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The planning, implementation, and evaluation of modules designed to provide school personnel with training in the area of parent/school interaction.

Susan D. Savitt

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# FIVE COLLEGE DEPOSITORY

THE PLANNING, IMPLEMENTATION, AND EVALUATION  
OF MODULES DESIGNED TO PROVIDE SCHOOL  
PERSONNEL WITH TRAINING IN THE  
AREA OF PARENT/SCHOOL  
INTERACTION

A Dissertation Presented

By

SUSAN DALE SAVITT

Submitted to the Graduate School of the  
University of Massachusetts in partial  
fulfillment of the requirements for  
the degree of

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

May, 1986

Education

Susan Dale Savitt 1986

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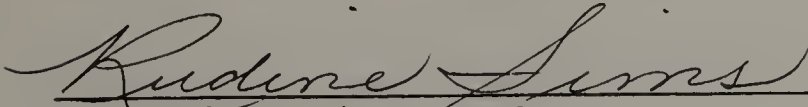
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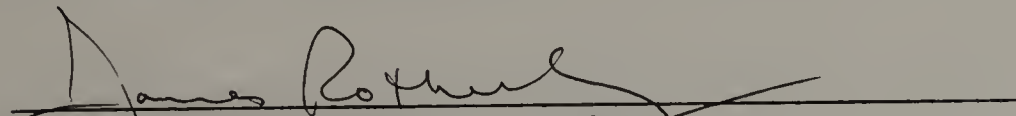
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ABSTRACT

The Planning, Implementation, and Evaluation  
of Modules Designed to Provide School  
Personnel with Training in the  
Area of Parent/School  
Interaction

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This study reports planning, implementation, and evaluation of modules designed to provide staff training in parent/school interaction. The research was conducted in an urban elementary school during the 1984-5 school year. The processes were described so that others may replicate or adapt portions to meet needs and resources in their particular setting.

The planning stage of the project emphasized determination of readiness of the various individuals and groups who would be involved, the development of goals,

the needs assessment procedure, the determination of available resources, and the mobilization of support for the concept of training school personnel for parent/school interaction.

The five instructional modules were based on the needs expressed in assessment surveys and interviews of prospective participants in the training sessions. Each module included objectives, procedures, and evaluation questions. The module topics were: Introduction to Parent/School Interaction; Parent/School Interaction--What it is and How it is Encouraged; Communication--the Key to Success; Ways School Staff Can Assist Parents to Help Children at Home with School-Related Activities; and Ways Parents and School Personnel Can Collaborate Regarding School Discipline.

Twenty-seven staff members attended the workshops on a voluntary basis. In order to receive parental input and encourage the parent/school interaction process in other settings, three representative parents from the targeted school and eight representative administrators and staff members from other schools in the district were invited to and did attend the sessions.

A variety of techniques, activities and guest speakers were used to present each module. Before the presentation of each module participants provided input

which was used in adapting the forthcoming modules to the present needs of participants.

After exposure to the modules participants indicated the following:

(1) Eighty-seven percent had a more positive attitude toward parent/school interaction,

(2) Ninety-seven percent had expanded their perception of the possible forms of parent/school interaction,

(3) Ninety-seven percent had increased preparation for their role in the parent/school interaction process, and

(4) Ninety percent had initiated more parent/school interaction.



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# C H A P T E R I

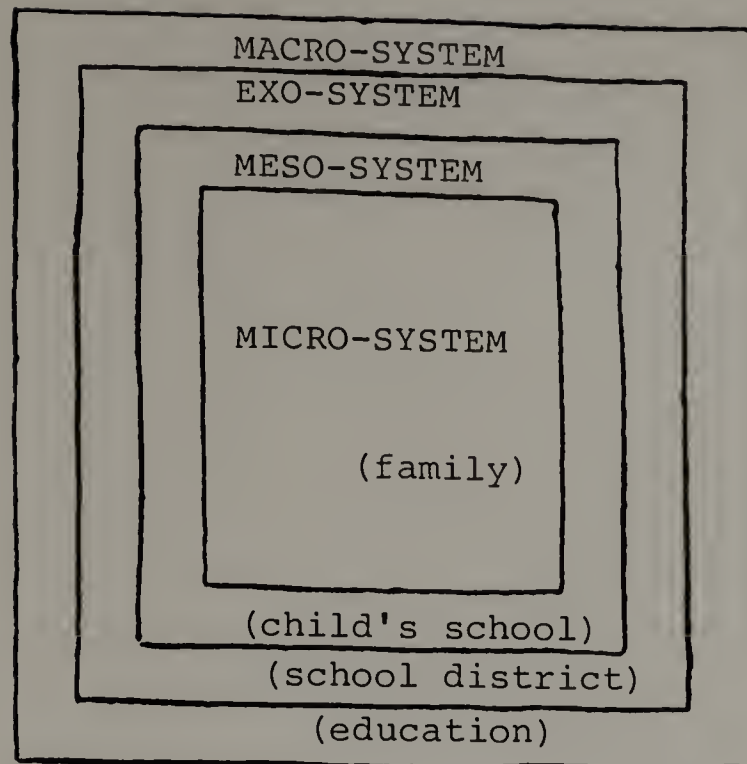
## INTRODUCTION

### Rationale

A better understanding of a child's home environment through interactions with parents and/or other adults in the home is imperative if school personnel are to meet the needs of students. Children take experiences to and from various settings. Ira Gordon's transactional theory, which borrows from Uri Bronfenbrenner's systems approach of explaining social forces, outlined four major systems within which individuals in our society function.<sup>1</sup> These systems were: micro--which consists of the home setting; meso--which is comprised of the home and the local school; exo--which represents the social forces that influence our lives without our always being consciously aware of their influence, and macro--which represents interactive forces at the broadest levels. Figure 1 is a pictorial depiction of Gordon's Transactional Theory.<sup>2</sup>



FIGURE 1



Schools cannot meet the needs of the students they service if school personnel avoid interaction with other individuals and forces within the various systems. There is a need for an interactional paradigm.<sup>3</sup>

Over a half century ago Willard Waller, a noted sociologist, recognized the potency parent/school interaction could have. In 1932, he wrote:

If parents and teachers could meet often enough and intimately enough to develop primary group attitudes toward each other, and if both parents and teachers might have their say unreservedly, such modifications of school practice and parental upbringing might take place as would revolutionize the life of children everywhere.<sup>4</sup>

### Statement of the Problem

In spite of the growing evidence that parent/school interaction plays a significant role in meeting the needs of children, significantly improving school community relations, and in some measure dealing with complex problems found in urban communities,<sup>5</sup> school personnel, particularly in urban settings, often shun such an interaction. They possess a monistic rather than a pluralistic philosophy. Sara Lawrence Lightfoot contended that schools serving minority students seldom meet the needs of the students and parents which they serve because staff and parents do not communicate their perceptions and priorities to one another. Her title, Worlds Apart, expressed her belief that there is a dichotomy between teachers and parents:

Rather than search for the origins of conflict and find effective strategies for real (rather than contrived) participation of parents and teachers in a collaborative task, schools develop more sophisticated methods of exclusion; parents draw farther and farther away from parental responsibilities in the schooling process and children fail . . .<sup>6</sup>

Michael Fullan divided barriers to parent/school interaction into two broad categories--phenomenological and logistical. He defined the two categories as follows:



Phenomenological barriers relate to the lack of knowledge and understanding that school personnel and parents have of each other's subjective worlds. Logistic and/or technical problems concern lack of time, opportunity or know-how about what activities or forms of parent involvement would be most effective.<sup>7</sup> Seymour Sarason supported the view that logistical problems can be a barrier to parent/school interaction. Sarason concluded that because prospective teachers do not receive training that exposes them to "the issues surrounding and the skills required for talking with (not to) parents, they often avoid communication with parents."<sup>8</sup>

In a study entitled State Education Agencies and Parent Involvement, conducted by the Center for the Study of Parent Involvement, it was reported that no state department representatives indicated that there was any legislation or state education agency mandate of schools of education to include training for parent involvement or interaction. The same study reported that the California Commission for Teacher Preparation and Licensing indicated a need for training in the area of parent/school interaction. They mandated prior to approving program plans for

teacher education:

Communications from school districts should include responses from parents and groups in communities served. Evidences should be provided to show the contributions from all groups which were included in developing the program.<sup>9</sup>

In recent years Florida and South Carolina have mandated parent advisory groups be formed in all public schools in their states.<sup>10</sup> There is no requirement for action, however.

Although many surveys and studies have revealed that parent/school interaction was necessary for achieving educational goals, few districts provided preparation for interaction. Teachers have indicated a lack of preparation in this area. For example, a statewide survey conducted in Maryland by Joyce L. Epstein concluded that 75 percent of teachers surveyed believed that parent involvement was necessary for achieving educational goals. This survey also reported that many of the teachers interviewed indicated that they did not know how to initiate and implement parent involvement programs.<sup>11</sup>

A telephone survey of school principals from thirty-nine of the fifty-nine school districts in Nassau County, Long Island, the county where the school this study was conducted is located, was completed by this researcher.

The survey required principals to: (1) place a priority level on parent/school interaction, (2) indicate if they believed staff development should be given to school personnel in the area of parent/school interaction, (3) report if their district (a) had offered staff development in the area of parent/school interaction, or (b) had definitive plans to offer staff development in the area of parent/school interaction in the near future, and (4) if the answer to question number 3 was "no," to indicate the reasons why not.

In response to question number 1, 94 percent (36 principals) indicated that in their school parent/school interaction was a primary priority. Six percent (4 principals) indicated that from their perspective it was a secondary priority, and 0 percent (no principals) indicated that parent/school interaction was not a priority.

In response to question number 2, 86 percent (34 principals) reported that they believed in order for parent/school interaction to be effective, school personnel needed staff development in the area of parent/school interaction. Sixteen percent (6 principals) indicated that they felt staff development was not necessary for parent/

school interaction to be successful.

In response to question number 3, in spite of the high percentage of principals indicating parent/school interaction was a priority, 96 percent (37 principals) indicated that their district had not provided teachers with staff development in this area, and did not have definitive plans to do so in the near future. Four percent (2 principals) indicated that they had provided staff development in parent/school interaction or had definitive plans to do so in the near future.

In response to question number 4, reasons given by principals for not providing staff development in the area of parent/school interaction included: lack of time because of specific curriculum training needs, lack of interest on the part of staff, lack of available funds, and lack of individuals with expertise to train staff in the area of parent/school interaction. The results of this survey indicated that the majority of the principals surveyed believed in the concept of parent/school interaction and in the premise that school personnel needed training in this area. The principals reported, however, that there were obstacles in providing the needed training. The process

followed during this study will, hopefully, serve as a model for overcoming stated and unstated obstacles.

Teachers can play the most significant role in educating, activating, and involving parents, since teachers are the significant link between parents and the education of their children. This point is supported by Daniel Safran in Community Participation in Education.<sup>12</sup> Until teachers receive the training that can serve as a conduit to change what Sarason terms "the encapsulated school system" resulting in isolation of schools and professionals from the community and parents and placement of emphasis on compliance rather than a development of strategies to achieve parent/school interaction, meaningful interaction cannot take place.<sup>13</sup> The present dichotomy that exists between parents and school personnel will continue to exist, and students will be denied the benefits of successful home/school interaction.

#### Statement of Purpose

Anne Henderson stated, based on a review of numerous studies, in Parent Participation--Student Achievement--The Evidence Grows:



If schools treat parents as powerless or unimportant, or if they discourage parents from taking an interest, they promote the development of attitudes in parents, and consequently their children, that inhibit achievement.<sup>14</sup>

Treating parents as powerless and unimportant can also result in both parents and students having feelings of low self-esteem.

The major purpose of this study is to report on the planning, implementation, and evaluation of modules designed to provide school personnel in a particular school with training which will prepare them to serve as a significant link between home and school. The modules were designed in a manner which allows for their implementation in other schools, with modifications based upon specific local needs.

The study attempted to answer the following questions: (1) Will school personnel agree to attend parent/school interaction sessions on a voluntary basis? (2) Will school personnel who have agreed to attend parent/school interaction sessions actually attend the scheduled sessions? (3) Will school personnel from schools other than the school targeted attend the parent/school interaction sessions? (4) Will participants believe, after attending the parent/school interaction sessions, that the

information and activities that were included will be of use to them in increasing and improving parent/school interaction? (5) Can staff development in the area of parent/school interaction improve school personnel's attitude toward parent/school interaction? (6) Can staff development in the area of parent/school interaction broaden the perspective of school personnel regarding the multitude of forms parent/school interaction can take? (7) Can staff development in the area of parent/school interaction result in school personnel feeling better prepared for their role in the parent/school interaction process? (8) Can staff development in the area of parent/school interaction result in school personnel initiating more parent/school interaction than they did prior to the parent/school interaction sessions?

The training modules sought to dispel negative myths and fears regarding parents which often result in a "territorial protection" attitude on the part of school personnel, as well as to deal with specific training needs ascertained after the administration of a needs assessment survey. Modules afforded workshop participants opportunities to examine and evaluate their beliefs, attitudes, and

behaviors toward them, in an attempt to create a better understanding which will in turn both increase and improve communication.

Byrd Jones stated in The Hope Factor that the major reason urban schools do not succeed is the

lack of sensitivity and awareness of today's teachers and administrators to their own racism and the impact of their values upon schools. They view children from poor families in terms of their own restricted middle class outlook.<sup>15</sup>

Peter Berger and Thomas Luchmann noted: "There is no psychology of individuals without a sociology of community. They are dialectically related."<sup>16</sup> A communication paradigm was developed as a part of this study in an attempt to increase understanding, improve two-way communication, and promote interaction between school personnel and parents.

The modules developed as part of this study deal with the three elements expounded by Kathleen Huguenin as playing a role in successful parent/school collaboration: expectation, structure, and behavior. Expectation relates to the belief that parents and school personnel should interact, while structure deals with the systematic planning, development of goals, definition of roles and



goals, and leadership and behavior deals with interaction patterns.<sup>17</sup>

Action research methodology was used which allowed for input of those receiving the training during the planning, the implementation, and the evaluation states of the study. This was accomplished by using ongoing assessment procedures, which provided information regarding the continually changing needs of the participants.

David Seeley expounded his belief that the sense of mutual responsibility and understanding of home and school that is necessary if students are to receive a quality education is too often missing, in Education Through Partnership: Mediating Structures and Education. Seeley stated that the solution to this deficit is to correct the imbalance between the mediating structure--in this case the family, and the megastructure--the school. The modules developed as part of this study attempted to test the above-mentioned solution based upon Seeley's premise that the critical issue in successful learning is not home or school, but rather the relationship between them.<sup>18</sup>

John Warren Stewig stated:

Hope is the motivating factor that helps individuals arrive at understanding and acceptance. By focusing on hope and being sensitive to parents' needs, we can diminish the adversarial relationship that too often exists between parents and school.<sup>19</sup>

This study reports on a process and product designed to sensitize school personnel to their own beliefs, and to parents' needs, and to assist school personnel in the implementation of strategies that will increase meaningful parent/school interaction. The process included input of parents and school personnel, research, personal experience, and a belief in the hope factor.

### Setting

#### Community

The community in which this study was executed was described in the following manner by the Bureau of the Census in 1980. Data was collected emphasizing population characteristics, income, employment and family composition.<sup>20</sup>

Number of inhabitants	14,109
Number of households	4,021
Number of families	3,557
Median family income	\$22,564
Race majority	89% Black
Married	46%
Married couple families	61%
Other families	30%
Single parent households	31%
Households of 6 or more individuals	17%
Individuals 18 and above who completed four years of high school	36%

The community is located in one of the wealthiest counties in the country. Although the tax rate is above the median in the country, the property wealth per pupil is one of the lowest in the county. There is no local government, sanitation or police department. The public schools are the only centralized public institution in the community. Unemployment Office records estimate that this community has one of the highest unemployment rates in the county. Government officials have indicated that the community is a microcosm of problems evident in large urban cities. Unlike the cities, however, the community does not have the business or industrial resources necessary to subsidize the community's needs. The public school system is comprised of four elementary schools, one pre-kindergarten center, and one junior-senior high school. The entire community is contained within one square mile.

The majority of working individuals in the community have a minimum of one job with many individuals having second and third jobs. School personnel have often cited this information when attempting to account for lack of attendance by parents at parent/teacher conferences, Parent-Teacher Association meetings, and/or parent open house. On the other hand, many parents have accompanied the District Superintendent of Schools to the state capitol to meet with the legislature regarding state aid to Roosevelt and have attended Compensatory Education Parent Conferences held on Saturdays for the past four years.

#### School

The school personnel who participated in this study were mainly assigned to the elementary school nearest the western border of the community. The school is a two-story, brick building, circa 1936. During the 1984-5 school year there were twenty teachers assigned to teach grade K-6 classes; three special education teachers, a reading coordinator, a math coordinator, a gym teacher, a nurse, a librarian, four teacher assistants, and a part-time writing teacher, psychologist, speech teacher, and a social worker. Over 60 percent of the staff had been

employed by the school district for over ten years, 36 percent for over five years, and 4 percent were new during the 1984-5 school year. The building principal had been employed by the school district for over twenty years. During this time he served as a math teacher, a high school assistant principal, and an elementary principal at the site of this project for the past nine years.

The Parent-Teacher Association participation at this school is moderate, although there is a core group of approximately eight parents who have been very involved with school affairs and projects. This school was selected to be the site for this project because of the desire of the building principal to increase parent/school interaction, the strong core parent group, and a supportive faculty.

#### Significance of Study

Research findings indicate that school personnel are seldom trained in home/school interaction. The significance of this study, therefore, is inherent in the potential usefulness of the process followed to develop the modules designed to fill this void, as well as the modules themselves. The potential uses include: (1) facilitating



encouragement of school personnel to serve as a significant link between school and home and (2) providing a training model which includes planning, implementation, and evaluation as part of a process designed to encourage development of strategies for home/school interaction which can be adapted in other settings based upon the needs in the particular setting. The significance of the study will be realized when and/or if the process used and structure developed foster a climate ripe for parent/school interaction.

#### Limitations

This action research study is limited because of the plasticity of parent/school interaction process. Each school and community has its own unique needs which change over time. Rather than evaluating from a longitudinal basis one should attempt to ascertain if: (1) training had an effect on the amount and quality of parent/school interaction in the setting in which the study took place; (2) modules could be successfully modified, based on specific needs, in other settings. Even more far-reaching, whether training had any effect on: (1) student achievement, (2) attitude of children toward school, and (3) parents' self esteem.

### Methodology

The following procedures were used in the preparation of this study. The researcher:

1. Investigated the topic of parent/school interaction
2. Reviewed District Needs Assessment results from Roosevelt/UMASS Staff Development Project.
3. Met with the Superintendent of Schools, the building principal, staff members and parents of the school which the prospective training was to take place to gather input and to mobilize support.
4. Developed needs assessment surveys regarding parent/school interaction based on input of school personnel and other colleagues, research, and personal experience.
5. Distributed needs assessment surveys to all Centennial school personnel.
6. Compiled and tabulated results of the needs assessment surveys.
7. Reviewed and updated research information gathered, concentrating specifically on training of teachers for parent/school interaction.

8. Selected topics for inclusion in modules based on staff needs assessment results.
9. Prepared the modules for presentation to volunteer participants using various techniques including: role playing activity, brainstorming, discussion, demonstration, and guest speakers, after identifying resources available.
10. Presented modules to volunteer participants.
11. Reassessed needs of the participants following each session and adjusted modules based on participants' expressed needs and concerns.
12. Requested participants evaluate the workshops and suggest further activities to promote parent/school interaction.
13. Reported and interpreted the results of the evaluations.
14. Determined the outcomes of the workshops and suggested implications for further activities and research in the area of parent/school interaction.

#### Evaluation Procedure

The formative approach was used to evaluate this study.<sup>21</sup> The procedures followed during the planning and



implementation aspects of the study were developed, monitored, evaluated, and modified based on assessments of outcomes and the updated needs of the participants.

As part of the initial assessment process, participants completed a survey that ascertained their attitudes toward parent involvement and gave them an opportunity to indicate the topics they wanted included in the parent/school interaction workshops. After each workshop participants completed a feedback assessment form to appraise learning attitudes toward the materials presented in the particular module, and to provide the opportunity to suggest modifications and topics for inclusion in future workshops. At the completion of the training workshops, participants completed a form designed to measure short and long-range teacher learning attitudes, as well as to identify suggested modifications in the modules, suggest topics for future workshops, describe workshop outcomes and implications for future projects in the area of parent/school interaction. Participants were also requested to complete a form approximately one year after the training session. The responses served as a means of answering the research questions and evaluating the process followed and the modules.

## Outline of Chapters

Chapter I introduces the study by: establishing that the lack of parent/school interaction and the absence of training procedures to prepare school personnel for such an interaction is a problem; elaborating on the purpose of the study; describing the setting in which the study took place; delineating the significance and limitations of the study; explaining the methodology and evaluation procedures followed, and outlining each of the five chapters included in the study.

Chapter II reviews literature emphasizing the conceptual framework of parent/school interaction; Twentieth century America and parent/school interaction; legacies for parent involvement including separation, disequilibrium, ambiguity, and individuality; parent involvement models and typologies; obstacles to successful parent/school interaction in urban settings; staff development from both the individual and organizational dimensions as it relates to training school personnel for parent/school interaction, and the role of communication in the process.

Chapter III details the planning aspect of the study

emphasizing a process model of planning, determination of readiness, mobilization of support, needs assessment procedures, review of available resources and module design.

Chapter IV contains the five modules developed as part of this study and discusses their implementation in a particular setting. The objectives, procedures and method of evaluation for each objective are included. Action research methodology used to make modifications during and following each session is also included as is an account of what actually took place at each session.

Chapter V concludes the study by reporting the outcomes, conclusions, responses to research questions, recommendations, aftereffects and implications for further research in the area of training staff for parent/school interaction.

### Epilogue

According to Ronald S. Barth:

One might expect that sharing a preoccupation with the same children would form a common bond, bringing principal, teacher and parents together. Unfortunately, this bond seldom develops naturally or spontaneously. We school people need help in finding ways to work cooperatively with parents; and parents badly need assistance in translating their basic

concerns into actions that will improve the situation for their children, the school and themselves. A major task confronting school people and parents is somehow to transform a relationship commonly characterized by indifference, anxiety, fear, and anger into one of mutuality, cooperation, trust, and support. Indeed the reform most critical to student success may not involve new curricula, testing minimum competencies, budget reforms, or control, but rather the forging of a productive coalition of parents and school practitioners.<sup>22</sup>

## C H A P T E R I I

### REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

#### Introduction

Children's education encompasses their total environment. Home and school are intrinsic variables within the child's environment. P. Susan Mamchak and Steven R. Mamchak, who have done extensive research in the area of parent/teacher relationships, stated:

If it is done properly, education is a partnership between the home and the school for the good of the developing child. Unfortunately, we all realize that this ideal is often frustrated. Communication breaks down, parents and teacher take on the role of adversaries, and the child becomes lost in the middle. For the good of that child, we must make certain that we do everything in our power to try to enlist the close cooperation between home and school that insures the success of the child.<sup>1</sup>

In order to meet a challenge of providing inservice for school staff with the goal of increasing and improving parent/school interactions, a review of related literature was undertaken by the workshop facilitator. The review was selective including that literature which might provide a framework in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of this research study.



### Conceptual Framework

Many educators and researchers have concluded that other forces--political, economic and social--comprising the macro-system interact to effect education which is also a force within the macro-system. According to Alex Molner, school practices affirm existing political, cultural and economic practices.<sup>2</sup> Robert Woodbury stated that the interlocking social, economic and political forces of our society affect educational results.<sup>3</sup> Sara Lawrence Lightfoot affirmed that a school's social system is shaped by the community of which it is a part, and that the school is a template of the larger society.<sup>4</sup> Ira Gordon contended that no one force--or as he terms it agency--operates in isolation. He used this philosophy as a base for his community impact model.<sup>5</sup>

The role individuals play in relation to the educational system is based on what society perceives their role to be as well as what they perceive their role to be. Upper and middle class individuals often assume powerful and assured attitudes when dealing with school personnel while poor and minority individuals often feel powerless when dealing with school personnel and other individuals who are part of bureaucratic institutions. Marilyn Gittell



concluded that poor and minority individuals do not willingly collaborate with school personnel because they lack power, resources, access to information and decision-makers, and the knowledge about how one must work through the system to gain power.<sup>6</sup>

James Comer in School Power, based on his experience within the New Haven, Connecticut schools, stated that lack of power often creates frustration, disappointment and anger in parents that may cause them to have either negative interaction with school staff or not to interact at all. Comer believed that trust and mutual respect must be developed between parents and school personnel before parents can be positively involved in parent/school interaction.<sup>7</sup>

Sara Lawrence Lightfoot corroborated Comer's

beliefs:

Education for a large majority of children will only be successful when there is continuity, trust, shared accountability, and responsibility between families, communities and schools.

Lightfoot added that:

Being aware of the power and significance of families does not mean that schools should not be held accountable for teaching children. Rather the opposite that once school personnel begin to value the significant place of families in the educational

process they will feel more responsible to the communities they serve and to the children they teach.<sup>8</sup>

The modules designed for this study attempted to increase the understanding of school personnel regarding the importance of parent/school interaction in the educational process and to suggest ways of increasing and improving the quality of parent/school interactions. The modules were developed based on Robert L. Sinclair's philosophy that "Children's education should and must be viewed as a 'two-way street' where the home and school take an active part in and are responsible for children's learning."<sup>9</sup>

#### Twentieth Century America and Parent/School Interaction

In the twentieth century the responsibility of teaching values which were formerly learned at home was delegated to the school due to urbanization and employment of family members outside the home. Parents started to look to the school not only to teach children the 3Rs, but to also take over the responsibility of instilling basic values in children without their parents being involved. Mario D. Fantini, presently Dean of the University of Massachusetts School of Education, summarized what took

place between 1940 and 1980 as follows:

A more active period of citizen participation, stimulated by the positive baby boom and by calls for education support to returning veterans, began to emerge in the late 1940s and early 1950s. The 1954 Supreme Court decision, finding measurable dysfunctions in segregational school systems, further stimulated demands for open access to education of real quality. In 1957 Sputnik transformed demand into virtual furor. Improving education became the answer to national industrial needs as the cutting edge of international competition.

The activist period of the 1960s created yet another social context for returning to a more classical form of participation in almost every governmental process. Calls began during the 1960s and continued throughout the "quieter" 1970s, asking for further clarification of human rights, as applied to minority groups and the socially disadvantaged.<sup>10</sup>

Many reformers committed to the drive for equality of minority groups and the socially disadvantaged for inclusion in areas where they were previously excluded and alienated believed that participation would rectify the situation.<sup>11</sup> In actuality, participation often resulted in confrontation that was ridden with hostility, bitterness and mistrust between parents and school personnel. The community control movement and interactive schools were outcomes of these confrontations. "Control" and "compliance" became key issues.<sup>12</sup>

The parent/school participatory movement recognized,

demanded, and in the case of Title I mandated parents' inclusion in decisions regarding their children's education. Although the mandate gave credence to parent involvement, outcomes could not be mandated since in most cases school personnel were not trained to deal with parent/school interaction, the interaction was fraught with problems and did not reach its full potential. The participatory movement provided opportunities for individuals and groups to learn about the process and the effects of parent involvement.<sup>13</sup>

Based on a belief in the importance of parent participation in education, several organizations were developed during the 1970s in which parent involvement was the main focus. These organizations included the Institute of Responsive Education, The National Coalition for Parent Involvement in Education, the Home/School Institute, and The Center for Study of Parent Involvement.

The 1980s find educational demographics changing at a rapid rate. Schools are faced with declining enrollment, low test scores, and dwindling resources. The fabric of families has also changed. No longer is the mother, father and two children the "average" family. There are more single parent homes than at any other time in the history of our country, more women are part of the work force, the



fertility rate is down, while the mobility and remarriage rates have increased. Television vies with schools as surrogate parents instilling conflicting values in children. If parent/school interaction is to be successful in the future, schools must "meet the realistic needs of society" as expounded by Sharon Lynn Kagan and Carol Schraft in the Institute for Responsive Education publication For Every School a Community. Among the activities Kagan and Schraft implore schools to develop to meet the realistic needs of society are breakfast programs, after-school child care programs, special conference times for working parents, and support groups for children facing difficult family situations.<sup>14</sup> School personnel must be prepared to meet the challenge presented by the needs of society based on their school's individual needs, history and resources.<sup>15</sup> The modules developed for this study were designed in an attempt to prepare school personnel to interact successfully with today's parents by making them aware of their needs, fears, and strengths.

#### Legacies for Parent Involvement

The 1985 publication of the Institute for Responsive Education authored by Sharon Lynn Kagan entitled Parent Involvement Research: A Field in Search of Itself concisely

reported current research on parent involvement. In the report Kagan discusses four legacies inherent for contemporary schools and their relation to parent involvement research. The four legacies are separation, disequilibrium, ambiguity, and individuality.<sup>16</sup>

### Separation

Separation is a factor because schools and families are not isomorphic. Since it is believed by many that parent involvement could bridge the gap between families and schools, "process" research was undertaken to determine how to accelerate parent involvement. Emphasis was placed on correlating specific variables, such as characteristics of teachers or parents that encouraged or participated in parent involvement activities. An example of this type of research is the work done by Joyce L. Epstein and Henry Jay Becker entitled Parent Involvement: A Survey of Teacher Practices. Epstein and Becker found that teachers who did not use parent involvement practices tended to believe that parents with less education could not or would not assist with learning activities in the home.<sup>17</sup> They also found that parents rated teachers who frequently used parent involvement activities higher than those who did not use parent involvement activities when rating them on interpersonal characteristics including cooperation, friendli-



ness, respect, trust and warmth.<sup>18</sup>

### Disequilibrium

The second legacy, disequilibrium, is a result of the imbalance of power that has existed between schools and parents--particularly in urban settings. The resistance on the part of schools to eliminate this imbalance and the acquiescence on the part of the majority of parents led to another direction of parent-involvement research--that of the study of schools that had innovative parent involvement programs and the construction of models which described various methods of achieving parent involvement.

According to a poll conducted by the National Education Association in 1981, over 90 percent of the teachers queried stated that home/school interaction would be desirable. From the parent perspective, recent Gallop polls indicated that over 80 percent of the parents polled believed a joint and coordinated effort of parents and school personnel was a worthwhile endeavor.<sup>19</sup> One must delve further to discover the types of interaction and activities teachers and parents had in mind when they responded to the Gallop poll. Familiarity with the various parent involvement models and typologies, which reflect the

philosophies of the individuals who created them, assists individuals and groups in formulating their own philosophies and adopting or adapting a model or typology for their particular setting.

### Hierarchical models

Many of the models and typologies were based on the belief that there was a hierarchy of types of involvement. For example, W. G. Winters and Carol Melchmann Schraft used a three-level pyramid to depict their model. They entitled the base, which was the largest segment of the pyramid, "entry level activities." Entry level activities included attendance at Parent-Teacher Association meetings and parent/teacher conferences. The second and mid-level of the pyramid was entitled "day to day life of the school activities." Examples of activities included on the second level included volunteering in and out of the classrooms and chaperoning class trips. The apex level of the pyramid was entitled "school governance activities and decision making activities" regarding areas such as curriculum and discipline.<sup>20</sup> Shirley Arnstein's Ladder of Participation is a hierarchical continuum, which starts with non-participation, moves up to tokenism, and ends with citizen power at the top of the ladder.<sup>21</sup>

Richard O. Titus also believed that there was a hierarchy of levels of parent/school interaction. His model borrowed concepts developed by David Little and Abraham Maslow. Titus felt that most schools stopped at the first step of the model, information. The second step, interaction, allowed parents to share information. Step three, involvement, allowed them to apply what they had learned and shared; and step four, insight, provided the opportunity to evaluate what they learned, shared, and applied.<sup>22</sup>

Mario Fantini's typology was depicted by a horizontal overlapping four-part continuum and related to roles in curriculum decision-making. The roles depicted were client: parents received controlled information; producer: parents were involved in a supportive manner; consumer: parents' needs determined what took place in the school; and governor: parents had the rights of accountability, choice and expression.<sup>23</sup>

James Comer developed a three level hierarchical model of parent participation based upon his work in the New Haven schools. The first level consisted of parents who were involved in curriculum and operation policy decisions. Level two was composed of parents who participated in day-to-day operation of the school. Level three dealt with broad based activities such as fund-raising, report card

conferences, and general meetings.<sup>24</sup> Barbara Tucker Cervone and Kathleen O'Leary called their model "Parent Involvement Continuum" and placed parents as passive participants at the beginning of the continuum and parents as active participants at the end of the continuum.<sup>25</sup>

Rodney Goodyear and James Rubovits developed a parent/school interaction model because they felt that other models were created with middle-class parents in mind. Their model was based upon Maslow's model of hierarchical basic needs, which included physiological, safety, esteem and self actualization needs. Goodyear and Rubovits believed that these needs and the level parents were on at the time had to be taken into consideration when planning parent involvement--particularly with low income parents.<sup>26</sup>

#### Non-hierarchical models

There were other models and typologies which were not hierarchical including Robert Salisbury's typology and Ira Gordon's models. Robert Salisbury's typology was divided into two categories--"instrumental purposive participation" which had a goal of parent inclusion in the decision-making process, and "expressive-supportive participation" with the goal being the participation itself which may include participation activities such as chaperoning class trips, volunteering both in and outside the classroom, and conducting cake sales. Salisbury contended that his typology met



the needs of many parents since it provided for personal growth and/or a means of expressing civil duty or parental love. Salisbury believed the "best" type of parental involvement was that which met the needs of the parents. He, therefore, made no hierarchical judgment.<sup>27</sup>

Ira Gordon discussed three distinct models: the Family Impact Model, the School Impact Model, and the Community Impact Model. They differed as follows: The major goal of the Family Impact Model was to do something to or for the family in order to help the child in school. This model assumed that families wanted to help but did not know how to go about doing so; family behavior would change when the family had the knowledge needed to do so, and educators know the correct way to teach children. The goal of the School Impact Model was to change the school. The assumptions this model was based on included: parents and school personnel's goal is to educate students; school personnel are not sure how to improve the quality of schools even though they would like to do so; parents can manage or govern schools if they learn the essential skills to do so, and parents should be involved in decision-making within the school.

The goal of the Community Impact Model was to integrate the school and home subsystems so that the efforts of both could be integrated and complementary. Gordon's

Community Model was depicted by a wheel since Gordon wanted to convey the concept of each spoke being of equivalent importance. Gordon's model consisted of six spokes with a possible parent role listed on each. He suggested decision-maker, adult learner, classroom volunteer, teach own child, para-professional, and adult educator as titles for each of the spokes. Gordon suggested the titles should change based on the roles which parents in a particular setting determine they wish to play. Gordon contended, however, that the wheel could not turn efficiently unless there were parents playing each of the roles depicted on the spokes.<sup>28</sup> As was true of Salisbury's typology, Gordon's model made no hierarchical judgments. (See appendixes B-1 through B-3 for a pictorial representation of several of the models described in this chapter.)

### Use of Models

Don Davies concluded that no single approach could be used successfully in all settings, but rather a variety of approaches might be required to meet the needs within a community or school.<sup>29</sup> When training school personnel for parent/school interaction, it was imperative that they were made aware of the various typologies and models to serve as a basis for the amelioration of parent/school interaction in their particular setting. As Kagan concluded,



Stated simply, the models provide angles and lenses through which parent involvement can be viewed. But in the hands of skilled practitioners, these models, constructed largely from ethnographic research, can be extremely useful in helping to define program goals, to establish priorities, and to determine day-to-day operations.<sup>30</sup>

The models were included in the modules to assist participants in determining philosophy and selecting a framework.

### Ambiguity

The third legacy, ambiguity, existed because there was no agreement why parent involvement should exist. There were those who believed that parent involvement should exist because we live in a democracy, while others believed that it should exist because it can make a difference in the lives of children, teachers, parents, schools and/or communities. Due to the range of goals of parent involvement the types of activities related to it have been diverse. They have ranged from baking cookies, to helping with homework, to making curriculum decisions.

### Effects of parent involvement

There have been many studies undertaken with the goal of measuring the effects of parent involvement. The

publication Parent Participation--The Evidence Grows, edited by Anne Henderson, summarized many of these studies.

Henderson concluded:

When parents show a strong interest in their children's schooling, they promote the development of attitudes that are key to achievement, attitudes that are more a product of how the family interacts than of its societal class or income. If schools treat parents as powerless or unimportant, or if they discourage parents from taking an interest, they promote the development of attitudes in parents, and consequently in their children, that inhibit achievement.<sup>31</sup>

Mimi Stern's parent-as-tutor model illustrated how parents helping their child at home can result in increased motivation of the child, improved performance of the child, and improved self-image of the parent.<sup>32</sup> (See appendix C for a pictorial representation of Stern's parent-as-tutor model.) On the other hand, Catherine Chilman's parent-teacher-child triangle illustrated the interdependence of parent, student and teacher.<sup>33</sup> (See appendix D for a pictorial representation of Chilman's parent-teacher-child triangle.)

### Societal concerns

The 1979 publication Citizen Participation in Educa-

tion Annotated Bibliography, by Don Davies and Ross Zerchykov, contains over 800 annotations describing sources of information regarding school/home interaction emphasizing parent participation in decision-making, policy development, and school governance.<sup>34</sup> Don Davies, president of The Institute for Responsive Education, was emphatic about the importance of parental involvement at the Methods of Achieving Parent Partnerships National Conference held in Indianapolis, Indiana in November, 1985. Davies stated:

Back in the sixties there was societal dynamite. Parents need to once again bring a new vision to schools that is difficult for those from within to bring. . . . Parents who believe in social justice and equity can bring a different kind of vision and prod those systems not to accept a new elitist formulation of what the goals of American education are all about. . . . In order to be consistent with our highest democratic ideals, be excellent and equitable for all children.<sup>35</sup>

The modules included in this study contain information regarding specific ways school personnel can help parents to help students at home as well as broaden societal factors related to parent/school interaction.

### Individuality

Individuality was the fourth legacy. Individuality was one of the main reasons why the methodological process

of collecting, analyzing, and generalizing research results in the area of parent involvement was problematic. Each school's novel history, customs, and regularities resulted in that school's individual attitude, approach, amount, and type of parent involvement. Because of individuality the modules in this study were based on on-going formal and informal needs assessment of the participants involved in the staff development.

### Sharing of Legacies

Kagan believed that the legacies of parent/school relations, separation, disequilibrium, ambiguity, and individuality have molded the lexion of parent/school interaction.<sup>36</sup> An individual whose goal is to encourage growth and development of school personnel in the area of parent/school interaction should be aware of the legacies and share his or her knowledge about them with school personnel during staff development sessions.

### Obstacles to Successful Parent/School Interaction in Urban Settings

In order to plan staff development for school personnel in the area of parent/school interaction, one should be aware of the obstacles which must be overcome before successful interaction can take place. Among the

major obstacles to successful parent/school interaction in urban settings in the 1980s are: conflicting misconceptions between black parents and white teachers which often result in conflict and apathy,<sup>37</sup> isolation of schools and professionals from the community,<sup>38</sup> emphasis on control or compliance rather than a search for strategies to achieve effective parent/school interaction,<sup>39</sup> emphasis on public relations rather than meaningful interaction.<sup>40</sup> reluctance of school personnel to share power,<sup>41</sup> unionization of school personnel, feelings of inadequacy and unimportance to school personnel on the part of parents, lack of time on the part of both parents and school personnel,<sup>42</sup> territorial protection<sup>43</sup> the need to blame someone else if a child does not do well in school,<sup>44</sup> the fact that everyone has his or her own conception of the system<sup>45</sup> and the social conditions of the 1980s discussed in the historical perspective section of this chapter.

Sara Lawrence Lightfoot contended that the major obstacle in parent/school interaction in urban settings was the fact that school personnel continued to "cling to the ideal images of family." She believed that school personnel would not be able to "search for constructive alliances with the majority of families who do not match these images,"<sup>46</sup>



until they are able to abrogate the ideal middle-class image myth which has become entrenched in their minds. Lightfoot elaborated on her contention that different perceptions and priorities held by parents and school personnel in communities composed of minority families resulted in a one-way process with the school having the power and seldom meeting the needs of the parents or children within the community.<sup>47</sup>

Annette Lareau and Charles Benson, Shirl E. Gilbert, II and Geneva Gay, and Jawanza Kunjufu concur with Lightfoot's beliefs. Lareau and Benson concluded based on results of a study they conducted with middle class and working class families in the San Francisco Bay areas, that there was a variation in the manner in which schools responded to social and cultural differences of families with emphasis on the fact that there was a disregard for the social and cultural differences of the working class families.<sup>48</sup>

Gilbert and Gay stated in the October, 1985 edition of Phi

Delta Kappan:

Educators cannot begin to think seriously about how to teach academic skills to black students within the context of a black cultural environment until they eliminate their negative biases toward black children and the black community. They will need to increase their knowledge of the substance and dynamics of black culture and explore ways to combine the cultural orientation of black children with the cultural norms and instructional strategies of schools.<sup>49</sup>



Kunjufu, in Developing Postiive Self Images and Discipline in Black Children, discussed the need for better understanding the learning styles and culture of black children. The modules within this study were developed with a goal of exposing participants to materials, such as Kunjufu's book and Rudine Sims' monograph Shadow and Substance, which discussed Afro-American children's literature,<sup>51</sup> which will decrease the cultural gap between school personnel and the individuals living in the community where they work.

Another major obstacle to parent/school interaction was the fact that the majority of school personnel had not received pre-service or in-service training in the area of parent/school interaction. Joyce L. Epstein and Henry Jay Becker, who had done a great deal of research at Johns Hopkins University in the area of parent involvement, reported that the training or lack of training, as well as the experiences and attitudes of individual teachers, played a large role in determining whether or not they chose to develop parent-involvement programs.<sup>52</sup> One of the major goals of the staff development designed as part of this study was to overcome the aforementioned obstacle.

## Staff Development--Individual and Organizational Dimensions

Staff development assumes a need for change. It has both individual and organizational dimensions. The probability that change and learning will take place is increased if teacher traits, adult learning considerations, and other individual and organizational factors are considered during the planning, implementation, and evaluation of staff development.

### Teacher Traits

The three major traits dominant in teachers according to Ronald Barth in Run School Run were: conservatism, a preference for the familiar; presentism, a tendency to live from day to day; and individualism, a quality of loneliness and isolation.<sup>53</sup> Staff developers can transcend the adverse effects of these traits by applying adult learning factors during the planning, implementation, and evaluation stages of staff development.

### Adult Learning Factors

The adult learning factors formulated by Fred H. Wood and Steven R. Thompson were used by the workshop facilitator, particularly when designing activities to be included in the modules. Wood and Thompson's factors included: (a) adults

commit to learning when the goals and objectives are considered realistic and important to them, (b) adults will learn, retain and use what they perceive as relevant, (c) adults need feedback, (d) adult learning is ego involved, (e) adults have a fear of failure, (f) individualism is appropriate for adults, (g) adults want to be involved in assessment, selection of objectives, and activities, (h) adults will resist learning situations which they believe are an attack on their competency, (i) adults reject prescription by others for their learning especially when what is prescribed is viewed as an attack on what they are presently doing, (j) adult learning is enhanced by behaviors that demonstrate respect, trust, and concern for the learner, (k) more adults may be operating at the concrete operational state rather than the formal operational stage of intellectual development, and (l) adults prefer to learn in informal learning situations where social interaction can take place among learners.<sup>54</sup>

#### Other Factors

Specificity of focus, need for identification of appropriate resources and support and importance of delineation of the role of the staff development leader were

among the factors identified as important in successful staff development in the Phi Delta Kappan publication Why Some Urban Schools Succeed.<sup>55</sup> The workshop facilitator used these factors as well as one of the major findings of the Rand Change Agent Study, which emphasized the importance of involving staff members in the decision-making process during the design, implementation and evaluation of staff development designed to prepare school personnel for parent/school interaction.<sup>56</sup>

#### School as an Organization

The workshop facilitator also adopted one of the assumptions suggested by Milbrey Wallin McLaughlin and David D. March following the Rand Change Agent Study. The assumption suggested that it is important that staff development be viewed within the context of the school as an organization. McLaughlin and March stated, "Within the most successful projects, the project was not a 'project' at all, but an integral part of an ongoing problem-solving and improvement process within the school."<sup>57</sup> The modules developed for this study were constructed based on the premise that they would serve as a vehicle for dealing with the problem of lack of preparation of teachers and other

school personnel in parent/school interaction. The modules were intended to be a part of ongoing processes rather than an end product. They were constructed based upon the action research process which consisted of related problem identification, the gathering and analyzing of data, and action taken to resolve the identified problem.<sup>58</sup> Betty Dillion Peterson stated in the ASCD publication Staff Development/Organizational Development "successful authentic organizational development is long-term and has three phases--entry, initial operation, and institutionalization."<sup>59</sup>

Sarason acknowledged "The way in which the change process is conceptualized is far more fateful for success or failure than the educational method of content."<sup>60</sup> There is no step-by-step recipe that can be followed to make change take place and/or make staff development successful. The process must be flexible and on-going in order to meet the ever changing and never ending needs of individuals and the organization. As Byrd L. Jones stated in Working Papers for the 1990s: Survival Strategies for Communities and Schools, "Individual improvement and an enhanced organizational climate synergistically support each other."<sup>61</sup>



The modules developed as part of this study attempted to create the synergy communicated by Jones.

Training School Personnel for Parent  
School Interaction

One of the major reasons the participatory movement failed was the fact that the training of school personnel was not considered of major importance to the success of the movement. Emphasis was placed on training parents with the assumption that school personnel did not need training to fulfill their role regarding parent/school interaction. Because they were not trained, school personnel's lack of knowledge and their fears remained intact and were obstacles to successful interaction with parents.

Elizabeth J. Webster stated: "Although there appears to be a growing body of literature about parents, there is still a paucity of literature with specific suggestions to help professionals improve their practice with parents."<sup>62</sup> Robert B. Rutherford and Eugene Edgar corroborated Webster's view when they stated: "The development of effective teacher parent interaction is one component frequently missing from teacher training programs."<sup>63</sup> If parent/school interaction is to succeed, personnel must receive training. A landmark study was conducted by the Southwest Educational

Development Laboratory to glean information from school personnel and parents regarding their attitudes. Based on results of the study, David L. Williams and Nancy Feyl Chaukin concluded:

The attitudes of teachers and educators are critical to the development of effective parent involvement programs and activities. It is not enough to have knowledge and skills about parent involvement: understanding is also important. Teacher training about parent involvement for both preservice and inservice educators is essential.<sup>64</sup>

There were eight recommendations which Williams and Chaukin made as a result of the findings of the Parent Involvement in Education Project regarding training school personnel for parent involvement. The eight recommendations were: (1) training should be developmentally sequenced and progress from traditional types of parent involvement, such as seeking parents' cooperation, to more non-traditional types such as parents and staff as partners in education, (2) a priority of the training should be to provide participants with an overview of the parent involvement movement, as well as providing them with knowledge, understanding, and skills in the area of parent involvement, (3) parent involvement should be presented as an integral part of teachers' preparation rather than an attachment to

it, (4) training sessions should include information from related knowledge bases which are imperative to the success of parent involvement. One such knowledge base would be adult learners. (5) Participants receiving training should be afforded the opportunity to apply the knowledge, understanding and skills they have gained from the training to develop and/or sharpen their skills, (6) if training is to be effective a series of training sessions needs to be scheduled rather than a single session, (7) principals and other administrators should be involved in the training so that they become part of the effort to make cooperation between the home and the school more synergistic; and (8) training should stress the importance of staff providing parents with information, materials, and opportunities to share concerns and insights, as a key factor in strengthening parent/school interaction.<sup>65</sup> The recommendations were reviewed by the workshop facilitator when planning, implementing, and evaluating the modules that were part of this study.

Communication--A Means and a Goal of  
Parent/School Interaction

Successful staff development that emphasizes inter-

action has communication as its focal point. Communication is the major means of achieving the goal of increasing parent/school interaction as well as the goal itself.

When selecting the activities for inclusion in the modules that were a part of this study, the workshop facilitator was cognizant of Joseph C. Rotter and Edward H. Robinson's belief regarding parent/school interaction, that:

Human interactions can have a positive influence on the course of education. As the professional member of the team, the teacher has a responsibility to assume the burden not for the outcome, but for assuring that the outcome is as productive as possible. Interpersonal communication skills form the base of success or failure of this endeavor.<sup>66</sup>

The workshop facilitator encouraged school personnel to use Rotter and Robinson's systematic interpersonal communications model which aimed at school personnel establishing and maintaining a relationship with parents that moves from exploitation to understanding,<sup>67</sup> to develop and present activities that encourage successful communication.

Ben M. Harris believed that activities in which two-way communication was prevalent increased the chances for feedback and interaction, as well as increased the

degree of experience impact.<sup>68</sup> Participants felt that they had some control over activities that involved two-way communication, their needs were given consideration, and they were a part of the process rather than a group of individuals who needed to be lectured to in a "how to improve" manner. For these reasons the workshop facilitator developed brainstorming, group discussions, buzz sessions, and role playing activities and de-emphasized the lecture approach when developing the activities included in the modules.

There are prerequisites to successful parent/school communication. Rutherford and Edgar in Teachers and Parents: A Guide to Interaction and Cooperation stated their belief that the two prerequisites were: (1) a belief by school personnel that parents have a role in the educational process and (2) that parents and school personnel trust one another.<sup>69</sup> Before there can be successful communication there must be cooperation and before there can be cooperation there must be trust. These two prerequisites served as the foundation for the modules included in this study:

Rutherford and Edgar also developed a process for



developing cooperation involving goal setting, selecting a solution, implementation and feedback and evaluation and sharing of results. This process was presented to workshop participants as a framework from which they could build cooperation with parents. Also included were suggested methods of communicating with parents via home visits, telephone conversations, problem-solving conferences, and suggestions on how to communicate with angry, hostile, or apathetic parents.

The process of cooperation was used as a model for the development of the modules included in this study and the model the participants were encouraged to use when interacting with parents as it allowed for a group determination of goals, stated explicit outcomes, activities were jointly determined. Everyone had an opportunity to become actively involved, open communication was stressed, everyone was treated as an important individual, and all involved shared in the success and failures.<sup>70</sup>

Improved parent/school interactions depend on effective communication.<sup>71</sup> A belief in this statement and the results of the needs assessment survey given to the staff at Centennial in which they requested staff development in the area of communication, led the workshop facilitator to

include activities which would afford participants the opportunity to discuss, practice, and understand the standard communication paradigm which deals with an individual encoding items and transmitting a message to another individual who decodes the message and the importance of the second individual understanding the message as the transmitter intended it. Reasons why the message may not be understood such as the use of educational jargon or lack of specificity, became part of the modules.

Methods of communicating information such as report cards, informal notes, work samples, and most importantly, the parent conference procedure developed by Stuart M. Losen and Bert Diament in Parent Teacher Conferences in Schools involving opening, exploratory, problem solving and follow-up stages were included in the modules.<sup>72</sup> Components of effective interpersonal communication, such as active listening and sending of messages as outlined by Gordon, were integrated into the modules as well.<sup>73</sup> Regardless of the specific topic emphasized in each of the modules, two-way communication was the means through which the topic was presented and was also the goal of the activity.

### Epilogue

Interaction between the family and the schools is one of the key inter-relationships that defines the possi-

bilities and limitations of public education in the 1980s, according to Barbara J. Love, Byrd L. Jones, and Atron A. Gentry in "The Politics of Urban Education for the 80s."<sup>74</sup> For successful interaction to take place parents need to be redefined as resources. Sarason contended:

The recognition that parents and other community groups should be involved in the change process is tantamount to redefining them as resources; i.e., to see them as possessing power and knowledge essential to the change process, and capable of understanding and contributing to the substance and process of change.<sup>75</sup>

Staff development designed to assist school personnel understand parents' viewpoints, accept the redefinition of parents as resources and provide school personnel with interpersonal communication skills which will prepare them for their role in parent/school interaction is crucial for education's future. Seymour Sarason and John Doris stated, in referring to the need to prepare school personnel for this onerous task:

One can justify giving no preparation for this task if one assumes it requires an ability that is already possessed by all human beings or that it is such an unimportant function that it does not deserve special training. Both assumptions are clearly untenable.<sup>76</sup>

## C H A P T E R I I I

### THE PLANNING PROCESS

#### Introduction

Effective staff development is related to organizational goals, shares some common processes, and is tailored to meet immediate and specific needs of participants. During the planning stage of this project the workshop facilitator included processes which could be common to most staff development projects, such as assessing resources, and developed, distributed, and tabulated needs assessment surveys to determine the specific immediate needs of the participants. All processes were undertaken in an exploratory attempt to meet organizational goals of increased parent/school interactions. This exploration may suggest to others with similar goals processes they may wish to adopt or adapt in their quest to reach their goals.

#### Process Model of Planning

A process model of planning, stressing flexibility, shared expertise, open communication, trust, and respect was used throughout the planning stage of this project. Emphasis

was placed upon determination of readiness for training in the area of parent/staff interaction by various individuals and groups that were involved, the development of goals, the needs assessment procedure, the determination of available resources, and the actual program design. Mobilization of support for the concept of training school staff for parent/school interaction was a major goal throughout the planning stage of the project.

#### Determination of Readiness

Readiness is often the most forgotten aspect of staff development programs according to Fred H. Wood, Steven R. Thompson, and Sister Frances Russell in Staff Development/Organizational Development.<sup>1</sup> The individual and groups whose readiness would determine the success or failure of this project were the facilitator/researcher, the superintendent of schools, the building principal and the staff and parents in the school where the staff development took place. It was imperative, if the project were to succeed, that the aforementioned individuals had an understanding of, and a commitment to the concept of parent/school interaction, as well as a belief in the worthiness of training staff for their role in such interaction. It was also important that the guest speakers and panelists selected to participate, at



a later stage in the planning process, exhibited a belief in the concept and merit of staff training in the area of parent/school interaction during their presentations.

#### Workshop Facilitator/Project Researcher

The workshop facilitator/project researcher selected training of teachers for parent/school interaction as a need for staff members based on research, personal experience and discussions with colleagues. During the readiness stage of the project the facilitator/researcher sought to: (1) discover if the individuals and groups who would be involved, directly and indirectly in the project, saw staff training for parent/school interaction as a need, and if so (2) discover if they would support the project. In addition to determining need and mobilizing support, the facilitator/researcher also believed a climate of readiness for training was imperative to the success of the project. The facilitator researcher saw her role as one which would require her, among other things, to be an initiator, stimulator, model, resource person, and coordinator of ideas. For this project to be successful she believed she had to use a practical approach, provide for the differentiated learning styles of the participants, and adjust content and/or approach

depending on the input and immediate needs of the participants.

### Superintendent of Schools

The superintendent of schools expressed interest in parent/school interaction from the first day he entered the district in 1977. At that time a group of Title I parents objected to the fact that only selected parents were "allowed" to review parts of the Title I application for government funding. The superintendent supported Title I parents' right to see the entire application and saw to it that they were given complete copies of the application. Soon after, the superintendent instituted the position of Title I District Coordinator and suggested that Title I parents form a screening committee to interview prospective candidates and recommend a candidate to fill the position. The committee's selection ultimately was named Title I Coordinator, and she was instructed by the superintendent of schools to consider parent involvement a major priority.

Throughout the past nine years, the superintendent has involved parents in trips to the state capitol to express the district's displeasure with state aid issues, included parents on textbook, report card, and other curriculum committees, worked closely with parent-teacher association groups, and supported compensatory education

parents' training conferences. When approached by the facilitator/researcher of this project, the superintendent expressed pleasure and support for the concept of training staff for parent/school interaction. He stated:

The trend today is away from parent involvement due to present societal conditions and pressures. For this trend to reverse, the schools must make overt attempts to use resources and programs to convince parents that they are needed. There is little evidence that schools are "tooling up" for this responsibility. The development of training modules intended to relieve fears teachers have regarding parent/school interaction and to assist teachers develop strategies is a positive step toward facilitating and increasing parent/school interaction.<sup>2</sup>

#### Building Principal

The principal of the Centennial Avenue School expressed a "buying in" attitude when approached by the facilitator/researcher regarding training of Centennial Avenue School teachers for parent/school interaction. The principal believed that some staff members resisted interaction with parents because they did not know what to say to parents, while others were "fearful" of parents. The principal stated he was pleased with the involvement of the core group of parent-teacher association parents who were involved, and he believed students would benefit if more parents were involved. The principal believed it was imperative to train staff for parent/school interaction before dealing with encouraging parents to become part of

the process. The principal agreed that parent/school interaction staff training take place at Centennial Avenue School during the winter of 1985 and that application of the skills and techniques and suggestions gleaned from the training go into effect immediately.

### Staff Members

The staff members at Centennial Avenue School were surveyed to determine (1) how many had received preservice or inservice training in the area of parent/school interaction and (2) how many would be interested in receiving training in the area of parent/school interaction. In response, (1) 100 percent reported that they had received no preservice or inservice training and (2) 88 percent reported that they would be interested in receiving training in the area of parent/school interaction.

During informal interview with staff members, held on an individual basis, the majority of the blame for lack of parent/school interaction was placed on parents. Among the reasons most often given were: lack of parent interest, illiteracy of the parents, and unavailability of parents because of work obligations. These candid opinions provided the workshop facilitator with relevant input for development of the modules.



## Parents

Parents of students enrolled in Centennial Avenue School were surveyed and interviewed informally. Survey results indicated that 75 percent (19) of the twenty-seven parents surveyed believed that school staff did not encourage parent/school interaction. During informal interviews of parents the majority placed blame for lack of parent/school interaction on school staff (particularly teachers). Among the reasons most often mentioned were: "Teachers don't think parents are capable of helping their children," and "Teachers make parents feel unwanted." When queried as to their opinions regarding the value of training teachers for parent/school interaction, the majority of parents (66 percent) indicated in their opinion such training would be worthwhile. Two parents stated reasons why they believed training school personnel for parent/school interaction would not be worthwhile. Their comments were as follows: "Training isn't going to stop teachers from feeling they are better than parents," and "You can't train people to treat other people like human beings. If they're not brought up to do it, you can't change them."

## Readiness Findings

The workshop facilitator found that the majority of individuals and/or groups who would be directly or indirectly affected by the training of staff at Centennial



Avenue School (a) believed there was a need for such training and (b) supported the concept that such training be planned, implemented and evaluated during the winter of 1985. The facilitator/researcher also believed, based on conversations and feedback from staff, that there was a willingness on their part to consider new behaviors regarding the parent/school interaction issue.

### Project Goals

The facilitator/researcher, based on input from the parties involved in the readiness stage, research, discussions with colleagues, and personal experience, formulated the major goals of the staff development project. They were: (1) to increase staff members' understanding of their own attitudes, fears, and strengths regarding parent/school interaction, (2) to increase staff members' understanding of parents' attitudes, fears, and strengths regarding parent/school interaction, and (3) to assist staff to develop strategies which will enhance their role in parent/school interaction.

### Needs Assessment Surveys and Interviews

Thomas S. Popkewitz defined needs assessment as a type of educational survey which is a mechanism through which people expressed their preferences, opinions, and/or wants.<sup>3</sup> A variety of approaches, such as surveys, questionnaires, and interviews were used to glean needs assessment

information. The needs assessment information contained in this study included: (1) results of surveys and studies completed throughout the country to substantiate the need for training teachers for parent/school interaction, (2) surveys conducted on a district-wide basis to provide general input, and (3) surveys and interviews held with Centennial Avenue School staff and parents to ascertain specific needs and attitudes.

#### External Surveys and Studies

Surveys and studies, external to Roosevelt and information gleaned from country-wide surveys and studies substantiated a need to provide staff development in the area of parent/school interaction. These surveys or studies included information contained in: (a) A study entitled State Education Agencies and Parent Involvement conducted by the Center for the Study of Parent Involvement,<sup>4</sup> (b) A statewide survey conducted in Maryland by Joyce L. Epstein,<sup>5</sup> (c) A survey of Nassau County principals conducted by this researcher and (d) Parent Involvement in Education Project conducted by Southwest Educational Development Laboratory.<sup>6</sup>

#### Roosevelt District-wide Surveys--Parents, Staff, Board of Education, and Administrators' Input

A report entitled, A Report on Roosevelt Public School Strengths and Potential Improvements, compiled by Byrd L. Jones was distributed in January, 1983. The report

summarized findings of participants enrolled in the Roosevelt/University of Massachusetts staff development program based on needs assessment and interview surveys completed by Roosevelt staff, residents, and students. Portions of the report contained information that substantiated the need for teacher training in parent/school interaction. The citizen survey was divided into four groups: Stable household with children attending the Roosevelt schools, revolving door households with children attending the Roosevelt schools, and taxpayers without children. Although there were separate conclusions reached, based on the input of individuals queried in each group, the major conclusions reached by the Roosevelt/University of Massachusetts staff development participants who completed the citizen portion of the report were:

- (1) Overall, residents queried expressed interest and support for the Roosevelt schools;
- (2) those who participated in the interviews were open-minded and eager to learn, and
- (3) that if a concerted effort were made by school personnel to involve residents and maintain active communication with them, many of the residents would actively participate.<sup>7</sup>

Participation would result in increased parent/school interaction if school staff knew how to go about involving parents and maintaining active communication.

Secondly, the same report contained a staff survey which reported results obtained by a survey completed by 53 percent of the Roosevelt elementary school staff. Results reported in the elementary staff section of the report indicated: There are staff members who believe (a) insufficient inservice is provided to staff; (b) there is a need for more teacher workshops; (c) more time is needed for teacher/parent workshops; (d) administrators could be more supportive with parent/teacher problems; (e) there is a lack of parental support; and (f) uninvolved parents and parent complaints are among the factors that contribute to teachers' frustrations, helplessness and anger.<sup>8</sup> Results indicated that there were staff members who believed that inservice was a need within the district and that parent/school concerns were an area that should be addressed.

Thirdly, administrators and board of education members were surveyed to discover what they considered areas of greatest need within the Roosevelt School District. In this section of the study those queried were asked to respond to the items included twice--first in relation to "what is," and second, in regard to what "should be." The items with the highest mean difference over 1.0 in each



category were considered to indicate areas of greatest need and those having the highest impact potential. Results of both board of education and administrators' surveys indicated that: (1) There was a need within the district for training programs for both teachers and administrators and (2) there was a need for "careful assessment of community desires."<sup>9</sup> Staff needed to be trained in order to successfully deal with assessing community desires and communicating with parents.

Centennial Needs Assessment Parent/School  
Interaction Staff Survey

A needs assessment survey was administered to Centennial Avenue School staff members in order to afford those who would be participating in the implementation stage of the project the opportunity to participate in the planning process, as suggested by Don Davies in For Every School a Community.<sup>10</sup> The major goals of the survey were to: (1) determine attitudes staff members had toward various aspects of parent/school interaction and (2) identify the areas of parent/school interaction which staff members wanted included in parent/school interaction workshops. (See appendix E-1 which contains Centennial Needs Assess-



ment Parent/School Interaction Staff Survey.)

### Staff Surveyed

All staff members were surveyed. This included: classroom teachers, teacher assistants, the principal, the librarian, the psychologist, the social worker, the writing coordinator, the math coordinator, the reading coordinator, the nurse, the gym teacher, the music teacher, and the English as a second language teacher. The facilitator/researcher believed that it was important to train all school personnel rather than restrict the training to classroom teachers. Since the training sessions were open to all staff members, it was imperative that all staff members be afforded the opportunity to provide input. Surveys were distributed on a personal basis, and 100 percent were completed and returned within two days.

### Results and Findings

1(A). Results indicated that the majority of the staff (84 percent) believed that parents had a responsibility to see that their child's individual needs were met.

1(B). Results indicated that all staff members (100 percent) believed that it was a responsibility of the school staff to provide the best education possible based on individual student needs.

1(C). Results indicated that although the majority of the staff believed that Centennial parents were not hostile (84 percent), were concerned (79 percent), and were positive (79 percent), the majority also believed that parents were uninvolved (84 percent), not good role models (66 percent) and were closed minded (53 percent). The results obtained from 1(C) provided the workshop facilitator with an overview of staff attitudes toward parents and the degree of intensity of attitudes which was valuable information in determining the content of the training modules.

2. Results of Question II which asked staff to indicate school-related-activities they believed parents should be involved in are reported in table 1.

TABLE I

Ranked list of affirmative responses

Parents should:

Category designation	Categories	Percent affirmative
A.	Be part of a parent teacher association	100%
E.	Be involved in fund-raising activities	100%
D.	Be field trip chaperones	97%
F.	Be volunteers in the school outside of the classroom	97%
C.	Help their children with homework	95%
H.	Serve in an advisory capacity as part of a parents advisory council	92%
B.	Be class mother or father	85%
I.	Collaborate with school personnel in development of school discipline codes	55%
G.	Be volunteers within the classroom setting	55%
J.	Be involved in curriculum development and review	37%
K.	Play a role in determining expenditures for equipment and instructional materials	37%
L.	Play a role in the selection of individuals for teaching and administrative positions	24%

Results indicated that a large majority of the staff believed that parents should be involved with organizational activities related to the school (Parent-Teacher Association [100 percent], and parent advisory councils [92 percent]), be involved with activities outside of the classroom (fund raising [100 percent], field trips [97 percent], volunteer to help in the school outside of the classroom [97 percent] including volunteering to be classmothers or fathers [87 percent], and helping their children with homework [95 percent]). A slight majority [55 percent] believed parents should be involved in the development of a school discipline code, and a minority believed parents should be involved in other decision-making activities listed which included: curriculum development and review [37 percent], determining expenditures [31 percent], and selecting individuals for teaching and administrative positions [24 percent]. The results of Question II provided the facilitator/researcher with valuable information regarding what staff perceived parents' roles within the school should be. This information was used in the development of the training modules.

3. In Question 3, staff were requested to list topics which they would like included if they were to attend parent/school interaction workshops. Upon completion of this task, the researcher categorized the items into four major areas. The results of this categorization are

contained in table 2.

TABLE 2

Topics which staff requested be included  
in parent/school interaction  
workshops

Percent responding in the designated area	Area
84%	1. Communication between parents and school staff
66%	2. Childrens' behavior--role of staff and parents
63%	3. How parents can help at home--the role of the teacher in the process
16%	4. Parents and curriculum

In the area of communication between parents and school staff the topics requested were: parent conferences--how to make effective, single parents, apathetic parents, ways to improve parent/teacher relationships, dealing with parents of students with academic problems, dealing with parents of students with behavior problems, dealing with hostile parents, needs of parents and teachers, ways of presenting dissatisfied observances to parents, encouraging



parent participation and legal role of parents.

In the area of children's behavior--role of staff and parents the topics requested were: role of parents regarding discipline of their child in school, role of parents in development of their child's morals, and role of parents in teaching their child respect.

In the area of how parents can help at home--the role of the teacher in this process, the topics requested were: reading, how to help at home (general), worthwhile extra-curricular activities, role of parents in educating their child, encourage the child to participate in class discussions, development of work habits, development of study habits, preparation for beginning school, encourage students to believe that learning can be fun, improve conditions in the home that affect students' lives, math, English, homework, nutrition, setting, writing, hygiene, social development, student/parent projects, and role of love in the learning process.

In the area of parents and curriculum topics requested were: ways to help parents understand curriculum, ways to include parents in curriculum development and review, and role of parents regarding curriculum.

The results provided the facilitator/researcher with valuable information regarding staff training needs from the perspective of those who would be receiving the training.

The workshop facilitator used these results to structure the training modules keeping in mind the fact that needs change and that the modules would be adjusted based on immediate needs of the workshop participants. In addition to finding out needs of staff on surveys, the facilitator/researcher interviewed several staff members to obtain insights about possible approaches that may not have been listed on surveys.

Wood, Thompson and Russell stated that interviews provided the most honest and accurate information because the interview was more personal than a questionnaire.<sup>10</sup> During interviews, one staff member mentioned "a fear of angry parents" and related an incident that led to this fear. Another staff member spoke in detail about a situation in which she felt administration incorrectly had backed a parent in a parent/teacher confrontation. This situation resulted in a negative attitude toward parent involvement in the case of the teacher relating the incident. Being aware of incidents or perceptions that played a role in staff's development of attitudes toward parent/school interaction assisted the facilitator/researcher in developing workshop modules.

#### Assessment of Available Resources

The facilitator/researcher assessed the availability

of human, funding, and material resources that would be needed to successfully implement the training modules. Funding resources to pay staff members who would be involved in the training were available within the district's Chapter I budget. Human resources, such as prospective guest panelists and speakers, were contacted by the workshop facilitator based on the areas of interest indicated by prospective workshop participants on the Centennial Avenue School Parent/School Interaction Staff Needs Assessment Survey. The facilitator/researcher explained to the individuals contacted that the workshops would follow an action research procedure and, therefore, were always subject to change of concentration based on participants' input and immediate needs. The facilitator/researcher gathered materials on the topic of parent/school interaction from her personal collection, colleagues, libraries, and publishing companies in preparation for the development and implementation of the training modules. The availability of audio-visual equipment that might be needed was also checked.

#### Design

Having determined readiness of individuals, and groups who would be directly and indirectly involved with the training of staff for parent/school interaction, the workshop facilitator compiled and interpreted the results

of the needs assessment surveys and interviews, assessed the human, financial, and material resources available, mobilized support for the project, and having established communication with the prospective participants, the facilitator/researcher designed the training modules. Included in the design process were: (a) the development of the module format, (b) the creation of objectives, procedures and evaluation questions which comprised the modules, and (c) decisions regarding logistical concerns.

#### Development of the Module Format

Before the module format could be developed, it was necessary to determine the topics to be included in each module. Based on the input received from prospective trainees on the needs assessment survey, the facilitator/researcher tentatively determined that since the largest percentage (84 percent) indicated communication between parents and school staff was the area they would like to receive training in, two modules would emphasize communication. Since topics falling under the headings of the role of parents and school staff and how teachers can prepare parents to help their children at home were mentioned by a majority of the staff (66 percent and 63 percent, respectively) as areas staff would like training in, the facilitator/researcher tentatively determined that one



module would be devoted to each of the aforementioned topics. Since only 16 percent of the staff members surveyed indicated an interest in parents and curriculum, the facilitator/researcher tentatively decided to integrate information and activities in this area into the communication and how teachers can prepare parents to help their children at home modules.

Based on the input from the individuals and groups who were involved in the readiness and needs assessment portions of the planning process, research, personal experience, and experiences of colleagues, the facilitator/researcher developed the module format. The modules were formatted to include objectives, procedures and evaluation questions. Objectives were developed to provide clarification of intent, focus for development, and criteria for evaluation. The objectives served as a means of providing an "acknowledged emphasis."<sup>11</sup> Procedures were developed based upon appropriateness in light of the corresponding objective and with the aim of providing participants with a variety of activities. The evaluation questions were developed with the intention of providing the facilitator with criterion-based evaluation information in regard to each objective. Due to the fact that this project was based on an action research model, feedback and input information were imperative at the conclusion of a session before



developing the specific objectives, procedures, and evaluation questions that should be included in the modules.

### Logistical Concerns

Logistical concerns that were exigent in the design of the program included: Length of the sessions, days of the week on which the workshop would be given, and where the workshops would be held. The workshop facilitator determined, based on projected content, that session 1, which would serve as an introduction to all Centennial staff members to the topic of parent/school interaction, would be ninety minutes; the remainder of the sessions (four) would be one hundred twenty minutes. The facilitator felt that the day of the week should be determined by the majority of those who planned to participate. Participants were afforded the opportunity to select a day at the introductory session. The workshop facilitator and the building principal selected the library as the location because of its attractiveness, acoustics, and mobility of furniture conducive to both small and large group instruction.

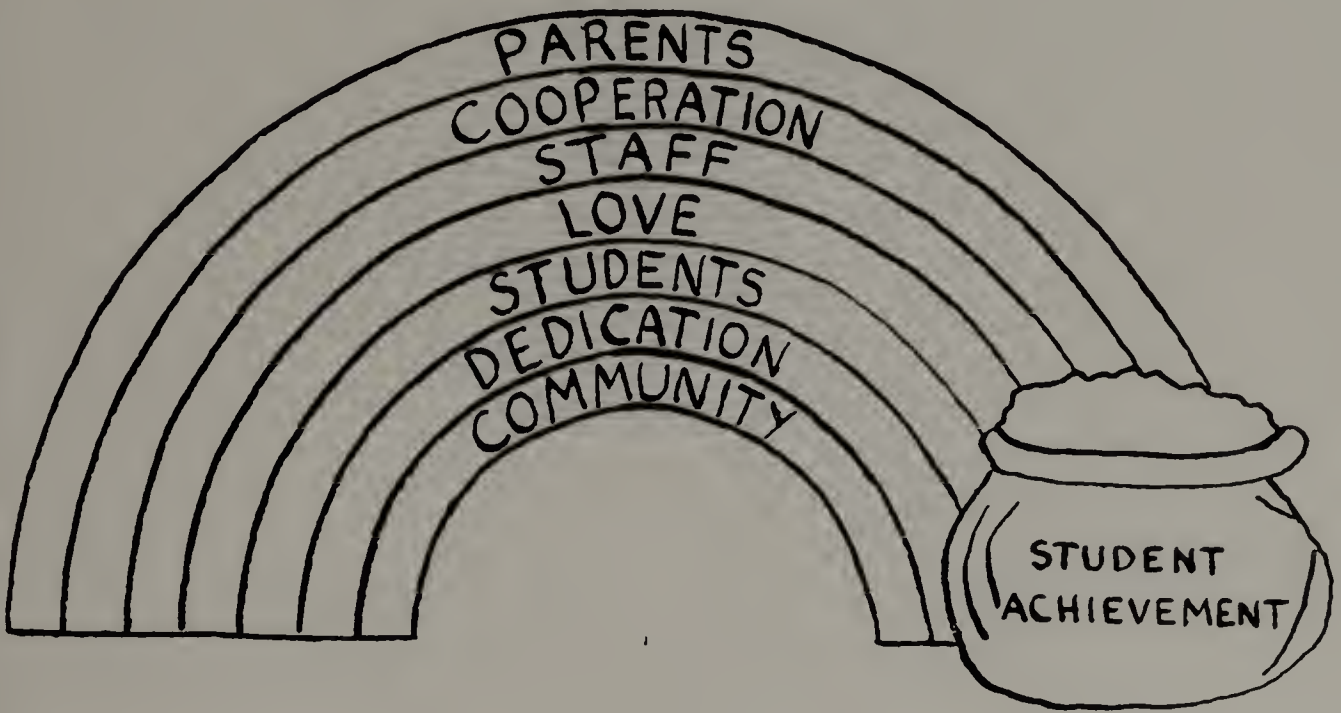
### Epilogue

Sara Lawrence Lightfoot discussed the importance of "looking beyond fences" in Worlds Apart;<sup>12</sup> Don Davies suggested moving beyond "window dressing activities" in Making Citizen Participation Work.<sup>13</sup> The modules developed

as part of this study were based on the researcher's belief that "together we can." A pictorial representation of the researcher's belief is contained on an illustration which follows.

PARENT/SCHOOL INTERACTION  
WORKSHOPS

"Together We Can"



CENTENNIAL AVE. SCHOOL  
1985

WORKSHOP FACILITATOR: Susan D. Savitt

## C H A P T E R I V

### THE IMPLEMENTATION PROCESS

#### Introduction

Each of the five modules developed to train school personnel for parent/school interaction included objectives, procedures, and evaluation questions. In developing each workshop and presenting it, there were ideas considered and discarded, unanticipated occurrences and later reflections that helped describe the process and clarified the intent of each activity.

#### Module 1--Introduction to Parent/School Interaction

##### Pre Session Commentary

The building principal introduced the workshop facilitator to the staff and stressed the facilitator's dedication to the "betterment of the district" and "the expertise and motivation which she possessed." The facilitator greeted the participants and indicated that she looked forward to being involved in a project with a school staff composed of "dedicated and knowledgeable" individuals. The

facilitator explained how she became interested in parent/school interaction through association with Title I (now Chapter I). The workshop facilitator distributed the agenda (figure 2) and proceeded with the presentation.

FIGURE 2

Parent/School Interaction Workshop 1 Agenda  
 Centennial Avenue School--February 6, 1985  
 Susan D. Savitt--Workshop Facilitator  
 Topic--Introduction to  
 Parent/School  
 Interaction

- I. Results--Parent/School Interaction Staff Survey (Fall, 1984--Centennial Avenue School)
  - A. Review
  - B. Discussion
- II. Importance of Parent/School Interaction
  - A. State Education Department article
  - B. Research findings
- III. Characteristics exhibited by school personnel when dealing with parents
  - A. Role playing activity
  - B. Article review
  - C. Discussion
- IV. Future parent/school interaction workshops
  - A. Framework
  - B. Content
  - C. Feedback
- V. Communication
  - A. Oral activity
  - B. Closing statement



## Objectives, Procedures, and Evaluation Questions

### Objective 1--module 1

To interest participants in parent/school interaction and to assist participants in conceptualizing possible implications of parent/school interaction for their school.

#### Procedure--objective 1--module 1

(1) The workshop facilitator distributed to each staff member "Results--Parent/School Interaction Staff Survey." (See appendix E).

(2) Participants were given three minutes to individually peruse survey results.

(3) The workshop facilitator encouraged participants to discuss survey results and realize implications.

#### Evaluation questions--objective 1--module 1

(1) Were participants able to interpret the results of the survey in the manner in which the results were reported?

(2) Did participants conceptualize implications for their school based on the survey results?

### Objective 2--module 1

To substantiate the importance of parent/school interaction according to the New York State Education Department, and research findings.

Procedure--objective 2--module 1

(1) The workshop facilitator distributed and summarized orally "Parent Education--It's Not Just for Parents," prepared by the New York State Education Department.<sup>1</sup>

(2) The workshop facilitator shared with participants research findings and information regarding parent/school interaction which had been reported by authors and/or researchers such as Lightfoot, Epstein, Williams and Davies, all of whom were included in Chapter I or II of this study.

(3) The workshop facilitator asked participants to connect research findings to their school situation.

Evaluation questions--objective 2--module 1

(1) Did the information presented substantiate the importance of parent/school interaction?

(2) Were participants able to connect research findings to their own school situation?

Objective 3--module 1

To assist participants in recognizing various characteristics school personnel exhibit when communicating with parents.

Procedure--objective 3--module 1

- (1) The workshop facilitator:
  - (a) Distributed an article entitled, "What Do You Say To Parents After you Say Hello?"<sup>2</sup>
  - (b) Requested participants to turn to the last page of the article and read the classifications and commentaries describing several types of behavior possible during a parent/teacher conference.
  - (c) Asked for participant volunteers to role play each of the described behaviors. The facilitator played the role of the parent in each scenario.

(2) Participants suggested additional classifications and role played the new classifications.

(3) Participants discussed positive and negative factors of each new classification.

Evaluation questions--objective 3-- module 1

(1) Were the participants able to differentiate between the various classifications of teacher behavior?

(2) Were participants able to recognize positive factors included in the behaviors?

(3) Were participants able to recognize negative factors included in the behaviors?

Objective 4--module 1

For participants to determine the modus operandi which they use when dealing with parents.

Procedure--objective 4--module 1

(1) The workshop facilitator:

- (a) Assigned participants to read the distributed article "What Do You Say to Parents After You Say Hello?"<sup>3</sup>
- (b) Instructed participants to complete the survey at the end of the article to determine which category combination they fall under.
- (c) Asked participants to reflect upon their placement on the survey and determine why they placed where they did, and if they were pleased with their placement.

#### Evaluation questions--objective 4--module 1

(1) Were participants able to determine the modus operandi they used when dealing with parents?

(2) Were participants able to objectively view their placement on the survey and suggest ways to improve their own modus operandi in dealing with parents?

#### Objective 5--module 1

To explain to prospective participants the framework of the workshop sessions to be held at their school in the area of parent/school interaction, impress upon them that those attending will have input into establishing specific content of the sessions, and receive prospective participants' input regarding organizational factors involved.

#### Procedure--objective 5--module 1

(1) The workshop facilitator outlined to prospective participants the framework of the four future parent/school

interaction sessions based upon the results of the needs assessment survey discussed earlier in the session.

(2) The workshop facilitator explained that participants would have input into determining what is emphasized in each session through both informal (oral) and formal (written feedback and input assessments) means.

(3) A participant information sheet was distributed to each participant requesting that they indicate:

(a) If they planned to attend the sessions;

(b) If so, the day of the week they preferred the sessions be held;

(c) Specific areas or questions they would like emphasized in session 2 on parent/school communication, and

(d) Any suggestions which they would like to make regarding guest speakers. (The participant information sheet is contained in appendix F).

Evaluation questions--objective 5--module 1

(1) Did the workshop facilitator clearly explain the framework of the workshops and the role participants would play in determining content of the sessions?

(2) Did staff members provide feedback requested regarding the organizational framework of the sessions?



### Objective 6--module 1

To illustrate to participants, in a humorous manner, the importance of communication.

### Procedure--objective 6--module 1

(1) The workshop facilitator:

(a) Distributed one section of "Communication Memorandum" (cut into five sections) to five different participants. (The "Communication Memorandum" is contained in appendix G.)

(b) Instructed each participant to sequentially read each section.

(c) Ended the session with the statement: "It is important to make sure the message which you are attempting to convey is understood as you intended it to be understood by the receiver."

### Evaluation question--objective 6--module 1

Did participants understand that school personnel need to be concerned not only with conveying a message to parents, but making sure the message is understood by the parents (receivers), as the message was intended to be understood?

### Summary

The majority of staff members who attended the session actively participated throughout the workshop. Results

of the needs assessment survey generated a great deal of dialogue, particularly item C-3. On item C-3, 66 percent of the respondents indicated that the majority of parents with whom they came in contact during the past year were uninvolved with their children's school.

Some of the reasons staff members gave for these results were as follows: Parents were "working two and three jobs," and did not have time to be involved with the child's school; parents felt uneasy in school settings because they did not feel "comfortable" communicating with school personnel; "Their own frustrations get in their way," and "Their lives are filled with so many negatives they can't take the chance of hearing bad news about their child." The workshop facilitator noted the comments and planned to include a discussion at a future workshop centering on ways school personnel can encourage parent involvement.

Staff members volunteered for the role playing activity which resulted in a discussion during which staff members at times defended the various classifications enacted, and others expressed reasons why they felt the portrayed behaviors of school personnel would be offensive to parents.

Since the worth of various qualities was being defended during this discussion, the workshop facilitator

asked the participants to select the most important quality in assuring positive communication with parents. The quality agreed on by the majority of those present was caring. Other qualities defended were: empathy, warmth, and sincerity.

Staff members appeared interested in the parent/school interaction workshops when the framework was explained by the workshop facilitator. Many staff members commented positively when informed that their input would determine the specific content of the workshops. One commented: "That will be new and different." Other staff members concurred. At the close of the session four staff members remained to share additional views and experiences with the facilitator.

#### Post Session Assessment

The workshop facilitator determined by reference to the Participation Information Sheet, the following:

- (1) The number of staff members interested in participating in the workshop sessions. (twenty-five)
- (2) The day of the week on which the majority of interested staff members would prefer the workshops be held. (Tuesday)

(3) Specific concerns and questions which participants indicated they would like addressed in session 2 on communication, included: "How to communicate with an angry parent," "What to do when you cannot reach a parent," "What to do if you know a child will be punished if school personnel tell parents anything negative about the child."

(4) Suggested guest speakers included the District Director of Pupil Personnel "to clarify the roles of the teacher and the parents when a student needs to be referred to The Committee on the Handicapped;" a principal from another building "recommended because he is known to run a well-disciplined school," and a principal from a neighboring district, recommended because of "her understanding as a resident of our community."

The workshop facilitator reviewed an audiotape of the first session and noted the comments made orally by staff members for follow-up at future sessions.

Module 2--Parent/School Interaction--  
What it is and how is it encouraged?

#### Pre Session Preparation

The workshop facilitator:

(1) Sent a memo to staff members, who indicated

interest in attending the workshops, stating the dates, time and place of each session.

(3) Requested the principal to select three parent representatives to attend the parent/school interaction staff training workshops. The suggestion was made that parents selected would have an interest in the concept of closer parent/school interaction, a willingness to be active participants in the workshop sessions, and an inclination toward attempting to involve additional parents in interaction with school personnel. Three parents who were actively involved with the Parent Teacher Association and/or the Compensatory Education Parent Advisory Council were selected and were willing to attend.

(3) Requested each principal in the other three elementary schools and the pre-kindergarten center to select a staff representative to attend the parent/school interaction workshops. The individual selected would be responsible for sharing the materials distributed and the information gleaned with the school personnel in his/her home school. Additionally, if parent/school interaction workshops were held in their buildings in the future, they would serve as resource persons and/or workshop facilitators.



Each principal complied with the request.

(4) Extended an invitation to each principal in the district to attend the sessions.

(5) Invited the District Superintendent of Schools to greet the participants at the beginning of session 2 and to indicate to the participants that parent/school interaction was a concept which the district supported and placed in a position of high priority.

(6) Met with the building principal for input regarding the content of session 2.

(7) Prepared module 2 based on oral and written input of staff members present at session 1, discussion with the principal, discussion with colleagues involved with parent/school interaction, research findings, and personal experience.

#### Pre Session Commentary

Refreshments were served before the session to give participants an opportunity to unwind after the workday and to set an informal mood. Participants, the workshop facilitator, and the Superintendent of Schools socialized during this repast and discussed the "Do Now" activity. The workshop facilitator distributed the agenda (figure 3) and began the presentation.

## FIGURE 3

Parent/School Interaction Workshop 2 Agenda  
 Centennial Avenue School--February 26, 1985  
 Susan D. Savitt--Workshop Facilitator  
 Topic--Parent/School Interaction--  
 What it is and how to encourage it

"Do Now" activity. List reasons why parents may avoid contact with school personnel.

I. Welcoming statements

- A. Superintendent of Schools--Dr. Ulysses Byas
- B. Building principal--Mr. Charles McIlwain

II. Workshop overview

III. Importance of parent/school interaction

- A. Research findings
- B. Systems theory
- C. Role of societal changes

IV. Interaction information

- A. Definition
- B. Prerequisites
- C. Components

V. Parent involvement models

- A. Presentation
- B. Compare and contrast
- C. Select

VI. Reasons why parents may avoid contact with school personnel  
 ("Do Now" activity follow-up)

- A. Discuss
- B. Share reasons as to how school personnel can attempt to combat the reasons discussed

VII. Ways to involve parents

- A. Brainstorm--in groups

B. Review Atlanta list

VIII. Homework assignment

IX. Feedback and input data

A. Complete

B. Return

### Objectives, Procedures and Evaluation Questions

#### Objective 1--module 2

To apprise school personnel of the fears and insecurities parents sometimes experience regarding contact with school personnel.

#### Procedure--objective 1--module 2

(1) The workshop facilitator requested that participants list possible reasons why parents may avoid contact with school personnel as their assigned "Do Now" activity.

(2) The workshop facilitator encouraged participants to discuss the "Do Now" activity with each other during the refreshment period, prior to the beginning of the session.

#### Evaluation questions--objective 1--module 2

(1) Did participants complete the assigned activity?

(2) Did participants communicate their opinions to each other regarding reasons why parents resist contact with school personnel?

Objective 2--module 2

To inform participants that parent/school interaction is considered a priority by the district administration and the building principal.

Procedure--objective 2--module 2

(1) The Superintendent of Schools addressed the participants and emphasized that parent/school interaction was a district priority.

(2) The building principal expressed to participants his support of parent/school interaction.

Evaluation questions--objective 2--module 2

(1) Did the Superintendent of Schools convey to participants the message that parent/school interaction was a priority of the school district?

(2) Did the principal convey to participants the message that he views parent/school interaction as a priority within the Centennial Avenue School?

Objective 3--module 2

To provide participants with an overview of the day's workshop and the three workshops to follow, and to emphasize participants' role in determining specific content.

Procedure--objective 3--module 2

(1) The workshop facilitator explained the topics and activities included in session 2.

(2) The workshop facilitator emphasized the importance of feedback assessment data distributed at the end of the session and explained that the questions and feedback would be used to determine the specific content of the next three sessions.

Evaluation questions--objective 3--module 2

(1) Did the workshop facilitator clearly explain to participants their role in determining content of future sessions?

(2) Did participants provide the workshop facilitator with feedback to assist the facilitator in designing future sessions to meet the needs of the participants?

Objective 4--module 2

To verify the importance of parent/school interaction and to create an understanding of the systems philosophy and the role of societal changes in regard to parent/school interaction.

Procedure--objective 4--module 2

(1) The workshop facilitator shared research reports



which verified that parent/school interaction could result in (a) improved achievement of students, (b) improved parents' attitudes toward schools, (c) improved parents' attitudes toward themselves, and (d) improved childrens' attitudes toward themselves. Parent Participation--Student Achievement--The Evidence Grows, served as the major resource for this discussion.<sup>4</sup>

(2) The workshop facilitator discussed with participants the philosophy that a child cannot be taught in isolation. Micro, mexo, exo, and macro systems information was explained. Ira Gordon's systems approach served as the emphasis of this explanation.<sup>5</sup>

(3) The workshop facilitator encouraged participants to discuss:

(a) How societal changes had affected parent/school interaction,

(b) If, and how schools were dealing with societal changes.

Evaluation questions--objective 4--module 2

(1) Did the workshop facilitator present adequate research documentation regarding parent/school interaction?

(2) Did participants understand the systems theory as presented by the workshop facilitator?

(3) Did the workshop facilitator and the participants actively engage in discussion of societal changes affecting parent/school interaction and how schools were dealing with these changes?

#### Objective 5--module 2

For participants to develop a definition of parent/school interaction and understand the prerequisites to and components of interaction.

#### Procedure--objective 5--module 2

(1) Participants developed a definition of parent/school interaction based upon input from several individuals.

(2) The workshop facilitator led a discussion which emphasized Huguenin's collaboration theory and discussed expectation, structure and behavior.<sup>6</sup>

#### Evaluation questions--objective 5--module 2

(1) Did participants develop a definition of parent/school interaction?

(2) Did participants understand the prerequisites to parent/school interaction and the components involved therein?

#### Objective 6--module 2

To familiarize participants with various models of

parent involvement and to assist them in ascertaining the likenesses and differences inherent in the various models.

#### Procedure--objective 6--module 2

(1) The workshop facilitator shared a pictorial representation of various parent involvement models with participants. (See appendixes B-1 through B-3).

(2) Participants engaged in discussion during which the workshop facilitator encouraged them to compare and contrast the various models.

(3) Participants selected the model, based on group consensus, which they would like to use in building parent/school interaction in their school and substantiated why they selected the particular model.

#### Evaluation questions--objective 6--module 2

(1) Did the facilitator present the models in a manner which was understood by the participants?

(2) Were the participants able to (a) select a parent/school interaction model to use in their setting, and (b) substantiate why they selected the model?

#### Objective 7--module 2

To ascertain reasons why participants feel parents avoid contact with school personnel.

Procedure--objective 7--module 2

(1) The workshop facilitator asked participants to share their reasons orally with the group.

(2) The participants discussed ways school personnel could combat the fears and negative feelings parents might have concerning contact with school personnel.

(3) The workshop facilitator distributed a handout entitled Ten Strategies for Working with Families and discussed the points contained in it with the group.<sup>7</sup>

Evaluation questions--objective 7--module 2

(1) Did participants actively engage in completing the listing activity?

(2) Did participants share the items which they listed with the group?

(3) Did participants understand that school personnel could help combat the fears and negative feelings parents often have?

(4) Did participants share with other participants ways in which school personnel could attempt to combat parents' negative feelings and fears?

Objective 8--module 2

For participants to suggest ways of involving parents

in their children's school.

#### Procedure--objective 8--module 2

(1) The workshop facilitator announced to participants that they were to brainstorm in groups for five minutes and list ways to involve parents in the school. Each group was requested to select a recorder. Participants were told that members of the group which had the most responses would receive a prize.

(2) Each group brainstormed for five minutes.

(3) The workshop facilitator awarded prizes, distributed a list developed at a workshop held at The International Reading Association Conference Workshop on the same topic (See appendix H), and announced that at the next session a list of the suggestions shared at that day's session would be distributed to each participant.

#### Evaluation question--objective 8--module 2

(1) Did participants develop lists of suggested ways to involve parents in the school?

#### Objective 9--module 2

To encourage participants to think about the role of parent/school interaction in relation to school reform.



Procedure--objective 9--module 2

(1) The workshop facilitator distributed an article entitled, Educational Partnership and the Dilemmas of School Reform.<sup>8</sup>

(2) The workshop facilitator requested that participants read the article and at a future session be ready to discuss (a) connections with their school, and (b) implications for their school.

Evaluation question--objective 9--module 2

(1) Were participants able to make connections and implications from the article and relate them to their school?

Objective 10--module 2

To afford participants the opportunity to share feedback about session 2 and provide input for session 3 to the workshop facilitator.

Procedure--objective 10--module 2

(1) The workshop facilitator distributed a Participant Feedback and Input Assessment Form to each participant.

(See appendix I).

(2) The workshop facilitator asked participants to complete and return the forms before participants left the session.

(3) The workshop facilitator said, if participants had any further thoughts they wanted to share with the workshop facilitator, that they call or send a written message to her during the following week.

#### Evaluation questions--objective 10--module 2

(1) Did participants provide the workshop facilitator with feedback regarding session 2?

(2) Did the workshop facilitator use the feedback and input from participants when planning future sessions?

#### Summary

Both the Superintendent of Schools and the building principal made statements which strongly supported parent/school interaction. The Superintendent voiced support for the Roosevelt/University of Massachusetts Staff Development Program which provided the impetus for the workshops. The building principal complimented the three parents who were present for their involvement with the school and voiced his opinion that after attending these workshops participants

would be "fired up" and ready to encourage more parents to interact with the school.

During a discussion in which the workshop facilitator described the content of future sessions to participants, and announced the guest speakers engaged for the sessions, a participant commented, "You really read what we wrote, didn't you?" The workshop facilitator responded, "Yes, and if I continue to be provided with input, I'll continue to read what you write and attempt to respond to your requests."

Participants did not hesitate in accepting that parent/school interaction could result in improved achievement of students, improved attitudes of parents toward schools, improved attitudes toward themselves, and improved children's attitudes toward themselves, but many participants expressed opinions that societal pressures, such as single parents and working schedules, hindered parent/school interaction.

The participants agreed that schools had not made adjustments based upon societal changes. The fact that latch-key programs and adult education programs were two ways the local school district had attempted to deal with the changing societal conditions was pointed out. The majority

of participants agreed that this was not enough, and if parent/school interaction were a priority, more changes needed to be made to adjust to the changing societal conditions. Suggested ways of doing this included: Holding parent/school conferences at various times of the day rather than at a set time, to accommodate working parents; providing babysitting services for parents at the school, so they could attend conferences and functions while their children were taken care of, and providing counseling services for parents, as well as students, to help them cope with societal changes. A minority of participants voiced the opinion that parents should be the ones to adjust to the school rather than the school adjusting to the parent's needs. One comment was: "People should not have children if they aren't willing or able to make the time and financial sacrifices involved."

One of the activities involved participants in developing a definition of parent/school interaction. After much discussion, the definition decided upon was: "A partnership between parents and school personnel." Discussion centered around whether or not to add the word "equal" before the word "partnership." The majority of

participants felt that although "equal partnership" "might" be a goal of parent/school interaction, it was not necessary for the interaction to take place and to be successful.

After the workshop facilitator presented various models of parent/school interaction reviewed in Chapter II of this study and participants ascertained their likenesses and differences, participants selected the model which they would like to use in their school setting. The participants selected Gordon's Wheel (See appendix B-3). The decision was unanimous, justified by a belief that no one aspect of parent involvement was more important than another; therefore, a hierarchy of involvement was inappropriate.

The exercise in which participants were asked to list and discuss the reasons why parents may resist contact with school personnel dovetailed with the earlier discussion regarding changing societal conditions. The workshop facilitator noted this and decided that when the module was presented in the future, the societal changes discussion would immediately precede the exercise. There were additional comments which indicated an understanding of parents' feelings, such as "School staff often come on strong with negative comments;" "School staff are often



insensitive and use professional jargon," and "Parents may be overwhelmed with their own problems and unable to cope." There were also comments blaming parents, such as: "They can't be bothered," and "They would rather watch TV." The workshop facilitator noted that this type of comment was given on three written sheets, but no comments of this type were made during the oral discussion.

Individuals participated enthusiastically during the brainstorming exercise when they were asked to list ways to involve parents in their children's school. The prize awarded to each member of the winning group was Your Child Can be a Super Reader,<sup>9</sup> which contains many ideas which school personnel can share with parents on ways they could help at home.

The parents remained silent during the first hour of the session. The facilitator noted this silence and attempted to draw them into the discussions during the second hour and insured that one of them served as a recorder during the brainstorming exercise. The facilitator also noted that attempts to make parent representatives feel comfortable and encouraged, but not forced, to actively participate in future sessions had to continually be made.

## Post Session Assessment

Staff members representing all grades at Centennial Avenue School attended this session. Of the six classroom teachers not attending, four requested copies of the information distributed at the session. Family or professional obligations prevented those teachers from attending.

Participants included twenty-four Centennial Avenue School staff members (the principal, eleven classroom teachers, two special education teachers, the reading coordinator, the math coordinator, the psychologist, the social worker, the English as a second language teacher, four teacher assistants, and the substitute librarian.) Three parents of students attending Centennial Avenue School, a staff member representing each of the other elementary schools in the district, a staff member representing the pre-kindergarten center, and a principal from another elementary school in the district also attended. There was a total of thirty-two participants.

Participants from the other elementary schools, the pre-kindergarten representative, and the principal from another elementary school within the district joined the discussion without hesitation. The facilitator made a note to encourage their participation in future sessions.

The workshop facilitator reviewed the feedback assessments and noted the following:

1. The majority of participants found the workshop "very useful." A statistical summary is found in Chapter V.

2. The participants differed as to which activity or discussion mentioned most frequently as being the most useful was the selection of a parent involvement model. One participant stated, "A model gives us something to work toward. It made parent/school interaction more real."

Several participants also found the brainstorming activity most useful. One respondent noted, "I found many of the suggested ways to involve parents very creative. I thought I had tried everything, but I found out I had not."

3. The workshop facilitator also met with the building principal to glean feedback regarding the session. The principal stated that he was pleased with the session and had received many favorable comments from staff members.

### Module 3--Communication--The Key to Success

#### Pre-session Preparation

The workshop facilitator:

1. Reviewed the input provided by participants

regarding questions and concerns they would like addressed in session 3.

2. Invited three individuals who have a reputation within the school district for dealing successfully with parent conferences to serve as guest speakers and respond to the concerns and questions posed by participants at workshop session 3.

3. Shared with the principal a compilation of questions and concerns which participants requested be addressed and points which the workshop facilitator intended to address at workshop session 3.

4. Compiled the group listing of ways to involve parents in schools to be distributed at session 3.

5. Summarized the reasons participants gave for parents resisting contact with school personnel, to be distributed at session 3.

6. Selected, in conjunction with the building principal, a parent/school interaction chairperson to distribute parent/school interaction materials, organize a lending library of materials, and gather feedback for the workshop facilitator.

7. Met with the parent/school interaction chairperson and gave her materials to disseminate and include in a lending library.

8. Completed module 3 based on participants' input at workshop 2, meetings with colleagues involved with parent school interaction, conferences with the building principal, research findings, and personal experience.

#### Pre-session Commentary

The workshop facilitator requested the panelists to arrive fifteen minutes early in order to have refreshments with participants and to set a relaxed atmosphere for the session. During this time the agenda for session 3 (figure 4) was distributed and participants worked on the assigned "Do Now" activity.



## FIGURE 4

Parent/School Interaction Workshop 3 Agenda  
Centennial Avenue School--March 5, 1985  
Susan D. Savitt-Workshop Facilitator  
Topic--Communication--The  
Key to Success

## I. "Do Now" activity

List possible reasons why school personnel may resist contact with parents.

## II. Exchange of information

A. Performance (report cards, informal notes, parent conferences)

B. Educational process (teacher explanations, parental observations, school publications, handbooks)

III. Process of Cooperation Plan and Self-evaluation  
.. Conference Scale

A. Discuss

B. Apply

## IV. Formation of committees

A. Distribute completed lists from session 2

B. Discuss items for follow-up

## V. Feedback and input data sheets

A. Complete

B. Return

Objectives, Procedures and Evaluation Questions

Objective 1--module 3

For school personnel to reflect upon reasons why their peers may resist contact with parents.

Procedure--objective 1--module 3

(1) The workshop facilitator requested participants to list as many reasons as possible why school personnel may resist contact with parents.

(2) The workshop facilitator encouraged participants to discuss the "Do Now" activity with each other during the refreshment period prior to the beginning of the session.

Evaluation questions--objective 1--module 3

(1) Did participants communicate opinions to one another regarding reasons why school personnel may resist contact with parents?

Objective 2--module 3

For participants to understand the exchange of information model of parent/school interaction.

Procedure--objective 2--module 3

(1) The workshop facilitator lead a discussion on exchange of information methods that fell under the performance category (report cards, informal notes and parent conferences) and those that fell under the educational

process category (teacher explanations, parental observations and school publications). Rutherford and Edgar's Teachers and Parents--A Guide to Interaction and Cooperation was used as a resource in the preparation of this activity.<sup>10</sup>

(2) Participants were asked to discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the methods.

Evaluation questions--objective 2--module 3

(1) Did participants exhibit an understanding of the methods of exchange categories?

(2) Were the participants able to ascertain strengths and weaknesses of the methods of exchange categories? ..

Objective 3--module 3

To familiarize participants with a process of cooperation plan which can be used to promote positive parent/school interaction.

Procedure--objective 3--module 3

(1) The workshop facilitator shared with participants Rutherford and Edgar's Process of Cooperation plan and explained each phase.<sup>11</sup> The plan was reported on in Chapter II of this study.

(2) The workshop facilitator presented a situation to participants and asked them to follow the steps included in

the Process of Cooperation Plan to attempt to solve the problem.

(Sample situation presented: Johnny is a fourth grade student who had always done well in school. Suddenly, his grades started to rapidly decline.)

Evaluation questions--objective 3--module 3

(1) Did the workshop leader present the plan in a clear and concise manner?

(2) Did participants exhibit an understanding of the plan by applying the steps involved and solving the sample situation presented?

Objective 4--module 3

To afford participants an opportunity to converse with experts of various backgrounds in the area of parent conferences.

Procedure--objective 4--module 3

(1) The workshop facilitator presented overview information regarding interpersonal communication skills and parent/school conferences and teacher self-evaluation conference goals.

(2) The workshop facilitator introduced the panel members who included an elementary principal with a social

work background, the District Director of Pupil Personnel, and a district psychologist.

(3) Each panel member shared beliefs, experiences, and suggestions concerning parent conferences and interacted with participants and other panelists.

Evaluation questions--objective 4--module 3

(1) Did the workshop facilitator present the overview information in a clear and concise manner?

(2) Did panelists present their opinions, suggestions, and experiences in a manner that would help participants improve the quality and quantity of their parent conferences?

(3) Did participants and panelists and the workshop facilitator interact by sharing ideas, concerns, and suggestions?

Objective 5--module 3

To share with participants compiled information from session 2 and to establish follow-up committees.

Procedure--objective 5--module 3

(1) Distributed:

(a) Compiled list of ideas on ways to encourage parent involvement developed by groups at session 2. (See appendix J).

(b) A summation of the individual items listed by



participants at session 2 of possible reasons why parents may resist contact with school personnel. (See appendix K).

(2) Discussed:

(a) Items on ways to encourage parent involvement and determined by consensus which five items would be most beneficial to follow up in the Centennial Avenue School;

(b) Which of the items selected each participant would like to work on developing.

(3) The workshop facilitator suggested that each individual come to the next session with suggestions and samples related to the item which they selected to develop.

Evaluation questions--objective 3--module 3

(1) Did the workshop facilitator provide participants with accurate and complete feedback in the areas mentioned above?

(2) Did participants select the items to be developed and volunteer to serve on committees?

(3) Did participants research the topics on which they selected to work?

Objective 6--module 3

To afford participants the opportunity to share feedback regarding session 3 and to provide the workshop facilitator with input for session 4.

Procedure--objective 6--module 3

(1) The workshop facilitator distributed feedback and input assessment forms to the participants. (See appendix I).

(2) The workshop facilitator requested participants to complete and return the forms before leaving the workshop. The workshop facilitator asked participants who had further thoughts or questions to call or send her a written message during the week, or contact the building parent/school interaction coordinator, who would then contact the facilitator with the message.

Evaluation questions--objective 6--module 3

(1) Did the participants provide the workshop facilitator with feedback regarding session 3 and input for session 4?

(2) Did the workshop facilitator use the feedback and input from the participants when planning future sessions?

Summary

Participants reacted strongly during the discussion of exchange of information methods when it was mentioned that report cards are not distributed by having students bring them home rather than requiring that parents attend a

parent conference to receive report cards, as had been the policy in the past. They voiced the opinion that if the administration believed in parent/school interaction the original policy should be reinstated. Many of the points mentioned at session 2 regarding societal conditions preventing parents from coming to parent/school conferences resurfaced, as did the opinion of many that the school needed to adjust to parents' schedules. One participant suggested using staff meeting time and open house night for parent conferences.

Participants adopted without hesitation Robert Rutherford and Eugene Edgar's Process of Cooperation Plan.<sup>12</sup> Participants freely developed examples in addition to the one given by the workshop facilitator and many voiced the opinion that it was a worthwhile tool to apply in problem situations.

The panelists each addressed several areas of concern which participants had indicated interest in on the input form at the end of session 2, and those which they brought up during session 3. The psychologist discussed role of school personnel during the conference and how to deal with angry, violent, and/or verbally abusive parents, and apathetic parents. The principal emphasized the importance of formulating strategies to make parents feel comfortable, the premise that all parents are concerned and want success

for their children, the importance of being realistic, and the important role of school personnel as resources. The District Director of Pupil Personnel spoke primarily about how to deal with parents of students who had problems and the school and the parents' role in the referral process of students to the Committee on the Handicapped. The referral process topic was one of great concern to many of the participants, including both staff and parents. Therefore, the workshop facilitator invited the Director of Pupil Personnel to session 4 to continue the discussion.

Participants selected five items from the compiled list of ways to encourage parent involvement for development in future sessions. Items selected were: Preconference parent forms, parent handbook on how to help the child at home, using parents as resource people, and "good progress" reports. Projects on each item would be followed up during sessions 4 and 5.

#### Post Session Feedback

The workshop facilitator:

(1) Reviewed feedback data forms from session 3. The majority of participants noted the Progress of Cooperation Plan as the most worthwhile activity or discussion presented at session 2. Many participants also mentioned the presen-

tations by panel members. Among the adjectives used by the participants describing the panel discussion were:

"insightful," "realistic," "informative," "concrete," and "excellent." Several participants also positively reacted to receiving feedback from the previous session. For example, one participant stated: "I liked seeing ideas about involving parents listed and the committees formed thereafter."

(2) Reviewed audiotape of session 3 to glean specific questions and content for future sessions based on the comments of participants.

Module 4--Ways School Staff Can Assist Parents  
to Help Children at Home with School  
Related Activities

Pre Session Preparation

The workshop facilitator:

(1) Noted the questions and concerns which participants requested be addressed at session 4 during which the topic was "Ways School Staff Can Assist the Child at Home." Areas and concerns most mentioned were: How to interest parents in helping their child at home, specific techniques parents can use when helping their child at home, how the deprived home may obtain resources, how to encourage parental commitment, and how parents can help in specific skill areas, such as reading, math, and writing.



(2) Contacted three individuals who had expertise in the area of how parents can help their children at home and who had exhibited the ability to convey their expertise to others.

(3) Invited the three individuals to address participants at the next workshop session in the areas of reading, math, and writing.

(4) Shared the compilation of questions and concerns, which participants indicated they would like addressed, with the guest speakers for session 4. Also shared with the guest speakers the points which the facilitator felt should be emphasized during session 4.

(5) Compiled the lists which individual participants made regarding reasons why school personnel may resist contact with parents.

(6) Gathered information to disseminate at session 4 on the topics on which participants were preparing group projects.

(7) Met with the building principal to discuss plans for the next session.

#### Pre Session Commentary

Prior to the arrival of participants, the workshop facilitator and the guest speakers set up a display of materials that parents could use with their children. When

participants arrived, they were encouraged to peruse the materials displayed and to chat with each other and with the guest speakers. At the opening of the session, the workshop facilitator distributed the agenda (figure 5). Participants were seated in groups based on the project they had selected at the previous session.

FIGURE 5

Parent/School Interaction Workshop 4 Agenda  
 Centennial Avenue School--March 12, 1985  
 Susan D. Savitt--Workshop Facilitator  
 Topic--Ways School Staff Can Assist  
 Parents to Help their Children  
 at Home with School-Related  
 Activities

- I. Work on group projects
  - A. "Good Progress" forms
  - B. Parent resource fact sheet
  - C. Parent needs and interest survey
  - D. How parents can help their children at home booklet
  - E. Parent pre-conference information form
- II. Discuss how parents can help their children at home
  - A. Categories
    1. Habits
    2. Study skills
    3. Activities
    4. Attitudes
  - B. Guest speakers
    1. William Fiore--Chapter I Elementary Writing Coordinator
    2. Terrecita Watkis--Theodore Roosevelt School Chapter I Reading Coordinator
    3. Perletter Wright--Theodore Roosevelt School Chapter I Math Coordinator

C. Follow-up activity

Participants develop an activity based upon an event listed on the March Language Arts calendar that was distributed and shared with the group.

D. Additional resource material explained and described by the workshop facilitator

III. School personnel, parents and pupil personnel services  
Joan Cottman, District Pupil Personnel Director

A. Questions

B. Follow-up

IV. Ways to combat reasons parents have for resisting contact with school personnel

A. Review lists compiled from participants' responses and "Educational Partnership and the Dilemmas of School Reform" article disseminated at session 2.

B. Formulate strategies to dispel reasons listed

V. Homework assignment

A. Review suggested strategies developed by the group today to combat parents' apprehensions regarding contact with school personnel

B. Select a strategy and attempt to use it before the next session

VI. Feedback and input assessment

A. Complete

B. Return

Objectives, Procedure, and Evaluation Questions

Objective 1--module 4

For participants to work in groups on parent involvement projects.

#### Procedure--objective 1--module 4

- (1) Each group selected a group leader and a recorder.
- (2) The workshop facilitator distributed information collected on each topic to each of the groups and suggested that they share ideas, start their projects, and plan on how to proceed with their projects in the future.
- (3) Participants shared information and ideas with each other and the workshop facilitator for approximately twenty minutes.
- (4) Each group leader reported to the total group a summary of accomplishments that day and their future plans.

#### Evaluation questions--objective 1--module 4

- (1) Did group members share ideas and materials?
- (2) Did group members start developing their project?
- (3) Did group members make a plan on how to proceed with their projects?
- (4) Did the workshop facilitator lend assistance but not tell the group how they should proceed?

#### Objective 2--module 4

To provide participants with techniques, materials, and activities which will assist them in developing a repertoire of ways to encourage parents to help their children at home in school related areas.

Procedure--objective 2--module 4

(1) The workshop facilitator provided participants with information regarding justification for parents helping their children at home in school-related areas and stressed habits, study skills and activity categories. (See appendix L).

(2) The workshop facilitator shared with participants a report on frequency of teacher requests to parents for ways to help children at home from Epstein's study.<sup>13</sup>

(3) The workshop facilitator discussed "A Report Card for Parents" developed by Jean Williams<sup>14</sup> and "Have You Helped Your Child Today?" developed by the Title I Compensatory Education Unit, Jefferson County Public Schools 1981,<sup>15</sup> which illustrated two ways parents can record their efforts. Participants suggested ways teachers can encourage parents to use one of the two suggested methods to record their involvement.

(4) The three guest speakers, specialists in the area of reading, writing, and math, respectively, presented suggested ways teachers could assist parents in helping their children at home in school-related areas, distributed materials and answered questions.

Evaluation questions--objective 2--module 4

(1) Did the facilitator provide adequate support for the concept of parents helping their children at home in



school related areas?

(2) Did the facilitator and the guest speakers present practical suggestions and materials which could be used by school staff and teachers?

Objective 3--module 4

For participants to develop and use three major strategies to combat reasons why parents often resist contact with school personnel.

Procedure--objective 3--module 4

(1) Reviewed participants' lists formulated from opinions rendered at prior session. (See appendix K).

(2) Participants reviewed "Educational Partnership and Dilemmas of School Reform" discussed at session 2.

(3) Participants formulated strategies to combat their listed reasons.

(4) The workshop facilitator requested participants to (a) use at least one of the strategies developed by the group and (b) be prepared to share their experiences with the group at the next session.

Evaluation questions--objective 3--module 4

(1) Did the group develop strategies to combat parents' reasons for avoiding contact with school personnel?

(2) Did participants apply one or more strategies to attempt to improve parent/school relationships?

Objective 4--module 4

To afford participants the opportunity to share feedback regarding session 3 and to provide input for session 4.

Procedure--objective 4--module 4

(1) The workshop facilitator distributed feedback and input assessment forms to participants. (See appendix I).

(2) The workshop facilitator requested participants to complete and return forms before leaving. The workshop facilitator announced that if participants had further thoughts or questions during the week, they should call or send a written message to her or contact the parent/school interaction coordinator who would contact the workshop facilitator with the message.

Evaluation question--objective 4--module 4

(1) Did the participants provide the workshop facilitator with feedback regarding session 4 and input for session 5?

### Summary

Participants reviewed the information collected on each topic by the workshop facilitator and each other, and started developing their projects. During the session attention centered on the selection of a format for each project. How far each group proceeded was controlled by the complexity of the topic. For example, the development of "good progress" forms was not as complex as the develop-

ment of a parent pre-conference form. When the group leaders reported each group's plan and progress to the entire group of participants, several individuals from other groups offered suggestions. The consensus of the participants was that it was important that emphasis be placed on "clearly communicating a message or requesting information in a concise manner." Each group planned how they would proceed with their projects at the next session.

The workshop facilitator emphasized the fact that there are many ways parents could help their children at home in school-related areas. Participants agreed that many individuals thought only of parents helping their children with academics when they heard the phrase "parents helping their child(ren) at home." The workshop facilitator stressed ways parents could help their children develop habits, study skills, and positive attitudes toward school.

Guest speakers and the workshop facilitator distributed materials (a) containing specific techniques and suggestions school personnel could use to encourage and assist parents to help their children at home and (b) actual materials which would be placed in the parent/school interaction section of the library at Centennial Avenue School were summarized by the workshop facilitator. When this material was passed around, several participants filled out a request to borrow the material immediately. The calendar developed

by the writing coordinator, who indicated he would be preparing one for each month of the year during the 1985-6 school year, received praise from many participants. (See appendix M).

The District Director of Pupil Personnel returned to complete the discussion started at the previous session regarding the role of school personnel and parents in Pupil Personnel Services. Both staff members and parents were concerned about the fact that informal consultation with pupil personnel staff was not "encouraged." Many of the participants stated that they were informed by pupil personnel staff that they had to complete a formal recommendation to the Committee on the Handicapped before pupil personnel staff would discuss, observe, or test a child. Parents argued that this procedure was unfair to the children since they were being "unnecessarily labeled." Classroom teachers stated that they were entitled to the expertise of trained psychologists and social workers in dealing with students who may need special handling, but not special educational services.

Pupil personnel staff members agreed with parents and classroom teachers, but stated that due to the number of students who needed servicing, they were limited in providing the services the classroom teachers requested. The Director of Pupil Personnel agreed to meet with her staff members to attempt to develop a schedule for the 1985-6 school year



which would allow time for pupil personnel staff to meet informally and share expertise with classroom teachers.

Participants agreed on three major strategies to combat reasons parents had for avoiding contact with school personnel: (1) They must believe their input "matters," (2) schools must take into account parents' other obligations (family, work) and adjust conferences and meeting times accordingly, (3) all contacts between home and school should not be of a negative and/or formalized nature. Other strategies were suggested, but the majority of participants felt that the three listed above would be the most beneficial in their particular settings at that time. Participants agreed to select and apply one of these strategies before the next session.

#### Post Session Assessment

The workshop facilitator reviewed the feedback assessments and noted the following:

(1) The majority of participants found the workshop "very useful."

(2) Participants differed when listing the activities and/or discussions they found most useful, but seldom differed on the reasons why they made their choice. Most participants stated the activity or discussion which they selected was most beneficial because it was "practical." The workshop facilitator (a) compiled issues and questions listed



by participants for inclusion at session 5 and noted participants' requests for more specific suggestions in this area exceeded any other requests regarding previous topics, (b) met with the building principal to discuss session 4, (c) had a follow-up meeting with the Director of Pupil Personnel to further discuss the aspects of session 4 that dealt with concerns related to pupil personnel.

Module 5--Ways Parents and School Personnel  
Can Collaborate Regarding School Discipline

Pre Session Commentary

Participants more forcefully expressed need for assistance in clarifying their role and the role of parents regarding discipline than any other need expressed on other topics covered in prior sessions. This was evident in their feedback comments from session 4. For example: "I'm frustrated because there are no student expectations and rules for students that they and their parents are made aware of." "What is expected to take place when a student misbehaves?" "When all forms of discipline have been implemented and nothing works, what is the next step?" "What can teachers do if parents don't care when their child misbehaves?" Some participants approached guest panelists prior to the session to ask their advice on individual situations.

The workshop facilitator distributed the agenda for

session 5 (figure 6) and requested participants to seat themselves in groups according to the project they were working on.

#### FIGURE 6

Parent/School Interaction Workshop 5 Agenda  
 Centennial Avenue School--March 19, 1985  
 Susan D. Savitt--Workshop Facilitator  
 Topic--Ways Parents and School  
 Personnel Can Collaborate  
 Regarding Student  
 Discipline

#### I. Group Projects

- A. Good Progress forms
- B. Parent Resource Fact Sheets
- C. Parents Needs and Interest Survey
- D. "How Parents Can Help Their Children at Home" booklet
- E. Parent Pre-conference Information form

#### II. Panel Discussion

- A. Topic--"Discipline--The Role of School Staff and Parents"
- B. Panelists
  - 1. Mr. Earl Moseley--Principal, Theodore Roosevelt School, Roosevelt, N.Y.
  - 2. Ms. Wilma Tootle--Assistant Principal, Uniondale High School, Uniondale, N.Y.

#### C. Group interaction

#### III. Discipline summation

- A. Brainstorm
- B. Compile

#### IV. Parent/school interaction strategies

- A. Reports
- B. Follow-up suggestions

V. Concluding remarks--Susan Savitt

- A. Summary
- B. Outcomes
- C. Implications for the future

VI. Feedback and Input Assessment forms

- A. Today's session
- B. Overall evaluation of workshop sessions

Objectives, Procedures, and Evaluation Questions

Objective 1--module 5

For participants to develop group projects intended to increase and improve parent/school interaction.

Procedure--objective 1--module 5

(1) Participants shared materials and ideas with members of their group.

(2) Each group determined what must be done before their project could be completed.

(3) The group leader reported what the group had accomplished to date.

Evaluation questions--objective 1--module 5

(1) Did groups progress toward completion of their projects?

(2) Were groups able to determine what was needed in order to complete their projects and have a plan for steps they intended to take in order to complete their project?

Objective 2--module 5

For participants to have the opportunity to listen to, to question, and to share ideas with school administrators who have exhibited expertise in dealing with the role of parents and school staff in relation to student discipline.

Procedure-objective 2--module 5

(1) The workshop facilitator discussed the concept of discipline as being learned and behavior being caused. She distributed an information sheet (appendix N).

(2) Each guest panelist presented information orally, distributed materials (appendixes O and P) and interacted with the participants.

Evaluation questions--objective 2--module 5

(1) Did the workshop facilitator effectively convey the concept of discipline as being learned and behavior as being caused?

(2) Did the guest panelists present relevant information, make realistic suggestions, and respond to participants' inquiries?

Objective 3--module 5

For participants to apply what was shared at the session about discipline to their own beliefs and to develop a listing of ways teachers and parents could collaboratively work together to improve a child's behavior in school.

## Procedure--objective 3--module 5

- (1) Participants worked in groups and developed lists.
- (2) The recorder shared each group's lists with the entire assembly of participants.
- (3) The workshop facilitator told participants that she would prepare a summation of the suggestions made by each group and would distribute the list to all participants within two days.

## Evaluation questions--objective 3--module 5

- (1) Did each group develop a list of suggestions?
- (2) Did the workshop facilitator provide the participants with a summation of the suggestions made within a two-day period?

Objective 4--module 5

For participants to share experiences related to encouraging parents to participate in parent/school inter-



action.

Procedure--objective 4--module 5

(1) Several participants chronicled experiences which they had when applying one of the strategies for encouraging parent/school interaction developed at session 4.

(2) Participants responded to the experiences chronicled by fellow participants and made suggestions as to additional ways to encourage parent/school interaction during the 1985-6 school year.

Evaluation questions--objective 4--module 5

(1) Did participants share experiences they had when experimenting with one of the strategies for developing parent/school interaction formulated at session 4?

(2) Did participants suggest additional ways to encourage parent/school interaction during the 1985-6 school year?

Objective 5--module 5

To summarize content and outcomes of the workshop and to discuss implications for the future based on the workshop outcomes.

Procedure--objective 5--module 5

(1) The workshop facilitator orally summarized the

content covered in the workshops.

(2) The workshop facilitator and the participants discussed outcomes of the workshops.

(3) The workshop facilitator and the participants formulated implications for the future based on the workshop outcomes.

Evaluation questions--objective 5--module 5

(1) Did the workshop facilitator summarize the workshop content in a comprehensive manner?

(2) Did the workshop facilitator and the participants develop a list of outcomes of the workshops?

(3) Did the workshop facilitator and the participants develop a realistic list of implications for the future based on the outcomes of the parent/school interaction workshops?

Objective 6--module 5

To afford participants the opportunity to share with the workshop facilitator feedback about session 5, the workshops as a whole, and input into future parent/school interaction activities at Centennial Avenue School.

Procedure--objective 6--module 5

(1) The workshop facilitator distributed feedback forms to each participant. (See appendixes I and Q).

(2) Participants were requested to complete the

feedback evaluation forms for the day's session before leaving and to return the Summary Feedback and Input Form to the workshop facilitator within two days.

(3) The workshop facilitator told participants that, if at anytime in the future they had information, questions, concerns, or suggestions regarding parent/school interaction, they should contact her office.

Evaluation questions--objective 6--module 5

(1) Did the workshop participants provide the workshop facilitator with feedback regarding session 5?

(2) Did the workshop participants provide the workshop facilitator with an overall feedback regarding the workshops?

(3) Did the workshop facilitator make use of the feedback and input provided by the participants in suggesting and/or implementing future parent/school interaction activities for the Centennial Avenue School?

#### Summary

Participants continued working on group projects during the first part of session 5. Some groups had products to share while others needed more time to complete their projects. (The "Good News Forms" and the "Parent Resource Letter" and Suggestions for Parent/Teacher Conferences contained in appendixes R, S, and T, are examples of follow-up products).

The panel discussion regarding ways parents and school personnel can interact regarding school discipline afforded participants the opportunity to express frustration and receive suggestions on how to deal with their frustrations. The workshop facilitator and the panelists all stressed the importance of students and parents being involved in the development of a set of consistent rules that are clear and workable with copies disseminated to all.

The importance of school personnel and parents working together to find solutions to problems was also stressed. Participants shared individual problems, and the workshop facilitator, the panelists and the other participants suggested both preventive steps and techniques to solve specific problems. A number of participants suggested during the brainstorming activity on discipline that a committee be formed to develop a discipline code for Centennial Avenue School. The principal voiced approval and stated he would pursue the development of a discipline committee.

Participants shared results of their efforts in completing the homework assignment from session 4. This assignment required participants to attempt to use one of the three strategies to increase parent/school interaction developed at the previous session. Most participants who reported had contacted parents by phone or through written

communication to inform them that their child had accomplished something of a positive nature (i.e. had done well in a test, had improved in the area of behavior.) One participant reported that the parent whom they contacted had not attended two scheduled parent/teacher conferences, and asked when she could have a conference with the teacher.

Another participant reported that the parent she contacted thanked her for calling and stated that this was the first time she had been called by a teacher with "good news" about her children. Another teacher reported calling a parent and stating that she was aware that the parent worked during the afternoon when conferences were scheduled, so she would be available between 8:00 A.M. and 8:30 A.M. to meet with the parent. The parent expressed appreciation for this consideration and agreed to confer with the teacher. Several other experiences were also reported. Participants agreed that although all contacts did not reap immediate positive results, seeds had been planted and most believed they would yield fruit in the future.

The outcomes and implications for the future developed by the workshop facilitator and the participants as the final activity of session 5 will be reported on in Chapter V. The workshop facilitator, at the request of the participants, agreed to continue to work with them in the area of



parent/school interaction in preparation for the 1985-6 school year. There seemed to be a feeling of hope and a belief that parents and school can interact which pervaded at the close of session 5.

### Epilogue

The workshop facilitator shared the following poem with participants to sum up her philosophy regarding parent/school interaction.

#### Together We Can

Even when storm clouds are filling the air,  
Look for the rainbow, it's waiting somewhere.  
Together we can find the rainbow!

Notice how rainbows make everything bright.  
They cover the world with a warm glowing light.  
Together we can find the rainbow!

For our children we want  
Only the best  
Education, happiness  
And all the rest.

Parents, staff  
And community together,  
Can reach this goal  
In all kinds of weather.  
Together we can!

## C H A P T E R V

### OUTCOMES, CONCLUSIONS, RESPONSES TO RESEARCH QUESTIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AFTEREFFECTS, AND IMPLICATIONS

#### Introduction

The major purpose of this study was to determine if staff development in the area of parent/school interaction could prepare school personnel for their role in the parent/school interaction process. Research questions posed were as follows:

- (1) Will school personnel agree to attend parent/school interaction sessions on a voluntary basis?
- (2) Will school personnel who have agreed to attend parent/school interaction sessions actually attend the scheduled sessions?
- (3) Will school personnel from schools other than the school targeted attend the parent/school interaction sessions?
- (4) Will participants believe, after attending the parent/school interaction sessions, that the information and activities included will be of use to them in increasing and improving parent/school interaction?
- (5) Can staff development in the area of parent/school interaction improve school personnel's attitude toward parent/school interaction?

- (6) Can staff development in the area of parent/school interaction broaden the perspective of school personnel regarding the multitude of forms parent/school interaction can take?
- (7) Can staff development in the area of parent/school interaction result in school personnel feeling better prepared for their role in the parent/school interaction process?
- (8) Can staff development in the area of parent/school interaction result in school personnel initiating more parent/school interaction than they did prior to the parent/school interaction sessions?

The answers to the foregoing research questions were based on the outcomes and conclusions drawn from the responses of participants on surveys they completed during, immediately following, and one year after the conclusion of the parent/school interaction staff development sessions. Recommendations for adapting the sessions to other settings are made; information regarding projects and activities developed as a result of the sessions are listed, and implications for further research are also delineated.

#### Individual Sessions

Input and participants' feedback, both written and oral, was encouraged during and following the presentation of each module. Specific feedback was reported in the summary and post-assessment sections following each module. The input was reported in the post-assessment section

following each module and the pre-session preparation section before the modules in Chapter IV. General information and feedback will be reported in this chapter.

### Attendance

Attendance that is based on voluntary participation is one indication of the interest participants have in the particular topic in which staff development sessions are offered. This is true of both (a) initial agreement of participants to participate and (b) continued participation throughout the series of sessions given on a particular topic.

#### Initial agreement to attend

The number and percent of staff members who voluntarily agreed to attend the series of sessions on parent/school interaction following session 1 is reported in table 3. The purpose of session 1 was to introduce the parent/school interaction topic to all staff members and provide them with an overview of the upcoming sessions.

TABLE 3

Centennial staff voluntarily agreeing to attend  
parent/school interaction staff development  
sessions

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Number of eligible staff members--31	
<hr/>	
Number of staff members agreeing to attend sessions	Percentage of staff members agreeing to attend sessions
25	81 percent

---

#### Conclusion

A large majority of the staff of the Centennial Avenue School agreed to attend the series of sessions to be offered on the topic of parent/school interaction

#### Response to research question 1

The first research question posed was, "Will staff members agree to attend staff development sessions that concentrate on parent/school interaction?" Based on the number of participants who agreed to attend, as reported in table 3, the answer was "yes."

#### Recommendations

Individuals wishing to implement parent/school



interaction workshops on a voluntary basis should: (1) present an overview of the sessions at a meeting which is mandatory for all school personnel, such as regularly scheduled faculty meetings, (2) encourage the building principal to express support for the concept of parent/school interaction and attendance of staff at forthcoming sessions during the overview, (3) share results of some form of assessment which the staff participated in to verify the fact that their input was instrumental in planning the session, (4) elicit at the mandatory meeting additional input from staff regarding the format, specific concerns, and suggested resource speakers or panelists.

#### Actual attendance

The attendance of Centennial staff members at each of the sessions is reported in table 4. Note that session 1 was held in lieu of a faculty meeting, and all staff members were contractually bound to attend unless excused by the principal.

TABLE 4

Attendance of Centennial staff members at  
parent/school interaction sessions

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Total number of staff members--31

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Session	No. of staff in attendance	Percent of staff in attendance
1	29	94%*
2	24	77%
3	25	81%
4	25	81%
5	27	87%

\*Regularly scheduled staff meeting

---

### Conclusions

Based on the outcomes regarding attendance of Centennial Avenue school staff at the parent/school interaction sessions, it was concluded: (1) 94 percent of the staff were exposed to a minimum of one session; (2) attendance increased as the sessions progressed, excluding mandatory attendance at session 1, which is opposite to the usual pattern when attendance at sessions is voluntary.

### Response to research question 2

The second research question queried, "Will school

personnel who have agreed to attend parent/school interaction sessions actually attend scheduled sessions?" Based on the data reported in table 4, the response was "yes."

#### Recommendations

Suggested ways of maintaining attendance as sessions progress include: (1) use of feedback provided by participants following each session in the planning of future sessions, (2) use of a variety of methods, activities, and techniques at the sessions, and (3) for individuals unable to attend a particular session, provision of a packet containing the materials distributed at the session they missed with a note indicating they were missed, and hopefully would be able to attend the remainder of the sessions.

#### Other participants

The category "other participants" includes Centennial parents, principals from other elementary schools in the district, and a staff representative from each of the other elementary schools and one pre-kindergarten center.

The short-range goal of including parents was to give them an opportunity to share feelings and concerns from the parents' point of view and for them to have an opportunity to become aware of school personnel's feelings and concerns regarding parent/school interaction. The long-range goal was that as a result of mutual sharing, for which the parent/

school interaction served as a vehicle, additional activities, meetings, and sessions would be planned, implemented, and evaluated jointly by staff and parents of Centennial Avenue School which would increase the quantity and improve the quality of parent/school interactions in that setting.

The purpose for including principals and staff representatives was that by attending sessions they would glean information, techniques, and exposure to research people, that could assist them in planning, implementing, and conducting parent/school interaction sessions in their school.

The attendance of participants other than Centennial staff is listed in table 5.

TABLE 5

Attendance of other participants at  
parent/school interaction sessions

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Total number invited to participate--10

---

Session	Number in Attendance	Percent in Attendance
1	0	0%
2	8	80%
3	8	80%
4	8	80%
5	8	80%

\*Session 1 was open only to Centennial staff members.

---

## Conclusions

Based on the outcomes regarding attendance of "other" participants at the parent/school interaction workshops, it was concluded that (1) there was parent representation from Centennial, and principal and/or staff representation from each of the other schools in the district at each session, and (2) the attendance of participants in this category remained constant.

## Response to research question 3

The third research question posed was, "Will school personnel from schools other than the one targeted for staff development attend the parent/school interaction sessions?" Based on information reported in table 6, the answer was "yes."

## Recommendations

Individuals wishing to implement parent/school interaction sessions in their setting and want to include personnel from schools other than the targeted school at the staff development sessions should:

A. With respect to principal participation (1) request that the superintendent or whoever is in charge of administrative meetings allow the workshop facilitator to discuss the upcoming sessions at an administrative meeting, (2) request that the superintendent voice support for the concept at the administrative meeting, and ask for an update on the sessions by the workshop facilitator and comments



by the principals at subsequent administrative meetings, (3) ask for principals' input during sessions, (4) request principals' feedback following sessions, (5) offer assistance in setting up similar staff development sessions within each principal's school based on the needs of their staff.

B. With respect to staff member participation (1) speak to the principal of each school and ask him or her to select a staff member who has exhibited an interest in parent/school interaction and who would be capable of serving as a workshop facilitator in their school using the materials and techniques gleaned at the sessions which they attended, (2) make an effort to make participants from other schools feel comfortable by introducing them, including them in all activities, and (3) let them know the workshop facilitator would be available to assist them when and if parent/school interaction sessions were given in their schools.

C. With respect to parent participation (1) request that the principal select parents who have shown an interest in parent/school interaction and who would be capable of sharing the appropriate information and techniques gleaned from the sessions with individual parents and parent groups, such as Parent Teachers Association, and Compensatory Education Parent Advisory Council members, (2) make an effort to include the parents in discussions and activities, and acknowledge their input and feedback (3) offer to collaborate with parents on planning sessions for parents on interaction.

## Utility of Individual Sessions

Following each session, participants were asked to indicate how useful they felt the information and activities included in the sessions would be to them. Table 6 is a summary of those results.

TABLE 6

Participants' ranking of the utility of  
information and activities included  
in the individual sessions

Session	Number of Participants	R A N K I N G							
		Not use- ful		Somewhat useful		Very use- ful			
		#	%	#	%	#	%		
1	29	0	0	4	14	25	86		
2	31	0	0	2	6	29	94		
3	33	0	0	4	9	29	91		
4	33	0	0	3	12	30	88		
5	35	0	0	2	6	33	94		

### Conclusions

Based on the feedback regarding the utility of the information and activities included in the sessions, a large majority of the participants believed that (1) the information gleaned from the sessions would be useful to them, and (2) the usefulness of the individual sessions did not vary significantly.

#### Response to research question 4

Based on the results included in table 6, the response to the query, "Will participants believe after attending the parent/school interaction sessions that the information and activities included will be of use to them in increasing and improving parent/school interaction? was "yes."

#### Recommendations

Individuals concerned with participants' believing that sessions provided them with utilitarian information and activities should: (1) utilize the input and feedback participants provide both orally and in written form when planning sessions and (2) emphasize practical and specific suggestions rather than philosophical and general suggestions.

#### Overall Sessions

Following the completion of the five sessions, participants were asked to provide feedback regarding their estimation of the utility of the information contained in the sessions in increasing and improving parent/school interaction, the opportunity given participants to ask questions and express their ideas, and the incorporation of

participants' questions and concerns into the sessions.

The results are reported in tables 7, 8 and 9.

### Utility of information

TABLE 7

Utility of information contained in the session on increasing and improving parent/school interaction

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Number of respondents--35

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Rating categories					
Not useful		Somewhat useful		Very useful	
No. of respondents	%	No. of respondents	%	No. of respondents	%
0	0	3	9	32	91

---

### Conclusion

Based on the information reported, a large majority of the participants believed that the information contained in the workshops would be useful in increasing and improving parent/school interaction.

Opportunity to ask questions and express ideas

TABLE 8

Opportunity for participants to ask questions  
and express ideas during sessions

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---

Number of responses--35

---

Never		Sometimes		Always	
No. of Responses	%	No. of Responses	%	No. of Responses	%
0	0	0	0	35	100

---

#### Conclusion

Based on the information reported, all participants believed that they had the opportunity to ask questions and express their ideas during the sessions.

#### Recommendation

Individuals facilitating staff development sessions should provide participants with the opportunity to ask questions and express their ideas since doing so will increase participants' motivation to attend sessions and share with one another.



## Incorporation of Questions and Concerns

TABLE 9

Incorporation of questions and concerns included  
on feedback forms in the sessions

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---

Number of respondents--35

---

Never		Sometimes		Always	
No. of responses	%	No. of responses	%	No. of responses	%
0	0	1	3	34	97

---

## Conclusion

Based on the information reported, a large majority of the participants believed that their questions and feedback were included in the follow-up sessions.

## Recommendation

Participants' questions and concerns should be incorporated into sessions if attendance of participants is to remain constant and participants are to continue to believe it is worth the effort to share questions and concerns with the workshop facilitator and other participants.

## Application of Activities and Information

At the conclusion of the final session, participants were requested to list the information and/or activities included in the parent/school interaction sessions which they felt would be used by them in the future. The responses are grouped and reported under general categories in table 10.

TABLE 10

Activities and information presented at the parent/school interaction sessions which participants believed they would use in the future

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Number of respondents--35

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### General categories

Communication with parents		Basic understanding of parent/school interaction		In-school discipline role of parent		Helping parents to help their children at home		Other	
#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
22	62	20	57	14	40	12	34	3	9

---

Additional comments

Each grouping had its own unique composition of responses. A majority of responses (eighteen) in the Communication with Parents category were connected with parent conferences (81 percent). This included consideration of parents when arranging conferences, the steps in preparing for parent/school conferences, and the content and follow-up to the conferences. Other responses listed in this category included the importance of positive communication with parents, and methods of reporting to parents, as activities or learnings they intended to use.

In the Basic Understanding category, importance of parent/school interaction and cooperation were mentioned most often (ten, which was 50 percent of the total responses in this category). Other responses in this category included: understanding of reasons why parents avoid contact with school personnel, ways to encourage parent involvement, and the different forms parent involvement can take.

The responses in the In-school Discipline--Role of Parents category indicated no significant difference between the number of individual responses within the category. Responses in this category included: discipline handbook suggestions, importance of working cooperatively with parent on student discipline, the role parents play in determining a student's behavior, and the development of a conduct code.

Seventy-five percent of the responses in the Helping Parents to Help their Children at Home category were evenly divided (twenty-five each) between the areas of math, reading, and writing. Other responses in this category included: Primer of Parents handout, Parent/School Interaction Lending Library, and the handout on working with families. Three participants reported that they would make use of support services when dealing with parents. This response is recorded under the heading "Other" on table 10.

### Conclusions

Based on the information reported: (1) A majority of the participants plan to use information and/or activities presented at the Parent/School Interaction Sessions that emphasized communication with parents (62 percent) and Basic Understanding of Parent/School Interaction (57 percent). (2) More than one-third of the participants planned to use information or activities related to In-School Discipline--The Role of Parents (40 percent) and Helping Parents to Help their Children at Home (34 percent). (3) The fact that communication was the area of parent/school interaction given priority in the initial needs assessment (see appendix E) may be the reason why this was the category most participants reported they would utilize the most.

### Additional Participant Opinions

Participants were also asked to list additional opinions regarding the session and suggest activities or information which they would like to have had included in the sessions. The majority of comments regarding the sessions were positive. Included were comments about the workshop facilitator, ("The rapport established by the workshop leader between herself and the teachers was based on warmth, knowledge, and true concern,) the presenters, ("I was amazed and pleased to see the professionalism of our own staff when they presented. I have gained much in self-image from realizing the quality of professionals we have here. They were informative, entertaining, and presented a multitude of information,") and the sessions in general, ("We have become mired in discipline, confusion, and depression that we sometimes feel nothing else can be done. I tend to accept these miserable conditions and feel that this is the way it has to be. This workshop made me feel that it does not have to be this way. We have control over making the situation better. I for one intend to do so.")

There were two comments which indicated that the participants who made them were experiencing some frustration. They were, "Administrators seem to have forgotten or are unaware of what life in the classroom is really like as cooperation from administrators is often non-existent," and



"Teachers are expected to give 110 percent--and they often do with little or no support, no tangible appreciation and constant criticism from parents, students, administrators and society."

### Suggestions of Participants

Suggestions made by participants regarding suggested activities that should be included in future workshops included the following: "use of a panel of parents to talk about their relationship with the schools;" "active parents from community organizations to speak to staff to inform them about various community activities," and "classroom teachers who have met with success in improving relationships with parents to tell teachers their experiences."

Suggested activities that participants reported they believed should be implemented in their school during the following school year included: a parent newsletter, more workshops for staff "helping them to better understand that the school is a microcosm of the community," development of a code of behavior by staff and parents, parent conferences and other parent meetings planned "with parents' schedules, fears, and strengths in mind," staff presentations at parent meetings, development of information packets to send home to parents telling them how they can help their children at home, positive phone calls and letters to parents, and more

interaction between parents, teachers, and support staff.

Feedback--One Year Later

Results reported on tables 3-10 were based on participant attendance and feedback during and directly after the parent/school interaction sessions were given. Tables 11-14 reflect feedback of participants approximately one year after the completion of the sessions. The survey distributed to participants is included in appendix Q.

Attitude Toward Parent/School Interaction

Table 11 reflects the results of the survey item: "I feel more positive regarding parent/school interaction than I did prior to the parent/school sessions."

TABLE 11

Participants' attitude toward parent/  
school interaction

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Number of respondents--30

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Improved since sessions		Unchanged since sessions		Deteriorated since sessions	
Number of respon- dents	Per- cent	Number of respon- dents	Per- cent	Number of respon- dents	Per- cent
26	87	4	13	0	0

---

## Conclusion

A large majority of the respondents reported that their attitude toward parent/school interaction had improved since attending the parent/school interaction sessions. Supporting evidence was given by many of the respondents in reply to the question, "How has your attitude improved?" Three representative replies are as follows: (1) "I am more aware of where parents are coming from which has helped me handle situations with parents more comfortably and skillfully." (2) "I have become a better listener--less apt to shoot from the hip." (3) "I am more aware of parents' concerns and fears. I have a better understanding of why parents often want nothing to do with schools. I feel better prepared to help parents overcome their negative feelings since I have overcome mine."

## Response to research question 5

Based on the results reported in table 11, staff development in the area of parent/school interaction can result in improved attitudes of school personnel toward parent/school interaction.

## Recommendations

If one of the major goals of parent/school interaction sessions is to improve school personnel's attitude toward parent/school interaction: (1) participants should

be encouraged to share their opinions toward the process in a manner that will be non-threatening to them such as role playing or anonymously in writing, (2) participants' negative attitudes should be discussed stressing reasons why they exist and ways to alleviate them should be suggested, (3) parents' attitudes, fears, and needs should be emphasized through panel discussions, role playing, lectures, and individual comments, and (4) participants should be assisted in developing strategies to improve parents' attitudes toward the process which may in turn improve their own attitudes.

#### Forms of Parent/School Interaction

Table 12 reflects the results of the survey question, "My perspective regarding the many forms parent/school interaction can take was broadened while attending the parent/school interaction staff development sessions."

TABLE 12

Participants' perspective regarding forms of parent/school interaction

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Number of respondents--30

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Broadened perspective		Perspective remained the same	
Number of respondents	Percent	Number of respondents	Percent
29	97	1	3

## Conclusion

A large majority of the respondents reported that their perspective regarding the forms parent/school interaction can take was broadened while attending the parent/school interaction sessions. One respondent reported, "Before the workshops I thought of parent/school interaction as only entailing parent conferences, PTA meetings and open house at the school. I now see the many other forms it can take and have tried some of the suggestions shared at the sessions including making positive phone calls to parents."

## Response to research question 6

Based on the information reported in table 12, staff development in the area of parent/school interaction can broaden the perspective of school personnel regarding the multitude of forms parent/school interaction can take.

## Recommendations

If one of the goals of staff development in the area of parent/school interaction is to broaden the perspective of school personnel regarding the multitude of forms parent/school interaction can take, the following should be included in the sessions: (1) an opportunity for participants to brainstorm in order to develop a list of interactions, (2) a sharing of lists of interactions developed by other



groups, (3) the opportunity for individuals to explain some of the interactions which they listed and at subsequent sessions and faculty meetings following the completion of the sessions allow time for participants to share interaction techniques or activities that they have tried and found successful.

#### Preparation of Participants for Parent/School Interaction

Table 13 summarizes the replies of respondents to the question, "I feel better prepared to interact with parents than I did prior to the parent/school interaction staff development sessions."

TABLE 13

Preparation of individuals for parent/school interaction following sessions

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Number of respondents--30

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Better prepared		No change in preparation	
Number of respondents	Percent	Number of respondents	Percent
29	97	1	3

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#### Conclusion

A large majority of the participants felt better prepared to interact with parents after attending the

parent/school interaction sessions. Comments two participants used to substantiate their feelings were as follows: (1) "The various speakers and discussions addressed questions I didn't even realize were stopping me from conversing with parents. I feel much better prepared to deal with parents since attending the workshops." (2) "I feel much better able to structure meetings and conferences with parents since I attended the sessions last year. I feel that my parent conferences are much more meaningful."

#### Response to research question 7

Based on the results reported in table 13 staff development in the area of parent/school interaction can result in school personnel feeling better prepared for their role in the parent/school interaction process.

#### Recommendations

If increasing participants' preparation for parent/school interaction is one of the goals of parent/school interaction sessions, it is recommended that sessions be: (1) based on needs assessment results, (2) practical rather than philosophical, (3) designed in a manner which allows for discussion of concerns and questions of participants.

#### Initiation by Participants of Parent/School Interaction

Table 14 reports participants' response to the query,

"Have you implemented any of the strategies or techniques discussed and/or demonstrated during the parent/school interaction staff development sessions?"

TABLE 14

Initiation of parent/school interaction  
by participants since attending  
parent/school interaction  
sessions

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Number of respondents--30

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Initiation of more parent/ school interaction		No increase in initiation of parent/school interaction	
Number of respon- dents	Percent	Number of respon- dents	Percent
27	90	3	10

---

### Conculsion

A large majority of the participants have initiated more parent/school interaction in the last year since attending the parent/school interaction sessions than they had prior to attending the sessions. Approximately two-thirds (nineteen) of the participants indicated that they had initiated more communication with parents during the

past year than they had in prior years. Methods of communication which were used by participants included: parent conferences (thirteen), telephone calls (six), good report letters (5), and home visits (2). One-third of the participants (ten) reported that they had provided parents with more suggestions and/or materials with which they could help their child at home than they did prior to attending the parent/school interaction sessions.

Areas in which participants reported initiating parent involvement included: writing (six), reading (four), and math (three). One-fifth of the participants (five) reported that they had initiated more parent/school interaction in regard to discipline than they had prior to attending the parent/school interaction sessions.

#### Response to research question 8

Based on information reported by participants who attended the parent/school interaction sessions held at Centennial Avenue School during February and March, 1985, staff development in the area of parent/school interaction can result in school personnel initiating more parent/school interaction.

#### Recommendations

If increasing the amount of parent/school inter-

action initiated by school personnel is a goal of parent/school interaction sessions, it is recommended that, (1) a variety of "do-able" suggestions be discussed during the sessions, (2) a "how to" approach be emphasized, and (3) individuals who have had success with the various suggestions be given the opportunity to share their experience with other participants both a) during sessions, and b) at regular faculty meetings.

#### Aftereffects

There are several projects and activities that are aftereffects of the parent/school interaction sessions at the Centennial Avenue School. They include: the development of a monthly parent newsletter, the development of a parent/staff committee to develop a school discipline code, the flexible scheduling of parent conferences, the provision of child care services for parents during conferences, the implementation of a social gathering for parents early in the year before formal conferences, a "call a parent a week" project, the development of packets of information that are sent home to parents, the opportunity for staff to share parent/school interaction experiences at faculty meetings, the invitation to parents to come into the school to serve as resources by



sharing their occupation, hobby, or travel experiences, the creation and use of good report forms, staff members working with parent groups (i.e. the district writing coordinator presenting a session at a PTA meeting on ways parents can help their children at home in the area of writing), and the scheduling of parent/school interaction sessions at two other schools in the district during the 1985-6 school year.

A staff development project based on a discussion that took place during one of the sessions regarding classroom teacher/pupil personnel communication is also in the planning stage for the 1986-7 school year. Also in the planning stage for implementation during the 1986-7 school year are: a series of parent/school interaction sessions designed to meet the needs of individuals in another school in the district, the formation of a parent/school interaction committee at the Centennial Avenue School which would plan, implement, and evaluate activities and projects whose goal would be to increase and improve parent/school interaction. Two other school districts in the area have also indicated the desire to implement parent/school interaction projects during the 1986-7 school year.

### Future Implications

If staff development in the area of parent/school interaction is to be effective it must be designed to meet the particular needs of a set of individuals in a specific setting at a particular time. The more research and projects that are completed in this area the more resources there will be for individuals interested in implementing parent/school interaction staff development sessions to review and adapt to their particular setting at a particular time. The more documentation of successful projects, the more respect and support there will be for the concept of staff development in the area of parent/school interaction. For the concept of parent/school interaction to become a priority within the education field, practitioners who have implemented successful projects must become advocates and disseminate information by making presentations at conferences, writing articles in journals, and discussing successes with colleagues. Researchers must conduct and publicize studies which verify that parent/school interaction staff development can assist in reaching goals that have priority in the educational community.

Practitioners, researchers, and other advocates of parent/school interaction should build a consortium both for

the purpose of sharing with one another successful parent/school projects, and encouraging and assisting school personnel and parents in the parent/school interaction process. The sharing of today's successes can lead to the creation of "the successes of tomorrow.

### Epilogue

Ronald Barth stated:

To the extent that school people and parents--the caring adults with whom they spend most of their waking hours--can work in concert, they can frequently have a greater influence on children than either can working alone, and certainly much greater than if they were working at cross purpose.<sup>1</sup>

A bicycle built for two can reach the top of the hill with one cyclist pedaling, but it does so much easier and quicker if there are two cyclists sharing the pedaling required to reach the top of the hill.

## FOOTNOTES

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#### Chapter V

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APPENDIXES



## APPENDIX A

Results of a survey of elementary principals  
from Nassau County, New York, regarding  
parent/school interaction  
(winter--1985)

Number surveyed--39

Question 1--Does your school district consider parent/school  
interaction a primary priority, a secondary  
priority, or not a priority?

Responses

<u>Primary priority</u>		<u>Secondary priority</u>		<u>Not a priority</u>	
Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
36	92	3	8	0	0

Question 2--Do you believe school personnel should be given  
staff development in the area of parent/school  
interaction?

Responses

<u>Yes</u>		<u>No</u>	
<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
34	87	5	13

Question 3--Has your district offered staff development in the area of parent/school interaction, or does it plan to do so in the near future?

Responses

<u>Yes</u>		<u>No</u>	
Number	Percent	Number	Percent
2	5	37	95

Question 4--If your answer to question 3 was "no," please indicate the reasons why.

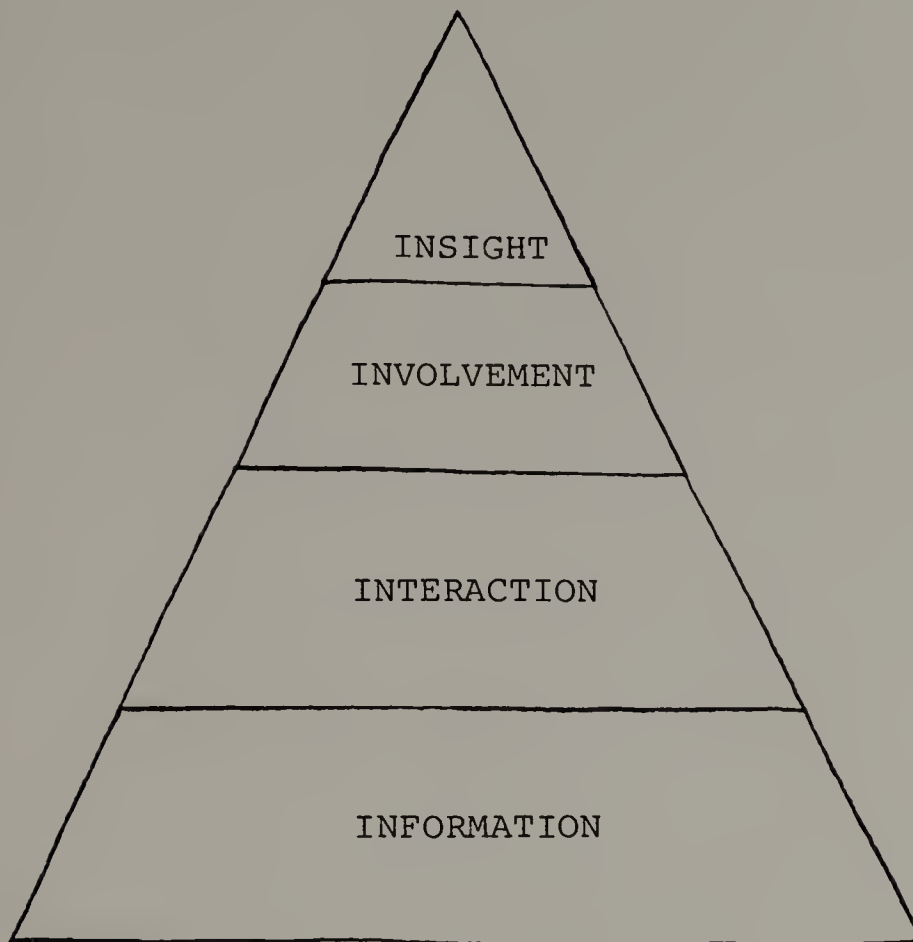
Responses in ranked order\*

<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>	<u>Reasons</u>
6	43	Lack of time because of specific curriculum training needs
12	32	Lack of interest on the part of staff
10	27	Lack of available funds
9	24	Lack of individuals with expertise to train staff in the area of parent/school interaction

\*Some respondents gave more than one response.

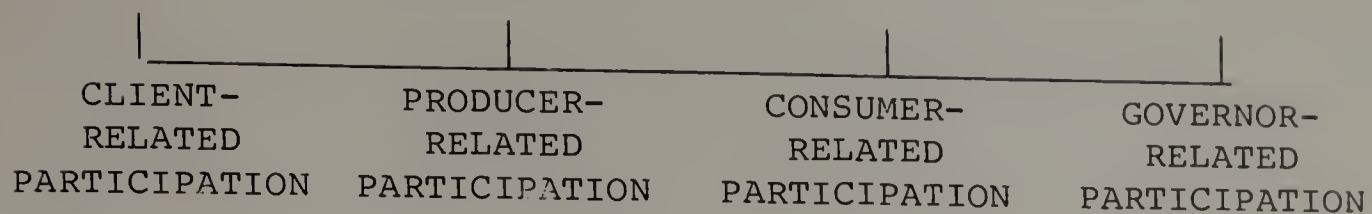
## APPENDIX B-1

## Titus' Hierarchy of Levels

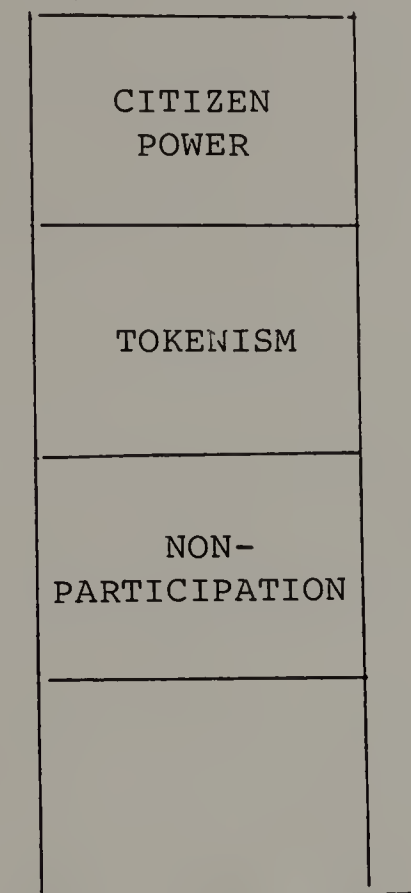


## APPENDIX B-2

## Fantini's Typology

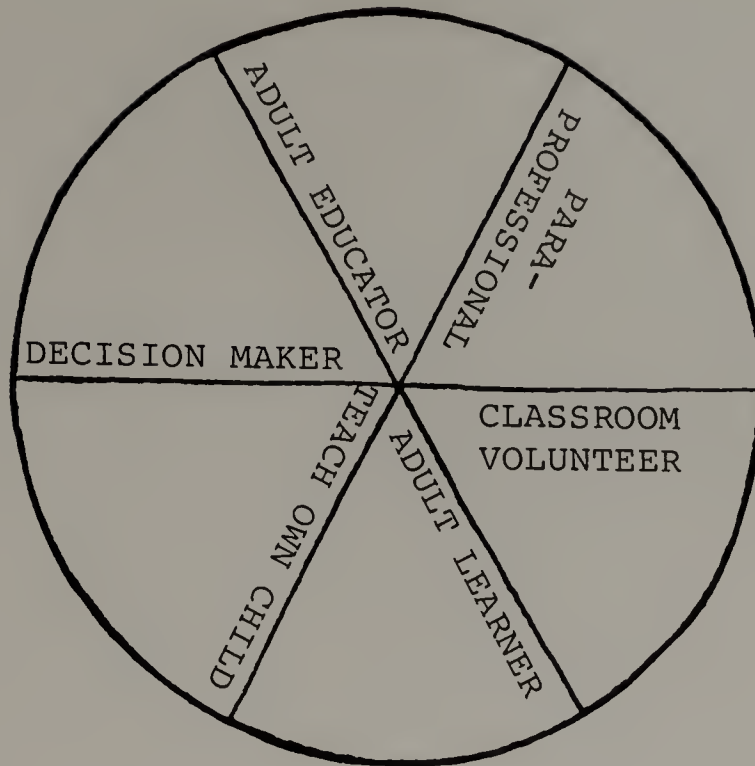


## Arnstein's Ladder of Participation

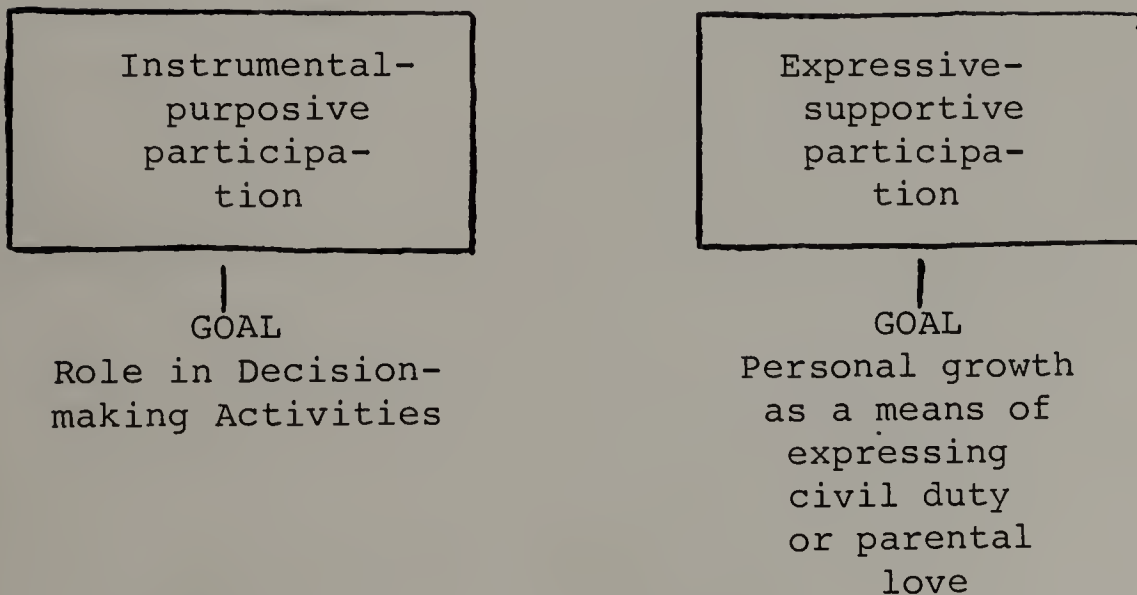


APPENDIX B-3

Gordon's Wheel



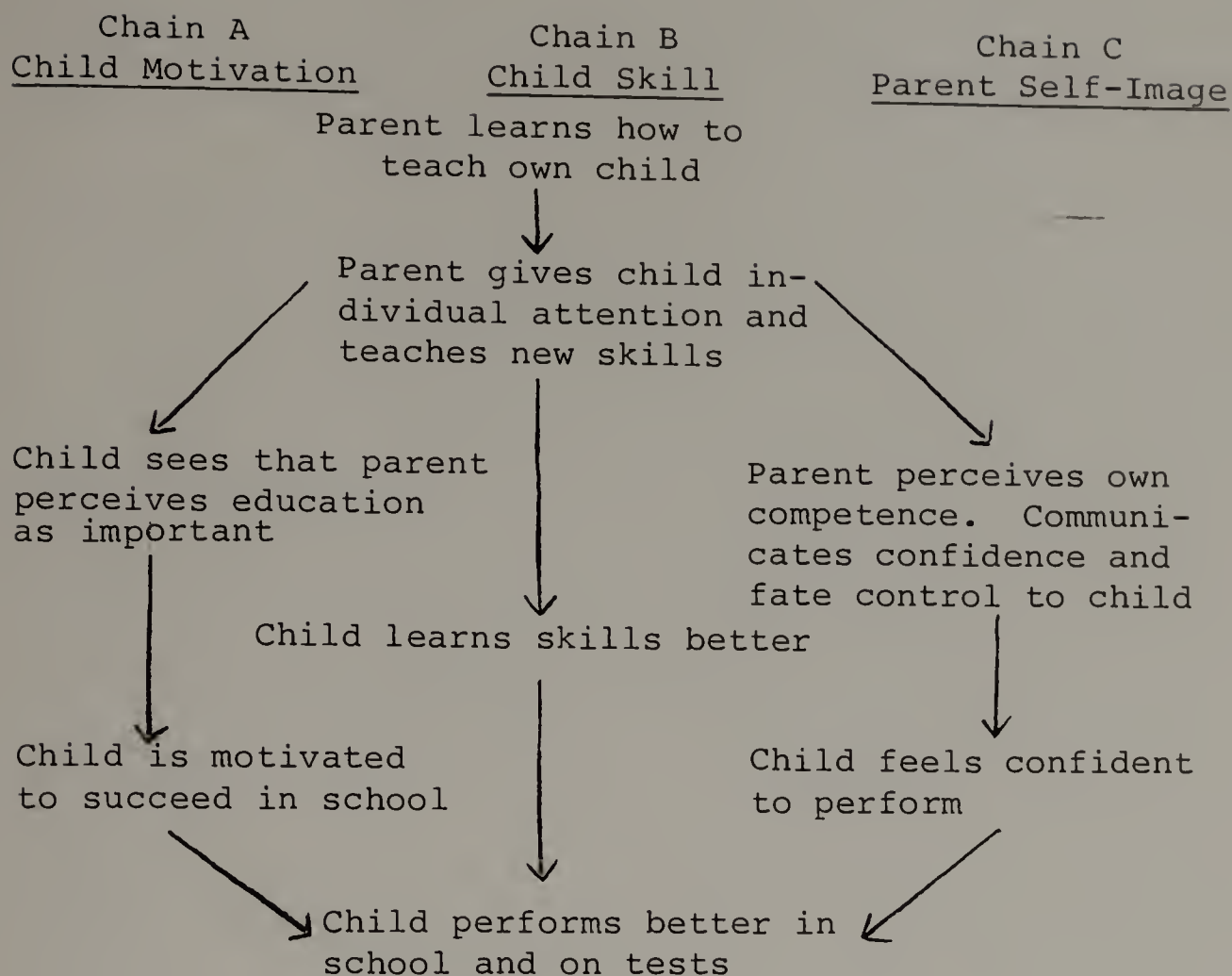
Salisbury's Typology





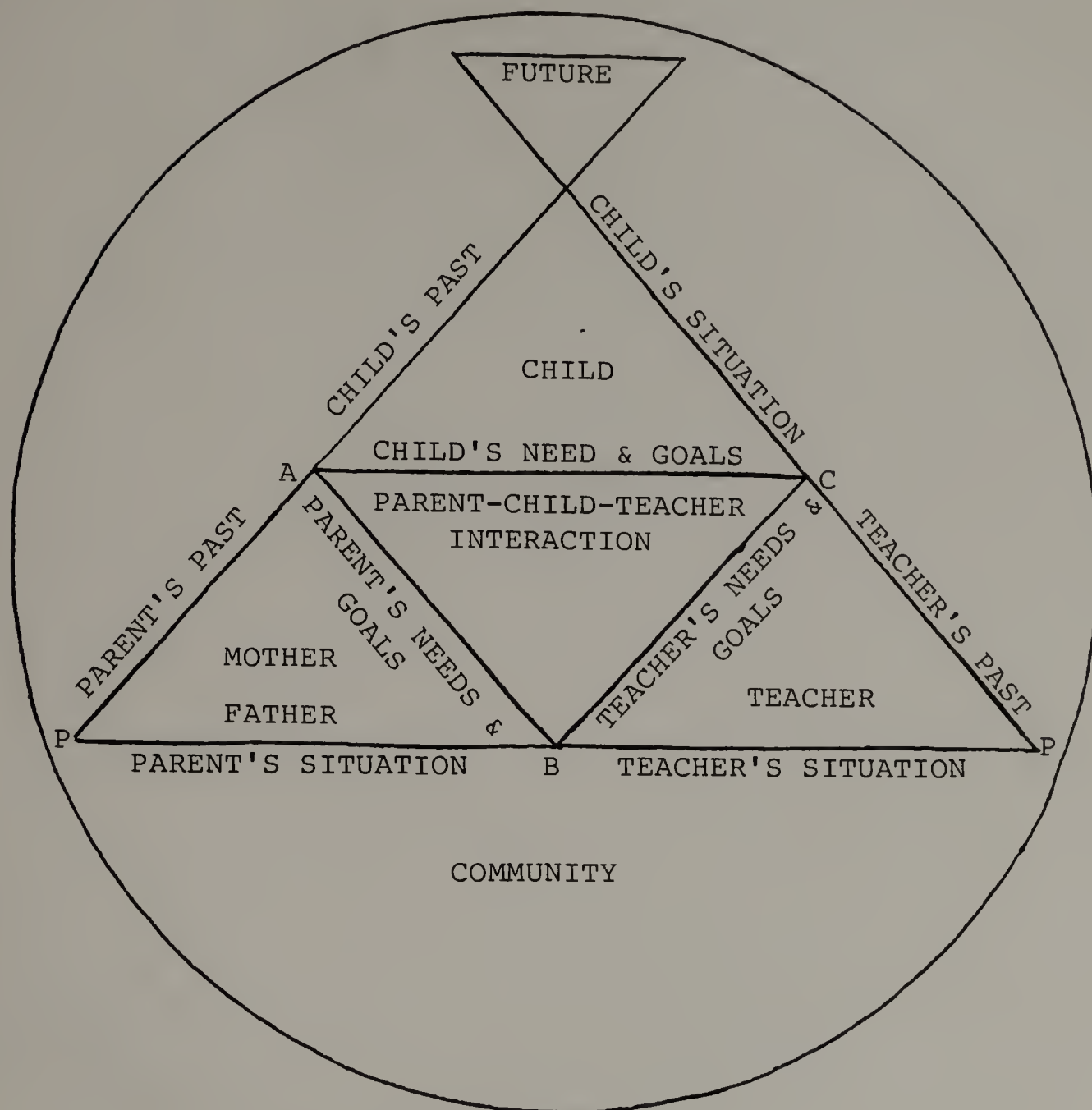
## APPENDIX C

## Mimi Stearns' Chain Model



APPENDIX D

Chilman's Parent-Teacher-Child  
Interaction Triangle Cluster



- ABC--Interaction Triangle
- ABP--Parent Triangle
- BCP--Teacher Triangle
- ACF--Child's Triangle

## APPENDIX D

PARENT/SCHOOL INTERACTION  
FALL 1984 NEEDS  
ASSESSMENT

## STAFF SURVEY

I. Please circle True or False in response to each question:

- |      |       |   |
|------|-------|---|
| True | False | A. It is a parent's responsibility to see that their child is given the best possible education based on his or her individual needs. |
| True | False | B. It is the responsibility of the school staff to provide the best possible education based upon a child's individual needs.         |
|      |       | C. "The majority of parents I have come in contact with in the past year were:"   |
| True | False | 1. hostile  |
| True | False | 2. concerned  |
| True | False | 3. uninvolved   |
| True | False | 4. close-minded   |
| True | False | 5. good role models   |
| True | False | 6. positive   |

II. Answer YES or NO in the following spaces provided to indicate your opinion regarding parental involvement in the following categories:

Should parents:

- A. be part of a Parent-Teacher Association? \_\_\_\_\_
- B. be class mothers or fathers? \_\_\_\_\_

- C. help their children with homework? \_\_\_\_\_
- D. be field trip chaperones? \_\_\_\_\_
- E. be involved in fund-raising activities? \_\_\_\_\_
- F. be volunteers in the school outside of the classroom? \_\_\_\_\_
- G. be volunteers within the classroom setting? \_\_\_\_\_
- H. serve in an advisory capacity as part of a Parent's Advisory Council? \_\_\_\_\_
- I. be involved in curriculum development and review? \_\_\_\_\_
- J. collaborate with school personnel in the development of school discipline codes? \_\_\_\_\_
- K. play a role in determining expenditures for equipment and instructional materials in a particular school? \_\_\_\_\_
- L. play a role in the selection of individuals for teaching and administrative positions? \_\_\_\_\_

III. If workshops were given for staff in the area of parent involvement, what topics would you suggest be included? Please prioritize your three topic selections.

1. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX E

RESULTS

## Parent/Interaction Staff Needs Assessment Survey

Centennial Avenue School  
Roosevelt, N.Y.

I. Please circle True or False in response to each question:

True	False	A.	It is a parent's responsibility to see that their child is given the best possible education based on his or her individual needs.
(84%)	(16%)		

True	False	B.	It is the responsibility of the school to provide the best possible education based upon a child's individual needs.
(100%)	(0%)		

C. "The majority of parents I have come in contact with in the past year were:

True (16%)	False (84%)	1. hostile	
True (79%)	False (21%)	2. concerned	(See attach-
True (84%)	False (16%)	3. uninvolved	<u>ment A for</u>
True (53%)	False (47%)	4. close-minded	<u>ranked</u>
True (42%)	False (66%)	5. good role models	<u>listing.</u> )
True (79%)	False (21%)	6. positive	

II. Answer YES or NO in the following spaces provided to indicate your opinion regarding parental involvement in the following categories:



Should parents:

	<u>YES</u>	<u>NO</u>
A. be part of a Parent-Teacher Association?	100%	0%
B. be class mothers or fathers?	85%	15%
C. help their children with homework?	95%	5%
D. be field trip chaperones?	97%	3%
E. be involved in fund-raising activities?	100%	0%
F. be volunteers in the school outside the classroom?	97%	3%
G. be volunteers within the classroom setting?	55%	45%
H. serve in an advisory capacity as part of a Parent's Advisory Council?	92%	8%
I. be involved in curriculum development and review?	37%	63%
J. collaborate with school personnel in the development of school discipline codes?	55%	45%
K. play a role in determining expenditures for equipment and instructional materials in a particular school?	37%	63%
L. play a role in the selection of individuals for teaching and administrative positions?	24%	76%

III. If workshops were given for staff in the area of parent involvement, what topics would you suggest be included? Please prioritize your three topic selections.

% Responding in the Designated Area

Area

84%	1. Communication Between Parents and School Staff
66%	2. Childrens' Behavior--Role of Staff and Parents
63%	3. How Parents Can Help at Home-- The Role of the Teacher in the Process
16%	4. Parents and Curriculum

## APPENDIX F

PARENT/SCHOOL INTERACTION WORKSHOP  
INFORMATION SHEET

TO: Centennial Avenue School Personnel

Please complete the following sheet and return to the office by the close of the school day.

- (1) Do you plan to attend the parent/school interaction sessions?

\_\_\_\_\_

Yes

\_\_\_\_\_

No

- (2) If you plan to attend, please

- (a) indicate what day of the week you would prefer the sessions be held \_\_\_\_\_
- (b) list any questions or concerns you would like included in session 2 on parent/school communication.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

- (c) list any suggestions you would like to make regarding guest speakers.

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX G

## COMMUNICATION EXERCISE

## Communication!!

MEMORANDUM #1

FROM: Superintendent  
TO: Assistant Superintendent

Next Thursday at 10:30 A.M. Halley's Comet will appear over this area. This is an event which occurs only once every 75 years. Call the school principals and have them assemble their teachers and classes on the athletic fields, and explain this phenomenon to them. If it rains, then cancel the day's observation, and have the classes meet in the auditorium to see a film about the Comet.

---

MEMORANDUM #2

FROM: Assistant Superintendent  
TO: School Principals

By order of the Superintendent of Schools next Thursday at 10:30 Halley's Comet will appear over your athletic field. If it rains, then cancel the day's classes and report to the auditorium with your teachers and students where you will show films, a phenomenal event which occurs every 75 years.

---

MEMORANDUM #3

FROM: School Principal  
TO: Teachers

By order of the phenomenal Superintendent of Schools, at 10:30 next Thursday, Halley's Comet will appear in the auditorium. In case of rain over the athletic field the Superintendent will give another order; something which

occurs only every 75 years.

---

TEACHERS TO STUDENTS #4

Next Thursday at 10:30, the Superintendent of Schools will appear in our school auditorium with Halley's Comet: something which occurs every 75 years. If it rains, the Superintendent will cancel the comet and order us all out to our phenomenal athletic field.

---

STUDENTS TO PARENTS #5

When it rains next Thursday at 10:30 over the school athletic field, the phenomenal 75 year old Superintendent of Schools will cancel all classes and appear before the whole school in the auditorium accompanied by Bill Halley and the Comets.

---

[Author unknown]

## APPENDIX H

INVOLVING PARENTS--OUR IDEAS  
WORKSHOP PARTICIPANTS  
ATLANTA, GEORGIA  
IRA CONFERENCE, MAY, 1984

1. Newspapers
2. Home activities
3. Volunteers in classroom
4. Parent swap day
5. Clerical volunteers
6. Camping trips
7. Field trips
8. Classmothers
9. Library aides
10. Advisement counselor
11. Lunch/recess duty
12. Tutors
13. Conduct workshops
14. Open-house
15. Pot-luck dinner
16. Ice cream social
17. PTA
18. Children participation
19. Youth parades
20. First-aid room
22. International meal
23. Newspaper (student made)
24. Child-Parent pen pals
25. Home visitations
26. Telephone conferences
27. Summer packets
28. Summer correspondence
29. Grandparent's Day
30. School observation
31. Education Fair



32. Audit classes
33. In-school coffee hours
34. Mother's Day Tea
35. Reading celebration
36. Coffee hours
37. Involve children with parents
38. Have parents invited to discuss hobbies
39. Students go to work with parents
40. Make games etc. at home
41. Home reading program
42. 1/2 day parent conferences
43. Discussion circles-monthly-re artists, writing
44. Workshop on exercise and stress
45. Share slide presentation of trips
46. Making items for other parents who attend meetings
47. "Happy Grams" for positive reinforcement
48. Provide transportation-school--parent  
parent--school
49. Muffins for Mom; Donuts for Dad
50. Hot lunch program for retirees
51. Serve as resource for other agencies
52. Involve parents in fund raising
53. Book fairs
54. Media aide; computer aides
55. Learning Center aide; hall monitors
56. "Make & Take" at home; at school
57. Special classroom projects
58. Advisory boards
59. Bus duty at bus stops; crossing walks
60. School Board
61. Public relations
62. Textbook Adoption Committee; G&T: Comp. Ed.
63. Babysitting
64. Emergency homes; Neighborhood patrols
65. Selection of personnel
66. Positive contact...phone...kudos...teachers, principal,  
parent
67. Bake sales
68. Food! Breakfast out, Chapter 1 Dinner, A.M. Coffee hour
69. Talent show, choral reading, puppet shows
70. Games taken home, checked when played, exchanged for  
another

71. Library night
72. Parent's Publishing Company
73. Use of media
74. Young Author's Day
75. Parent Fund Raising Carnivals
76. School Purchasing Supply Companies
77. Make activities FUN
78. Get parents involved in planning and awareness of parent activities
79. Graphics, bulletin boards
80. Special "Parent Lunch" Day
81. Parent "Ed." workshops-speakers
82. Career Day
83. Parent "grade/report card" conferences
84. Program explanation meeting at beginning of the year
85. School choir
86. Parent-talent production
87. Floating trophy for best attendance in PTA
88. Parents as helpers
89. Listeners (LAP TECHNIQUE)
90. Luncheon with Superintendent or Principal-with OFFICIAL INVITATION
91. Community speakers-influential-more general topics as opposed to pedagogical
92. Taking family (as unit) to functions-arts and crafts as family activity, family picnics
93. Parent/student chorus, band, orchestra
94. Awards night
95. Open School nights...display of children's work
96. A Co-operative project-build a playground, greenhouse

## APPENDIX I

PARENT/SCHOOL INTERACTION WORKSHOP  
FEEDBACK/INPUT ASSESSMENT FORM

## I. Feedback

I would appreciate your frank assessment of today's workshop so that future sessions can be planned to meet your needs.

A. The session on the whole was:

1. not useful
2. somewhat useful
3. very useful

B. The activity or discussion I found most useful was the following:

---

## II. Input

Please provide specific input for the next session so that it can be designed to meet your specific needs.

A. In the next session emphasizing (the specific topic was listed) I would like the following questions and/or concerns addressed:

---

B. Open comments

## APPENDIX J

INVOLVING PARENTS--OUR IDEAS  
WORKSHOP PARTICIPANTS  
PARENT/SCHOOL INTERACTION WORKSHOP  
Roosevelt, New York

February, 1985

1. teacher-parent conferences
2. plays, fashion shows, and talent shows put on collaboratively by parents and staff
3. fairs (school and/or class)-academic or craft
4. trips-class or staff/parent
5. classroom newspapers
6. inviting parents to share talents, hobbies, or knowledge with classes or at an assembly (parent-resource/careers)--send home a fact sheet to glean information
7. workshops--for parents and staff together  
for parents, staff and children together
8. classroom parents
9. introductory tea
10. ethnic dinners
11. parenting sessions
12. teas
13. breakfasts
14. planting activities on school grounds
15. committees dealing with the formulating of school policies, establishing procedures for discipline, homework, etc.
16. viewing pertinent films with follow-up discussions
17. game nights
18. sports night
19. square dancing
20. boy scouts, girl scouts, brownies
21. trips
22. open house
23. basketball or baseball games
24. relevant speakers
25. award days
26. after-school clubs

27. latch-key programs
28. parent/school social functions
29. parent handbook on how to help your child at home\*
30. chaparones
31. volunteers (to assist the nurse, in the cafeteria, classrooms, office and/or halls).
32. a parent resource center
33. clothing center
34. community resource involvement
35. pot-luck rap sessions
36. send questionnaires to parents asking them what types of activities they would like to be involved in\*
37. set aside daily a certain time for parent conferences
38. "make and take" sessions
39. evening activities for parent, child, and school staff for all to participate in
40. invite parents to the school as community resource people\*
41. make follow-up phone calls after notices have been sent home (suggestion--be sure to send notices early enough)
42. devise "Good Progress" reports\*
43. have parents pick-up report cards
44. provide child care services for parents while they are at meetings, workshops, conferences, etc.
45. telephone conferences
46. meet with parents in a non-academic setting
47. awards to students and parents
48. End of Year Parent Appreciation Dinner
49. summer packets
50. dessert and cheese tasting
51. grandparents' day

\*Follow-up projects selected by Centennial staff



## APPENDIX K

PARENT/SCHOOL COLLABORATION WORKSHOP

CENTENNIAL AVENUE SCHOOL

FEBRUARY 1985

SUMMATION OF POINTS LISTED AND DISCUSSED AT THE  
FEBRUARY 25th SESSION

LIST AS MANY POSSIBLE REASONS AS YOU CAN THINK OF TO  
EXPLAIN WHY PARENTS MAY RESIST CONTACT WITH SCHOOL  
PERSONNEL.

- time constraints
- negative personal memories of school
- negative experiences with a teacher
- feelings of inadequacy in dealing with "professionals"
- embarrassment because of a child's behavior
- fear of the unknown
- avoidance of a possible unpleasant situation
- lack of knowledge of what to expect
- dread of being blamed for a child's behavior
- not wanting to face the truth about an unpleasant situation
- already frustrated with problems in regard to a child, and  
don't want to hear additional problems
- there may be a language problem
- do not want individuals outside their home to know family  
problems
- overwhelmed with own problems
- believes the child is the teacher's responsibility while  
in school
- afraid of being asked to do something unable to do
- do not have respect for schools or teachers
- school is not considered a priority

## APPENDIX L

## PARENT/SCHOOL COLLABORATION WORKSHOP

March 12, 1985

SUSAN D. SAVITT - WORKSHOP FACILITATOR






INFORMATION PERTAINING TO PARENTS HELPING THEIR  
CHILDREN AT HOMEI. Categories

- A. Habits (attendance, sleep, nutrition, safety, responsibility, independence, getting along with others, following routines, and decision making.)
- B. Study skills (encourage, set aside a specific time for study, eliminate common distractions and interruptions, provide necessary supplies, set an example, etc.)
- C. Specific Activities
  1. Home learning experiences can strengthen a child's attentiveness, motivation, perceptions, concept development, language, problem solving ability, and self concept.
  2. Activities which parents are asked to work with should:
    - a. explain why the activity will help the child
    - b. be written in a clear, direct manner which outlines the steps the parents should follow when working with their child.

- c. include an answer key when appropriate
  - d. provide the child with reinforcement in a particular skill.
3. Students should not be punished or held responsible if parents do not help them at home.
  4. Parents should not be overwhelmed with suggestions. Teachers should select activities and perhaps set a routine. This is not to imply that if parents request additional suggestions, they should not be provided with them. Parents as well as children and teachers are individuals.

## II. Other Pertinent Information

- A. Workshops built around parents helping their children at home are useful.
- B. Teachers need to take leadership in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of these activities.
- C. This approach reinforces the natural relationship of home and school, and allows school and home to collaborate on a common goal--meeting the needs of children.

MARCH		CALENDAR OF LANGUAGE ARTS ACTIVITIES				
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
ROOSEVELT PUBLIC SCHOOLS	NATIONAL PEANUT MONTH 					"IN LIKE A LION" "OUT LIKE A LAMB"
3	4	5 1770 CRISPUS ATTUCKS DAY	6 NATIONAL MUFFIN WEEK	7	8	9 1451 AMERIGO VESPUCCI
10	11 FUN MAIL WEEK	12	13 1781 URANUS WAS DISCOVERED	14	15	16 1827 BLACK PRESS DAY ANNIVERSARY OF 1ST BLACK NEWSPAPER IN U.S.
17 ST. PATRICK'S DAY 	18 1837 GROVER CLEVELAND BAKE WEEK	19	20 EARTH DAY 	21 	22	23 1775 PATRICK HENRY'S FAMOUS SPEECH
24	25	26 1874 ROBERT FROST'S BIRTHDAY	27 ART WEEK	28	RED CROSS MONTH 	30 1853 VAN GOGH

## APPENDIX N

PARENT/STAFF INTERACTION WORKSHOP

MARCH 1985

Susan D. Savitt--Workshop Facilitator

DISCIPLINE--The Role of School Staff and Parents

## DISCIPLINE IS LEARNED--BEHAVIOR IS CAUSED

School staff and parents should:

- \* Focus on causes rather than symptoms.
- \* Foster good discipline by creating an environment that is conducive to good discipline rather than adapting isolated practices to deal with discipline problems.
- \* Use preventative measures rather than punitive actions to improve discipline.
- \* Collaboratively develop a discipline code.
- \*The discipline code should list rules and consequences for not following the rules. The consequences should be feasible, relevant, reasonable, immediate, non-punitive, and consistent. The rules should be clear and workable. The goal should be to find long-term solutions.
- \*A handbook explaining the discipline policy should be sent home to every parent at the beginning of the school year
- \*Meetings should be held for parents and students to discuss the policy.
- \* Model expected behaviors
- \* Reinforce good behavior
- \* Jointly develop an action plan when a student exhibits unacceptable behavior in school.
- \*If a student exhibits unacceptable behavior the teacher should inform the parent (hopefully, this will not be the teacher's initial contact with the parent--the first contact should be a positive one.)



- \*If the unacceptable behavior persists, student's parents should be contacted, and a conference requested.
- \*The teacher should have documentation of what has taken place.
- \*Both teacher and parent should not deal with fault finding, but rather with developing an action plan.
- \*Follow-up procedures and communication should be arranged.
- \* Attempt to help students develop a positive self-concept.

IF WE THINK IMPROVEMENT IS IMPOSSIBLE--IT WILL BE

## APPENDIX O

Earl Mosely  
Roosevelt Public Schools

POINTS FOR PARENTS

1. Your child will profit greatly from the assurance that you are interested in what he/she does in school.
2. Discuss discipline strategies with your child's teacher. It will help if you present a united front.
3. Discuss the establishment of a regular study schedule with your child's teacher.
4. Find out from your child's teacher what is expected of him/her in the way of homework and how you can help.
5. Impress your child with the virtues of prompt and regular class attendance.
6. Talk about your child's day in school during the dinner hour.
7. Attend Open House and parent conferences at your child's school.
8. Share information about your child's interests with your child's teacher.
9. Be active in the Parent Teacher Association in your child's school.
10. Discuss your child's report card with your child and his/her teacher, and discuss as a group ways to improve in the future.

## APPENDIX P

## FIVE WAYS TO PROMOTE SELF-DISCIPLINE

Wilma Tootle

Uniondale Public Schools

## 1. Build a good relationship.

If you want your children to become responsible for their own actions, you must be kind and firm: firmness without a touch of kindness is not the answer. Your children must feel that you like them. Assure them that it is because of your concern for their welfare that you insist on certain things (curfews, obeying school rules, etc.)

## 2. Use logical consequences.

Distinguish in word and deed the difference between "punishment" and "logical consequences." Punishment demands compliance with rules. Punishment conveys the threat of disrespect or loss of love. Logical consequences give the child a choice: "If I do this and people find out, then I am sure to \_\_\_\_." The logical consequence of wrong acts and deeds are known to the child before he commits the action. What happens to him is known ahead of time. If he is caught he must face the "logical consequences." In this way, he knows it is the act and not the person who must "face the music." The child is still accepted as a worthwhile person; the act is wrong and what follows is logical and fair.

## 3. Promote decision-making skills.

Responsibility and decision-making are dependent upon each other. Most children feel that they make few decisions for themselves. They need to feel that they are involved in the decision-making process. Point out to them how many decisions they make for themselves each day. This will enable them to realize that they do have

choices in their daily lives; and that they must bear the responsibilities for the choices they make.

4. Develop mutual respect.

Make your children understand that no one human being is worth more than the other. That means all in the household must respect each other. Use encouragement, recognize improvement, be lavish in your praise, show trust, respect and belief in mutual respect.

5. Have a responsible household.

Set the tone for responsibility. Set up goals for the year. Develop them with your children as a family. Refer to a code of behavior or set of rules.

These methods of achieving self-discipline are based on mutual respect, self-responsibility, and better decision-making. Try them, you'll like them. And what's more, your children will like themselves better.

## APPENDIX Q

## PARENT/SCHOOL INTERACTION WORKSHOPS

CENTENNIAL AVENUE SCHOOL

FEBRUARY-MARCH 1985

Susan D. Savitt--Facilitator

FINAL WORKSHOP--FEEDBACK ASSESSMENT

I would appreciate your frank assessment of the workshops and your input into the development of follow-up plans.

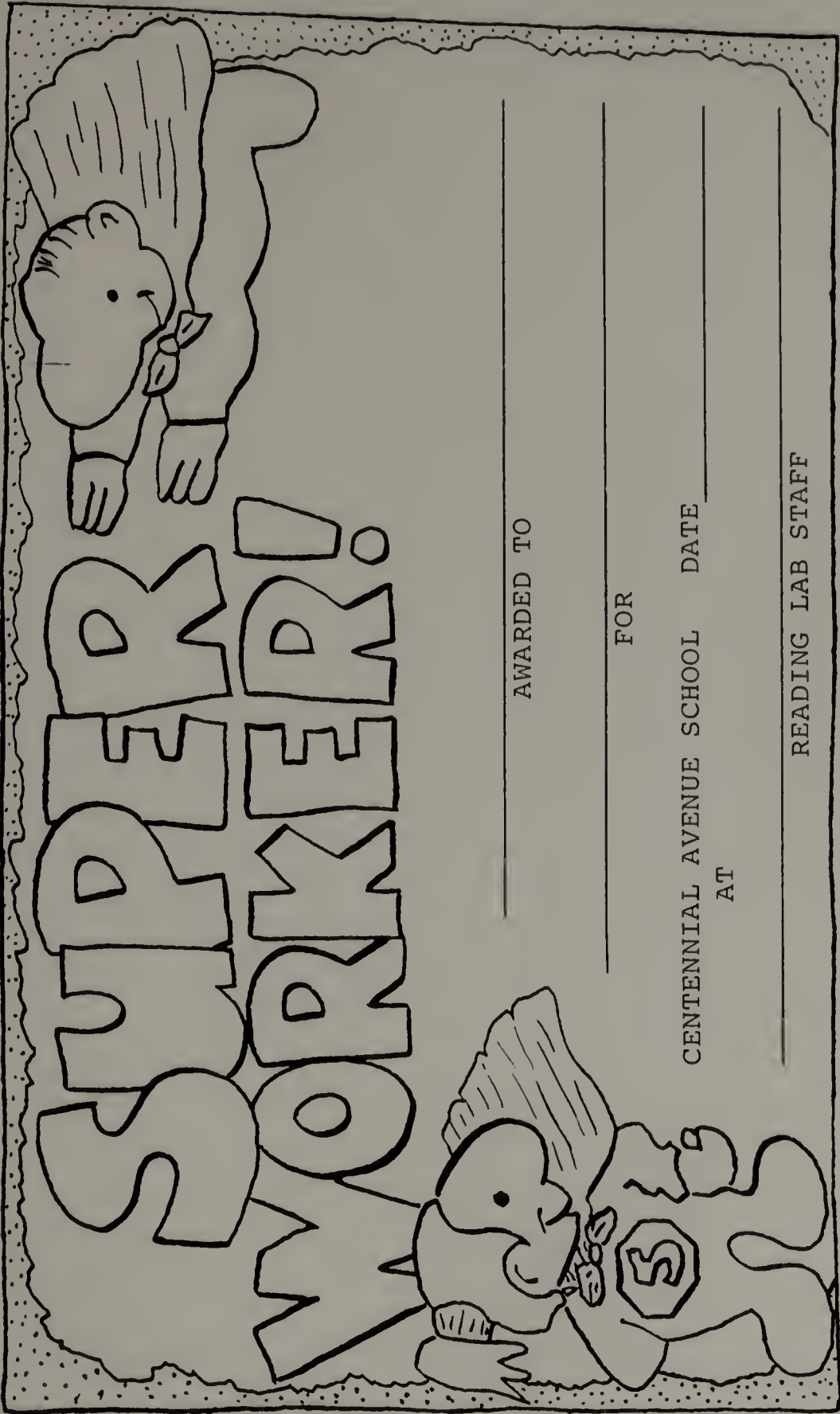
## CIRCLE YOUR RESPONSE

1. The workshops as a whole were:
  - a. not useful
  - c. somewhat useful
  - d. very useful
  
2. Participants were given the opportunity to ask questions and express their ideas.
  - a. yes
  - b. sometimes
  - c. no
  
3. Questions and concerns included on the feedback form were incorporated into the following sessions.
  - a. yes
  - b. sometimes
  - c. no
  
4. Please list activities, materials, or suggestions presented at the workshops which you plan to make use of.



5. Please list any additional positive and/or negative comments regarding the workshops, presenters, etc. and suggestions which you would like to share.

6. Please list concerns, suggestions, areas, etc. which you suggest be addressed in the quest to increase parent/school interaction at your school.



AWARDED TO \_\_\_\_\_

FOR \_\_\_\_\_

CENTENNIAL AVENUE SCHOOL DATE \_\_\_\_\_

AT \_\_\_\_\_

READING LAB STAFF

## APPENDIX S

## Parents as Resources

Letter to Parents

[Letterhead]

March, 1986

Dear Parents,

The Centennial Avenue School staff realizes that our community provides an important part of our students' lives and would like to see our parents, school staff, and students actively working closely together. Parents have an abundance of experiences and information that could help broaden our students' education. We would like for parents to assist us by serving as resources for our students. For example, a parent who is a florist might plan to make a floral arrangement as he explains how it is done, or a parent who knits as a hobby might plan to give some instructions in basic knitting.

If you are available to share your career, hobby, or interest, or know someone in our community who would be available and agreeable to do so, please complete the following form and return it to your child's teacher.

Looking forward to working with you. Please remember our motto: "TOGETHER WE CAN."

Sincerely,

---

 PARENT RESOURCE INFORMATION

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_ TELEPHONE: \_\_\_\_\_

BEST TIME OF DAY OR EVENING TO CONTACT YOU: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_ OCCUPATION \_\_\_\_\_ HOBBY \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_ SPECIAL INTEREST \_\_\_\_\_ OTHER \_\_\_\_\_

## APPENDIX T

Centennial Avenue School  
Suggestions to Parents for Parent-Teacher Conferences

Parent-teacher conferences are important. They give the parent and teacher an opportunity to exchange information about the child and how he/she is doing in school.

This conference will give you an opportunity to discuss your child's strengths and talents and to work on any problems your child might have.

Remember, when the teacher asks questions, she isn't prying; she is trying to get information that will help her teach your child.

If only one parent can attend the conference please ask for additional ideas and suggestions before you meet with the teacher. Make your own list of all questions. Use our questions as a guide.

Questions Parents Should Ask

What is my child's attitude toward school?  
 Is my child working up to his/her potential?  
 Does he/she show confidence?  
 Does he/she listen and follow directions?  
 How is my child progressing?  
 Do you have samples of my child's work for me to see?  
 How much of this conference information should I share with my child?

Questions Parents Should Be Prepared to Answer

How does your child feel about school?  
 How much does he talk about school?

What does your child like about school?  
What does your child dislike about school?  
What does he/she like to do at home?  
What responsibilities/jobs does he/she have at home?  
What type of discipline works best with your child?  
How do you think your child behaves at school?  
Does your child have any kind of problem which may  
affect his/her classroom behavior or work?

Does he/she have a hearing problem?  
Does he/she wear glasses?  
Does he/she have a medical problem?  
Does he/she often act as though he/she doesn't care?  
Has there been a recent death in the family?  
Is there a problem with his/her friends?  
Have there been any changes in the home?  
Is he/she ever embarrassed to ask questions in class?

Is there something else you wish to ask or talk about?  
Do you feel you need an additional conference to pursue  
some of the information we have discussed?  
Do you have information (academic, social, emotional,  
physical) about your child you would like someone at  
school to know about? Who?

LET'S KEEP IN CLOSE COMMUNICATION - REMEMBER--

"TOGETHER WE CAN"



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