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A Book Club's Impact on Parent Support of Adolescent Reading

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Rachel Nichols

May 2011

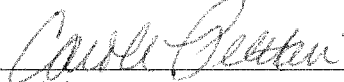
A thesis submitted to the Department of Education and Human Development of the
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Rachel Nichols

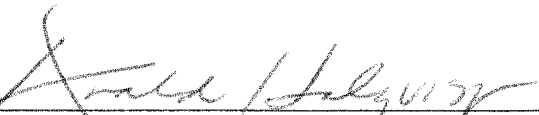
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Chapter 1: Introduction

The bell rings, an announcement sounds, and feet shuffle out the classroom door. Another whirlwind open house has ended, but one parent remains in my room. She approaches me and says, “I just wanted to ask you about the book in progress requirement.” A reassuring nod and smile from me prompts her continuation. “My husband and I can not get Dan (pseudonym) to stick to a book. We’ve brought him to the library and book stores. His sister has even recommended books that she enjoyed in middle school, and he still won’t read. Do you have any recommendations for us? We just don’t know what to do anymore.”

Problem Statement

Reading among adolescents, young people in the developmental stage between the beginning of puberty and adulthood, is declining rapidly across the United States (NEA, 2007). Reading is such an important factor in classrooms today that even more alarming is the report that the most dramatic decline in reading rates are in the adolescent age group (Stinnett, 2009). The NEA (2007) reported three findings regarding reading in adolescents. First, Americans are now spending less time reading. Second, students’ comprehension skills are decreasing. Lastly, these declines are impacting more than just academics. This study concluded there is a strong connection between reading for pleasure and high test scores in reading and writing (Stinnett). As teachers we know this to be true. The way a student increases his or her ability in any area, hobbies or academics, is

through regular practice and application. A child who dreams of becoming a professional soccer player will not attain this goal having only played one game of soccer. This remains true with reading and writing. A student will continue to fall short of grade level standards if he or she only reads and writes sporadically (Allington, 2002). However, American students are spending less than ten percent of their school days immersed in actual reading and writing (Allington, 1994), Even though students require large blocks of time for extended reading and writing (Harvey & Goudvis, 2000). This time is required for students to fully process and respond to what they are reading (Harvey & Goudvis). In addition, students struggling in the area of reading who read for four hours daily gain two years of reading comprehension growth per year as measured by grade level reading benchmarks (Guthrie, 2001). At the middle school where I work, students only have forty-five minute periods, meaning my students are only receiving forty-five minutes of reading and writing instruction per day. In this time period, on some days, my students are listening to direct instruction and participating in whole group discussions about reading and writing. On other days this forty-five minute period includes small group work where students are engaged in a written response to literature. Indeed, my students' reading and writing instruction only encapsulates ten percent of their school day. For students struggling to achieve grade level benchmarks, this lack of instruction continues their downward spiral in reading achievement and they continue to fall behind (Guthrie). An increase in the volume

of reading produces greater achievement (Guthrie). It then becomes imperative that students are reading in their many hours outside the school day and during summer months when school is not in session.

Education takes place at home and at school. However, parents often struggle with what they can do to support their adolescents in reading. Strong teaching at school is a piece of this puzzle. Ideally, students should be receiving ninety minutes of high quality literacy instruction per day (Allington, 2002). In addition to that, students should also receive two additional forty-five minute periods of reading instruction from experts (Allington). However, even in the ideal situation students can continue to increase their reading comprehension by reading outside their school day (Guthrie, 2001). Parent involvement becomes important in carrying on literacy activities at home for many students with low literacy levels (Elish-Piper & Smith, 2002).

Significance of the problem

Teachers can encourage students to read and write in school by assigning materials, through providing many opportunities to read and write, and through demonstrating reading and writing. However, it is also crucial that parents demonstrate the importance of literacy activities at home (Elish- Piper, 2008; Compton-Lily, 2006; Hughes & Kwok, 2007). Research has shown that even parents of middle and high school students can positively affect their child's success in school through their involvement in school related activities, as well as

through their role as “coach and mentor” at home (Elish-Piper, 2008; Sylva, Scott, Totsika, Ereky-Stevens & Crook, 2008; Epstein, 2001). Even more pertinent is that research has shown that this success increases over time (Elish-Piper, 2008). Students whose parents remain involved in their schooling even as the student advances into middle and high school see an increase in school achievement (Jordan, Orozco & Averett, 2002).

While these findings show a clear indication for the need for parent involvement and the importance of such, parents are also plagued with their own obstacles in becoming literacy role models for their children. Parents with low or limited literacy skills often also have children who struggle with literacy acquisition (Elish-Piper & Smith, 2002). Children with limited literacy skills themselves are not likely to engage in literacy activities independently, and thus the cycle continues. It then becomes the teacher’s responsibility to help these parents so they can then support their children in becoming literate (Elish-Piper & Smith). However, the question remains: What is the best way to reach and support these parents?

Parent involvement and strong teaching at school are key aspects in changing the direction of reading rates among adolescent students. When parents actively and consistently model literacy behaviors at home, their children are able to see how literacy activities can be incorporated into their lives at home and in the community. When literacy activities are not a regular part of home activities,

adolescents can struggle to identify how these activities can become a regular part of their lives.

Purpose

The purpose of this study, then, is to investigate, both before and after intervention, parents' perceptions of their abilities to impact their children's literacy attitudes and activities. The intervention will take the form of a book club conducted by the researcher with parents. This book club will include discussions on current authors and books for adolescents, as well as demonstrations of literacy activities parents can incorporate into their daily lives. The following research questions will be addressed. First, how do parents perceive their abilities to support their sixth grade students in the area of reading? Second, what happens to these perceptions when parents participate in a parent book club and how does this effect home literacy activities?

Procedures

I will design each meeting's discussions and demonstrations based on parent reports of student interest, and current literature and research regarding appropriate literacy activities for adolescent students. Parents and I will meet once per week for five weeks. Each meeting will be approximately one hour long. During this time parents will participate in direct instruction, open discussion, role playing opportunities, and exploration of book recommendations.

In order to assess my research questions, I will administer a qualitative survey at two points during the book club; one at the beginning, and one at the midpoint. I will also administer a phone interview one week after the end of the book club. Throughout this process, I plan to keep a teacher journal in which I will record any observations during book club meetings. Through this study, I hope to arm parents with information about activities, authors, and books that will help them support their adolescent readers. I hope to share my findings with my school colleagues, administrators, and other parents.

Rationale

Over the past few years, I've crossed paths with many parents who are simply exasperated with trying to encourage their reluctant or struggling readers to read at home. During parent-teacher conferences, phone calls, and e-mail, conversations have taken place between me and the parents of my students regarding how to encourage their children to read more at home. Parent support and involvement in every child's education is absolutely essential. Without such support students lose out on an exponential number of additional opportunities to apply and practice reading outside the school setting. Yet, many parents feel they don't have the knowledge or tools in order to provide such support at home. Thus, I am curious to find out how a parent book club can assist parents in recommending reading to their adolescent children.

Therefore, this study is an investigation into the impact of a parent book club on parents' perception of their ability to support the reading practices of sixth grade adolescents. Meetings for this study will be held weekly, and serve to provide information on current activities, books, and authors to parents.

Definition of terms

Parent Book Club: A meeting for parents to learn more information about current adolescent books and authors.

Adolescence: The time of development between the beginning of puberty and adulthood (Definition from <http://wordnetweb.princeton.edu/perl/webwn?s=adolescence>).

Summary

Parents play an integral role in their child's education. While the parent role may morph from director to mentor as the child moves from childhood to adolescence, the parent's involvement remains insurmountably important (Crosnoe & Trinitapoli, 2008). The partnership between teachers and parents during adolescence remains an important piece of education. This study served as an opportunity to build that partnership between teacher and parent, and hopefully helped parents to encourage reading at home by offering an opportunity for parents to learn about current books and authors for adolescents as well as literacy activities that can be implemented in any setting.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Introduction

Sir Richard Steele once said, “Reading is to the mind what exercise is to the body” (*The Tatler*, no. 147). While this statement has always reigned true, reading in today’s culture is increasingly important to overall success. However, no matter how important reading is, it continues to be a complex issue for schools and parents alike.

This study is an investigation into one possible way schools and parents can band together to combat declining reading rates among adolescent students. In order to fully address the complexity of the issue at hand, this section of the report is broken into three subsections: Adolescent reading habits and preferred activities, parent involvement, and book clubs. In each of the subsections, current research and findings are discussed.

Adolescent reading habits and preferred activities:

Americans have continued to be introduced to higher and higher levels of technology. Students as young as five years old are entering kindergarten classrooms with near proficient levels of computer knowledge. Twenty years ago, computer proficiency was reserved for adults in highly technological career fields (Mokhtari, Reichard, & Gardner, 2009). What does this mean for traditional reading habits? In a study conducted to examine the impact of internet and television use on college students’ reading habits, researchers found that

recreational reading is being overlooked and replaced with other activities (Mokhtari, Reichard, & Gardner, 2009). The Mokhtari et al. study examined a sample of 4,500 undergraduate college students at a Midwestern university regarding the students' internet, television, and reading habits. Participants in the Mokhtari et al. study were given a diary in which they recorded the amount of time they spent doing the three activities listed above over a period of seven consecutive days. When the researchers examined each of the diaries they found many overlapping similarities between each of the participants. While this study was conducted with college students, similar trends have been found with younger students (Ivanov, 2007).

In the Mokhtari et al. study the internet was a largely preferred activity by the participants. In fact, ninety-five percent of the participants reported using the internet on a daily or close to daily basis (Mokhtari et al.). Eighty-five percent of participants also noted enjoying using the internet more than engaging in traditional forms of recreational reading (i.e. reading a book, magazine or newspaper) (Mokhtari et al.). Lastly, the study compared the amount of time the participants engaged in recreational reading with the amount of time the participants engaged in academic reading. Participants reported spending, on average, close to eight hours per week reading for recreation. In contrast, participants reported spending, on average, just over fifteen hours per week reading for academic purposes (Mokhtari et al.).

Although it was not clear in Mokhtari, et al.'s (2009) study of undergraduates, participants' quantity of internet use was allocated for academic purposes and how much was allocated for recreational purposes, the Mokhtari et. al study verifies educational requirements have taken away a significant amount of time for recreational activities such as reading. And while these participants were enrolled in an undergraduate program, other studies have noted the significance of educational requirements on younger students (Kohn, 2008; Guthrie et al., 2006; Guthrie et al., 2009). In fact, an increase in the amount and length of homework assignments given to grade school students has left less time at home for students to engage in reading for anything other than academic purposes (Kohn, 2008; Washor, Mojkowski & Foster, 2009).

Per *No Child Left Behind*, and *Race to the Top* initiatives, American schools are being pushed to increase test scores across all areas or risk the loss of funding for other essential activities. In an effort to increase students' scores on high-stakes testing, some teachers are feeling pressure to "teach to the test" (Kohn, 2008). However, this preoccupation with test scores is partly to blame for the decrease in students' perceptions of reading as a recreational activity (Kohn). Teachers are again using isolated decoding activities that are removed from meaning, and are accompanied by numerous worksheets and repetitive skill routines (Kohn). This teaching technique is souring students' views of the act of reading (Washor, Mojkowski & Foster, 2009). Instead of viewing reading as an activity to learn more

information about a preferred activity, students are associating reading with a classroom activity rather than an “anytime” activity (Washor et al).

Ironically, it’s a growing trend that adolescents are yielding lower and lower test scores in reading and writing (NCES, 2009)(cite -- is that true across America?). In fact, researchers have found a strong connection between “independent reading and school success” (Knoester, 2009, p.676). “Being literate is fundamental for learning most school subjects” (Lam, Cheung, & Lam, 2009, p. 6). Yet, students are engaging less and less in reading as a recreational activity (Knoester, 2009).

A study conducted by Matthew Knoester (2009) examined the reading habits of urban adolescents. Adolescent reading habits needed to be seriously examined due to this drop in reading activities and test scores by American adolescents (Knoester, 2009). Case studies were completed on a sample of fifth, sixth, and seventh grades at a school in the eastern United States. In each of the case studies the reading habits of the adolescent participants were examined both from the participants' views and their parents' views. Data in this study was collected through several interviews and surveys that were completed by both the participants and their parents. Through these surveys and interviews, it was found that there is a strong connection between independent reading habits, social relationships, and identity formation. It was concluded that these connections would have a strong influence on whether a student identifies themselves as an avid

or reluctant reader (Knoester). These findings were also connected to Gee's theory of discourse (1989), saying that if a student feels strong in the area of school discourse they are more likely to be an avid reader, and enjoy reading in their free time (Knoester).

Adolescents find themselves in a very awkward place in their lives (Creel, 2007). Between the ages of twelve to fourteen, one minute they are children and the next they are young adults with very different needs and wants (Creel). This stage of development, while difficult on the adolescent, is also difficult on their teachers. The change in mindset from one minute to the next makes it difficult for both adolescent and teacher to determine books that will hold their attention and boost their enthusiasm. Creel (2007) notes reasons adolescents often give for not reading:

1. *Boring/Not fun*
2. *Little interest/Don't like it*
3. *Prefer other activities*

Dean Schneider (2009) echoes the finicky nature of adolescents in his field notes, stating they are quick to explain their distaste of required reading and open-ended endings. Schneider also notes that adolescents are also quick to show their enthusiasm when they read something they like (Schneider). With this bright light, it falls on the teacher and parents to introduce students to books they may be interested in. In Schneider's experience, once a student enjoys a book that a

teacher has recommended, the student is more likely to listen to future recommendations (2009). It is important for teachers and researchers to keep this “light at the end of the tunnel” in mind as reading continues to decline with age (Howard, 2004). As indicated in Howard’s study, the gender gap in adolescents' reading habits continues to widen, as well as the gap between the reading habits of rural and urban teens (2004). With one positive recommendation, a teacher has the ability to change a teen’s perspective of reading and influence the teen's life in the future.

As with any other activity that adolescents partake in, reading is influenced by many aspects of an adolescent’s life. In a survey study completed by Dr. Christina Clark, adolescents who feel more confident in their reading ability read a wider variety of texts than adolescents who feel less confident (2009). Confidence is one factor that has great control over the activities that students feel they are capable of completing (Clark, 2009). The activity of reading is no exception to this rule. Clark also found that having role models within the immediate family increased the chance that adolescents would read more for recreation than their peers who lack role models in their immediate families (2009). Adolescents with positive role models within the home are also more likely to have regular reading activities structured within family routines. This promotes a love of reading from within the family and supports the adolescent more because everyone in the family is engaged in reading (Clark, 2009). Parents who demonstrate the power of reading

leave a lasting effect on their children. Adolescents from these families are more likely to enjoy the act of reading and make time to read (Chen, 2008).

In a study conducted by Su-Yen Chen (2008) family influence on adolescent reading was examined. Chen sampled ninth and twelfth graders who had taken the Taiwan Education Panel Survey. Chen used survey results from 2001 and 2003. In his study, Chen examined facets of the home life of these students, including level of parent education, cultural level in the home, and the amount of time either parent spent reading or engaging in other reading behaviors. After reviewing the data, Chen found a strong correlation between the amount of recreational reading engaged in by the adolescent and the number of times the adolescent's mother visited a bookstore or library (2008). Adolescents who had parents with a high number of visits to the bookstore or library participated in more recreational reading activities than their peers (2008). Also, Chen found that females were almost two times more likely to be enthusiastic readers than their male peers.

If having a reading role model at home increases recreational reading, what can teachers do to increase reading at school? As shown through Corcoran and Mamalakis' (2009) study, students have a clear idea of the techniques they enjoy and the techniques that do not help them. Corcoran and Mamalakis have outlined steps teachers can take to help increase their adolescent students' love for reading. Corcoran and Mamalakis studied twenty-six fifth grade students through interviews

in order to discover their attitudes towards reading and teaching techniques used in schools. After examining the interview answers, the researchers concluded the following:

1. “Students favor teacher read alouds to independent reading activities” (p. 140).
2. “Students would like their teacher to discuss books they have read in their own free time” (p.140).

The interest students have in teacher read alouds has also been noted by Dean Schneider (2009). Schneider teaches seventh and eighth grade English. In his field notes, published in *The Horn Book Magazine*, he makes note of his students' reading preferences, stating that sometimes a required book read in class produces more positive results and more thorough discussions than a required book read outside of class (2009).

Parent Involvement

Rohr and He (2009) conducted a study with twenty-five preservice teachers and eighteen parents in order to investigate the attitudes preservice teachers hold toward educational involvement and student success, especially in regard to students who struggle academically. Parents were invited to bring their children who were struggling readers to free-of-charge tutoring sessions put on by the twenty-five preservice teachers. Surveys were used to investigate the preservice teachers' perceptions of parent involvement before and after the tutoring sessions.

At the beginning of the study, the researchers found that the preservice teacher strongly believed that parents are mostly responsible for their children's struggles with reading (Rohr & He). However, at the end of the study, the preservice teachers no longer agreed with the previous statement.

In another study completed by Elish-Piper (2008), common beliefs teachers have of parents were investigated. It was found that many teachers hold beliefs like,

1. "Those parents' don't really care about their children's education" (p. 51).
2. "If (parents) don't come to school activities, events, and conferences, it's because they don't care" (p. 52).
3. "The PTA ensures parent involvement" (p. 53).

However, through discussion with parents and teachers, each of these beliefs was discounted with reasonable explanations, each of which explain the obstacles that parents face when attempting to visibly participate in their children's education.

It is important that parents and teachers work together during all stages of a child's education (Harris & Goodall, 2008). However, when a child fails to succeed to the level expected of him or her, often times parents and teachers find themselves caught in a battle of finger-pointing and blame (Elish-Piper, 2008; Rohr & He, 2009). Teachers often have preconceived notions of what parents are willing to participate in, as well as what amount of value parents put on their children's

education (Elish-Piper; Rohr & He). A parent's commitment to a child's school success cannot be measured by the number of visits made to the child's school. If a parent missed opportunities to visit the child's school, or does not have household structures and routines that mimic the teacher's, it does not mean that the parent values his or her child's education any less than other parents (Elish-Piper; Harris & Goodall, 2008).

There are many other factors that may prevent parents from participating in ways that a teacher may expect. A case study completed in England in 2008 investigated some of the factors that parents are faced with. Researchers Harris and Goodall (2008) investigated the relationship between parental engagement and student achievement with a sample of twenty schools and 314 participants. Over the course of a year, Harris and Goodall compiled observational and performance data at each of the twenty schools. It was found that factors such as a parent's socioeconomic status, level of education, family structure (two parent vs. single parent household), occupation, availability of childcare, time restriction, and relationship with administrators and teachers all contributed to a parent's involvement in a child's schooling. Many of these factors prevent parents who would like to be involved from being visibly involved in various school functions (Harris & Goodall). However, while parents face many obstacles in being visibly active in school activities, it was found that the most influential type of parental involvement in a child's academic achievement is found within the home (Harris &

Goodall). This supports research completed by Elish-Piper (2008), and Rohr and He (2009) that simply because a parent is not present at school functions does not mean that they do not value education or support their child in their own special way.

Much research has been completed that has investigated how schools can build programs that allow and encourage as much parent and community involvement as possible (Epstein, 2001; Epstein, 2008; Epstein & Dauber, 1991; Elish-Piper, 1996; Sylve et al, 2008). The design of the school's parent and community involvement can encourage or even discourage parent and community participation (Epstein, 2001). School programs that have had a positive effect on parent and community partnerships have been developed with clear expectations regarding program goals and priorities (Epstein). Successful school programs should also provide parents and the community with lots of information (Epstein, 2008). Lastly, it is important that school programs be connected with the school, rather than separate (Epstein). For example, discussions and activities held within the program should be complimentary to the school's learning expectations for students in order to directly connect parents and the community to school expectations (Epstein).

Similarly, a study with 171 participants in eight inner-city elementary and middle schools in Baltimore examined the connections between school programs and parent and community participation (Epstein & Dauber, 1991). Epstein and

Dauber collected data through a questionnaire that was given to teachers in the randomly selected eight schools. The questionnaire asked pointed questions about the teacher's connections with the student's home, as well as attitudes toward parent involvement. Data collected was used to provide the schools with two profiles regarding the schools' strengths and weaknesses in the area of parent and community involvement. The data was also used to inform schools of positive improvements to school programs that, based on the data, would improve parent and community partnerships (Epstein & Dauber). The study found that teachers generally have positive attitudes toward parent and community involvement in students' education (Epstein & Dauber). The study also found five ways in which schools could improve parent and community programming. The researchers suggest that the school assess its own strengths and weaknesses in order to fully begin to improve programming. Schools should also identify clear goals for each program as well as for the school as a whole, identify the person responsible for measuring attainment toward those goals, and continually evaluate programs and results of programs (Epstein & Dauber). Schools that continually follow through with setting program specific goals eventually develop programs that are unique to the community, and therefore most helpful (Epstein).

Many successful programs have been developed that have had a positive effect on parent involvement in their child's literacy development. In 1996 a study was conducted with thirteen families in a nine-week summer family literacy

program (Elish-Piper, 1996). Participants who enrolled in the family literacy program completed pre and post interviews as well as dialogue journals that were used to communicate with the researchers. In addition to these measures of data collection, researchers kept detailed field notes, and collected completed work from the participants (Elish-Piper). The research found that all of the families who participated in the study used literacy in meaningful ways that addressed their needs at any given time. Also, literacy was used as a tool or resource in order to complete needed life activities or requirements. Researchers noted that using literacy specifically for life activities might contribute to the difficulty some students experience at school when literacy is decontextualized from real-life (Elish-Piper). Finally, the researchers found that parent participants provided helpful feedback regarding the program's schedule and activities. While parents may practice literacy in different ways than the ways literacy is practiced in school, they have valuable information regarding programming that is most helpful to their parenting (Elish-Piper).

In another study, researchers investigated a program that taught parents how to help their children read (Sylva et al., 2008). A sample of 104 primary aged students from eight inner-city schools in London participated in the study. The participants were randomly selected and divided into two groups. Parents of children in the intervention group participated in meetings and received home instruction, over the course of one year, on children's literacy development, skills

and strategies. Parents or children in the control group were given access to a telephone helpline which they could use to have their questions regarding literacy answered. Each child's literacy development was then measured with the British Ability Scales II at the beginning of the program, as well as at the end (Sylva et al.). Researchers found that participants in the program group achieved higher literacy scores than participants in the control group. Also, parents in the program group attended meetings more regularly than parents in the control group used the telephone helpline. Suggesting that programs requiring attendance are more helpful in increasing parents' knowledge of literacy development, and therefore, more helpful in increasing child literacy than telephone helplines (Sylva et al.).

Many programs for parents have been developed and investigated over the past several years. This research has found that programs that increase parent knowledge of literacy development have positive effects on child literacy development (Sylva et al, 2008; Epstein, 2001; Stainthorp & Hughes, 2000; Smith & Elish-Piper, 2002; Elish-Piper, 1996). Also, programs that include clear goals and expectations developed with the participants, as well as programs that are connected with school learning expectations yield more participation and better results than other programs (Epstein, 2001; Epstein, 2008).

Book Clubs

Book clubs have become increasingly popular over the last several years. Often times participation in book clubs includes adults reading adult literature, or

teachers reading and discussing literature for their grade levels. However, more recently parent book clubs, parent-child book clubs, and parent-teacher book clubs have begun (Feret, 2007; Sennett, 2006; Zaleski et al, 1999).

Zaleski et al. (1999) investigated a parent-teacher book club that included a self-selected group of thirteen parents and seven teachers. The book club met for five, one-hour meetings for five weeks in which they discussed popular books for a wide variety of school aged students. Participants in the group participated in group discussions of books such as *The Watsons Go to Birmingham* by Christopher Paul Curtis, and *Hush! A Thai Lullaby* by Mingfong Ho. The book club allowed participants to openly discuss literacy practices and share strategies. Participants were able to recognize the importance of reading aloud to students even as they get older, as well as recognize similarities both parents and teachers have regarding their feelings about the importance of literacy (Zaleski et al.). Researchers also noted that even after the book club was over, students of parents who participated would mention to their teacher that their parents were involved in a reading group and would ask for a copy of the book that was being read (Zaleski et al.).

In another book club, nine mothers and their fourth grade daughters in North Carolina attended meetings (Feret, 2007). The book club read four books over the course of five months. Both the daughters and the mothers read each of the book selections. During each meeting, mothers and daughters would discuss thoughts and questions they had recorded in their reading journals. Each mother

and daughter pair also completed an enrichment activity for each of the books. Researchers noted that at the end of the book club, many of the book club student participants borrowed many more books from the library and also had a more positive attitude toward reading (Feret). A study completed by Sennett (2006) also found that book clubs can increase students' enthusiasm for reading.

Summary

Adolescents' reading habits and attitudes is a complex subject. The habits and attitudes of adolescents have many facets that researchers continue to investigate. It is important that schools and parents continue to be involved in this subject. Though parents and schools may not always see their impact, studies continue to show not just the impact schools and parents have but the positive impacts of their involvement are also shown.

Chapter 3: Study Design

Introduction

This study was designed to explore the impact of a parent book club on parents' perceptions of their ability to support and encourage their adolescent students. During the book club I provided parents with information about current books and authors for adolescents. I also addressed parent questions regarding literacy and gave information on literacy activities that can be used at home with adolescents. Book club meetings included opportunities for parents to receive instruction on current books and authors as well as to discuss characteristics of adolescent readers.

Positionality of the Researcher

I have been teaching for three years in the district in which I conducted my research. I graduated from Nazareth College with teaching certifications in childhood education, special education, and middle childhood education. I began my teaching career shortly after graduation as a special education teacher. After two years in the special education position, I was offered a general education position teaching English Language Arts and Social Studies at the 6th grade level. While teaching, I have been working on my master's degree at SUNY Brockport for the past two years in childhood literacy. I believe that literacy is a key factor in

every aspect of life, and I strive to offer my students many opportunities to increase their literacy skills both at school and at home.

Participants

The study took place in a suburban school district in western New York State. This particular district has a diverse population of students and staff in regard to both socio-economic status and racial background. Parents in this district live in a wide range of areas. The southern portion of the district is rural with a strong base in agriculture, whereas, the northern part of the district is made up largely of commercial properties. Also, in the northern portion of the district are two large universities.

The study included participants from a self-selected convenience sample of parents of students on my sixth grade team. All parents of the eighty students on my team were given the opportunity to participate; however, those who chose to participate did so based on their ability to attend meetings and their perceived need for the information that the meetings provided. All three participants were female. Two of the participants worked in the education field. One of the participants was a high school English teacher in a neighboring school district. The second participant was a speech therapist who works for a community agency with non-school aged children. The third participant was a pediatrician. Two of the participants live in a two-parent home raising two children. The other participant was a single parent raising one adopted child.

Procedures of Study

Each of the five weekly meetings were held for one hour. Specific discussion points, activities, and book recommendations during those meetings were based on parent responses collected at the first meeting through a survey. This was done to ensure that all parents felt they were represented in each of the meetings and that all meetings were meaningful for each parent participant.

Prior to the first meeting, an informational meeting was held to inform parents of study details as well as their rights as perspective participants. At that time parents who wanted to participate signed consent forms. At this meeting parents asked for current research about adolescent readers. At the first meeting, parents completed a survey (Appendix A). Information from this survey was used to answer the research question: How do parents perceive their ability to support their adolescent reader? Therefore, at the first meeting, after the survey was given, participants were given four current research articles about adolescent readers and reading behaviors of adolescents. During the meeting parents looked at these articles, of which I provided a summary, and discussed the following questions: What stands out to you about adolescent readers in your experience and/or in these articles? What do you think about the answers adolescents gave about reading during their leisure time?

At the second meeting parents were given a list of current book series (Appendix E). In the first survey parents reported feeling a lack of knowledge

about current books and authors. A book talk was given that summarized each of the series and discussed types of students that have been drawn to that series in the past. Parents were given the opportunity to look at each of the series and take books home that they felt would be a good fit for their children.

At the third meeting parents completed the second survey (Appendix B). This survey was used to check how parents were feeling about the information they were receiving during the meetings, as well as to assess their attitudes about their ability to support and encourage their adolescent readers. Information gathered from this survey was used to plan the last two meetings and was compared with information gathered from the first meeting to help answer the research question: When participating in a parent book club, what happens to parents' perceptions of their ability to support their adolescent reader and how does this effect home literacy activities? Participants were also given a list of current authors as well as a website that could be used to research authors. The website included short author biographies as well as reviews submitted by readers. Participants discussed any others they were familiar with through their own experience or through their children's experiences. In this discussion parents were able to give each other recommendations for their children. Participants also had the chance to research the website for different authors they felt were a good fit for their child.

At the fourth meeting parents were introduced to five websites that they and their child could use to research books and authors now and in the future. The

websites provided book summaries and reviews as well as author biographies. First, I introduced each of the websites by explaining some of the highlights of each website and showing parents how to navigate the site to find desired information. Participants, again, discussed the websites and were given time to navigate them independently.

At the fifth meeting parents were given a packet of information regarding questioning techniques and activities that could be completed at home. I introduced the information to the participants, explaining to them how I thought they could be helpful. Participants then discussed what they saw and how they felt the activities would fit in their homes.

One week after the final meeting, I completed a phone interview (Appendix C) with each of the participants regarding her final thoughts on the book club, and any changes that had taken place in the home since the last meeting. I analyzed all the data collected from the surveys and phone interviews to determine how parents perceive their ability to support their 6th grade students in the area of reading as well as what happens to these perceptions when parents participate in a parent book club and how this effects home literacy activities.

Data Collection and Analysis

Several data collection techniques were used in order to explore the research questions. I gathered information from parent responses, my observations (template, Appendix D), and a final phone interview.

Surveys

The first survey (Appendix A), given at the start of the parent book club, included questions that asked parents to describe any family literacy activities that are already in place in their homes as well as to describe their feelings regarding recommending reading to their adolescent readers. This survey also asked parents to describe their children's interests in order to assist me in planning book talks for the coming meetings.

The second survey (Appendix B), given at the third book club meeting, included questions similar to the first survey in that it again asked parents to describe their feelings regarding recommending reading to their adolescent readers. This survey also asked parents what other information they thought would be helpful to them.

Phone Interview

The phone interview (Appendix C) took place one week after the final meeting. The phone interviews were conducted at that time so each participant had an opportunity to implement the information they received during the duration of the book club and had an opportunity to think about the information they received. During the phone interview I asked parents to discuss how they were feeling about recommending books to their adolescent readers as well as how this book club had impacted activities and/or conversations that took place at home.

Trustworthiness

Much research has been conducted in the arena of parent involvement in children's school activities, literacy development and social development. However, much of the earlier research focuses on a younger age group than the students of the parent participants in this study. Due to the uniqueness of my study many of the survey questions have been tailored to answer my specific research questions. Benchmarks for survey and interview questions are from research done by Laurie Elish-Piper (2001, 2008) in her research regarding parent involvement in children's development. Literacy activities that I shared with parents during the final book club meeting have been recommended by Laurie Elish-Piper based on her own research, as well as books by Elizabeth Rowell and Thomas Goodkind, as well as Philip Perrone, Franklin Zeran, and T. Antoinette Ryan.

Qualitative data was collected in order to answer the research questions of my study. While qualitative data does limit the types of data that could have been collected throughout the duration of my study, it has been successful in previous studies regarding parent participation and book clubs (Sennett, 2006; Sylva et al, 2008; Epstein, 2001; Epstein-Dauber, 1991).

Analyzing the Data

At the first meeting I administered the first survey. By charting responses and looking for commonalities through a constant-comparative method (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) I analyzed this survey for trends regarding parents' feelings about

recommending reading to their adolescent readers. This information was used to answer the first research question: How do parents perceive their ability to support their adolescent reader? I also analyzed this survey for information regarding student interests by looking for parents' comments about their children's interests. This information was used to plan following meeting agendas. Answers from the first survey were kept in order to compare using a constant-comparative method with the second survey which was given at the third meeting, and the phone interview completed one week after the last meeting. The qualitative information from all three of these instruments, as well as my observations were analyzed by charting responses and observations, and looking for commonalities through a constant-comparative method in order to answer the second research question: What happens to parents' perceptions of their ability to support their adolescent reader when participating in a parent book club and how does this effect home literacy activities?

Limitations

Initial limitations to this study include the small self-selected sample size, the use of only qualitative data, and the length of the study. Due to the required weekly meetings for this study, parent participation was limited by ability and availability to attend weekly meetings. Also, since the participant pool for this study is small and participants were self-selected, this study does not include a wide variety of participant backgrounds. Meetings were kept informal and

discussion based, and it was explained to parents that their comments would be kept confidential and not be connected to their child's success in school. However, even with these interventions in place, participants might have felt intimidated and could have adjusted their comments accordingly. This study was also six weeks long with only five one-hour meetings. More data and observations could be gathered during a longer time period. This study, due to its length, only analyzed parents' perceptions of supporting their adolescent readers. A longer study would offer more information about the long term effects of a parent book club on these perceptions and would be able to consider the effects of such a book club on reading behaviors of adolescents in participants' homes. These limitations should be taken into consideration when reviewing this study.

Summary

My study investigated the use of a parent book club to help parents feel more confident supporting their adolescent readers. Through the use of confidential surveys and discussions each of the three participants' reactions to the book club was analyzed through the constant-comparative method.

Chapter 4: Results

Introduction

The following research questions were investigated: First, how do parents perceive their ability to support their 6th grade students in the area of reading? Second, what happens to these perceptions when parents participate in a parent book club and how does this effect home literacy activities? The qualitative data that was collected from each case study will be reported in this portion of the report. Each case study's data will be discussed in detail individually. After each case is discussed individually, commonalities across all three case studies will be discussed. All names used in this portion of the report are pseudonyms.

Case 1: Anna

Anna is the parent of two children, a son who is elementary age and a daughter who is a middle school student in sixth grade. In the first survey, Anna reported feeling her biggest impact on her daughter's reading habits is through setting an example. Anna stated, "The more I read, the more she wants to." She also reported that she and her daughter often read the same book and discuss different events throughout the book together. Although Anna reported feeling confident about the ways she impacts her daughter's reading through reading together and dedicated reading time each night, she reported feeling she lacked knowledge of contemporary authors appropriate for middle school aged students to

help further her daughter's reading. This was evidenced when Anna reported she struggled when her daughter asked her what book to read next.

At the third book club meeting Anna completed a second survey. Anna continued to feel positive about impacting her daughter's reading activities stating that "She is interested in what I have to say about books and enjoys talking about them with me." In the first survey, Anna reported feeling that she lacked knowledge of contemporary authors. In the second survey, Anna reported that she felt more confident about her knowledge of age-appropriate authors and books that she could pass on to her daughter. She also reported that a change had occurred in her conversations with her daughter about books she was reading. Initially, Anna reported that her daughter would typically only discuss books both of them were reading. However, on the second survey Anna reported that her daughter was now discussing books with Anna that her daughter is reading independently. When Anna discussed this change with the group, she mentioned feeling that her increased confidence in book and author knowledge changed the types of conversations she was having with her daughter. As a result of book club participation their conversations included more discussion about the book with questions like, "What is your favorite part so far?" rather than Anna asking a string of questions like "What book are you reading?" and "Who is the author?"

At the end of the six week book club Anna participated in a phone survey. During the phone survey, Anna reported an increased amount of excitement about

recommending books to her daughter, as well as an increased amount of excitement about reading books with her daughter, stating, "I'm excited to recommend books to my daughter and read alongside her. It is a great way for us to spend time together." She also reported having a continuing positive outlook on her ability to impact her daughter's reading activities. During the interview she stated, "My involvement helps shed a positive light on reading which, in turn, makes her more enthusiastic about reading. By modeling my own reading habits, she is able to see that the importance of reading carries over into adulthood. The websites and book lists have been very helpful in supporting me support my daughter." Lastly, Anna reported more changes in her family's home literacy activities. Now the family is bringing books on trips with them and reading is encouraged and modeled during "down time." Also, Anna and her daughter have visited teenreads.com, which was a website that was introduced during a book club meeting, in order to determine a new book to read.

Case 2: Sue

Sue is the parent of two children, a daughter who is high school age and a son who is a sixth grade student. In the first survey, Sue reported having a "rich" reading environment in her home. As reported by Sue, she and her family have a dedicated reading time for one hour each night before bed. Sue reported, she also stocks bathrooms and sitting areas in her home with various magazines, newspapers, and books. Sue reported, her daughter intrinsically enjoys the act of

reading and is consistently immersed in a book. However, Sue reports that she has had a difficult time motivating her son to read at times other than simply the family reading time at the end of the day. She states, “Most of the time he reads because it is the house rule.” Sue reported using many different resources to help motivate her son to read, including the public library, newspaper book reviews, her daughter’s knowledge of young adult authors, and the website: www.libraryweb.org. However, during the first meeting Sue reported, she was not sure of other resources she could be using to help motivate her son, stating “He does not like to go to the library and look for a book, but the reviews that I have been bringing home have not been successful.” Lastly, Sue reported she feels she is constantly fighting electronics time for reading time despite the scheduled reading time established in her home.

After three weeks of book club meetings Sue completed a second survey where she reported some changes in her home literacy activities. Sue reported having an increased number of conversations with her son about word meanings found in books both she and her son were reading. Sue also reported, during the one hour family reading time she now reads in the same room as her son. She reports, “I have found reading with my reluctant reader (in the same room) reinforces my love for reading. I’m not just telling him to do it; I am doing it myself.” During book club meetings after the second survey was completed Sue also reported her son seemed, to her, more open to investigating new books. She

had introduced him to our book lists and websites, and she reported that he had actually tried reading books from the list.

At the end of the book club Sue participated in a phone survey. Sue continued to have a strong, positive attitude toward her influence of her child's reading habits. However, she continued to be frustrated about her son's attitude toward reading stating, "He thinks it is not 'cool' to read." Sue stated, she continues to read in the same room as her son, but wishes that he would develop an intrinsic "love" of reading like her daughter. She continues to use the new websites and book lists as well as resource materials she had previous to the book club to encourage reading and hopes that with time he will develop a "love" of reading. Though she is disappointed that he lacks motivation, Sue believes that continuing to show her love of reading will help develop his. She also feels she has new resources to hopefully "hook" him with an author or book series that is more current. At the end of the phone survey, Sue reported an additional change within her family's home literacy activities, stating that she and her family now will also play word games like Apples to Apples and Scrabble during "reading time." She reports, she now regards increasing vocabulary through the use of games as important as a dedicated reading time.

Case 3: Beverly

Beverly is the single parent of a daughter who is a sixth grade student. Beverly came to book club with a vast amount of knowledge about literacy in the

elementary grades and a belief that she can impact her daughter's reading habits. She states, "By showing my love for reading, keeping a variety of reading materials available, visiting libraries and book stores, and setting specific reading expectations, I can impact my daughter's reading habits." However, in the first survey Beverly reported feeling not as knowledgeable about sixth grade reading expectations and rigor. Beverly reported that her daughter often reads at home, but often selects books that are significantly below her grade level or books that she has read previously. Beverly reported that she struggles with that as she wants her daughter to be challenged, and doesn't want to see her "stop growing as a reader." In several conversations Beverly reported fearing her daughter was unable to comprehend text at an appropriate level. Beverly also reported feeling a lack of knowledge about appropriate comprehension questions to ask her daughter as she reads .

In the second survey Beverly continued to report a positive outlook on her ability to impact her daughter's reading habits stating "I can impact my daughter's reading through exposing her to a variety of books, having discussions regarding books, encouraging her reading and modeling good reading behaviors and attitudes." Beverly also reported feeling more confident about her knowledge of age appropriate reading materials and ways to engage her daughter in more conversations during reading time. Beverly often arrived at meetings earlier than the other participants which gave us time to discuss her daughter privately. In

those conversations, Beverly commented on her daughter's habit of reading "younger" books. Originally this was a concern of Beverly's due to the fact that she worried that these books were not challenging her daughter which she worried was delaying her daughter's reading growth. We discussed that when readers don't have to struggle with vocabulary they are able to focus on fluency, visualizing, and other important reading behaviors that bring the book to life and impact the simple joy of reading. In the second survey Beverly reported feeling more comfortable with allowing her daughter to read "lower level" books on occasion.

During the phone interview at the end of the book club Beverly expressed her appreciation for the information given at book club and the discussions that took place. Beverly continues to have a positive outlook on her ability to impact her daughter's reading, and reported that she feels she is more "informed and competent" to continue to assist her daughter select reading material and monitor her comprehension. In the first survey Beverly reported feeling that she did not have all the resources she needed to support her daughter's reading. However, during the phone interview Beverly reported feeling that she had a "great knowledge" base that would help her help her daughter now and in the future. Although Beverly did not report any changes in her and her daughter's literacy activities at home, Beverly did report an increased number of conversations she and her daughter had regarding books and other reading materials.

Cross Case Analysis

Each participant in this study began with a positive outlook regarding her impact on her child's reading habits, stating things like "I think the best way to impact my daughter's view of reading is through example. The more I read, the more she wants to," and "By providing opportunity, reading materials, and encouragement I can impact my daughter's reading," and "I can impact my son's reading habits by setting an example, and discussing books he is reading." With this belief, each participant also reported having structured time in her home dedicated to reading. Each participant reported feeling knowledgeable about how to impact her child's reading, but reported lacking some knowledge regarding current books and authors that would help her to help her child select new books. Also, each participant was able to set up expectations within the home that encourage reading and set time aside for reading. However, participants discussed feeling "stuck" when their children asked for help selecting the next book to read. One participant also discussed feeling "stuck" when her child lacked the intrinsic motivation to read and felt she was running out of resources. At the end of the book club no drastic changes in the home literacy activities of each of the participants took place. However, each participant reported feeling revitalized in aiding her child in finding new literature, as well as in her conversations with her child regarding books that the child was reading. An increased number of conversations were reported by all three participants. All three participants also felt

more confident asking their children questions about reading. Questions that the participants reported changed from “What are you reading?” to “Tell me about what you’re reading” and “What is your favorite part so far?” Participants also reported that these questions were being mirrored by each of their children in their discussions with each other. Not only would the parents ask questions of the children’s books, but the children would also ask questions about their parents’ books. Lastly, all three participants felt more confident when recommending books to their children and in showing them resources they could use independently. Two of the participants specifically reported having used one of the websites, www.teenreads.com, discussed during book club, as well as the book list that was given to help their child pick a new book to read.

Summary

How do parents perceive their ability to encourage their children’s reading at the 6th grade level?

In this study, participants came with the belief that they have an impact on their children’s reading habits. However, it was uncovered that knowing how to encourage reading at home and setting up reading routines and expectations is only one aspect the parents face. While parents may know how to create a reading environment in their home, they may still lack information to sustain appropriate reading materials for this reading environment. This appeared in two different

cases. Sue struggled with recommending books to her son due to his “reluctance” to read. Recommending reading material to her son became a battle. Despite her awareness of many resources and the many different types of text she brought home, he continued to turn the reading material down or to never finish it. In her words, “he reads because it is the house rule.” Parents of reluctant readers, or readers who simply read because they are told to do so, can find that trying to get children to intrinsically love reading can become overwhelming. These parents can feel like they are in the never ending cycle of bringing many different types of reading material to their children, who immediately turn it down or never finish a piece of literature. At some point these parents become overwhelmed and frustrated. This frustration is especially apparent when parents feel they are using all known resources and their children’s behaviors are still not changing.

Conversely, Beverly struggled with the change in reading demands when her child entered sixth grade and subsequent grades. This parent reported not having any trouble getting her daughter to read. However, the struggle appeared with matching reading preference with grade-appropriate reading material. Beverly mentioned, “She prefers to read ‘younger’ books over and over.” Beverly struggled with giving her daughter books that would allow her to grow as a reader but not eliminate her love for reading. In this case, Beverly maintained the belief that she could impact her daughter’s reading but was struggling to find the balance between comfort and challenge for her daughter. This was compounded by

Beverly's self-announced lack of knowledge of grade level reading expectations and requirements. This can be just as frustrating for parents, as having a child that refuses to read. An internal battle ensues and both child and parent end up frustrated.

What happens to these perceptions when parents participate in a parent book club and how does this effect home literacy activities?

Participants of this study entered with a positive outlook on their influence of their child's reading habits. All three participants believed that their modeling of reading behaviors, as well as the reading routines they had incorporated into their home life had a strong impact on their child's reading behaviors. This attitude remained strong throughout the book club. In both surveys as well as the phone interview, each participant reported believing that she had an impact on her child's reading behaviors. Through discussions with each of the participants it became clear that each had set up reading routines at home because they believed that would influence their children positively. One participant stated, "I think the best way to impact my daughter's view of reading is through example. The more I read, the more she wants to."

Chapter 5: Conclusions

Conclusion

The dynamics of each home across America are different. Family routines vary, obligations change, and relationships between parents and children look different, however, reading can remain a strong staple in a home.

Parent involvement in a child's literacy development has been investigated by many researchers (Elish-Piper, 1996; Elish-Piper & Smith, 2002; Sylva et al., 2008; Epstein, 2001; Stainthorp & Hughes, 2000). While each of these studies focused on different aspects of parent involvement, many of them obtained similar findings. Parent involvement in literacy may look different in homes across America, but it still remains strong (Corcoran & Mamalakis, 2009; Elish-Piper, 2008; Rohr & He, 2009). Parents want to help their children succeed academically and grow as individuals. In this study, participants continued to support this finding by coming to the book club with a positive outlook of their influence on their children's reading habits and having already developed reading expectations and routines within their homes.

Implications

Recent aptitude testing completed by American and international students have shown American students lagging behind their international counterparts in several different academic areas, one of these areas being reading (NCES, 2009). Both schools and parents want children to be successful members of society.

Parents and schools have gone about doing this in several different ways including the incorporation of parent boards, an increase in the amount of parent-teacher communication, and family literacy programmes (Elish-Piper, 1996; Sylva et. al., 2008). Schools have implemented policies to keep teachers accountable for the work they do with students (Danielson, 2010). Schools have also implemented continued professional development for teachers to incorporate research-based techniques into teaching reading.

Parents, as in this study, have incorporated reading routines within their homes. They have also modeled reading behaviors for their children and worked hard to show their children how important reading is. In this study Anna and her sixth grade daughter sometimes read the same book and had discussions.

Additionally, Beverly, Sue and Anna all incorporated a structured reading time into their children's daily lives. Each of these cases show parents working diligently to positively impact their children's reading growth.

However, even though both sides are working hard to increase reading abilities among children, there remains a disconnect between parents and school. Both sides are working to fix the disconnect however, both struggle when students are not successful and tend to blame the other side for the disconnect (Elish-Piper, 2008). Parents in this study worked hard to incorporate a reading environment in their homes through developing structured reading times, giving opportunities to discuss current reading material, and having regular visits to local libraries and

book stores. However, in this case, the disconnect between parent and school arose when these parents struggled to answer their middle school children's question, "What do I read next?" These parents, as many others may, struggled to answer that question for their children. Anna reported feeling she lacked the knowledge of contemporary authors to help her sixth grade daughter select new reading material. Sue also reported feeling she lacked information about grade level reading expectations and rigor. As a teacher, I find it becomes my responsibility to help parents answer that question for their children throughout their developmental years (Epstein, 2008; Zaleski, 1999). Despite the many resources available to help people find new books that interest them, I can't expect that parents are going to know where to access that information or how to filter it all. In this study, a parent book club was helpful for parents who already believe they impact their children's reading.

The book club in this study provided participants with information about current books and authors, as well as resources to sustain reading material in their homes as their children continue to mature. As found by Joyce Epstein's (2008) study of school programs for parents, successful school programs provide parents with lots of information. In a book club, information about current books and authors as well as resources to sustain this knowledge is vital for parents to continue to discuss reading with their child and to support their requirement of nightly or regular reading. Evidence of this appeared in this study. Participants all

reported an increase in conversations with their children about current reading. Conversations participants had with their children changed, including an increase in the number of conversations and the types of questions participants asked and responded to with their children. Participants used the new resources, including websites and book lists to help the conversations with their children continue to develop.

The book club in this study created a place for parents to learn about the resources available to them including opportunities to navigate the information found in each of the resources and time to ask questions. It also created a place for parents to ask questions and have candid conversations about their children and the books they are reading. Beverly consistently came to meetings several minutes early and would share stories from the week about her daughter's reading and discuss her concerns of her daughter's comprehension skills. Beverly agonized over her daughter's love of "younger" books and the book club gave her an opportunity to discuss these concerns with me, her daughter's teacher, and other parents with children of a similar age that otherwise she may not have had.

Zaleski (1999) conducted a book club between parents and teachers and found a similar opportunity for conversation. Parents and teachers were able to connect with each other about reading because of the opportunities for discussion that the book club offered (Zaleski).

Parents who already have a reading environment in place in the home benefit from these opportunities for discussion and information to learn what resources are available to help them help their children find new reading material, therefore, creating an opportunity for parents to feel more confident when recommending reading material to their children as well as feeding that reading environment so it can continue in a way that is an enjoyable time for parent and child rather than a struggle.

Recommended Research

Parents' involvement in their children's education, both in school and at home, remains an important topic. Schools and parents are beginning to work more closely together to build stronger bonds that help support learning throughout a child's day. However, it is not an area that has finished developing. Parents and schools are still lacking information to help them best support students as individuals. Based on the results of this study below are suggestions for further research to help support and continue the growth of the relationship between parents and schools.

Perceptions of parents from a variety of backgrounds

This study analyzed the perceptions parents have of their ability to support their adolescent readers. However, due to the small number of participants this study did not include participants with a wide variety of backgrounds. Participants of this study were all highly educated, and two of the participants were

educators. Zaleski (1999) conducted a similar book club between parents and teachers. While the study conducted by Zaleski (1999) had a larger sample size than this study, the inclusion of only thirteen parents and seven teachers does not yield results that can be generalized to an entire population. Since there has not been much research conducted on parent book clubs like this one, it would be beneficial to investigate if a variation in participant socioeconomic status, and educational background would impact the results.

Effects of a parent book club on student reading behaviors

Book clubs have been studied in a variety of ways and have shown a positive impact on relationships between its participants (Sennett, 2006; Zaleski, 1999; Feret, 2007). It is important for parents and schools to work closely together to promote education; however it is also equally important that students become a part of this dialog as they take on more independence with their education. It then becomes important that it be investigated to see if a parent book club, like this, has an effect on student reading behaviors. If a book club can have a positive impact on parent support of reading, as this study suggests, does that then transfer over to a positive impact on student reading behaviors?

An investigation of different at-home reading routines. Is there a routine that works better for reluctant readers?

Reading behaviors in adolescents has been studied by many researchers (Mokhtari et. al., 2009; Ivanov, 2007; Washor et. al., 2009). In this study one

participant struggled with her middle school aged son and his reluctance to read. Despite the many opportunities and reading materials she offered, his reluctance continued. By the end of the study she was reading in the same room as he and was beginning to see a positive change in his attitude toward reading. There are millions of reluctant readers, students who only read when told to, whose parents can become frustrated quickly when trying to encourage reading and creating a reading environment within the home. Many studies have been conducted with reluctant readers in schools; however, there is a void in the research when it comes to helping these reluctant readers at home. Investigating how reluctant readers react to different routines and structures at home would aide parents and teachers in determining how best to support adolescent readers. In particular, it would be helpful to find out if there is a certain routine that helps the child build his or her intrinsic motivation to read.

Summary

A parents book club can be helpful to parents of many different types of students. Parents in this study benefitted from the information about new reading resources and opportunities for candid conversations about their children's reading regardless of if their children were avid readers or reluctant readers. Participants developed their knowledge of resources to help them find new reading for their children and their knowledge of questions to foster communication about reading with their children. It is important that parent book clubs continue to be

investigated. With larger participant pools and more diverse participant backgrounds researchers would be able to investigate more facets of the subject of parent support of adolescent reading.

Appendix A

Beginning Survey Questions

1. In what ways do you support your child's reading activities and attitudes at home? Please be as specific as possible.
2. Do you feel you have all the resources needed to fully support your child's reading activities?
3. If your answer to question 2 is yes, what resources do you have available to you?
4. What resources do you feel you are lacking?
5. Currently, how do you feel your child views reading?
6. Do you believe you have the ability to impact your child's view of reading?
If so, in what ways do you believe you can make this impact?
7. What other factors do you believe have an impact on your child's view of reading?

Appendix C

Phone Interview Questions

1. How do you feel about supporting your child's reading activities?
2. Do you believe you have the resources and knowledge needed to support your child's reading?
3. Do you believe you have the ability to impact your child's reading activities and attitudes?
4. If answer to question 3 is yes, in what ways do you believe you can have this impact?
5. Please explain your home literacy activities.

Book Club Meeting Date _____

Appendix D

Initials	Comment	Researcher Notes

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