, collaboration, and engagement while constructing a bridge for an engineering project; although the focus of the project was engineering skills, technology was able to support the learners and enhance the learning experience.

Learning through play has proven an effective strategy for promoting literacy skills, as seen in the study conducted by Cavanaugh that found Kindergarteners' literacy skills improved when they participated in dramatic play and word games. Schmitt, Hurwitz, Duel, & Linebarger (2018) studied the impact of web-based games on early literacy development; their case study found that students who used a literacy-based website approximately thirty minutes a week for eight weeks improved their letter recognition, letter sound knowledge, letter sequencing, phonics, and vocabulary skills (p. 384). So, learning through play and the use of technology can be implemented in the classroom but is especially pertinent for parents wanting to help their children work on literacy skills at home.

Parent Advocacy

     As educators, it is important to engage parents and students in partnerships in order to improve student learning. Wilder (2014) defines parental involvement as "parental participation in the educational processes and experiences of their children (p. 390). Wilder (2014) found that there is a strong positive relationship between parental involvement and student achievement, especially when parent involvement includes setting expectations for academic achievement. Wilder (2014) also examined the impact ethnicity has on parental involvement and achievement, finding that parental involvement by ethnic groups may "significantly contribute to reducing the achievement gap between different ethnic groups" and parental involvement has a positive impact across all ethnic groups (p. 393). Suzanne Panferov (2010) discusses how parental involvement can be increased for EL's; Panferov explains that "schools that successfully help EL parents navigate school challenges offer both two-way communications and parental guidance for effecting positive home support of school supports" (p. 111). The families of English Learners present unique challenges and needs, so Panferov (2010) suggests implementing two-way communication systems to learn about these families' needs, attitudes about schools, and ways to help them become involved in their child's education.

     There are specific ways parents can be aware of their child's needs and advocate for these needs in school: by helping with homework and communicating with their child's teacher. When parents help with homework, it is important to ensure the parent is assisting their child without taking away from the learning process (Reilly, 2018). Depending on parents' beliefs and goals, they may have different tactics while helping their children with homework; however, it is most beneficial for parents to promote

autonomy in their child in order to increase their child's motivation and achievement (Gonida & Cortina, 2014). In order to promote autonomy, parents can stay near their child instead of sitting beside them while doing homework, establish a routine, teach time-management skills, and let the student take the lead; by teaching children self-monitoring skills, parents are promoting autonomy in their children – which can positively impact achievement (Reilly, 2018). Arensault (2013) of the Sylvan Learning Company also suggests that parents create a quiet, well-lit atmosphere for homework, stay organized, and remain available for their children to create an effective homework environment.

Communication with teachers is also an important way for parents to understand and advocate for their childs' needs. Danielle Pillet-Shore (2013) discusses how parents can have varying attitudes about their children during parent-teacher conferences, either dramatizing or ignoring their child's flaws. Shore (2013) states that parents can sometimes get caught up in looking like a "good parent" in front of their child's teacher, but honesty is necessary for parent-teacher communications to be effective. In order for parents to advocate for their child's needs, they must be honest with their childs's teacher and communicate openly. Panferov (2010) discusses how teachers should communicate with parents, specifically EL parents, to gain a better understanding of their knowledge and attitudes toward school and find out the best ways to communicate with the parent. It is important for all parents, but especially EL parents, to share their child's unique needs with their child's teacher to understand how to better support their child at home.

However, parents may not know what to ask during parent-teacher conferences. Taylor (2014) of the Sylvan Learning Company suggests ten questions parents should ask

during parent-teacher conferences: 1. How do you best prefer to communicate with me? (Email? Phone? Text? Notes?) 2. What do you see as my child's strengths? 3. What do you think are the academic challenges for my child? 4. What would you do if my child were struggling academically with something? 5. How is my child doing socially? 6. How do you support kids in their social development? For example, how do you address challenges that happen at recess? 7. Is my child on grade level for reading? What about math, science and writing? 8. How does the school handle standardized testing and prep for those tests? 9. Can we talk more about your homework policy and how my child is doing with homework? 10. What can I do at home to support what you're doing in the classroom? While the previous list of questions is not completely comprehensive, it would provide parents with a framework to begin the conversation. Parent-school partnerships are important in promoting achievement for all students.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

Setting:

The family literacy program was implemented at the Simpson County Literacy Center (SCLC), an adult literacy center in Franklin, Kentucky. The center works to provide their clientele with a variety of services and instruction, including English language instruction, high-school equivalency exams, digital literacy, financial literacy, and interview skills. The SCLC serves the Simpson County population, and anyone can take advantage of services offered at the center.

Participants:

The participants of the family literacy program self-selected to attend the program with their children. The participants included the clients of the SCLC but also members of the Franklin Community. Clients of the SCLC often have limited reading and writing skills or have limited English abilities. Therefore, the particants of this program included both native English speakers and non-native English speakers.

Participants of this program included parents who attend the SCLC and their children in elementary school or middle school; one child from the Simpson County community also attended with their guardian. Children who attended the program also attended schools in Simpson County.

Program Design:

Before the family literacy program began, the researcher advertised the program to the SCLC's clients and the Franklin community. The instructors at the center advertised the program to their clients. The researcher also made connections with the surrounding elementary schools to distribute flyers advertising the program to students

and their families. The researcher also posted flyers at local community centers, such as the public library and the Boys and Girls Club.

The family literacy program consisted of three weekly sessions, each lasting approximately one hour. Each session covered a different topic: early literacy, technology, and parent advocacy. Each session consisted of a twenty-minute presentation of information and strategies to parents, while children were separately engaging in literacy games and activities. After the presentation to parents, parents and children came together to engage in a thirty-minute literacy activity. The literacy activity at each session used a different children's book to involve shared reading time and some other activity based on that week's topic. To promote participation in the program, a raffle for a Kindle Fire included families who attended all three sessions in the program.

The first session focused on the importance of early literacy skills. The parent presentation focused on the research on early literacy skills and presented parents with strategies for practicing literacy at home and resources to do so. Strategies included shared reading time, writing practice, and learning through play. Resources included quality children's literature, wordless picture books, bilingual picture books, family journals, writing utensils, and games such as Boggle, Scattergories, Bananagrams, Scrabble, etc. The parent-child literacy activity allowed parents to engage in shared reading time. Parents and children read the book *Chocolate Milk, Por Favor* by Maria Dismondy. Parents practiced asking quality questions that go beyond the text, while engaging in shared reading time with their child. First, the researcher read the book aloud to parents and modeled asking appropriate questions. Next, the researcher and parents participated in choral reading to practice a few pages together. Finally, parents worked in

pairs to read a few pages to their partner and practice asking appropriate questions that go beyond the text. The researcher provided parents with question stems to practice asking these types of questions during shared reading time. At the end of the session parents were given two handouts: a list of quality children's literature available at the local public library and general question stems for use during shared reading time.

The second session focused on technology. The parent presentation discussed how important technology is in society and to a child's education, how technology is used in the classroom, what technologies are used in the local schools, and how technology can be used to promote literacy. The presentation modeled Google Classroom, Zearn, Math Whizz, Class Dojo, and other technologies used in Simpson County schools found from conversations and interviews with teachers in the community. The presentation also discussed how parents can use a variety of websites to promote their child's literacy skills and interests in math, reading, social studies, and science. The parent-child activity allowed parents and children to engage in shared reading time, reading either *I am Jane Goodall* or *I am Jackie Robinson* by Brad Meltzer. While reading, parents again practiced going beyond the text and asking questions. After reading, parents and children collaborated to retell the story using Blabberize or Chatterpix. At the end of the session, parents were given a handout listing websites for their children to use focusing on math, reading, science, social studies, and study skills.

The third and final session focused on parent advocacy and communication. The parent presentation explained the research on parent involvement in a child's education, strategies for helping with homework, and strategies for communicating with a child's teacher and advocating for a child's needs. The parent-child literacy activity again

allowed parents and children to practice shared reading time, reading *The Name Jar* by

Yangsook Choi. Parents again practiced going beyond the text and asking questions

while reading. After reading, parents and children completed a writing activity about their

child's name and children completed an art activity stamping out their name – like the

character in the book. At the end of the session, parents were given multiple handouts on

note-taking tips, text features, tips for homework help, and questions to ask during

parent-teacher conferences.

Materials

To implement the program, various materials were needed for each session. With

funds from the FUSE grant, each family was given a book and/or a literacy material to

take home. A different children's book was given at each session; the books chosen

included: *Chocolate Milk, Por Favor* by Maria Dismondy, *I am Jackie Robinson* by Brad

Meltzer and *I am Jane Goodall* by Brad Meltzer, and *The Name Jar* by Yangsook Choi.

At the first session, parents were also given a literacy game *Bananagrams*. For each

session, handouts were created to provide parents with the information and strategies

presented during the presentation. Materials were also needed for each literacy activity,

including markers, construction paper, stamps, and worksheets. A Kindle Fire was also

needed for the raffle promoting attendance during the program.

Data Collection Procedures

Data was collected throughout the family literacy program regarding parents'

attitudes towards literacy, questions and concerns parents have about literacy, and the

effects of the program on the family's literacy practices. Pre-surveys and post-surveys

were designed for use in the program. Pre-surveys were to be given to parents once

throughout the program, evaluating parents' attitudes towards literacy, current literacy

practices at home, and questions they have concerning literacy or their child's education.

The post-survey was to be given at the end of the program, evaluating how the family's

literacy practices had changed at home, what the parents found useful in the family

literacy program, and any suggestions they had for improvement. However, participants

of the program chose not to complete the pre-survey and post-survey. Involvement in the

surveys was completely voluntary and did not affect the families' ability to participate in

the program.

Data was collected through observation. Throughout the program, observation

and conversations were used to gather information about the parents' literacy practices

and questions they had concerning literacy.

CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS

The results of the family literacy program were small, but impactful. Each class was attended by four to five families whose parents attended classes at the SCLC. Each family from the SCLC were native Spanish speakers and had one or more children attending elementary or middle school in Franklin. Despite advertisements to the community and surrounding schools, only one child and guardian from the Simpson County community attended one class during the program; this family was also EL.

The fact that all families were English learners drove the discussion in a certain direction, focusing on building literacy skills for both the parents and children during family literacy time and the concerns and issues that EL families may have. Kathryn King, ESL instructor at the SCLC, and myself were able to answer these families' questions and discuss their concerns. The goal of each session during the presentation to parents was conversation and discussion, not just talking at the parents; the small number of families allowed for more engagement and allowed time for Ms. King and I to answer their individual questions and concerns.

Ms. King made sure to point out at each session that practicing family literacy with shared reading time, technologies, etc. would not only develop literacy skills in the children, but allow the parents to develop their English and literacy skills as well. There were also several specific questions parents had that, otherwise, may not have been answered if a larger number of parents attended, due to lack of time or lack of confidence in speaking up. For example, one mother whose daughter was in kindergarten asked about lists of words sent home for her child to memorize and how she could help her daughter learn these words. Ms. King and I were able to explain in more depth what sight

words were, words her daughter should know as soon as she sees them, and were able to discuss using flashcards and spelling out words using Bananagrams to help her daughter practice sight words. Another parent explained that she had trouble helping her daughters, one in elementary school and one in middle school, with their math homework. Ms. King and I pointed this mother to KHAN academy, a resource with videos explaining math concepts; we were also able to tie this back to the importance of parent-teacher communications and parent-teacher conferences, where this mother could discuss her issues with math homework and see what resources the teacher had to offer as well. Another parent explained her difficulty getting her son to complete his homework, as he spends a lot of time playing video games. Ms. King and I were also able to discuss the use of child locks to set time amounts on the parent's iPhone and having their children use educational games and technologies instead of violent or time-wasting games. The questions parents had required simple answers but may not have been answered otherwise if parents did not have the opportunity to ask them of Ms. King or myself in a setting they felt comfortable.

The parents were also able to voice their concerns with their English abilities, specifically when communicating with their child's teacher. Ms. King and I were able to make sure each parent understood how to access their child's newsletter or teacher e-mails on their phones. Ms. King and I also discussed parent-teacher conferences as an opportunity for EL parents to practice their English skills in a real-life setting, having confidence, using translators or phone apps, and involving their child in communications with their teacher. We were able to clearly convey the idea to parents that everything is a

learning experience, especially for parents learning English, and teachers are usually happy to accommodate and communicate with these families.

After these discussions, it became clearer to those families who attended the SCLC that the instructors at the center are there to help the families with *whatever* they need in life. Ms. King offered to help parents figure out child settings on their iPhones, draft emails to teachers, practice parent-teacher conferences, or allow parents to check out books from the center's library. Although parents are attending classes to develop their English skills, it is obvious that the instructors at the center are there to help these families navigate life in whatever way they can – and these discussions helped show that.

Although surveys were created to collect data, the families that attended the program chose not to participate in the surveys. However, I was able to collect information from parents by talking with them about their concerns and questions. During the program, two out of four families that attended all three sessions discussed how they have trouble reading to their children because of their limited English abilities. One out of four families discussed how they have little time to read with their children due to work. Three out of four families discussed their nervousness attending parent-teacher conferences or communicating with their child's teacher via e-mail or phone. Because this information was collected, even through discussions, Ms. King and I were able to address these parents' concerns and answer whatever questions we could.

CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION

Although I was unable to collect any physical data from the participants of the family literacy program, valuable information was gathered by talking with parents one-on-one about their situations, questions, and concerns. Because all participants in the program were English Learner families, many may have minimal writing skills and would therefore be intimidated by, or unable to, complete the surveys. So, talking with the families allowed me to obtain more valuable information.

For example, there are various factors that need to be considered when examining and promoting family literacy practices. One parent expressed during the program that it is difficult to find time to read with her children because of work. Lack of time can prove to be an issue with many parents, especially when asking parents to help their children with homework and completing assignments. Therefore, it is important to make family literacy practices flexible to accommodate for these families; creating easy access to resources whenever possible and broadening the scope of family literacy practices to go beyond just reading can allow for more flexibility and perhaps more family involvement – even though lack of time is sometimes out of a parent's control.

Although lack of time and resources can get in the way of a parent becoming involved with their child's education, this program aimed to influence something a parent can control: knowledge. If parents are more knowledgeable about family literacy practices, strategies to help their children, and access to resources, parents can focus their time on action and practicing literacy with their child. The program also worked to provide families with some resources, including one or two books or games at each

session and the chance to win a Kindle Fire, to promote literacy among families with a lack of resources.

Another important impact of the program works to benefit the families and instructors of the Simpson County Adult Literacy Center themselves. During the program, it became clear that the instructors at the SCLC are truly there to help their clients with life skills in any way they can. The center offers many valuable classes, including ESL classes, completing a high school equivalency exam, digital literacy, financial literacy, interview skills and more; however, the staff said they are willing to help their clients with all aspects of life in any way they can. Kathryn King and I were able to address each family's individual questions in discussion, and Kathryn always made sure to say, "If you ever need help with ___, let me know and we can work on it during class." The SCLC is a valuable resource for its clients, and I think the discussions during the program made it clear to clients that they can come to their instructors with a variety of questions about literacy, school, and life.

Although the program's turn-out was small, with seven families total participating in the program, the impact of the program was not lessened. The small numbers were not for lack of trying, as connections were made with teachers in the elementary schools to advertise the program directly to students and advertisements were posted in community centers around Franklin. It is difficult to garner parent participation, especially in a program that is not run through the schools themselves. The program was also run close to the beginning of the school year, when parents are forming routines and children have sports and other extracurriculars. Parents who work may not have the time, resources, or

interest in the program to attend. These are all issues that the SCLC themselves – and the schools – encounter when running community events and asking for parent involvement.

While it is unrealistic to think that the family literacy program could completely change each parent's involvement in their child's education, I do think the program had an impact on each family. There will always be factors that parents cannot control, such as lack of time or resources, but the family literacy program may have helped parents change what they can control. Each family had at least one question or concern addressed by a SCLC staff member or me, so knowledge was gained. If each parent begins reading with their child more, practicing writing, playing word games, encouraging their child to choose an educational technology or game, or feels more confident communicating with their child's teacher – then the program made an impact. Small changes in the parents' actions can work to improve not only the child's literacy skills and success in school, but the parents' literacy skills and success as well. Small victories can easily turn into larger victories in the education field, and small victories are what continues education.

The impact on the families who attended the program is most important, but the program had a meaningful impact on myself as an educator as well. The Elementary Education Program provides abundant opportunities to be in the classroom and connect with students, but it is diffult to create opportunities that allow interactions with families. This program allowed me to interact with parents and students as an educator, to see the concerns and issues that parents – and specifically EL parents – may face. Something that pleasantly surprised me throughout the program was the parents' sheer interest in the topics we were discussing. I did not expect the parents to be uninterested, but it was promising to see how willing these parents – who have language barriers, work

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commitments, and other worries – were to learn and help their children in whatever way they could. Sometimes, teachers may truly "judge the book by its cover" when a parent is not involved in their child's education, forgetting the underlying cultural, socioeconomic, language, or other barriers preventing them from doing so. It was encouraging to realize that, despite the many challenges these parents faced, they were invested in their children and willing to learn from me, someone young and unfamiliar. Education students are taught to think about students in all situations, in various cultures with different socioeconomic backgrounds, but talking to real parents about their real concerns is an opportunity I have not had otherwise. Being mindful and remembering the needs of my EL students and students with low socioeconomic backgrounds will benefit my future classroom. Being mindful of parents' lack of time when creating homework assignments, the low confidence and nervousness that may be present in EL parents during parent-teacher conferences, or a students' lack of resources to practice reading each night will make me more flexible and more considerate when designing instruction, communicating with families, and helping my students grow.

Running a family literacy program has also shown me what I can bring to my own school in the future. Many schools now host family literacy nights, math nights, or STEM nights – and I now have experience planning and executing this type of event. This idea is something that can be implemented in my classroom and school that will positively impact the school's culture. If I were to implement this program in the future, there are ways that I could improve the program. By assessing the attitudes and concerns of my targeted population, I can better tailor the program to their needs. For example, if I were to implement this program in my future school, I could survey the parents involved

before the program begins to assess their attitudes toward school, any questions or concerns they have regarding literacy, their current literacy practices at home, and any other relevant issues they would like to discuss with a teacher. By communicating with parents beforehand, I can adapt the program to include the specific languages spoken by EL parents, include materials relevant to the families' cultures and interests, and select topics based on the families' specific questions and concerns.

Creating, planning, and implementing a family literacy program has truly been a learning experience. The opportunity to work with families, specifically EL families, has helped me grow as a teacher. In future professional development and possibly graduate study, I look forward to more opportunities to learn about teaching English Learners in the best way – possibly gaining certification to teach English as a Second Language. Overall, this program has allowed me to grow as an educator in so many ways and my experiences have better prepared me for my future classroom.

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Early Literacy Resources

Classic Books:

- "Today I Will Fly!" by Mo Willems (part of the "Elephant and Piggie" Series)
- "If You Give a Mouse a Cookie" by Laura Numeroff
- "Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus!" by Mo Willems (this is also a series of books)
- "The Cat in the Hat" by Dr. Seuss
- "Where the Wild Things Are" by Maurice Sendak
- "Make Way for Ducklings" by Robert McCloskey
- "Frog and Toad" Series by Arnold Lobel
- "The Day the Crayons Quit" by Drew Daywalt
- "The Very Hungry Caterpillar" by Eric Carle
- "Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day" by Judith Viorst

Bilingual Books:

- "Marisol McDonald Doesn't Match/Marisol McDonald no combina" by Monica Brown (Spanish)
- "Chocolate Milk, Por Favor" by Maria Dismondy (Spanish)
- "Maximillian & the mystery of the Guardian Angel: A bilingual lucha libre thriller" by Xavier Garza (Spanish)
- "Am I Small/Watashi, chisai?" by Philipp Winterberg (Japanese)**
- "Treasury of Japanese Folktales: Bilingual English and Japanese Edition" by Yuri Yasuda (Japanese)**
- https://www.kaplanco.com/shop/childrens-books/bilingual-spanish-books (website to purchase Spanish-English books)
- http://www.childrensbooksforever.com/index.html (website to download free books in other languages)

Wordless Picture Books:

- "Mr. Wuffles" by David Wiesner
- "Journey" by Aaron Becker
- "Chalk" by Bill Thomson
- "Flashlight" by Lizi Boyd
- "Good Dog Carl" by Alexandra Day

Non-Fiction Books for Middle and High School:

- "The Diary of a Young Girl" by Anne Frank
- "I Am Malala: How One Girl Stood Up for Education and Changed the World" by Malala Yousafzai
- "Bomb: The Race to Build and Steal the world's most dangerous weapon" by Steve Sheinkin
- "Code Talker: A novel about the Navajo Marines of World War Two" by Joseph Bruchac
- "Aha!: The most interesting book you'll ever read about intelligence" by Trudee Romanek

Games:

- Boggle, Scattergories, Spill and Spell, Mad Libs, Riddle Maze, Banana Grams**

All items are available at the Goodnight Memorial Public Library, except for those marked with a **

APPENDIX B: CLASS #1 SHARED READING TIME HANDOUT

<u>Strategies for Reading with your Child</u>

1. Read *with* your child, not just *to* your child: ask questions, comment on their responses to the story

2. Go beyond the text: make connections between the story and your child's life, predict what will happen next in the story, make inferences

3. Reference the Print: point out things about the book itself, such as letters, the way words look, punctuation marks, pictures, even the way your are holding the book

Ask as many questions as you want, but only "reference the print" 3-5 times in the book so you don't overwhelm your child. Reading together is a good way to learn, but should be fun too!

For more information on family literacy, visit my website
https://sites.google.com/view/familyliteracysclc/home

Chocolate Milk, Por Favor Sample Questions

These questions address the following skills:
Predicting (red)
Inferencing (green)
Retelling/Summarizing (orange)
Vocabulary (yellow)
Making Connections (blue)

During Reading:

1. Page 1: What kind of day do you think Gabe is going to have? Do you think the other kids will be like Johnny?
2. Page 4: Why did Johnny call Gabe a baby?
3. Page 9: Why is Johnny being mean to Gabe?
4. Page 9: What do you think Gabe thinks of Johnny?
5. Page 12: Why was Johnny finally able to do the tricky soccer move?
6. Page 13: Why did Johnny finally understand how Gabe must have felt?
7. Page 15: Why did Johnny say it was going to be a good day?
8. Page 15: What does "actions speak louder than words" mean?

After Reading:

9. What is empathy?
10. How can you help new students at school?
11. Think about your best friend. What makes your best friend different from you? What makes your best friend similar to you? How can differences help us learn about each other?

General questions for future reading:

- Does this remind you of your own life or anything in the world?
- Does this remind you of another book we have read?
- Why do you think this happened? What in the story tells you that?
- What message do you think the author wanted you to understand?
- What do you think this word means?
- Tell me what happened in the story, in your own words?
- Who are the main character? Where did the story take place? What was the problem? How was the problem solved?
- What do you think will happen next? What makes you say that?

Technology & Learning

- Website of the Technology Specialist for Simpson County Schools, lots of fun games and helpful tricks:
  http://techtaco.weebly.com/

Games and Websites Based on Subject:

Math	Social Studies	Science
https://www.education.com/games/math/ (math games) http://pbskids.org/games/math/ (math games) https://www.mathplayground.com/ (math games) http://pbskids.org/games/problem-solving/ (problem-solving games)	http://pbskids.org/games/social-studies/ (social studies games) https://kids.nationalgeographic.com/ (social studies games and tools) https://kidsgeo.com/geography-games/ (geography games)	http://pbskids.org/games/science/ (science games) https://www.sciencea-z.com/main/resourcetype/type/science-in-the-news (science news articles for kids) http://discoverykids.com/category/science/ (activities, games, videos)

Reading	Study Skills
http://pbskids.org/games/reading/ (reading games) http://www.abcya.com/ (reading games) http://www.squiglysplayhouse.com/WritingCorner/StoryBuilder/ (mad-libs sheets, fill-in-the-blank stories) https://storybird.com/ (writing your own stories)	https://quizlet.com/ (a way to create flashcards and quizzes) http://www.sparknotes.com/ (analysis and summaries of literature) https://www.goconqr.com/ (a way to create webs and other graphic organizers)

Help with Technology:

- https://gsuite.google.com/learning-center/products/docs/get-started/#!/ for Google Docs
- https://gsuite.google.com/learning-center/products/slides/get-started/#!/ for Google Slides

My Full Name Is:

Names are unique to us and sometimes have a meaning. Names are part of what makes us special.

Why did your parents choose your name?

Who decided on your name?

Does your name have a meaning?

APPENDIX E: CLASS #3 READING TO LEARN HANDOUT

4th grade and beyond: Reading to learn

Using the text features chart, see if you can identify text features on the textbook page!

Note-Taking Tips:

- Don't copy word for word, write summaries of paragraphs/sections, main ideas, and important facts
- Look to headings and subheadings to determine main ideas
- Copy vocabulary words (look to words in bold and italics), important people, important dates
- There are many ways to take notes: on a timeline, asking and answering questions, in a web, in a chart, etc.
- To study, have students re-write notes, make flashcards of definitions and important questions, make a timeline of all the events in the chapter (social studies), or make a web of important concepts

04/05/2018

Circulatory and Respiratory Systems

- All systems in the body are dependent on each other and connected

- Circulatory System
  - Heart = muscular motor that pumps blood
  - Arteries = strong vessels that carry blood away from the heart
  - Veins = thinner vessels that carry blood back to heart
  - Capillaries = tiniest vessels connecting Arteries and veins

- Respiratory System: inhale oxygen through mouth and nose → travels through trachea → enters bronchial tubes → enters lungs → enters Alveoli → oxygen enters the blood stream
  - Alveoli = small air-sacs surrounded by capillaries; oxygen is exchanged for carbon dioxide here
  - Diaphragm = muscle used to draw in air and force air out of your lungs

Circulatory + Respiratory work together
Heart pumps blood throughout body

LUNG | HEART | LUNG

oxygen-Rich blood from lungs to Heart

Science
LINK

Changes in Pressure

Place a measuring tape around your chest and directly under your armpits. Take a deep breath and measure the size of your chest. Exhale and take another measurement. Compare the difference between the first and second measurements. Repeat this process twice and record your results. Compare your results with several classmates and draw a conclusion.

Circulatory and Respiratory Systems

All of your body's transport systems are interdependent and interconnected. They rely on each other and are linked to accomplish their tasks. Consider how your circulatory and respiratory systems interact with every beat of your heart and every breath you take.

Circulatory system Your heart is the muscular motor of your circulatory system. It pumps blood into your arteries. **Arteries** are thick, strong blood vessels that carry oxygen-rich blood away from the heart and throughout the body. **Veins** are thinner vessels that transport blood back to the heart. **Capillaries**, the tiniest blood vessels, connect your arteries and veins. Most capillaries are only wide enough to allow one red blood cell to pass through at a time.

Respiratory system Your respiratory system's most important activity is breathing, which brings oxygen into your body. You inhale oxygen-rich air through your mouth and nose. It travels through your trachea into two bronchial tubes that lead to your lungs. The fresh air then enters the alveoli. **Alveoli** (al•VEE•uh•ly) are small, thin-walled air sacs surrounded by capillaries. The capillaries contain blood that has come through the veins from other parts of the body. In the alveoli, the oxygen in the air is exchanged for carbon dioxide, a waste product. The oxygen enters the bloodstream, and the carbon dioxide leaves your body when you exhale.

Your lungs don't work alone—they need the help of your diaphragm. The **diaphragm** (DY•uh•fram) is the muscle your body uses to draw air into and force air out of your lungs. You can feel it putting pressure on your lungs when you inhale and relieving pressure on your lungs when you exhale.

Systems in Sync

The circulatory and respiratory systems work together to transport oxygen-rich blood throughout the body.

1. Oxygen-rich blood cells travel to the heart from the lungs.

2. The heart pumps enriched blood cells. They travel through arteries to the body.

3. Throughout the body, red blood cells deliver oxygen to cells and remove carbon dioxide.

red = oxygen rich
blue = oxygen poor
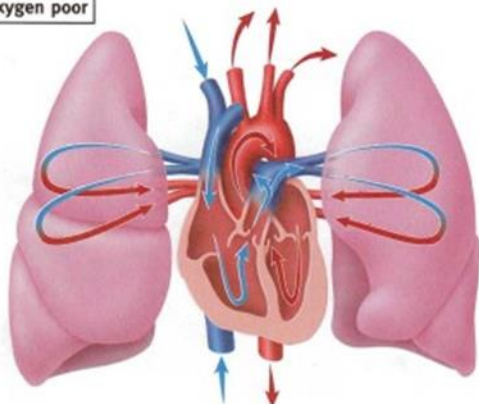
4. Veins carry oxygen-poor blood back to the heart.

5. The heart pumps blood back to the lungs to eliminate carbon dioxide and absorb oxygen.

6. Red blood cells move through the lungs, taking in oxygen and exchanging it for carbon dioxide.
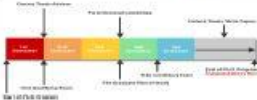
Text Features Chart

Text Feature	Definition	Example
Title	Name of a literary work. It gives the reader an idea about what will be read in the book	
Appendix	a section at the back of a book or document that gives additional information that is important to but is not in the main text	**Appendix** A chronological record to June 30, 1948 of the development of Rotary contributed by Rotary International, Philip C. Lovejoy, General Secretary, whose courtesy is appreciated by the Publishers.
Captions	words underneath/ beside photographs, illustrations or charts explaining what it is or what it is about	Inauguration of President Kennedy
Charts or tables	a visual representation of data, a visual depiction of information that is quick and easy to read	
Diagram	a drawing intended to explain how something works; a drawing showing the relation between the parts	
Glossary	glossary is an alphabetical list of terms with the definitions for those terms. It usually appears at the end of a book and includes terms which are newly introduced	GLOSSARY Astrophysics – The branch of astronomy that deals with the physics of stellar phenomena Atmosphere – The layers of gases which surround a star, like our sun or a planet like our earth
Graphs	a visual representation showing how 2 or more sets are related to each other plotted with reference to a set of axes	
Heading	a line of text serving to indicate what the passage below it is about	**Ancient Road System** There are traces of several ancient roads in the history and landscape around Turoe.
Index	Pages at the back of the book that tell where to find important topics in the book. It lists the page number the term is found on.	**Index** Abernathy, William, 36-37, 38, 47, 197-199 Acheson, Dean, 47, 291 Acme Cleveland, 312 action principle, 13-14, 17, 119-155
Maps	Information presented in visual form to tell you where something is or where it happened. It helps to understand where places are located	

Photograph/Illustration	A picture that emphasizes key points and adds interest	
Bold Print	Text that is heavier and darker than the rest of the text. It can be used to show which words can be found in the glossary.	**Text in Bold Print**
Table	A list of facts or numbers arranged in a special order, usually in rows and columns.	
Table of Contents	A list that shows the major chapters and parts of the book as well as the page numbers.	**Contents** List of illustrations .... 5 General Introduction ...... 6 User's guide .... 10 Language of Shakespeare ... 17 Commentary 20
Time line	A visual representation of events in history displayed in chronological order.	
Subheading	A secondary heading added underneath a subject heading. It is used to divide entries under the subject into more specific subcategories.	**Heading** For a major heading, skip three lines from the top margin (or previous section) and place the heading. Use a font larger than the text , initial capitals, and boldface. For minor reports, the major heading serves as the report's title. **Subheading**
Footnote	a note of text placed at the bottom of a page in a document that provides additional information	[2] Radford, Robert. July 28 2002. <http://www.imperialtometric.com>
Bullet Points	a symbol used to introduce items in a list. Bullet points are used to create a list and make it easier to read and understand	• Item 1 • Item 2 • Item 3
Italics	Words that are slanted to the right. It calls attention to important words or terms. It shows which words can be found in the glossary.	*Words in italics*
Sidebar	Boxes of information to the side of the main text/column(s).	

APPENDIX G: CLASS #3 ADVOCATING FOR STUDENT SUCCESS HANDOUT

Homework Help

- Don't hover, but be there when your child wants to ask for help
- Do homework in the same place at the same time every day
- Provide a quiet, comfortable, distraction-free zone for homework
- Help your child set goals for the day and week
- Attitude is everything! Believe in your child and they will believe in themselves!

10 Questions to Ask Teachers at Parent-Teacher Conferences

1. How do you prefer to communicate with me?
2. What do you see as my child's strengths?
3. What academic challenges does my child face?
4. How is my child doing socially?
5. How do you support kids in their social development?
6. How does the school handle standardized testing and prep for those tests?
7. Do you keep a folder of my child's work? If so, could you review it with me?
8. Is my child performing at grade level in reading/math/science/social studies?
9. Does my child have special learning needs?
10. What can I do at home to support what you're doing in the classroom?

APPENDIX H: PRE-SURVEY QUESTIONS

<u>Pre-Survey Questions</u>

1. **How confident are you in your use of classroom technology (such as Google Slides, Microsoft Word, Class Dojo, other)? (please circle one)**

1	2	3	4
Not at all confident	Somewhat confident	Confident	Extremely Confident

2. **How confident do you feel reading picture books and other books for fun with your child? (please circle one)**

1	2	3	4
Not at all confident	Somewhat confident	Confident	Extremely Confident

3. **How confident do you feel reading for homework (articles, textbooks, other) with your child? (please circle one)**

1	2	3	4
Not at all confident	Somewhat confident	Confident	Extremely Confident

4. **How confident do you feel contacting your child's teacher/attending parent-teacher conferences? (please circle one)**

1	2	3	4
Not at all confident	Somewhat confident	Confident	Extremely Confident

5. **What do you enjoy reading with your child?**

6. **Does your child spend more time reading for academic purposes/homework (textbooks, articles, other) or reading for pleasure (picture books, novels)?**

7. **How much time do you spend reading with your child for academic purposes/homework per day or per week?**

8. **What types of literacy activities do you do with your child? (reading to your child, listening to your child read, asking questions while your child is reading, talking to your child, helping your child with writing) All these activities are part of literacy.**

9. **Do you have any questions regarding technologies your child uses in school?**

10. **Do you have any questions regarding reading with your child, or helping your child succeed in school?**

APPENDIX I: POST-SURVEY QUESTIONS

Post-Survey Questions

1. Do you think the information presented in the family literacy program was useful? What specific information did you feel was the most useful for your family?

2. Have you implemented any strategies learned during the program (reading with your child, the types of book you read, using technology, doing homework, communicating with your child's teacher)? If so, please explain your use of these strategies?

3. What did you enjoy most about the family literacy program?

4. Do you have any suggestions for improvement to the family literacy program?