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THE IMPACT OF PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT ON STUDENT SUCCESS: SCHOOL AND FAMILY PARTNERSHIP FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF PARENTS AND TEACHERS

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THE IMPACT OF PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT ON STUDENT SUCCESS: SCHOOL AND

FAMILY PARTNERSHIP FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF PARENTS AND TEACHERS

by

Audric C. Newchurch

A Dissertation

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support and giving me the inspiration and empowerment I needed to endure during this process,

and her incredible love for me, which stimulated me to be steadfast in completing this work.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to:

Geraldine, without your prayers and encouragement it would have been impossible for me to muster up the bravery and determination to complete the voyage. Your endurance and moments of encouraging words contributed to this achievement more than you comprehend. With all my heart, I love you. My parents− Dr. Fred and Maryann Newchurch−two individuals whose obligation to their children's education has empowered them all, leaving a life-long impression to be life-long learners. My brother Dwight Newchurch−a successful business owner whose accomplishments forces me to be meek and encourages me to remain in a posture of humbleness. My grandmother, Mrs. Ruth Bonaby whose life-living gave me direction and support in assisting me to preserve, to always be thankful, and to treat all persons fairly. In addition, to all the co-workers and practitioners in the field of education who have demonstrated to me what is vital in education and life in general.

ABSTRACT

THE IMPACT OF PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT ON STUDENT SUCCESS: SCHOOL AND
FAMILY PARTNERSHIP FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF PARENTS AND TEACHERS
by
Audric C. Newchurch
Kennesaw State University, 2017

The purposes of this study was to examine the perceptions of parents and teachers regarding their awareness and responsiveness concerning parental involvement and search for ways to improve the home-school relationship through effective parental involvement. Additionally, the study strived to identify efficient yet useful ways that families and schools can build strong partnerships and to discover the role of the school in at home *parenting* and *learning* through a collaborative partnership based on Epstein's six typologies of parental involvement.

Conversely, this study focused on two uncommon involvement typologies in Epstein's framework. Those two are *parenting* and *learning at home*. This inquiry was conducted using a qualitative approach with a narrative implication. The research analyzed the participant's stories, commonalities of participant's stories, and non-commonalities of participant's stories linked to the themes. This inquiry includes information on parent and teacher perceptions of the impact of parental involvement on student success. The participants consisted of three parents of 5th grade students, three 5th grade students, and two teachers of the 5th grade students.

The results were categorized by the three themes that emerged during the interviews. Each of the findings justified the importance of parenting, learning at home, and communication in student success while building a stronger home-school partnership.

This research provided insight on parent and teacher perspectives of school and family involvement, how to improve school and parent partnerships, and developing effective and strategic communication.

The results may inform the practice in several ways. School administrators and stakeholders could use the results to help organize parent programs to better support students at home. Administrators could use the communication strategies from the research to increase parental support, which could increase involvement. Furthermore, school leaders may find this research informative because of the logical results in the study. This research provides parents and teachers collaborative strategies that represent best practices for developing the whole child. School administrators can also use the findings in this research to inform parental involvement improvement efforts at the school level.

Keywords: Parental involvement, familial involvement, social forces, socio-economic factors, cultural diversity, narrative research.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Wilder (2014) reported that parental involvement was found to be one of the factors affecting student achievement. The overwhelming studies indicate that there are positive academic outcomes stemming from parental involvement with benefits beginning in early childhood throughout adolescence and beyond (Loomans, 2014). Policy makers and educators are studying the escalation of parental-school collaboration as a method of improving educational success and socially accepted behavior for children. Their findings suggest that children of parents that are involved tend to perform at higher rates academically than students whose parents are less involved. In addition, children of involved parents tend to exhibit higher educational aspirations (Alba, Sloan, & Sperling, 2011).

While this study focused on the influence of parental involvement on student success, school and family partnership proves to be a real-world phenomenon. As educators concur that there needs to be continual attention and ongoing research on ways to promote parental involvement (El Nokali et al., 2010).

School administrators are continually looking for ways to improve parental participation. Accordingly, one of the goals of this study was to expose current practices and identify additional strategies to support parental involvement. School and family partnerships and involvement are not a one size fits all model; numerous factors go into the level of engagement, involvement, understanding, and the perspective of each party. (McWayne & Melzi, 2014). This research examines perceptions of the home and school relationships through the lens of a diverse group of parents and teachers of fifth grade students.

Statement of the Problem

For many years, the importance and need for parental involvement in education has been well recognized (Ravitch, 2016). Vincent and Neis (2011) noted that there is a significant shortage of parent participation at the secondary level that may negatively affect academic progress and high school completion. Current researchers continue to investigate the influence of parental involvement on student achievement, accountability, and attendance. Patel and Agbenyega (2016) recognized parent involvement as "the participation of parents in every facet of children's education and development from birth to adulthood" (p. 8). Therefore, it is imperative for educators to continue to find ways and to encourage parents to become involved in the educational process of their children regardless of social and socio-economic challenges.

Researchers have articulated that family and community participation in the educative process can significantly have an impact school and student success (Fan & Williams, 2010). Henderson and Berla (1994) reported that the most accurate predictor of a student success in school is the extent to which families can: (1) create a home environment conducive for learning; (2) articulate high expectations for their child's achievement and future career; and (3) become involved in their children's education (p. 160).

Research Questions

The following questions were posed to examine the impact of parental involvement on student success.

1. In what ways do parents get involved in their child's educational experience?

2. How does parental involvement provide support to overall student success?

3. What can parent stories tell us about parental involvement that is unobservable by the school and its effects on academic success?

Problem Background

Parents are their children's first teachers. If children are to be successful in school, parents must be actively involved in their children's academic lives. By increasing parental involvement, children's academic life will improve. A lack of parental involvement negatively influences children's academic success and performance.

While it is highly recognized that parental involvement produces positive effects on students' motivation and achievement, it is noted that social factors and socio-economic factors present a challenge to many parents. Those factors include increasing ethnic and cultural diversity, environment, changing values, family stress, equal rights, crime and violence, parent's level of education, parent's occupation, income and living conditions. All of these contribute to a decline in parental involvement. (Lin, Pearce, & Wang, 2006).

Jeynes (2017) found an important difference in parental involvement rates between the academic achievement and school behavior of Latino pre-kindergarten through college-age children. Parental involvement levels were significantly higher in upper and middle-class neighborhoods than in low-income communities.

A staggering amount of research has included ethnicity as a factor in parental involvement. Marschall and Shah (2016) found that schools with predominantly African American and Latino enrollment and a high percentage rate of students on free or reduced lunch programs had low parental involvement. However, Watkins (2013) found that White parents reported higher levels of education, lower parental participation and engagement, and their children received higher grades. Watkins concurred that white parents had lower parental participation and engagement because their children were achieving at a higher level than that of African American students; this was their rationale for their low involvement rate.

After controlling for socio-economic status, Fan, Xu, Cai, He, and Fan (2017) discovered very small statistical differences in parental involvement among ethnic groups. Additionally, Fan et al. established that parents with higher educational levels had higher expectations for their children. Additionally, Fan et al.'s research articulated the impact of socio-economic factors and social forces on parental involvement and student achievement. It is necessary to note that, due to the relationship between ethnicity and socio-economic status, differences in the degree of parental involvement by ethnicity may be partially the result of socio-economic status (Fan et al., 2017).

Purpose and Significance of the Study

The purpose of this narrative research was to examine the impact of parental involvement on student success at the elementary level and to examine perceptions of parental involvement among parents and teachers. Narrative research is a type of qualitative research that depends entirely on individual narratives, whether written, spoken, or visually represented. Such research favors participant collaboration and discovery of themes and significant elements of the participants lived told story over finding objective trends in a broader subject.

Studies show that mathematics and reading aptitude grow at all educational levels when parents are involved. Additionally, there are lower rates of school incompletion and better self-confidence among students when teachers have better classroom management and when parents participate more (Moon & Hofferth, 2016). Parents likewise profit from actively participating at their children's school. As parents become more involved, they gain a better comprehension of school, they empower the communication with their children, they have constant access to needed services, and they strengthen their self-efficacy and sense of empowerment (Okeke, 2014).

Students in the United States are lingering behind students in other countries academically (Duncan & Murnane, 2016). This study indicates that the academic disparity among the students in the United States and other countries is steadily increasing. If this gap persists, students in the United States will forfeit multiple global opportunities. Children whose parents fail to become involved in their education often do not benefit as well academically and socially as those children, whose parents get involved (Kim & Bryan, 2017).

In December 2015, the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) was signed into law and replaced the Elementary and Secondary Education Act. ESSA guarantees opportunity for students, educators, parents, and communities because it exchanges the federal top-down approach as required by NCLB. Those opportunities are guaranteeing equitable access to effective teachers using the State Equity Plan and expanding access to high-quality early learning. Equitable access denotes to the concept that all students should have the same opportunity to be aided by teachers and administrators who are qualified and effective educators. Evidence often shows that unqualified and ineffective educators often serve poor and minority students at disproportionate rates (Hahnel, Carrie, & Orville Jackson, 2012). Yoshikawa et al., (2014) reported that children who attend high-quality early learning programs, and more specifically preschool programs for 3- and 4-year-olds, are less likely to need special education services or be retained, and are more likely to graduate from high school, go on to college, and succeed in their careers than those who have not attended such programs.

Because of this new law, states and local schools/districts can make educational decisions that are best for their students and develop plans that address standards/assessments. Schools and districts also give special attention to accountability and employ special help for struggling schools and students. With bilateral support, ESSA permits local schools/districts and states to

make education decisions that are best for their students, rather than overreaching federal requirements. This new law necessitates that states develop regulations that address school and district accountability along with standards, assessments, and special help for struggling schools and students.

As the transition from No Child Left Behind to the Every Student Succeeds Act takes place, schools/districts are charged to carefully listen to feedback from all stakeholders interested in making education better for students. Schools and districts are required to collaborate with educators, parents, community members, business/industry leaders, and lawmakers/policymakers to personalize education for students to ensure they are ready to learn, ready to live, and ready to lead.

Conceptual Framework

Parents, schools, and society partake in a mutual awareness and commitment in instructing students (Epstein & Sheldon, 2016). Epstein's school-family-partnership theory demonstrates and suggests that the stakeholders work cooperatively to influence the improvement and education of children. Epstein alluded to this theory as an overlapping sphere of influence among the stakeholders in teaching children in an effort of making educational progress. According to Epstein's theory, the students are the focus behind the school, families, and community cooperating to build students' success. This theory is not intended to create effective students, but rather to give them the tools to make progress on their own. "School and family partnerships do not 'produce' successful students, rather, the partnership activities that include teachers, parents, and students engage, guide, energize, and motivate students so that they produce their own success" (Kumari, 2016, p. 26).

The overlapping spheres of influence theory exhibits joint commitment of the stakeholders for a student's accomplishment in school (Epstein & Shapiro, 2016). The outside construction of Epstein's theory perceives the children are on the inside as the focus within the family, school, and community (Figure 1). Different encounters, theories, and forces push the circles together or pull the circles apart resulting in the amount of coverage among the stakeholders (Epstein et al., 2016). The measure of overlap changes, yet there is never an entire covering as families, schools, and communities lead a few practices independently (Epstein & Sheldon, 2016).

Figure 1

Epstein's Overlapping Spheres of Influence Model External Structure
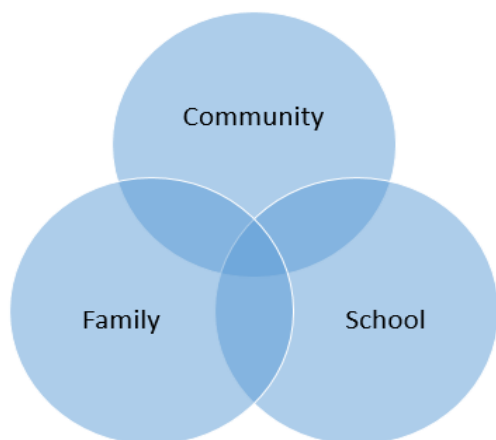
The inside construction of this theory shows the associations that might happen due to stakeholder cooperation (Figure 2 and 3). Such cooperation might occur at the school level including all stakeholders. It may sometime be found at an individual level including only one parent, child, educator, or community person.

Figure 2

Epstein's Overlapping Spheres of Influence Model Internal Structure

F=Family   S=School   T=Teacher   P=Parent   C=Child
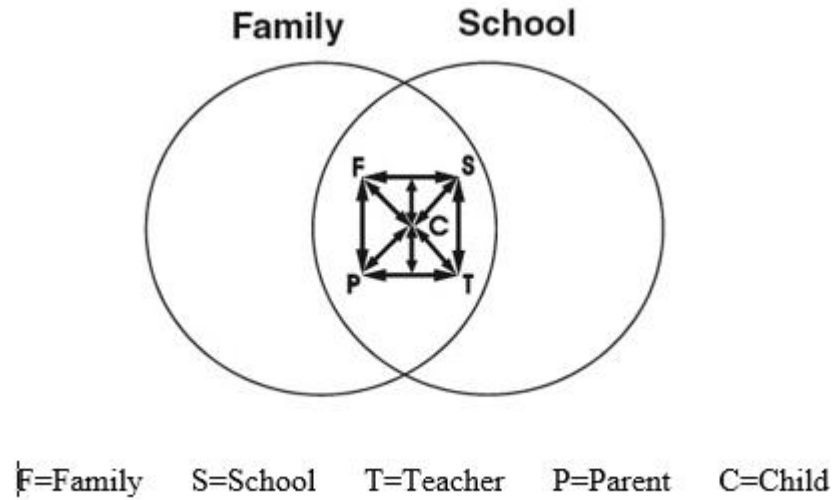
Figure 3

Epstein's Overlapping Spheres of Influence Model
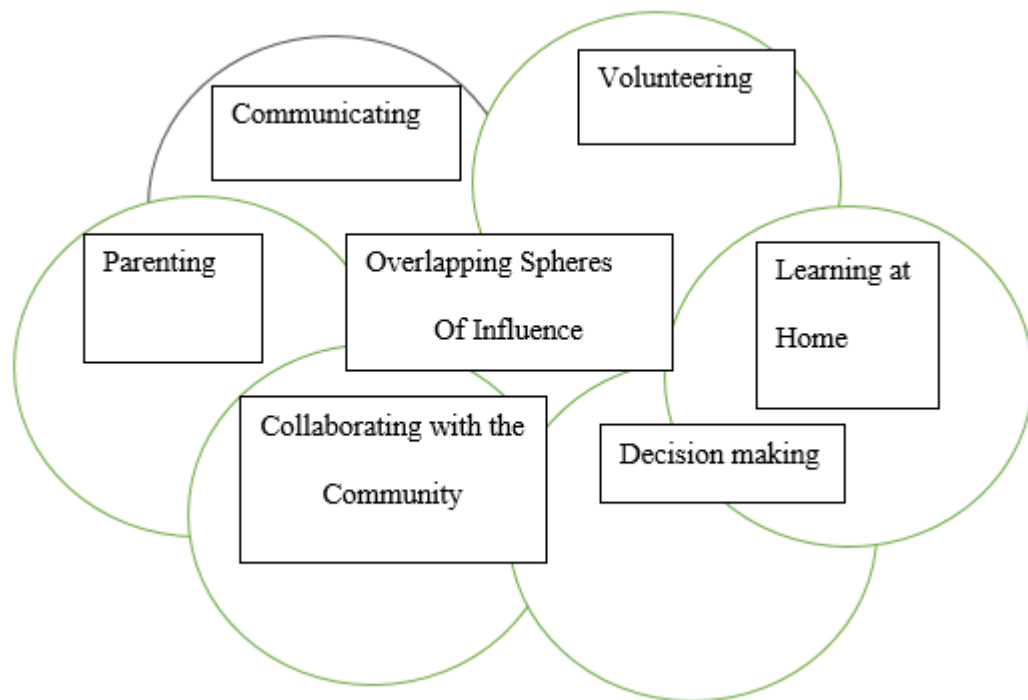
The hypothesis of this theory recommends the following: that educators offer *family-like* schools, families develop *school-like* homes, and communities support school-like opportunities and family-like services. Epstein's model encourages educators to offer family-like schools by perceiving students as people thus causing them to feel worthwhile. Parents and guardians should develop school-like families by perceiving the significance of school and school-related exercises while empowering their child's accomplishment. Communities should give school-like opportunities by strengthening and recognizing the endeavors and accomplishment of students. Communities likewise give family-like settings and occasions by empowering and helping families in sustaining their child's academic achievement.

Epstein has acknowledged six significant types of involvement among stakeholders. The six types of parental involvement are grounded in the outcomes of many studies and years of work by educators on families in elementary, middle, and high school (Herrell, 2011). Epstein established a hypothesis that coordinated psychological, sociological, and educational points of view of how community establishments come together and construct a framework of the basic foundations of the stakeholders. Joyce Epstein expressed that her theory is grounded on a framework that creates ongoing growth of home, school and family actions and interactions across the school years (Epstein, Galindo, & Sheldon, 2010). She constructed her framework on the developing child during the 1980s. This theory exemplifies stakeholders with the child at the center. It accepts that there are a few procedures that stakeholders partake in separately and mutually that influence a child's improvement and success. The amount of overlap is measured by three trajectories: (a) time, (b) experience in families, and (c) experience in schools (see Figure 1; Epstein, 2010a).

The outside construction of the framework might be pulled together or separated relying on the viewpoint, applications, and activities of the stakeholders. The age and grade level of the child and the social conditions is called the force of time. Educators and schools rationalize about how parents/guardians would likewise increase the level of the sphere of influence. When educators allow parents to be a part of their systematic educational endeavors, they produce a bigger overlap than expected. Parents may likewise make more noteworthy overlap by expanding their inclusion in their child's education. Grounded examples of this framework are viewed as educators change throughout the years and parents transform their level of involvement. Epstein (2010a) reported that the extreme overlap occurs when stakeholders work as genuine partners and have clear, yet close communication among parents and teachers.

The inside model of the framework reveals where the necessity of interpersonal relations and forms of influence might occur among stakeholders (Epstein, 2010). Epstein clarifies that relationships and communication transpires within establishments and among them. She also concurs that relationships and communication takes place at two levels, a standard organizational communication or a specific communication between two individuals. Typical organizational communication would include knowledgeable information for all families pertaining to school policies, events, or workshops available to all stakeholders. Such communication would also include the events of a parent-teacher organization, a school council, or a community group. Specific communication would include discussions or written communication between a parent and a teacher about an individual child. Epstein also noted that, although children are at the center of this framework, their relationships and communication among the spheres influences the results. She proposes that this model may be used to enhance research measures to study the impact of parental engagement on student success and other child and family outcomes.

Six Types of School-Family-Community Involvement

In 1995 the National Network for Partnership Schools was established by Epstein to assist in connecting research, policy, and practices in education (Epstein et al., 2009). Epstein et al. (2009) described a framework to include six key types of involvement and incorporated diverse practices, challenges, redefinition of terms, and possible outcomes for students, parents, and schools for each type. The six types of involvement recognized by Epstein et al. (2009) are:

Parenting. The initial type of inclusion is child rearing and this incorporates helping families with essential child rearing skills, creating living environments to help students in the learning process, and helping institutions understand families. By giving information and material that increases parent's awareness and strengthen their skills to influence their child's development and advancement, institutions can help families in attaining their responsibilities as parents/guardians of students at each age level (Epstein, 2013; Herrell, 2011). Activities that may reinforce parent's understanding of helping with child rearing abilities and enhance living environments may involve but are not limited to support programs for families, parent-training seminars, and home visitations (Epstein, 2010a; Herrell, 2011). Action plans should contain material for parents and from parents about their families (Epstein & Shapiro, 2016; Herrell, 2011). Disseminating information to all families and not only the families who go to the seminars at school is crucial. Many times, it is those families who do not attend or cannot attend that are the families who need the material (Epstein et al., 2011).

It is vital for institutions of learning to accumulate data from families to assist teachers in better understanding students and their families, including their experiences, objectives, qualities, and requirements. At the point when parents give this sort of information to the school, this

information helps schools to develop an awareness of the obstacles many parents face and give schools a lead way on how to build a strong and trustworthy relationship among the family and the educators.

Stakeholders can profit with effective child rearing practices in place. Student attendance can improve when families are kept abreast of policies and are involved (Epstein, 2013). While students can have an expanded consciousness of the significance of school and respect for education, parents can profit by meaningful child rearing practices, expansion of their awareness, and an increased knowledge of each developmental stage in their child's life. With effective child rearing skills in place, parents tend to have a better sense of support from the school and other parents. Teachers and schools can also benefit from successful parenting practices by increasing their understanding of families and the goals and concerns families have for their children (Epstein & Sheldon, 2016; Herrell, 2011).

Communication. Communication is the second type of involvement. Communication alludes to parent and school contact with respect to school curricula and student progress. Epstein et al. (2011) characterize it as the capacity to plan compelling kinds of school-to-home and home-to-school collaborations about school and student progress. Reciprocal communication encourages teamwork between the home and school and discloses to students that contact is being made between the home and school to track student success. There are various ways and examples of communication including conferences, PTA gatherings, week by week or month to month organizers of students' work, handbooks, parent receiving students' report cards, notes, messages, pamphlets, telephone calls, and sites to create successful dialogue among the school and the home (Epstein, 2013; Herrell, 2011).

"Past and emerging national educational policies emphasize the importance of establishing programs to involve families and practices to empower and engage families in the educational process (ED, 2010)." (as cited in California Department of Education, 2014). Employing such assistance suggests navigating away from agendas of isolated events to all-inclusive family involvement services that produce open dialogue and solid teamwork between stakeholders to increase student success. A shared understanding of the main values, objectives, and approaches for family involvement will sustain useful communication and collaboration. Effective communication can be in the form of memos, mass e-mails, text messages, mass phone calls, and other outreach efforts to families to encourage family involvement and affiliation with the school.

Schools may improve from clear and successful correspondence with families. Communication, regardless of whether composed or oral, gives parents a greater comprehension of agendas, methods, and procedures inside the school, which takes into consideration extra support of the school (Epstein, 2013). Communication should be detailed yet valuable and schools should be thoughtful of components; for example, this could include dialect obstructions and proficiency of families that could influence the comprehension of the material being shared (Epstein et al., 2011; Herrell, 2011). An expanding number of schools are utilizing innovative means (such as technological resources) as a method for correspondence; nonetheless, it is crucial to keep in mind that not all families may have access to these technological resources (Epstein & Shapiro, 2016; Herrell, 2011).

Viable correspondence between the stakeholders yield many positive outcomes. Students can profit from a cognizance of their development and growth in specific subjects and skills. When students are included in the correspondence, they are more knowledgeable of the activities

required to keep up or enhance their progress and educational success (Epstein & Shapiro, 2016; Herrell, 2011). Involvement in the communication process can likewise make students more mindful of their duty be accountable and give them a greater accountability over their educational success (Epstein et al., 2011).

Parents can profit from viable correspondence with the school by having expanded information on strategies, policies, and procedures inside the school, permitting the parents to give more assistance in the educational experience (Epstein, 2013; Herrell, 2011). As parents speak with the school, they commonly turn out to be more agreeable and happy with the school and the educators (Epstein et al., 2010). Because of positive correspondence with staff, educators, and executives, parents can develop an effective instructional support for their children and they may become more actively engaged (Epstein, 2011; Herrell, 2011).

Volunteering. Volunteering is the third kind of parental engagement and has been well defined as recruiting and organizing parent help and support programs (Herrell, 2011). It is comprised of supporting the mission and vision of the school and supporting the learning process in any capacity. Some of the sample practices include allowing parents to serve in school and classroom programs to help teachers, administrators, students and other parents (Epstein, 2010b). Many times, there are parent resources and family centers within the schools where they can work, hold meetings, create and benefit from resources for families. In these parent resource centers, volunteers can create annual postcards and parent questionnaires to categorize parents' skills that can be used to locate potential future volunteers. They can develop a parent list, telephone tree organizational chart, or other structures to provide all families with needed information.

Volunteers can help in numerous ways to support the school program along with student's work and activities, permitting educators and families to cooperate in the child's educational best interest. Their duties incorporate such activities as enrolling and preparing other volunteers, organizing calendars and activities, and many times, filling in as an audience for student programs (Epstein 2010b; Herrell, 2011). They can give support in classrooms by helping students and educators, or as assistants, guides, mentors, instructors, chaperones, promoters, coaches, and in countless other ways.

Some of the challenges of volunteering lies within recruiting the volunteers so that families recognize that their time and effort are welcome (Epstein, 2010b). Many schools have volunteers, but often there are a small number of people who continue to offer their time. Schools need to offer helpers with suitable training, empowering them to successfully serve the school and the students (Epstein, 2001; Herrell, 2011). With time being a concern in many families, schools need to generate accommodating calendars to afford training and permit volunteers to support the school programs and the educational experience (Epstein et al., 2009).

There are considerable gains from effective volunteer programs for students, parents, and teachers. Students can increase their communication skills with adults as well as increase scholarship and skills that they receive through extended-day programs. Parents gain a better comprehension of the teacher's job, gain increased comfort in the school, which can carry over into school activities at home (Epstein, 2010a). They also develop a better sense of self-confidence about the ability to work in schools and with children or take steps to improve their own education. With this, a strong sense of consciousness is developed letting them know that families are welcome and valued at school (Epstein, 2010a). Teachers become more ready to

involve families in new ways, thus including those who do not volunteer at school. In addition, they become more cognizant of parents' talents and interests in the school and children.

Learning at home. The fourth type of parental engagement is learning at home which offers materials and information to families about how to assist children at home with core curriculum-related subjects. Parents also help their children with decisions, planning and setting goals for each year and planning for college or a career (Epstein, 2010a). When families give reassurance to their children, there is a likelihood for the children to be more actively involved in setting goals for educational success and in planning postsecondary educational experiences (Epstein, 2010a). Learning at home inspires students to share and converse on assignments and ideas with family members, which supports two-way connections between the home and the school concerning the curriculum and other school-related activities (Epstein, 2010a).

Some of the sample practices include gathering materials for families on skills mandatory for students in various grade level subjects as well as gathering material on homework procedures and how to monitor and discuss schoolwork at home. Many parents collect information on how to help students to advance in various subjects and in school assessments. With learning at home, there is normally regular schoolwork that requires students to discuss and connect with their families what they are learning in class. It is also possible to provide calendars of events for parents and students to be engaged together at home. Some of the challenges exhibited with learning at home include designing and organizing a systematic agenda of interactive homework (e.g., weekly or bimonthly), students' accountability for communicating meaningful topics they are learning, and effective strategies that help families stay cognizant of the content concerning their child's classwork.

Many benefits come with learning at home for students, parents, and teachers. Learning at home can be beneficial to the learning experience of students, but can be difficult to design and implement (Epstein, 2010a). Creating and applying interactive homework on a consistent basis to allow students to discuss ideas and display skills with their family can be challenging and time consuming. Students make gains in skills, aptitudes, and assessment scores connected to homework and classwork. They achieve higher completion rate in homework and develop a more positive attitude toward schoolwork. Parents become more knowledgeable of how to support, encourage, and help students at home and develop an awareness of how to discuss school, classwork, and homework with their children. Many parents also develop a better comprehension of the total instructional program and what students are learning in each core subject. Teachers become more efficient in designing homework assignments and formative, summative, and diagnostic assessments. Teachers also become more respectful of family time, while recognizing the helpfulness of single parents, dual-income, and less formally educated families in motivating and reinforcing student learning.

Decision-making. The fifth type of parental engagement is decision making which includes parents in school decisions, thus developing parent leaders and representatives within the school (Piper, 2012). Some of the sample practices may involve active PTA/PTO and other parent organizations, councils, and advisory boards (Wright, 2009). Such organizations focus on curriculum, school safety, and personnel for parent leadership and engagement. Often, there are independent parental advocacy boards that lobby for school improvement and reform. Schools are charged now to include parental representation in school governance council and committees so that parents have a voice in the decision-making process for school affairs.

Some of the challenges that are exhibited in the decision-making process involves including parent leaders from all racial, ethnic, socioeconomic, and other groups in the school (Epstein, 2010b). Many families want their opinions and ideas to be represented in the schools, but most families do not want to serve on committees or in leadership roles (Herrell, 2011). Offering training to ensure leaders serve as representatives of other families, with input from and return of information to all parents can be a difficult task, along with the issues of including students with parents in decision-making groups (Epstein, 2010b).

There are many benefits that are established when parents, students, and teachers are involved in the decision-making process. When parents are involved, there is a stronger awareness of representation of families in school decisions. Being a part of the school governance council gives parents a voice in helping make school decision. This then gives them a sense of ownership as well as having shared experiences and being connected to other families. Students become more knowledgeable of representation of families in decision-making and understand their rights are protected. Also, they learn about specific benefits that are connected to policies enacted by parent organizations that are beneficial to them. Teachers become more aware of parent perspectives as a factor in policy development and decisions and recognize equal status of family representatives on committees and in leadership roles.

Collaborating with the community. Collaborating with the community is the sixth type of parental engagement. It refers to identifying and combining resources for assisting schools and families from the community to support school agendas, family practices, and student learning and development (Hall & Quinn, 2014). Some of the sample practices involved in collaborating with the community include offering information for students and families on community health, cultural, recreational, social support, and other beneficial programs and services (Hall & Quinn,

2014). Oftentimes, such services bring about a partnership where the services can be integrated. Information on community events that connect learning skills and talents, including summer programs for students are encouraged and enforced.

Some of the challenges that are encountered when collaborating with the community include supplying information to families about community offerings for students, such as counseling, coaching, professional partnerships, job opportunities, and other similar offerings. A challenge for schools may be ensuring equal opportunities for everyone and informing all families of services offered within the community (Epstein & Sheldon, 2016). Finally, assuring opportunities for students and families that are fair, enabling them to participate in community programs or to obtain services remains a steady challenge (Feiler, 2010).

There are benefits in collaborating with the community. Students begin to increase skills and talents through enriched curricular and extracurricular activities (Anthony, 2008). They develop an awareness of being college and/or career ready after completion of school and are informed of choices for future education and work. In addition, students are connected to programs, services, resources, and opportunities that connect them with the community (Feiler, 2010). Parents develop more knowledge about the use of local resources that can increase skills and talents or help them obtain needed services. Teachers benefit by learning of community resources to enrich curriculum and instructional practices. They become more open to the skill of using mentors and other stakeholders to assist students and enhance teaching practices (Anthony, 2008).

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

A comprehensive literature review on improving parental, family, and community

engagement should include important information that impact this subject of concern. Therefore,

some of the citations and resources used in the literature review and entire study were older than

5 years. The rational for using some resources older than 5 years is because most of them are

considered seminal work in the area. The purposes of this study was to examine the perceptions

of parents and teachers regarding their awareness and responsiveness concerning parental

involvement and search for ways to improve the home-school relationship through effective

parental involvement. Additionally, the study strived to identify efficient yet useful ways that

families and schools can build strong partnerships and to discover the role of the school in at

home *parenting* and *learning* through a collaborative partnership based on Epstein's six

typologies of parental involvement.

Section one elaborates on the perceptions regarding parental engagement and student

success in education and addresses various researchers' beliefs and theories of the phenomena of

family-school relationships. It draws attention to Epstein's ideology while giving a brief and

concise definition of parental involvement along with other theorists' opinions and

understandings on the inclusion of parents and community members as collaborators and

decision makers.

The second section addresses *parenting* which is Epstein's first parental involvement

typology. This section explicitly speaks to the research topic and shows various ways that parents

are engaged in their child's education. This section also sheds light on parental participation

among different ethnic groups and discloses information about families across ethnic groups. It shares implications from studies stating that such families are actively engaged in education and that parent-child collaboration and high parent expectations are linked with high student performance.

The third section addresses learning at home, Epstein's fourth parental involvement typology. This portion gives information on how parents can support learning at home while building a strong parent-child relationship.

The fourth portion addresses the idea of the school and its staff creating a welcoming environment that fosters family-school relationships. In this portion, discussions are presented on schools engaging and building partnership with diverse families. The fifth section reviews barriers in parental involvement along with some of the philosophies that influence the idea of parental/family and community involvement in education. The sixth portion focuses on parental engagement giving care to the home school partnership. The assorted terminologies and notions that have developed in this body of work include parental involvement, community involvement, school-family relationships, and partnerships.

The seventh section deals with parental involvement and socioeconomic levels and ethnicity. It focuses on how living in poverty can be difficult and challenging for both children and parents.

The eighth section mentions for a short time the effectiveness of technology and electronic communication on parental involvement, also how schools and communities can bridge the gap via the employment of technological communication thus connecting schools, districts, home, and communities.

The ninth section incorporates the family involvement/parental engagement in the Response to Intervention (RTI) process and what parents need to know. Each section is followed by a summary.

Perceptions Regarding Parental Involvement and Student Success

Educational researchers have emphasized that parent involvement is related to student academic achievement and is a primary contributor to a student's success (Toldson, 2008). While there is no exact meaning for parental involvement, it has been defined through literature in similar ways. Epstein et al. (2011) defines parental involvement as,

> …being involved with their children's education and are consistently demonstrating good parenting skills, communicating with the school staff, volunteering their time in school, helping their children learn at home, taking an active role in school-related decision making, and who regularly collaborate with the school community. (p. 462)

Research has also shown that early parental support as well as continuous involvement has a substantial constructive effect on the child's achievement, particularly for the entire duration of their early educational experience (Okado, Bierman, & Welsh, 2014). Most parents perceive that they are involved, they are not cognizant of the various school programs and intervention methods to help their children succeed. Kim (2009) stated that teachers are misguided if they believe that parents do not care. Her study revealed that minority parents do desire to assist their children if they can; however, they do not know how.

Communication between parents and teachers increases achievement and enhances the learning process (Epstein et al., 2011). Despite the attention given to the importance of parental involvement, teachers reported lack of parental involvement as a major obstacle (Gonzalez-DeHass & Willems, 2012). Herrell (2011) urged an appraisal on the perspectives concerning

parents and the absenteeism of some parents from school-related functions. She concluded that teachers might notice that their analyses of parents who are concerned about their child's education may just be the parents who are contented with school and have excelled during their own schooling. Trainor (2010) recommended that parents and educators have varied beliefs about parental engagement. Parents were inclined to be community focused, concentrating on children as members in the community and in society. Teachers were proven to be school focused, concentrating on students within the school setting.

In the 36th Annual Phi Delta Kappa, Rose and Gallup (2004) revealed their findings from the Gallup poll of the public's attitudes toward the public schools. They conveyed that parents were mainly influential in shaping how well or how poorly students performed in schools and that parents were the most vital force in shaping whether students learn in school.

The poll disclosed that 97% of the public favored encouraging more parental engagement to eradicate the achievement disparity among racially diverse students. In the 42nd Annual Phi Delta Kappa, the Gallup poll of the public's attitudes toward the public schools asked a question. The question was, "Which was more important–school or student's parents–in determining whether students learn in school"? (Bushaw & Lopez, 2010, p. 20).

Not only do researchers and educational leaders believe that parental involvement is significant, but parents and educators also agree that it is essential (Epstein et al., 2009). Parents want their children to succeed. Many parents are apprehensive about their children and can assist in their learning, despite ethnicity, cultural background, or socioeconomic status.

Hafiz Muhammad Rafiq, Fatima, Sohail, Saleem, and Khan (2013) conducted a study in Allama Iqbal Town, Lahore city in Pakistan to examine the impact of parental participation in the schooling of their children. The researchers' aim was to determine:

1. the degree of parental engagement of children studying at the high school level;

2. the level of scholastic success of children studying at the high school level;

3. the connection, if any, between the parental engagement in the scholastic endeavors of their children;

4. the authentication of Epstein's (1995) six types of parental engagement in their children's scholastic success in Pakistani context.

Muhammad et al. used "150 students (boys and girls) of 9th grade classes in secondary schools (public and private)" as subjects. Through the process of simple random sampling, a total of four schools were selected which consisted of one boy and one girl from each of the public and private school groups for identical representation of both male and female students in the sample frame of the study. As a tool for data collection, the researchers decided to use survey questionnaires. Later the scrutiny of data revealed that that parental engagement has a meaningful impact on the academic success of their children and that parental engagement enhanced the academic achievement of their children. The study results concluded that there was a noteworthy connection between the degree of parental engagement in their children's academics and the degree of academic accomplishment of students and the authentication the framework of Epstein's (1995) framework of six types of parental engagement.

Ahmed F. Al-Alwan (2014) projected a pattern to clarify how parental engagement and school participation correlates to academic achievement. The subjects were "(671) 9th and 10th grade students who completed two scales of 'parental involvement' and 'school engagement' in their regular classrooms." Alwan concluded and noted that findings of the path analysis advised that the parental engagement affect school participation, parental engagement impacts scholastic

success "indirectly through its effects on school engagement," and "school engagement influences academic performance directly."

Summary

In summary, there have been an assortment of studies on parental involvement and student success. However, the above research supports and shows a cohesive connection between parental engagement and student success at both the elementary and high school levels. Nevertheless, there seem to be a notable difference when studying the level, type, and frequency, of parental engagement among parents of elementary and high school students. For high schoolers, there seemed to be a downhill movement in the degree of parental engagement when students transition to high school, with decreases in parental visits involving such activities as Parents' Day and PTA meetings. Also, there appears to be evidence that parental support and involvement for female students was noted at higher levels than that of males. The difference between parent involvement and student achievement for elementary school students and high school students are the level of support that parents contribute and to what activities they deem most important. In comparing elementary to high school parental participation rates, there seemed to be more barriers exhibited on the high school level than at the elementary school level among parents. There also seemed to be a gap in the types, frequencies, and level of parental involvement among gender.

Parenting

While Joyce Epstein's framework (overlapping spheres of influence) is built on the six typologies of involvement which includes: parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision making, and collaborating with the community; type one (parenting) and type four (learning at home) tends to go unnoticed, and is misunderstood and devalued by many

teachers, school administrators, and stakeholders (Fazily, 2012). This occurs because parents are not at the school when engaged in these two types of involvement. Teachers, school administrators, and stakeholders cannot see parents engaged in parenting and learning at home compared to the other typologies. Therefore, these two parental involvement types were my focus and the premise of strengthening parental involvement and home-school partnerships.

Parents need the skills to handle their children's needs. Parents want information and it needs to be repeated sometimes, as parents are preoccupied with issues pertaining to their children (Turnbull, Turnbull, Erwin, & Soodak, 2006). All information distributed to parents needs to be disseminated in a language that they can understand. Epstein (2010a) advocates that through parenting, teachers can help all families to establish home environments to support students as school-aged children.

Radl, Salazar, and Cebolla-Boado (2017) discussed the connection between several family forms and the degree of cognitive and non-cognitive competencies between 15- to 16-year-old students. The researchers computed cognitive skills by means of standardized scores in math and non-cognitive abilities as determined by a composite measure of internal locus of control in association to math. Noteworthy enough, specific emphasis was placed on the absence of the fathers in the home. They also scrutinized the position occupied by other residence with siblings and grandparents. Using cross-nationally comparable data on students participating in the Programme for International Student Assessment's release for 2012 by charting disparities by family from across 33 developed countries, the inquiry offered a strong cross-country comparable proof on the relationship of household structure with both cognitive and non-cognitive skills. There were three main outcomes of this research. First, the absence of fathers from the home as well as co-residency with grandparents relates to unfavourable effects

on the children in almost all established countries. Second, this is generally true in terms of both cognitive and non-cognitive skills, even though the drawback associated to both family forms is particularly greater in the former rather than in the latter domain. Finally, there is clear cross-national difference in the effects linked with the presence in the home of relatives and especially grandparents, which furthermore differs across the two results measured.

Bearss et al. (2015) conducted a study at Emory University, Indiana University, Ohio State University, University of Pittsburgh, University of Rochester, and Yale University to assess the effectiveness of parent training for students with autism spectrum syndrome and disorderly conduct. This study was a five-and-a-half-month randomized trial-comparing parent training to parent education at the six centers. The researchers screened 267 students. Of the 267 students, 180 students ranging from ages three to seven with autism spectrum syndrome and disorderly conduct were randomly assigned (86% white, 88% male) between September 2010 and February 2014. The parent training sessions were comprised of two home inspections, two telephone supporters, two optional sessions, and 11 main core conferences. These parent trainings offered detailed interventions on how to control students' disorderly conduct. The parent education portion was comprised of 1 home inspection and 12 main core conferences. Parents were offered material about autism, but no behavior management interventions. The results concluded that a five-and-a-half-month parent-training program was shown to be more beneficial, effective, and having more positive impact than parent education for decreasing disorderly conduct.

Heath et al. (2014) in their longitudinal study, "A Spotlight on Preschool: The Influence of Family Factors on Children's Early Literacy Skills," wanted to enhance probable grouping exactness for failing struggling students of reading by including two new family measures (parents' phonemic awareness and parents' perceived self-effectiveness), then merging the

within-child and family factors. They discovered in their study that countless students were unsuccessful in gaining literacy skills regardless of satisfactory intellect and opportunity. They reported that current national reading ability testing showed that 25% of Year 9 Australian students completed at or below the standard for base achievement in literacy. Tracking and detecting these students before they started to have difficulties was an issue of substantial concern to teachers, parents, and policy makers. The assessment of students in Australia, as they began school at kindergarten, is progressively being noticed as a normal procedure, but for this method to be successful, it is critical that screening measures are precise and well organized. The methodology of the study included assessing the pre-literacy proficiencies in 102 pre-K students (46 girls and 56 boys) during the start of preschool and at the inception and end of Kindergarten. Family data were gathered at the start of preschool, and students' reading results were calculated at the end of Year 1 (six to seven years old). The outcomes indicated that students from high-risk families and experiences showed less reading results than low-risk students, though three family indicators (school socio-economic status, parents' phonemic awareness, and family history) normally counted for less Year 1 discrepancy than the within-child factors. Merging these family influences with the end of kindergarten within-child factors provided the most precise category (i.e., sensitivity = .85; specificity=.90; overall correct =.88). The implications of the researchers' method recognized at-risk children for intervention before they started to fail. Furthermore, it would be profitable since few struggling students would be missed and the distribution of pointless educational assessments would be diminished.

The features that lend to children's initial reading ability skill progress is of grave significance for researchers, policy makers, and educators (Lonigan, Burgess, & Anthony, 2000). Even though a great body of study has listed some significant early forecasters of later literacy

achievements, numerous studies concentrate exclusively on within-child factors (e.g., phonemic skills) or, instead, on ecological or hereditary influences, but not the shared influence of both child and family influences.

In each child, there is a collection of aptitudes known to be important to reading growth and acceleration. These developing reading abilities are phonemic awareness (PA; i.e., an individual's awareness of the sound structure of language), alphabet (i.e., letter) knowledge, and oral language, including sentence recall, vocabulary and grammatical understanding (Adams, 1990). Students who start school deficient in these vital skills are at high risk of delays in reading achievement. These struggling students seldom reach grade level in comparison to their peers (Prior et al., 2000). In accumulation to variances in aptitude levels across students, there is also excessive disparity in the home environments from which children begin school, as well as in the characteristics and skills of their parents. Parent and home environment factors can have important implications for children's literacy acquisition (Byrne et al. 2009).

Huang, Costeines, Kaufman, and Ayala (2014) scrutinized the impact of teenage mothers' parenting despondency and apparent social support on maternal unhappiness and despair at reference point (which is a half a year after birth), and its effect on newborn growth and one year later (one-and-a-half years after birth). The subjects were 180 teenage Blacks or Latino/Hispanic mothers. The outcomes revealed that greater degrees of parenting pressure and fewer apparent social supports were linked with larger degrees of unhappiness and despair in the teenage mothers at reference point. The researchers found that higher degrees of maternal despondency were also linked with more growing interruptions in newborns' one-year post- reference point. Furthermore, despair facilitated the relationship between parenting stress and later child outcomes. These conclusions mark the significance of investigating parenting issues such as

parenting stress, social support, and maternal despair in ethnic minority teenage parents, and offered valuable information concerning critical and protective effects related with maternal results for ethnic minority teenage parents and healthy growth for their children. The researchers noted that the number of adolescent pregnancies are greater for Blacks and Latina youths in relation to Whites. Blacks and Latina teenage mothers also undergo more difficulties than their White peers, such as higher degrees of despair, school incompletion, and economic disadvantage. Moreover, children of teenage mothers are at higher risk for opposing development. Parenting stress and social support can influence results experienced by teenage parents and their children.

Mytton, Ingram, Manns, and Thomas (2014) carried out an organized examination of qualitative inquiries asking parents why they chose to or chose not to begin, or finish parenting programs. The researchers linked these observations with other researchers and individuals bringing in new like-kind programs. The inquiries investigating parents' participation with such programs mostly gave attention to providers', policy makers', and the researchers' reflections of their encounters of parental involvement. They employed data-mining methods to categorize pertinent studies and summarized results by means of framework synthesis methods. There were six facilitators and five barrier themes named as vital impact on involvement, with a total of 33 subthemes. The parents focused on the chance to gain new skills, going to work with trusted people, in an atmosphere that presented opportunities. The investigator and beneficiaries concentrated on adapting the program to parents and on the preparation and employees. The parents, researchers, and beneficiaries consequently varied in their views of the most significant elements of programs that act as facilitators and barriers to participation and retention. The researchers found that program developers need to seek the views of both parents and deliverers

when evaluating programs and parenting programs are likely to enhance the health and welfare of parents and their children.

Rehel (2014) in her research titled "When Dad Stays Home Too" drew information from three cities (Montreal, Toronto, and Chicago) via survey data gathered from fathers and mothers. She contends that when heterosexual fathers undergo the changeover to parenthood in methods that are physically like mothers, they begin to contemplate about and same parenting styles that are rather like mothers. She considered the precise role played by prolonged time off directly after the birth of a child in constructing the experience. The results concluded that by pulling fathers into the daily experiences of childcare, free of workplace restrictions and prolonged time off, offered the time needed for fathers to grow and mature in the parenting habits and sense of accountability that affords them to be dynamic and pro-active co-parents instead of just being helpers to their female partners. This transition from a manager-helper capacity to that of co-parenting forms the opportunity for the building and creation of a more gender-equitable division of labor.

Froiland, Peterson, and Davison's (2013) longitudinal study on the long-term effects of early parent involvement and parent expectation in the United States was built on social-cognitive theory and the expectancy-value theory. They specified that initial parent outlook for children's college educational fulfilment carries a more convincing influence on the accomplishment of eighth-graders than home-based parental engagement. With a nationwide demonstrative model of kindergarten scholars and their parents in the United States, Structural Equation Modeling was used to better distinguish longitudinal influences on student success through facilitators. For example, anticipations assumed by parents in kindergarten demonstrate a considerable amount of their impact on teenage academic accomplishment via anticipations

understood in eighth grade. Student beliefs (that are influenced by parental beliefs) also meaningfully calculate eighth grade accomplishment. The researchers noted that parental participation in homework and grade checking in eighth grade has an insignificant negative bearing on achievement. Home literacy in kindergarten predicts achievement in eighth grade indirectly via kindergarten achievement. (Froiland et al., 2013). These outcomes show that parents display strong influence on educational success through early home literacy and having strong confidence that their children will excel in post-secondary education. Since initial parent opportunities have lifelong bearing on children, parental engagement mediations for young children should be established that also focus on enriching parental expectations.

Learning at Home

In this type of involvement, parents are given information and strategies on how to help students at home with homework and other curriculum-related task by overseeing, conversing, and carrying out tasks given by teachers. Students obtain educational help from their families in numerous environments such as at home, at school, and in the community (Epstein, 2010a). "Help" at home means encouraging, listening, reacting, praising, guiding, monitoring, and discussing–not "teaching" school subjects (Epstein, 2010a). Epstein supports that educators should offer information and ideas to parents about how to help children at home with homework and plan other learning activities. In addition, Sheehey and Sheehey (2007) endorsed that parents should share their beliefs towards assuming their responsibilities at home with the teachers and the kind of requirements their child would need to be successful. They also stated that teachers should direct the parents on how to carry out certain tutoring strategies on learning programs at home.

Parents can offer their educational support to their children by ensuring a conducive learning atmosphere and by discussing school matters with them. Countless research has found that parental involvement at school and at home are important, for many outcomes, particularly for academic success (Barnard, 2004; Christenson, 2004; Jeynes, 2003, 2005). When parents take the initiative to communicate with their children about their studies and other school activities, students' academic performance will show gains (Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2005). Parents show their interest in the education of their children when they take the initiative to spend time with their children while doing their school work. This involvement of the parents to encourage their children to do their homework and the regular interaction helps the children to understand their lessons better and indirectly improve their academic achievement. Epstein's (2001a, 2001b, 2002) framework on parental involvement stressed the significance of parental involvement in all facets of the child's education, as well as involvement at school and at home (as cited in Dogaru, 2008, p. 3).

The element predominately connected to student success contains practices such as parent-child dialogues about school, thoughtful arrangement of environmental space in the home to encourage and empower learning, and the usage of collaborative homework sharing (i.e., work that requires parents and students to converse and collaborate on a learning task or assignment). Sheldon and Epstein (2005) discovered that the routine application of an educational task or schoolwork packets delivered home to parents by teachers was linked to an increase in mathematic scores.

Four of the 12 inquiries investigating learning at home task and habits also suggested certain type of parent training sessions and realized that they are strongly related with gains in students' performance as well (Bailey, 2006; Bradshaw, Zmuda, Kellam, & Ialongo, 2009;

Ingram, Wole, & Lieberman, 2007; Redding, Langdon, Meyer, & Sheley, 2004). Although parent training was noted as being required to sustain the relationship among learning tasks in the home and gains in student performance, in one of the few controlled studies offered, Bailey et al. discovered that offering parents information and training to put into practice that knowledge to impact learning at home improved student performance ranks to an outstanding degree.

Bradshaw et al. (2009), in another controlled study, discovered that parent meetings concentrating on supporting academics and conduct management techniques, even though not exhaustive or methodically reinforced, bring about continued pro-active outcomes. Some clear-cut, simple parent involvement tasks tend to have a ripple effect, introducing other profitable tasks or situations. For example, Dearing, Kreider, Simpkins, and Weiss (2006) noted that parental participation is strongly connected with improved achievement, particularly for students with under-educated mothers. This finding opposes predictions that under-educated parents have less measure to be effectively engaged in education.

Parental participation tasks shape a parent's ability, even when they are not intended to do so. Correspondingly, Cancio, West, and Young (2004), in a very small study of an approach to involve parents in homework, emphasized that doing so tend to increase the students' ability to complete the homework. It is uncertain whether it is parents' engagement or the students' increased responsiveness of responsibility that influences homework completion and overall achievement; however, the meaningful outcomes are the same. For students habitually labeled as "at risk" (low-income, Black, and inner-city students, particularly), the studies stated that learning-at-home tasks were rewarding. Cox (2005) examined 18 studies concentrating specifically on low-income, Black student sub-groups and noticed that learning at home tasks, along with school-home communication, were linked to better quality of work, better student

conduct, better attendance rates, better study habits, and better student academic success. Fantuzzo, McWayne, Perry, and Childs (2004) found that "home-based" parent involvement, including literacy at home, setting aside homework space, and discussing school, most strongly correlated to greater degrees of classroom aptitude and lower conduct problems in children.

Berkowitz et al. (2015) carried out a randomized field experiment, which included 587 first grader students. The researchers examined an educational intervention intended to encourage relations among students and parents regarding mathematics. They projected that increasing mathematic activities at home would boost student's mathematic accomplishment at school. They verified this likelihood by having students become involved in mathematic story time with their parents. The results revealed that the intervention, short numerical story problems provided via an iPad app developed by the researchers, greatly improved students' mathematic accomplishment throughout the academic year in comparison to a literacy (control) group, especially for students whose parents are consistently concerned about mathematics. In addition, short-term, high-quality parent-child relations regarding mathematics at home assisted in breaking the intergenerational cycle of low math achievement.

Currie-Rubin and Smith (2014) stated in their article "in the past decade, the number of students attending online schools in the United States has skyrocketed. In 2011, roughly 1.8 million students in grades K-12 were enrolled in at least one distance education course, up from 222,000 during 2002-2003 (Watson, Murin,Vashaw, Gemin, & Rapp, 2011)" (as cited in Currie-Rubin & Smith, 2014). Increasingly, families are electing to enroll their children in full-time online schools as states begin to offer a huge quantity of online courses. "Approximately 200,000 K-12 scholars attended full-time online schools in 2009-2010. Just 2 years later, that number had grown to approximately 275,000 (Watson et al., 2011)" (as cited by Currie-Rubin & Smith,

2014). The article noted that by 2012-13, in 31 states and in Washington, D.C., fully-fledged online schools were in operation. While many of these schools were operated at the state level, some were operated by local educational management organizations (Glass & Welner, 2011). Many of these online schools employed highly qualified educators and often involved parents as "learning coaches" for their children at home (Cavanaugh, 2009). Currie-Rubin and Smith claimed that families enrolled their children in full-time online school for numerous reasons. Some of those reasons are:

- online schooling offers flexibility in schedules

- online schooling allows students to learn at their own pace in the comfort of their home environment while getting assistance from family members

- that online schooling reduces the amount of peer pressure

- it permits personalized and individualized instruction

Currie-Rubin and Smith (2014) noted that the purpose of their study was to lay a framework concerning the ever-changing role of the family in online learning at home, especially at the elementary and beginning years of middle school. They also claimed that online learning at home is effective, especially for students with disabilities when families are involved in the educative process.

Dumont, Trautwein, Nagy, and Nagengast (2014) studied indicators of the number of parents being actively involved in homework sessions, the shared relations among the number of parents being involved in homework sessions, students' literacy accomplishment and scholastic performance in a literacy-rigorous subject (German). The researchers gathered and analyzed data from 2,830 scholars that were in fifth and seventh grades and in nonacademic tracks along with their parents. The superiority of parents being involved in homework sessions was measured

using student reports. It was hypothesized as a multidimensional concept and weighed by three dimensions projected by self-determination theory: parental control, parental awareness, and parental structure. However, the results showed that students' academic performance in Grade 5 revealed how involved parents became in the homework procedure in Grade 7; the superiority of parents' assistance with homework was not predicated on their socioeconomic environment. Shared relations among the quality of parents being involved in homework and children's academic performance were monitored: Low academic performance of students in Grade 5 led to greater parental control in Grade 7, and more parental control in Grade 5 was linked with lower academic performance in Grade 7. Equally, high academic performance in Grade 5 led to more parental responsiveness and structure in Grade 7, and greater parental awareness and structure in Grade 5 were linked with better academic performance in Grade 7.

Lukie, Skwarchuk, LeFevre, and Sowinski (2014) conducted a study concerning students' participation in home reading and math activities and related it to school achievement. The rationale of this inquiry was to decipher how students' welfare and co-operative parent–child relations affected exposure to home reading and math activities. Reviews were completed by parents of 170 four-to-five-year-old students regarding their child's home learning setting. The parents graded their children's interests in 14 activities, and the degree of parent–child partnership on a culinary and art and craft task. Follow up reviews were also executed with four mothers to offer proof of the interview data in math. Factor analyses lowered the number of interview items. The results showed that parents whose children favoured exploratory, active or crafts activities found regular engagement in reading and math activities. Parents looking for a collaborative method throughout activities stated bigger gains in home reading and math activities than families with less co-operative engagement. Interview data established that

parents of children with high math scores were helping their children to rich mathematic activities during play. The results advise that children's interests and co-operative parent–child engagement impacts reading and math exposure in the home.

Ingersoll and Wainer (2013), in their pilot study, examined the likelihood and primary effectiveness of a parenting training program intended for early intervention and early childhood special education (EI/ESCE) programs helping children with autism. In this study, there were 13 educators representing three middle school systems applying the mediation with 27 scholars and their parents. The results revealed that there were 89% percent of the families that finished the program. From pre- to post-mediation parents, made notable gains in their use of the management techniques and children made gains in their level of language throughout parent-child interaction in their home. Parents and teachers stated noteworthy improvements in the students' mastery of social-communication skills and teachers, but not parents, stated a substantial reduction in social deficiency. Parents conveyed a noticeable decline in parenting stress. All parties evaluated the intervention favorably regarding treatment appropriateness, perceived usefulness, and usability. The results suggest that this mediation can be employed in public EI/ECSE settings, while closing the gap in services for intervention programs serving students with autism.

Barriers to Parental Involvement

While parental participation is regarded as vital in the educational preparation of children, there is still a notable difference regarding parental participation. There are some situations in which schools have no control over and these influences are of vital importance to educational decision makers. While parents today are frequently inattentive when there are disturbances and pressures of daily life, many of them find it hard to attend school functions or

become involved in the schooling of their children on a regular basis due to being burdened with long work hours, childcare, low income, and linguistic barriers (Okeke, 2014)

Leitch and Tangri (2006) conducted a study in two high schools in Washington D.C. and found that parents that were employed were more involved than parents who were unemployed; the two main explanations for lack of parental involvement were work and poor health. Although these problems may not be simply affected, the barriers can be defeated. Research has shown that successful schools have effective partnerships with parents; therefore, school, family, and community partnerships are important elements in schooling. While countless are plagued with low self-confidence and others because they did not experience success in school, these parents exhibit a deficiency in the knowledge and confidence on how to help their own children. Because of this, many parents view schools negatively. The language, the curriculum, and the staff may intimidate parents; consequently, they avoid communication with the school (Flynn, 2007).

Given decreased budgets and increased expectations in education, school administrators and teachers must take the initiative to involve parents to assist in the educational success of their children (Wherry, 2009). Although many school administrators and teachers may not recognize how to encourage parents to participate, they can be trained how to employ techniques for involving parents and creating partnerships. Flynn (2007) stated that administrators and teachers may not fully understand the importance of parental involvement and the effects of parental involvement on student success. He continued to emphasize that when teachers do not feel parental support, they often believe it is a waste of their time to contact parents.

In some instances, parents may not be involved in school activities due to barriers experienced in being engaged with and understanding processes of the educational institutions within which their children are learning (Okeke, 2014; Yoder & Lopez, 2013). In a vivid case

study conducted by Okeke (2014), 30 parents of children that attended one of the primary

schools located in the London area of England, United Kingdom were interviewed and asked

three questions on how to improve parental involvement and what strategies to use. The focus of

the study was to examine the level of parental involvement in the schooling of their children.

Okeke's conclusion indicates, "Most parents do not always know how to get involved."

Additional results revealed that many parents want to get involved and some are even

overwhelmed by the operational structures within the school, but that parents care about their

children's education. Okeke's study determined that to effectively involve parents in the business

of the school, and thus their children's education, certain approaches must be promoted within

the school. He recommends that parents be made aware of the approaches for their involvement

in children's education if such approaches are to be effective.

Some barriers found in various studies include but are not limited to:

1. lack of time (Okeke, 2014);

2. lack of childcare (Okeke, 2014);

3. no friendly school-parent welcoming policy in place (Okeke, 2014);

4. do not know how to get involved (Okeke, 2014);

5. intimidated by the operational structures of the school (Okeke, 2014);

6. speak a different language (Yoder & Lopez, 2013);

7. lack of resources (Yoder & Lopez, 2013);

8. age of parents (Yoder & Lopez, 2013);

9. feel marginalized (Yoder & Lopez, 2013); and

10. education jargon is intimidating (Byrd, 2011).

Therefore, it is necessary to illuminate the problem that parents face regarding the many barriers that may impede their participation in their child's/children's school and programs for their children (Yoder & Lopez, 2013). Much research exists on the importance of parental involvement in the education of children in order to achieve academic excellence (Fan & Chen, 2001; Okeke, 2014; Yoder & Lopez, 2013).

Moore (1990) gives attention to models and methods to meaningful parent participation in the education of their children and themselves, the need for innovation in family-school partnerships, and five barriers that hinder or obstruct parent participation. Moore reports that such models include "those derived from early childhood education and school partnerships with parents as policymakers, as volunteers in the program, and as facilitators of children's development." Moore noted that the barriers include physical or psychological distance between teachers and parents, lack of educators' professional development, ethnicity and socioeconomic status biases, limited views of parental participation, and perceptions of the school as limited to the provision of instruction. The study stresses that the formation of partnership and collaboration between schools and parents will require a dramatic change in the way in which our nation views its schools. Moore concludes that if students are to meet new academic challenges and obtain success, the nation's schools must develop to the point where parents and schools get the most out of on each other's knowledge and abilities. Therefore, a joint partnership between parents and schools will ensure that all children arrive at school each day ready to receive an education.

To combat the hurdles preventing parental participation, schools must offer a welcoming atmosphere where the faculty and staff are cordial and responsive to parents (Wherry, 2009). It is important that administrators and teachers foster well-mannered two-way communication

between the school and home (Wherry, 2009). Bouie, an educational consultant stated, "The answer is to stop treating parents like 'clients' and start treating them like 'partners' in helping children learn" (as cited in Wherry, 2009, p. 7).

Summary

The research also describes an assortment of barriers standing in the way of parent participation. These include a lack of time among working parents; negative experiences with schools; parents' inability to help children with learning at home (homework, etc.); inadequate funding to assist parent engagement activities; faculty and staff linking with parents especially when their children habitually exhibit behavioral problems; and a lack of staff training in different strategies to engage parents. Moreover, parents may face language barriers, may not be aware of school procedures, and may not have transportation or childcare.

Creating a Welcoming Environment That Fosters Family-School Relationships

Feeling welcome and respected by educators is an important link with parents and their willingness to become involved (Henderson, Mapp, Johnson, & Davies, 2007; Herrell, 2011). If parents are invited, it is more probable they will become actively engaged in their child's education. While the issue may be very sensitive, educators (including teachers, school leaders, and district officials) must convey messages to parents that they are appreciated and valuable in their child's education because many parents desire to be trusted and satisfied with their child's teachers and the school setting. (Herrell, 2011). Many educators believe that school and family collaboration is needed for optimal scholastic success. They also believe that students excel when parents enhance their academics and reinforce the home-school relationship. Henderson et al. (2007), recognizing the importance of the home and school relationship, stated, "There are many successful schools where partnership is a rule, and they come in a wonderful variety of

shapes, sizes, and structures" (p. 23). Once parents dialogue with their children about school, hold them accountable to meet standards and/or exceed, support them in preparing for post-secondary education, and assure that out-of-school events are productive; their children perform at higher level in school. When schools involve families in habits that are connected to cultivating learning, students meet and/or exceed standards. When schools construct partnerships with families that are responsive to their ideologies and value their assistance, they are effective in maintaining connections that are geared toward improving student success.

The sense of welcome families feel has a direct effect on their involvement in their children's education (Auerbach, 2007). However, families, especially those representing different populations, frequently experience negative constructs, although some families can overcome this deficiency in welcome and help their children. Naturally, the degree or rate of this engagement is predicated on the following factors:

- the adults' personal educational experience and knowledge;

- previous levels of involvement;

- beliefs about their children's ability and knowledge; and

- invitations, not just from the school, but from the child as well.

Caspe and Lopez (2006) realized that once schools form structures that creates a culture of balance or shared learning, collaboration about education, family beliefs about family engagement, and several outreach programs or events, families feel more welcome. To develop this logic of welcome, school staff should change methods to explicitly deal with the sense of feeling unwelcome by relaying that the following are not obstacles to engagement:

- differences in language;

- family beliefs of the child's academic aptitude;

- educational assistance related to the home culture; and

- capacity to direct educational organizations.

Anderson and Minke (2007) engaged in research to discover the many components and influences of why families select to be engaged in their children's education. The researchers used the Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (1995, 1997) framework for family decision-making. To regulate how families respond to approaches to promote family engagement via role construction, sense of effectiveness, supplies, and understanding of teachers' invitations, the investigators conducted surveys in English and Spanish in three elementary schools in a large district in the southwest. The three schools, students are 49% Black, 29% Latino, 8% Caucasian, 4% Asian, 1% Native American, and 77 % low socioeconomic level. The investigators were requested by the schools to administer the surveys in the same manner the schools normally correspond with families—paper documents sent home with students. Grades 4 and 5 were surveyed by School 1; all other grades were surveyed by School 2 and 3. Three hundred and fifty-one surveys were gathered, yet this report gives attention to the English results. Comparable to prior studies, the investigators noted that families rank their engagement higher than teachers rank family engagement. The researchers clarified this ranking variance as normal since teachers normally misjudged home-based activities and were habitually uninformed of non-school related participation. The researchers realized that the misunderstanding was more pronounced for home-based actions in minority families versus non-minority families from the study schools. They also discovered comparable outcomes in respect to role construction and family engagement. While role construction exhibited some influence on a family member's decision to participate, it was irrelevant in terms to grade level. They also stated that exclusive offers of engagement had a profound result on engagement as an issue in why families decide to

become engaged as well as a supporting factor in strengthening overall involvement. In retrospect to preceding inquiry, Anderson and Minke (2007) found that resources do not have any bearing on family engagement. However, when families view their endeavors as necessary to their children's academic success, they fine tune and assure individual adjustments or work with other stakeholders or family members to guarantee that children have the needed support.

Baker, Dennessen, and Brus-Laven (2007) conducted a study to explore teacher observations of family engagement, degrees of family engagement, and student achievement. Subjects in the research include 218 parents and 60 Grade 1 to Grade 6 teachers (80% female, 20% male). From each teacher's classroom, four students were randomly selected, and researchers asked their parents to partake in the study. Baker et al. use two types of surveys: one to determine the degree of parental engagement and the other to determine teacher awareness of the degree of parental engagement. Each survey contained 20 prompts with a five-point Likert scale for rating. The investigators employed correlational analyses and paired-sample analyses to decipher associations. In their examination of the teachers' viewpoints, the researchers noted that teachers rated family engagement when family behaviors match their model description— mainly family member cooperates with teachers. Furthermore, teachers identified family assistance for learning only when those aids are noticeable to the teacher or seen as bearing direct result. For example, teachers might decide the degree of participation by being present at meetings or seminars or other school-based activities.

Educators also decipher the superiority of a family's participation by economic status or educational status, i.e., underprivileged families do not participate as much, and privileged participate more. For instance, teachers feel as if students who have high reading comprehension scores have families who support learning at home. The family surveys define contradictory

observations. Family answers specify that they offer help that is often unnoticeable. Furthermore, economic status or educational status was not a gauge of the degree of participation. Students, whose families were contacted frequently by teachers, appeared to have a poorer achievement level. The cause of this poor achievement level had little to do with notable interaction among school and home. Thus, these contacts were essentially adverse collaboration concerning discipline or performance. There was small amount of positive interactions between teachers and families.

Baker et al. (2007) projected this inquiry to offer awareness into the role teacher perceptions play—teacher's perception of students grounded on economic status and the consequence and degree of family participation linked to student achievement. While, that may not be its main significance, it evidently defines the framework in which the major players—school personnel and families—build their understanding and skill about family participation on erroneous beliefs instead of realities.

In a related research by Caspe and Lopez (2006), they studied prototypical programs approaches, including assessment procedures, which encompass a family-strengthening section to encourage children and youth's academic accomplishment and improve the socioemotional quality of life of children and youth. The review included 13 models. From the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Substance Abuse and Mental Health Service Administration (SAMHSA) database, statistics on each type were taken. Caspe and Lopez noted that the most successful approaches for empowering families involved the following strategies:

1. Offer information on positive practices to raise parent-child connection (i.e., unravelling puzzles or participating in board games, storytelling about family

experiences, or going on family outings to community locations like museums or parks).

2. Find recruiting and retention services that are linked to exact ethnic needs (i.e., face-to face visits; shared experiences of previously involved family members; or ongoing, reiterative recruiting procedures).

3. Empower staff to enforce the program with families (i.e., confronting assumptions, reviewing research, providing time to process new information).

Summary

Particularly in reference to these barriers, school leaders are important in providing leadership in their schools—including sending the clear message that parents are welcome. Harvard Graduate School of Education researchers observed three schools together with one in Los Angeles (Warren, Hong, Rubin, & Uy, 2009). The one school in Los Angeles was chosen because: Los Angeles is a highly densely populated area with a high immigrant rate, many immigrant parents barely speak English, many of them do not have transportation to visit their child's school and many can only support their child's education within the home environment. They defined the crucial duty of school leaders in initiating a variety of effective strategies including offering classes for immigrants on the U.S. education system; teacher-led professional development on math, science, and computers on the weekends; and training sessions for all parents on effective discipline at home and how best to help students with their homework to connect the home-school partnership among all stakeholders.

Parental Involvement and Home-School Partnership

The objective of family participation in education is not only to get families engaged, but instead to link significant frameworks for the consolidation of children's educational growth.

Comprehending the many features of home-student-school frameworks and putting into practice the procedures needed to promote proactive connections between parents and teachers, while enhancing students' educational success is very important. Endorsing family and school success for children and empowering relations while developing skills has become a huge focus in education. There have been many programs designed to increase home-school cooperation. Few programs, however, have been systematically evaluated for their effects on students' performance (Borman, Hewes, Overman, & Brown, 2002; Epstein 2001).

Concentrating on procedure variables is imperative for connecting with parents; it may be more significant than the application of explicit parent engagement activities in isolation. While activities offer commendable concepts, not all concepts and methods are proven worthy in every parent-student-teacher setting. Resourceful parent-teacher relations may take various forms. Ellis, Lock, & Lummis, G. (2015) articulated that "parents and teachers working as partners" (p. 14), given the impact of the setting, is a model, not a precise remedy or prearranged collection of procedure or activities. Cooperating as partners is contingent on cautious thought of school-based practices for linking with families.

Amato, Patterson, & Beattie, (2015) found that home setting arrangements are absolutely related to the types of rewards anticipated by teachers for students. When parents participate, students display progress in achievement, test scores, including literacy and mathematic, mannerism toward schoolwork, conduct, scholastic persistence, homework completion, attendance rate, and being involved in classroom learning activities. Other benefits for students include fewer placements in special education, increased enrollment in college, declined dropout rates, less suspensions, and increased awareness of exceptional talents. Teachers strengthen the chance of family involvement when they create a sense of urgency concerning each role and

support parents in seeing the significance of their role. Students will perform their best when there are constant communications concerning learning across the home and school sphere to help. Some questions that these communications should answer are:

- What helps students develop confident behaviors of learning?

- What helps students to perform at their best in school?

- What conditions improve the likelihood that students will succeed in school and engaged as learners?

Mautone, Lefler, and Power (2011) found that students with ADHD normally undergo significant impairment in the home environment and school, while their relationships with their parents, teachers, and other children are often under pressure. Optimizing the outcomes of any mediation encompasses a multi-faceted approach that is aimed at both the family and school. The researchers expressed that FSS (Family School Success) can be employed to strengthen the parent-child relationship, enhance family engagement in education at home, and build home-school collaboration, as well as academic and social learning. "Family School Success (FSS) is an intervention program that links the family and school systems to address the needs of elementary school children with ADHD (Power, Soffer, Clarke, & Mautone, 2006)." (as cited by Mautone, Leler, & Power, 2011).

Minako Moriwaka (2012) states that "parental involvement can have a positive impact on students' academic, emotional, and social success; however, there are few studies of how to improve parent advocacy and home-school collaboration in special education" (p.248). Moriwaka observed teachers and parents of students with disabilities to discover how to enable them to build home-school relationships within the district school system. From the study, Moriwaka aimed to help the audience to understand the following:

- the influence of social capital, social interaction, and resources in special education on supporting disabled students and their parents;

- how parents and teachers see their positions in parent-educator collaborations;

- what types of hindrances are present for parent-professional collaboration;

- what kinds of resources parents of disabled students and special educators see required to be a pro-active supporter for their children and students.

The outcomes showed that functional isolation among home and school was an important hurdle, and a systemic approach is needed to produce positive home-school partnerships in special education.

Jones (2014), in her qualitative study, investigated the impact of parental engagement in Yonkers, New York at a special education middle school. The subjects were all at-risk academically. Jones stated, "Schools lack more in parental involvement as children move up in grades" (p. 2). When children's home environment reflects academic activities and a climate of success, they tend to be academically successful. Ten parents were interviewed to confirm, from a parent's viewpoint, how parents, teachers, and facilitators help schoolchildren to create a succession of theories, mindsets, and reasons that contribute to children who are on the pathway to becoming academically successful. Even though some research results have indicated that parental engagement is valuable when teachers connect more with parents and have a fixated method to reach parents and students, the outcomes of this inquiry concurs that when parents are helpful and involved in their child's education, the child will become academically successful.

Núñez et al. (2015) studied 1,683 scholars at diverse periods of schooling and found that students' homework habits, testified that parental homework participation, and academic success are knowingly related. Núñez et al. focused on capturing a convincing comprehension of the

association among apparent parental homework participation (i.e., parental homework control and parental homework support), students' homework habits (i.e., time spend on homework completion, time management, and amount of homework completed), and students' academic accomplishment. Nevertheless, results differ depending on the scholars' grade level: (1) in middle and high school, parental homework participation is related to students' homework habits, but not in elementary school; and (2) although students' homework habits are connected to academic achievement at each school level, the path and extent of the relations vary. The researchers concluded that the rapport among parental homework participation and academic achievement is greater in middle and high school than in elementary school and those students' homework habits facilitate the relationship among apparent parental homework engagement (control and support) and academic achievement only in middle and high school.

Considering parental engagement and involvement, two research studies that give understanding about the values of parent-school partnerships are the study at the University of Oxford and the study published in the *Journal of Instructional Psychology* by Machen, Wilson, and Notar in 2005. Researchers at the University of Oxford discovered that students whose parents were involved in the Peers Early Education Partnership, a program aimed in the direction of assisting families of students ages 0 to 5, made progress that is more notable in their schooling than students whose parents failed to participate. These steps where noticed in students ages 3-5, and involved progress in terminology, linguistic comprehension, comprehension of literature, and numeric concepts. In addition, these students also displayed higher self-confidence in contrast to students of non-participating parents (Evangelou & Sylva, 2003). The researchers concluded that cultivating parental participation with schools could advance schools. While parental participation is extremely imperative for moving school districts to higher standards, the

research reports that engaging parents in lively roles in the school curriculum can open alternate opportunities for students to be successful academically. The report shares data that speaks to the degree and level of contact that parents have with the school and the amount of time they volunteered in the classrooms. To create meaningful parent-engagement programs, which range from greater support for the school programs to improving student achievement, the researchers investigated how to support school personnel in identifying procedures and policies that boost parent trust and participation in the process of schooling. Per Machen et al. (2005) schools should be active partners with parents. Parents are an important part of the process of improving schools. It is important to incorporate a range of activities for parent involvement.

The second study published by (Machen et al., 2005) in the *Journal of Instructional Psychology* reported that improving parental involvement in the classroom could also improve schools in general. The authors explained how every person inside the school community could profit when parents and teachers work as partners. This study offered commendations for the growth of parent-school collaboration programs and indicated that parental involvement may navigate toward improved schools, influence higher standards, and afford opportunities for students. The study also offered commendations for developing parent-school collaboration programs such as creating prescribed educational sessions that would increase parental awareness about their children's potential in school, providing regular positive correspondence among parents, the school, and the community, and eliminating the obstacles to parental involvement. Some solutions to remove parental involvement barriers suggested by the Machen et al. (2005) are offering childcare during school activities and scheduling conferences for teachers and parents during times that are suitable for the parents. Students benefit from parent involvement with positive results in their education. When parents become engaged in the

classroom, they deliver an invaluable message to their children. They demonstrate that they are concerned about their child's success and the outcomes that children feel more assured (Machen et al. 2005).

Summary

In analysis, from the literature previously discussed, there appears to be a strong connection between student achievement and home-school parental partnership and collaboration. However, there seem to be a gap in terms of social capital, social networking, and the lack of parental engagement as students enter middle and then high school. Although many may argue concerning the notion between parental home-school collaboration and students' academic accomplishment being stronger in middle and high school than in elementary school, there appears to be a separation between home and school which then creates a serious obstacle.

It is clear that for any interaction to be productive, it needs the support of all parties involved. To ensure a successful home-school relationship, teachers should initiate communication with parents and welcome them as part of the educational process. Parents too must be dedicated and set aside time and energy toward supporting their child both at home and in school. They should understand that giving their child the necessary tools is not enough but they need to develop a good collaborative partnership with the teachers of school.

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Parental Involvement and Socioeconomic Status and Ethnicity

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Living in poverty can be difficult and challenging not only for children, but also for parents. There appear to be many benefits of parents staying involved with their children's education, but parents living in poverty are less likely to participate in school events or their children's education than those living out of poverty (Van Velsor & Orozco, 2007). Van et al. found an important contrast in parental participation rates. Parental participation levels were

significantly higher in upper and middle-class neighborhoods than in low-income communities. Some research has included ethnicity as a factor in parental participation. They also noticed that schools with predominantly African American and Latino enrollment with a high participation in free or reduced lunch programs had low parental participation levels. Since social forces are forever, changing, educational programs must change with them. Few social forces exist independent of each other. They are interconnected, and each person in the society experiences the influence of most of them, if not all, of them at the same time.

Race is an important aspect in education in relationship to student test scores, participation, and socioeconomic status. In relation to parental involvement and the level of participation, issues of equity arise. History and statistics shows that parental involvement is "significantly higher among middle- and upper-class parents than in low-income families (De Carvalho, 2001). Researchers agree that rates of parental involvement are lower in low income communities than in higher income schools (Lareau, 2000; O'Connor, 2001)" (as quoted in Smith, 2006). Therefore, students from low socioeconomic backgrounds with minimal parental participation in relation to education, frequently profit far less academically than students from higher income families.

While minority families face numerous obstacles that hinder their ability to be an active parent in the school, Williams and Sánchez (2011) point to the obstacles that poor African American families face in education. They identified four crucial elements presenting a roadblock for these parents' involvement: time poverty, lack of access, financial resources, and awareness. Time poverty (Newman & Chin, 2003) refers to a family's lack of time due to other commitments and lack of access refers to various illness and/or disability. Williams and Sánchez (2011) noted that impoverished parents are more likely to exhibit problems with physical

activity, as well as the timing of school events. Finances means inadequate resources of some parents and awareness may be hindered by traditional school communication. All the previous mentioned factors make it increasingly difficult for families that are facing various levels of hardship to be an active parent versus a family that has a stay-at-home parent, a large amount of discretionary income, strong health, and an ability to effectively communicate with the school.

In their study, Fan and Chen (2001) examined the impact of diverse scopes of parental engagement on high school students' academic progress, and the possible variances in parental engagement between four major racial groups (Asian American, Hispanic, Black, and Caucasian). Student progress was assessed by literacy, mathematics, science, and social studies test results. Using the data set from the National Educational Longitudinal Study (NELS:88), the researchers set to measure four scopes of parent engagement: communication, educational motivation for students, engagement, and supervision; the results revealed a strong impact on academic development of communication and educational motivation, after controlling for family socioeconomic status while educational motivation uncovered a greater reliability and noticeable effect than communication did. The participation and supervision scope revealed unreliable and insignificant negative impact on academic progress. The study also presented that, after controlling for socioeconomic status, the difference among the stated degree of parental engagement across cultural groups was minute, but outcomes were reliable when relating student and parent questionnaire data.

In his study in an elementary school in a Midwestern city, Watkins (2013) administered surveys during the third quarter of the year to parents of each second-grade students, along with the student's teacher. Questions on the survey were related to mastery and performance orientation, parent participation, parent awareness concerning the amount of teacher

communications, and parents' sense of efficacy in participation. His aim was to examine parent participation patterns by investigating parents' achievement goal orientation in terms of achievement motivation theory based on both his prior studies as well as others. The results revealed that parents were more engaged when their children showed low performance and that teacher communications could increase numerous forms of parental engagement. While Watkins does not offer implications for experts, the evidence about teacher communications and perceived teacher communications and their impact on parent involvement are important tools in working with parents to increase student achievement.

Summary

In summarization from this literature, there seem to be some disparity between student achievement, parental involvement, and exhibited social forces. However, there seems to be a very small gap in parental involvement and student achievement in terms of socioeconomic status based on ethnicity. Watkins (2013) found that Caucasian parents reported higher levels of education, lower parental involvement, and their children received higher grades. Watkins states that because Caucasian students were achieving at a much higher level than that of African American students, the Caucasian parents had lower levels of parental engagement because they now felt that their children did not need much parental involvement.

After controlling for socioeconomic status, Fan and Chen (2001) found very small amounts of statistical differences in parental participation among ethnic subgroups along with noting that parents with higher educational levels had higher educational expectations for their child. While the effects of socioeconomic status on parental involvement and student achievement have also been addressed in previous research, it is necessary to note that due to the

association between ethnicity and socioeconomic status, differences in parental involvement per ethnicity may be partially the result of socioeconomic status.

In all schools, parental involvement is imperative, but it is critically needed in low-income communities. Epstein's (2011) research points out three important themes that must be considered by any district as it develops its plans for parental involvement:

1. To offset other contacts that focus on behavioral issues or academic infractions at school, low-income communities need to ensure that they contact parents and families more often about positive accomplishments of their children.

2. To involve parents who have traditionally been more challenging to become involve in school activities, schools need to work harder to gain buy-in from single parents, those who live far from school, households where both parents work, and fathers.

3. Many teachers and administrators would like to involve families but they do not know how to go about building positive and productive programs and are consequently fearful about trying.

Technology/Electronic Communication and Parental Involvement

Bill Gates, in March 1996 wrote a guest editorial in *THE Journal* concerning a perception he described as connected learning community. Uniting collectively in three aspects, this community: "networked school districts where all the students are connected; connections between homes and schools; and connections reaching out to the entire world . . . everyone accessible on the Internet" (p. 10). This idea includes personal computers linked by means of the World Wide Web. In 1996, that was quite groundbreaking and innovative thinking. Today, however, only two decades after his editorial, developments in technology permitted many to

deliberate and ponder even more globally and largely about enabling and empowering parental participation in schools.

With all of this, school districts and schools can include parents and communities by using the Internet as the medium to connect learning and community. However, Internet presence can be far greater than a set of web pages with data and material about the school system or school itself. There is an increasing body of literature on what information and services are offered by schools and districts and what should be offered through their websites (Bradford, Ducan, & Tarcy, 2000; Miller, Adsit, & Miller, 2005; Starr, 2002).

School websites are affording educational environments with opportunities to reform and improve the educative process and experience. Nevertheless, the supposed reputation of school websites and the resources capitalized in creating and safeguarding them differs significantly across context. At hand, there seem to be a necessity to better comprehend what establishes a website that offers a school with an opportunity and pathway for delivering innovation in teaching and learning, and balances how a school functions and how electronic and technological communication impacts parental participation while bridging home and school relationships.

Watkins (2013) investigated the impact of electronic communication on parental involvement of high school students. He elaborated on six types of parental involvement: parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning at home, decision-making, and collaborating with the community. In a small Midwestern town, 86 parents of high school students were used as subjects and data was collected. While the outcomes were not noteworthy, it presented the large percentages of positive agreement from both groups with the survey items signifying that electronic communication can have a positive effect on parent participation at the high school level. Watkins believes that the results may lend to social change by informing sponsors about

the significance and possible effect influencing parental engagement has on student success via the usage of electronic communication.

Miller et al. (2005) examined the components that are presently contained in school-based websites and the level to which users of school websites rate features that are included. Third-, fourth-, and fifth-graders at Cloud Springs Elementary (CSE) in Ringgold, Georgia participated in this research. Additionally, parents and caregivers of students who attend CSE in kindergarten through fifth grade and all full and part time classroom and resource teachers of CSE were also included. The study produced outcomes that only eight out of the 70 schools involved in the research included more than 50% of the suggested features in their site. The researchers determined that it might be that webmasters are uninformed of the features that are believed to be most needed.

Summary

Electronic communication and technology can have a positive impact on parent involvement and home-school relations. There is also a notable association and bridge between the level of parental involvement in students' academic lives and the students' level of academic success in regards to the employment of electronic and technological communication.

Family Involvement and Parent Engagement in Response to Intervention

After attending a national level meeting of school and district leaders, Jennings (2005) stated that RTI (Response to Intervention) is built on the foundation that an evidence-based program has been proven to work for students. Jennings elaborated that RTI needs the usage of assessments for calculating how good students are performing and for assessing their improvement in the basic core subject skill areas such as literacy, spelling, math, and/or written language. Moreover, Jennings asserted that at the inception of the year, leaders at the school

should study students' records of past performance on state or other tests or give all students a test with one of the assessment tools such as pre-test, post-test, formative, diagnostic and/or summative. They should also identify the students who appear to be at-risk for academic success. These assessments are used systematically and not only to check on students' academic performance, but to also find out if the way the student is being taught helps (progress monitoring). Lastly, if a student is not performing well, based on these implementations and tests (tools), then the students should receive additional support that is proven to be effective. Still, if the student does not perform satisfactorily, even more assistance should be given (tiered interventions). Moreover, for the small number of students who are still not responsive, they possibly will require additional support that is not typically offered through general education, perhaps in the form of referral and evaluation for special education services. Jennings assures that RTI, properly applied, with parents involved s partners from the inception, will demonstrate the value in the process and the importance of it for their child. Parents collaborating with their child's teacher in the RTI process is a well-documented research-based strategy. There is noteworthy evidence on the impact of parental involvement on student grades and assessment scores, attendance, conduct and social skills, graduation, and pursuit of college education.

Reschly (2007) shared that much has been talked about and underscored concerning family involvement in schools and that descriptions of family involvement differ, ranging from volunteering to chaperone for various school events to the formation of partnerships between families and educators. Moreover, she states that it is not surprising that traditions of supporting learning at home are connected to various outcomes that can lend themselves to different types of parental involvement at school. She clarifies however, (a) that students' academic, social, emotional, and behavioral outcomes are connected to family procedures and routines while

students are in school and beyond, and (b) that student outcomes are improved when schools and families collaborate to support student learning.

Reschly (2007) further expressed that assuming this connection among families, family–school partnerships, and student results, numerous educators want better family engagement and partnership in supporting learning at school and in the home. Furthermore, she discovered that a high degree of family engagement is one of the shared components of high-performing schools and that family engagement along with partnership are vital facets of many all-inclusive school reform efforts. She reported that while schools are responsible for educating students, families undoubtedly have a strong influence on student development, learning, and conduct—inside and outside of the school. Lately, steps have been made to inspect the efficiency of family mediations such as parent coaching, parent preparation programs, and school–family collaborative mediations for improving students' academic achievement and/or conduct at school. Even though practical assessment and the combination of such programs is fairly new and additional work is required, outcomes of these preliminary investigations may be useful to inform practice in schools and are significant to educators as they try to work with families to support student learning in RTI models.

Schools and families can work together in numerous ways to include families in meeting objectives, following through with well-defined activities by the school, while working with families to support student learning. RTI signifies an important change in educational practices. More than a few of these changes, such as the emphasis on prevention, screening, early intervention, as well as regular, organized data collection, in addition to the change in emphasis from "where to teach students" to questions of "how," "what," and "is this working" together help produce optimal student learning. (Reschly, 2007).

The rationale for working with families to support student learning is clear: When families and schools work together, student outcomes are enhanced (Reschly, 2007). RTI is an opportunity to foster successful change in family–school relationships, permitting the formation of involved partnerships between educators and families via collaborative, structured problem-solving efforts. Collective problem-solving will necessitate that parents, teachers, experts, and administrators work together to regulate suitable resources and supports as well as detailed information-sharing guidelines that facilitate parental engagement. A constant hurdle for every educator is to expand and enhance skills that will give students the greatest possible learning experiences and opportunities, in school, at home, and in community context; therefore, it is a good reason to involve and engage parents, thus making them partners. It is crucial that steps be taken to guarantee the establishment and maintenance of ongoing, effective communication and partnerships with parents.

Summary

The review of literature indicates that parental involvement may absolutely influence a child's educational success. While countless parents desire their children to be successful in school, far too many parents do not know how to assist in their child's education. Educators are concerned about student success but often find it hard to provide valuable involvement opportunities. It is critical that parents and educators agree to the shared responsibility in striving for student academic success.

Additionally, the literature strongly supports my study concerning parental involvement and student success because the significance in effectively involving parents is paramount and crucial in developing a home-school relationship. Research has shown that when parents are involved, students' academic success increases. Fan and Chen (2001) focused on parental

involvement and student achievement and found a positive connection, suggesting, "When parent involvement increases, student achievement increases" (p. 10). While parents are challenged with an abundance of obstacles that hinder their participation in their children's education, their involvement is vital in education for many reasons. To educators, it means a support system to help improve instruction in school and at home. To students, it establishes support and a belief in education, motivating them to excel daily. To schools, it means support from the community at large to provoke students to do their best. A collaborative system of support needs to exist, because when "parents, teachers, students, and others view one another as partners in education, a caring community forms around students and it begins to work" (Epstein, 1995, p.7).

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Qualitative Traditions and Lenses

Creswell (2000) stated, "When we refer to the lens, we mean that the inquirer uses a viewpoint for establishing validity in a study. Qualitative inquirers bring to their studies a different lens toward validity than that brought to traditional, quantitative studies" (p. 125). The intent of this inquiry is to examine the perceptions of parents and teachers of fifth grade students concerning their parental involvement and ways to improve the home-school relationship through effective parental involvement. I chose a qualitative approach because Stake (2010) states, "many people who do qualitative research want to improve how things work" (p. 14) and "by qualitative we mean that it relies primarily on human perception and understanding" (p. 11). Creswell (2013) reported that "we conduct qualitative research when we want to empower individuals to share their stories, hear their voices, and minimize the power relationships that often exist between a researcher and the participants in the study" (p. 48). Moreover, Creswell (2013) noted, "we conduct qualitative research because we want to understand the context or setting in which participants in a study address a problem or issue" (p. 48). Therefore, I deemed this approach more suitable. The main question that this inquiry sought to address was "What can parent stories tell us about parental involvement that is unobservable by the school and its effects on academic success?" This chapter defines the approaches and processes used in this study to decipher the perceptions of parents and teachers of fifth grade students regarding effective parental involvement and ultimately employ approaches that the school can perform to strengthen the working relationship between the school and families.

Narrative Inquiry Lens

I implemented a narrative methodology to learn about the experiences as expressed in lived and told stories of three parents and two teachers. Through a narrative lens, there exists a three-dimensional inquiry space of sociality, temporality, and place in which the participants and the researcher move "inward, outward, backwards, forwards and situated within place" (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p. 49) during the investigation progression. The participants and I (as the researcher) shifted inward to our personal interpretations and views, outward to the social environment in which we will find ourselves, forwards and backwards in time, with all of this positioned in the different places in which the events we experienced happened.

Narrative inquiry not only allowed me to take hold of the lived experiences of parents and teachers during the child's educational process, but it also shed light on the genuine influence of their reflective episodes. Relationships of trust and longevity are created through these outlets of personal experiences making it easier for unearthing an oppressed voice (Butler-Kisber, 2010). The expression "narrative as the human enterprise" defines the closest one can get to expressing the experience of the storyteller (Butler-Kisber, 2010, p. 52). Norman Denzin and Yvonne Lincoln (1994) underscore that qualitative researchers are exploring ways to share stories, and Gloria Ladson-Billings (1994) argues that stories have gained credibility as an appropriate methodology for conveying the rich quality and complexities of cultural and social phenomena.

"…narrative research originated from literature, history, anthropology, sociology, sociolinguistics and education, different fields of study have adopted their own approaches (Chase, 2005)" (as cited in Creswell, 2012). Narrative inquiry takes on many forms, applies a host of analytic procedures, and is grounded in different social and humanities disciplines

(Daiute & Lightfoot, 2004). "Narrative might be the phenomenon being studied such as a narrative of illness, or it might be the method used in a study, such as the procedures of analyzing stories told (Chase, 2005; Clandinin & Connolly, 2000; Pinnegar & Daynes, 2007)" (as cited in Creswell, 2012). As a method, it starts with the experiences as articulated in lived and told stories of individuals. Czarniawska (2004) defines it as a specific type of qualitative design in which "narrative is understood as a spoken or written text giving an account of an event/action or series of event/action chronologically connected" (p. 17). Studying one or two persons, collecting data through the gathering of their stories, writing individual experiences, and sequentially ordering the meaning of those experiences, are procedures for implementing this research.

In narrative qualitative inquiry, it is the account behind the act that matters. Through my research, using a narrative inquiry as a methodology, I came to know and better understand the experiences of parents and teachers in relation to their engagement in being involved with students' education, on and off the school site.

Theoretical Lens

Parents, schools, and communities have a shared interest and responsibility in educating children (Epstein et al., 2009). Epstein's school-family-community partnership model emphasized the roles of the school, the family, and the community in working collaboratively to influence the development and learning of children (Epstein et al., 2009). Her partnership model (see details in Chapter 2) has been accepted and employed as a theoretical framework in many studies. She referred to this partnership model as an overlapping influence between the school, family, and community in educating children in an effort of achieving academic success (Epstein et al., 2009). My study sought to discover how families and schools build strong partnerships. I hoped to discover detailed stories evidencing what the school's role is in developing a

collaborative partnership based on Epstein's six typologies of parental involvement. Ultimately, I was most interested in two of the six typologies (parenting and learning at home) in Epstein's framework, typologies that tend to go unnoticed by many. To help with this process, I interviewed parents and teachers. The information, collected from the parents and teachers, was used to gather data on their perceptions on school and family partnerships to better answer the following questions:

1. How are parents involved in their child's educational process?

2. How does parental involvement provide support to the child's school, family, and home-school connection?

3. What can parent stories tell us about parental involvement that is unobservable by the school and its effects on academic success?

Research Setting

This elementary school is a metropolitan Atlanta charter school located in Fulton County, Georgia and is a part of the Atlanta Public School District. The school has been in operation for three full academic school years, and serves students in kindergarten through fifth grade as well as special needs students. It has many great strengths, as examples, an upbeat, motivated, and united staff, involved community members, as well as enriching academic programs to support the student population. With the great strengths come inevitable challenges, like diversity and acceptance. This school was founded on the ideal and premise that students should not only receive a high academic education, but an education in the social aspect of diversity. Diversity plays a large role in this cohort of students. The students and parents come from an economically different area within the same Atlanta zip code of 30318. Within the 30318 zip code there is a large degree of separation in relation to the economic abilities of the families.

Sixty-five percent of the fifth grade students receive free and reduced services; Ninety percent of those students who receive free and reduced services in fifth grade are African American.

As stated, the staff at this elementary school is one of its biggest assets. Approximately 37 staff members, there are twenty certified teachers that are currently employed at this elementary school. All of the teachers here teach in the field for the entire day. The attrition rate for the 2015-2016 school year was approximately 1%. Seventy percent of the students are African American and the other 30% are Caucasian. Forty-eight percent of the students are female, and 52% are male.

This school has two fifth grade classes. Altogether, there are 30 fifth grade students. Of those students, 18 are female and 12 are male. There are two fifth grade teachers and they are both African-American. To help better understand the context as a background to the actions of the teachers and parents they were participants in the study.

Researchers' Positionality

As Creswell (2009) states, "[r]esearchers recognize that their own backgrounds shape their interpretation, and they position themselves in the research to acknowledge how their interpretation flows from their personal, cultural, and historical experiences" (p. 8). While agreeing to take knowledge as socially constructed, my research also must recognize that the analyses of the inquiry are therefore seen through the socially constructed lens. In a determination to better comprehend my own socially constructed lens, a brief account of my personal history as it relates to parental involvement will be shared.

Currently, I am employed as an educator at the high school level in Fulton County, Georgia. This high school is situated in a rural area. I have worked in field of education since 1997, after completing my master's degree program from Florida State University in Tallahassee, Florida. In my current role (and in all my prior roles in education), I have an

extensive degree of contact with parents, consequently have I observed how parents and students interact, particularly as it relates to apparent problem with the schools and system. I have observed (what I trust to be) a growth in parental involvement in my duration in the profession, and believe I have observed a modification in how students perceive themselves and their responsibility in decision making for their own lives.

Through the years in the profession, I have noticed what I believe is a steady handing over of self-confidence in favor of shared decision making with parents. This worldview has been formed by my collaboration with others in the profession and the literature produced in the field that supports this view. To this study, I also bring of course, my own experience as a former traditional-aged student, and my collaboration with my parents at the time I attended school since elementary, middle, and high school. My parents and I lately conversed about our relations in laying groundwork for this research, and they recall that we collaborated face to face and around the dinner table approximately once every day or every other day, and our subjects of discussion were habitually about how things went at school and my future plans.

As a parent, I also bring to this research my viewpoint. I am actively engaged in my son's education now, getting e-mails from the school about twice a week. In addition, I have been asked to attend more than a few functions for parents to help me feel involved in the school community. Finally, I bring to this research my own awareness of the growth of self-sufficiency, self-direction, and the ability to think critically that is informed by my ethnicity, gender, and culture. I am a Black male from a foreign country who conveys his own bias of what it means to be self-sufficient or self-directed. I call to remembrance, undergoing a progressive stage of discarding my parents' influence (especially my father's) before attempting to incorporate their influence. Consequently, I have a difficult time comprehending how growth in self-sufficiency, self-direction, and the ability to think critically transpired within the context of close parental

interaction. This degree of interaction does not define my personal path; therefore, I have tried during this study to understand this unique path.

Entry and Reciprocity

Creswell (2013) reported that

Qualitative research involves the study of a research site(s) and gaining permission to study the site in a way that will enable the easy collection of data. This means obtaining approval from university or college institutional review boards as well as individuals at the research site. It also means finding individuals who can provide access to the research site and facilitate the collection of data. (p. 151)

This study was conducted simultaneously with another that examines the school-family-community partnership from the student's perspective. As these studies are ideologically linked, they pull from the same participants. The researcher for the simultaneous study is a faculty member at the research site and secured access for the research.

The parent and teacher participants were informed that the approval of Atlanta Public School District along with the Kennesaw State University Institutional Review Board (IRB) was attained before the execution of the research. Participants completed an informed consent form (See Appendices D and E). They were cognizant of their right to proceed or lapse their participation with the study at any time with the assurance they would not experience any antagonistic reactions from their decision. The parents and teachers will not be able to be recognized through the dissertation or subsequent publications, leaving their identity to remain fully confidential. Lastly, entry was

alleviated by allowing possible subjects to have full access to this proposal and informed

consent documentation (see Appendix D), which explicitly certified confidentiality, prior

to participation in the study. From this study, the participants would gain more insight

about parental involvement, ways that parents actually are involved but many fail to take

note of, and many of the motivations and hindrances of parental involvement. The

benefit to the participants was that they gained meaningful information on how to

strengthen school-home relationship between schools, parents, and families.

Participants

The participants were purposefully sampled and included three parents and two

teachers from an elementary charter school in an urban area in the Atlanta Public School

District, in Fulton County, Georgia. While all of their safeties fit my research concerns, the

parent participants represented an extensive range of backgrounds in order to pull forward

stories of varied experiences. The participants represented individuals located in various

cultures and socioeconomic statuses, mothers and fathers and parents with children in fifth-

grade. The criteria that was used for this study was the purposive sampling process.

Purposive sampling (known also as judgment, selective, or subjective sampling) is a

sampling technique where the researcher depends on his or her own judgment when

choosing the subjects of population to participate in the study. In purposive sampling,

personal judgment needs to be employed to select cases that assist in answering research

questions or achieve research objectives. The method of recruitment was through letters and

emails to parents and teachers, in which both students and parents were chosen through the

method of purposive sampling via their approval (Appendix B).

Data Collection

A typical response to thinking about qualitative data collection is to focus on the actual types of data and the procedures for gathering them (Creswell, 2013). Before the study began the researcher followed several essential procedures (Fink, 2003). A site was chosen, access and entry to the site was gained, participants were purposefully chosen, several interview sessions were held with the participants in order to collect data, and data were recorded then stored in a locked file. Interviews with participants were 30 minutes in duration and were executed using "tell me" prompts to encourage a rich thick description of the issue. Each interview consisted of open-ended questions from the interview protocol. Interviews were recorded and transcribed (see Appendix F for Transcriber Confidentiality Agreement). By using this approach, the participants could actually tell stories of their lived experience which would produce the data needed. Follow-up questions were used to better understand the perceptions and attitudes about the issue.

Interview Design

There is no agreed upon structure for how to design a qualitative study (Creswell, 2013)**.** Stake (2010) stated that,

> Interviews are used for a number of purposes. For qualitative researcher perhaps the main purposes are: obtaining unique information or interpretation held by the person interviewed, collecting a numerical aggregation of information from many persons and finding out about "a thing" that the researchers were unable to observe themselves. (p. 95)

Interviews were conducted in safe and conducive environments based upon the participant's request and were used as the data collection strategy for this qualitative inquiry. The interviews occurred without spouses and children, depending on the comfort and availability of the

parent/teacher. The interview protocol was designed to allow parents and teachers to be given the freedom to tell their stories with minimal prompting and questioning during a one-on-one audiotape interview. My goal was to examine what I could learn from their stories about the perception of parental involvement as seen through the lens of parents and teachers of fifth grader students and how these experiences may impact the student's education. Qualitative researchers generally agree that interview questions need to be open-ended and framed using every day and common language (Creswell, 2013). Many of my prearranged questions were prompts, such as "Tell me about when…". I felt that by using this interview protocol I would gather the data to answer my research questions because using the approach of "tell me" opens the door for the interviewee to actually expound on the issue at hand thereby delivering a rich descriptive text−a story. The interview questions asked of the participants is in Appendix A.

<div align="center">**Research Design**</div>

The parent and teacher participants within this study were asked to do two things: first, to sign a consent form expressing their agreement to participate in the interviewing process and, second, to participate in interviews sessions about their experiences involving parental involvement that were digitally recorded at the school (See Appendix D). Each parent would participate in one interview regarding their child's experience from the parental perspective and the teacher would interview as well (one interview per student/parent pairing). The participants and I met individually after school in the media center, for approximately 30 minutes each time, to talk about parental involvement as it relates to student success (See Appendix C). All of these interviews were taped conversations. Our conversations included topics such as how to help their children with homework, how to be involved in their child's educational process, how to provide support to the child's school, family, and home-school life and how to increase parental

involvement across the board. Teachers were also interviewed focusing on the student portion of the research. The findings from that simultaneous study may be linked to the findings from this one.

Data Analysis

Analyzing text and multiple other forms of data presents a challenging task for qualitative researchers. Deciding how to represent the data in tables, matrices, and narrative form adds to the challenge. Often qualitative researchers equate data analysis with approaches for analyzing text image data. The process of analysis is much more. It also involves organizing the data, coding and organizing themes, representing the data, and forming an interpretation of them. These steps are interconnected and form a spiral of activities all related to the analysis and representation of the data (Creswell, 2013, p. 179).

In this study, qualitative data analysis followed several strategies of a qualitative narrative. The stories of all subjects were transcribed and coded using concepts and themes. Initially, noteworthy accounts were branded and coded. Codes were then distinguished and grouped into like categories. In several rounds coding was completed. All overarching themes were then further distinguished into important themes. The Atlas TI qualitative computer program supported the narrative analysis process. Initial and axial coding revealed a pattern across participants' stories and approaches to parental involvement. All three parents and two teachers authored stories from their lived experiences that informed their identities.

The Three Cs: Coding, Categorizing, and Concepts

I am now at a point where I can see how to move from raw data to meaningful concepts or themes. I call this the three Cs of analysis: from coding to categorizing to concepts. Coding interview data, observational notes, and text into meaningful chunks is a challenging task. It is

my responsibility as the researcher to generate the codes. The computer program generated codes

and organized them; provided I input the information. This process has been broken down into

four steps (see Figure 4).

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Figure 4

Three Cs of Data Analysis: Codes, Categories, Concepts
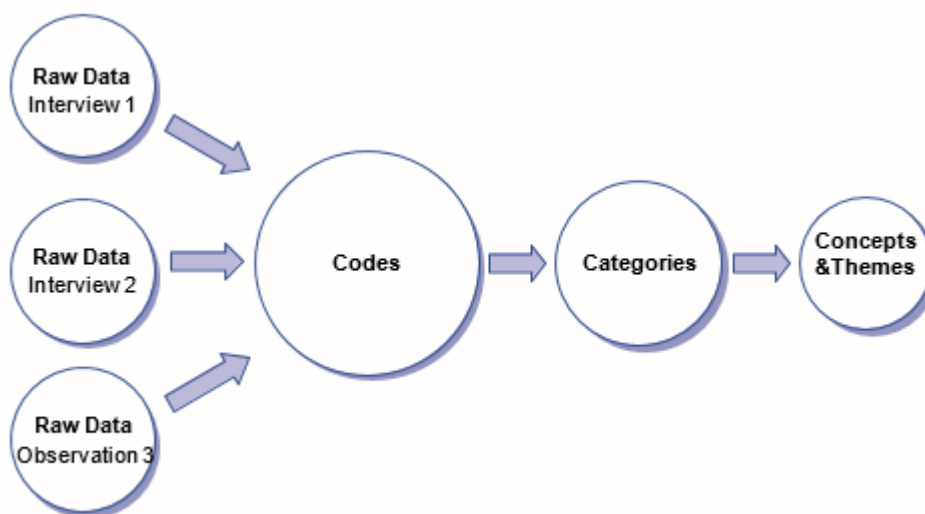
Initial Coding

  While initial coding can be the respondent's own words or phrase, one can establish it by

a cautious reading of the text. In my coding of participants' interviews, I employed the usage of

short concise phrases for my coding. It was not too early to begin coding even if I have only

gathered a tiny amount of data. Selecting any transcript, I read the initial page or two. I used the

"Comment" function in my word processing program to insert my initial codes (in Microsoft

Word, I will find the function on the "Insert" menu). I entered my initial codes. While

continuing in reading transcripts, I entered different codes. Upon conclusion of initial coding

with one transcript, I chose another transcript and continued the same procedure. After initial

coding was complete, like codes were consolidated or modified as new data appeared. I focused on eliminating redundancies, renaming synonyms, or clarifying terms.

Initial Listing of Categories

According to Creswell (2013), "themes in qualitative research (also called categories) are broad units of information that consist of several codes aggregated to form a common idea" (p. 186). I modified my codes, then organized them into categories. As particular codes became main subjects, others were clustered under a main subject and became subsets of that topic. In essence, therefore, I had to move from one long list of codes into a shorter list of categories, with related codes as subsets of the categories. At this point, I continued the iterative process and prioritized categories based on importance, or I combined two categories. Therefore, my goal was to move from coding initial data through identification of categories to the recognition of important concepts or themes. Finally, I revisited my list of categories to remove redundancies and identify critical elements and began placing codes in subsets within each of the major categories.

From Categories to Concept

During the last stage of data analysis, I identified main ideas that reflected the meaning I have attached to the data collected. While there are no conclusive guidelines for the number of conceptual ideas I might classify, I trusted that a smaller quantity of well-developed and supported concepts offered a better analysis than many loosely outlined ideas. After reading and re-reading my data, I saw that some ideas seemed prolific in description and more prevailing than others. Three to four concepts were the maximum number that I found in a set of data. When arranging my codes into concepts, it was my duty to elect the most useful or logical method of sorting. I found that I needed to uncover from the data what meaning I think could be

understood. Occasionally my beginning thoughts were rather shallow. Therefore, I regrouped and redrafted and reconsidered which led to more influential ideas. I used the categorized codes to analyze the data for thematic material. Themes were either collections of codes or threads that involved multiple codes.

Verification and Trustworthiness

Narrative design research is a qualitative exertion. While it incorporates many qualitative strategies for validation, Creswell (2014) enumerates eight procedures. Creswell suggested the use of prolonged engagement and persistent observation in the field, triangulation and multiple sourcing of data, peer review and debriefing for external checks, negative case analysis, clarifying of researcher bias, member checking, thick description, and external audits. On the other hand, Shenton (2004) uses the terms credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability to group various procedures together under larger aims and to offer alternative terms to positivist concepts. They establish that trustworthiness of research and its findings are the central issues in positivist ideals of validity and reliability. In that sense, the terms proposed by Shenton are very useful in explaining the trustworthiness aims of the theory. This inquiry used four of these techniques offered by Creswell including triangulation, member checking, bias clarification, and debriefing/auditing from a peer and/or external source.

Triangulation

Triangulation includes the usage of various elements such as observation, focus groups, and individual interviews. These form the major data collection approaches for much qualitative research. It is a dominant system that empowers validation of data through cross verification from two or more sources. In particular, it refers to the application and combination of several research methods in the study of the same phenomenon. This triangulation strategy is inherent to

the narrative lens of the study. All of the important themes discussed were found to be necessary because they were important in some way to each individual story. Therefore, emergent themes were validated by triangulation.

Member Checking

For establishing the credibility of qualitative research, member checking is one of the most vital practices. My method of incorporating member checking included allowing the participants of my study to review all recoded data, interpretations, and reports. If the participants agreed that their responses had been correctly recorded and that the conclusions reached in the report were trustworthy to them, the reader of such an inquiry is likely to be persuaded that the qualitative inquiry itself is credible.

Bias Clarification, Bracketing Interview of Each Other

Bracketing is a method used in qualitative research to ease the possible harmful properties of biases that may defect the research process. The researcher who conducted the simultaneous study mentioned above assisted me with a bracketing interview in order to accomplish the goals. Two forms of researcher engagement are presented in bracketing that involves data and evolving findings. Those are (1) the well-known identification and temporary setting aside of the researcher's assumptions, and (2) the hermeneutic revisiting of data and of one's evolving comprehension of it in light of a revised understanding of any aspect of the topic. While both processes are ongoing and include the careful development of language with which to represent findings, they lend themselves useful to the process of validity. In order to realize these two goals, my co-researcher assisted me with a bracketing interview. Concepts and themes from this interview were studied before each interview, round of data analysis, and coding.

Outside Perspective: Debriefing and Auditing

Creswell (2000) reported that "a peer review or debriefing is the review of the data and research process by someone who is familiar with the research or the phenomenon being explored" (p. 129). In debriefing and auditing, a peer reviewer's role is to challenge the researcher's assumptions, push the researcher to the next step in methodology, and ask hard questions about methods and interpretation as he/she provides support. The lens for building credibility is having someone from the outside to look in. The peer debriefers provided written feedback to me on my research or simply served as a sounding board for ideas. This adds credibility to the study.

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Delimitations

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The participants consisted of three parents and two teachers from the school where the study took place. This study interviewed only parents that had a fifth-grade child attending the school or the teacher that teaches the fifth-grade students of the parents being interviewed. The above are the stipulations required for participation in this inquiry which sets the delimitation.

<div align="center">

Limitations

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While the study is limited to the lived experiences of the subjects, interviews were only provided in an English language format; thus, non or limited English speaking individuals may have been underrepresented in the sample population. The possibility for socially desirable responses by respondents, particularly parents, exists as the nature of topical matter covered by the interview may have lead respondents to skew responses toward a higher degree of involvement. The teacher interviews were subjected to redesign and provided with a limited external review; therefore, there exists the possibility of measurement error due to poor wording

or presentation of questions that stories are always subject to misremembering and rely on

participant's honest recollection of events. Such things cannot be totally accounted for.

CHAPTER 4

PARTICIPANTS' STORIES

In this study, there were eight individuals participating. These participants are categorized as follows: three students, three parents, and two teachers. My focus was on the parents and teachers; the students were covered by my co-researcher and are listed in that inquiry. The participants were all gathered from the same elementary school in the Fulton County District in Atlanta, Georgia. The parents in the study are the actual parents of the students who participated in the study. All students were taught by the same two teachers. The two teachers are departmentalized; one teacher taught science and math while the other taught English language arts (ELA) and social studies. All individuals that participated in this study did so willingly, and assisted in the data analysis by confirming researcher-identified coding. In the upcoming material, I will for a short time narrate the biographical stories of each participant's analysis on their education and their position in education. To ensure the privacy and protection of the participants, fictitious names and alias descriptions were adhered to. In Chapters 5 and 6, a more profound breakdown of the narratives and emergent themes will be presented.

Beth

Beth (a parent) was born and raised in Charlotte, North Carolina and moved to Atlanta, Georgia in 1998. She attended Myers Park High School and graduated from there in 1994. After graduation, she decided to attend the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. While in university, she participated in many extra-curricular activities and then graduated in 1998 with a BA degree in history. Beth stated that "besides paying for college (which I am grateful for), my parents were not involved in my education at all." She explained that, "my parents were struggling adults trying to maintain a roof over our head and keep the lights, water and gas on."

Beth further stated that she believes that because of her parents being over-worked, under-paid, not having reliable transportation and limited finances, led to them not being significantly involved in her and her sibling's education.

Beth described herself as a female who desires to obtain her Master's degree but because of many setbacks and challenges she can only push her child to obtain what she herself did not obtain educationally. She says that education is very important to her and being educationally equipped is a must in today's world to improve one's quality of life. Currently, Beth has no certification and is not working towards a higher degree.

When I asked Beth "What is your role in your child's education? And how is your role connected to home-school and family relationship?" She said that

I make sure that my child gets to school each day. I stay in communication with his teachers through texts and emails and I read any materials that come home from school via backpacks or email. I ask him about upcoming homework and tests.

Beth seemed to be very much concerned about her child's safety and receiving good communication from the school and her child's teacher. Beth also appears to be a good parent who assists her child at home with school work and is supportive in his education. She stated that,

before school our children eat breakfast at home and get a ride to school with either me or their dad. We do not regularly carpool with another family this year. After school, we are involved in recreational sports in our community. When they are not at sports practices, my children are often playing outside with their friends in our neighborhood until dinner.

These are some of the things that happens before and after school each day in her children lives. On the other spectrum, she realizes that there are obstacles that get in the way of her being actively involved many times. So when I asked her about some of those challenges, she clearly said that,

for the most part, the biggest obstacle for parental involvement is a lack of finances or transportation, which prevents them from providing necessary tools such as supplies or lack of mobility, which prevents them from volunteering at the school. This lack of resources prevents parents from supporting their child during specific education events within or outside the classroom. Another issue that hinders a parent(s) involvement in their child's education is due to the need to support their child financially. Many parents work long hours and are unable to attend school events or assist their child with homework because they are tired when they arrive home or their child is asleep by the time they finally arrive home. Also, due to the parent's lack of education they are unable to support their child's studies become of the complexity of their child's assignments.

Finally, she stressed that she likes "to build strong, positive relationships" with her children's teachers and administrators. By building these relationships, Beth feels comfortable discussing any educational issues that arise with her children and wants school officials to know that they are a team educating her children together. She said, "I also want my children to see the importance of serving our community, not just being a consumer."

Mary

Mary (a parent) was born in Abingdon, Virginia and moved to Georgia in August 1994. As far as educational accomplishments, she attended and graduated from Abingdon High School in 1993. Mary stated that she pursued higher education after completing high school and

graduated from the University of Virginia in 1993 obtaining a BA in economics (major) and English (minor). She also was an Echols Scholar and Jefferson Scholar.

Concerning her home life, Mary told me that,

this is a second marriage for my husband, Herb, and me. We each had a son when we married: Ian is 21 and graduated from University of New Hampshire this year with a degree in environmental economics. Sandy is 19 and is a U.S. Army Reserves. He is a freshman at Georgia Southern University.

Mary went on the inform me that

together we have Joshua who is 12 and in the sixth grade at Centennial Academy Charter School and Jordan. With four boys, it has always been a busy, loud, and crazy household. Now that the oldest two are essentially out of the house, it's quieter and calmer. But we now live in a neighborhood with more kids, so having extras around isn't unusual. Joshua and Jordan are both used to their older brothers coming and going a lot, especially Sandy, whose father lives locally. Ian's mother lives in Maine, so he is here less frequently.

Mary also articulated that she and her fifth grader collaborate a lot and engage in many of activities together, but that she expects everyone in the household to contribute to household duties. She stated that she loves books more than just about anything, and that reading was always a big deal in the family — both individual reading and reading novels aloud. While Mary's family loves sports — especially baseball and football, they also enjoy movies, music, and going to concerts along with outside activities like hiking, swimming, going for walks in the neighborhood, etc.

When I asked Mary to talk about how her parents were involved or not involved in her education, she stated that,

I am the youngest of three children, and both of my older siblings were out of the house (for the most part) by the time I was in first grade. My sister skipped two years of school and went to college at age 16, although she was "asked not to return" after her first year. My brother went to boarding high school in 10th grade. Therefore, in many ways, I grew up as an only child, and my parents could give me more attention than they could have if my older siblings were at home at the same time. They petitioned the school system to let me start kindergarten when I was four years old, so I was always the youngest in my grade by a few months.

Mary articulated that her parents were very involved in her education on a macro scale, but much uninvolved on a micro scale. In other words, they cared very much about her education, made sure she had as many opportunities available to her as possible, and they expected a lot out of her. They expected her to do her best in everything, and that was more important than the letter grade received. However, they were very hands off as to how she accomplished the work. There was very little "helicopter parenting" that you see these days. "Helicopter parenting" is a concept with which many parents are familiar (Armour, 2007; Carrol, 2005; Gordon, 2010). She continued to stress that if there was any helicoptering done, they hovered over the teachers making sure that they were challenging her and expecting her to do her best all the time. She noted that it could get embarrassing at times.

Mary reported that, "they took every opportunity to teach me something or hone a skill at home. My parents would pretend they couldn't hear me if I was speaking with incorrect grammar." Her dad, a former newspaperman, would hand her the newspaper in the morning and ask her to find the typos or buried lead in an article. Their house was filled with books, and they encouraged Mary to read well above her grade level. She said,

They made it possible for me to participate in as many extra-curricular activities as I wanted. I was not an athlete, but I was the editor of the school newspaper, in the marching and concert bands, played piano, was in school plays and drama competitions, etc.

Mary's mother was an advocate for gifted education in the county where she went to school in the 1970s and 80s before gifted education was a "thing," especially on an elementary/middle school level. Because of this — and because Mary was the "baby" — they were not supportive of her going to boarding high school, which was her desire. Mary applied to St. Catherine's School in Richmond without her parents' knowledge and was accepted. But they turned down the spot. This was the one time they said no to something she wanted that was academic or educational in nature. Mary expressed that her son Jordan is very self-motivated and will do his best even if 75% effort is all that is needed. If she had to answer these questions about his brothers, the answers would frequently have been very different. None of them has Jordan's internal drive to desire to succeed at everything. Jordan and his mother are very much alike in this respect which makes it easier for Mary to identify with him. It also helps her see areas where he may struggle or need assistance.

When I asked Mary "What is your role in your child's education? And how is your role connected to home-school and family relationship?" She replied,

I am there to support him when needed, but I see his education as a very personal responsibility. It is my job to make sure he has the time, environment, and tools he needs in order to be successful. I am available if he has questions, concerns, or needs help.

Mary articulated that she tries to encourage her son to be inquisitive, learn about things he's interested in, read books about anything and everything, and ask questions. When he asks

her questions that she does not know, either together they will look it up or she encourages him to. Or, if it is something his dad would know, she encourages him to talk to his dad about it when he gets home. Because Jordan is bright and a hard worker, his mother expects a lot out of him. Her biggest expectation is that he does his best — whatever that may be.

Mary seems to be more of a parent that facilitates to her child, thus placing gradual release of responsibility on her child to take ownership of his own learning and education. Mary explained that before school, her son gets up at about 6:00 A.M. or 6:15 A.M., showers, and (is supposed to) make his bed and tidy his room before coming downstairs for breakfast. "Sometimes I fix a hot breakfast", she said, "sometimes he cooks his own breakfast, and sometimes he just has a bagel or bowl of cereal." She remarked that her son is supposed to be ready for school by 7:15 A.M. and he earns weekend video game time if he is. There is grace between 7:15 A.M. and 7:30 A.M. After 7:30 A.M., there are consequences for being late. Mary told me that after school his routine varies widely. Many days he has after-school activities (football or soccer, Honors Chorus, Spanish Club, piano lessons) which affects the time he gets home. But if he has time before dinner, he will practice piano for 30 minutes and do homework. She said,

> We generally require the kids to practice and do any "pencil and paper" homework before getting on the computer. If everything is done before dinner, that's great! If not, he finishes up after dinner. If it's his week, he helps his dad clean up after dinner. TV and video games during the week are not allowed.

She and her husband break the "electronic entertainment fast" on Friday nights with pizza/movie night. However, if her fifth grader gets everything finished in time on a weeknight, he can research something he is interested in or do extra tests on the computer. "We also live a

block from the library so he frequently walks there and comes home with an arm full of books."

She said, "and bedtime is 8 P.M., and lights out is at 9 P.M. Between 8 and 9 he can read or listen

to music in his room or clean it."

When asked about the biggest obstacle concerning parental involvement, she reported

that,

> The biggest obstacle is communication between the school and home. I don't always
> know what is going on or what projects Jordan is working on or the deadlines for
> completion. This can lead to more last minute, night-before work than I would like. They
> started the year with agendas, but I'm not sure what ever happened to them. After a
> while, I stopped seeing them, but I don't know if that's a Jordan thing or if all of the kids
> stopped. Jordan is fairly good at keeping track of his daily homework which is given in a
> packet at the beginning of the week, so I don't usually worry about that.

Finally, Mary informed to motivate her to be involved, she likes to know what her child is

studying so they can talk about it. "I also want to know how he's doing on a regular basis instead

of waiting until there is a problem to find out he's behind or struggling with something."

Bill

Bill (a parent) was born in Newark, New Jersey, and after attending undergraduate school

in Nashville, Tennessee, moved to Atlanta, Georgia and has been in Georgia ever since. Bill

attended Fisk University and obtained his undergraduate degree in psychology and Atlanta

University (now known as Clark Atlanta University). He later went on to enroll in Cambridge

College to earn his graduate degree in accounting and toping it off with earning his Educational

Specialist Degree in Leadership and Administration. He is certified in special education. Bill

states that "I have twenty years in special education."

In terms of his home life, Bill mentioned that as of June 2017, it will mark 36 years of marriage for him. He states "I have 3 children (a daughter and two sons). I also have 2 grandchildren." Bill continued to express to me more about his children, giving a brief history of them. He articulated that,

My children are products of Fayette County Schools, and they attended college on athletic scholarships (basketball). My daughter is a teacher in Fayette County, my oldest son works from home like my wife (project management, program management), my youngest son is in pharmaceutical sales. All three of my children are also pursuing entrepreneurial endeavors. They came out of Fayette County School System college and career ready. My wife and I were very involved in their education.

When talking about how his parents were involved in his education, Bill said that his mother and father had a long-term influence on his education. They always wanted for his brother and himself to do their best. Bill's mother was a teacher, and his father was a stationary engineer. Bill's parents kept them involved in extracurricular activities, such as piano lessons, dancing, and singing. They traveled and participated in many cultural experiences and encouraged them to be thinkers and problem solvers. His father normally asked Bill's opinion concerning various topics.

When asked about some of the obstacles and motivation concerning parental involvement, he informed me that some of the obstacles that prevent him from being involved in his child's education are his work schedule, and his duties and responsibilities for his younger children. The other responsibilities include extracurricular activities after school, such as sports, tutorials, and church activities. In addition, Bill said that he is trying to get a second job to supplement his income. On the other hand, Bill told me that some of the motivations that

encourage him to be involved is that he believes that the sooner you can impact a child's learning and foundation building, the better their future will be, and it is important to build good habits early so that they can become a natural part of life

Ken

Ken (fifth grade teacher) was born in Clanton, Alabama, and then moved to Atlanta, Georgia to enhance himself personally, professionally, and for more opportunities. He has been living in Georgia for two years now. When I asked Ken about his experience in education along with grades and subjects taught, he said that "I went to Marbury High School in Marbury, Alabama and I received my undergraduate degree in theatre at the University of Alabama at Birmingham in Birmingham, Alabama. I received my master's degree in education at the University of South Florida in Tampa, Florida. I then went on to obtain even more education and successfully received my Education Specialist degree in Curriculum Instruction in Management and Administration from Nova Southeastern University in Fort Lauderdale, Florida. I have my teaching certification from the state of Georgia and Alabama for K-6. Ken has six years of experience as being a teacher. He has taught in elementary all six of those years. He has taught first, third, and fifth grade math, science, social studies, and English language arts.

When Ken explained to me more about his home life and family, he mentioned that he grew up in a small town in Alabama called Marbury and that he is not currently married but in a relationship. Ken stated that he has three siblings, two older brothers and a younger sister. Although he has no children, he has one pet, a dog, and her name is Ari Blue. Prior to working as a teacher, Ken used to be a tutor, counselor, and personal trainer within the YMCA organization in Clanton, Birmingham, and Huntsville, Alabama for a total of eight years.

When I asked Ken about how his parents were involved in his education or were not involved in his education Ken said, "My mother and father had a lasting impact on my education. They always expected for my siblings and I to do our best." His mother finished high school but did not attend college. His father did not go past seventh grade of junior high school. Instead, Ken's father had to work on a farm to help his family. Although Ken's parents did not achieve much, they motivated him to attend college and instilled in him a desire to be successful. Because of this, Ken was the first in his family to complete college and receive a bachelor's degree.

When I asked Ken, "Tell me about how you see parents of students in your homeroom involved in their child's education? And tell how (or if) you see a connection between home-school and family relationship?" His response was, "I would say 80% of the parents are involved. They help with homework, school functions, volunteering." The 80% that are involved are the same parents all the time. Ken informed me that the connection between home-school and family relationship is vital. His articulated that it is very important and parents need to take the time out and have a conversation with their child about school, how their day was, and just how their social life is with peers. The interaction with peers plays a very important role in the development of the child.

When I asked Ken to tell me about the level of parental involvement before/after school and outside school, his reply was so shocking, but it seemed to be a reality. He reported that,

> I think it's a little less than 50%. Outside of school, parents will attend events and different activities. It could be more than just one thing that keeps parents from getting involved, work, sick kids, additional kids that go to different schools. Some parents have to go to events for their other children.

Ken feels as if parents' level of education and knowledge base hinders them. He said that,

> Some parents just don't know what is going on in school. Parents just don't understand
> the homework. Some who don't have the funds for tutoring just tell the students to ask
> their teachers and that is their form of dealing with it.

He feels as if having food at certain events attracts people and will motivate parents to be more involved. "Definitely something that recognizes their child will motivate parents. Most parents will come if their child is receiving something," he stated.   Ken assured that sometimes it can be simple task of the teacher just asking the parent to volunteer that sparks motivation.

> I have had parents that are very involved at the beginning of school because I needed
> more help with different activities. For the most part, parents as long as I "kept them in
> the know about something" that I needed, they were there. After school, it just depends.
> Parents were there to help if it was extracurricular if it involved their child, some but not
> all parents.

Ken's final thoughts were his belief of education. He told me that,

> I believe education is the key to a happy and successful life. Attending college causes one
> to enhance themselves in a way that builds confidence, self-advocacy, and developing
> social awareness among diverse population. Parents must first see and appreciate the
> value of education. It can be the difference between a happy or discontent life.

Lina

Lina (fifth grade teacher) was born in Baltimore, Maryland. She grew up in a low-income area about two blocks away from Johns Hopkins Hospital. In our conversation, Lina stated that,

> My parents moved to the suburb of Reisterstown, Maryland where I went to junior high
> school. My final year of junior high school, my family relocated to Milwaukee,

Wisconsin. While in Milwaukee, I completed junior high school, high school, and college. After a 10-year career as a social worker and the beginning of a career in education, I moved to Atlanta, Georgia.

Lina graduated from Harold S. Vincent High School, which had a large population of students who were bused into the neighborhood from the inner city. She worked for one year after high school and began attending Alverno College, an all-women's Catholic school, from which she received a Bachelor of Arts degree in Psychology and Social Science and a Master of Education in Curriculum and Instruction.

When I asked Lina about her experience in education along with grades and subjects taught, she told me that, "of my 20 years in education, I have taught all academic subjects in 5th grade. In middle grades sixth, seventh, and eighth, I have taught language arts, social studies, and science." Concerning her home life, she made remarks that she will be married 15 years in December and that she has two children and two grandchildren. When questioned about her family, Lina was happy to share that,

My daughter attended all public schools in Milwaukee Wisconsin and is currently a dental assistant in Georgia. My son briefly attended public schools, but is currently attending a private Christian high school. My grandchildren have been homeschooled because of travel abroad and will return to the private and the public school system in Georgia.

When I asked her about how her parents were involved in her education, she said,

My mother, more than my father, played an important role in my academic success. She provided much encouragement for continuing my education. She knows well about the struggles of maintaining educational goals while raising a family. She obtained an

Associate's Degree in Nursing. Unlike my mom, my dad does not have a high school diploma, nor does he have a degree. While he would often provide words of encouragement, he often struggled with understanding the plight of pursuing a degree.

When I asked Lina to tell me about how she sees parents of students in her homeroom involved in their child's education and how (or if) she sees a connection between home-school and family relationship, she reported that,

A lot of them are involved when I contact them about assignments that the students need to do. If the students are below level in certain aspects, I will contact them to let them know and the parents will do what they can to improve their child's level of academics.

She firmly believes that to make the connection between home and school she needs to make contact with the parents and let them know what is going on in school. If they have outside activities, such as dance or football, she tries to go to those activities and participate in those celebrations for the kids. This keeps a healthy connection between home and school and the family relationship.

Before school, she does not have a lot of parental assistance. She claimed that before school contact with parents for her students is minimal and the parents just drop them off. Generally, for the grade level that she is teaching, there are not a lot of before school activities. If it is a club or athletic activity, the parents generally show up for that. During the day, unless it is requested or special activity, then parents do not generally come to campus and maybe because it is an older group of students. Lina has had parents offer to come in if there were things with which she needed assistance. Commonly, it is the same group of parents who want to come in because they have that time frame in the middle of the day available. Even though Lina does not get before school help, if she sends out an email for a need for something tangible, extra tissue,

snacks, or whatever, most of the parents will send things in. Parents are supportive with tangible items, but not necessarily their time.

Lina deliberately stated that she feels as if it is the work schedule of the parents that is the biggest obstacle that would prevent them from being involved. "It is the time frame for when we get out of school and they can't be here at the end of the day is a major obstacle," she stated. She stated that she has a handful of parents who may not be available around dinner time but most of her parents are off of work by 5:30 P.M.; therefore, the majority of them are available for late night activities. They are not always at functions; however, if it is an athletic function they definitely show up, or if food and snacks are being served, but they will not show up if it is a general function, like a writing lesson. She stated,

> If it is for something specific I will have parents come in. Since I have older kids and I am trying to make them a little bit more autonomous, I do not always invite parents to come in and volunteer during the day. Usually, if I have certain parents come in the kids may tend to cling to them. I am real cautious about them volunteering during a class time because I want the kids to be focused during class time especially if it is a new concept. If it's a culminating activity at the end of the unit, I will have parents come in. On a day to day basis during the day, it can sometimes be a distraction for parents to volunteer. I have had parents come in and be speakers if they know more about a concept, for an example the Civil War, I had a parent come in and speak about that. For situations when parents are an expert, I encourage parents to come in and volunteer. I put it out there for parents to know what is available.

Lina's final thoughts that she expressed were about how parent's involvement in their child's academic education is extremely important to their success. She said that she believes it is

important for parents to lead by example and that a child must not only hear that education is important, they must also see that education is important. She ended by saying,

> Parents must have discussions and participate in their child's learning. Often parents feel uncomfortable when they are not fluent in a subject. They are afraid to show their weaknesses and parents must be willing to learn and grow. A child will appreciate their parent's participation and desire to grow with them.

Review of Participants

These brief narratives encompassing the stories of the participants are intended to familiarize the reader with the persons who partook in this inquiry. These biographical drafts do not fully articulate the degree, incongruities, deep challenges, and worthwhile moments intrinsic to each participant, but instead summarize the life force and essence of each story. Chapter 5 will focus on the commonalities surrounding feedback from the participants' interviews and the finding of significant purpose and/or differences among these participants' responses. Table 1 below serves to review the backgrounds of the participants.

Table 1

Summary of Participants

Pseudonym	Demographics	Undergraduate and Graduate Schools	Participant's Role
Beth	Caucasian Female Charlotte, North Carolina	Univ. of NC at Chapel Hill	Parent
Mary	Caucasian Female Abingdon, Virginia	Univ. of Virginia	Parent
Bill	African American Male Newark, New Jersey	Fisk Univ. – Undergrad Clark Atl. Univ.– Grad.	Parent
Ken	African American Male Marbury, Alabama	Univ. of Alabama– Undergrad Univ. of South Florida – Grad.	Teacher
Lina	African American Female Baltimore, Maryland	Alverno College (Milwaukee, Wisconsin)	Teacher

CHAPTER 5

FINDINGS: ESSENTIAL THEMES

Data Analysis

Data analysis is the process of organizing and storing data in light of your
increasingly sophisticated judgments, that is, of the meaning-finding
interpretations that you are learning to make about the shape of your study.
(Glesne, 2011, p. 149)

This study was intended to unfold the lived experience of parents and teachers of fifth

grade students that provided insight into their perspectives on how they view parental

involvement along with school and family collaboration. While examining the perceptions of

parents and teachers regarding their awareness of parental involvement, the inquiry also searches

for ways to improve the home-school relationship through effective parental involvement

methods. The narrative lens of the inquiry delivers a clearer understanding of the participants

that experience the events pertaining to parental involvement and its bearing on student success.

Willing participants that were selected purposefully eventually yielded five stories (three from

parents and two from teachers) which were adequate to triangulate the data.

Essential Themes Encompassing Parental Involvement and Student Success

Participants were interviewed with a protocol based on the primary research question

"What can parent stories tell us about parental involvement that is unobservable by the school,

and its effect on academic success?" Participant accounts concerning parental involvement were

very much associated to components within the theoretical frames of Epstein's *overlapping*

sphere of influence theory.   Essential themes were identified using coding strategies that were

coded to saturation, (to the point where no further inferences could be found) and eventually

three interconnected essential themes turn out to be distinct:

1. Parenting skills and habits employed by parents are important in a child's education and supports student success.

2. Learning at home support skills and habits employed by parents are important in a child's education and supports student success.

3. Communication efforts are effective tools for promoting parental involvement.

Theme 1: Parenting Skills and Habits Employed by Parents Are Important in a

Child's Education and Lends Toward Student Success

The first theme was closely linked to the succeeding theme. It dealt with the ways by which participants assist, support, and demonstrate parental involvement while helping their child achieve academic success, but it was unobserved by the school. While there are two main categories or methods that go unobserved as parents are involved, those two parental involvement types are parenting and learning at home. They seem to be driven by communication. Recognizing these realities were complicated by the fact that participants across the board accepted that they were contributing to their child's education by these means. However, the school, its teachers and administration did not comprehend this responsibility of parental involvement. Without employing parenting skills as a means of being involved in their child's education, participants came to the realization that if they failed to take advantage of such a significant support system, their children became negative statistics among the school population and often lagged behind.

Understanding participants' perceptions of parenting. Since the target of parenting is predicated on helping all families institute home environments to support students, while communicating the story of their parenting experiences, a high percentage of participants conveyed the multi-faceted tasks that they commit themselves to in order to ensure that their child succeeds in school. Many participants mentioned that they did not realize that employing

their parenting skills at home assisted in their child's educational success. Other participants suggested that parents, who are not employing this method as a means of being involved, should do so immediately. Participants were inclined to use the parental involvement strategies employed by their parents with their own children. Participants said that during parenting, they regarded their parenting skills, and the habits of their biological parents, as a major job where they had the most rewarding sense of being involved in their child's education while not being present at the school. This pool of participants suggested that understanding the impact that parenting skills have on student success could bridge the gap between the child, parent, and the home-school relationship. Here, parent concepts of employing parenting skills will be discussed using participant interview data.

Several participants expressed that they never considered their parenting skills or even acknowledged the effectiveness of its impact on student success until they reconsidered the impact of their very own biological parents' skills of parenting in their lives. Mary mentioned that her parents were very active participants in her life. Considering her story, Mary indicated that,

My parents were very involved in my education on a macro scale, but very uninvolved on a micro scale. In other words, they cared very much about my education, made sure I had as many opportunities available to me as possible, and they expected a lot out of me. They expected me to do my best in everything, and that was more important than the letter grade received.

Additionally, as has been stated for Bill, his parents were also supportive and involved in his education. Bill reported that,

My mother and father had a lasting impact on my education. They always expected for my brother and I to do our best. My mother was a teacher, and my father was a stationary engineer. They kept us involved in extracurricular activities, such as piano lessons, dancing, and singing. We traveled and participated in many cultural experiences. My parents encouraged us to be thinkers and problem solvers. My father frequently asked me my opinion regarding various topics. I remember him saying, "Bill, what do you think?"

Another common understanding concerning the positive impact of parenting among participants focused on the conception that when concerned parents hold to a high standard and expectation for their child, it yields a positive outcome. Ken, showed understanding about the concept of the effects of parenting skill on student success when he said,

My mother and father had a lasting impact on my education. They always expected for my siblings and I to do our best. My mother finished high school but didn't attend college. My father did not go past seventh grade of junior high school, instead he had to work on the farm to help his family. My parents may not have achieved much but it motivated me to attend college and the desire to be successful. I was the first in my family to complete college and receive a bachelor's degree.

Lina said,

My mother, more than my father, played an important role in my academic success. She provided much encouragement for continuing my education. She knows well about the struggles of maintaining educational goals while raising a family. She obtained an Associate's Degree in Nursing. Unlike my mom, my dad does not have a high school diploma, nor does he have a degree. While he would often provide words of encouragement, he often struggled with understanding the plight of pursuing a degree.

Beth, Mary, and Bill mentioned an important fact of parenting that speaks volume to the child's nurturing and human growth and development aspect of parental involvement. Their parenting habit reminds me that they are concerned with meeting the basic need of their child and finding ways to support their family by assisting with health and nutrition. It is a part of Abraham Maslow's theory and hierarchy of needs. Maslow's hierarchy of needs is a theory in psychology proposed by Abraham Maslow in his 1943 paper "A Theory of Human Motivation" which are:

- *Physiological needs*: the need for oxygen, food, and water;

- *Safety needs*: When all physiological needs are satisfied and are no longer controlling thoughts and behaviors, the needs for security can become active;

- *Needs of love, affection, and belongingness*: When the needs for safety and for physiological well-being are satisfied, the next class of needs for love, affection, and belongingness can emerge. Maslow states that people seek to overcome feelings of loneliness and alienation. This involves both giving and receiving love, affection, and the sense of belonging;

- *Needs for esteem*: When the first three classes of needs are satisfied, the needs for esteem can become dominant. These involve needs for both self-esteem and for the esteem a person gets from others;

- *Needs for self-actualization***:** When all of the foregoing needs are satisfied, then, and only then are the needs for self-actualization activated. Maslow describes self-actualization as a person's need to be and do that which the person was born to do;

Bill made a powerful comment in relation to this theory of truth. He said,

My role as a parent of a special education scholar is to support the functional academics and functional life skills that are taught at school. It is also my responsibility to inquire and pursue opportunities and programs that will support my child's growth and development. It is also imperative for me to plan for my scholar's future placement after graduation and what quality of life they will experience beyond just educational development, but as a functioning adult with social and emotional needs. The positive relationship that I foster with the school enables me to have access to tools and information that guide me in making the best choices for my scholar.

As a result, I believe responses were in this case even more specific, such as supporting academics and functional life skills and the child's growth and development process. In principle, I discovered that inspecting current social emotional developmental expectations or future levels to be achieved did match how some parents were thinking about their child's growth. Although the questions posed did not ask parents to comment on developmental goals now and for the future, the most common responses instead reflected observations about concrete behavioral or task-oriented indicators.

Figure 5

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs in Relation to Parenting Within the Teaching and Learning Environment

Maslow's Heirarchy: *applying it to the classroom*
adapted from Harkin et al (2001)
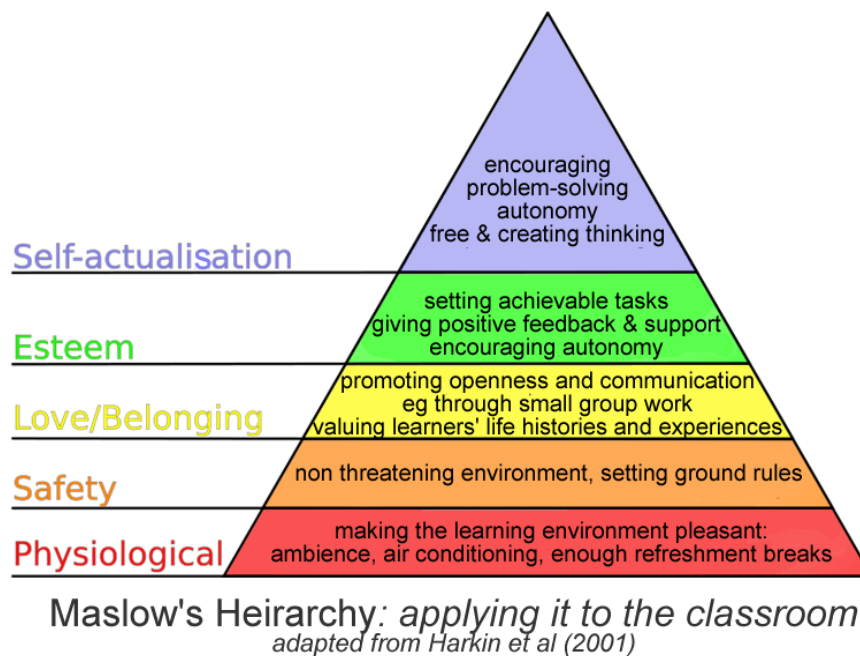
Beth said,

> Before school, our children eat breakfast at home and get a ride to school with either their
>
> dad or me. We do not regularly carpool with another family this year. After school, we
>
> are involved in recreational sports in our community. When they are not at sports
>
> practices, my children are often playing outside with their friends in our neighborhood
>
> until dinner.

Mary echoed, "Sometimes I fix a hot breakfast, sometimes he cooks his own breakfast, and
sometimes he just has a bagel or bowl of cereal." Bill's response was,

> If I don't already have breakfast prepared, my child knows how to prepare a bowl of
>
> cereal and milk, and a piece of fruit. My child can independently go to the bus stop and

wait for the bus. After school, my scholar rides the school bus home, and comes into the house to have a snack until dinner. My child does homework and watches television until it is time for dinner. If I don't inquire about their day, my scholar will not give me any information.

Table 2

Specific Examples of Needs in Both the Home and School Context

Need	Home	School
Self-actualization	Education, religion, hobbies, personal growth	Training, advancement, growth, creativity, placement, grades
Esteem	Approval of family, friends, community	Recognition,
Belongings	Family, friends, clubs	Peers, teachers, clubs, teams, extra-curricular
Safety	Freedom from war, prison, violence	School safety, security
Physiological	Food, water, shelter	Heat, air, basic needs

Note some of the instances, as if "education" are actually satisfiers of the need.

These quotations and surrounding statements share commonalities from the participants' stories to the degree that they suggest that employing parenting skills yields a positive impact on student success and equates to a method of effective parental involvement.

The stories of the participants that understood the employment of parenting skills proved effective as a means of impacting student success and parental involvement conversely, were not all similar. While Mary, Bill, Ken, and Lina told stories of how the positive effect of their

biological parents' parenting skill influencing their educational success, and thus they replicated their parents' behavior in the lives of their children, Beth's story was totally the opposite overall. Beth reported, "My parents were not involved in my education at all. My parents were struggling adults trying to maintain a roof over our head and keep the lights, water and gas on."

Beth further stated that she believes that because of her parents being over-worked, under-paid, not having reliable transportation and limited finances, led to them not being significantly involved in her and her sibling's education. Because of many setbacks and challenges, she can only push her child to obtain what she herself did not obtain educationally. Beth articulated that education is very important to her and being educationally equipped is necessary in today's world to improve one's quality of life.

Four of the five participants advocated that they had a positive understanding of the perception of the impact of employing parenting skills. Even the four who established a more thorough recognition of the benefits of parenting on a child's education and life would soon realize that their habits of employing such skills with their child would prove also to be beneficial long term. In spite of having a different perspective and positionality, one of the five participants did not have a positive understanding of the impact of employing parenting skill due to the fact that her parents were not that involved in her education as a child. Regardless of this single participant's views, her awareness was transformed moving forward.

Theme 2: Learning At-Home Support Skills and Habits Employed by Parents are Important in A Child's Education and Lends Toward Student Success

The secondary emergent essential theme is related to the first. Each of the participants expressed a vivid viewpoint of this theme. Many of the participants felt that once they are given information on skills required for their child to be successful in all subjects at each grade, they

can assist and support this at home. Such material includes homework procedures and how to monitor and talk over schoolwork at home, data on how to help their child improve skills on different class and school assessments, and systematic agenda of homework that necessitates their child to discuss and interact with their families on what they are learning in class. While some participants stressed that calendars with activities for them and their child at home would help, the school has been slack in proving such regularly. The participants voiced that math, science, and reading activities at school are carried over into the household along with summer learning packets or activities, thus keeping parental involvement strong and family's participating in setting student goals each year and in planning for college and/or career readiness.

Understanding participants' perceptions of learning at home. Since the target of learning at home is grounded on the notion of providing information and concepts to families about how to support students at home with homework and other curriculum-related activities, decisions, and planning, the emergent participants' stories from the interviews speaks to this theme. While communicating their stories, the participants revealed that they allocate, support, and help by using coaching strategies to assist their child learn at home. Through teacher commitment and support, parents can better support their children at home with learning. The participants felt that when teachers involved parents in programs that they have arranged like curriculum, co-curriculum, behavior management, and religious events, this opens the door for them to actively participate and gives them more advantage to support learning at home. Teachers should plan more programs as such that involve parents.

Other participants said that they support their child's academics and functional life skills and feel as if that it is their responsibility as it supports the child's growth and development. On the other hand, some participants reported that they assist with extra-curricular activities, core

curriculum subjects, and find it necessary to set expectations for learning at home which includes some non-negotiables. Some participants stated that they help their child when needed but encourage the child to be independent. However, participants stated that they assist their child with math, reading comprehension, socializing skills, graphic arts, art, other core subjects, electives, and discussions on college and career readiness. One participant stressed how she visits the library with her son because he loves books and loves to read. She claimed that the library is within walking distance of their home, and this is a regular activity form the family. An example of learning at home being impactful was seen when Mary reported that,

Many days he has after-school activities (football or soccer, Honors Chorus, Spanish Club, piano lessons) which affect the time he gets home. However, if he has time before dinner, he will practice piano for 30 minutes and do homework. We generally require the kids to practice and do any "pencil and paper" homework before getting on the computer. If everything is done before dinner, that's great! If not, he finishes up after dinner. If it's his week, he helps his dad clean up after dinner. TV and video games during the week are not allowed. My husband breaks the "electronic entertainment fast" on Friday nights with pizza/movie night. However, if my fifth-grader gets everything finished in time on a weeknight, he can research something he's interested in or do extra tests on the computer. We also live a block from the library so he frequently walks there and comes home with an arm full of books. Bedtime is 8pm, and lights out is at 9pm. Between 8 and 9 he can read or listen to music in his room or clean it.

Mary appeared to be a parent who is highly involved in her children's educational and non-educational lives. It is apparent that she and her husband have strong parenting skills and habits to support learning at home. As a result, Mary and her husband's comprehension of the instructional program each year and of what their child is learning in each subject is

strengthened. The parents that I interviewed have observed the trajectory of involvement that they have offered to the school through volunteering and in the lives of their son or daughter from the very beginning of his/her life. Throughout the interview process, I began to comprehend that parents previously had identified the apparent method and approach that they mostly are involved in their sons or daughters' education which seem to be unobserved by the teachers and school and that is through parenting and learning at home.

Bill articulated that, "I try to have a discourse with my scholar 2-3 times per week to have him reflect on his experiences at school, and their impact. However, I sit with my scholar daily to assist with homework." This participant engages in conversations with his child at least two to three times per week concerning school and sits with his child to help with homework. By doing this, he strengthens the communication aspect of parental involvement while bridging the gap between home and school. As I continued to review the data from the participants' stories and from the interview coded data, I discovered that a good percentage of participants engaged in learning at home activities, but it went unnoticed by the school, thus; the parents were looked upon as not involved in their child's education.

Mary said that,

I mostly just look over his shoulder if he's working on a project or if he needs me to show him how to do something on the computer. He doesn't need any help with his daily homework so I usually let him work through that on his own. We talk about grammar, books, math concepts, science concepts, etc., just as part of our everyday interaction, but it's not planned. I do correct grammar on a regular basis as my parents did with me.

Mary supports and helps her child learn at home, but she is more of a facilitator in the process. She seems to offer her assistance to her child when it is needed. She, like Bill, spends some time

communicating with her child to find ways to better assist. She also seeks information on homework policies, and she monitors and discusses schoolwork with her child. Such information on how to assist her child to improve skills on various class, school assessments and homework requires her to have these discussions.

Beth articulated that,

Reid was having trouble with reading comprehension and we worked through some comprehension questions and discussion. I can recognize when he needs a break and we take those as needed when working through a difficult task. I also know that his teachers are better at explaining a concept than I, so I will ask Reid to approach his teachers and tell them that he does not understand the assignment. I try not to do too much hand holding.

While Beth supports her child with learning at home, she shared the same viewpoint as Mary by supporting their child when needed. They gradually release responsibility on the child to take ownership of his/her own learning while they (the parent) act as facilitator. By doing this, Beth and Mary soon realize the awareness of their child as a learner and know how to support, encourage, and help their child at home on a daily basis.

Bill related that,

My child struggles with reading, but he can express himself verbally better than he can read or write. He is slated to take a reading class next school year. I have been doing activities outside of the classroom such as vocabulary building and rhyming to strengthen his language skills.

On the other hand, Bill, unlike Mary and Beth, does not act as the facilitator but instead acts as the tutor. He recognizes his child's area of weakness in learning, comes up with an

intervention plan that supports the child's area of weakness in learning, then supports it by

including outside school and classroom tools to assist the child to ensure success. When

examining learning at home as a type of involvement as defined by Epstein, there are some

positive results that are manifested for parents. Some of them are that parents now begin to gain

knowledge on how to assist, inspire, and support their child at home each year. They also learn

and gain experience on how to have discussions with their child about school, classwork, and

homework while becoming more knowledgeable about the total instructional program and what

their child is learning in each subject.

Ken articulated that, "Some parents just don't know what is going on in school. Parents

just don't understand the homework. Some who don't have the funds for tutoring just tell the

students to ask their teachers and that is their form of dealing with it." Ken believes that because

some parents do not fully know what is going on within their child's school and do not

understand the homework given to the child, they "pass the buck" and push the child off on the

teacher to suffice for their lack of knowledge. While many schools do have before and after

school tutoring often supervised by the child's teacher, parents should find a way and some time

to spend with the child to engage in learning at home regardless. When a parent does not fully

know what is going on their child's school, it boils down to poor communication or lack of

communication between school and home.

Lina, from a very different perspective added that,

Parents must have discussions and participate in their child's learning. Often parents feel

uncomfortable when they are not fluent in a subject. They are afraid to show their

weaknesses and parents must be willing to learn and grow. A child will appreciate their

parent's participation and desire to grow with them.

Lina is inclined to believe that many parents may want to support their child with learning at home, but because of they themselves being very limited in their education may draw back and participate very little or not at all. However, she indicates that parents should still participate regardless because they themselves can learn from the child as well as the child learning from the parent. When the parents participate, the students make gains in skills, abilities, and test scores linked to homework and classwork. In addition, the child's homework completion rate increases while building a positive attitude toward schoolwork. Additionally, the child now begins to see the parents as more similar to teacher and see their home as more similar to school. This then connects home and school collaboration among parent, child, teacher, and school.

All five of the participants supported that they had a positive understanding of the perception of the impact of employing learning at home skills. They all recognized a more systematic respect of the benefits of parents employing learning at home skills to improve their child's education and life. Even though Ken and Lina felt that some parents shy away from this involvement type because of their limited education and some because of not knowing what is going on in the school, all five participants shared the same perspective and positionality and concurred that with better communication between home and school, this involvement type will be even more effective.

Table 3

Learning at Home Context

Challenges	Results for Students	Results for Parents	Results for Teachers
Design and organize a regular schedule of interactive homework that give students responsibility for discussing important things they are learning and helps families stay aware of the content of their children's classwork.	• Gains in skills, abilities, and test scores linked to homework and classwork. • Homework completion • Positive attitude toward schoolwork	• Know how to support, encourage, and help student at home • Discussions of school, classwork, and homework • Understanding of instructional program each year and of what child is learning in each subject • Appreciation of teaching skills and an awareness of child as a learner	• Satisfaction with family involvement and support • Respect for family time. • Recognition of equal helpfulness of single-parent, dual-income, and less formally educated families in motivating and reinforcing student learning
Coordinate family linked homework activities, if students have several teachers.	View of parents as more similar to teacher and of home as more similar to school		
Involve families and their children in all-important curriculum-related decisions.	Self-concept of ability as Learner		

Theme 3: Communication Efforts Are Effective Tools for Keeping Parents Involved While Connecting Home-School Relationships

While the main focus of employing effective communication is to design effective forms of school-to-home and home-to-school communications about school programs and children's progress and the focus of volunteering is to recruit and organize parent help and support, the two go hand and hand with each other. Good communication from schools leads to high percentages

of parents volunteering. As deliberated when re-counting Themes 1 and 2, a favorable number of participants defined that employing parenting skills and learning at home skills with their child has relationship to and is predicated on receiving good communication from the school which prompts them to volunteer. Participant-narrated stories of their own experiences display connections regarding the occurrences of communication and volunteering that seem to confirm this belief. Five types of communication effort that prompt volunteering were described within the group of participants including:

- engaging in face-to-face collaboration among teachers and school;

- receiving and sending telephone calls to the child's teacher and school administrators;

- receiving and sending text messages to the child's teacher and school administrators;

- receiving and sending emails to the child's teacher and school administrators; and

- receiving letters/memos from the child's teacher and school.

Understanding participants' perceptions of communication patterns among parent/student/teacher and school. Although the two preceding themes focused on the nature of parenting and learning at home, instead of the frequency, providing data on the frequency of communication, which in return sparks parents to volunteer, provides a useful context to the nature of the communication. The next section reviews patterns that emerged from parent interviews in terms of their communication with their child, the child's teacher, and the school.

Beth informed that, "I stay in communication with his teachers through texts and emails and I read any materials that come home from school via backpacks or email. I ask him about upcoming homework and tests." It appears that Beth frequency of communication with her child's teacher is on an ongoing basis via texting and emails. She stated that she reads any material that comes home from the school whether it is in her child's book bag or in the form of

email. While there is no indication of whether or not there was a weekly or monthly folder of the student's work sent home for review and comments, nor is there indication of the frequency of the school making connections with the home and parent, there is evidence that this parent frequency level of communication is high. Therefore, I would conclude that Beth communicated on a weekly basis. Beth seemed to be very much concerned about receiving good communication from the school and her child's teacher in order to assist her child at home with schoolwork and to be supportive in his education.

Beth continued to express that,

I like to build strong, positive relationships with my children's teachers and administrators through encouraging them and serving when I am able. By building these relationships, I am comfortable discussing any educational issues that arise with my children and want school officials to know that we are a team educating my children together. I also want my children to see the importance of serving our community, not just being a consumer.

Here we see that while Beth is a parent that reaches out to her child's teachers, administrators, and school to establish a relationship, she takes another step by offering herself to serve when she is able. This is demonstrating her willingness to volunteer which came about via communication. Through building such relationships, Beth is now relaxed to communicate with her child's teachers and administrators about any educational problems her child may be facing. Beth demonstrates that she is mindful in monitoring and being aware of her child's progress and responding effectively to her child's problems. Additionally, Beth shows self-confidence about her ability to work in school and with her child or to take steps to improve her child's education while developing a sense of awareness that families are welcome and valued at school.

Bill stated that,

It is also my responsibility to inquire and pursue opportunities and programs that will support my child's growth and development. The positive relationship that I foster with the school enables me to have access to tools and information that guide me in making the best choices for my scholar.

Bill, like Beth, feels as if by taking the initiative first in reaching out to the school, his child's teachers and in building positive relationships, he would then gain access to more opportunities for his child to be successful educationally. He feels that way because his mindset is that the school and teachers hold the tools and information that he needs to use with his child to ensure the success. Bill feels as if it is his responsibility to inquire and seek out opportunities and programs to support his child's growth and development. From his response, he is communicating with the school and teachers possibly through face-to-face collaboration.

Mary stated that, "The biggest obstacle is communication between the school and home? I don't always know what is going on or what projects Jordan may be working on or the deadlines for completion." Mary feels as if the biggest obstacle that prevents parents from being involved is lack of communication between the school and home. She blames the school for not being consistent with communicating with the parents at home altogether. In the data collected in her interview, she also mentioned that her son's school began the school year with sending an agenda home with information concerning school happenings and her child's homework, etc., and suddenly it all stopped. She is referring to this inconsistency. As a result of the school not being consistent with the dissemination of information, many parents are left in the dark concerning opportunities for their child, volunteering opportunities, and other pertinent information.

Mary continued to share that,

I like to know what he's studying so we can talk about it. I also want to know how he's

doing on a regular basis instead of waiting until there is a problem to find out he's behind

or struggling with something. I also don't want him to coast, and knowing what he's

doing helps me to ensure that he's not. There are times when he could, but I don't want

him to.

Mary stresses that she desires more collaboration from her child's school and teachers so that she

can be supportive of her child and communicate with her child. She infers that the only time she

receives communication is when there is a problem with her child lagging behind. While parents

do need to know when their child is falling behind, this should not be the only time and reason

when communications are sent to them. When this technique is used, many parents are not so

readily apt to volunteer. At some point, positive communications need to be sent to parents

reaching out to them stressing something positive about the child.

Ken on the other hand stated that,

The connection between home-school and family relationship is vital. It's simple, parents

need to take the time out and have a conversation with their child about school, how their

day was, and just how their social life is with peers. The interaction with peers plays a

very important role in the development of the child. There are some parents who do not

know what is going on with their student's school life, outside of their home life, some

could care less about what their kid is up to.

Ken reveals that while linking home and school is important, parents should reach out

and first communicate with their child face-to-face about school and their social life with their

peers. Ken feels as if many parents are not knowledgeable of exactly what is going on in their

child's school life and can be just by having conversations with their child. He suggests that those parents who do not do this just do not care.

Lina said that,

A lot of them are involved when I contact them about assignments that the students need to do. If the students are below level in certain aspects, I will contact them to let them know and the parents will do what they can improve that level of academics.

Lina's parents get involved and volunteer when she communicates with them about their child's assignment. When she communicates with the parents, they then become proactive and supportive of their child's learning, and subsequently volunteer. Lina has confidence that in order to make the connection between home and school, she needs to make contact with the parents and let them know what is going on in school.

Parents in high-level communication contact. As for those participants that communicated rather frequently with their child's teacher and school, the question developed: What was the nature of the communication? For the three participants who were in frequent contact with their child's teacher and school (7, 5 and 2 times a week), texting, emailing and face-to-face resulted in approximately half of the mode of communication contact. When I inquired about the nature of these communication contacts, all three parents confirmed that the subjects were usually problems the child exhibited or simply updating about some activity or program they are required to attend. All three parents agreed that no significant communication happened via text, and that more noteworthy communication transpired via face-to-face conversations or phone calls that typically occurred either once or maybe twice a day.

Parents grouped as either high or low communication contact. The amount of parental communication with the child, child's teacher, and school has been on a steady rise. A wave of parental communication really began to happen after 2005, when cell phones and their

supplementary texting plans became universal (Hofer & Moore, 2010). Recent studies

determined that parents are communicating over 13 times a week, especially when texting;

Skype, Facebook, and email are added in with phone conversations (Hofer & Moore, 2010).

While parents met or even exceeded this number (the most communicative parent estimated

communicating between 5 to 2 times per week), many parents communicated with their child's

teacher and school once a week or less. In my inquiry, I discovered that the regular extent of

parental communication among teacher and school was about 8 times per week, but I do not

believe that this statistic actually tells the whole story. In my inquiry, parents appear to end up

into two classifications: (1) those that initiated communication on a daily basis, and (2) those that

went at least a week or several weeks before communicating.   For the one parent that

communicated more frequently with their child's teacher and school, the communication

averaged around 5 times per week. For the remaining two that communicated less frequently,

the average was five times per every other week, with two of three parents going several weeks

at a time without communicating with their child's teacher and school. With both groups, I

established that the individual responsible for initiating the communication was basically

divided, with parents initiating the communication half the time and the other half the time the

teachers and school reaching out.

Table 4

Participants' Communication Patterns and Frequencies

Pseudonym	Type of Communication	Frequency
Beth	Texts, emails, face-to-face, notes from school	Weekly
Bill	Face-to-face	Every other week
Mary	Face-to-face, telephone	Every other week
Ken	Face-to-face	Every other week
Lina	Telephone call, face-to-face, email	Every other week

Conversely, not all variances in parental and teacher communication patterns were due to what parents and teachers observed were necessities of the student. Many communication patterns were predicated on the personality of the parent and teacher and the style of communication that appeared to be most effective to parents and teachers in obtaining desired results.

CHAPTER 6

DISCUSSION AND RESEARCH SUGGESTIONS

This study was proposed to shed light on parents' and teachers' lived experience concerning their perspective of parental involvement. Through a narrative lens, the inquiry provides a clear comprehension of the participant's experience pertaining to parental involvement. Through purposeful sampling, a willing pool of participants eventually generated five stories, which were satisfactory enough to triangulate and horizontalize an essential underlying structure of meaning (Colaizzi, 1978; Creswell, 2002).

Review of Emergent Essential Themes

Because of purposefully selecting participants for the inquiry, interviews were conducted and transcribed. Noteworthy accounts were coded, clustered, and absorbed into three essential themes that show:

1. Parenting skills and the habits employed by parents are important in a child's education and lends toward student success;

2. Learning at home support skill and habits employed by parents are important in a child's education and lends toward student success;

3. Communication efforts are effective tools for keeping parents involved while connecting home-school relationships.

Because there is an interconnection of the first two themes, discussion and connection to literature will be addressed for both simultaneously. In the final discussion, the third theme stands on its own.

The first and second themes - a) Parenting skills and the habits employed by parents are important in a child's education and lends toward student success; b) Learning at home support skill and habits employed by parents are important in a child's education and lends towards student success; – are extremely interconnected. Because of this interconnected nature, it is practical to discuss both at the same time. Below, both themes will be reviewed and a discussion with relations to relevant literature will follow.

Themes 1 and 2

The core of the first theme - *that parenting skills and habits employed by parents are important in a child's education and lends toward student success* - is represented in participant responses of the positive impact of their biological parents parenting skills and habits in their lives and it having an effect on how they themselves employed parenting skills and habits in their child's life is manifested throughout their stories. In essence, each of the participants in the inquiry had very similar viewpoints about raising and parenting millennial children. The same beliefs revealed itself in relation to the role of these parents in the lives of their millennial child. The mannerisms of those in the millennial generation are often an inquiry in contradictions. Even the influential book on the group, *Millennials Rising*, refer to the generation as both "optimistic" and "team-oriented" as well as "sheltered' and "entitled" (Howe & Strauss, 2000). There is consensus among several researchers about the increasing role of parents in the lives of millennials (Carney-Hall, 2008; Hofer & Moore, 2010; Savage, 2008; Taub, 2008). Nevertheless, there are two varied viewpoints as to the influence of this involvement. Many inquires spotlight the significance of a secure parental "attachment" on positive outcomes in school, such as academic success, self-esteem, and social growth, and development.

The second emergent theme - *Learning at home support skill and habits employed by parents are important in a child's education and lends towards student success* - is exemplified

by participant narratives surrounding their willingness to seek out information and ideas about how to help their child or children at home with homework and other curriculum-related activities. All participants identified an unwavering, positive impact of applying and supporting learning at home skills to increase student success. The participants in the inquiry also articulated that when parents employ learning at home tactics and habits, it can be one of the best ways that any parent can become involved in their child's education.

Connections between Themes 1 and 2. The understanding is that most parents are likely to be engaged in *parenting* habits while automaticall*y* operating in *learning at home* methods simultaneously and unconsciously. Hence, it is normally predicated on how their own personal experience with their biological parents impacted their belief system concerning education, and is therefore, carried over into their child's life. Furthermore, not being able to get involved in any other way due to lack of transportation, lack of financial resources, and work schedules, many parents quickly find themselves engaging in *parenting* and *learning at home* as the only way to get involved in their child's education.

While some parenting styles can be classified as either authoritative, authoritarian, or passive, they have different impact on the child. The authoritative parenting style is distinguished by parents showing a high degree of warmth and autonomy-granting to the child. Authoritative parents respond rapidly to the necessities of their children and are demanding in that they set targets/standards for the children. The rationale for these parents setting clear standards for their children is to encourage the child to be independent and develop an open communication between the child and parents. "Authoritative parents instill academic and social competence by helping children balance the need for autonomous, active thinking with other-oriented, rule-following tendencies" (Walker, 2008, p. 221). The authoritarian parenting style is distinguished

by the amount of control the parent has, but the parents show a low degree in warmth toward the child. This parenting style is categorized by a high degree of demandingness and little receptiveness by the parents to the necessities of the child. The expectation among these parents is that rules are followed without question. Maccoby and Martin reported that "this parenting type scores high on measures of maturity demands and control but low on measures of responsiveness, warmth, and bidirectional communication" (as cited in Spera, 2005, p. 134). The permissive parenting style is distinguished by high degrees of warmth displayed by the parents but a lack of control toward the child. This parenting style is categorized as being more receptive to the necessities of the child but less demanding. While permissive parents are extremely lenient and tolerant of the compulsions of the child, they rarely demand mature behavior of the child and allow high degrees of self-regulation. Maccoby and Martin articulated "these parents' score moderately high on measures of responsiveness and low on measures of maturity demands and control" (as cited in Spera, 2005, p. 135).

As was repeatedly seen throughout participant narratives, even though a parent's role in their child's learning develops as the child grow, one thing remains constant: parents are their child's learning models. Parents' perceptions about education can inspire the child and show them how to take charge of their own educational journey. It is a fact that parents are their children's first teachers — visiting the library together, reading together, enjoying extra-curricular activities together, and watching movies together. However, the parent's job is to show the child how school can extend the learning they started together *at home,* and how stimulating and important this learning can be, when the child begins formal school. As preschoolers mature into school age scholars, parents become their children's learning coaches. Through guidance

and reminders, parents help their child prioritize their time and assist their desires to learn new things in and out of school.

Pratt, Green, MacVicar, and Bountrogianni (as cited in Walker, 2008) found parents' efforts to assist children's comprehension of core subject tasks to be more effective in authoritative than non-authoritative contexts. Hokodan and Fincham (as cited in Walker, 2008) found that children whose parents provided reinforcement and support at home and were authoritative during problem-solving activities validated more interest and confidence, persisted longer, and had higher rates of task completion than did children whose parents used a controlling, authoritarian teaching stance. "Appropriate autonomy support (i.e., maturity demands) offers children opportunities for independent practice with concepts and procedures" (Grolnick et al., as cited in Walker, 2008, p. 221). Parental effects and specific parenting styles have been connected to autonomy development in children. As previously stated, authoritative parents are high in supporting autonomy of their children

Theme 3

The third emergent theme - *Communication efforts are effective tools for keeping parents involved while connecting home-school relationships* - is illustrated by a comparison of participant stories. Many of the participants stressed that the more that parents and teachers share relevant information about students, they become more readily prepared to *volunteer* help to those students in order for them to become successful. In addition, a climate for maximum realization of a student's potential is created when these parents and teachers consult and communicate. Effective communication with families means that the school welcomes and consistently supports families to support their children. When there is two-way communication among the school and parent concerning school programs and children's progress, the ending

result will be better outcomes for students. When teachers and parents dialogue together, two-way communication happens. Effective dialogue "develops out of a growing trust, a mutuality of concern, and an appreciation of contrasting perspectives" (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 2004). The parent-teacher conference is another traditional occasion for dialogue . Effective parent-teacher conferences are an opportunity to create a successful partnership, but they may be anxiety provoking for both teachers and parents alike (Minke & Anderson, 2003). Regrettably, many teachers are not specifically trained in the skills they need to communicate effectively with parents (Lawrence-Lightfoot, 2004). Because school communication practices are so fundamental to involving families in the education process, Caspe (2003) suggests that teacher preparation and professional development programs should actively promote the development of communication skills for teachers.

Another commonly used written communication technique is school-to-home notebooks. To share information with parents, many teachers use daily communication books particularly for children who have special learning needs. Several authors propose strategies to enhance the effectiveness of communication books (Davern, 2004). Finally, Davern (2004) notes that it is important to consider when a face-to-face meeting is more appropriate than a written exchange, depending on the issue. In fact, use of the internet can serve as an "interactive tool for individualizing homework and supporting the involvement of families in the homework process" (Salend, Duhaney, Anderson, & Gottschalk, 2004, p. 65). They realized a homework website can begin with a straightforward layout offering basic information to parents and students, and progressively increase in complexity to create electronic assignment logs and individualized homework modifications for students, integrating appropriate password protection.

A lot of of the participants' communication patterns were based on their persona and the style of communication that seemed most advantageous at the time to accomplish desired results. A remarkable development that transpired throughout the interviews was the difference in the communication style of the parent between child, teacher, and school administrators. Throughout the interview process, it was noticeable that all participating parents in the inquiry had at least one other son or daughter. As I explored for data about the frequency, substance and style of communication among their other children, parents often reflected on their level of communication by comparing it to their other children, their teachers, and school. In each case, the parent defined the communication pattern as something that had developed over time and was appropriate to what they felt were the necessities of the specific child.

Conclusion

Through a qualitative approach with narrative lenses, this inquiry discovered how five participants perceived the impact of parental involvement on student success from the perspective of parents and teachers. Essential themes proposed that employing parenting skills, learning at home skills*,* and communication methods are important in a child's education and lends toward student success. In addition, the participants' stories gave rich text that led toward and guided the three emerging themes. As a result, this inquiry offered acknowledgement of several thought-provoking relationships regarding not only the importance of the substance within the participants' stories, but the connection of the data which was revealed thus formulating the three themes. Essentially, authoritarian, authoritative, and passive parenting habits and styles were identified as a guiding gauge of how parents engaging with that style got results from their child concerning schooling (see pg. 123). Beforehand I concurred that the authoritarian style of parenting would have been global, and that seemingly over-involved parents would shadow the same method with their children. However, other parents assisted me

in realizing that, rather than a global approach to parenting, these relationships are further thoughtful of an understanding of the needs of their specific child.

As a result of this inquiry, it is my hope that readers will come away with clearer comprehension and more knowledge of how parents and teachers views on parental involvement and strategies used as indicated through their stories. Several noteworthy recommendations for further study are underscored below.

Recommendation for Education

Though qualitative examinations are not specifically designed to yield generalizable data in the manner that quantitative studies might (Creswell, 2009; Lichtman, 2006), some recommendations are warranted due to the consistency of the themes that emerged in this research. Data were triangulated and horizontalized and yielded several common perceptions and experiences between the participants. As a result, researchers and educators should not overlook these findings and themes, but continue to explore areas of parental involvement to add to the knowledge base and inform practice should not. Below are practical recommendations for teachers, school administrators, and parents.

Recommendations for Practice

Results showed that participants in this inquiry share similar perceptions but also have varied perceptions regarding effective parental involvement. With pronounced attention on student success and research suggesting that parental involvement influences student achievement, the significance of parental involvement should not go unrecognized. As educators across the country continue to strive for academic success for all students, it may be advantageous to school officials and researchers to give attention to approaches that could

strengthen parental involvement and improve communication. The following recommendations are offered to school administrators and stakeholders.

Parents and teachers in this study strongly articulated that communication was one of the most important types of involvement. Epstein et al. (2009) state, "Two-way communications increase understanding and cooperation between school and home and show students that their teachers and parents are in contact to help them succeed in school" (p. 58). School leaders and educationalists may find that frequent communication among home and school may be helpful. To guarantee effective communication between the home and school, numerous approaches such as conferences with families, PTA meetings, and weekly folders of student work, handbooks, emails, newsletters, phone trees, and websites may be employed. Although these are just a few example of means to encourage communication between the home and school, it is critical to cultivate two-way communication with all parents throughout the year, not just with the parents of struggling students.

It is very important to make further efforts to ensure opportunities for all parents to be involved in their child's education. School officials should provide numerous opportunities for parents to become involved in ways that are not confined to in-person participation at the school during school hours. This includes online activities and engagement, involvement through social media, and in-home family activities to support the school-home connection.

It is recommended that schools build effective community partnerships that continually develop, implement, evaluate, and improve school-based parental involvement plans. These plans should support practices that encourage family and community

involvement in multiple ways. School officials should be creative in using resources to develop protocols to build the capacity of individuals who are specifically charged with parental involvement efforts. These individuals may be paid employees or volunteers, but their goal should be to work with school leaders to implement effective methods and strategies to increase parental involvement. These individuals can also support parents by being a school liaison by assisting parent with a variety of issues to help parents better understand school functions.

Recommendation for Teachers and School Administration

Participant stories suggest that teachers and administrators are usually aware that they are involved in the educational success of children and that there is not a strong academic connection among students, parents, teachers, and home school due to communication infrequencies. Participants said that through *parenting*, *learning at home* and *communication* initiated on their part, they are involved but teachers and school officials do not notice it.

Encourage and support parents who prefer to help at home. Teachers and school officials might better serve parents and students by first identifying, encouraging, and supporting parents who prefer to help at home. Schools, along with its teachers and administrators, should organize programs that spark parental involvement while acknowledging and exemplifying respect for parents who choose to assist their child at home and in the community. They should also find ways to offer such parents information that would be helpful in giving quality support for their children at home. Teachers and principals may give thought to leveraging programs that unify parents and children into the school, while greeting parents with a welcoming, positive environment that makes them feel comfortable to seek more information if they need it. While it may be crucial to practice caution to avoid creating feelings of guilt among parents who may not be able to volunteer for different of reasons (e.g., time, other family responsibilities, etc.),

thought should be given to inviting the parents' participation in ways that demonstrate respect for their preferences.

Teachers and principals should offer training sessions for parents on how to assist their child with homework. Open school computer labs or libraries can provide parents with access to blogs, teacher web sites, learning software, the Internet, and social media, all of which parents may not have access to at home. Finally, organizing remedial sessions and homework sessions for students in neighborhoods within the school's boundaries (i.e. libraries and community centers) and assigning homework in a way that inspires parents to be readily engaged with their child's homework. When applicable, teachers should ensure that parents have access to weekly folders with graded work so they can monitor their child's progress and pinpoint areas in which they need assistance.

Design communications to acknowledge and anticipate the different informational needs of distinctly different types of parents. Teachers and school officials should lever different communiqué methods to reach, recognize, and show respect for the preferences of different parents in order to meet their individual informational needs. The recognition that at least three distinct groups of parents exist (authoritative, authoritarian, and passive) makes it necessary to periodically tailor communications to individual parent groups. Communiqués should be crafted to speak directly to a particular sect, this can improve the impact and effectiveness of the communication by demonstrating knowledge of the audience and respect for their preferences. For example, parents who mostly assist at home may be interested in communications to help them in supporting their children at home or through community events. Parents who are interested in volunteering will want to know about upcoming events and the requirements for volunteering. As a result, teachers should communicate these types of activities with parents.

Participants agreed that more communication was needed from the teachers and school officials. Most participants in the study believed that communication on the school's part was limited and did not take into consideration the entire student population and their parents, resulting in a perception of poor home-school relationships. Considering this, teachers and administrators should cultivate and use a home-to-school/school-to-home communication system, employing approaches that thrive best for specific parents and teachers. (Telephone calls, email, U.S. mail, communication notebooks, face-to-face meetings). Personnel should make certain that parent contact information is up to date to ensure accurate delivery. Teachers should encourage systematic use of school and classroom newsletters, web pages, blog, and monthly calendar of events. I recommend that school-based materials and information should be offered in other languages for parents of English Language Learners (ELL) and English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) students. I also recommend sending memos and letters to parents or offer information online while following up with personal contact to ensure effective communication. Home visits by special educators and administration are recommended, where appropriate. These visits add an interpersonal dynamic and may help parents feel a sense of belonging.

Recommendations for School Officials

Partner and collaborate with parents. The most frequent commendation resulting from this inquiry is to recognize the critical role parents play in the success of their child. While many schools and school systems have committed to the increasing in parental advocacy over the last decade, much of the change was to relieve apprehensions of parents as consumer. The creation of parent resource centers within many public schools shows that schools and school systems identify parents as an important stakeholder. (Noel-Levitz, 2010; Savage & Petree, 2011).

However, a paradigm shift is needed to begin identifying parents as key partners for driving their child's learning process while in school. Because of my interviews, it is apparent that participants want to be involved and welcome more involvement from the school officials. Participants would like to get more communication from the school so they can become more involved.

School administrators should seek creative ways to provide teachers more time to engage parents. Examples of this creativity could be reducing class size, increasing planning time, and providing incentives to teachers with high parental involvement. All of these strategies could support teacher efforts to communicate with and engage parents. I recommend that schools recognize parents as invaluable stakeholders who are needed and should be included in the decision-making process, school governance councils, school improvement plans, and be embedded in nearly all aspects of school. School officials must understand that parents are part of the child's growth and development process beginning at the inception of the child's schooling, throughout the entire schooling experience, and even after they graduate. In order to construct this partnership, school officials must recognize the parental role and communicate with parents that a partnership is necessary to produce learning environments that allow students to develop the skills they will need to graduate and be college and career ready.

Recommendation for Parents

Develop a pathway for your child's personal development. A rewarding recommendation for parents is to develop a pathway for their child's personal growth and development. While all children possess the ability to succeed in school and in life, therefore; parent, family member, and caregiver should help to make this possible. Because of this, now the question becomes how can parents help their children succeed? The answer stems from a mixture of common sense and research about how children learn and how to prepare them to learn.

While children have a high level of trust in the opinions of their parents throughout their schooling, parents should use this existing relationship to collaborate with their child and school officials in order to develop attainable goals for their child to ensure educational success (Laughlin & Creamer, 2007). Parents will need guidance to be effective in this collaboration. Parents should understand that they are their child's first and most important teacher and it is imperative that they build and maintain strong connections with school officials. When parents along with families are involved in their children's schools; the children do better and have better feelings about going to school. Parents assist their children to succeed by working with teachers to ensure that they offer curricula and use teaching approaches that are scientifically based on best practices.

A good example of a developed pathway for a child by a parent could provide information concerning things that the parent can do at home to contribute to their child's school success. These could include activities that the parent can use to help the child gain the skills to succeed in school as well as answers to frequently-asked questions on how to work with teachers and peers, and instructions on how to help the child with test taking strategies. Because of developing pathways, parents are more likely to provide direct advice to their child in navigating difficult personal interactions. Assisting parents in understanding the resources readily available at school and how to coach their child through a situation will generate valued partners in supporting their very own child and other students. This pathway may also highlight when the school considers parents should take a more active role in supporting their child, such as when they suspect their health may be impacted or if they are making unsafe personal choices that put them at significant risk.

Ethnic background of the parent and child. One variable that appeared to be linked to

the type of relationship that is developed between parents, teachers, and school administrators is

the accepted ethnic background of the parent and child. This study did not investigate the ethnic

background of the parents and child. There were not any occasions where ethnic implications

played a large part in how the parents described interacting with their child. However, some

parents stressed an understanding of the importance ethnicity/culture bares on a family.

Preference exists for the influence of race or ethnic group/culture on the norms for interaction

with parents (Hofer, 2010; Melendez & Melendez, 2010; Torres & Hernandez, 2007). Yet, it

appeared in my interviews that the ethnicity factor of the importance of the family might be even

more distinct. In reality, it is probable that had I included race on the parent questionnaire and

used the typical categories (Caucasian, Hispanic, Blacks, etc.) two parent interviewees would

have identified as "Caucasian" and the other one parent as "African-American." All the same,

the Asian and Hispanic cultural influences were at least somewhat informing my participants'

viewpoints on family. To understand this interaction, I recommend that additional studies survey

dynamics that form the self-described cultural background of parents and how these dynamics

contribute to the outlook concerning the role of family as a support system. Many aspects could

inform this self-described family culture, including national, regional, and community norms,

cultural traditions, religious beliefs, and the parent's very own lived experience in his or her own

upbringing, among others.

Recommendation for Further Research

While research suggests that parental involvement positively impacts student success

and it has been documented at the local, state, and national levels, parents and educators

need to have a greater comprehension of what effective parental involvement looks like. As

this inquiry indicated, communication is important between the home and school; however, effective communication is difficult to reach. As school officials work to improve parental involvement, they may refer to studies such as this to increase their understanding of the perceptions among parents and teachers regarding effective parental involvement. To assist with this obstacle, research needs to be expanded to develop the understanding of parental involvement for all families. Recommendations for future research include but are not limited to, the following:

1. A comparable inquiry employing the same interview protocol including parents and teachers of middle and high school students should be conducted to provide a well-rounded understanding of parental involvement in educating children.

2. Although this study was restricted to data from one County School System in North Georgia, it could be more developed by including multiple districts to gain broader data on the perceptions of parents and teachers regarding parental involvement.

3. While this study only focused on qualitative data with a narrative approach, a quantitative inquiry applying a mixed-methods approach could prove to be advantageous in providing a more in-depth understanding of effective parental involvement in educating children. A study that includes surveys of administrators, teachers, parents, and students could provide a clearer view of parental involvement.

4. While this study concentrated on parents' and teachers' perceptions of effective parental involvement, further studies should be conducted to investigate the perceptions of school systems and districts on parental involvement.

5. With the many types of parental involvement, it would be constructive to examine which specific involvement type has more impact on student learning and development, therefore; a similar study should be carried out to examine how different types of involvement relate to specific student outcomes.

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APPENDIX A

INTERVIEW PROTOCOLS

PARENT INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

1. What is your role in your child's education? And how is your role connected to home-school and family relationship?
2. Tell me about your child's day before and after school?
3. Tell me about some of the obstacles that prevent you from being involved in your child's education?
4. Tell me about some of the motivations that encourage you to be involved?
5. How often do you work with your child outside of school, and explain how?
6. Tell me about what your child likes about this school and the classes?
7. Tell me about times when you had to help your child in a subject that they were failing? Explain how you helped them to improve and succeed.
8. When you talk to your child about school and education, what do some of those conversations typically sound like?

TEACHER INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

1. Tell me about how you see parents of students in your homeroom involved in their child's education? And tell how (or if) you see a connection between home-school and family relationship?
2. Tell me about the level of parental involvement before and after school in your classroom and school building?
3. Tell me about some of the obstacles that you see prevent parents from being involved in their child's education?
4. Tell me about some of the motivations that you believe encourage parents to be involved?
5. How often do you have parents to volunteer and assist you with inside and outside of school events, and explain how?

APPENDIX B

PARTICIPANT RECRUITMENT LETTER

February 7, 2017

Dear Parent/Guardian and Teachers:

I am a doctoral student at Kennesaw State University in the Teacher Leadership Program. As part of the requirement for completing the doctoral program, I am currently conducting a research study about the perceptions of parent, teachers, and students regarding effective parental involvement activities. You have been *purposefully selected* to participate in this study, and I need you help!

Participation in this research study is voluntary. You may refuse to participate. Although your right and privacy will be maintained, the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services, the KSU IRB (for non-medical research), and the committee members from the KSU Teacher Leadership department assigned to this research study have access to the study records.

If you are willing to participate, please be willing to meet at a scheduled interview time. Please take time to inform me of a good time to meet with you to conduct the interview. You will be asked to sign a consent form at the interview by May 17th, 2017.

I appreciate your time and your willingness to participate in this study. If you have any research-related questions or problems, you may contact me at (678)216-5454.

Sincerely,

Audric C. Newchurch
Doctoral Student
Kennesaw State University

APPENDIX C

PARTICIPANT SCHEDULING FORM

Contact Info

- Name: (open field)
- Email Address: (open field)
- Phone Number: (open field)

Sex (choices)

- Would prefer not to answer
- Male
- Female

Race/Ethnicity (choices)

- Would prefer not to answer
- American Indian or Alaskan Native
- Asian
- Black or African-American
- From multiple races
- Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander
- White

Please select the description which most closely applies to you. (choices)

- I am a parent holding a no high school diploma
- I am a parent holding only a GED or high school diploma
- I am a parent holding a Bachelor's
- I am a parent holding a Master's Degree
- I am a parent holding a Specialist Degree
- I am a parent holding a Doctoral Degree
- none of these apply to me

Please select the description which most closely applies to you. (choices)

- I am a teacher holding a Bachelor's
- I am a teacher holding a Master's Degree
- I am a teacher holding a Specialist Degree
- I am a teacher holding a Doctoral Degree

APPENDIX D

INFORMED CONSENT

Title of Research Study: The Impact of Parental Involvement on Student Success: School and Family Partnership from the Perspective of Parents and Teachers

Researcher's Contact Information: Audric Newchurch, 678-216-5454, audric.newchurch@clayton.k12.ga.us   **Faculty advisor:** Dr. Arvin Johnson
 Assistant Professor
 Kennesaw State University
 Bagwell College of Education
 Department of Educational Leadership
 Telephone: (470) 578-3354

Introduction

You are being invited to take part in a research study conducted by {**Mr. Audric Newchurch**} of Kennesaw State University. Before you decide to participate in this study, you should read this form and ask questions about anything that you do not understand.

Description of Project

The purpose of this study is to examine the perceptions of parents and teachers of 5th grade students regarding their awareness of parental involvement and search for ways to improve home-school relationship through effective parental involvement. Additionally, the study strives to identify effective ways that families and schools can build strong partnership, and discover exactly what the school's role is in developing a collaborative partnership based on Epstein's six typologies of parental involvement, but will focus on the two of the six typologies in Epstein's framework that tend to go unnoticed by many and are worthiest to be employed and recognized. Those two are parenting and learning at home.

Explanation of Procedures

The participants will be asked to participate in interview sessions 30 minutes in duration in order for the interviewer to collect data on their perception of parental involvement. Interviews with participants will be executed using "tell me" prompts to encourage a rich thick description of the issue. Each interview will consist of open-ended questions from the interview protocol (see attachment). Interviews will be recorded, transcribed and stored in a locked file.

Follow-up questions will be asked if needed to better understand the perceptions and attitudes about the issue. The parent and teacher participants within this study will be asked to do two things: first, to sign a consent form expressing their agreement to participate in the interviewing process and, second, to participate in interviews sessions about their experiences involving parental involvement that will be digitally recorded at the school. Each parent would participate in one interview regarding their child's experience from the parental perspective and the teacher will be interviewed (one interview per student/parent pairing).

Our conversations will include topics such as how to help their children with homework, how to be involved in their child's educational process, how to provide support to the child's school, family, and home-school life and how to increase parental involvement across the board.

Time Required

It would require thirty minutes for each interview. There will be three parents being interviewed and two teachers. Therefore, to complete the assigned task, thirty minutes' times five amounts to two and a half hours.

Risks or Discomforts

I do not anticipate any risk associated with this research, but if there is any risk there is minimal physiological risk to the parents and teachers that might reasonably be expected to happen. The participants will not experience any harm.

Benefits

Although there will be no direct benefits to the participants for taking part in the study, the researcher may learn more about effective ways that families and schools can build strong partnership through parental involvement, and discover exactly what the school's role is in developing a collaborative partnership. The benefit to humankind is evident in the possible growth of the educational system in relation to building a stronger school-home relationship between schools, parents, and families.

Compensation

The participants will not receive any compensation or credit for taking part in the study.

Confidentiality

The results of this participation will be to ensure the anonymity and confidentiality of the parents and teachers, their names will not be used in the process, instead factitious name will use. Participants will be allowed to make-up their own factitious name. All data will be secured in a locked filing cabinet in a secure location while study is underway. Participants are protected from the potentially harmful future use of the data collected in this research by being allowed to use factious names to hide their true identity. To prevent harmful future use of the data, the parents, teachers and school name will be omitted from the study.

Inclusion Criteria for Participation

The age of intended participants are as follows: 30-50 Parents, 32-45 for teachers =Number: 5

Signed Consent

I agree and give my consent to participate in this research project. I understand that participation is voluntary and that I may withdraw my consent at any time without penalty.

_____

Signature of Participant or Authorized Representative, Date

_____

Signature of Investigator, Date

_____

PLEASE SIGN BOTH COPIES OF THIS FORM, KEEP ONE AND RETURN THE OTHER TO THE
INVESTIGATOR

Research at Kennesaw State University that involves human participants is carried out under the oversight
of an Institutional Review Board. Questions or problems regarding these activities should be addressed to
the Institutional Review Board, Kennesaw State University, 585 Cobb Avenue, KH3403, Kennesaw, GA
30144-5591, (470) 578-2268.

APPENDIX E

IRB APPROVALS

From: irb@kennesaw.edu <irb@kennesaw.edu>
Sent: Wednesday, September 27, 2017 9:48 AM
To: newchurch@fultonschools.org
Cc: irb; Arvin Johnson
Subject: Study 17-482: The Impact of Parental Involvement on Student Success: School and Family Partnership from the Perspective of Parents and Teachers

9/27/2017

Audric Newchurch

RE: Your Progress Report dated 3/27/2017, Study number 17-482: The Impact of Parental Involvement on Student Success: School and Family Partnership from the Perspective of Parents and Teachers

Dear Mr. Newchurch,

I have reviewed your application for revision of the study listed above. The requested revision involves a change to the study title. Your request is eligible for expedited review under FDA and DHHS (OHRP) regulations.

This is to confirm that I have approved your request for revision as follows: Revision to Study Title: Revising it from the Perspective of Students to the Perspective of Parents and Teachers. The data set associated with this study is considered limited. The consent form as previously approved remains in effect. You must obtain signed written consent from all subjects.

You are granted permission to conduct your study as revised effective immediately. The date for continuing review remains unchanged at 4/3/2018.

Please note that any further changes to the study must be promptly reported and approved. Contact the IRB at irb@kennesaw.edu or at (470) 578-2268 if you have any questions or require further information.

Sincerely,

Deanna Hendrickson, CRA
Director of Research Compliance & IRB Administrator

cc: ajohn560@kennesaw.edu

APPENDIX F

TRANSCRIBER CONFIDENTALITY AGREEMENT

I _____, agree to transcribe the interview for the doctoral

       (Insert Printed Name)

research of Audric Newchurch entitled "The Impact of Parental Involvement On Students

Success: School and Family Partnership from the Perspective of Parents and Teachers." I will

maintain strict confidentiality of the data files and transcripts. This includes, but is not limited to

the following:

- I will not discuss them with anyone but the researcher

- I will not share copies with anyone except the researcher

- I agree to turn over all copies of the transcripts to the researcher at the conclusion of the

   contract

- I will destroy the audio files I receive upon conclusion of the contract.

I have read and understand the information provided above.

_____

Transcriber's Signature   Date

_____

Researcher's Signature   Date