22nd National Conference on Family Literacy

Research Strand

Conference Proceedings

2013

Edited by:
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April 2013

Dear National Conference on Family Literacy Participants,

Welcome to the second year of the NCFL Conference Research Proceedings. We are delighted to have received a growth in the research papers we received this year. Each author has crafted a short piece, based on their research that directly pertains to topics of interest for practitioners, researchers, and administrators working in family literacy. Topics range from parent involvement, math, and reading to leadership and technology.

This year we also have the pleasure of working with some of our colleagues working in family literacy in Mexico. This has resulted in a short section of Spanish language research papers. We hope to translate these papers in the future to make them accessible to the wider NCFL audience. Their participation highlights and links us to the international scope of family literacy.

We hope that you find these papers informative for you and your work.

Sincerely,

Blaire Willson Toso, Research Associate
Goodling Institute for Research in Family Literacy

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April 2013

Dear National Conference on Family Literacy Participants,

This is our second year of producing proceedings from the National Conference on Family Literacy. The papers, based on research sessions that the authors are offering at the Conference, will be of immeasurable value to conference participants as they revisit and reflect on what they learn at the Conference. The proceedings, available on the Goodling Institute's web page at Penn State <ed.psu.edu/educ/goodling-institute>, will also reach a broader audience, enriching others' knowledge about issues in family literacy.

The 2013 National Conference on Family Literacy continues a tradition of offering research-based practical sessions as well as cutting edge research for those who want in-depth information on specific topics. Researchers may be invited to present as Featured Speakers or as session presenters of new and ongoing research about or relevant to family literacy. Regardless, their papers reflect the quality of the research as well as its practical application to improving classroom and program practices. This year's proceedings include papers that emphasize parents' engagement in their children's growth as learners and the essential role that culture plays in relationships between families and schools.

We look forward to our ongoing relationship with the National Center for Family Literacy and our collaborative support for research presentations at the Conference.

Sincerely,

Barbara Van Horn

Barbara Van Horn, Co-Director
Goodling Institute for Research in Family Literacy
Institute for the Study of Adult Literacy
The Pennsylvania State University

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Dear educators and family literacy advocates,

The National Center for Family Literacy (NCFL) is pleased to present, alongside the Goodling Institute for Research in Family Literacy at Penn State University, these proceedings from the research strand at the 22nd National Conference on Family Literacy.

Through these sessions NCFL's conference continues to provide the latest research in family education efforts, and the practical applications of that research. This annual dissemination of and focus on research findings is critically important to our nation's family engagement in education movement, and we are delighted to extend this body of information to a broad audience with the publishing of these proceedings.

NCFL is committed to our partnership with the Goodling Institute, continuing the research strand at our conference and engaging even more researchers in family-focused education efforts. We encourage educators and programs nationwide to apply the information and strategies shared in the proceedings to everyday classroom instruction, a practice that will surely support better outcomes for families.

To learn more about future research strands at the conference and other exciting initiatives and resources for families available from NCFL, please visit www.famlit.org often. Thank you for your dedication and commitment to families learning together.

Sincerely,

Sharon Darling

Sharon Darling
President & Founder

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Note: These papers reflect the content of the research presentations at the conference. These papers are not peer reviewed, nor formally edited. Content, omissions, inaccuracies in citations, or other errors are the responsibility of the authors.

RESEARCH PAPERS

Measuring Parent Engagement in Early Childhood Intervention Programs

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University of South Florida

Abstract: A primary aim of many early childhood intervention programs is to facilitate parent engagement to enhance child development and school success. Promoting meaningful parent engagement requires understanding the relationship of different types of caregiver behaviors and attitudes to learning and development. Yet, there is limited understanding about the specific aspects, levels, and patterns of involvement that differentially affect child outcomes. This is, in part, due to the variations in definitions and conceptualizations that have been used to guide evaluations and the limitations of available research measures. Given the potential importance of parent engagement as a protective factor for children experiencing multiple risk factors, understanding key dimensions that can be enhanced with early intervention is strongly warranted. Further, defining desired outcomes and appropriately measuring impact is increasingly necessary for funding and establishing "evidence based practice". This paper presents a review of issues related to assessing parent engagement as an early childhood intervention program outcome. It concludes with a description of the research efforts of one national early childhood home visiting program to address these issues.

Key words: parent engagement, early childhood intervention, measurement, program evaluation.

Introduction

A primary aim of many early childhood intervention programs is to facilitate parent engagement to enhance child development and school success. Promoting meaningful parent engagement through intervention requires understanding the relationship of different types of caregiver behaviors and attitudes to learning and development. Given the potential importance of parent engagement as a protective factor for children experiencing multiple risk factors, understanding key dimensions that can be enhanced with early intervention is strongly warranted. Enhancing parent engagement through early childhood intervention is a process that requires appropriately defining the behaviors, attitudes and knowledge a program intends to influence. Defining the desired outcomes and appropriately measuring impact is increasingly necessary for funding and establishing "evidence based practice". However, measuring parent engagement as a program outcome is challenged by limited understanding about effects of different parenting practices, variability in definition, and lack of available instruments. This paper presents a review of definitional and measurement challenges and considerations in evaluating parent engagement as a program outcome. It concludes with a description of the efforts of one national early childhood home visiting program to address these issues.

Why is Parent Engagement Important?

School success is a complex process facilitated by many factors beginning before a student enters the kindergarten classroom. Research shows that children who are successful in kindergarten generally demonstrate better long-term educational outcomes. Conversely, poor performance at the start of formal schooling has been associated with significantly lower future academic performance. Achievement discrepancies start early and persist. Many modifiable contextual factors including family income, high quality child care, and home literacy environment influence a child's readiness and successful entry into school (Waanders, Mendez, & Downer, 2007; Duncan & Brooks-Gunn, 2011). In addition, several specific parent behaviors have been related to positive child educational outcomes including enriched language environments and shared book reading during early childhood (Farrant, 2012; Brinkman, Sayers, Goldfeld, & Kline, 2009; Hoff, 2012; Janus & Offord, 2007).

Thus, parent involvement and early childhood education have been regarded as two of the most important protective strategies to maximize positive outcomes for children, particularly important for children living at or below the poverty line (Sproul, 2012). Involving parents in the educational process has been identified as particularly important for "maximizing low-income children's opportunities for academic success" (Waanders et al., 2007, p620). Parental engagement with children has been associated with positive benefits for preschool age children including language and literacy development (Sheridan, Knoche, Kupzyk, Edwards, & Marvin, 2011). Further, parents are the first teachers of their children (Reese, Sparks, & Leyva, 2010; Bornstein, 1995; Britto, Brooks-Gunn, & Griffin, 2006) and are therefore in a unique position to encourage and promote strong language and literacy practices at an early age in order to promote academic success. Programs that are designed to support parent engagement during early childhood then may be particularly powerful to change the developmental and academic trajectories of many children.

It is well established that parent involvement in education is generally beneficial for achievement. Parent involvement can provide continuity between home and educational settings, increase teacher awareness of family cultural values and background, promote positive adaptation to formal schooling, and increase parent knowledge of developmentally appropriate parenting (El Nokali, Bachman, & Votruba-Drza, 2010). However, rigorous research examining specific benefits of parent involvement for low-income families during preschool is lacking (Waanders et al., 2007). Early education programs that include a family component have also been positively associated with children's educational success, but the effects of specific features of such programs, "remain largely untested and unknown" (Boethel, 2004, p2). Studies that examine how programs can best facilitate parent engagement to promote early and long-term school success, what types and patterns of involvement enhance educational outcomes, and how to appropriately define and reliably measure key dimensions of parent engagement are strongly warranted. A clear definition of parent engagement and identified theoretical framework is necessary to guide the selection of measures to assess significant effects of different types and levels of parent attitudes and behaviors.

What is Parent Engagement?

Parent engagement is a complex, multifaceted construct (Fantuzzo et al., 2000; Epstein, 1995). Many researchers agree that there are multiple dimensions that influence the developmental pathways that affect the child's approach to the learning, requires a multidimensional framework of involvement (Morrison, 2009; Edwards et al, 2010; Sheridan et al, 2011; Waanders, et al., 2007). Joyce Epstein's model (1995) is often cited as the theoretical framework in parent involvement research involving the following six dimensions: parenting, communicating, volunteering and supporting school programs, learning in the home, decision making, and community collaborations. These dimensions fit well for school age children. Current theoretical frameworks of parent engagement are situated within a broader ecological perspective (Bronfenbrenner, 1979; 2000). Yet, there is limited understanding about the specific aspects, levels, and patterns of parent engagement that differentially affect child outcomes. This is, in part, due to the variations in definitions and conceptualizations that have been used to guide evaluations and limitations of available research measures.

Parent engagement has been operationally defined and measured in many ways. This variability complicates the current understanding of what is actually meant by different programs who seek to promote parent engagement and what it would look like if programs were successful in achieving this aim. Further, the terms "Parent involvement", "family involvement", and "parent engagement" have been used interchangeably in research. Common definitions of parent involvement are often narrower in scope than those used to represent parent engagement. Parent involvement behaviors "range from ideological support of education to active communication with school personnel" (Waanders et al., 2007, p620). This term is often used in relation to education at school and in the home (Castro, Bryant, Peisner-Feinberg, & Skinner, 2004; Grolnick & Slowiaczek, 1994; Parker, Boak, Griffin, Ripple & Peay, 1999). The term "parent engagement" is often used to represent a broader and more holistic operationalization that encompasses several types of parenting practices.

While the concept of parent involvement is often grounded in educational activities, the concept of parent engagement has been viewed as more generalized parenting practices. Parent engagement extends the parent role in academic achievement to include other ways parents promote their child's learning and development. For example, Sheridan and colleagues (2011) conceptualize parent engagement during early childhood as "behaviors that connect with and support children or others in their environment in ways that are interactive, purposeful, and directed toward meaningful learning and affective outcomes" and suggest that this includes "interactions and provision of experiences that nurture children and promote children's autonomy and learning" (p362). They define parent engagement as being composed of three dimensions: (a) warmth, sensitivity, and responsiveness; (b) support for a child's emerging autonomy and self-control; and (c) participation in learning and literacy. Despite differences in definition and measurement there is general agreement that parent engagement is a complex and multifaceted construct significantly associated with child academic achievement and social competence. Regardless of the term used, it is necessary to have a clear definition of this program goal to decide what and how to measure change in parent behavior, knowledge or attitude and assess effects of program participation.

Measuring Parent Engagement

Parent engagement has been assessed using various methods. Parent report, teacher report, program and school records and observation are methods used to examine parent engagement. Multiple raters are recommended as research has found that parents and teacher report significant differences in types and levels of involvement (Kohl et al., 2000). However, few studies include objective measures of involvement or consider the quality of the parent–teacher relationship (Waanders et al., 2007). Affective components and quality of engagement may also matter and have been left out of existing early childhood measures.

Many past studies of parent involvement in early childhood used surveys, solitary items from surveys, or one item to assess parent involvement, all considered inadequate to assess complex parent behaviors (Fantuzzo et al., 2004). Fantuzzo and colleagues recommend a multivariate study with empirically informed dimensions that will further allow for an examination of how aspects of involvement influence early childhood competencies necessary for school success. Based on Epstein's model, an early childhood three dimensional family involvement questionnaire was created and has been validated with factor analyses. Although there are few standardized measures of parent engagement, there have been large national studies that include items to assess parent activities with their children and involvement with schools. In early childhood these studies include the ECLS-K, NHES, NICHD child care, and Head Start Impact Study. These surveys use items that consist of face-valid, *a prior,* groupings of items without clear documented evidence of construct validity (Sproul, 2012).

A limited number of empirically based standardized research measures of parent engagement are available with limited options focused on early childhood. Nevertheless, two commonly used early childhood measures are the Family Involvement Questionnaire (FIQ) and the Home Observation for Measurement for the Environment (HOME). The FIQ is a self-report measure to assess their involvement in the home, school and classroom environments (Perry, Fantuzzo, & Munis, 2002). It has been used primarily in Head Start research and as a base of comparison for other parent involvement measures (Buhs, Welch, Burt, & Knoche, 2011). The HOME is a descriptive profile that assesses the caregiving environment; it has been used by researchers and practitioners for over 30 years (Totsika & Sylva, 2004). This instrument focuses solely on the experience of the child in the home environment. It contains eight subscales: learning materials, language stimulation, physical environment, responsivity, academic stimulation, modeling, variety and acceptance (Totsika & Sylva, 2004) information is collected by direct observation and interview by a trained observer at one time point.

Measures and methods to assess parent engagement should depend on the purpose of the study. A local program evaluation that is asked to collect information about change in parent behavior (e.g. frequency reads to a child) may use parent surveys at the start and completion of a program. While this may indicate positive change in behavior, it is not an appropriate method to determine cause without an appropriate comparison group with baseline data. Nevertheless, comparing items in a pre and post test format with a questionnaire directly comparable to national averages (and matched subsample) to provide descriptive information about promising benefits for program participation. This type of information can be useful for process evaluation and may provide information for future research with rigorous effectiveness studies.

There is a need for a better understanding of predictors of parent involvement and understanding of aspects that are associated with differential child outcomes. Investigating determinants of parent involvement will help in understanding the development of preschool age children (Waanders et al., 2007). There is also a need for new early childhood standardized measures of parent engagement using a multi-dimensional framework for children who may not be in center based care. To that end, new measures should include "dimensions of PI that are specific in behavioral scope, capture the variety of PI behaviors, and consist of enough content items to reliably measure the construct will improve the likelihood that the findings are useful in future research (Kohl et al., 2000, p505)".

Assessing Parent Engagement as an ECI Outcome

Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters (HIPPY) is a home-based early childhood intervention program focused on parent-involved learning for preschool age children. HIPPY was established in 1969 at Hebrew University in Israel as a research and demonstration project. It is currently implemented in 13 countries. HIPPY was established in the United States in 1984 and now serve more than 15,000 families across 21 states and the District of Columbia. The aim of the HIPPY program is to prepare children for long-term school success starting at kindergarten entry by empowering parents of three to five year-old children as their first and most important teachers. It was developed for families who have risk factors associated with lower academic achievement including economic disadvantage, limited English language proficiency, and social isolation. A primary objective of the program is to increase parent involvement in school and community life with the goal to increase early learning and school success of young children. According to HIPPY International, a central assumption is that engaging interactions between parents and children and an enriched home environment are key and fundamental components in facilitating school readiness and increased achievement motivation to foster the capacity of children to realize their full potential.

The HIPPY model involves community based home visitors who meet with parents in their homes to role play curricular activities one hour a week for thirty weeks per program year. Parents then spend approximately 15 to 20 minutes per day with their children using the reviewed HIPPY books and activity packets. Programs also have regularly scheduled parent group meetings. All HIPPY programs share the same four core components: a standard developmentally appropriate school readiness curriculum, role-play as method of instruction, peer home visitors, and home visiting as the service delivery method. One major expectation is that learning and completing the activities in the standard HIPPY curriculum parents will have increased knowledge and skills that increase parent involvement in early learning and education activities with anticipated long-term engagement in their children's education upon entry into formal schooling. Thus effectively measuring impact on parent engagement is essential to establishing effectiveness.

The National Research and Evaluation Center (NREC)

HIPPY is committed to supporting research to demonstrate the effectiveness of the program and to identify areas in need of improvement. Numerous research and program evaluations have been conducted since HIPPY began. In February 2012, HIPPY USA and the

University of South Florida (USF) began a joint initiative to build a national research and evaluation center (NREC) for HIPPY USA. The NREC is in a unique position to set a national research agenda that would enhance the evidence base for a national home visiting model and provide support for the state and local program evaluations.

Given the primary goals for HIPPY programs, one of the primary activities of NREC is to identify, develop and recommend standardized measures for parent and child outcomes. A HIPPY USA questionnaire is under development that will align with the new curriculum to be offered to all programs for free. The design began with a review of available measures and discussion with state directors and program coordinators in focus groups and site visits. A multi-state national parent survey advisory board was organized. The advisory group convened to discuss definition, questionnaire scope, and purpose of the survey. Members reviewed existing measures and national studies to recommend specific items. The design of a program specific survey was guided by local program evaluation needs and content that would be comparable to national datasets with many items were selected from existing national surveys.

Another aim of the NREC is to examine parent outcomes using a rigorous research design that can indicate cause and effect. A multisite, national randomized control trial (RCT) study using mixed methods and standardized measures of parent engagement will be conducted pending funding within the next few years. NREC has started instrument design work to create a standardized instrument on parent engagement applicable for all home visiting models and programs. Developing this measure would address the identified lack of reliable and valid early childhood instruments to help better understand consequences of different types of parent engagement and the effects of participation in different early childhood intervention programs.

Future Direction

Challenges to measuring parent engagement as an ECI program outcome are vast. Different conceptualizations and definitions exist. Nevertheless, given the potential importance of parent engagement as a protective factor for children experiencing multiple risk factors, continuing work on understanding and appropriately measuring parent engagement as a program outcome is strongly warranted.

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Summary: School, Family, and Community Partnerships to Improve Students' Reading and Literacy Skills and Attitudes

Joyce L. Epstein**
Johns Hopkins University

**Featured Research Presenter

Abstract: This is a summary of published and forthcoming reviews of the literature on family involvement with students on reading and literacy skills. Four main conclusions are discussed:

- School-based programs of school, family, and community partnerships can correct the historic pattern that only some families become involved with their children's reading and literacy learning.
- *Subject-specific* family and community involvement activities are more likely than generic involvement activities to improve students' reading, writing, and other literacy skills.
- The *quality* of programs and practices of school, family, and community partnerships counts.
- Researchers must continue to improve the depth of studies on family and community involvement for students' reading, writing, and other literacy skills.

We discuss six implications of the confirmed research results for improving policy and practice. It is clear that parents *could* become engaged with their children on reading and related activities *if* teachers and school-based partnership teams had professional development and on-going technical assistance to put effective programs in place.

A few activities conducted by schools in the National Network of Partnership Schools (NNPS) at Johns Hopkins University are included to illustrate how schools at all grade levels are developing their partnership programs to engage parents, other family, and community partners with children to improve reading skills and attitudes.

Key words: partnerships, parental engagement, reading skills and attitudes, reading readiness

This summary presents the main conclusions and implications from two extensive reviews of research on the results *for students* of family and community engagement in reading and literacy skills and attitudes from preschool through high school. One publication examined studies conducted over 30 years at all grade levels of family involvement with children on reading (Sheldon & Epstein, 2005). The second examined a decade of research on the results of family involvement with preschool children on reading readiness (Van Voorhis & Epstein, forthcoming).

This summary is limited to *studies of school-based programs to engage families in their children's education*. It does not include studies in the original publications of how parents conduct reading activities at home on their own. It does include a few examples of present-day applications of the research findings in promising practices reported by schools in National

Network of Partnership Schools (NNPS) at Johns Hopkins University (Epstein, et al., 2009; Hutchins, Greenfeld, & Epstein, 2008; Thomas, et al., 2012).

Summary of Research Results

There are four main conclusions confirmed in over one hundred studies of school-based programs of family and community involvement for students' reading and literacy learning.

- School-based programs of school, family, and community partnerships can correct the historic pattern that only some families become involved on their own with their children's reading and literacy learning.

Most parents, even those with many years of formal education, say that they need information and guidance from their children's teachers to remain involved with their children's learning from one year to the next. Research confirms that *when* schools reach out to all families with well-organized, age-appropriate, goal-linked practices, just about *all* families can and will support their children's reading and literacy learning at all grade levels, regardless of the parents' formal education, socioeconomic status, or racial, cultural, or linguistic backgrounds.

- *Subject-specific* family and community involvement activities are more likely than generic or unfocused involvement activities to improve students' reading, writing, and other literacy skills.

When preschools, elementary, middle, and high schools design and implement activities that engage families and community partners with children on reading readiness and on reading and literacy skills at different grade levels, more students are likely to improve these very skills. Goal-linked activities show parents that their time and interactions with their children are well-planned and productive in supporting students' learning and achievement in specific subjects.

Educators must be able to design age-appropriate, family-friendly activities that encourage and enable all parents to help their children master and enjoy reading, writing, storytelling, talking, and listening. Studies of diverse populations of parents across the grades show that just about all parents can share and discuss stories and conduct activities to help their children recognize sounds and letters; write letters, numbers, and words; read aloud; listen to and tell nursery rhymes and stories in any language; read for understanding; become accurate and fluid in reading; improve spelling and vocabulary; read for pleasure and enjoyment; and continue to improve reading and writing skills in the older grades. Parents need not be experts in reading or speak English to help their children practice and celebrate the mastery of reading and literacy skills at home and at school.

Well-designed homework activities enable *students* to work with a family partner to practice reading and literacy skills in creative ways and to read aloud the stories, poems, and essays that they write. See, for example, *Teachers Involve Parents in Schoolwork – TIPS –* interactive homework materials for enabling *students* to engage their own parents in reading and language arts activities in the middle grades at www.partnershipschools.org in the *TIPS* section.

- The *quality* of programs and practices of school, family, and community partnerships counts.

Well-organized partnership programs increasingly engage more and different families. Well-designed, goal-linked engagement activities help parents see *why* they are interacting with their children at school or at home, and with teachers and others to improve students' reading skills and attitudes, and other subjects. In strong and sustainable programs, these two aspects of program design and conduct—outreach to parents and results for students—can be evaluated in feasible ways and improved from year to year to increase the *quality* of school-based plans and practices for family and community engagement, the number of different parents who become partners, and results for students.

Studies indicate, too, that the *frequency* and *consistency* of teachers' or a partnership team's outreach to engage parents make a difference in whether and which parents become and remain productively involved with their children on reading, language arts, and other literacy skills and learning. Several studies identified "essential elements" of excellent programs of family and community involvement. High-quality partnership programs must establish and strengthen *leadership, teamwork, the quality of action plans, the implementation of planned activities, adequate funding, evaluation of quality and progress, collegial support,* and *networking.*

Schools and districts that want to move from rhetoric to action in developing research-based programs of family and community engagement that contribute to students' reading achievement and attitudes (and success in other subjects and behaviors such as attendance, behavior, and college and career planning) are invited to join the National Network of Partnership Schools (NNPS) at Johns Hopkins University for professional development and on-going support (www.partnershipschools.org).

- Researchers need to continue to improve the breadth and depth of studies on family and community involvement for students' reading, writing, other literacy skills, and other outcomes.

Over the past thirty years, research on partnership program development has influenced federal, state, and local policies, programs, and practices of family and community engagement with students on reading and other school outcomes. Individual studies and meta-analyses of scores of studies provide consistent and convincing findings that support educators in developing "research-based" and "evidence-based" goal-linked programs of family and community engagement with students in practicing, mastering, and celebrating reading and related skills and attitudes, and other results for success in school.

Nevertheless, researchers must continue to improve their questions and methods for studying the results for students of subject-specific, grade-specific, and skill-specific family and community engagement activities. New studies may explore the most effective communication technologies to engage parents and community partners with students on specific reading/literacy skills; strategies for engaging fathers as well as mothers in these activities; and activities that maximize results on specific reading skills from preschool through high school.

Because every school cannot conduct extensive, expensive, longitudinal research studies, the research community must strengthen the knowledge base of results, guidelines, and

applications that educators may use to take action on partnership program development in their own districts and schools. At our Center, we recognize the value of the following chain:

Research→Improve Practice→Inform and Improve Research→ … and so on.

Grade-Level Results of Family Involvement in Reading

Studies show that, although practices of involvement differ in preschools, elementary, middle, and high schools, age-appropriate family and community involvement activities help students improve reading and literacy skills at every grade level. The following are a few findings confirmed across studies.

In preschool and early elementary grades, just about every study conducted over the past 10 years indicates that students benefit when families are engaged with young children on reading and literacy readiness and early reading skills. This includes parents with low and high incomes and in diverse communities. Results were strongest for parent-child *shared reading* approaches including dialogic reading and reading storybooks. Different involvement activities had different results for students. For example, some studies indicated that shared reading with storybooks increased students' vocabulary, listening, and comprehension skills, whereas teaching young children sounds and letters increased students' alphabet knowledge, decoding, and invented spelling.   The results suggest that preschools and elementary schools will help students strengthen the full range of reading and literacy skills by guiding parents as partners with students in practicing and enjoying various reading-related activities together.

In the later elementary grades, studies show that family and community involvement positively influences student achievement and other measures of success. One study of third and fifth grade students in mainly African-American families with low incomes found that students in classrooms with teachers who more frequently involved families in learning activities at home had higher gains in reading achievement from one year to the next, compared to students in other teachers' classrooms. The finding has been reproduced in other studies.

At the secondary level, fewer studies have been conducted on family engagement with students on reading skills in middle and high schools than in the earlier grades. Research, now beginning to accumulate, suggests that when middle and high school teachers, counselors, administrators, and partnership teams communicated frequently and clearly with parents, teens were more likely to increase reading achievement scores than when educators did not communicate with parents. Students also had higher achievement and report card grades in English if their parents discussed school and future plans with them, checked homework, and maintained high educational expectations. Parents' interest in and support for reading (and other school subjects) played an important role in students' academic development through high school.

Studies of the NNPS approach, *Teachers Involve Parents in Schoolwork (TIPS) Language Arts* intervention found that middle school students who completed more homework assignments by interacting with a family partner had better writing skills, higher language arts report card grades and, over two years, higher reading/language arts achievement test scores than students in control (non-TIPS) classes (Van Voorhis, 2011).

**Framework for School, Family, and Community Partnerships
on Reading Skills and Attitudes**

Studies indicate that more and different families get involved when schools implement a comprehensive partnership program with activities that represent six types of involvement, identified in a research-based framework (Epstein, et al., 2009). The six types of involvement may be designed to encourage family and community partnerships with students on reading and literacy skills.

Type 1-Parenting: Provide workshops for parents with ideas on how to: read aloud with young children at home and how to structure family conversations to discuss books and literacy skills across the grades. Activities may include home visits to meet with parents about their child's reading program and to learn what parents want to do at home to support children's reading. Workshops may be offered in multi-languages at school or in community locations.

 Type 2-Communicating: Conduct parent-teacher-student conferences focused on reading goals and students' reading progress. Discuss with parents and students actions at school and at home that will help improve or sustain reading and literacy skills. Help students and parents know how reading skills are measured and reported on report cards and in annual school reports on achievement test scores.

Type 3-Volunteering: Organize reading volunteers, spelling buddies, tutors, and other well-trained literacy volunteers to work with individual children or small groups who need extra help on reading, writing, and other literacy skills. Volunteers may assist before school, during the school day, at lunch time, and in afterschool or Saturday programs. Parents also volunteer their time when they serve as "audience" for student activities.

Type 4-Learning at Home: Design weekly interactive reading and writing homework assignments for all students to share their work and ideas with their family partners, including reading, writing in all styles, and speeches. Interactive homework helps students practice oral reading, spelling, vocabulary and other literacy skills. Parents and students benefit from guidance on shared-reading to enjoy at home.

 Type 5-Decision Making: Have the PTA or PTO conduct book fairs, family reading night, and other reading and literacy-related programs. The school's parent organization and the Action Team for Partnerships (which includes teachers, parents, and administrators) can work together to ensure that all parents feel welcome at the school and know that their engagement with their children at home is valued by teachers and administrators.

Type 6-Collaborating with the Community: Work with business partners and community groups to provide books for students to help establish a literacy-rich home environment and to increase students' reading for pleasure. With community groups, conduct adult literacy programs to help parents gain reading, English, or GED skills, and family literacy programs for parents and

children to attend together. Work with community partners on tutoring, mentoring, and summer learning programs to increase students' skills and success in school.

Here are a few examples of family and community involvement activities linked to reading and writing goals that schools in the National Network of Partnership Schools (NNPS) reported as working well in their locations in the past two years. Examples emphasize one or more of the six types of involvement in their design.[*]

ACTIVITIES FOR PARENTS AND STUDENTS, TOGETHER OR STUDENTS AND COMMUITY	
Literacy Breakfasts Elementary School / Vermont	A breakfast buffet included students reading a favorite book passage to a parent or family member. Each teacher's classroom also selected a reading-related activity to share in a creative way (e.g., song, drama, featured writing).
A Night at the Oscars Middle School / Washington (state)	Books based on movies were featured with costumes on the "red carpet" and in a "wax museum" of biographical people who came alive to tell an historic story. Movie career opportunities were discussed; a *Jeopardy* game for students and parents was based on book-to-movie information; and teachers provided parents with information on their reading programs.
Family Literacy Night Early Childhood Center / New York	Curious George, Mother Goose, Dr. Seuss, and Nursery Rhymes were featured, and characters came alive to tell their tales. At the Fairytale Theater, students performed to share their favorite stories with parents, grandparents, and others.
One Book, One School Book Club and Senior Center High School / Pennsylvania	Students, adults at school, at home, and in the community read *The Hunger Games* at the same time. Students discussed themes in class. At a meeting at the Senior Center, students and senior citizens discussed the book's themes of social standing, power, poverty, and war. The meeting forged strong intergenerational conversations and respect for varied viewpoints.
SPOTLIGHT ON STUDENT WORK	
Authors' Celebration Elementary School / Virginia	Students selected, "published," and read for parents and classmates one of their best work from their writing portfolio for the year. On a dedication page, students thanked those who encouraged their writing
Family Traditions Reading Night Elementary School / California	Students discussed with a family partner and then wrote stories on their family's favorite holiday for an "essay contest." Some

	read their essays aloud that the Reading Night, which also included a book swap and information from the public librarian about library cards and special activities.
Word of the Week High School / Idaho	The high school focused on vocabulary for SAT tests throughout the community. A weekly new word (spelling, pronunciation, meaning, usage) was featured in all classrooms. Businesses sponsored different words and gave discounts on goods and services if students used the word at the register. An end of year quiz offered students valuable prizes.

*Full description of these examples and many other activities are in books of *Promising Partnership Practices* in the section Success Stories on the NNPS website, www.partnershipschools.org. Also see the NNPS *Sampler on Reading.* Other foci of school, family, and community partnerships in reading include workshops for parents, activities for volunteers, and community partners. For still more ideas, see Hutchins, Greenfeld, and Epstein (2008).

Implications for Policy and Practice

It must be stated that all children need highly-competent teachers every day and every year to continually improve their reading, writing, and other literacy skills. It also is imperative that all teachers know that students' parents, other family members, and community partners are important partners in supporting and advancing students' reading and literacy skills. Although longitudinal and intervention studies are needed to continue to strengthen the research base, the extant studies on family and community involvement with children on reading across the grades yield six *immediate and actionable* implications for policy and practice.

(1) Parents at all grade levels and in all socioeconomic and cultural groups can support and encourage their children's reading, writing, and other literacy learning.   Most parents need and want good guidance, useful tools and materials, and encouragement from their children's teachers on how to become engaged with their children on reading-related skills and attitudes.

(2) All preschools, elementary, middle, and high schools could develop school-based, goal-linked partnership programs and grade-specific practices that engage all families with their children on reading, writing, and other literacy skills. Based on results of research at all grade levels, action must replace rhetoric to involve all families in productive ways.

(3) At the school level, teachers need guidance and encouragement from principals, district administrators, and/or reading coaches to engage all parents with children on useful reading activities.   Professional development and on-going technical assistance must be provided for teachers, grade level teams, and schools' partnership teams to develop and implement— equitably and consistently—specific activities for family and community involvement with students on reading and literacy skill development. Activities may be designed to activate the

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six types of involvement (Epstein, et al., 2009) to engage parents and community partners in different ways to support children's learning.

(4) District curriculum coaches and specialists in reading and language arts need professional development, too, to become and remain up-to-date on strategies for conducting family and community engagement in reading, writing, and other literacy skills in preschools, elementary, middle, and high schools. Only with knowledge of teamwork for partnership program development will district leaders be viewed as legitimate "experts" by their schools' teachers and teams.

(5) Preservice and advanced education courses at the college level are needed to prepare future teachers and administrators to understand and be able to develop effective and equitable programs of family and community involvement linked to improving reading and other school improvement goals (Epstein, 2011).

(6) Resources are available to help educators at the school, district, and state levels take action to develop research-based partnership programs. Visit the National Network of Partnership Schools (NNPS) at www.partnershipschools.org, National Center for Family Literacy at www.famlit.org, Harvard Family Research Project at www.hfrp.org, and see references below.

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Culturally Relevant Reading and Mathematics Instruction

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Abstract: The purpose of this research was to find culturally relevant ways to differentiate reading and mathematics instruction with populations of diverse students including those who are economically disadvantaged as well as culturally diverse. Learning culturally relevant ways to address reading and mathematics with historically marginalized student populations can help these students have a more equal opportunity at a quality education. The researchers present integrated behaviors that proved most likely to lead to academic achievement or content attainment in the areas of reading and mathematics instruction. This study is specialized because it was conducted with a population of economically disadvantaged students who attended tutoring on a bus that visited their housing complex once a week.

Key words: reading, mathematics, culture, community

Statement of the Research Topic

To the researcher's understanding, there has been no research on identifying what behaviors can be used by adults to enhance math understanding through reading math storybooks and participating in supplemental math activities in preschool age children. This study integrates the work of DeBruin-Parecki (1999) and "Edible Math: Hands on Math Strategies" by Project Central in order to create a math storybook and activity intervention. The goal of this study is to determine how providing culturally relevant experiences or stories into mathematics storybook reading time make children more receptive to mathematics and reading, and enhance children's interest in mathematics and reading.

Literature Review

The National Association for the Education of Young Children and the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (2002) agree that integrated, intentional curriculum can effectively introduce children to problem solving skills that can nurture both reading and mathematical development. Additionally, scholars affirm that shared reading that encourages behaviors such as mutual questioning, responding, and making stories relevant to the child's life promotes increased engagement in reading (DeBruin-Parecki, 1999, 2009; Isbell, Sobol, Lindauer, & Lowrance, 2004). Because mathematical learning occurs through concrete experiences (doing, seeing, or hearing) using reading as a tool for learning mathematics requires students to learn from hearing math stories (Capraro, Capraro, & Rupley, 2011) and doing math activities.

Learning mathematics is much like learning a new language. Although the concept of math as language is largely accepted in research, what is often excluded or given little attention is the basic notion of reading mathematics as a language (Adams, 2003) especially in early childhood. Children are expected to know a specialized vocabulary to learn math and be able to comprehend what that vocabulary means in order to apply those specialized, mathematics concepts when appropriate. Just like vocabulary development is essential for reading comprehension, mathematical vocabulary is essential for mathematics conceptual understanding (Capraro & Joffrion, 2006). As children learn mathematics, it is essential they learn the meaning of new words that are either not part of their oral vocabulary or have wholly different meanings from what they already know (Capraro, Capraro, & Rupley, 2011). For most students, mathematical language is learned almost entirely at school and it is not spoken at home (Cirillo, Bruna, & Herbal-Eisenmann, 2010) which is what makes math storybooks so important to an early learner. Through incorporating math storybooks into shared reading time, children are able to build their understanding of the language of mathematics. Hearing mathematics vocabulary during shared reading time is important because it can lay a foundation that can help further their future academic achievement in mathematics.

Preschoolers must make sense of mathematics vocabulary in order to communicate and think mathematically (Bryant, Ugel, Thompson, & Hamff, 1999; Samuels & Flor, 1997). Because mathematical learning occurs through concrete experiences such as doing, seeing or hearing (Capraro et al., 2011) children must be encouraged to engage in activities that allow them to apply new mathematics vocabulary or concepts learned from mathematics storybooks. Approaching mathematics in a relevant, practical way can be advantageous to parents in developing an effective shared reading practice. Then children are able to experience what could be perceived as an act of play that becomes a foundation for problem solving skills, building mathematics vocabulary, and future success in reading.

It is plausible that reading mathematics based storybooks and incorporating mathematics experiences into shared reading for preschool children could enhance both reading and mathematics skills in these early learners. Research (Miller & Mercer, 1997, 1993) has shown that in order to achieve the necessary level of abstract thinking in mathematics, students must start at the concrete level and gradually move through the abstract level. The concrete experience of hearing stories during shared reading becomes representational when children learn to read and apply mathematics vocabulary later in their classrooms at school. By including mathematics experiences in shared reading time, children can gain intellectual capital that can help them with sense making of both the abstract and the representational in the content areas of both mathematics and reading.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework for this study is based on several theoretical premises (Sulzby, 1985, 1988; Sulzby & Teale, 1987; Valencia & Sulzby, 1991). We first assume that children are becoming literate long before they are reading from print meaning that children are developing print awareness and alphabetic principle before learning to decode words on a page. Our research also assumes that early literacy experiences happen during shared storybook readings. Additionally we assume that children are acquiring both oral and written language

simultaneously. We also recognize that children are receptive to special language and cultural norms that are present in a particular culture despite their young age. By using this theoretical framework, the proposed study is able to explore literacy in early learners who are not considered literate by conventional standards.

Some researchers have argued that various types of reform will improve mathematics education for minority students. One particular solution of interest was presented by Ladson-Billings in the 90's termed culturally relevant pedagogy (CRP). Ladson-Billings studied a group of teachers that were successful with African American students, and as a result she developed the grounded theory of CRP (2009). She defined CRP as "a theoretical model that addresses student achievement but also helps students to accept and affirm their cultural identity while developing critical perspectives that challenge inequities that schools perpetuate"(Ladson-Billings, 1995, p.469). CRP produces students that 1) can achieve academically, 2) maintain cultural integrity, and 3) critique and analyze social inequities (Ladson-Billings, 1995). Students being able to achieve academically means that they are able to read, write, speak, compute, pose, and solve problems at sophisticated levels (Ladson-Billings). CRP was originally described as a mechanism to help African American students achieve academically, but throughout the years other researchers have also studied the success of CRP with Mexican American and Hispanic students. Therefore CRP has developed a track record of helping minority students achieve academically. Therefore another theoretical framework for this study rests within CRP.

Methodology

This research is a case study of mathematics tutors involved in administering shared reading and mathematics treatments to low socioeconomic status (SES) early childhood participants as an intervention. The focus of this case study was to engage the tutors in discourse about the developed intervention treatment that was designed to develop a culturally relevant foundation for children in mathematics through reading math storybooks. Creswell described a case study as the study of cases being explored through a bounded system (Creswell, 2007).

To save time, money, and effort, the site was selected due to its accessibility and convenience to the researchers (Creswell, 2007). The mobile tutoring project involved the use of a remodeled RV bus. The bus was remodeled to resemble the atmosphere of a classroom. The bus contained thirteen laptop computers, five flat screen televisions, tables, and chairs. MATH set up the bus once a week in one particular housing authority community located in the inner city, and provided free mathematics tutoring to children between grades one and twelve. One of the researchers was a part of the planning and grant writing team for the project; therefore the site was convenient and accessible to the researchers.

This study consisted of the tutors of children from the mobile tutoring project. The mobile tutoring project consisted of eight trained tutors. Tutors were trained by the nonprofit organization on CRP and mathematics content knowledge. All of the mathematics tutors were either college students or college graduates. Figure 1 represents gender and ethnicities of the tutors. The eight trained tutors were being paid from a foundation grant funding the mobile tutoring project.

Three months into the mobile tutoring project, one of the researchers presented the information about the research to the mathematics tutors. The tutors were informed about the

purpose of the research, to develop an intervention treatment that can help develop a culturally relevant foundation for early childhood children in mathematics through reading math storybooks. Tutors were also informed about the involvement needed from the participants, to administer storybook treatments to preschool aged children, and participation in interviews and
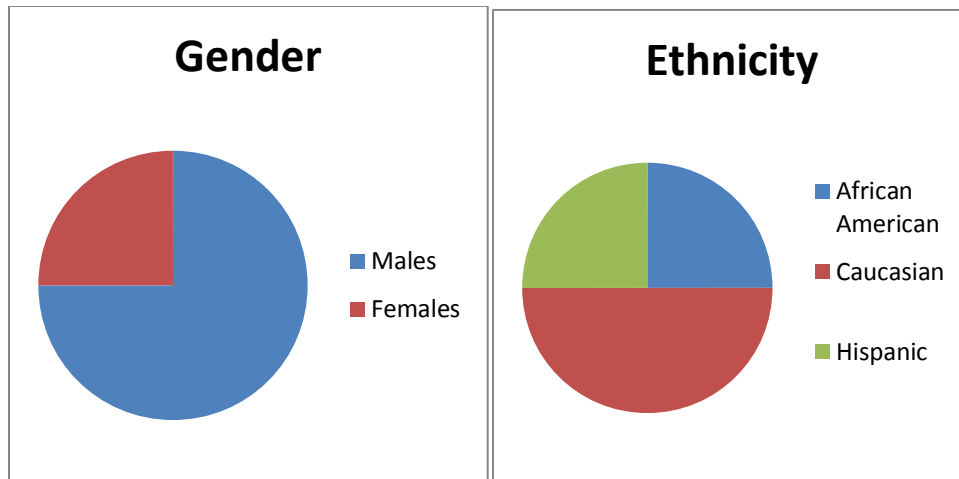
Figure 1. Gender and Ethnicity of Tutors

surveys. As an incentive to participate in the research, the tutors were offered pay for any additional time spent participating in the research comparable to the wages they were receiving from the mobile tutoring project. Tutors were asked to volunteer if they were interested in participating in the research. All eight of the tutors wanted to participate in the study.

There were four reading and mathematics treatments administered by tutors to young children between the ages of three and five. Tutors took a pre-intervention survey to gauge each tutor's perception of reading and mathematics integration prior to starting treatments with young children. These surveys were used to gather both quantitative and qualitative data via Likert scale survey and an open response section for the tutors to reflect on what seemed effective at integrating reading and mathematics with young children, what was not effective, and if the tutors perceived that cultural relevance played a part in their tutee's acquisition or reception to early reading and mathematics instruction.

Each intervention session lasted approximately 60 minutes. First, participants completed a pre-session Likert scale survey called the *Reading and Math Perception Survey*. Each survey had questions adapted from the joint position statement of The National Association for the Education of Young Children and the National Council of Teachers of Mathematics (2002). These questions required tutors to rank how often, if ever, the target behaviors had been implemented during shared readings and whether or not those behaviors had yielded a positive effect on engaging the child in both reading and mathematics or in sparking culturally relevant experiences, dialogues or stories. Engaging the child in both reading and mathematics was defined as aiding in the development of the child's oral language, early decoding, early numeracy or understanding of mathematics activities.

Then participants reflected on their experience with the targeted behavior for the week with the researcher. Through a structured interview participants shared experiences, concerns, and excitement about the previous week's mathematics storybook treatment and then inquired about the coming week's target intervention. Tutors were then instructed on the target behaviors for the coming week and were dismissed from the treatment with a "goodie bag" that contained (A) one mathematics counting storybook, (B) a snack to compliment the storybook such as Goldfish, and (C) a synopsis of the targeted behavior for the week. The "goodie bag" assisted tutors in remembering the treatment presentation and replicating and integrating targeted behaviors. The major emphasis was on how achieve symbiosis between mathematics and reading during shared readings.

Analysis

The three stages of analysis presented by Creswell (2007) are used in this study. They include preparing and organizing the transcribed data, reducing the data into themes, and representing the data in figures, tables, or a discussion. All interviews were transcribed verbatim and organized into data files. This step was followed by a read through of the data and initial coding. The data was then divided into themes through a process of coding called categorical aggregation (Creswell, 2007). Direct interpretation was used in the interpretation process by looking at a single instance to develop meaning. Naturalistic generalizations were drawn at the conclusion of the data analysis in an effort to determine what people can learn from this particular case study about an intervention integrating mathematics and reading for low SES early childhood participants.

Findings

Analyzing the results from the interviews and surveys led to the development of three consistent themes: 1) mathematics vocabulary; 2) interest and focus level; and, 3) development of reading habits. As a result of tutors engaging in shared storybook time with preschool aged children, students began to use mathematics vocabulary more frequently and confidently. Tutors shared their experiences of how they would hear the students using mathematics vocabulary more frequently such as comparing things using the terms "greater than" or less than". The intervention integrated aspects of the students culture by using items such as fruit loops, m&m's, cheerios, and goldfish to help young children with developing number sense. All tutors consistently voiced their opinion of how using these items from the students' culture helped to increase the students' interest and motivation for wanting to learn and do more. One tutor shared how she could see the eagerness in the students' eyes and how they would want to read another book or do another activity once they were finished. Students' also really enjoyed the fact that they were able to take a goody bag home of the items used in the storybook (cheerios, fruit loops, etc.). The tutor's also shared that the students began to count faster and more frequently and over time began to read the numbers on the pages. The third theme developed from the consistent pattern of the tutors changing their reading practices over time. According to the surveys, about 100% of the tutors changed at least 50% of their reading strategies over time throughout the intervention. The reading patterns that the tutors were asked about included:

allowing students to touch the pages; asking students questions about the stories; identifying pictures in the book related to the story; emphasizing repeated words; relating the story to the students' personal experiences; and, using hand motions to demonstrate numbers. The patterns that were changed most frequently involved the tutors allowing the students to touch the pages, using hand motions, and identifying pictures in the book. Tutors began to ask the students' to show them where the numbers were on the page in order for the students to be able to make the connections between the different representations of the numbers. Most of the books used numbers that involved pictures in the shape of numbers, and therefore the reading strategy of touching the pages and identifying pictures were directly related. Also, the tutors began to use their hands more to show students' numbers, and in turn the students began to use their hands to show numbers. This concept also helped the students be able to understand numbers using multiple representations.

Discussion

According to the tutor's perspectives, using the storybooks related to numbers was a great way to help students develop number sense. The tutors shared the extent to which the storybooks increased the students' desire to learn mathematics. Storybooks that were used in this study include The Cheerios Counting Book, The M&M's Counting Book, The Froot Loops Counting Book and The Goldfish Counting Book. A majority of the children that participated came to the tutoring program with little to no number sense, and the tutors were happy and amazed at how they witnessed the students' number sense begin to develop over time. One tutor stated, "We have seen progress in a small amount of time, so I would love to see how much progress will be made in a long time of the students engaging in these activities". Not only did the students enjoy the activities, but the tutors also expressed their enjoyment of participating in the storybook activities. Therefore, based on this intervention, using culturally relevant storybook experiences to teach children number sense helped to make students more receptive to mathematics and reading, and also increased their interest in mathematics and reading because it used items and ideas that the students were interested in and cared about.

Implications

The practical implications of creating an effective interactive shared reading practice that builds foundations for both mathematics and reading is nearly infinite. Children who have fulfilling shared reading experiences may also practice better interactions with others. Said children could become better learners and community leaders. Developing better community learners can improve the quality of the workforce, the post-secondary matriculation rate, and the overall fulfillment of the child and the uplifting of their community.

In order to justify the development of more programs integrating reading and mathematics, this research and similar studies are critical not only to enhancing children's interest in reading and mathematics today, but also enhancing shared reading time, and building relationships. Furthermore, information developed from this research could also be used to create professional development opportunities for early childcare professionals in order to reach a larger populace by creating leadership programs for literacy.

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Parents and Children Learning Together: An Immigrant Family Perspective

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**Featured Research Presenter

Abstract: Drawing on data collected with immigrant families, primarily of Mexican origin, in urban (Los Angeles, CA), suburban (New Brunswick, NJ), and rural (Inland Empire, CA) communities, this paper reviews family activities that support literacy development. I discuss how parents and children pool their respective skillsets to address family needs, with children contributing their greater dexterity with English, U.S. cultural norms, as well as with various media forms and content. Parents contribute their adult understandings of how the world works and of family needs, as well as their greater Spanish proficiency. Since children and parents come to these interactions as both learners and as more competent peers, these are opportunities for all family members to simultaneously support each other's and their own learning. The prominence of media connections in these practices also emphasizes that immigrant families' activities share similarities with native-born families, since middle-class, majority culture children often assist parents' development of new media literacies. The paper also emphasizes the critical importance of linkages between home and school-based learning activities. When their family responsibilities and learning activities are validated in school settings, children find it easier to make and maintain meaningful connections to their teachers and other educational resources.

Keywords: immigrant family, scaffolding, media

Immigration remains a prominent social and political issue in the U.S. and other immigrant-receiving nations worldwide. This abiding interest is well founded; recent estimates indicate that one in four U.S. children is growing up with at least one immigrant parent (Dinan, 2006). One-third of these children have at least one parent who was born in Mexico, and the Pew Hispanic Center forecasts that by 2050, one in three Americans will be of Latino descent (Passel & Cohn, 2008; Urban Institute, 2006).

These demographic shifts reflect growing significance of immigrants and their children to U.S. society and an urgent need for research in many areas, including how family activities relate to various forms of literacy. Literacy—including reading, writing, and speaking proficiencies (in multiple languages), as well those required for connecting with traditional and new media—is central to how immigrant family members communicate and learn with each other. These collective learning activities directly affect social integration and outcomes related to educational attainment, access to health care, and other resources and services (Katz, forthcoming).

Since most of my own research has focused on families headed by immigrant parents, and mainly on those of Mexican origin, I will focus my remarks primarily on this particular set

of immigrant families.[1] These families face a number of particularly difficult challenges, compared with immigrant parents from other countries of origin. These include higher likelihood of unauthorized residency status than any other group, limited formal education, and a higher risk of living in poverty than other families in the U.S. (Dreby, 2010; Fortuny et al., 2009; Katz, Ang & Suro, 2012; Yoshikawa, 2011). All these factors have direct, enduring influence on their family relationships, the time they have to spend with their children, and abilities to secure resources they need to thrive in their adopted communities.

By focusing on this particular group of immigrants, I am not implying that these families' practices are unique; in many ways, they likely reflect those of immigrant families from other countries of origin and those of families with native-born parentage (e.g., Clark, 2012; Takeuchi et al., 2010). Family activities and strategies related to learning are best viewed as a spectrum, where structural variations like socioeconomic status, parental education levels, and English proficiency influence the activities and strategies most common in different family units. More often, immigrant families are described in contrast to their native-born counterparts, and explanations for distinctive practices are often attributed to cultural differences.

"Cultural" explanations are generally too broad to help researchers identify the specific processes that result in particular family activities related to literacy and other collective goals. In addition, essentializing "culture" makes traits and behaviors appear unchangeable, which implies little room for skill-building interventions that can enhance family members' individual and collective abilities. Finally, since "culture" is implicitly invisible in middle class, white families, families from other class or ethnic origins are compared to a standard of "normal" that inevitably casts any variations in practices as non-normative. Such framing has serious consequences when literacy development and related practices diverge from mainstream expectations of "appropriate" parenting strategies.

Learning in Immigrant Families

All families are influenced by the individual and collective experiences of their members. Migration engenders many changes to family life that have consequences for how members engage with each other and share responsibilities (e.g., Dreby, 2010; Hondagneu-Sotelo, 1994; Katz, forthcoming; Orellana, 2009). Mothers may begin working outside the home for the first time after migration. Since many occupations in the low-skilled service sector in particular tend to favor women, these mothers may find work more quickly and at higher rates of pay than their husbands do (Hondagneu-Sotelo, 2003). Family survival often means that both parents work at least one job each, and as a result, children take on additional household responsibilities. The same patterns are seen in low-income families more generally, where parents' demanding work schedules mean that older children take on more family tasks, like cooking, cleaning, and caring for younger siblings (e.g., Dodson & Dickert, 2004; Romich, 2007; Valenzuela, 1999).

In immigrant families where parents have limited levels of formal education, children often also assume active roles to help address family needs. Much of my research has focused on children who are the primary English speakers in their immigrant families, and who therefore play important roles as "brokers" of language, culture, and media content for their families (Katz

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[1] Some parents who have participated in my research have been from Guatemala, El Salvador, or Nicaragua, though they were living in primarily Mexican communities and in almost all cases, they had a Mexican spouse or partner.

2010, 2011, forthcoming). While there are no data specifically documenting how many children act as their families' brokers, 61% of children of immigrants in the U.S. today have at least one parent who has difficulty speaking English. Among children with at least one parent from Central America, that proportion rises to 68% and to 82% for children with at least one parent from Mexico (Urban Institute, 2009). Furthermore, the likelihood that children of immigrants have at least one parent with limited English proficiency is rising steadily, from 49% in 1990, to 55% in 2000, and to 61% today. These trends suggest that for children of immigrants, growing up with parent(s) requiring brokering assistance is the norm, rather than the exception (Johnson et al., 2005).

Children in these families have sustained contact with a key U.S. institution by attending school, where they have extensive opportunities to develop language proficiency, cultural familiarity, and technological skills, as compared with their parents (Gonzales, 2011; Katz, forthcoming). Combined with children's developmentally greater facility for language acquisition, their time in schools helps them develop proficiencies more quickly than their parents. In many families, children make considerable contributions to how their families learn about and interact with their local communities, what resources they know about and connect with, and how they manage every day challenges. Brokering activities include, for example, facilitating parents' interactions with English-speaking service providers, explaining documents that arrive in the mail, and making phone calls to request information or services. While children play important roles in their families' connections with their English-speaking environments, they do not act independently when they do so. Children broker best when their parents are meaningfully engaged in shared efforts to seek and interpret information and make decisions about the best courses of action for their family's needs (Katz, forthcoming).

Children's brokering activities often involve connections to a range of media. Children may not only broker parents' connections to media content, but to new communication technologies and devices. Even in working poor communities, children are more likely to develop new media-related proficiencies than their parents (though often not as easily or extensively as their more socially privileged peers; see Lenhart, 2010). In some cases, they develop these skills as part of school curricula; otherwise, they may teach themselves requisite skills or pick up them up from friends (Ito et al, 2009). Of course, media brokering is not unique to children of immigrants. Even in middle class, native-born families, children broker media for their families by, for example, teaching their parents how to send text messages (Clark, 2012). However, children in immigrant families broker their parents' connections to media and technologies more often and for a wider range of tasks than the native born, because these media activities intertwine with brokering the linguistic and cultural information embedded in that media content (Katz, 2010).

Given that children play brokering roles, they are more likely than children of native-born parents to connect with a wide range of media alongside their parents. A 2002 study by researchers at Harvard University found that only 20% of adolescent children of immigrants (from Central America, Mexico, the Dominican Republic, and China) reported watching TV "mainly alone," as they most often co-viewed with family members (Louie, 2003). By contrast, a general study of U.S. teens (conducted by the Kaiser Family Foundation during the same period) found that over one-third of teens watched TV "mainly alone." They were also more likely to co-view television with their friends (Roberts, Foehr, Rideout, & Brodie, 1999). These

findings suggest that media connections may be more embedded in immigrant families' literacy development than is the case in native-born families.

Parents and children in immigrant families connect with information resources around them to arrive at shared decisions about the best ways to address family challenges. This may mean that family members identify an issue (e.g., finding a quality homework help for a younger sibling) and individual members make connections that could yield helpful information. For example, immigrant mothers spend more time interacting in local institutions than fathers, even if they work full time (Jones-Correa, 1998). As a result, she may have contacts in local services that she is comfortable enough to approach for recommendations or advice. Her primary child broker (usually the eldest, or eldest female) will often negotiate that interaction. Parents may seek advice from friends and neighbors, or at their local church. Children may seek information at school, or go online to locate relevant suggestions about local programs. Family members pool these resources to make decisions. They also pool their respective skills when they engage in forms of "scaffolding" activities to learn from each other, enhancing family discussions and decision-making (Katz, forthcoming).

Scaffolding is a term associated with Vygotsky's (1978) situated learning theory, in which he posits that learning occurs through active engagement with others. Vygotsky distinguished between what learners can do without help (their actual development levels) and their "zones of proximate development." These zones are skills and content just beyond the limits of actual development levels. Scaffolding occurs when a more competent partner assists with skills and content in those zones, until their help becomes unnecessary, like a scaffold against a finished building. In families I have observed, scaffolding was not a one-way process; children contributed their greater dexterity with English, U.S. cultural norms, as well as media forms and content. Parents contributed their adult understandings of how the world works and of what the family needed, as well as their greater Spanish proficiency. Because parents and children came to these interactions as both learners and as more competent peers, scaffolding provided opportunities for all family members to simultaneously support each other's and their own learning. Dorner, Orellana and Li-Grining (2007) found these developmental interplays between parents and children "[led] to cognitive benefits for children who are both guided by more expert others on cognitively-demanding tasks, and who get placed in the 'expert' position where they are forced to articulate their understanding for novices" (p. 458).

To varying degrees, children reinforced their own skillsets by supporting their parents' needs. These interactions also provided natural opportunities for children to learn more sophisticated Spanish and social understandings from their parents' examples. Likewise, parents who actively engaged with their children around brokering tasks had natural opportunities to become more familiar with U.S. culture norms, spoken and written English, and a range of media forms, over time. Through scaffolding, children and parents could therefore facilitate each other's development of various literacies—including traditional reading, writing, and speaking in English and in Spanish, and media-related literacies—in the process of identifying and connecting with local resources the family needed (Katz, forthcoming).

Joint media engagement (JME) was a particularly important element of these families' scaffolding activities. The term refers to "spontaneous and designed experiences of people using media together…when there are multiple people interacting together with media…JME can support learning by providing resources for making sense and making meaning in a particular

situation, as well as for future situations" (Stevens & Penuel, 2010; Takeuchi et al., 2010). Cooperative engagement around media content has direct consequences for whether these families manage to make and maintain connections to locally available resources (e.g., related to health care, schools, social services) that can help address immediate and long-term needs. I found that JME is essential to understanding how and why some immigrant families integrate more readily than others; JME also helps account for variation in child brokers' own developmental trajectories. As a guide for future research, JME opens exciting avenues for considering literacy development as a cooperative, family-level learning process in which children are active, valued partners.

Learning, Immigrant Families, and Schools

Children's active contributions to family learning make it important to understand how these family scaffolding activities affect their schooling, and how formal education affects family learning. I found that teachers I interviewed were all familiar with and sympathetic to constraints low-income parents faced, such as work schedules that constrained their abilities to come to school for meetings or otherwise fully participate in their children's educations. However, most teachers were unaware of their students' brokering responsibilities to their families and how these might affect their connections to their schools (Katz, forthcoming).

Children were unlikely to divulge private information about their families to teachers unless they already had a trusting relationship with them. Many children were further motivated not to reveal their brokering roles to teachers, in order to protect their parents' vulnerabilities from outsiders' judgment, because their parents were undocumented immigrants, or both. For any or all of these reasons, teachers were generally unaware of what were often considerable family responsibilities for these students. Among children I interviewed, brokering when parents needed them often resulted in incomplete homework, foregone afterschool and weekend programs, and school absences. By spending less time on campus both during and after the school day, child brokers had fewer opportunities than their classmates for contact with adults who could become mentors and role models for them. Incomplete homework and missed school days could also directly contribute to lower grades and limited mastery of school-related material.

On the family front, many children's regular responsibilities involved brokering for parents at home and in community institutions, but also serving as tutors and guides for younger siblings, cousins, and neighbors. Younger children therefore benefited from elder brokers' trial-and-error movements through the U.S. school system, but these activities could infringe on the time, effort, and energy that brokers had to focus on their own schooling. Child brokers helped younger siblings and neighborhood kids with their schoolwork, but seldom had such assistance themselves when they needed it. Child brokers also generally accompanied parents to school in order to broker parent-teacher meetings. In some cases, elder children (high school age or older) sometimes attended meetings with their younger siblings' teachers in their parents' stead. The degree to which these efforts were appreciated and accommodated by teachers were critical to how much teachers knew about their students' family circumstances, and whether students were willing to trust them and ask for help if they needed it (Katz, forthcoming).

Meaningful connections to adults at school can be particularly critical for young people in immigrant families, since their parents often have limited formal education and are largely unfamiliar with the vagaries of the U.S. school system (Louie, 2012). Having trusted adults who can act as role models and alert them to opportunities for higher education and other forms of enrichment can be especially critical to their development and social mobility (Stanton-Salazar, 2001). Teachers who validated children's brokering efforts were most likely to be rewarded with insight into these families' circumstances and were therefore most likely to be able to ably support these students. Sometimes this trust resulted from teachers' accommodations when children brokered parent-teacher meetings.

In other cases, teachers validated the skills children had honed through their brokering in the classroom, such as organizational skills, problem-solving strategies related to comprehension of challenging words, and so forth. When learning in school involved practical tasks that could inform their brokering efforts, children generally recognized these enhancements and consciously applied them to their family activities. However, since many of the skills children developed through brokering were not so clearly linked to what they learned in school, the formal curriculum often posed distinct challenges for these young people. For the many who did not reach out to teachers for support, these disconnects could disadvantage their educational gains, relative to their native-born classmates. In other publications (e.g., Katz, 2011; forthcoming) I discuss at length the practical adjustments that teachers and administrators can make to enhance their relationships with these families and ultimately support their literacy development.

Linking Home, School, Community and Family Learning

Learning and literacy development can take place in formal and informal environments. Furthermore, what is learned in one context can support or contradict what is learned in another. I have found that what parents and their child brokers do at home, in the form of scaffolding activities that support literacy development and learning, is applied and reflected in their interactions in other community spaces. By the same token, individual and collective strategies are altered and honed according to what is most successful in, for example, a brokered interaction with a healthcare provider. The degree to which parents and children are accepted as a team by teachers, doctors, and other local providers affects how successful their developed scaffolding strategies can be in a particular context (Katz, forthcoming).

While my research has focused on children brokering for their families, I stress that brokering is an *inter*dependent, not *in*dependent activity. Children play critical roles in family learning, but they are most successful in doing so with the active support and engagement of parents. Interplay between immigrant parents and children may be more visible than in native-born families because of differences in language use and cultural norms, but these kinds of interactions occur in families from all backgrounds. My own and others' findings (e.g., Clark, 2012; Katz, forthcoming; Stevens & Penuel, 2010) suggest that to understand how American families are changing and developing, we should be less concerned with whether it is parents or children who are leading the charge. Instead, family learning activities and literacy development are best framed as family endeavors that all members are able to contribute to and benefit from over the life course. A grounded approach to documenting these family endeavors can enable

efforts by researchers, practitioners, and policymakers to better facilitate immigrant families' efforts to integrate into the social fabric of U.S. society.

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Hybrid Literacy Practices of English Language Learners

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Abstract: With an increase in the enrollment of English language learner (ELL) children as well as the persistence of high stakes testing as a standard of measurement of academic achievement, today's teachers and students struggle to find harmony between culturally sensitive classroom strategies for learning English and preparing for formal assessments. This review assesses the techniques and importance of hybrid literacy practices in qualitative studies published during 2001-2013. Inclusion criteria included a review of ELL students in preschool-third grade and focused primarily on techniques that were facilitated at home and during the school day. Findings indicate that more than a decade after No Child Left Behind very few qualitative studies have assessed the impact of hybrid literacy. In addition, studies are primarily conducted with native Spanish speaking ELL students while other populations are rarely discussed. Several implications for enhancing curriculum instruction and further areas of research are noted.

Keywords: hybrid literacy practices, English language learner, multiliteracies

With an increase in the enrollment of English language learner (ELL) children as well as the persistence of high stakes testing as a standard of measurement of academic achievement, today's teachers and students struggle to find harmony between culturally sensitive classroom strategies for learning English and preparing for formal assessments. Additionally, parents of ELL students are faced with sending their children to schools that are continually labeled as "failing" due to large enrollment numbers of ELL students, which causes feelings of stress and helplessness on part of ELL parents (Abedi, 2004). Still, many parents of ELL students recognize and stress the importance of education in their homes through continued encouragement of their students to excel academically and through sharing the cultural capital they have acquired from their homelands (de la Piedra, 2010; Derderian-Aghajanian, & Cong, 2012; Panferov, 2010).

In order to build classroom communities that are supportive of ELL students and their families it is critical to consider the differences in their backgrounds as well as the different funds of knowledge that ELL students come to school with (de la Piedra, 2010; Derderian-Aghajanian, & Cong, 2012; Panferov, 2010). One of the most significant challenges that ELL students face is the development of English vocabulary for communication at school and in their homes (Abedi, 2004; August, Carlo, Dressler, & Snow, 2005; Blachowicz, 1999).

One solution to the issue of English vocabulary development is establishing a curriculum that allows for communication in both home language as well as in English; this is referred to as a hybrid literacy practice (de la Piedra, 2010). By providing a welcoming classroom environment for ELLs to use their cultural capital while acquiring a new language, we hypothesize that

teachers can create culturally sensitive and academically accountable classroom communities for ELL students. With the passing of the No Child Left Behind Act in 2001 (NCLB), which requires states to test ELL students in reading and language arts in English after three consecutive years of schooling in the U.S., this systematic review presents the outcomes of hybrid literacy practices used since 2001 between the classroom and the home. Through this review we further provide implications for literacy scholars and practitioners in developing programs in the new era of education practices in the context of the United States for ELL students.

Background

In providing a robust context for Early Childhood Systems, Eugene Garcia (2012) provides an outline of the changing demography of schools in the U.S. and the all too often "English only is spoken here" reception. Detailing the rapid change of cultural diversity of young children, Garcia notes "at least one in five children ages 5 to 17 in the United States has a foreign-born parent and many, although not all, of these children learn English as their second language" (p. 31). Although a majority of these students come from homes where Spanish is the primary language, it is important to note, that there are more than 350 languages that are spoken among the school age population in the United States. In addition, to children moving into the U.S. with their families Garcia (2012) notes that "among the pre-K- 3rd population, nine in ten children from immigrant families are born in the United States" (p. 31). Nevertheless, the context of dual language learners or English language learning has not been as critically considered in light of changing education policy.

One of the misconceptions about ELL students is that they share a common background that is negatively perceived for a myriad of reasons. However, this could not be further from the truth. ELL students come from a variety of backgrounds with different home lives and cultures that vary between and among ELL students and families. The number of ELL students in a school and where these ELL students are from can also vary by region (Abedi, 2004). Acknowledging that these differences exist can help teachers begin recognizing that ELL does not mean lacking in knowledge or potential.

Many ELL students come from print rich homes that encourage students to value their education and do well in school (Panferov, 2010). Additionally, many of these students have experiences that contribute to their overall understanding of the world because of their background called funds of knowledge (Gonzalez, 2005) that they bring to the classroom. Keepers of these funds of knowledge are ultimately families of ELL students, including parents. ELL parents should be encouraged to participate in their students' school experience.

Drawing on the philosophical perspectives of language, communication, and power, Sarroub (2010) reminds scholars that language is more than arbitrary symbols, but a carrier of ideology and dominant discourse (p.123). When language and literacy intersect a complex web of identity and social cultural practices are formed (Street, 1995). Thinking about literacy as more than a static process that happens during the formal education process allows us to examine the dynamic multidimensional effects of literacy. This entails the recognition of literacy as a socio-cultural practice that varies according to time and space with layered effects on literate identities.

Methods

To conduct this review and assess the merits of hybrid literacy practices we searched for relevant articles in numerous databases. Our databases used in the search included: Academic Search Complete (EBSCO), Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews, Education: A SAGE Full-Text Collection, Education Full Text (EBSCO), Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC), Google Scholar, Linguistic and Language Behavior Abstracts (Proquest), PsychINFO, and EBSCO. Search terms included the following: hybrid literacy practices, English language learners, English as a second language, dual language learners, early bilingualism, supporting the multilingual development of minority-language children, and hybridity. A comprehensive list of abstracts and citations were compiled from these searches and article titles and abstracts were reviewed to see if they answered our question of the benefit of hybrid literacy programs for ELL students. A total of 84 articles were compiled.

These 84 articles then underwent another review to critically appraise our specific focus of family literacy and in-school experiences. For this we excluded those hybrid literacy practices that were in conjunction with after-school programs (to be pursued for later research) and focused specifically on in-school time for ELL children in Head Start through third grade. The final level of review entailed screening each article to determine if it met the inclusion criteria presented in Table 1. Those articles that met the inclusion criteria were read and parsed through

Table 1.

Inclusion Criteria for Studies

Design
Qualitative
Participants
Native non-English speakers And English language learners And Children enrolled in Head Start through third grade in U.S. schools
Publication
Peer-reviewed journal And 2001 to present

to focus on studies that specifically looked at concrete hybrid practices between school and home. Out of that final review, seven articles were analyzed and findings of hybrid literacy practices in both the home and the school are discussed below.

Findings

Since NCLB's passing in 2001 and other individual state laws and programs that require English only in the classroom, there has been a large impact on ELL students (Combs, Evans, Fletcher, Parra, Jimenez, 2005). Understanding these broad sweeping education policies in the context of the United States' diverse, multilingual population is imperative. Particularly examining the advantages and disadvantages of hybrid literacy practices, as a way to integrate the domains of home and school, can provide solutions to policy makers on either side of the debate. Nevertheless, since the passing of NCLB, and seven years since the 2006 "Report of the National Literacy Panel on Language-Minority Children and Youth," the results from our review, suggests that over the past decade, there has been very little qualitative research done on the advantages and disadvantages of hybrid literacy practices (Escamilla, 2009). Although there are a dearth of studies on how to link practices of literacy in the home with those in school for a younger population of ELLs, this review of techniques with pre-K- third grade does provide some valuable insight for areas of future research.

Domain of Home: The Role of Extended Family Members in Literacy Practices
A common theme in ELL families regarding helping their child in school is that of hopelessness. Many ELL parents and families want to help students achieve academic success during their time in school but feel as though they are not prepared to facilitate or take part in such success because they lack knowledge of the English language (Borba, 2009; Derderian-Aghajanian, & Cong, 2012; Panferov, 2010). However, research has shown that ELL parent involvement in a child's schooling has a positive correlation with their overall academic achievement and their perception of school (Harper & Pelletier, 2010; Mace-Matluck, Alexander-Kasparki, & Qeen, 1998) as well as their English acquisition (Gardner, 1985, Panferov, 2010). It is apparent that family has an important role in student academic achievement. In order to facilitate positive relationships between schools and families, teachers can initiate communication in which parents are invited to take part in their students learning. A lack of English understanding does not mean a lack of cultural capital. Cultural capital can be used as a form of informal instruction that happens between exchanges among family members that include language acquisition and the acclimation of unique cultural practices.

In a study done with a preschooler, Reyes (2006) shows how informal learning environments that involves parents and extended kin are useful for young children to draw upon family cultural and social practices as well as developing literacy in both the child and the adult. Both languages are privileged in the home and amongst family members to keep the child is engaged in the learning process. Whereas older children in immigrant families may create a hybrid variety of language, such as "Spanglish" in the example of Mexican families that migrate north to the U.S., younger children may have a more limited command due to English spoken in schools.

In this example Reyes (2006) highlights the distribution of language and literacy socialization amongst multiple persons and experiences through the story of Alejandra. Alejandra's learning is mediated by her mother, uncle, and an aunt who help her learn the alphabet by teaching her through letter recognition and song in both languages. Providing thick description and dialogue of the ethnographic study Reyes (2006) shows the importance of the intersection of biliteracy and the support of extended family members in language and literacy development.

By establishing a reciprocal relationship of respect with parents, teachers are able to form an open communication within those ELL families that allows parents to take part in their child's education in a way that enhances cultural relevance and recognizes the funds of knowledge that students already bring to the classroom (Harper & Pelletier, 2010; Panferov, 2010). Furthermore, including family in the learning experiences of ELL students helps promote intergenerational exchanges that help foster each member of the family's development (Palmer, Chen, Chang, & Leclere, 2006). When it comes to literacy practices, family is important.

Domain of School

For ELL students, learning English is much like first language acquisition. Students learn a receptive vocabulary first and then progress to using the language proficiently by adding it to their expressive language bank as well (Blachowicz, 1999). Therefore, teaching ELL students in many ways becomes an activity in taking a proud step backward before running forward into what could be a more fortuitous future due to their dual language proficiency. English language learners must be able to first access a term, concept, or procedure in their mother language and then code switch that term, concept, or procedure into English. This code switching, or transfer, is a critical part of learning a new language, it is defined as being able to muddle through "the influence resulting from similarities and differences between the target language and any other language that has been previously (and perhaps imperfectly) acquired" (Odlin, 1989, p. 27). In order to correctly be able to transfer between languages (and cultures) students must be exposed to English in a setting where they feel safe enough to acculturate to the language of the classroom, and ultimately begin attempting to use English in the classroom.

Situated Identities

Sally Brown (2011) in a collaborative-ethnographic style research study in a second grade classroom, investigates the ways in which identities are constructed for and by Ana, an ELL student. Highlighting the importance of social identities, Brown connects the identities that Ana has at home as a reader with the competent reader identity Ana wants to display at school. Highlighting three opportunities for students to read in the classroom—independent reading, reading conferences, and partner reading—Brown suggests that especially when paired with other students that are similarly advanced and enjoy reading Ana thrives and is able to enact her social identity from home in the classroom as it pertains to her literacy.

Margaret Hawkins (2004) highlights the social and situated identities of children through a focus of one student, Shoua, a Hmong ELL student in a Kindergarten class. In this study Hawkins highlights reexamining methodology and theory as we examine techniques to observe ELLs. Hawkins conducts this study with the help of Shoua's teacher and suggests that new literacies studies go beyond the decoding print on the page and holistically examine the social

scripts children bring to the classroom. Hawkins suggests individuals are multiliterate and the ability to understand the ecology of the classroom in confluence with the diverse cultural scripts and identities students bring with them is critical to their literacy development. In one critical example of a photo book project integrated into the curriculum that upon first thought was benign, Hawkins upon further examination dictates that it opened up conversations about Shoua's situated identity and social interaction.

Identities Recognized and Used in the Classroom

As with the examples above, recognizing the individual abilities and expertise that students bring to the classroom are beneficial for native and non-native English speakers. Patrick Manyak (2002) presents an ethnographic analysis of the literacy practices in a first and second grade English immersion class. Key elements were observed as beneficial to the hybrid literacy practices: Spanish and English were freely used, interaction patterns, other social scripts and social identities were incorporated as a resource in classroom literacy practices, and finally, teacher and students used Spanish "consistently and strategically" to make English texts more comprehensible (p. 425). Despite monolingual mandates in California, Manyak (2002) draws a compelling argument in this study of the necessity of drawing on the collaboration of the classroom community and bridging the gaps between linguistic competencies.

In a study following the same ethnographic framework, Manyak (2006) provides greater examples of activities that provide examples of curriculum in which teacher's taught against the monolingual grain. These activities include such examples as the "Daily News" which students were able to report in English and Spanish the activities that happened in their home world. As Manyak describes "Daily News sanctioned the children's everyday experiences as appropriate content for classroom literacy tasks and their existing linguistic repertoires as tools for full participation in a valued literacy event" (p. 256). Activities such as these created hybrid literacy practices between not only the social identity and knowledge students were able to incorporate into the classroom but through the oral and written texts the entire class benefitted through the development of slight biliteracies.

Power of Positive Peer Interactions

As with the importance of family relationships, the importance of the peer relationships in the classroom setting is also a key component of hybrid literacies. As discussed in other areas of the domain of school the ability to be accepted and work with peers in both the student's primary language as well as the dominant language of the school is important. In a three year longitudinal study, Lucinda Solatero-Gonzalez (2007) observes Adalberto and demonstrates that during student-centered activities such as journals, centers, or free-choice time Adalberto is able to draw on things from Spanish (his primary language) and English (the language that is dominant in the school). Through the ability to draw from Language 1 (L1) and Language 2 (L2) with his peers he is able to feel comfortable in a collaborative environment in which students support each other's learning. Although Adalberto had little interest in teacher-guided activities that involved English print, the unofficial curriculum of peer interaction and self-regulation enhanced his English literacy.

Implications

Based off of our extensive literature, positive results and enhanced literacy is developed when hybrid literacy practices are used to highlight the importance of both language practices. As specified through many of these qualitative studies, hybrid literacy practices have been primarily studied with Spanish –speaking children in predominantly English-Speaking classrooms. With changing demographics and an increase in multilingual spaces it will be important to not simply create literacy practice for Spanish to English dual language learners but to incorporate more research on other multicultural communities within our schools and literacy programs. In addition approaching these studies through critical cultural studies lens will allow for enhanced methodologies and more dynamic ways of investigating the complexities of literacy and in many ways the very essence of an individual's cultural identity.

Many of the studies that we found that were published during this time period were conducted shortly after the implementation of the English only state laws in Arizona and California. There needs to be studies that are conducted now that the country has had over a decade of NCLB. Furthermore, very few home literacy practices were recorded and how families are able to integrate the biliteracy or multimodal literacy practices of what their primary grade student is learning in English dominant settings. Finally, as mentioned at the start of this review, community and after-school programs were excluded from this study. After further review community and out of school programs are prime areas for there to be the bridge between home and school literacy practices for both ELLs and native English speakers.

Conclusion

By providing a welcoming classroom environment for ELL students to use their cultural capital, while acquiring a new language, teachers can create culturally sensitive and academically accountable classroom communities. As this review demonstrates, the domain of the literacy practices in the domains of home and school, produce a compelling argument that children learn from meaningful interactions. In addition, this research suggest that meaningful literacy experiences are diverse and impact learners in various context. Understanding both the ecology of the classroom and the cultural identity from the home will aid both literacy practitioners and scholars as they seek to create enhanced literacy practices for increasing diversity in the U.S.

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Latino Parent Perspectives on Parental Involvement in Elementary Schools

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Abstract: The purpose of this research is to provide insight into immigrant Latino parents' perspectives on parental involvement in elementary school settings as influenced by the Title I Family Literacy Program (TFLP). A comparison is made of Latino parents who have been participating in the TFLP for more than one year, participants new to the program and Latino parents who chose not to participate in the TFLP. Both quantitative and qualitative data were collected via a survey and individual interviews of randomly selected members of each comparison group. All research participants were immigrant Latino parents with children at one of ten Title I elementary schools operating a TFLP. The schools are part of a large, urban school district in the Southwest. Findings indicate the TFLP has a positive effect on parental involvement practices of immigrant Latino parents. Participating parents showed increased confidence in their ability to support their children's education and program participants are more engaged in school activities. The results of this study imply participation in the program for one year or more has the most impact on families. Parents who participated for more than one year communicated a high sense of responsibility toward their influence on their child's education and upbringing and an understanding of strategies needed to effectively support their children. This research also identifies barriers parents face to participation in the TFLP and parental involvement in general. Implementation of family literacy programs in other districts would need to follow guidelines similar to this TFLP to achieve comparable results. More research is needed on the effects of this program on parents, children, and school staff.

Keywords: Latino, Parent and Child Together Time (PACT) parent barriers, family literacy

Research Topic

The purpose of this study is to explore immigrant Latino parents' perspectives on parental involvement. The study will focus on the population of immigrant Latino parents of children in Title I elementary schools in a large, urban school district in Arizona. Through surveys and interviews, this phenomenological study intends to focus on the role of cultural and social capital in immigrant Latino parents' experiences in supporting their children's education. The focus on immigrant Latino parent perspectives on parental involvement in Arizona elementary schools will provide insight into how to maximize immigrant parents' positive

influence on their children's education while minimizing perceived barriers to their children's educational success.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework for this study will draw upon Bourdieu's (1986) conceptualization of social and cultural capital defined in *The Forms of Capital*. In general, urban elementary schools value the cultural capital, or the cultural knowledge and practices of the European American, middle class majority. Parents' understanding of their role and the role of schools in children's education is also related to their cultural and social capital. However, low-income, minority parents' cultural and social capital is not the same as the European American, middle class majority's cultural and social capital. Immigrant Latino parents' capital often does not facilitate children's adjustment to schools in the United States. In fact, this difference in cultural and social capital often causes misperceptions by teachers and parents, which may impede parental involvement of immigrant Latino parents.

Literature Review

Even though definitions of parental involvement exist, the research reviewed offers evidence that educators and parents have very different beliefs for what encompasses parental involvement. Several studies reveal that school staff define parental involvement as participation in school activities (Ferrara, 2009; Joshi et al., 2005; Lawson, 2003; Valdés, 1996). Parental involvement as defined by low-income Latino parents however emphasizes home-based involvement over other forms of involvement (Lee & Bowen, 2006; Manz, 2005; Ryan et al., 2010). This contrast of educators' and parents' understanding of parental involvement is even more pronounced in urban schools with minority families and/or families of low socioeconomic status. Much of this disparity can be related to cultural and social capital. Gándara and Contreras (2009) note:

> An important aspect of formal education is the cultural capital (knowing how things work) and social capital (having access to important social networks) that are acquired while earning a diploma or college degree; this knowledge and access help students succeed. Latino parents, with their relatively low levels of formal education, have far fewer of these important assets to assist - and pass on to – their children. (p. 30).

Currently, parents are expected by schools to have a role in their children's academic development and "the acceptance of a particular type of family-school relationship emerges as a result of social processes" (Lareau, 1987, p. 74). Valdés (1996) found that Latino parents often misunderstood their role in their children's education because they didn't understand the concept of parental involvement as defined by the school. While educators and schools believe they are providing ample opportunities for involvement, these activities often ignore the cultural perspectives of minority populations (Gonzalez-DeHass & Willems, 2003). The conflicting beliefs by educators and parents in how parents should be involved in schools is further confounded by the mismatch of teachers and administrators beliefs of what is good parental involvement and what they actually promote and practice (Barnyak & McNelly, 2009).

Research on parental involvement through a social and cultural capital lens highlights the mismatch between school staff and low income Latino parents' understanding of parental involvement in the areas of home-school communication, helping with homework and volunteering at school.

Suárez-Orozco, et. al. (2008) asked teachers how they expect parents to support their children's education. Teachers believed that parents who came to school and helped with homework were concerned parents, and usually parents of children that were doing well in school. Immigrant parents face major barriers to providing assistance with homework. In fact, Suárez-Orozco, et. al. (2008) found in their research that only 38% of immigrant children had someone in their household that they could ask for help on homework. Many children referenced their parents' long work hours in low-wage jobs as being a major barrier to parental support, not only with homework, but parents' inflexible work hours also hinder them from participating in school functions.

A second major barrier immigrant parents confront is their lack of formal education. Gándara and Contreras (2008) repeatedly make reference to the importance of mother's education in their children's success in school. They found that only one in ten Latino students has parents with higher levels of education, as opposed to four in ten white students. Latino parents often lack education and self-efficacy to assist their children with homework, and in addition, may not understand that it is an expectation of the teacher (Valdés, 1996). Suárez-Orozco, et. al. (2008) also emphasize the importance of parents' level of education as related to social capital. The researchers write:

In Arizona, the Pew Hispanic Center (2008) reports that 44% of the immigrant Latino population has less than a high school diploma. The low educational attainment of Latino parents creates barriers to their participation in their children's education not only because they cannot help their children at home, but also, as Gándara and Contreras (2009) note, "it is essential because it is tied to class, and class privilege is tied to social and cultural capital"(p. 51).

Communication between home and school is identified as an important component of parental involvement (Henderson & Mapp, 2002). When teachers were surveyed about what parental involvement practices were most important, communication with teachers was the most common answer (Joshi et al., 2005). According to teachers in several studies, forms of communication with parents consisted of parent teacher conferences, newsletters, emails, and report cards (Barnyak & McNelly, 2009; Joshi, et al., 2005; Lawson, 2003; Valdés, 1996). These forms of communication are generally one directional, from school to home. Parent teacher conferences, though opportunities for a two way exchange, often revert back to a one way form of communication from teacher to parent (Joshi, et al., 2005). In addition, communication from school to home is less frequent with low-income, Latino families (Enyeart, Diehl, Hampden-Thompson & Scotchmer, 2006). Latino parents' lack of response to teacher communication is often misinterpreted by teachers as the parents' disinterest.

Researchers in various studies discussed other reasons for Latino parents' difficulty communicating with teachers and school staff. First and foremost was the parent's lack of self-efficacy and feeling intimidated by the teachers and school itself (Jones, 2003). Valdés (1996) found that of the nineteen adults in the families she studied; only three had completed elementary school in Mexico. Parents felt incompetent and embarrassed by their lack of education and

preferred not to talk with the teacher or even go to the school. Parents who did communicate with personnel, often preferred to speak with the bilingual aide than the teacher (Valdés, 1996). Parents and teachers have preconceived notions about each other and appropriate forms of communication that make communication even more difficult (Joshi, et al, 2005). Parents recognize that teachers believe Latino parents aren't interested in their children's education. This pre-judgment makes it difficult for parents to feel comfortable going to the school and talking with staff (Jones, 2003).

Cultural differences in the role of communication also create barriers to parental involvement. In several studies, Latino parents felt a lack of trust and relationship building on the part of the schools (Auerbach, 2009; Henderson & Mapp, 2002; Mapp, 2003). Latino parents were more likely to participate in social gatherings at the school than one-on-one communication with teachers (Gonzalez-DeHass & Willems, 2003). Parental involvement is often limited to ceremonial, festive occasions when the focus is not on academic conversation (Valdés, 1996). While for Latino families, these activities are important for relationship building; these types of activities provide parents with little opportunity to interact with teachers. For Latino families, schools seem to emphasize the programming of parental involvement and not the process (Mapp, 2003).

Jones (2003) found that Latino parents believe that teachers need to understand the context of the local Latino population and that Latino families want their children to preserve their Latino culture. According to Joshi, et al. (2005), teachers often do not have a good understanding of their own culture, much less that of their students. The researchers also found a disparity among teachers of what they understood about culture in its relation to learning and what they practiced.

Teachers do not understand or value the cultural capital of immigrant Latino families. Although they may realize the depth of the definition of culture, they are unable to incorporate the important aspects of culture to improve students' learning and their relationship with parents. Also, misperception of intentions on the part of teachers and parents leads to barriers to parental involvement of Latino parents, which further perpetuates the misperceptions (Jones, 2003).

Immigrant Latino families' lack of understanding about their role in their children's education also has long term implications. As children advance in schools, European American, middle-class parents typically know which teachers are better, which classes and extracurricular activities are better for getting accepted into college, how to communicate with school staff and get the best for their children (Gándara & Contreras, 2009). Immigrant Latino parents lack this social and cultural capital to use on their children's behalf. Additionally, because of Arizona's implementation of the English Language Development (ELD) program, children may be segregated from their peers and their peers' families, thus further weakening their social capital networks.

The opportunities for parental involvement are usually dictated by the school and are limited, ignoring the cultural perspectives of minority populations (Gonzalez-DeHass & Willems, 2003). Generally, parental involvement focuses on how to get parents to do what the teachers and schools want them to do (Jones, 2003). Mapp (2003) identified three important components that schools must practice with parents if they want parents to connect to schools: welcoming parents' participation, honoring their culture and contributions, and connecting. She

also found that the lack of parental involvement options is what limits parent participation, not the parents' lack of interest.

Research suggests that when low- income, immigrant Latino parents are approached from a strengths based perspective, parents are more likely to participate in their children's school (Orozco, 2008).   Research shows that teachers feel they have the fewest skills in involving parents in communities of color and/or where a language other than English is spoken (Gándara & Contreras, 2009). Mapp (2003) believes dispelling the myth that Latino parents do not care about their children's education is fundamental, and then schools need to create a welcoming environment to parents and more options for parental involvement.

Research has shown that parental involvement is considered important to reducing the achievement gap between white and minority students, therefore gaining an understanding of effective parental involvement practices is essential. Furthermore, given the large population of Latino immigrant students in Arizona schools, parental involvement practices must be culturally appropriate for immigrant Latino families.   This study will provide insight into immigrant Latino parents' perspectives on parental involvement, and hopefully help schools devise more effective strategies to increase parental involvement among immigrant Latino population.

Research Methodology

This mixed methods project gathered information about what Latino parents believe about parental involvement in their children's education as a function of participating in the TFLP. In this research, results from the surveys informed the approach to the interviews and the interviews built on the results from the surveys.

Individual survey questions were adapted from the "Parent Survey of Family and Community Involvement in the Elementary and Middle Grades", developed by Sheldon and Epstein (2007). The purpose of the surveys was to gather families' demographic information, parental involvement behaviors and parents' perceptions of the school climate and parental involvement practices. The survey was implemented to three groups of Latino parents at Title I elementary schools: parents who have participated in the TFLP program for one year or more, parents new to the program and parents who are not participating in the TFLP.

Interviews provided the qualitative data for the study. Results from the surveys were analyzed and used to create the format and questions for the interviews. Five survey respondents from each of the three groups were interviewed. All parents interviewed were asked the first nine interview questions about the school atmosphere, parent-teacher communication, and parental involvement in general. An additional seven questions were asked only in interviews with the new TFLP and veteran TFLP parents, since these questions were specifically about TFLP participants' experience in the program.

Analysis

Survey data was analyzed initially by basic descriptive analysis to identify frequency and means. Survey results from each of the three groups of participants were compared for trends in each group. Interview questions were developed from the survey results. Data from the

interviews was coded and categorized as per the Miles and Huberman (1994) model of qualitative data analysis and was used to enrich the summary information from the survey data.

Findings

Data from the surveys indicates the longer the parents were exposed to information related to the TFLP, the more positive and confident their responses related to their ability to support their child's education.

The results and discussion of the interviews are presented in two parts. The first part, addresses similarities and differences in the three groups of parents' communication with school staff and parental involvement across the three groups. Three trends emerged across the three groups of parents from these questions: communication, parental involvement in school, and parental involvement at home.

Participation in the TFLP program improved parent-teacher communication by providing the venue for increased relationship building between parents and teachers regardless of the language barrier. This activity validates the cultural capital of the parents: the need for relationship building among Latinos and the cultural capital of the school: the importance of parent-teacher communication to teachers.

TFLP participants began to recognize many different ways they could participate in schools. TFLP veterans listed a variety of participation strategies such as fund raising, attending their child's class, attending school activities, participating in PTO meetings, attending conferences, and just showing interest in what was going on at the school. A benefit of participating in the TFLP may be raising awareness among Latino parents of the many different ways they can participate and support their child's school. TFLP parents were comfortable at the school and willing to participate. Participation in the TFLP program did not change the Latino parent's desire for their children to do well; participation in the program involves parents being more visible at school and they are more likely to participate in school-based activities. Over time, their goals shifted from learning English for themselves, to learning English so they can help their child in school.

Parents participating in the TFLP program understood their responsibility to support their children's education at home and from the survey and interview data, TFLP parents felt more capable of providing this support.

Parents in the TFLP Program

This section presents the results of the second group of interview questions asked only of TFLP participants. The analysis of the additional interview questions with TFLP participants revealed three trends: changes in participants' lives, perceptions of student involvement, and effects on the participants' families.

After only 4 months in the program, parents new to the TFLP already noticed improvement in their English skills. They were able to communicate better in English with their children and others. They also felt more comfortable at the school and had more self-confidence. Veteran parents also noted improvement in their English skills but they elaborated more on how they have become more independent, and have improved they call their 'bad character' (character faults or ill-temperament) and their lives overall. Veteran parents' goals in the

program shifted. When they entered the program, their goals were to learn English. After participating in the program, the parents' primary goals shifted to wanting to learn how to help their children be successful in school.

Children overall were proud of their parents, happy that they came to class and wanted to help their parents do well. The children also motivated their parents. They tell them how well they are doing; congratulate them for speaking English to neighbors; and that they don't need them, kids, to translate. Children also noticed that the parents have more confidence now.

Changes in the participants' lives and the lives of their families are more profound when families attend the program for more than one year. First and foremost, parents felt that they have a better relationship with their children. They are more involved in their children's lives and have better communication. Parents became more aware of the example they were setting for their children and the absence of that example for other children.

Discussion and Implications

The results from the surveys and interviews presented above indicate changes in Latino parents' perceptions of parental involvement as a result of their participation in the TFLP. The design of the TFLP requires parents to be participants in their child's education. The program understands and respects the culture of the Latino families served, and also teaches Latino parents about the American school system.

The program facilitates the Latino parents' needs to build relationships with teachers and school staff, which improves teacher-parent communication. Increased communication is beneficial to teachers as well, since research shows teachers believe teacher-parent communication is one of the most important parental involvement practices (Joshi et al., 2005).

Parents noted their primary interest when entering the TFLP was to learn English. Improving English language skills has an impact on the parents' ability to communicate with their child's teacher, and also increased their self-confidence and independence. Parents were also able to help their children, even their older children, with homework. TFLP parents also felt more comfortable volunteering in their child's classroom and participating in school-based activities. Some veteran TFLP parents took on leadership roles on the PTO or organizing enrichment activities for children and their parents.

The TFLP program's English language classes are unique because children's curriculum is woven into English instruction. Parents receive lessons on phonics, reading strategies, etc., which are later reinforced when the parent experiences a similar lesson in their child's classroom during PACT time. The children's weekly homework packet is also part of the TFLP parents' English lesson. Veteran TFLP parents understood the importance of learning English so they could help their children in school. They also gained a collection of strategies to use to support their children's learning at home.   Veteran parents also recognized that many parents may not know how to help their children be successful at school.

By participating in the TFLP program, parents are gaining knowledge of the cultural capital valued by the American school system. The TFLP provides an educational venue for Latino parents that respects their cultural capital and teaches them about the cultural capital of the school. Through English language instruction, parenting education, and instruction in their

children's curriculum on the school campus, parents are implicitly and explicitly given strategies to work in this new system while still maintaining their traditions, beliefs and cultural capital.

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Effect of Asking Parents to Be Engaged in Learning Activities at Home: Will they Become Involved?

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Abstract: Parent involvement has long been lauded as an effort worth making, with perceived benefits for children's academic success. Discrepancies in parent involvement definitions and foci may contribute to differential outcomes obtained in research studies. Some teachers perceive that parents, particularly those in low-income school districts, are either not interested or not willing to work with their children at home. The aim of this study was to investigate parents' willingness to complete weekly, teacher provided activities that were sent home with their children, and to investigate whether the type of activities sent made a difference in parent involvement in the activities. Results indicate that parents were more involved in activities that included concrete resources rather than suggestions sent home by teachers. Teachers also perceived that parents were more involved in these activities. Parent qualitative responses indicated that they would like to be more involved in their children's schooling, and that they are willing to do whatever teachers ask for them to do. Teachers' perceptions of how involved parents were in their children's education increased over the 10 week intervention.

Keywords: parent involvement, home learning activities, parent engagement

Public School Improvement

Academic achievement and success of our children in school is the subject of a number of recent political and academic debates and study. An area related to children's school success that has received attention is parent involvement. In fact, the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) of 2002 is the first piece of legislation that requires that schools involve parents in their children's educational achievement in a manner that is beyond just serving on committees (Epstein, 2005), although some researchers argue that family involvement should be an "integral" component of any school reform that is proposed (Weiss, Lopez, & Rosenberg, 2010). Furthermore, Weiss and her colleagues argued convincingly that schools should design their programs so that family engagement strategies are planfully used to facilitate children's learning outcomes.

Teachers appear to agree with this philosophy, and to a lesser degree, so does the public. When asked in a Gallup poll what one thing could be done to improve public schools, the most common answer reported by 361 teachers was increasing parent involvement in schools, while

for the general public, it was in the bottom half of responses (Langdon & Vesper, 2000). However, in this same poll, teachers and the general public concurred that the main obstacle to improving public schools was "parents/lack of parent involvement" (p. 609). But while opinions appear strong that involving parents is important, practice does not always follow belief. Barnyak and McNelly (2009) also surveyed teachers and administrators and found that they were supportive of a number of strategies for involving parents; however, their beliefs were not supported by their actual practices, as they were much less likely to actually implement many of the strategies that they so strongly supported.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to investigate parents' engagement when they were asked by teachers to participate in children's learning at home activities, and whether parental level of involvement was related to the types of activities that parents were asked to engage in. More specifically, this study compared parents' willingness and involvement in completing activities in their homes after being invited to participate by teachers. Three levels of activities were included: teacher suggestions for parents (Level 1); teacher suggestions with prompts (Level 2); and teacher provided parent activities with resources to do at home (Level 3).

Procedures and Participants

Fifteen teaching staff members in 5 Head Start and 3 public prekindergarten classrooms representing 11 classes total in a Midwestern state agreed to participate. Participating staff averaged 12.47 years of teaching experience and had been in their current location for an average of 9.13 years. Teachers and aides averaged 15.86 years of education, with one high school education, one having some college, three with associate's degrees, four with Child Development Associate degrees, four with bachelor's degrees, and two with master's degrees. Class sizes ranged from 16 to 23, with an average of 18.11. Teachers were asked to recruit willing parents, with the knowledge that children would be bringing home activities or ideas to increase parent involvement, and that they would be asked to complete pre and posttest questions regarding their experiences. The intervention occurred from mid-September through November 2009.

During the intervention, teachers sent home one activity each week for 10 weeks. The researchers randomly assigned participating students to one of three groups so that they could investigate parents' participation in different types of activities sent home by teachers. This method of assignment prevented bias such as asking parents who always comply to participate in the more intensive activities. The randomization procedure resulted in each classroom having children in each level, except for the classroom which only had one participant. Three different types of activities were sent home: Level 1 activities included suggestions of activities that parents could do with their children, such as a "read to me" sticker or a finger play activity suggestion; Level 2 activities included suggestions with prompts such as a reading record sheet or a die cut prompt; Level 3 activities included parent resources and activities to do at home such as a learning game kit or a puzzle bag. Pretest and posttest information, including both quantitative and qualitative questions, was obtained from parents before sending materials home

and at the end of the project.

Sample

Teachers recruited 83 parents to participate, with 54% the parents of female children and 46% the parents of male children. Fifty-nine percent of parents recruited were married, 30% were single parents, 6% were divorced, and 4% were separated at the time of the intervention. In terms of education level, 31% of parents had a high school education or below, 50% had some college, and 19% had a college degree or higher. No pretest differences by group in demographic variables were evident at the pretest.

Parent participation in this project ranged from one parent in one classroom to 25 parents in another classroom. Of the 83 families agreeing to participate in the project, 93% completed all aspects of the project. Of the six children whose parents did not complete the posttest, two had moved and were no longer attending the school program.

Measures

Demographic information was obtained from parents using a short parent information survey developed by the researchers that included information such as the target child's gender, the number of children in the home, education level of parent completing the survey, and marital status of parent completing the survey. A 4-point Likert scale (not at all, very little, quite a bit, too much) scale was used to ask "How involved are you in your child's education?" Additional open-ended questions included "In what ways are you involved?" and "How else would you like to be involved?"

The posttest survey administered to parents was developed for use in this project. The survey included a table that listed each activity they had received with a number of questions regarding the activity, including "Do you remember this activity?", "Did you do this activity with your child?", "How many times did you work on this activity?", "About how long did you spend doing this activity?", "Would you like to receive additional activities to do with your child?", and "Which activities did you most enjoy?". The researchers wanted to learn whether parents remembered doing an activity with their children, and approximately how many times and how long they spent engaged in the activity. Since the intervention lasted for 10 weeks, the researchers hypothesized that parents would still recall the activities.

A posttest survey administered to teachers was developed for use in this project. The survey included teacher perception of parent and child interest in activities that were sent home for each level, questions regarding how difficult it was to send the activities and suggestions home, how easy or difficult it was to manage the activities, what teachers liked and would change about the process of involving parents, and teacher perception of how involved parents are in their child's education. Teachers were also given a list of each of the 30 activities (10 activities for each level) and were asked to indicate which strategies they saw as effective in engaging families.

Results

Before the intervention began, parents rated their level of involvement in their child's education as 2.93 on a 4.0 scale (not at all, very little, quite a bit, too much). No pretest

differences existed between the groups at the pretest ($F = .44$, $p = .65$). Parents were also asked how they were involved in their child's education in an open-ended manner. Responses indicate that parents were mostly involved with helping their children around reading, learning the alphabet, working on numbers, counting, shapes, and colors, and helping children with homework. Parents also spent time talking to children about their time at school. Of the 23 different responses obtained from parents about their parental involvement 6 reflected at school engagement while 17 responses solicited concerned parental at home support of their child's learning.

Parents were also asked how they would like to be involved in their children's education, and the most common responses were any way possible/whatever the teacher recommends and work in the classroom.

At the posttest, parents were asked how many times and how long they spent doing each activity. One way ANOVA analyses indicated that after combining all ten activities, parents did more activities ($F = 5.66$; $p = .005$) and spent more time ($F = 3.54$; $p = .037$) in Level 3 activities than Level 1 or Level 2 activities (see Table 1).

Table 1

One way ANOVA Results of Time Spent in Activities

Variable	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
How many activities did you do?	6.44	7.33	8.24***
How long did you spend doing the activities?	141.32	193.56	223.33*
How many times did you work on the activities?	21.20	25.12	27.00

*$p < .05$
***$p < .005$

In general, parents spent around 20-30 minutes each time doing the more popular activities with their children. Overall, parents spent more time in Level 3 activities (shared resources), but parents also spent more time in some Level 2 activities (suggestions with prompts) than Level 1 activities (suggestions).

After the 10 weeks of involving parents through activities that teachers sent home with young children, teachers were asked about the involvement of parents and students. Teachers consistently rated Level 2 and 3 parents and students as the most involved (see Table 2). Note that teaching staff in 11 classrooms were involved in this project, which prevents robust statistical analyses from being conducted.

If the results of Tables 1 and 2 are compared, one can see that teachers' impressions of the activities' abilities to engage parents are often reflected in the amount of time that parents spent actually engaging in the activities, indicating that overall, teachers' impressions were confirmed by parents' behavior.

When teachers were asked how involved parents are in their children's education, they clearly thought they are quite involved at the pretest (2.57 on a 3 point scale), and their results at the posttest (2.87 on a 3-point scale) indicated a greater belief that parents were involved (paired

t-test t=-2.073; p = .057). When asked how they are typically involved, teachers said home visits, conferences, field trips, volunteering in the room, school activities, listening to ideas during

Table 2

Teachers' Ratings of Involvement of Parents and Students

Question asked:	Mean[a]	SD
How involved were Level 1 parents?	3.64	.93
How involved were Level 1 students?	3.54	1.05
How involved were Level 2 parents?	4.38	.51
How involved were Level 2 students?	4.45	.52
How involved were Level 3 parents?	4.62	.65
How involved were Level 3 students?	4.58	.67

[a] 1 = not at all; 2 = very little; 3 = neutral; 4 = somewhat interested; 5 = very interested

conferences to help their child learn concepts, working with children on homework, participating on Policy council and committees, and communicating with teachers when they pick up or drop off their children. When asked how else they would like parents to be involved, teachers said volunteering in the classroom, asking more questions on how to help their children, working with children at home, reading to their children, spending one on one time with their children, visiting the classroom more, encouraging children's skills at home, and seeing that teachers are educators not babysitters.

Discussion and Recommendations

When teachers sent suggestions for activities home with children, parents often spent some time completing the activities. However, when teachers sent activities with resources home, with specific instruction for how parents should complete them (as in Level 3 activities), parents responded by spending a greater amount of time engaged in the activities with their children, and repeated doing them several times. When asked how they would like to be involved in their children's education, seventeen (of 49 respondents to the open-ended question) said in any way possible or whatever the teacher wanted them to do. Likewise, when teachers were asked how they would like parents to be involved in their children's education, their responses focused on having parents help their children with skills at home. The comments by teachers and parents alike indicate that parents are willing to help their children, but perhaps do not know how, and what teachers would like parents to do at home. In the vast majority of cases, when teachers sent materials home with children to complete activities with their parents, parents actively participated in the suggested activities. One of the reasons that teachers may not send materials or ideas home for parents to complete with their children is due to a perceived lack of time, and perhaps that parents may not complete activities. Our results indicate that the provision

of activities to do at home was not time consuming for teachers, and parents were actively involved in completing the requested activities. Teachers sharing at home activities could promote two important goals: to help parents become more involved with their children's education, and to increase time that a child may spend on important learning activities, thus increasing the likelihood of greater mastery of skills.

A limitation of this research is the effect of parent involvement in the activities on children's academic and social outcomes. Future research should continue to seek additional targeted information regarding under what circumstances, and with whom, parent involvement seems to be linked with positive outcomes, and the resulting information should be used to help shape school policies toward involving parents. It is the opinion of these researchers that parents are particularly under-utilized especially in low-income schools, but our experience has shown that when parents are asked to become involved and are given specific activities to complete, they have been motivated participants who bring knowledge, concern and motivation to helping their children succeed.

It is apparent that teachers and parents see value to parents practicing skills at home with their children. Without giving parents guidance on what might be useful to practice at home, parents may practice skills that aren't useful for the child's progress. The results of this project indicate that sharing concrete engagement activities and resources with families may indeed help students to increase their learning, and is a strong recommendation from this project. Teachers who are reluctant to share resources need to be aware of parents' overwhelming interest in receiving resource support and the successful results of the lending process, as well as the small amount of time required, according to teachers involved in the project. Teachers who are willing to invite and support parents to do home enrichment activities may find this study a supportive nudge for partnering with families.

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The Power and Potential of Literacy Practices in Latino Households and Communities: Mapping and Teacher Critical Inquiry

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Abstract: This paper will discuss three inquiry-based community mapping projects carried out by teachers in Los Angeles. The goals of these projects were to uncover the depth and diversity of community and home-based language and literacy resources. The objectives of this study is to investigate the process by which teachers carried out the mapping projects in the context of their school communities and to discuss implications for practice as it relates to student voice, literacy instruction, and home-school connections.

Keywords: family literacy, Latino families, culturally/linguistically responsive instruction

Statement of the Research Topic

In *Education and Experience*, John Dewey (1938) criticizes traditional education for lacking in holistic understanding of students and designing curricula overly focused on isolated sets of skills rather than the knowledge that can be derived through content, process, and one's interaction with, and knowledge of, their environment. Over seventy years later the debate continues over the role of context - specifically the local everyday realities and multicultural and linguistic words and worlds of children and their families - in teacher instruction and student learning. Many would argue that it is the responsibility of the educator to understand the unique and ever-changing dynamics of their surrounding school communities in order to meaningfully create educational experiences that will have a positive impact on students' present realities and future aspirations.

This paper explores three language and literacy community mapping project carried out by three cohort of teachers in southern California. The goals of these projects were to chronicle the knowledge produced by teachers about the depth and diversity of language and literacy resources within their students' households. Community language and literacy mapping is an inquiry-based method that can be utilized by teachers to place literacy learning in context by connecting students' words and worlds to literacy instruction. For many educators, community mapping can also promote increased interactions among teachers and families by removing potential cultural barriers and unearthing cultural and linguistic assets. According to O'Sullivan (2001), mapping the community surrounding the school by taking photos/videos, observing the neighborhood, writing field notes, and interacting with the people who work and live in the area should allow teachers to "see" the needs and resources of a community with new lenses (p. 1). Armed with this knowledge, teachers can develop the critical knowledge necessary to create

literacy instruction that encourages students to act upon the multiple social worlds in which they inhabit.

Literature Review

In her analysis of successful practices in working with Spanish-speaking Latino families in Chicago, Flora Rodriguez-Brown (2009) discusses the need to move beyond what she refers to as *functional* approaches to family literacy. She describes a functional approach as one where programs are developed without the input from the families and communities for which the programs were designed. She found that school programs that adopted a functional perspective did not always consider the cultural/linguistic needs of the students or their families. Research reveals that schools and program who approach family literacy from a functional perspective tend to also implement skills-based, English-only prescriptive curriculums that privileges schooled literacy over out-of-school home literacy practices (Taylor, 1997) and works to change parents' abilities and beliefs about the role literacy plays in their lives proposing only school-like literacy interactions with their children (Auerbach, 2001). In addition to promoting language correctness over cognitive complexity, these approaches to family literacy underestimates the cultural literacies within the home (e.g., oral traditions, faith-based practices) that may serve to enhance a strong cultural identity or competency while building strong academic literacy skills as well (Ordonez-Jasis & Jasis, 2011). According to Paratore's (2003) research synthesis of past and present practices in family literacy, these in and out of school literacy programs do not produce long-term sustainable gains because the "burden of change rests, primarily, often even exclusively, on the shoulders of parents. They are expected to incorporate school-like literacy and learning routines within the fabric of their everyday lives…(However) increased efforts by (schools) to learn about and build on the multiple ways in which parents and children use literacy outside school may help children maintain, even increase, the gains they make during initial family literacy interventions" (p. 23).

In developing literacy programs for culturally and linguistically diverse students and their families, it is imperative to reexamine unexpressed assumptions about, and approaches towards, non-dominant families. It is within this space that new learning environments could be imagined where culturally and linguistically diverse students receive meaningful opportunities to engage in critical inquiry rather than rote learning, where their language and literacy practices are meaningfully incorporated into curriculum design, and where the relationship between homes and schools are strengthened and reconstructed on a more equal basis.

Moving Beyond a Deficit Perspective: Mapping Language and Literacy Resources

Community mapping is a term used to describe both a "process and a product" (Tredway, 2003, p. 1). Community mapping is a process of discovery and reflection that allows the "mapper" to develop new understandings about a specific geographical area. Mapping also includes the documentation - through field notes and photos or videos – of recollections/observations and interactions with community informants. Tredway (2003) describes community mapping as an inquiry-based method that has the potential to change the

perspective of the teacher from one of an outsider to that of an insider, particularly when the lived realities and experiences of community members are taken into account

For literacy educators, community mapping can serve as a reflective tool to create purposeful learning situations which validate the diverse experiential and symbolic cultural and linguistic resources children bring with them to the classroom (Ordonez-Jasis & Jasis, 2010). Genishi and Dysons' (2009) ethnographic work in multicultural classrooms reminds us that by becoming better observers of their students, both within and outside the classroom, teachers are better able to respond to their literacy growth, and make more relevant their literacy curriculum. Luis Moll's work (see Moll & Gonzalez, 2004) has informed those researchers and educators concerned with this type of meaning-driven literacy instruction. In particular, his research on *funds of knowledge* has helped to frame teachers' ethnographic work, including their observations and documentation of how students and community members attach meaning to language and literacy practices. By conceptualizing community members' relationship to literacy in this way – in terms of the diverse ways it is experienced, represented, and created – educators are able to situate literacy learning within a richer understanding of their students' contemporary social context.

New understandings gained from locating language and literacy resources may also broaden our understanding of literacy instruction so we may also approach reading, writing, speaking, listening, and viewing as permeated by social and political issues (Gee, 1996). In this regard, community mapping can lead us to question our own long-held beliefs about historically marginalized communities and, possibly, to interrogate asymmetrical power relations and social injustices in society and within schools (Darder, 1991). Consequently, as Moll (2010) has written, educators have the political power to determine "whose language and cultural experiences count and whose do not, which students are at the center, and therefore, which must remain in the periphery" (p. 454). Recognition of the cultural capital of diverse communities, including potential literacy assets, is a first step towards centralizing the voices of its members and integrating them into the "social and intellectual fabric" of schools (Moll, 2010, p. 454). In a very Freirian sense, as teachers engage in a collective analysis of power, language, literacy and access within schools and society, vis a vis community language and literacy mapping, a deeper understanding may develop of how literacy, as a pedagogical tool, can be used by both teachers and students to derive meaning from, and later learn to "act" upon, one's environment.

Theoretical Framework

Grounding my analysis in the theoretical discussions put forth by Auerbach (2001) and Lareau (1994) who, among others, have attempted to reconceptualize family literacy to necessarily include issues of power, voice, and ideology, this paper responds to the need to embrace a more critical stance towards literacy and families to help re-imagine the possibilities for literacy instruction. Defined by Giroux (1988), *critical literacy* "functions as a theoretical tool to help students develop a critical relationship to their own knowledge" to "learn how to read the world and their lives critically and relatedly...and, most importantly, it points to forms of social action and collective struggle" (p. 49). Applying this critical approach to literacy instruction, then, begins with an in-depth understanding of sociocultural theory; that is, it acknowledges that the discourse patterns, linguistic practices, and cultural ways of knowing and

experiencing are essential aspects of literacy learning (Moll, 2010). Within under-served communities residing in the United States, and among culturally and linguistically diverse communities in particular, the need to meaningfully incorporate a profound respect for their culture, linguistic codes, and worldviews into the learning environments of the classroom has been clearly delineated in the literature (Ada & Zubizareta, 2001; Delgado- Gaitán, 1994; Valdés, 1996). In sum, family literacy from a sociocultural perspective, is a means of recognizing, validating, and meaningfully integrating a community's multiple perspectives, diverse realities, varying discourse patterns, and "diversity of literacies" into the heart of its programs curricular design.

Methodology

The general purpose of this Community Language and Literacy Mapping project was to better understand the experiences of three cohorts of teachers – at the preschool, elementary school, and middle school levels - who attempted to uncover the language and literacy resources of the families and communities surrounding their urban school sites. The aim of this project was to first understand how the process of mapping the literacy and language resources of diverse communities - within various social-cultural-historical-political contexts - impacts or informs teachers' production of knowledge. Second, we wanted to investigate what, if any, were the implications for teacher practice and student learning. This paper will share the findings of two cohorts of teachers: preschool and elementary school.

Using their own students' communities as settings for study and critical analysis, the teachers carried out a teacher inquiry project that required them to map the cultural, linguistic and literacy "geographies" (Moll, 2010, p. 454) of the their school households and communities. Teachers scouted, tabulated, and videotaped/photographed language and literacy resources. In order to gain deeper understandings of community resources, teachers also interviewed and/or surveyed families and conducted home visits. This community mapping activity was followed by community of practice meetings where teachers engaged in active thought and inquiry as they discussed their reflections on both the content and process of their mapping experience.

Data Collection and Analysis Procedures

The key modes of data collection included participants' voluntary submission of their field work journals. These journals contained teachers' documented observations, transcribed interviews with parents/caregivers, and written reflections. Data collection also included artifacts such as student work and assessments, email correspondence, and recorded teacher meetings and conference calls.

Qualitative data were analyzed using Carney, Joiner, and Tragous' (1997) approach to sorting data. All interviews and recordings were transcribed. The teacher descriptive observational data, interview transcriptions, and reflective essays were coded to illuminate key emergent themes and patterns. Atlas I software was used for the second coding. A table was created to further organize the themes and identify their significance. This last level of analysis allowed for a deeper knowledge of the data. Teachers were included in data analysis. Participants were requested to reflect upon their mapping experiences and to describe significant discoveries.

Findings

Three themes emerged from the data. First, parent engaged in many rich and varied non-traditional literacy practices with their children, but did not readily recognize these practices as literacy based. Second, through reflection and dialogue, teachers learned to view the literacy resources within homes and communities with a new lens and developed a re-appreciation for their "cultural intuitions." Finally, with support from their colleagues, teachers were able to create "literacy bridges" and meaningfully incorporate these new learnings into their literacy instruction.

Non-Traditional Literacy Practices and Preschool Families: Oral Storytelling and Alegria

According to McLaren (1994), "Translating an experience into a story is perhaps the most fundamental act of human understanding" (p. 92). Snow, Tabors & Dickinson (2001) highlight the strong relationship between children's interaction with oral language later reading abilities; specifically, storytelling that "requires participants to develop understandings beyond the here and now and that requires the use of several utterances or turns to build linguistic structure, such as in explanations, narratives, or pretend" (p. 2). Furthermore, stories that are authentic, meaningful, and culturally relevant enhance our understanding and allows for greater connection and comprehension (Flores-Duenas, 2004). For many of the parents interviewed by the cohort of preschool teachers, relating their experiences into a story of how they met their spouse took on a fairy tale like quality to which their children intimately connected to because of its cultural and experiential familiarity. The parents warmly recalled the story of how they met their spouses and shared how their children enjoyed listening to them time and time again. These romance stories with the male and female protagonist reinforced important story elements including a beginning, a middle, a climax, and a happily ever after sentiment commonly found in children's literature. Through the telling and retelling of stories families were able to construct and reconstruct meaning and order in their lives. These stories served a dual purpose in strengthening cultural bonds among family members and simultaneously building essential literacy skills with their children. Sociocultural theory views families as powerful socializing agents as they introduce their children to the words and worlds of the community to which they belong (Freire, 1994). These tales and folklore served as opportunities for parents to socialize their children *through* language while socializing them to *use* language (Morrow, 2008) in a way that that reflect the cultural and linguistic worldviews of the families. Many of the Latino parents interviewed clearly separated the oral storytelling and other forms of language play they engaged in with their children from the more serious literacy "work" that was clearly part of the drive for "school readiness." In their reflections and discussions, the preschool teachers began to draw upon their own experiences and "cultural intuition" to make sense of this unfolding theme. The topic of the teacher meetings transitioned to making clear connections among the various types of literacy practices found in homes and how they can be better connected with school-based literacy expectations. As the teachers carefully listened to the stories of the families and reflected upon the richness of literacy practices they found in the homes, a heightened consciousness developed as they came to rediscover and better appreciate the benefits of home-based stories and songs in the emergent literacy process.

Uncovering Literacy Bridges: Learning from Families' Words and Worlds

A primary goal of the elementary teacher cohort was to better understand family literacy practices but to also find meaningful and authentic ways to merge the literacy worlds of children with the curriculum. Several of the elementary school teachers decided to conduct community walks and home visits in order to develop a better understanding of families' language and literacy-related practices. While interacting with parents and their children, the teachers observed several examples of storytelling, particularly those stories or *consejos* (family or generational, morally-oriented teachings) that held cultural and religious value for the families. They also discovered ways in which parents engaged their children in culturally-relevant literacy-based activities. These included creating and designing *calaveras* (sugar skulls) for Day of the Dead and teaching games such as *Loteria* (Mexican game similar to bingo) *and La Pirinola* (traditional Mexican game). At several of the teacher meetings they excitedly reported back to the group about the many rich practices they were was able to identify. These candid conversations with families in their homes also contributed to a significant shift for teacher - from viewing schools as the center of the community towards a renewed appreciation that schools and households actually inhabit the community equally. In the days and weeks that followed, teachers co-constructed units across the subject areas that intentionally incorporated their findings from the home visits and community walks. One example, in particular included a poetry unit that was inspired when one 5th grade teacher noticed a poem hanging on the wall of one home. The following day he asked his students to bring in an example of a poem that was significant to their family. One student requested the help of his mother. The mother shared poetry that, unbeknownst to him, she had periodically written over the years. "She had poems," he commented "and well I turned out to like them because they were about me and when I was small and she actually was really creative about the writing." The student talked about how reading them made "me feel that I was cared for and my mom, all those things my mom said in the poem were nice and just makes me feel like really happy and to know that she took her time to write those" and although he thought he might be "shy, embarrassed" to share the poem with his classmates, he wanted to "show my mom that I like what she does so she can also feel important." Inspired by this experience, the teachers discussed the power and potential of taking a more student-centered approach by providing opportunities for students to actively negotiate and "decode" the multiple literacies within their homes (field notes, 4/2011).

Discussion and Implications

The Community Literacy Mapping project provided teachers with a participatory forum to discover a wealth of resources at the grassroots level to reflect on and to strengthen their classroom-based pedagogies. The participants engaged in a re-appreciation of the multiple literacies found within Latino households. With it, and through this transforming process, they also learned to validate and incorporate their "non-traditional" literacies into a more effective instruction with all its vibrancy and pedagogic possibilities.

In an increasingly diverse and changing world, this experience invited teachers to reflect upon their dispositions and practice so they may recognize the complexities of family literacy and literacy learning. This was an effort that involved teachers in a concerted, inquiry-based approach to understand the words and worlds of the students in their classrooms. There is a need

for a teacher cultural disposition that allows for learning and understanding of students' cultural and familial contexts and experiences. Through their work, teachers began creating spaces that invited students to bring the artifacts, meanings, values, and resources of their home and community into the real work of classroom learning. Student engagement, learning, and achievement increased when home-community-school literacy routines were equally valued and legitimate. By asking students to bring in resources or stories from home or having them write about objects in their community, the students suddenly began coming in deeply excited about classroom learning.

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Got Coalition? A National Study of the Differences Between
Literacy and Non-Literacy Coalition Communities

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Abstract: There has been growing interest in the power of community coalitions to bring about sustained and systemic change in areas of community need ranging from health to poverty. Despite a growing literature on coalition building and potential gains, very little research to date exists on the impact of coalitions. In this project, we use national data to probe the discernable differences between coalition and non-coalition communities in the area of literacy. We find that U.S. counties with literacy coalitions have healthier nonprofits in terms of annual revenue and assets, are more likely to be classified as a creative class community by the U.S. Census, have a lower percent of residents not completing high school and a higher percent completing college and above. These findings remained statistically significant when controlling for county population characteristics including average household income, population density, racial ethnic diversity, immigration and language dynamics, household profiles, and major sectors of employment. While more research is needed to discern the extent to which coalitions are responsible for these noted differences, we offer a model for theorizing the relationships found in this research.

Keywords: literacy coalition, community impact

Community Coalitions are a growing national phenomenon. Though many definitions exist, they are perhaps most simply described as "multi-sector alliances of individuals and groups that promote change through citizen-based involvement" (Watson-Thompson, Fawcett, & Schultz, 2008). Over the past few decades, interest in coalitions has emerged across a spectrum of causes ranging from community health (Office of Health Policy, ASPE 2010), to environmental justice (Mix, 2011), urban neighborhood development (Watson-Thompson et. al., 2008), stopping gun violence, and creating affordable housing (Berkowitz, 2001). Such attempts at coalition formation have been accompanied by academic interests across disciplines as well, ranging from psychology (Cox 2009; McMillan, Florin, Stevenson, Kerman, & Mitchell, 1995), criminology (Fagan, Brook-Weiss, Cady, & Hawkins, 2009) and sociology (Mix, 2011), to health sciences (Office of Health Policy, ASPE 2010) and communications (Broom and Avanzino 2010). In fact, not only has the appearance of the word "coalition" steadily increased in printed text since the 1920s (Michel et al., 2010), but as Berkowitz (2001) reports, the number of scholarly articles referring to coalitions has grown more than 50 fold from the 1980s to the

turn of the century, from approximately 80 to 5,295. Their growth has been further promoted by funding for coalitions from the federal government (Office of Health Policy, ASPE 2010), private foundations such as the Robert Wood Johnson (Clark et al., 2010) and the Kauffman Foundations (Watson-Thompson et. al., 2008), and community foundations (Ridzi, Carmody, & Byrnes, 2011). In the words of Kaye (2001), "Coalitions are the rage. Every Community has one by now or one is most certainly coming to a community near you." (p. 269).

Despite this growing popularity and an expanding literature on how to build coalitions and why coalitions are an attractive means to "create population-wide, macro-level changes" (Clark et al. 2010, p. 904), research on coalition effectiveness is strikingly sparse. A comprehensive review of outcomes of community based coalitions completed in 2001 concluded that "coalitions and similar collaborative organizations are too complex to be adequately evaluated by the methodology that is now available" (Berkowitz, 2001, p. 213). Despite knowledge of an estimated several thousand community coalitions across the United States (see also Kegler, Rigler, & Honeycutt, 2010), the review lamented, "we do not know what percent of coalitions enjoy… success, what degrees of success are most typical, whether success in some areas is more common than in others, nor what factors were responsible for success when it occurred" (Berkowitz, 2001, p. 218). In short, data on coalition impact has been more qualitative than quantitative and limited largely to a series of case studies of single coalitions. The fear that was voiced in response to this finding was that, given a lack of evidence about their impact, "funders and practitioners may be expecting too much from these increasingly popular mechanisms" (Berkowitz, 2001, p. 219).

Since the publication of the 2001 review of coalition evaluation research, little has changed. A National Opinion Research Center review funded by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services in 2010 also found "a limited body of literature examining the impacts of community coalitions" and concluded that "traditional program evaluation methods are often ill-suited to capture the dynamic nature of community coalitions" (Office of Health Policy, ASPE 2010, p.3). A contemporary study by Clark et al. (2010, p. 905) similarly asserted that "outcome data are scant given the level of effort expended by these collaborations on partnership building, mobilization, and action and the prevalence of coalitions in the United States alone."

In this paper, we set out to address the continued need for rigorous evaluation of the impact of coalitions on community life. Specifically, we respond to what Berkowitz (2001) noted as a need for studies comparing the outcomes of multiple coalitions while using statistical controls. This has remained a daunting challenge particularly because of the noted difficulty in finding a sample, given that there has not existed a national registry of coalitions and given that coalitions seldom have shared outcome indicators. In this paper, we utilize the sample of Literacy Coalitions because a national affiliation organization recently jas emerged to keep track of all of the coalitions in existence and because these coalitions aspire to common goals such as increased educational success which are measurable to some extent through U.S. Census data. Thus, although it is still a preliminary effort to assess the impact of Literacy Coalitions, it is the first national study to our knowledge of the differences that exist between coalition and non-coalition communities.

Methods

Research Question

Are communities that have literacy coalitions significantly different from those that don't in the areas that coalitions are intended to impact— namely nonprofit resources, educational achievement and a creative/collaborative community? Our hypothesis, based on the literature, is that counties with literacy coalitions will outperform counties without literacy coalitions in each of these areas. We test this hypothesis with data on all US counties in 2010. There are 3,136 counties in the United States (and in our sample). Of these, 109 counties have Literacy Coalitions.

Results

The results all supported our research hypothesis that counties with literacy coalitions will outperform counties without literacy coalitions in each of the areas or nonprofit resources, educational achievement and a creative/collaborative community. We review each finding in detail below.
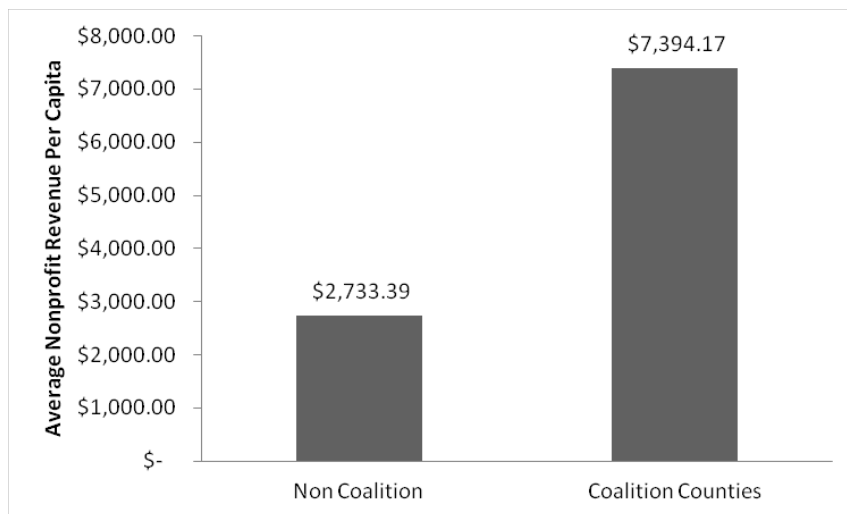
Figure 2. Average nonprofit revenue per capita for 2010 for coalition versus non coalition counties.

As we see in Figure 2, in 2010 nonprofits in Coalition Counties on average had an advantage. They received over twice as much revenue (per capita) than non LC counties ($2,733 vs. $7,394). This difference was statistically significant at the .01 or 99% level.

In 2010 nonprofits in Coalition Counties also on average had an advantage in terms of assets per capita. In 2010 LC counties averaged nearly 3 times more assets ($6,036 vs. $17,278 per capita). This difference was also statistically significant at the .01 or 99% level. In Figure 4 below, we observe that Coalition Counties have an approximately 3% lower rate of non high school graduation. This difference was statistically significant at the .01 or 99% level .
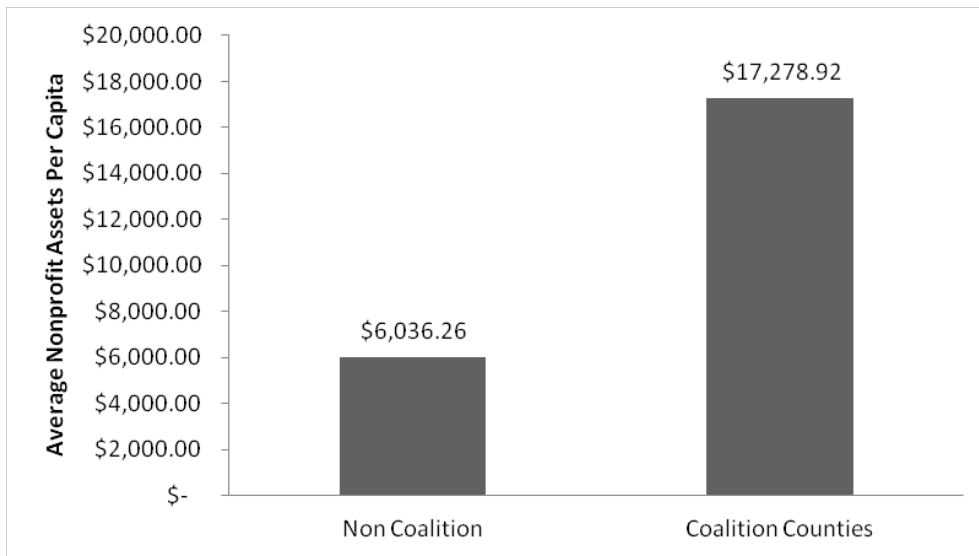
Figure 3. Average nonprofit assets per capita in 2010 for coalition versus non coalition counties.

Approximately 10% more of the population in coalition counties goes on to complete a 4 year degree or higher as compared to non coalition counties. This difference was statistically significant at the .01 or 99% confidence level. .
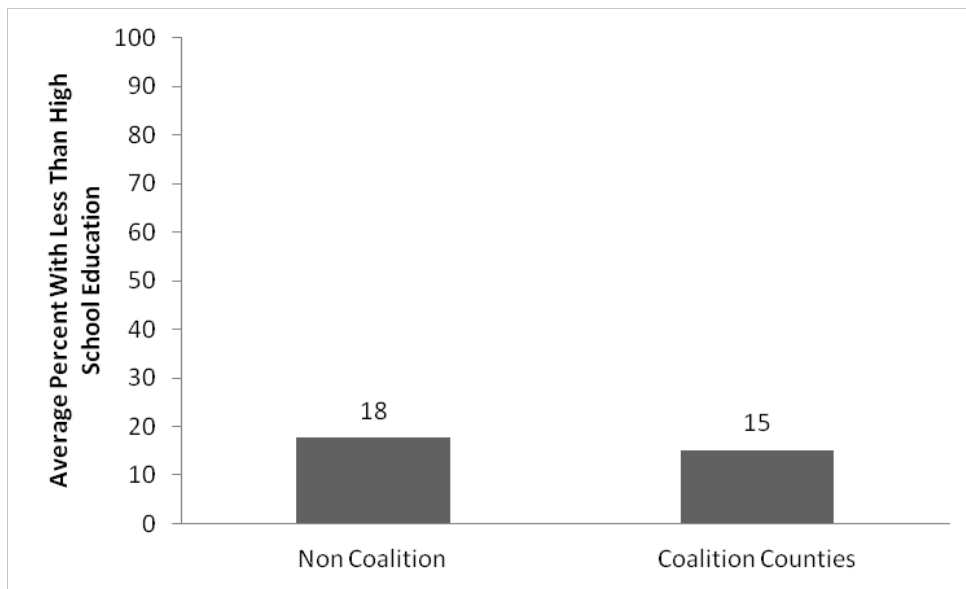
Figure 4. Average percent with less than high school education in 2010 for coalition versus non coalition counties.

Comparing coalition counties to non-coalition counties we also find a difference when it comes to completing college and higher education (see Figure 5).
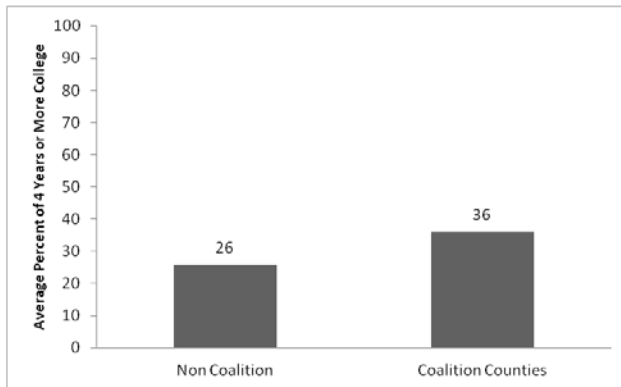
Figure 5. Average percent of adult population with education level of four years or more of college for 2010 by coalition versus non coalition communities.

As we can see in Figure 6 below, 79% of coalition counties are designated as creative class by the U.S Census meaning that they fall in the top quartile of counties ranked by percent of employed persons 16 years old or older in occupations that involve "thinking creatively." This skill element is defined as developing, designing, or creating new applications, ideas, relationships, systems, or products, including artistic contributions. Comparatively, only 23% of non coalition counties fall in this categorization. This relationship was statistically significant at the .01 or 99% level.
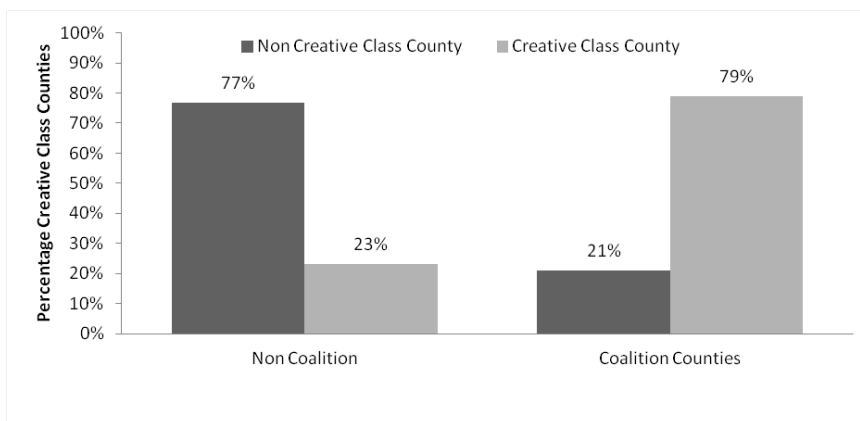
Figure 6. Average percent of counties designated as creative class by the U.S Census for 2010 by coalition versus non coalition communities

Discussion

The above findings offer new evidence in support of the hypothesized impact of community coalitions. Namely, having a community literacy coalition was a statistically significant predictor of having financially better resourced nonprofits, a higher percent of adults

completing high school or above, a higher percentage of adults achieving four year and more advanced college degrees, and a community characterized by a creative class of workers. While the robust nature of these findings, persisting even after controlling for a series of other community characteristics (not shown in this paper), are certainly encouraging to proponents of the coalition approach, they fall short of proving that coalitions cause these community outcomes. Rather, the findings paint a picture of healthy communities (literacy-wise) in which having a coalition tends to coincide with other desirable community outcomes. As depicted in Figure 7 below, there may be a circular chain of causality whereby having a creative class of highly educated residents and financially healthier nonprofits cause the creation of coalitions, rather than the other way around. Nevertheless, the present findings suggest that literacy coalition communities are more successful in the ways literature would lead us to assume. More research is needed to distill the specific roles that community literacy coalitions play in this success.

Figure 7. Hypothesized circular chain of causality.

Conclusions and Future Research

The above findings are certainly encouraging to coalition proponents, but further research is needed, especially given the weak and contradictory outcomes found in other studies of coalitions (Berkowitz, 2001). We offer some promising lines of research below. First, a survey of coalitions, such as literacy coalitions could enable a more detailed examination of which specific community coalition practices that literature has identified (i.e. strategic planning, community indicators, leadership etc. as outlined in Watson-Thompson 2008) are associated more strongly with the positive community outcomes noted in this research. Preliminary analysis suggests that considerable variation exists among coalition structures and activities. Berkowitz (2001) suggests contacting coalition leaders directly in order to gather more comprehensive data. Clark et al. (2010) for instance, suggests the importance of distinguishing between coalitions that provide services and programs versus those that focus on policy and system change. They further point out that no studies to date have evaluated both changes and outcomes. Pairing these data

with outcomes such as the ones in this research would better enable researchers to distinguish what pattern of involvement among coalitions or their partners was evident when positive outcomes were achieved (see Foster-Fishman et al., 2001 for a review of coalition activities).

A second potential approach to further research could involve a more longitudinal focus on communities. For instance, Berkowitz (2001) suggests studying change over time. Goodman et al. (1996) similarly suggests the use of trend analysis on archival data in communities. This approach could be combined with the approach in the present study and change in communities over time could be compared nationally. To do this would require some form of control for when the coalition was formed and its stage of development – another area for further study. Since most of the research to date is based on single case studies, we know relatively little about the lifecycle of coalitions and their generalizable stages of growth. Future research could enlighten us here as well.

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Parent Perceptions of Family Literacy:
The Impact it has on the Reading Process of Elementary-Age Children

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Abstract: Research has shown that the family structure influences literacy development. The study was developed based on the social learning theories of Vygotsky and Skinner. Vygotsky's approach to sociocultural theory examines the interaction between parent and child (Heath, 2009). Skinner analyzes the dynamics of this parental relationship. Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (1995), present a conceptual model of parent involvement that suggests that parent factors and school factors influence parental involvement that ultimately impacts student outcomes. Based on these theories, a mixed methods study with both a survey and interviews was developed. The purpose of this study was to explore the influential factors in both the home and school settings that may assist in the improvement of elementary-age students' reading skills. The study focused on parent perceptions of family literacy and how these influence students' reading behaviors. The study of 120 parent participants is unique in that it represented students of two different grade levels. The analysis of the data indicated that regardless of a child's grade level, parents viewed involvement in their child's reading development a priority and an important practice at home that can lead to academic achievement. Furthermore, results revealed that parents' behaviors and beliefs lead to students' positive reading behaviors.

Keywords: family literacy, parent beliefs, elementary-age literacy, reading behaviors

Statement of the Research Topic

Parent involvement is one of the essential components to developing a lifelong reader. The purpose of this study was to explore the influential factors of both the home and school settings that may assist in the improvement of elementary-age students' reading skills.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework in which this literature review and study are considered encompasses the research that supports the sociocultural theory. The theory supports the idea that individuals use both what they know as well as the social context to process learning (Ordonez-Jasis, 2010). Within the framework, individuals develop literacy not only through learning specific skills, but also rather as a result of interactions and experiences (Ordonez-Jasis, 2010).

Review of the Literature

The foundation of early literacy experiences begins with the family environment, specifically with parent interactions (Darling & Lee, 2003; Neumann & Neumann, 2009). Research has shown that children who learn to read at the early stages of development will increase their literacy skills (Darling & Lee, 2003). Experiences provided by parents have a significant impact on literacy achievement (Darling & Lee, 2003). According to the research, parents who model and demonstrate uses of reading and writing have a strong influence on their child's literacy development in the school setting (Butler & Clay, 1982). Parents must see themselves as readers and expose their children to a variety of literacy experiences prior to the start of school (Butler & Clay, 1982).

The relationship between parent and child, the level of expectations, and the amount of participation in the family that is genuine and purposeful enhances the academic successes of a child (Benard, 2004). These three components are significant to the child's learning development. When families set high expectations for their children, they set the stage for a positive attitude towards academics.

Research shows that children who have been exposed to literature and have had many positive experiences with it, prior to entering school, have a greater lead to early success (Bishop, Yopp, & Yopp, 2000). When the home environment presents itself with positive interaction with the integration of various reading activities, children begin to see the importance and value of reading (Bishop et al., 2000). Parents and other family members in the home play a significant part in role modeling for the younger, emergent reader. The ultimate goal for parents and educators together is to create lifelong readers.

Motivation and encouragement are key components to establishing a positive attitude toward reading. It is critical that not only should parents share these with their children, but they too, should feel that same sense of motivation and encouragement (Bishop et al., 2000). Children who view these key components enacted by their parents discover the power and purpose of reading.

Parent involvement thrives at the elementary level. Both parents and teachers find this involvement essential at the early stages of reading development. According to Darling and Westberg (2004), parents are able to improve their own reading skills as they learn about what is needed for their children. Strategies that encourage family involvement have been found to increase more positive effects on reading achievement (Darling & Westberg, 2004). It is essential that educators model for parents the process for creating a positive reading environment for the child (Darling & Westberg, 2004). The home environment is a positive one when parents display the value and purpose for reading achievement (Smith, 1991). According to Gadsden (1998), parents understand their responsibility to literacy and want to provide a clear and comprehensible model to reading.

Why is it that a decline in achievement occurs at the beginning of young adolescence? A decline that is prevalent in literacy. There are a number of factors that influence this belief. Research has shown that reading instruction along with lack of interest in reading materials that are made available to them contribute to this downfall in literacy achievement (Ivey & Broaddus, 2000). It has also been found that parents are less involved at this stage in development (Brough & Irvin, 2001). Though parent involvement changes as children enter adolescence, teachers and

parents are still aware of the significant impact this involvement has at this level of education (Halsey, 2005). In addition, studies have shown that parents want to be involved in their child's education, but lack the understanding of how to effectively assist their child (Halsey, 2005). While parents have a clear understanding of how to interact with their child at the elementary stage, they find it unclear at the middle school level (Brough & Irvin, 2001).

With young readers still struggling at the advanced level, it is important that both teacher and parent support are apparent. Addressing individual needs and interests in order for a child to be a proficient reader is essential. Although teachers play a significant role in this process, parents are just as vital. This is why it is critical that teachers create that supportive rapport and partnership with parents. Having the involvement in the home can bring positive effects.

For many years, experts have researched the relationship between parents and teachers in order to see if there is a direct link to literacy achievement in children. What researchers have found is that parent involvement is essential and highly influential in the development of children's literacy skills (Colombo, 2006).

Many educators understand the importance of providing support to parents who need assistance in guiding their children through the literacy process. Moreover, they understand that families are an integral part of reading development. It is key that the home and the school community unite into a partnership to enhance literacy achievement.

Method

The study was conducted in two phases. Phase One was conducted in March of 2008. Phase Two was conducted in December of 2011 as a follow-up to the initial study. The purpose of the second phase was to see if parent perceptions differed from the original sample, especially given changes in technology, and if the school was providing the necessary resources and workshops the parents aspired to have at the site in order to meet the needs of their children.

Phase One

The purpose of Phase One was to examine parent perceptions about reading and parent involvement. The study explored perceptions parents have on beliefs about reading as well as school support in relation to reading achievement.

The parents were randomly selected to participate in the survey. Eighty-five of the participants completed the questionnaire. Forty-six of the participants were parents of first-grade students and thirty-one of them were parents of sixth-grade students. Participants came from a variety of educational levels and cultural and ethnic backgrounds. Questionnaires included statements related to school support and the role parents' play in their child's reading development. Questions regarding parents' own childhood reading experiences were addressed as well.

Phase Two

The purpose of Phase Two was to reexamine perceptions parents have on their own beliefs and being involved in the reading process, their own reading role models, and what they believe the school should provide to them in terms of effective resources to use at home when assisting their child with reading.

The participants were parents of first and sixth-grade students. These parent participants were a different selection than those represented in Phase One. Thirty-five parents participated in the study. Nineteen parents represented first-grade students and sixteen parents represented sixth-grade students. Participants came from a variety of educational levels and cultural and ethnic backgrounds. The instruments that were used in Phase Two of the study included a survey and an interview protocol.

Analysis

Combined Results: Phases One and Two

The purpose of the study was to answer five research questions that pertain to home and school partnerships and the role parents' play in their child's reading development. Additionally, it was important to see if parent perceptions have varied since Phase One of the study. Data results indicated that parents, regardless of their child's grade level, viewed involvement in their child's reading development, a priority and an important practice at home that can lead to overall academic achievement. Below are the results to the specific research questions that were analyzed through the data:

Question 1: Do parents integrate and model reading practices learned during their childhood in order to enhance reading development that will lead to overall literacy achievement?

Findings indicated that parents themselves experienced positive reading practices during their childhood. Many were read to daily as well as taught various strategies to discover the meaning of the written text. As a result, many parents have passed down these practices to their own children. Parents', who did not have the same positive childhood reading experiences, have taken those experiences and learned ways in which they could make them positive for their child.

Question 2: What do parents of first and sixth-grade students believe about reading?

Data results show that regardless of their child's grade level, parents view reading as an important practice at home. Parents see themselves as role models in the reading process. Furthermore, they believe that reading leads to academic achievement.

Question 3: Do parents' level of education influence reading practices at home and the overall attitude towards reading?

The parent participants that were surveyed represented a variety of educational levels. However, regardless of these levels, all parents involved in the study viewed reading as an important practice that leads to academic success. Parents without college degrees appeared to be more passionate about their role in their child's education than those with the educational background. However, parents with college degrees did see their role as an important one. They just felt it was automatic to be involved and concluded that their child would be academically successful. Irrespective of educational backgrounds, parents value the importance of reading and know the positive impact it has on children.

Question 4: Do teachers and school encourage parent involvement?

Findings suggested parents do feel that the school encourages them to be involved. However, some parents who were interviewed did not feel welcomed in their child's classroom. Nevertheless, parents still offer their assistance despite the teacher's lack of encouragement.

Question 5: Does the school, in order to support a child's reading development, provide parents with strategies and other learning resources?

Results showed that schools provide minimal reading resources for parents to use at home with their child. Parents feel that they would benefit learning from teachers, reading strategies and techniques that would help their children improve their skills. In addition, parents suggest that schools provide family literacy nights where these reading strategies could be learned. Furthermore, parents feel that along with learning the strategies, teachers could also model them and then in turn, have the children apply the strategies during the family literacy nights. This would allow parents to practice reading skills with their child while teachers guided them through the process.

Discussion

It is evident that parent support and involvement are essential for literacy growth and development. In reviewing the literature, Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler (1995), present a conceptual model of parent involvement that suggests that parent factors and school factors influence parental involvement that ultimately impacts student outcomes. Findings from the two-phased study that was conducted support this model.

Based on Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler's original model of parent involvement, Hoover-Dempsey and Whitaker (2010), developed a second model reflecting parent involvement as a process. Because a large portion of the study examined parental beliefs, this model illuminates the findings concluded in the data. The key points of this model are "the most important contributions of effective family involvement are formed in families' support for students' beliefs about themselves as learners, students' motivations for learning, and students' development of effective learning strategies" (Hoover-Dempsey & Whitaker, 2010, pp. 55-56).

Although there have been a number of studies to suggest that parent involvement increases overall student learning, few have shown the direct link between involvement and literacy achievement. However, analysis of the data based on the study that was conducted suggest that parent involvement is viewed as a priority for parents. Additionally, parents believe that a strong reading background leads to a successful academic future. However, future research needs to continue in the area of home and school partnerships.

The questionnaire that was administered to the parents of first and sixth-grade students for the purpose of this study can be extended to a larger sample size in order for the validity of the data to be stronger.

Research suggests that parents serve as the primary role models to literacy (Kissinger, 2004). Through modeling good reading practices, parents establish a foundation to reading (Kissinger, 2004). Parents need to encourage children to read and to be interested in what they read. A child's literacy success is clearly linked to the home and the experiences it provides (Hill-Clark, 2005). According to Kissinger (2004), when parents are role models at the early stages of their child's development, reading is likely to begin in the first-grade and even earlier.

Implications

Implications for Teachers

Teachers working with parents to create a partnership can help improve a child's academics, specifically in the area of reading. It is important for teachers to share with parents the reading strategies and techniques they use in the classroom. Students learn best when they have continuity with instructional practices both in and outside of the classroom.

It is imperative that teachers become advocates for educational reform. A strong education is needed for our students if they are to lead the future and become promising contributors of society.

Implications for Parents

Parents understand the importance of their role in the reading process of their child. They know they are the foundation for early reading development. Moreover, parents recognize that regardless of the stage of reading their child is in, continuous involvement and modeling are essential.

Parents are encouraged to become advocates for their children and to seek ways in which they can continue to assist in the home. Additionally, it is suggested that parents share with teachers concerns they may have with the reading process and ask for instructional tools to help improve the reading levels of their child.

Parents need to be partners with not only their child's teacher, but with the school community. It is recommended that parents form their own groups and learn together various reading strategies and techniques to use at home with their children. In addition, it is suggested that parents play an active role in the classroom and contribute where needed. Parents want help from teachers and teachers want to help. A partnership between the two would be beneficial for the entire school community.

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When Parents Go to School:
Adult Education and Parent Involvement for School-Age Children

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Abstract: This paper presents findings from a comparative case study that explored the relationship between adult education participation and parent involvement beliefs and practices for parents of school-age children. One English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) program and one Adult Basic Education (ABE)/General Educational Development (GED) program served as the cases. Data sources include semi-structured interviews with seven parents and eight adult educators, classroom observations, and documents. Connections between participation in the adult education courses and four parent involvement practices were evident: parent-school communication; assistance with homework; accessing resources to support children's education; and parent-child conversations about education. Four programmatic factors help explain the variation observed in the two programs: characteristics of the program and the student population served, the perceived roles and backgrounds of individual educators, and the nature and use of educators' and the organization's social networks. This case study identifies ways that ABE/GED and ESOL programs can be important partners for schools seeking to reach parents who did not complete high school or have limited English proficiency.

Key Words: parent involvement, parent engagement, adult education, K-12 education

Statement of Research Topic

Schools often struggle to involve parents who did not complete high school or have limited English proficiency. Formal adult education programs such as Adult Basic Education (ABE), General Educational Development (GED), and English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) offer potential contexts for supporting and strengthening parent involvement in a child's education by providing exposure to new knowledge, skills, and learning experiences. This paper presents findings from a comparative case study that explored the relationship between adult education participation and parent involvement beliefs and practices for parents of school-age children in an ESOL program and an ABE/GED program. The research question guiding this paper is: How do parents' experiences in adult education courses inform the ways in which they support their child's education? Data sources include observations, documents, and interviews with parents and adult educators from the two adult education programs and a coordinating organization providing support for English literacy instruction.

Theoretical Framework and Literature Review

This study is premised on the notion that parents' lives at home, work, community, and school are interconnected in ways that inform how parents understand and support their child's

development (Bronfenbrenner, 1979). Parent involvement in the education of school-age children encompasses actions and beliefs associated with sending a child to school prepared to learn; setting and voicing expectations; supporting learning; advocating on behalf of a child; communicating with school staff; and maintaining a presence at the school (Epstein, 1992; Hoover-Dempsey, Walker, Sandler, Whetsel, Green, Wilkins, & Closson, 2005).

Parents with less formal education or limited English proficiency often encounter difficulties navigating school and teacher expectations, communicating with school staff, and securing resources to support their child's education (e.g., Auerbach, 2001; Delgado-Gaitan, 1992; Lareau, 1989). Adult education courses may provide parents with content knowledge, information about the learning process, and practical guidance about school norms and strategies to support and advocate for their school-age child (Bingman & Ebert, 2000; Shiffman, 2011). Parents' relationships can provide information about schools, teachers, and programs, as well as practical supports (Coleman, 1988). Participating in an adult education course offers access to expanded social networks including those of adult education instructors and staff, and those of other students (Drago-Severson, Cuban, & Daloz, 2009; Prins, Toso, & Schafft, 2009; Shiffman, 2011; Small, 2006). A few studies have found parents draw on their classmates' resources, information, and advice to support a child's education (Larrotta & Yamamura, 2011; Shiffman, 2011; St. Clair, 2008).

Method

A comparative case study was conducted in 2011 to explore relationships between adult education and parent involvement in the education of school-age children (Yin, 1994). Cases were selected to represent common types of programs for adults with less formal education and/or limited English proficiency. One ABE/GED program (Iris Center) and one ESOL

Table 1.

Data Sources

	Elm ESOL	Iris ABE/GED	Learning Initiative	School District	Total
Interview	1 program leader 4 instructors 4 (2 fathers; 2 mothers)	1 program leader 1 instructor 3 (3 mothers)	1 program leader	--	15
Observation	5 classroom sessions 1 program celebration	4 classroom sessions	2 day workshop	--	12
Artifacts and Documents	Textbooks, flyers, and class materials	Textbooks, program brochure, GED materials	Workshop materials, reports, resources	Publicly available curriculum materials, reports	--

program (Elm Project) served as the cases. The Learning Initiative, a coordinating organization for adult English literacy programs in the area, also participated and assisted in identifying the two cases.

Data collection included interviews, observations, and documents. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with eight adult education instructors and program leaders, and seven parents who were participants in one of the two programs and have children enrolled in the local public school system. Interviews explored parent involvement beliefs and practices and connections between the adult education courses and parent involvement. Observations focused on the use of course material and interactions among students, instructors, and staff. Documents analyzed included program reports, policy statements, and instructional materials from the two programs and the Learning Initiative, as well as publicly available reports produced by the school system and state and county agencies.

Data analysis was guided by the study's theoretical propositions (Yin, 1994). Interview transcripts, observation notes, and documents were coded according to themes identified in the literature and those that emerged during the study. The coding process identified characteristics of adult students; parent involvement beliefs and practices; programmatic and curricular features; instructors' beliefs and actions; and interactions among instructors, students, and program leaders. The researcher developed individual descriptive case studies of each program and then conducted a comparative analysis of the two cases to identify themes.

Setting and Programs

The two programs are located in a large metropolitan county in the mid-Atlantic region of the United States. Residents are diverse in ethnicity, native language, country of origin, income, prior formal education, and citizenship status. The Learning Initiative provides coordination for English literacy programs in the area, and resources to strengthen English literacy programs through training, grants, and other supports. The Elm Project is a small community-based organization. Elm's ESOL program serves primarily low-income adults living in the community with broadly defined goals for learning English. The program enrolls over 200 men and women ranging widely in age and formal education. The majority are Spanish speakers from Central America. Classes are offered in the evening at a public school and are taught by a combination of paid and volunteer instructors. The Iris Center is a community-based organization that serves families with young children and focuses on healthy family functioning and school readiness. The ABE/GED program is one service of many offered at Iris. One evening and one day ABE/GED course are offered. Classes are small, with approximately eight students each—the majority of whom are young and female. The population served by Iris is approximately 50 percent Latino. The ABE/GED instructional staff includes one full-time adult education instructor and volunteer tutors.

Findings

Connections were identified between participation in the adult education courses and four types of parent involvement practices: parent-school communication; assistance with homework; accessing resources and information to support children's education; and parent-child

conversations about education. The extent of these connections varied by program. Connections between the Elm ESOL classes and parent involvement practices were most prominent in the areas of parent-school communication, accessing resources and information, and parent-child education conversations. Connections between the Iris ABE/GED classes and parent involvement practices were most prominent in the areas of homework assistance and parent-child conversations about education.

Parent-School Communication

Strengthening English communication skills is central to the work that occurs in the Elm ESOL courses. This takes the form of instruction and practice using written and conversational English and exploration of American culture and civics. Three of the four parents explained that they study English in part to communicate with their children and with their children's schools. Elm educators encourage parents to interact with school staff at formal school events such as parent-teacher conferences and back-to-school nights, and help them develop skills and build confidence to do so during class and in separate workshops. Staff noted that the program's location in a public school helps to familiarize students with a typical learning environment in this school system. Two of the four Elm parents explained that the courses help them communicate both orally and in writing with their child's school.

Communication is also a central focus at the Iris Center, however, the emphasis is on navigating relationships to facilitate peer support and minimize interpersonal conflicts. The ABE/GED instructor, a former middle school teacher, closely monitors student interactions and heads off interpersonal conflicts. She also helps students re-examine past relationships with teachers, an exploration that may prove useful in future interactions with their child's teachers. Among the three mothers interviewed, none directly discussed how the experience at Iris—and in the ABE/GED course in particular—impacted interactions with their children's schools. However, all three described substantive and productive communication with school staff that is consistent with the orientation at Iris. These communications involve discussing children's progress, asking questions about homework, navigating and advocating for children's special education needs, and participating in school events.

Homework Assistance

Iris Center staff members tell parents they have a responsibility to learn in order to support their child's learning. Parallels between the ABE/GED course content and work of school-age children are evident in similar curricular content, learning tasks, and strategies. In class, parents were observed practicing basic fractions, writing persuasive essays, and completing short answer responses on science, social studies, and English topics. The three parents enrolled in the ABE/GED course described fairly extensive roles in assisting their children with homework. Parents identified content knowledge and strategies they learned in the ABE/GED class which inform the assistance they provide. For example, the two parents of children who have regular homework share math shortcuts they learned in the ABE/GED class with their child.

Elm educators speculated and parents concurred that many Elm parents find it difficult to help their children with homework, particularly as the children advance in grade levels. Several adult educators observed that children do not ask their parents for help because they do not

believe their parents are able to assist them. Neither Elm parents nor educators viewed connections between children's homework and the content knowledge (such as English grammar and vocabulary) and learning tasks practiced in the adult education course as particularly relevant or robust. However, with guidance these might be areas for making productive connections.

Accessing Education Resources, Information, and Supports

Access to resources, information, and supports via adult educator and organization networks was indentified more often than via peer networks during interviews. At Elm, educator networks in the community are extensive, informal, and activated on an as-needed basis with the ESOL director at the nexus of these connections. Identified efforts to connect parents to school-related resources include facilitating communication between individual parents and school staff, and collecting and disseminating information about special programs offered by the school system. The Iris Center has an extensive and diverse network in the community consistent with the organization's mission to provide holistic support to families with young children. Unlike Elm, this organization's network is more formalized, with a caseworker as the primary contact point for securing external resources for families. The organization's interactions with the school system focus on the population of parents considering dropping out of school who might benefit from Iris services, rather than the population of parents with school-age children currently enrolled in Iris programs.

Peer support for parent involvement roles was not a prominent focus of interviews in either program. At Elm, class time was relaxed and informal during observations, indicating a climate conducive to impromptu conversations and forging peer relationships. Some parents discuss their children's schools with classmates but only one father referenced information he gleaned from these relationships about the area schools. At Iris, staff members encourage parents to turn to their peers for resources and support, but often this is a difficult step. Observed ABE/GED classes focused on coursework, leaving little time to discuss unrelated topics. A mother with older children described friendships at the center and her role as a resource to younger parents but said she does not seek advice from these classmates. The other two mothers interviewed are reserved in their relationships with classmates.

Parent-Child Communication about Education

In both programs, shared experiences as learners in formal settings provide opportunities for parents and their children to discuss the role of education in supporting future goals, empathize with learning challenges, and frame learning as a family activity. Five of the seven parents said they discuss their adult education experiences with their children. An Elm father explained that everyone in his household is in school and that they help one another with schoolwork. The three mothers in the ABE/GED program talk to their children about why they returned to school and described games they create out of school assignments. As students themselves, parents try to model the importance of education for future goals and its pursuit in the face of challenges. One mother tells her son, "Even though things are hard…you still have to push yourself to accomplish what you want in life."

Discussion

The Elm ESOL and Iris ABE/GED programs vary in opportunities to connect knowledge, experiences, and relationships to the ways in which parents communicate with school staff; assist their children with homework; access education resources, information, and networks; and talk about education with their children. Four programmatic factors help to explain the nature of connections between these adult learning experiences and parent involvement practices. These factors include characteristics of the program and of the adult student population served, the perceived roles and backgrounds of individual educators, and the use of an educator's and the organization's social networks.

Not surprisingly, program emphasis and population served are important determinants of the relative attention devoted to specific parent involvement topics and the likelihood that such connections are recognized. As preparation for a high school equivalency exam, the Iris ABE/GED program's curricular content is aligned with the K-12 curriculum. Furthermore, the population served is comprised of parents focused on strengthening their families and preparing children for school. Thus, opportunities for connection between adult and child learning in the ABE/GED context are pervasive and organic. In contrast, the Elm program serves students with diverse goals for learning English and includes students who are not parents of school-age children. Thus, the program must craft curriculum and instruction that broadly meet student interests, experiences, and priorities.

The Elm and Iris adult educators make connections between the courses and parent involvement needs based on how these educators define and enact their instructional role and make sense of their own experiences with K-12 schools. Some Elm educators described their role strictly in terms of adult English language instruction while others described a role that includes helping parents navigate school expectations of parents. Some use a shared identity as parents as a strategy to relate to students. In interviews, the Elm educators referenced their experiences as parents and grandparents to understand what parents need to do to support their children. The Iris ABE/GED instructor referenced her experience as a former middle school teacher and as a staff member of Iris to frame her instructional approach and advise her students on how to be successful in school.

The use of educators' and the organization's networks to access information about and connect students to school resources depends heavily on the nature of these networks and the extent to which individuals activate these relationships to support the parent involvement needs of students. Elm has an extensive, informal, and nimble community-based network ready to be activated when needs arise. Iris has a more formalized structure for connecting parents to needed resources that is less likely to funnel through the ABE/GED program.

Conclusion and Implications

This study suggests that adult ABE/GED and ESOL programs can be important partners for schools seeking to reach parents who did not complete high school or have limited English language proficiency. Adult educators who work with parents on a regular basis can provide insights regarding parental priorities and concerns. At the same time, schools can expand adult educators' frame of reference for understanding parent involvement needs by providing

information about the K-12 curriculum, instruction, and available resources. Such partnering can help school staff, parents, and adult educators recognize and make connections between adult and child learning and strengthen parent involvement practices.

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The Relationship between the Home Literacy Environment, Parental Characteristics, and Children's Emergent Literacy Skills

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Abstract: The home literacy environment plays a critical role in the development of children's emergent literacy skills (Evans & Shaw, 2008; Evans, Shaw, & Bell, 2000; Wasik & Hindman, 2010). The purpose of this study was to assess the relationships between parents responses to a home literacy environment survey (HLES) and Title Recognition Test (TRT) and parents' characteristics (educational level, literacy skills), and preschoolers' emergent literacy skills. It also addressed whether or not parents' responses to a HLES and TRT uniquely contributed to preschoolers' emergent literacy skills. The study included 96 parent-child dyads. Descriptive analyses, correlations, and regressions were employed to gain information about the relationships among the variables. The HLE (measured by responses to the HLES and TRT) had positive relationships with parents' skills and children's skills. However, the HLE did not predict the children's skills beyond the contribution of parental characteristics. Interpreting the results of this study promotes thought about the specific role of the HLE as a potential mediator between parental characteristics and child skills. This study provides preliminary information about parental factors that may influence preschoolers' emergent literacy skills.

Keywords: emergent literacy, parents, home literacy environment

Home Literacy Environment

Children's emergent literacy skills are influenced by their Home Literacy Environment (HLE) (Burgess et al., 2002). The HLE can be characterized by a variety of aspects including shared reading, library visits, direct teaching of literacy skills, parental reading habits, and parental recognition of children's book titles (Phillips & Lonigan, 2009; Wasik & Hindman, 2010). Shared reading is an interactive process which takes place between an adult and a child during book reading. It is often measured by frequency of reading between the adult and child and has positive implications towards the development of children's emergent literacy (Bus, van Ijzendoorn, & Pellegrini, 1995). Studies investigating the associations between shared reading and children's emergent literacy skills have found this practice to be related to different child skills such as phonological awareness , print knowledge, and oral vocabulary (Bingham 2007; Bus et al., 1995; Hood, Conlon, & Andrews, 2008; Levy, Gong, Hessels, Evans, & Jared 2006; Sonnenschein & Munsterman, 2002.

Another aspect of the HLE often studied is the frequency of library visits. When comparing the frequency of library visits and emergent literacy skills, previous research has demonstrated a positive relationship between the variables. For instance, how often parents take their preschool or a kindergarten child to the library is positively correlated to children's receptive oral vocabulary knowledge (Sénéchal, LeFevre, Hudson, & Lawson, 1996) phonological awareness (Frijters, Barron, & Brunello, 2000) and letter knowledge (Frijters et al., 2000).

When parents engage in the teaching of literacy skills, they may engage in activities such as teaching their child the alphabet, beginning sounds, or print recognition. Parental teaching of literacy skills has been recognized as an important contributor to specific child emergent literacy skills (Haney & Hill, 2004; Hood et al., 2008; Sénéchal & LeFevre, 2002). However studies have found mixed results in terms of the specific skills that are impacted by parental teaching. For instance, Sénéchal and LeFevre (2002) reported parental teaching that occurred in the home during kindergarten had a predictive relationship with emergent literacy skills such as print awareness, alphabet knowledge, and decoding but not receptive vocabulary. However, Haney and Hill (2004) found that parents' teaching of literacy skills predicted their preschool children's oral receptive and expressive vocabulary. The inconsistencies in these findings may be due to the different ages of the samples (mean age = 5.36 years in Hood et al.'s study and 4-5 years in Sénéchal & LeFevre's study compared with 3-5 years in Haney & Hill's study). The different results may also be due to the fact that the studies assessed parental teaching differently (e.g., Hood et al. and Sénéchal & LeFevre used a questionnaire which asked parents to answer based on the frequency of parental teaching of skills while Haney & Hill used a questionnaire which asked parents to answer "yes" or "no" to whether or not they engaged in teaching of literacy skills in the home).

Studies also have assessed the relationship between parents' own literacy habits and their children's literacy skills. For example, Burgess et al. (2002) looked at the relationships between parents' literacy habits (e.g., how many books per month the parent reads, how often the child observed the parent reading) and their preschoolers' oral vocabulary, letter knowledge, and phonological awareness. The results of this study demonstrated positive relationships between the parents' literacy habits and their children's oral vocabulary and phonological awareness, but not their children's letter knowledge. As another example, Farver et al. (2006) found that parents' literacy habits (e.g., about how often do you read for fun or pleasure, about how often does your spouse read for fun or pleasure, how often does your child see you or your spouse reading for enjoyment) were related to their preschool children's receptive vocabulary.

Studies that focus on the relationship between parents' recognition of children's books and children's emergent literacy skills, have found positive relationships between parents' recognition of children's books and their children's oral vocabulary skills (Sénéchal et al. 1996) Additionally, Frijters et al. (2000) found parents' knowledge of children's books predicted their children's oral receptive and expressive vocabulary.

Parental Characteristics

In this study, parental characteristics are defined as parents' educational level and parental literacy skills. These characteristics may need to be considered when understanding the predictors of children's emergent literacy.

Several investigators have found parents' educational level (highest grade or level of education completed) to be positively associated to children's emergent literacy skills. For example, Bracken and Fischel (2008) found that parents' educational level significantly predicted preschoolers' emergent literacy skills such as oral receptive vocabulary, print awareness, emergent writing skills, and sound awareness. Korat (2009) indicated a positive relationship between mothers' educational level and their kindergarten and first grade children's emergent literacy (print awareness, phonological awareness, receptive vocabulary, word writing, word recognition) skills. Children of mothers in the high-education group (Bachelors degree or higher) performed better than the children of mothers in the low-education group (high school diploma or lower) on all the emergent literacy measures except for phonological awareness.

Not much is known about the associations between parents' literacy skills and their children's emergent literacy skills. Unfortunately, no studies were found that examined this specific relationship.

Assessing the Home Literacy Environment

Home Literacy Environment Survey

Home literacy environments are usually measured by self-report questionnaires that ask parents about the literacy activities they engage in with their children in the home (Hood et al., 2008; Sénéchal et al.,1996; Umek et al., 2005). Traditional measures of the HLE have focused on shared reading (i.e., the frequency of reading to children) with less emphasis on other factors (Bus et al., 1995). However in order to extend our understanding of the potential role of the HLE, researchers suggest that measures must attend to a variety of literacy activities that will address its extensive nature (Boudreau, 2005; Umek et al., 2005). For example, Boudreau (2005) described the importance of accurately measuring the HLE through parental self-report by obtaining information related to reading books, responses to print, and language awareness.

Recent investigations have used measures which assess different aspects of the HLE such as teaching of explicit skills (Haney & Hill, 2004; Hood et al., 2008). These types of questions ask parents to report the frequency of teaching literacy skills such as alphabet knowledge and reading words. Another important aspect to measure is parents' modeling of literacy activities. This can be addressed by questions such as "how often do you read for fun and pleasure" (Farver, Xu, Eppe, & Lonigan, 2006). Parental involvement in literacy activities is another essential area addressed by home literacy environment surveys (e.g., how many times per week do you read to your child, how often do you take your child to the library) (Umek et al., 2005).Through the use of HLE surveys, researchers strive to ascertain the importance of the diverse home literacy interactions between parents and their children.

Title Recognition Test

The Title Recognition Test (TRT) was originally developed by Stanovich and West (1989) in response to concern about the validity of self-reported HLE questionnaires. The TRT involves checking off the titles of popular books from among foils that are plausible but not actual book titles. Response bias is controlled by subtracting false positive responses to the foils from correct responses to the actual book titles (Hood et al., 2008).

Sénéchal et al. (1996) argued that conventional measures of the HLE may not be reliable due to social desirability biases or because it is difficult for parents to interpret the questions and to make reliable estimates. To obtain more reliable and objective information about parent reading activities, the authors employed measures of storybook exposure in which parents were asked to recognize titles of children's book and children's authors from lists containing plausible foils. The study found that parents' knowledge of storybooks predicted children's receptive vocabulary scores.

Similarly, Hood et al. (2008) assessed shared reading based on a composite of reading frequency and a parental title recognition test (TRT) of children's books. The TRT included 20 children's book titles (and 10 foils) which were considered popular and age-appropriate children's books. Their argument in using both measures was that more variance could be accounted for when multiple measures were used. Consequently, the results of their study indicated there was a stronger correlation between the parent-child reading composite and vocabulary ($r = .30$), than just the TRT alone ($r = .18$). The parent-child reading composite was also found to be related to the preschoolers' letter-word identification, but not to their phonological awareness.

Aims of the Study

This study assessed the relationships between parents' responses to a HLES and TRT and parents' characteristics (educational level, literacy skills), and preschoolers' emergent literacy skills. It also addressed whether or not parents' responses to a HLES and TRT uniquely contributed to preschoolers' emergent literacy skills.

Methods

Participants

Participants in this study included 96 primary caregiver- child dyads. The children were enrolled in two different urban prekindergarten programs in a large metropolitan city in the southeastern United States.

The adult participants consisted of 96 primary caregivers of the children where 99% were African American, 80% were female, and their average age was 32 years old. Mothers were the majority of the primary caregivers who participated in the study (i.e., 75%), with others self-identifying as grandparents, fathers, or other guardians. All participants were native English speakers. The educational levels of the adults varied as 44% had some high school and or graduated high school while 56% had some college or above. The caregivers' (herein referred to as *parent)* children (n = 96) were native English speakers, African American, 60% female, and were an average age of four years and six months.

Measures

A Home Literacy Environment Survey (HLES), a Title Recognition Test (TRT) of children's books, literacy tests, along with a demographic questionnaire were administered. Each literacy measure was selected based on its psychometric properties, age range of intended examinees, and relevance to the study's aims. It is important to mention that this study included

struggling adult readers and while each test has excellent psychometric properties for its norm group, none of the norm groups described in the technical manuals included samples of struggling adult readers.

The following assessments were administered to the adult participants:

- **Home literacy environment survey.** Parents were orally administered a Home Literacy Environment survey (HLES). Questions were based on those previously used by Hood et al. (2008). The survey assessed aspects of shared-book reading (e.g., about how many times per week do you read to your child at home?), library visits (e.g., about how often do you go to the library with your child?), parental teaching of literacy skills (e.g., about how often would you say you try to teach your child the letters of the alphabet?) and parental reading habits (e.g., about how often do you read for fun or pleasure?)
- **Title recognition test.** Parents were orally administered a Title Recognition Test (TRT) of children's books created by Hood et al. (2008). The TRT is a checklist in which parents indicate whether they are familiar with the name of a particular popular children's book by indicating "yes" or "no". The list consisted of 30 titles, 10 of which were foils randomly interspersed. The TRT was scored by taking the total number of real book titles identified minus the number of foils identified. To calculate the overall TRT score, this study followed previously reported procedures (e.g., Evans et al., 2000; Hood et al., 2008)
- **Oral receptive vocabulary.** *Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test-PPVT (PPVT; Dunn & Dunn, 1998).* The PPVT assessed the extent of the individual's knowledge of word meanings.
- **Oral expressive vocabulary.** *Expressive Vocabulary Test-EVT (EVT; Williams, 2007).* The EVT tested expressive vocabulary and word retrieval.
- **Word recognition.** *Woodcock-Johnson III Tests of Achievement-WJ III (Letter-Word Identification; Woodcock, McGrew, & Mather, 2001).* The Letter-Word Identification subtest measured the participant's word identification skills.
- **Decoding.** *Woodcock-Johnson III Tests of Achievement-WJ III (Word Attack; Woodcock et al., 2001).* The Word Attack subtest measured the adults' decoding skills.
- **Fluency.** *Woodcock-Johnson III Tests of Achievement-WJ III (Reading Fluency; Woodcock et al., 2001).* The Fluency subtest assessed the participant's reading speed and rate within a 3-minute time limit.
- The following literacy assessments were administered to the child participants:
- **Oral receptive vocabulary.** *Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test-PPVT (PPVT; Dunn & Dunn, 1998).* See above description.
- **Oral expressive vocabulary.** *Expressive Vocabulary Test-EVT (EVT; Williams, 2007).* See above description.
- **Phonological awareness.** *Beginning Sounds subtest Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening(PALS PreK)(PALS PreK; Invernizzi, Sullivan, Meier,& Swank, 2004).* The Beginning Sounds subtest was a 10 item test that required children to orally produce the beginning sounds of words that were first spoken aloud by the examiner.
- **Alphabet knowledge.** *Letter Knowledge subtest of Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening (PALS PreK)(PALS PreK; Invernizzi et al., 2004).* Alphabet knowledge was assessed by the Letter Knowledge subtest.

- **Print awareness.** *Print and Word Awareness subtest of Phonological Awareness Literacy Screening (PALS PreK)(PALS PreK; Invernizzi et al., 2004).* The Print Awareness task included measures of print identification, concepts of print, and concepts of word.

  The following demographic information was obtained on the participants:
- **Demographics.** Parents were asked to provide the following demographic information: age, gender, ethnicity, educational level, language spoken in the home, and caregiver role. Child background data (gender, age, and ethnicity) was provided by the parents. This survey was administered orally.

Procedure

Parents were assessed by the investigator in a quiet location at their children's schools. Testing was completed in one session lasting 25 to 40 minutes. As part of another study, trained data collectors tested children individually in the fall of the prekindergarten year at their schools. The investigator was provided access to the child test database with parental consent.

Since it is unclear whether standard scores are appropriate for struggling adult readers and because one of the child assessments (PALS) did not have standard scores available, raw literacy test scores were used for all the analyses. It is important to note that within this study, reference to phonological awareness includes only beginning sounds since that is the skill that the PALS subtest assessed.

Results

Descriptive analyses were conducted to provide information about the adult participants' performances on the HLES and the TRT. Close to 72% of the parents reported reading to their child three or more times per week. Out of those who reported reading to their child, only 15% of the parents indicated they had read to their child the previous day with episodes lasting 3 to 45 minutes ($M = 20.9$). The majority of the parents (83%) indicated that another person such as a parent, grandparent, older sibling, or other relative read to their child on a daily or weekly basis. Approximately 53% of parents reported they never took their child to the library. Some parents reported that they sometimes or often taught their child the alphabet (7%), rhyming words (30%), and how to read words (48%). Additionally, 37% of the parents indicated that they engaged in leisure reading sometimes while another 37% reported they engaged in leisure reading often or very often. Parents also reported that their child observed these reading habits sometimes (35%), often (18%) or very often (18%).

Parents recognized on average 8 real book titles (ranged between 0 and 20), and incorrectly recognized on average 7 foils (ranged between 0 and 10). Since the total possible score is 20, this indicates that on average, the parents recognized fewer than half of the real book titles.

Parents' responses to the HLES and TRT, and all of the parent variables were related with one exception. Parents' expressive vocabulary skills were not related to responses to the HLES and TRT. Parents' TRT responses correlated to all child variables except for phonological awareness and print awareness. However, there was only one significant correlation between parents' HLES responses and children's skills. Specifically, a small association was found

between the HLES total score and children's expressive vocabulary skills ($r = .22$). Parent's responses to the HLES and TRT were not found to account for variance in the children's skills, beyond parental characteristics.

Discussion

The finding of an association between parents' educational level and the HLE factors is consistent with other studies indicating a similar relationship (e.g., Bracken & Fischel, 2008; Roberts, Jurgens, & Burchinal, 2005). As no other studies were found that have assessed the relationship between parents' responses to the HLES and TRT and specific parental literacy skills, the finding of a positive association among these variables contributes to an area that is lacking in current research.

It was hypothesized that parents' responses to the HLES and TRT would be positively related to their children's emergent literacy skills. The results of this study only partially supported this hypothesis. In terms of the TRT, previous research has shown a positive relationship between parents' recognition of children's books and their children's oral vocabulary skills (e.g., Evans et al., 2000; Frijters et al., 2000; Sénéchal et al., 1996). This study confirmed such a relationship. This study also showed a relationship between parents' TRT responses and their children's alphabet knowledge, a finding not reported in other studies. In terms of the HLES, only one significant correlation was found between parents' responses to the HLES and their children's literacy skills. Specifically, parents' responses to the HLES were positively related to their children's expressive vocabulary skills. This correlation finding is similar to other studies which have found aspects of the HLE related to children's expressive oral vocabulary skills (Bingham, 2007; Hood et al., 2008, Sénéchal et al., 1996). However, previous literature (Frijters et al., 2000; Levy et al., 2006; Sonnenshein & Munsterman, 2002) also found aspects of the HLE to be related to children's phonological awareness, print knowledge, and letter knowledge, which this study's findings did not replicate. Further research is warranted to investigate the individual items of the HLES to indicate whether individual home literacy activities are associated with children's literacy skill levels.

This study found that parents' responses to the HLES and TRT failed to uniquely contribute to the children's emergent literacy skills. Instead, variables such as parents' educational level and parental literacy skills were found to account for variance in the children's specific skills. For example, parents' educational level and parent oral vocabulary contributed variance to their children's oral vocabulary. Parents' educational level also uniquely contributed to their children's phonological awareness. Furthermore, parents' written language skills and parents' educational level contributed variance to their children's alphabet knowledge while, parents' decoding skills contributed variance to their children's print awareness. These results indicate that it is important to consider parental characteristics when assessing the relationships between the HLE and children's emergent literacy skills. Perhaps the HLE is mediated through parental characteristics such as educational levels or parental literacy skill levels. The participants' performances on the TRT also were minimal, and may not have been enough to make a difference in the analyses. These factors may have contributed to the findings of a lack of significance in the regression models. Based on these results, further research is warranted.

Additional Findings

The frequency with which the parents read to their children (approximately 72% read three or more times per week) was consistent with previous studies (Hood et al., 2008; Phillips & Lonigan, 2009; Sénéchal et al., 1996). However, the parents in this study on average recognized fewer than half of the real book titles on the TRT which is lower than what has been reported in other studies (Frijters et al., 2000; Hood et al., 2008). In addition, fewer parents in this study than in previous studies (Hood et al., 2008; Haney & Hill, 2004), reported engaging in teaching activities often or very often. Finally, half (53%) of the parents in this study indicated that they never took their children to the library. This finding was different from other reported findings that found that most parents took their children to the library at least occasionally (e.g., Sénéchal et al., 1996). The exact cause of these differences is not known.

This study found a positive relationship between parents' educational levels, their literacy skills, and the HLE. Perhaps, one reason for the differences in findings may be that level of parental involvement may be predicated by their educational level and literacy skills. For example, Evans et al. (2000) found parental education level to be positively related to whether or not parents initiated literacy activities in the home with their children. This study included struggling adult readers, and therefore it may be possible that these parents did not engage in home literacy activities as often as the parents who did not struggle with reading. Supportive of this possibility are the correlation results which indicate that parental characteristics (with the exception of expressive vocabulary skills) were positively correlated to the HLES and TRT responses.

Conclusions

Altogether, the present study found different strengths of associations among parents' responses to a HLES and TRT, parental characteristics, and preschooler's emergent literacy skills. The HLE components (HLES and TRT) did not account for variance in the children's emergent literacy skills but other parental characteristics (i.e., parents' educational level, parental literacy skills) did. The findings of this study have relevance for the field by providing preliminary information on an area (relationships between HLE factors, specific parental skills, and children's emergent literacy) that is lacking. These findings also provide evidence that when looking at home literacy practices, it may be helpful to include parental literacy skills.

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Engaging Parents in Meaningful Roles:
The Benefits of Parent Leadership Activities for Family, School, and Community

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Abstract: Nearly thirty years of research points to the formative role parents can play in children's education. Studies cite benefits such as higher test scores and grades, increased graduation and attendance rates, better social skills, and improved behavior. This paper surveys the parent leadership literature to argue for incorporating leadership components into family literacy programs. These leadership training and opportunities can support parents in having a meaningful voice in social and educational issues. These experiences can foster increased self- efficacy, agency, social capital, literacy, and skills and knowledge; key ingredients for effective leadership. Our survey of successful programs demonstrates how parents become active advocates for communities, schools, families, and children.

Keywords: family literacy, leadership, parent engagement, parent leadership, self-efficacy, social capital

Nearly thirty years of research points to the formative role parents can play in children's education. Studies cite benefits such as higher test scores and grades, increased graduation and attendance rates, better social skills, and improved behavior (Fan & Chen, 2001). These kinds of findings have led to educational policies and funding requiring schools to develop parent involvement programs. In this paper we survey the parent leadership (PL) literature to argue for incorporating PL components into family literacy programs; first, as a way to support parents to have a meaningful voice in social and educational issues; and second, to afford educators a better understanding of the benefits of leadership training and experiences. Through leadership programs parents can develop self-efficacy, social capital, and social networks (Chrispeels, 2011), components necessary to advocate effectively for communities, families, and children. We address definitions of parent leadership, the benefits of adding a PL program, and characteristics of leadership. Lastly, we develop a typology and offer examples of PL. We suggest that family literacy programs are well-suited to offer parent leadership opportunities.

Background

School, home, and community are usually defined as bounded locations; this separation does not reflect the reality of parents and children's day-to-day lives. Parents and children move between these spaces, whether in the guise of a homework assignment, negotiating forms at a local organization, or a visit to the school. Because these contexts are often defined as separate entities, the feeling of belonging, welcome, or knowledge of how to exercise voice as a member is often missing. Furthermore, cultural or formal educational levels may inform

one's perception of who belongs (Hornby & Lafaele, 2011). Linguistic background, and knowledge of and experience with the U.S. school system can also impact parent engagement (Sanders, 2010). Schools, based on middle class ideals, often exclude non-mainstream parents who do not automatically have the cultural, linguistic, or social entrée into public schools (Auerbach, 2011; Hubbard & Hands, 2011). Schools often offer token involvement opportunities that placate or use parents as opposed to offering them power to effect change through partnership or control (Auerbach, 2011) . Families, schools, and communities working in partnership tend to be more fruitful in supporting children's school success (Henderson, Mapp, Johnson, & Davies, 2007).

Family literacy programs are ideal locations to foster leadership programs because they serve a population that—due to issues such as, lower educational attainment, poverty, and racism—is, perhaps, more disconnected from mainstream schooling.

Defining Parent Leadership

Parent involvement (PI), parent engagement (PE), and parent leadership (PL) are often used interchangeably; the most commonly used term is PI. We argue that PI, PE, and PL have distinct meanings. PE and PL suggest a partnership between school personnel and parents as they work together to determine and achieve common goals, whereas, PI activities are realized on the school's terms (for a lengthier discussion, see Pushor & Ruitenburg, 2005). The partner relationship implies sharing of knowledge and two-way conversations (Auerbach, 2011). If parents are to become central contributors to the schooling process it is essential to offer activities beyond traditional offerings, such as Parent Teacher Association (PTA) meetings or volunteer opportunities.

Parent Involvement is the primary model of how parents participate in schools. Typical parent activities (fund raising and volunteering) engage parents in the labor of making schools financially and academically successful (Hands & Hubbard, 2011). Communication is usually one direction, school to home (Auerbach, 2011); school staff and administrators set the agenda and are responsible for education while parents support their endeavors.

Parent Engagement programs position parents to have a voice on topics centering on children, schools, community and other issues that involve them as adults and parents. Parents are no longer conceived as helpers for schools and children (Miano, 2011); they are acknowledged as partners in the child's learning. A critical difference between PI and PE is that in the latter, school and parents mutually benefit (Henderson, 2010).

Parent Leadership is a form of PE wherein parents have the opportunity to guide and negotiate curricular or program decisions. Leadership can include subtle activities, for example, inviting another parent to a school event, and more robust activities, such as developing a petition or holding a seat on the school governance committee. Dependent on skill, knowledge, and concerns of the parent, parents may take a leadership role, support other parent leaders, or co-lead with a teacher, principal, or other administrator (Pushor & Ruitenberg, 2005).

While the qualities necessary to become a leader depend, to some degree, upon individual characteristics, effective leadership requires several external components, including

social capital, leadership skills, agency, and literacy (Krishna, 2001). When an individual only has one or two of these components it can constrain her ability to move an agenda forward (Krishna, 2001) or advocate for her child. Outside circumstances, such as work schedules or family obligations, can inhibit a parent's ability or desire to be a leader (Hornby & Lafaele, 2011). However, leadership programs can be a relevant way for parents to develop or expand voice, to learn how to negotiate institutions, and to effect change in schools (Olivos, 2011).

Parent Leadership Programs and Family Literacy

Family literacy programs are poised to be a catalyst for providing leadership activities for adult participants because they can weave PE into an environment that highlights literacy, child development, school, community, and family. Family literacy participants are largely minority or immigrant families living in poverty. Many parents in these programs have had poor school experiences or are unfamiliar with the U.S. school system leading them to be uncomfortable interacting with educators, either due to feelings of marginalization, exclusion, or linguistic constraints. Because of this, parents may choose not to participate in the Pre-K-12 setting as they are not recognized as valuable members of the school community or worry about schools marginalizing their children (Stelmach, 2011). Offering parents opportunities to practice leadership skills within a family literacy program, is one way to develop qualities needed for effective leadership in a supportive and risk-free environment. It is worth noting that the sharing of power in the classroom is often contested and difficult for teachers and learners as they negotiate new roles and processes (see Toso, Prins, Drayton, Gnanadass, & Gungor, 2009).

Factors of Leadership

Millar and Kilpatrick (2005) provide a definition of leadership that extends the concept of leadership that relies on an individual's skill or ability to a *process* that involves building knowledge, skills, relationships, collaborations, and responsibility. We have identified from the literature particular benefits that come from leadership and educational opportunities; ironically, these are also qualities that have been recognized as necessary for leaders to effect change. Krishna (2001) lists the following as components of effective leadership and successful change: social capital, agency, and literacy. A review of adult education and family literacy literature added two other contributing factors: self-efficacy and life events.

Social capital. Social capital refers to a network of people that confers membership andprovides material and symbolic resources and support to members (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 56). It is tied to social class and race as members tend to be associated with networks within a class or race system (McNeal Jr., 1999). A low-income family may have fewer connections and horizontal networks—networks that include a wide range of acquaintances—to effectively advocate for their child with school personnel than a middle-class family who is identified with mainstream discourses of public institutions (Chrispeels, 2011). In general, being recognized as having membership in the middle class allows one to operate with fewer constraints and have access to more benefits with greater ease. Leadership experiences can support adults to broaden their networks and become more familiar with negotiating social institutions (Shiffman, 2013).

Agency. Agency denotes one's capacity to act, achieve desires and enact an identity. This concept is not one of free will; we are constrained by cultural, historical, and social discourses (Ahearn, 2001). In other words, how we behave and the opportunities that are available to us can differ dependent on race, class, and gender, etc. Leadership opportunities can

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enhance agency. For example, in one program, adult students engaging in a leadership council took on leadership roles in other community organizations, made informed choices that benefitted their families, and spoke up on matters of integrity (Toso et al., 2009).

    Literacy. The relationship of literacy and leadership is underexplored in adult education literature. We consider literacy as a set of sociocultural practices, wherein, the act of reading and writing involves dynamics of power and meaning (Heath, 1983). Because schooling in the United States reflects mainstream ideas and practices of literacy, minority and poor populations are often considered deficient and in need of education (Cook-Gumperz, 2006), thereby relegating these parents to marginal school volunteer roles. Freire (2005) offered a compelling rationale as to how literacy informs civic engagement and understanding power dynamics and inequities in society.

    Self-efficacy. Self-efficacy is the self-perception of a one's ability to engage, carry out, and affect the outcome of an event (Bandura, 1982). This perception is critical to a person accomplishing his or her goal. Acquisition of skills and positive experiences can increase self-efficacy, and thereby willingness and persistence in managing new or intimidating activities (Bandura, 1982). Education and supported leadership experiences might assist learners, particularly marginalized adults, to engage in advocacy or other leadership activities. Heightened self-efficacy can support adults to take action, lead community events, interact with school personnel, advocate for their child, or seek out new opportunities (Chrispeels, 2011).

    Life events. A person may have the desire and skills to become a leader but outside circumstances can hinder him from taking that step toward a leadership role. Events such as job loss or a family crisis, can affect parents' ability to act as leaders (Hornby & Lafaele, 2011). External factors may be an issue particularly for family literacy parents who experience more overwhelming life events that constrain time and emotional well-being. Some parents may be unwilling to participate, despite having the tools, due to a history of exclusion or leadership given in name only (see Olivos, 2011). Given this, a parents' lack of engagement should not be viewed as lack of interest or capacity; circumstances may dictate her level of involvement.

Leadership Program Characteristics

    Few programs or research articles specifically define what is meant by leadership; expanding on Sanders (2010) and Millar and Kilpatrick (2005), we define leadership as a process in which individuals or groups exercise influence to achieve a goal or objective. We found that PL programs described outcomes, thereby inferring attributes of PL. Primary purposes of leadership programs outlined in the literature are: to engage parents in collaborative and shared decision-making in the schools or governance committees; to build knowledge of systems and institutions and the accompanying power relationships; and, to develop advocacy skills.

Program Typology

    Leadership programs come in a variety of formats. Some take leadership as the main emphasis, others highlight parents as leaders in their children's educational life (this can be as homework helper or as a leader in the child's school setting), while still others embed ideas about leadership into their general offerings. All of these programs have benefits. We have divided leadership programs into four general categories delineated below; in each we highlight unique successful leadership programs with research to support stated outcomes.

Programs for parents as leaders in children's education in the home. Many family literacy programs frame leadership as supporting the child's at-home education (see Draper, Larsen, & Rowles, 1997). While an important component of family literacy programs, we focus on programs providing leadership opportunities beyond the parent's role in the home.

Programs for parents as leaders in educational governance. This section addresses programs that focus solely on building an understanding of how schools function and training parents to take an active role in school or district policy issues.

Parent Curriculum Projects (see Bechely & Bernstein, 1998) was a collaborative project between UCLA's Department of Curriculum and Education and selected schools in Los Angeles. The project's goal was to provide parents with an understanding of: how schools function, curriculum and content changes, and instructional methodologies. An underlying goal was to encourage social justice and allow parents to develop their leadership potential. Participating parents revealed increased leadership skills and an understanding of school policies.

Olivos (2004) formed the ***English Language Advisory Committee*** (ELAC) at a school in San Diego. He convened monthly meetings where Latino parents discussed current issues, such as racism at the school. As parents became more vocal, the school administration pushed back, demonstrating the tension that can occur when parents want a meaningful role in school governance but do not conform to the school's ideas of change or engagement. Parents in ELAC went on to form an independent parent group, through which they made substantial changes, such as replacing the school's principal and publishing a monthly parent newsletter.

Recently, a new framework was instituted for ***Head Start programs*** to engage families through a systemic, comprehensive and integrated approach of shared leadership (Office of Head Start, 2011). PL goals are integrated into the Head Start program's work plans and goals and may vary from site to site. Programs might offer professional development for parents, foster leadership, or provide community mentors. Recent research found that more involved Head Start parents had children with higher scores on math and literacy tasks, and better social behavior (Office of Head Start, 2006).

The ***Parent Leadership Training Institute*** (PLTI), an initiative of the Connecticut Commission on Children, helps parents become leaders and advocate for their child. The institute offers a 20-week course devoted to self-understanding, learning about PL, state and city government structures, budgets, and the law. Participants also complete a community project. In an outside evaluation, parents reported having a greater understanding of how community organizations were run, improving their leadership skills and knowledge, and improved self-confidence (Connecticut Commission on Children and RMC Research Corporation, 2009).

Programs for parents as leaders in children's literacy development, school and communities. Programs in this section reflect a broader agenda; these programs are structured to emphasize a parent role in the academic development of their child and a leadership role in school and community.

Project FLAME (Family Literacy: Aprendiendo, Mejorando, Educando (learning, improving, educating) worked with non-native English speaking parents and children to improve language and basic skills, to help parents understand and establish a connection with children's schools, and to develop leadership skills. Activities focused on recognizing, validating, and developing knowledge about local and community issues, and developing

leadership skills (Rodríguez-Brown, 2004). Studies found that leadership and literacy programming can build literacy (child and parent), agency, social capital, and self-efficacy (Rodríguez-Brown, 2004).

Henderson (2010) conducted a survey on PL training programs. One notable program was the **Commonwealth Institute for Parent Leadership** (CIPL) in Kentucky. CIPL offered a six day leadership institute. Participants discussed topics such as improving student achievement and increasing PI (Henderson, 2010). Each group developed and carried out an action plan. Coaches supported these endeavors. Participants said that they gained confidence and the ability to become actively involved in their children's school lives, the schools, and community organizations (Henderson, 2010).

Programs for parents as leaders in both parent and child's literacy development, school and communities. A central Pennsylvania family literacy program added a **Parent Advisory Council** (see Toso et al., 2009). This council, designed to develop leadership skills and voice, engaged parents in developing and making decisions about program structure, curriculum, student incentives, and community building activities. Parents enhanced literacy skills while working with teachers to write agendas, meeting notes, and develop activities for their children. Staff and parents reported higher levels of attendance, parent-school communication, and leadership of community events. Adult students noted increases in self-esteem and self-efficacy.

An international program, **Parent Empowerment for Family Literacy Project** (PEFaL) (see Camilleri, Spiteri, & Wolfendale, 2005) was developed to (a) work with parents to support their children's academic performance, (b) to assist parents to see themselves as lifelong learners through basic skills instruction and taking up the role of "co-educator" (p. 76), and (c) to train parents to take leadership roles in schools. Some reported outcomes of the project include children increasing literacy and social skills and women feeling empowered. A number of parents became active in school-based or community organizations or family literacy tutors.

Conclusion

Parents are concerned about their children's success in school and the quality of life in their communities. Their ideas can contribute to improving these areas of concern. However, parents may not know how, or may not be given entrée to opportunities where they can give voice to their concerns and desires. Incorporating leadership experiences into family literacy programs offers a supportive atmosphere in which to exercise voice and practice leadership. Leadership programs move beyond traditional PI offerings giving parents an opportunity to address issues that affect their children's academic success. These programs can foster self-efficacy, agency, social capital and skills and knowledge that allow access to advocacy and voice. However, schools must also be willing to substantively engage in this process.

Research on PL programs has begun to demonstrate an impact on parent voice, self-efficacy, civic engagement, and advocacy skills, but the relationship between literacy and leadership is less clear. Little information is available on whether leadership programs with lower-literate populations can improve literacy skills for children or adults, or conversely, whether literacy skills are necessary for a person to engage in leadership activities. Research needs to document items such as how PL programs support children's academic outcomes or

how PL supports parents in achieving personal goals. Relevant research that documents leadership experiences and the ensuing benefits from a parent and child perspective will inform educators, administrators, and policy makers on the importance of and how to extend the role of parent as helper or in need of education to being a welcomed partner in the educational life of a child. Simultaneously, this research can also build the case for developing educational experiences that combine literacy, examination of social issues, and leadership training so that parents can successfully advocate for their families in a variety of settings.

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RESEARCH PAPERS

SPANISH LANGUAGE

Aprendizajes en Familia
La Importancia de la Participación Social en la Educación

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Una clave fundamental para el funcionamiento real de la democracia en las sociedades es el nivel de participación social existente en la toma de decisiones y en la articulación de políticas públicas. El grado de realidad que tiene la democracia para determinada sociedad está directamente correlacionado con el nivel de participación social existente. Es un importante tema de debate actual, por ejemplo, el grado en que la democracia se ha consolidado en las sociedades latinoamericanas; en este sentido, es importante ubicar si la democracia en la región ha trascendido el nivel de la retórica política para hallar expresión en la realidad concreta. Sin duda, una variable fundamental por considerar a fin de ponderar el nivel de consolidación de la democracia en nuestras sociedades lo constituye el grado real de participación social en la toma de decisiones políticas en sus diferentes expresiones. En ello destaca el nivel de participación social en la educación, pues el educativo es un ámbito de cuyo desarrollo óptimo depende la consolidación de muchos otros aspectos relacionados con la democracia, tales como la movilidad social, la equidad, el acceso a la justicia, el desarrollo de mejores oportunidades laborales, el desarrollo de hábitos saludables, entre otros no menos importantes.

Entre los principales aspectos relacionados con la participación social en la educación destaca, en el caso de México, la articulación de los llamados Consejos Escolares de Participación Social, cuyo cometido ha sido propiciar la participación de los padres de familia y la comunidad en los asuntos relacionados con la escuela. Establecidos desde la Ley General de Educación de 1993, los Consejos Escolares de Participación Social encontraron un fuerte impulso para su concreción en la realidad práctica mediante el establecimiento de los lineamientos para su operación hacia finales de 2010. Sin embargo, aún queda mucho trabajo por hacer en la consolidación del trabajo de los Consejos, pues su funcionamiento real depende del nivel de participación efectiva de los padres de familia en ellos. En mucho el objetivo de los Consejos sería facilitar la vinculación entre la escuela, la familia y la comunidad a fin de fortalecer los procesos de enseñanza-aprendizaje dentro de las escuelas.

Hay que aclarar que el funcionamiento óptimo de los Consejos Escolares de Participación Social no es la única solución a la necesidad de fortalecer la vinculación entre familia, escuela y comunidad para lograr una mejor educación. Los Consejos son, sin duda, un mecanismo importante que bien aprovechado puede constituir un eje fundamental para que las políticas educativas se retroalimenten de las bases sociales; sin embargo, también es necesario considerar la relevancia de otros medios para fomentar la participación social, como lo es el emprendimiento de programas específicamente destinados a estimular la participación social en la educación, así como el fortalecimiento y seguimiento a las organizaciones de la sociedad civil, haciendo eco de su opinión acerca de los procesos educativos (Aguilera, 2007: 10), y, por supuesto, la participación de organismos internacionales como el Centro de Cooperación

Regional para la Educación de Adultos en América Latina y el Caribe (CREFAL) en la recomendación y articulación de propuestas que contribuyan a expandir las posibilidades de la participación social.

Aprendizajes en Familia y Participación Social

El Programa Aprendizajes en Familia es una propuesta del CREFAL que opera en México como proyecto piloto desde 2011 en cinco entidades federativas del país: Chiapas, Durango, Guerrero, Nayarit y Veracruz. Aprendizajes en familia busca justamente contribuir con la Secretaría de Educación Pública mexicana para fortalecer la participación social en la educación mediante el desarrollo de estrategias que permitan vincular a la familia, la escuela y la comunidad, y con las cuales se logre una mayor pertinencia en los contenidos y métodos educativos, según las necesidades locales.

En el contexto de los cambios políticos y las transformaciones sociales que se han presentado en el último siglo en el mundo, especialmente en lo que respecta a las políticas sociales y su misión de atender los problemas del desarrollo social y educativo, el tema de la familia, la escuela y la comunidad evidencia la necesidad de formular modelos de intervención socioeducativos desde una perspectiva integral e intergeneracional. En el caso de México, en el contexto de la consolidación del Estado laico y de un sistema educativo nacional posterior a la Revolución Mexicana, la familia ha tenido pocas oportunidades de participación en la definición de los métodos y contenidos educativos. Sin embargo, ante la problemática educativa actual, en la cual con frecuencia los currículos responden poco a las necesidades específicas de las comunidades y son poco atractivos para garantizar la permanencia escolar de niños y jóvenes, se hace necesaria más que nunca la articulación de la familia, la escuela y la comunidad como puntos de referencia claves para el sistema educativo. Esto implica que la educación recibida por niños y jóvenes en la educación básica debe nutrirse de la participación no sólo de los maestros en las escuelas, sino también de otros integrantes de la familia y la comunidad (padres, hermanos, tíos, abuelos) y la gran diversidad de actores educativos, de modo tal que la construcción del proceso de enseñanza-aprendizaje refleje la importante diversidad demográfica característica del México actual.

Es por ello justamente que cobra especial relevancia la necesidad de que el sistema educativo formal se abra a la retroalimentación, por parte de la educación no formal e informal que ocurre en el seno de la familia y la comunidad, en el contexto de la transmisión de saberes intergeneracionales. En este sentido, el factor intergeneracional se entiende como el factor socializador que promueve el desarrollo del capital humano entre las generaciones de un México rico en tradiciones y costumbres, y sustentado en un vasto panorama educativo informal de conocimientos y saberes integrados a lo largo de la historia personal y regional de las familias y sus comunidades.

Con Aprendizajes en Familia se considera la interacción entre escuela, familia y comunidad como fuente importante para la articulación de políticas educativas más eficaces y eficientes, ya que la escuela, la comunidad y los padres de familia son esenciales en el proceso de formación temprana de niñas, niños, jóvenes y adultos, y contribuyen a la generación de ambientes letrados y a la gestación de comunidades de aprendizaje cuyo objetivo es propiciar los aprendizajes inter-generacionales a través de redes de tutoría y capacitación permanente a lo

largo de la vida. De aquí la importancia de la interacción escuela-familia-comunidad como puntos de referencia importantes para la agenda sistémica gubernamental en México.

Aprendizajes en Familia promueve la vinculación entre familia y escuela, así como con los actores comunitarios que intervienen en el proceso de enseñanza-aprendizaje. Tal vinculación implica que en el plano educativo formal exista una retroalimentación directa desde el ámbito no formal e informal para los procesos educativos, de modo que las niñas, niños, jóvenes y adultos, como integrantes de la familia, se conviertan en agentes educativos en toda la extensión de la palabra, y se involucren en los procesos de participación social de la escuela y la comunidad.

Gran parte de la problemática de baja calidad y logro en el desempeño educativo podría solventarse a partir del desarrollo de mecanismos que permitan una mayor participación social en la retroalimentación de las propuestas educativas. Tal retroalimentación estimularía el desarrollo de propuestas más pertinentes según la realidad de cada localidad. Una mayor pertinencia educativa implicaría, asimismo, que los programas educativos estimularan la permanencia en la escuela de niños y jóvenes. Cabe destacar que los problemas de deserción educativa suelen ser una combinación de factores en los que intervienen las apremiantes necesidades de fortalecimiento del ingreso familiar a partir de la labor de niños y jóvenes, a lo cual se suma una educación que muchas veces no resulta lo suficientemente estimulante para garantizar la permanencia de los estudiantes en el aula.

El fortalecimiento de los programas educativos requiere de políticas de intervención que consideren la realidad familiar y comunitaria. Aprendizajes en familia constituye un modelo de intervención socioeducativa en el cual se impulsa que los diversos actores en torno a la escuela, de la familia y la comunidad, participen en el desarrollo educativo de niños y jóvenes en la educación básica.

Con Aprendizajes en familia, por ejemplo, se promueve la integración de centros de cultura comunitarios en cada escuela, en los cuales se den cita los alumnos y los padres de familia para efectuar de manera conjunta una gran diversidad de actividades como la realización de círculos de lectura, el intercambio de experiencias y conocimientos, o bien la impartición de talleres de capacitación y formación para padres, así como la realización de eventos culturales como la proyección de películas y la presentación de obras de teatro, entre otros.

De esta manera, la escuela se abre a la participación directa de los padres de familia y de otros actores de la comunidad. En Aprendizajes en familia se parte de la base de que consolidar un proceso de enseñanza-aprendizaje más efectivo depende en mucho del nivel de involucramiento de los padres de familia en la escuela. Al realizar actividades de lectura e investigación, y al compartir saberes y experiencias de manera conjunta, padres e hijos, con el apoyo de los maestros, pueden afianzar mejor un proceso de enseñanza-aprendizaje que les sea atractivo y útil.

Aprendizajes en familia busca constituirse, de esta manera, en una alternativa concreta para que se desarrolle un trabajo educativo más integral en las escuelas, con la plena participación familiar y comunitaria. En ello, los maestros tienen un liderazgo fundamental, pues son un puente importante entre la forma en que las políticas educativas se expresan a través de los contenidos curriculares y el modo en que se trasmiten, por un lado, y las necesidades y posibilidades reales de cada localidad involucrada, por el otro.

La Participación Social y las Políticas Públicas

La participación social es un tema de especial importancia en el contexto de las políticas públicas y el desarrollo social, y en torno al cual se abren nuevas vertientes de reflexión y posibilidades prácticas. La relación entre las políticas y el desarrollo social se encuentra en las acciones públicas que tienen como misión atender problemas públicos que atañen a la comunidad, en particular el desarrollo familiar y comunitario.

En lo concerniente a las políticas educativas, éstas buscan atender los diversos problemas educativos que afectan el interés público. Este proceso está conformado por diferentes momentos en los que se despliegan las acciones gubernamentales y convergen diversos actores. En el terreno del desarrollo social, las políticas públicas se consolidan mediante aquellas intervenciones impulsadas en diversos niveles de gobierno a través de la movilización de recursos humanos, financieros e institucionales para atender problemas públicos relacionados con la mejora de la calidad de vida de los integrantes de determinada sociedad.

En el marco de la relación entre la familia, la escuela y la comunidad, la intervención a través de las políticas públicas advierte la necesidad de definir problemas públicos —como por ejemplo el rezago educativo y su relación con el problema del analfabetismo en jóvenes y adultos— e integrar opciones de política de un modo relativamente sistemático y consistente, así como fijar componentes mediante la construcción de programas de intervención en asociación con actores diversos que toman parte en un asunto público (Salinas, 2007: 27-28). La familia, la escuela y la comunidad son células fundamentales en la integración de cada individuo como sujeto político y social. Las políticas públicas buscan atender los problemas de interés público como los que implica la nivelación de oportunidades para el mejor desarrollo de cada persona. Eso es en mucho el sentido de las políticas de desarrollo social. En tal contexto, la familia, la escuela y la comunidad son referentes fundamentales para que las políticas públicas partan, en su diseño, de una mejor perspectiva de las necesidades y expectativas sociales concretas y más realistas.

En el caso de las políticas educativas, la participación social mediante la familia y los diversos actores comunitarios en la educación de niños, jóvenes y adultos ofrece la mejor oportunidad para nutrir de manera efectiva las propuestas desarrolladas en la escuela. La corresponsabilidad entre el maestro, los padres de familia y la comunidad en la mejora de la calidad y el logro educativos es un ingrediente fundamental para fortalecer de manera efectiva los procesos de enseñanza-aprendizaje. Al respecto se requiere un replanteamiento de las políticas educativas de modo tal que ofrezcan el terreno propicio para que los sistemas educativos formales sean más flexibles y se abran a la retroalimentación que potencialmente pueden recibir de los saberes de la familia y la comunidad.

Así, la familia y la comunidad son agentes que pueden aportar mucho para resolver problemas sociales como el rezago educativo, el analfabetismo de las personas jóvenes y adultas y la inequidad socioeconómica derivada de la exclusión de aquellos sectores de población en condiciones de mayor vulnerabilidad (comunidades marginadas, grupos indígenas, etc.). De lo anterior se deriva que la familia, en su interacción con la escuela y la comunidad, tiene un papel central en la construcción de ciudadanos y su rol como actor social es fundamental para comprender las formas de intervención generadas desde la comunidad y su vinculación con el entramado institucional y gubernamental (Patiño, 2008: 82-105).

Así pues, es necesario seguir fortaleciendo la participación social en la educación y la corresponsabilidad de padres y comunidad, junto con los maestros, mediante la referencia directa al tema en las leyes vigentes y en los programas que brindan el marco para las políticas educativas. Pasos importantes se han dado en esa dirección mediante la inclusión del tema de la participación social en los programas sectoriales de educación, como en el caso de la presente administración de gobierno federal, en la cual se ha dado especial relevancia al tema.

Sin embargo, queda aún mucho por hacer en cuanto a la articulación de políticas públicas que incorporen a la familia y a la comunidad como importantes protagonistas de su propio desarrollo, principalmente en materia educativa. La familia tendría que ser considerada como un eje fundamental a partir del cual se promueva la participación social y la retroalimentación a las políticas educativas de una manera más fehaciente.

En este sentido la familia tendría que adquirir un papel muy activo en la propuesta e instrumentación de los programas de desarrollo social derivados de las políticas públicas. En un contexto de mayor participación social, tales programas ofrecerían líneas de apoyo para la mejora de la calidad de vida en las comunidades, involucrando a la familia y a la comunidad en su desarrollo y fomentando su liderazgo, en lugar de pretender dirigir todo el proceso desde la esfera de la toma de decisiones políticas.

Además, es importante que los programas educativos sean flexibles y adaptables según la diversidad de las necesidades locales. Se trata de una diversidad constituida por la gran riqueza de estilos de vida, aspiraciones y contextos culturales, a cuyo conocimiento sólo puede accederse mediante la participación activa de la familia y la comunidad en la formulación y operación de las propuestas que buscan contribuir a mejorar la calidad y el logro educativos.

La Escuela y el Proyecto Educativo Familiar

El liderazgo que tienen los maestros en la escuela, como impulsores fundamentales del proceso de enseñanza-aprendizaje en el nivel local, puede verse en mucho fortalecido con la mayor participación de la familia y la comunidad de manera corresponsable en la educación de niños, jóvenes y adultos (Schmelkes, 2008: 113). En este sentido, el liderazgo de los maestros tiene el potencial de trascender los muros de la escuela para ejercer su impacto en otros ámbitos de la familia y la comunidad, a la vez que una mayor participación de otros actores educativos como la familia y la comunidad en la escuela ofrece al maestro la oportunidad de fortalecer su trabajo no sólo en las aulas, sino también en otros ámbitos de la comunidad donde es importante que los procesos educativos tengan un mejor impacto, como el trabajo, la salud, el desarrollo sustentable, las relaciones de género, entre otros.

El cumplimiento de los objetivos de la escuela puede fortalecerse en mucho a partir de la generación de un proyecto educativo familiar, en el cual los padres, con el apoyo del liderazgo del maestro, tengan claros y desarrollen sus propios intereses en el tema educativo. Esto depende, por supuesto, de la manera en que la escuela y los maestros apoyen a la familia y a la comunidad a detectar las acciones educativas más acordes con sus necesidades específicas (Relación Escuela-Comunidad, 2003: s.p.)

Según esta perspectiva, con relación a la familia, consideramos importante impulsar una mayor incidencia en las formas y modalidades para la participación de la familia en los procesos de formación básica de las niñas y los niños, así como promover que las políticas públicas tomen

en cuenta la función vital de la familia en el conjunto de iniciativas encaminadas a favorecer los procesos educativos, promoviendo formas diversificadas de atención integral que hagan viable y factible dicha participación. Aprendizajes en familia justamente impulsa que se avance en tal dirección.

Intervenir en la vinculación entre familia-escuela-comunidad implica trabajar con acciones que lleven a los puntos de encuentro generados por una política integral socioeducativa que sirva en la construcción de caminos viables, en donde la participación social sea el eje rector para que la escuela asuma un papel colaborativo que coadyuve a que los niños, niñas, jóvenes y adultos sean capaces de solucionar sus problemas y necesidades por sí mismos. Este trabajo colaborativo y de participación social, como lo viene desarrollando Aprendizajes en familia en su operación, implica que la familia, la escuela y la comunidad transiten hacia un conjunto de transformaciones en la manera de concebirse como instancias y espacios de socialización y hacia un actuar permanente y activo de su realidad. De esta manera, con Aprendizajes en familia se estimula que las familias hagan propio el espacio educativo y que incluso desarrollen un proyecto propio al respecto.

Cabe destacar que los modos de convivencia naturales que ocurren dentro de la familia pueden adquirir un sentido y significado altamente didáctico, sobre todo si son realmente valorados como parte integral de los procesos de enseñanza-aprendizaje. Es en este terreno, justamente, donde la educación formal puede fortalecerse ampliamente y mejorar su sentido de pertinencia. En la medida en que la escuela incorpore en los contenidos educativos la experiencia y sentido vital de los estudiantes en su contexto familiar y comunitario, entonces el proceso de enseñanza-aprendizaje se vuelve más cercano y apropiado a lo que cada localidad necesita.

Participación Social y Calidad Educative

Construir un puente en la educación básica entre niños y adultos desde una perspectiva formal no es suficiente si es que se busca elevar el nivel de calidad y logro educativo en las comunidades. En la calidad educativa intervienen múltiples factores que van desde el desempeño docente, la infraestructura escolar y los contenidos curriculares, hasta el nivel de apertura de la escuela hacia la familia y la comunidad, siendo este último elemento el que propicia una verdadera participación social. Por otra parte, afianzar la calidad educativa requiere que desde la perspectiva de las políticas públicas se contribuya a integrar los procesos y prácticas educativas informales y no formales que se generan en la familia y se impulsen estrategias educativas creativas y más efectivas en la resolución de la problemática de la educación básica mexicana a través de la vinculación entre la familia, la escuela y la comunidad.

De esta manera, afianzar una educación con mayor calidad e impacto en el nivel de logro escolar de la población mexicana, como lo demandan los retos educativos actuales, implica enfrentar el dilema de cómo trascender el mero cumplimiento de las estadísticas de cobertura de la educación básica y reducir las inequidades y deficiencias existentes en el sistema educativo mexicano. De esto es evidencia el hecho de que a la fecha más de 30 millones de personas no hayan concluido su educación básica y se encuentren en situación de rezago educativo. El sistema educativo formal se halla ante la dificultad de contrarrestar de manera efectiva los problemas de tal rezago educativo debido a su rigidez programática y temporal, poco adecuada para atender a grupos sociales que enfrentan alguna situación de exclusión.

Programas como Aprendizajes en familia, al que hemos hecho referencia en líneas anteriores, tienen un gran potencial para atender problemáticas educativas tales como los bajos resultados en la prueba ENLACE de niños y jóvenes en escuelas de educación básica, que evidencian la necesidad de fortalecer la calidad de los procesos de enseñanza-aprendizaje en tales escuelas, si es que se busca mejorar el nivel de logro educativo.

Pero más allá de la obtención de mejores resultados en este tipo de pruebas, elevar la calidad educativa demanda de un compromiso pleno por parte de los diversos actores educativos a fin de consolidar nuevas perspectivas formativas, que se traduzcan en programas curriculares más incluyentes y abiertos a la participación social.

En Aprendizajes en familia, por ejemplo, se fomenta que los maestros desarrollen una dinámica de trabajo con sus estudiantes en la cual se propicie la interacción con los padres de familia, incorporando temas que aunque no necesariamente sean parte de los contenidos programáticos formales, sean de su interés y despierten su curiosidad. Además, se estimula que la exploración de los diferentes temas del currículo se realice con la participación de los padres, y que éstos sean parte integral del proceso formativo de niños y jóvenes en su educación básica. Para lograr esto, se aportan materiales didácticos, recomendaciones de interacción, capacitación a los docentes y padres de familia, entre otros mecanismos que buscan fomentar la vinculación entre escuela y familia.

Otra forma de estimular la participación de los padres de familia en la escuela es mediante el desarrollo de actividades culturales o educativas (como los cursos de computación) en un espacio que pueda conformarse como una especie de centro cultural comunitario, que generalmente coincide con la biblioteca de la escuela. Se trata de espacios en donde también se conforman pequeños laboratorios de cómputo mediante equipos que se obtienen, por ejemplo, a través de la participación de la escuela en programas especiales de la SEP destinados a fortalecer la infraestructura escolar.

Mediante la experiencia de Aprendizajes en familia se detecta la correlación entre calidad educativa y participación social. Las escuelas donde se realiza el piloto del programa, que forman parte de las escuelas focalizadas por la Subsecretaría de Educación Básica de la SEP, por ejemplo, se está consolidando una mayor vinculación entre los maestros, los estudiantes y los padres de familia, lo cual a su vez está contribuyendo a que los estudiantes sean más participativos y busquen investigar por ellos mismos los temas que les causan inquietud, no sólo en la escuela, sino también en sus hogares.

Se anticipa que al continuar con la aplicación de Aprendizajes en familia, las escuelas participantes puedan consolidar un mejor nivel de calidad y logro educativo, que eventualmente tendrá que reflejarse no sólo en los resultados de la prueba ENLACE de los estudiantes con los que se trabaja, sino también en el desarrollo de una cultura de participación social en la educación que implique la interacción de los diferentes actores comunitarios para hacer posible una educación más pertinente a sus propias necesidades, y que responda mejor a los retos actuales de nuestra sociedad.

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Aprendizajes en Familia: Hacia una Educación Intersectorial e Integral en la Experiencia Mexicana

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Los grandes retos del desarrollo social, particularmente de la educación, requieren hoy más que nunca de una mayor coordinación entre las instancias sociales y de gobierno a fin de ampliar el impacto de las políticas diseñadas para contribuir a mejorar la calidad de vida de la población. En la región latinoamericana, en particular, las políticas de desarrollo social enfrentan grandes problemáticas derivadas de la profunda brecha entre los sectores más privilegiados y aquellos con un menor nivel socioeconómico.

La consolidación de propuestas en materia de políticas públicas que mejor aborden la complejidad de causas detrás de la inequidad social demanda de perspectivas creativas e innovadoras que permitan apoyar la realización de los cambios estructurales necesarios a fin de generar programas más efectivos. Esto, sobre todo al considerar que la inequidad social es un tema con implicaciones multifacéticas, que van desde los aspectos de economía y trabajo, hasta los de educación, salud, vivienda, cultura y desarrollo sustentable, entre otros. Por tanto, la instrumentación de políticas de desarrollo social que atiendan y disminuyan la inequidad social requiere de la articulación coordinada del quehacer y recursos de diversas instituciones. Ejemplo concreto de esto lo encontramos en la importante convergencia entre los ministerios de educación y los de salud, a fin de promover hábitos más saludables entre niños y jóvenes, a través de los maestros y el espacio escolar.

Particularmente el tema educativo cuenta con especial importancia en cuanto a las propuestas para enfrentar la inequidad socioeconómica. Aunque no podemos decir que la educación sea la panacea para todos los problemas que viven nuestras sociedades latinoamericanas (frecuentemente se ha aludido al efecto regresivo de la educación pública —más bien a favor de las clases medias y altas urbanas— en muchos de nuestros países), una educación con mayor calidad y que estimule un mayor nivel de logro educativo entre los estudiantes es una necesidad imperiosa, si es que se busca elevar los niveles de desarrollo y de equidad socioeconómica de la región latinoamericana.

El alcance de mayor calidad y logro en la educación depende de factores diversos que son motivo de constante debate no sólo en el ámbito educativo. Sin embargo, un factor fundamental para la mejora educativa reside en la capacidad de las instituciones de interactuar de manera conjunta para combinar sus programas y recursos en la obtención de un mayor impacto en el desarrollo social de las comunidades, según sus necesidades reales. El cumplimiento de mejores indicadores educativos de calidad e impacto requiere de las acciones coordinadas de los ministerios de educación, en conjunto con los ministerios de salud, trabajo y economía, entre otros, de modo que se diseñen programas más acordes con la realidad concreta de las localidades. Los grandes problemas del desarrollo social pueden solventarse mejor en la medida

en que las políticas públicas se apoyen en una perspectiva intersectorial, donde se aborde cada aspecto del desarrollo social de manera interdisciplinaria e integral.

La Intersectorialidad Ante el Reto de la Calidad y el Logro Educativos

La integración de políticas públicas que respondan de manera más integral a los problemas del desarrollo social relacionados con la educación necesita propiciar un mayor trabajo intersectorial a fin de que los objetivos de las instituciones públicas trasciendan su ámbito específico de acción y aborden necesidades más amplias (Kalegaonkar y Brown, 2000: 3). Relacionado con esto, es conveniente que las políticas públicas sustenten la realización de reformas estructurales cimentadas en una visión integral de los problemas educativos y del desarrollo social. Sólo mediante una visión de conjunto de este tipo se pueden propiciar las transformaciones sustantivas necesarias a fin de llevar a cabo tales reformas. Por otra parte, los indicadores de seguimiento relacionados con el nivel de efectividad de las políticas públicas necesitan dar cuenta de una mayor transversalidad, donde se evalúe el impacto y la calidad de los programas con una perspectiva intersectorial.

Mejorar el nivel de calidad y logro educativos de México demanda de políticas educativas y programas intersectoriales y multidisciplinarios que abran la posibilidad de una atención más orientada a las necesidades concretas de las localidades. Esto implica que las acciones educativas puedan ser retroalimentadas con amplitud desde el nivel de las comunidades, y que los recursos asociados para los programas educativos sean ejercidos de manera más efectiva y con mayor flexibilidad en el nivel de lo local. Sólo de esta manera se podrá estimular una mayor inclusión social que fortalezca la democracia en nuestro país.

A fin de poder consolidarse adecuadamente para el beneficio de las comunidades, la intersectorialidad de las políticas educativas —mediante la participación de los sectores educativo, salud, desarrollo social, trabajo, economía, medio ambiente, etc. — requiere de un ejercicio de los recursos públicos en el nivel de lo local, en la escuela, con mayor pertinencia. Asimismo, es importante fomentar que los actores educativos en las comunidades —maestros, estudiantes, padres y autoridades locales— se conviertan en gestores de su propio desarrollo. Su corresponsabilidad en los procesos de enseñanza-aprendizaje de niños y jóvenes en las escuelas implica una participación social efectiva, así como un ejercicio de los recursos públicos que respalde de manera muy concreta las acciones de cada escuela, mediante el involucramiento directo de los actores locales en su administración.

La operación de un programa como Aprendizajes en familia, diseñado e instrumentado por el Centro de Cooperación Regional para la Educación de Adultos en América Latina y el Caribe (CREFAL), en cinco estados de la República Mexicana en su etapa piloto, ofrece una muestra importante de la manera como el trabajo intersectorial de varias instituciones se apoya en la participación de múltiples actores educativos en el ámbito de la comunidad, promoviendo su integración como gestores de su propio desarrollo.

Al ser un programa que se adapta a las necesidades reales de las comunidades, Aprendizajes en familia promueve un mejor aprovechamiento de los múltiples programas de fortalecimiento educativo y social disponibles, de modo que su impacto sea más acorde con las expectativas locales. Para lograr esto, parte de un diagnóstico de las condiciones específicas de las escuelas y de las comunidades donde éstas se encuentran, a fin de que se convierta en el

punto de referencia de las acciones educativas y sociales por efectuar. Posteriormente, se estimula a que los actores educativos involucrados en la escuela (maestros, padres, autoridades) elaboren un catálogo de los diversos programas educativos y sociales que tienen incidencia potencial en la localidad. Una vez definido esto, se capacita a los actores educativos en cuanto a la mejor manera de acceder a tales apoyos, y se les asesora para que puedan convertirse en gestores de los mismos.

Es así como Aprendizajes en familia se puede convertir en referente para la articulación de políticas educativas que contribuyan a la mejora de la calidad y logro educativos a partir de un conocimiento más concreto de la realidad de las escuelas, y según sus propias necesidades. En este sentido, un fundamento importante de este programa se encuentra en el desarrollo de herramientas metodológicas y materiales didácticos que promuevan la participación de los padres en la educación de sus hijos, pues pone especial énfasis en fortalecer el entendimiento de los factores que mejor motivan dicha participación.

Hacia una Educación más Integral e Intersectorial

El problema de exclusión social que se refleja en los altos niveles de inequidad socioeconómica de los países de la región latinoamericana se ve agravado por un círculo vicioso donde la población en rezago educativo (población de 15 años o más que no ha iniciado o concluido su educación básica) suele tener menos oportunidades educativas y laborales, lo cual, a su vez, difícilmente le permite superar el rezago. La magnitud de la importancia de este problema en la región es muy alta: alrededor de 30% de la población, en promedio, se encuentra en esa condición.

Tal situación amerita el diseño de políticas públicas que contribuyan a un desarrollo educativo más equitativo, en el cual no sólo se atienda a la población en rezago de manera más efectiva y con mejores recursos, sino que también se prevenga el rezago desde la educación básica, con el fortalecimiento del nivel de logro educativo en las comunidades. Conseguir esto demanda de mayor flexibilidad en los programas de educación formal, de modo que éstos se retroalimenten de los saberes y experiencia locales. Ello es importante porque es la mejor manera de hacer que los programas educativos sean más pertinentes y, con ello, atractivos para que niños y jóvenes que realizan su educación básica, así como sus padres, desarrollen la convicción de que la escuela les ofrece un proceso de enseñanza-aprendizaje verdaderamente provechoso. Así se conforma la base para desarrollar una educación más integral, donde los saberes formales se abran a lo informal y lo no formal.

Una educación verdaderamente integral depende en mucho de que el rezago educativo no se vea como sustancialmente diferente de los problemas de baja calidad y logro en la educación básica. En realidad ambos tipos de problemática están interrelacionados, pues, como hemos visto antes, justamente la baja calidad y logro en la educación básica estimulan la deserción escolar y, por ende, el crecimiento de la población en rezago educativo. Esto implica que si se ha de fortalecer la educación básica, debe considerarse el impacto significativo que ello puede tener en reducir el rezago educativo. Y, a la inversa, en el momento de diseñar las políticas educativas es fundamental considerar que los recursos invertidos para apoyar a que la población en rezago supere su situación, contribuirán también a fortalecer la educación básica, pues ésta deberá atender de manera más equitativa a la población.

Una visión integral de la educación necesita apoyarse en un fuerte trabajo intersectorial en el cual la escuela se convierta en punto de convergencia de diversos programas educativos, de salud, sociales y de trabajo, entre otros, mediante los que se fortalezca la correlación entre la mejora de la educación básica y la disminución del rezago educativo desde diferentes ámbitos (Picón, 1983: 5). Sin embargo, la mejor convergencia intersectorial de tales programas puede ocurrir mediante la retroalimentación coordinada, en el ámbito de la comunidad, de los propios actores locales, en torno a sus necesidades y expectativas concretas. Esto debido a que generalmente las causas de la deserción escolar residen fuera de los esquemas formales, en situaciones y retos específicos que enfrentan día a día las familias con mayor rezago socioeconómico. Así, es fundamental que el trabajo intersectorial ocurra como un proceso retroalimentado por las localidades, de modo que se evite el diseño de programas sin un referente concreto de lo que en verdad es relevante para las comunidades.

Los diagnósticos locales tienen una especial importancia para contar con referentes concretos, pues en ellos interviene la familia, y eso permite sustentar mejor la coordinación de los diversos programas que contribuyen al beneficio de la comunidad. Es desde la familia donde se puede articular una visión más integral de la educación, pues en ella se evidencia la importancia de niños, jóvenes y adultos no sólo como sujetos receptivos de las políticas educativas y de desarrollo social, sino también como actores fundamentales de ellas.

Las relaciones formales e informales que ocurren dentro de la familia y que están vinculadas con el contexto de la comunidad generan una amplia multiplicidad de necesidades y expectativas que difícilmente pueden conocerse desde una perspectiva institucional rígida. Desde la visión general de los diseñadores de las políticas públicas es un reto, sin duda, ubicar la complejidad de intereses y demandantes realidades que coexisten en la comunidad y que hallan expresión dentro de la familia. Sin embargo, una visión intersectorial de las políticas públicas puede permitir un mayor acercamiento a la complejidad de retos en el ámbito de lo local (Kalegaonkar y Brown, 2000: 2). Tales retos suelen demandar perspectivas más integrales en el desarrollo de programas que mejor contribuyan a mejorar la calidad de vida de las familias, particularmente en lo concerniente al tema educativo.

En Aprendizajes en familia se fomenta que la familia encuentre la manera de apoyar a niños y jóvenes en su proceso formativo aprovechando los elementos a su alcance: la experiencia de los mayores, los materiales de lectura al alcance de la familia, las situaciones de la vida cotidiana en las que se necesita aplicar el razonamiento lógico-matemático, entre otros. Lo importante es desarrollar entre niños, jóvenes y adultos la capacidad de resolver problemas cotidianos y demostrarles la utilidad de un proceso de enseñanza-aprendizaje apoyado por la escuela y por los maestros.

También, por otra parte, se incentiva que los adultos expandan su propia formación, mediante el estímulo para que participen en la educación de sus hijos, y a involucrarse en las actividades culturales desarrolladas en la escuela y en la comunidad. Además, se impulsa su espíritu de cooperación con la comunidad al hacerlos darse cuenta de su gran potencial de impacto y de autogestión, lo cual se logra mediante la orientación y asesoría del maestro, el coordinador estatal de Aprendizajes en familia y de las autoridades locales, así como con el estímulo de los propios niños y jóvenes estudiantes.

Las estrategias de Aprendizajes en familia buscan no sólo incidir en la mejora de la calidad y logro educativos, sino que también propiciar la generación de ambientes letrados en la

escuela, la familia y la comunidad, de modo tal que las capacidades desarrolladas por el niño o joven en la escuela pueda aplicarlas de manera práctica y con relativa facilidad en contextos diferentes al escolar. Esto contribuye a que los aprendizajes obtenidos sean realmente significativos.

Con Aprendizajes en familia se impulsa que la educación formal de la escuela se abra a los aprendizajes no formales e informales y que éstos se integren de manera natural a los contenidos escolares, de modo que contribuyan a fomentar una formación más completa en la cual niños y jóvenes expandan su potencial de aprendizaje al máximo, con la participación plena de los adultos que los rodean. De esta manera se estimulan los aprendizajes inter-generacionales, que se desarrollan a partir de lo que resulta de interés para la familia y la comunidad.

Funcionamiento Intersectorial de Aprendizajes en Familia

En este programa, propuesto y coordinado por el CREFAL, participan la Subsecretaría de Educación Básica de la SEP, el Instituto Nacional para la Educación de los Adultos (INEA), el Consejo Nacional de Fomento Educativo (CONAFE), la Secretaría de Desarrollo Social con su Programa Oportunidades y la Representación de la UNESCO en México, con la asesoría y apoyo técnico del Instituto para el Aprendizaje a lo Largo de la Vida de la UNESCO (UIL).

El programa, aplicado en escuelas focalizadas por la Subsecretaría de Educación Básica (aquellas que en 2007, 2008 y 2009 obtuvieron los más bajos resultados en la prueba ENLACE), tiene el propósito de mejorar sus resultados en dicha prueba y se opera en cinco estados de la República Mexicana: Chiapas, Durango, Guerrero, Nayarit y Veracruz. A partir de diagnósticos en las escuelas participantes, se definen estrategias diferenciadas para impulsar la vinculación entre la escuela, la familia y la comunidad, en las cuales juega un papel importante el logro de un mayor conocimiento y aprovechamiento de los recursos provenientes de diferentes programas federales, como el Programa Nacional de Lectura, el Programa Escuelas de Calidad, Escuela y Salud, la Estrategia Integral para la Mejora del Logro Educativo, Escuelas de Tiempo Completo, Escuela Siempre Abierta, el Programa Oportunidades, y los programas del INEA y del CONAFE, entre otros.

El carácter intersectorial del programa se concreta principalmente a través de la retroalimentación de lo que necesitan los actores educativos en cada comunidad, así como en brindar capacitación y asesorías específicas para desarrollar en dichos actores su capacidad de autogestión y corresponsabilidad en los procesos de educación básica de los niños y jóvenes de su localidad. Esto se logra mediante el desarrollo de cursos y talleres orientados para tal fin y el uso de materiales didácticos *ad hoc*, así como con el desarrollo de centros culturales comunitarios que fungen como punto de convergencia de niños, jóvenes y padres en actividades culturales, de lectura, o para la mejora o adquisición de hábitos saludables y de aprendizaje específicos.

Una ventaja importante de la coordinación de esfuerzos intersectoriales bajo la óptica de Aprendizajes en familia es que se evita la duplicidad de esfuerzos y de recursos, y además se orienta la aplicación de los programas públicos según necesidades y expectativas específicas. De esta manera, el impacto socioeducativo de tales programas adquiere una dimensión más práctica y concreta. Además, antes de aplicar los programas, se realiza un intenso trabajo de sensibilización con los maestros, niños, jóvenes y adultos, y con la comunidad en general, que

los estimula a hacer propios los programas involucrados, y a efectuar esfuerzos realistas para que éstos tengan éxito. De este modo, se evita el riesgo de que los programas sean vistos como imposiciones provenientes del exterior, con poca o ninguna utilidad, al considerarlos ajenos y desconocer sus posibilidades reales.

La experiencia de Aprendizajes en familia ha demostrado que hay un gran potencial para la participación familiar en escuelas ubicadas en comunidades con grados altos o muy altos de marginación, siempre y cuando se promueva a la escuela como un espacio donde se brindan aprendizajes ligados a las necesidades locales. Los padres de familia suelen mostrar interés por acudir a la escuela con sus hijos a pesar de las retadoras condiciones económicas y de vida en las que se encuentran. En esto, los directores de las escuelas y los maestros tienen un gran liderazgo, sobre todo cuando demuestran flexibilidad para adaptar los contenidos y procesos de enseñanza-aprendizaje según la realidad específica del entorno de la escuela. Con Aprendizajes en familia se fortalece esta flexibilidad y liderazgo por parte de los docentes y se estimula a que los padres vean la importancia no sólo de mantener a sus hijos en la escuela, sino también de estudiar y aprender en conjunto con ellos, así como de desarrollar hábitos que conduzcan a una cultura más saludable.

En su perspectiva intersectorial, Aprendizajes en familia estimula el aprovechamiento sistemático del conjunto de programas sociales disponibles, así como su retroalimentación a partir de la realidad local. Tal aprovechamiento sistemático implica que haya una combinación coordinada de recursos, entre materiales didácticos, infraestructura, personal y recursos financieros, de modo tal que se puedan consolidar verdaderas comunidades de aprendizaje que trasciendan los muros de la escuela, y en las cuales la familia se constituya como un agente educativo de primer orden. Ello, con el objetivo de generar procesos de enseñanza-aprendizaje que contribuyan a elevar el nivel de calidad y logro educativos en contextos de fuerte interacción entre niños, jóvenes, padres, maestros, autoridades locales y otros actores comunitarios.

Adicionalmente, aprendizajes en familia apoya fuertemente en la consolidación de los Consejos Escolares de Participación Social de las escuelas participantes, mediante la generación de programas de trabajo realizados de manera conjunta entre la escuela y los padres de familia, para activar los diversos comités de cada escuela, principalmente el de lectura y escritura. Estas acciones incorporan elementos de los diversos programas de apoyo educativo y social que pueden tener una incidencia positiva en cada escuela según sus necesidades específicas: Programa nacional de lectura, Escuela y salud, Escuelas de calidad, Escuelas de tiempo completo, Escuela siempre abierta, Estrategia integral para la mejora del logro educativo, Oportunidades, etc. De esta manera se promueve la integración de centros de cultura comunitaria en cada escuela, que se constituyen como espacios atractivos para la labor conjunta de los diversos actores locales involucrados, y sobre todo, hacer el espacio escolar más atractivo para los padres de familia.

La experiencia de Aprendizajes en familia ofrece una visión útil en cuanto a los aspectos que requiere el trabajo intersectorial a fin de tener éxito. Por un lado, es importante que dicha labor se desarrolle a partir de marcos de referencia que trasciendan coyunturas inmediatas, es decir, que partan de una visión de Estado más allá del corto plazo, de modo que la articulación de los esfuerzos de los diversos actores clave participantes cuente con objetivos estratégicos de largo alcance. La dimensión estratégica de tales objetivos, de hecho, da en mucho la oportunidad para que los sectores involucrados, y sus correspondientes actores, cuenten con un sólido punto

de referencia hacia el cual orientar de manera más coordinada y eficiente sus esfuerzos (Buj, 1992: 156).

La concreción del derecho a la educación en las comunidades con mayor rezago educativo y socioeconómico depende en mucho de la realización de otros derechos como los relativos a la salud, a la alimentación, a una vivienda digna y al trabajo, entre otros no menos importantes. Aprendizajes en familia promueve una visión sistémica en la cual se ubica a la educación en el contexto de los aspectos antes mencionados, y se buscan soluciones conjuntas al problema educativo mediante el trabajo coordinado de las instituciones responsables de los diversos programas de apoyo.

Conclusiones

La elevación de la calidad y el logro educativos constituye un reto importante para las políticas educativas que sólo puede abordarse mediante el desarrollo de programas intersectoriales. Tales programas ofrecen la posibilidad de enfrentar la problemática educativa desde una perspectiva más integral, acorde con las necesidades reales de las comunidades con mayor rezago económico y educativo, y cuya satisfacción depende no sólo de factores educativos, sino también de aspectos relacionados con la salud, el trabajo, la vivienda, el medio ambiente y la alimentación, entre otros.

En este sentido, es también importante consolidar propuestas educativas integrales que favorezcan la vinculación entre la escuela, la familia y la comunidad, de modo tal que los actores educativos en las localidades se conviertan en gestores de su propio desarrollo. Esto, en consonancia con políticas públicas y programas intersectoriales que estimulen en las comunidades la apropiación de los programas de apoyo disponibles mediante su adecuación y operación de manera flexible. Para ello, es necesario que los recursos asociados con tales programas puedan ser administrados por la propia escuela con la participación corresponsable de los padres y otros miembros de la comunidad.

Aprendizajes en familia, como iniciativa del CREFAL y con una fuerte participación intersectorial, fomenta un mayor conocimiento de las necesidades reales de las comunidades, a fin de contar con los elementos que permitan hacer más atractiva para los padres de familia su participación en la escuela. Así, se estimula que los procesos de enseñanza-aprendizaje trasciendan los muros de las escuelas y consoliden su presencia en los hogares, contribuyendo con ello a fortalecer la formación de los padres y adultos de la comunidad.

A fin de lograr una educación más integral es necesario que los problemas del rezago educativo se vean como parte componente de la propia educación básica. Una educación básica de baja calidad y poco pertinente para las necesidades reales de las localidades tiende a elevar los niveles de deserción educativa. Por ello, es fundamental que las propuestas educativas se alimenten de la participación de los actores educativos de las comunidades, y que se apoye en la formación de las familias como agentes educativos de primer orden.

La experiencia de Aprendizajes en familia en México evidencia que a pesar de los demandantes retos enfrentados en su vida diaria por los padres de familia en comunidades con importantes grados de marginación, la generación de espacios escolares donde se les dé cabida y que les sean atractivos al abordar sus intereses particulares estimula en ellos una mayor participación en la educación de sus hijos, así como en el proceso de convertirse en autogestores

de su desarrollo. Esto les permite aprovechar mejor los beneficios de los diversos programas gubernamentales que convergen en la comunidad, de modo que se convierten en agentes activos del desarrollo comunitario, y administran de manera adecuada los recursos necesarios para dar respuesta a sus necesidades.

Aprendizajes en familia estimula que maestros, padres de familia y autoridades locales desarrollen proyectos educativos propios para fortalecer corresponsablemente la educación de niños y jóvenes en las escuelas. En tal proceso, ubican los diversos programas intersectoriales que les son más adecuados, y que les permitan cubrir mejor los tres ejes del programa: fortalecimiento de la lectoescritura, la creación de comunidades de aprendizaje, y la construcción de comunidades letradas.

En la perspectiva de Aprendizajes en familia, el trabajo intersectorial se construye no sólo desde la visión de las políticas públicas y los programas de desarrollo social de ellas derivados, sino que encuentra su sustento más concreto en la participación de las comunidades, de modo tal que las acciones intersectoriales sean adoptadas por ellas como propias y que, así, los servicios educativos y de apoyo social se operen de manera más coordinada y eficiente, evitando la duplicidad de esfuerzos y de recursos.

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Modelo Integral de Comunicación Pedagógica para la calidad educativa en México: "Educación Integral e Integradora para Todas"

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Abstract: Frente a la necesidad de generar estrategias que permitan atender las deficiencias que están permeando el logro educativo en las escuelas, la calidad de vida en la familias y el óptimo desarrollo de las localidades consideradas como marginadas, el Centro de Cooperación Regional para la Educación de Adultos en América Latina y el Caribe (CREFAL) a través de proyectos especiales incursiona en la Educación Básica del sistema mexicano, con una propuesta integral que sostiene que la solución a esta vulnerabilidad social, además de ser una competencia de los diferentes sectores de gobierno, hace necesaria la participación y cooperación activa de otros actores como la familia, la comunidad, las organizaciones civiles y de las propias personas que se encuentran en situación de riesgo de exclusión social y educativa.

En este propósito, el CREFAL presenta su Modelo integral de comunicación pedagógica, que se entabla como una estrategia de formación transversal en intervención socioeducativa para docentes y autoridades educativas en el ámbito escolar; madres, padres y/o tutores responsables de niñas y niños en las familias; y autoridades municipales, líderes comunitarios y personas jóvenes y adultas en la comunidad. El propósito de esta atención diversa para la formación intergeneracional, es brindar las herramientas necesarias para el desarrollo potencial del aprendizaje informal, hacia una mejora en el aprendizaje formal que se vive en las escuelas de educación básica.

Se podrá observar más adelante que el modelo emerge de una dinámica educativa incluyente que busca indagar, evidenciar y proyectar las estrategias de intervención más adecuadas, que lleven al posicionamiento de la familia, como el núcleo social que coadyuve en el logro educativo de las niñas y niños que cursan la educación básica en el país; vía la mejora de la calidad de vida de sus integrantes y del desarrollo comunitario de las localidades en que habitan.

Así, mientras que la intervención socioeducativa con un enfoque sistémico busca generar la vinculación entre los ámbitos del hogar, el escolar y lo comunitario; es con la comunicación pedagógica que se llegan a crear las ambientes de aprendizajes constructivos entre la familia, escuela y comunidad, en donde se desarrolla la motivación e interés por aprender de manera colaborativa.

Introducción

Día a día, el campo de la educación se enfrenta a nuevos retos y desafíos que debe emprender con solidez y firmeza, no obstante la apabullante realidad política, económica y social de un país caracterizado por su diversidad étnica, cultural e ideológica: México. En éste como en

otras tantas regiones del mundo, la llamada sociedad del conocimiento demanda que las personas productivas sean capaces de generar, utilizar y compartir conocimientos de un modo eficaz sobre un continuo social de constante transformación.

Las altas cifras de pobreza e inequidad prevalecientes en ciertos sectores de la sociedad en México, obligan a repensar una política de gobierno que tiene como prioridad mejorar la calidad e inclusión educativa. Esta medida implica un compromiso compartido entre los diferentes niveles (Federal, Estatal y Municipal) y sectores administrativos; así como la participación y cooperación activa de otros actores como la familia, la comunidad, las organizaciones civiles y de las personas que se encuentran en situación de riesgo de exclusión social y educativa.

Es en medio de este acontecer, que el aprendizaje formal sobrepasa las aulas para matizarse en un factor educativo que lleva a un cambio en las mentalidades, y que transita hacia un aprendizaje a lo largo de toda la vida. En los tiempos venideros y aún en el presente, contar con una exitosa trayectoria escolar no basta; hace falta dar continuidad hacia una formación permanente que nos mantenga en el campo de la acción académica y laboral.

Pero, ¿qué sucede con quienes por diversas razones no continuaron o iniciaron con esa trayectoria escolar? Padres, madres, hermanos, tíos, abuelos, vecinos, o todo aquel joven y adulto que además de enfrentar las carencias de su propia vida, tiene la responsabilidad de educar a un niño o niña en edad escolar. Una breve mirada a la educación básica en México, presenta un mosaico de situaciones con personas letradas e iletradas que comparten un fin común: que sus hijas e hijos tengan una buena educación.

En este marco, el Centro de Cooperación Regional para la Educación de Adultos en América Latina y el Caribe, CREFAL, como organismo internacional preocupado por la equidad y justicia social, refrenda su compromiso al ofertar una educación intergeneracional con niñas, niños, jóvenes y adultos, para sumarse a la tarea de enfrentar los desafíos por igualar las condiciones de cobertura y calidad de la educación; generar condiciones para la mejora en la infraestructura; eficientar el desarrollo y profesionalización docente para garantizar la eficacia de los aprendizajes en el aula; promover la participación social de los padres de familia y de diversos actores involucrados con la educación. En suma, apuntalar la educación obligatoria en México para generar escuelas autónomas que garanticen el máximo logro de los aprendizajes de los educandos.

El Enfoque Pedagógico-Comunicacional y de Intervención del Modelo Integral

En el campo de la educación, la comunicación pedagógica se suele asociar con los procesos de aprendizaje que se desatan en el aula. En contraparte, la propuesta sistémica en términos de intervención se resuelve estratégicamente con la perspectiva comunicacional del aprendizaje formal, no formal e informal, como motor para la inclusión social de jóvenes y adultos; ya que éstos no sólo son padres y madres de familia que deben ayudar a sus hijos e hijas en sus procesos de formación; son también ciudadanos y personas que deben desempeñar actividades laborales, productivas, profesionales, sociales y hasta culturales en su vida diaria.

En la actualidad, la llamada sociedad del conocimiento demanda que las personas productivas sean capaces de generar, utilizar y compartir conocimientos de un modo eficaz sobre un continuo social de constante transformación. Es en este acontecer que el aprendizaje formal

sobrepasa las aulas para matizarse en un factor educativo que lleva a un cambio en las mentalidades que transita hacia un aprendizaje a lo largo de toda la vida.

Con esta referencia sobre la necesidad y demanda social para el campo de la educación, el Modelo Integral propone potencializar los aprendizajes formales, no formales e informales, con estrategias, métodos y técnicas de aprendizaje para la atención específica de necesidades educativas mediante tres ejes fundamentales que toman como base a la lectoescritura, las comunidades de aprendizaje y comunidades letradas, en donde la alfabetización y analfabetismo pierden categoría, para transformarse en ámbitos y ambientes de colaboración para la constante y permanente construcción de conocimientos provistos de sentido y significado.

Contexto de Intervención Socioeducativa

En esta medida, los beneficiarios del modelo redescubren el significado, sentido y valor del aprendizaje en su propio contexto. Según la experiencia disciplinaria en la que se sustentan sus principios, primero se tiene que reconocer que respecto al conocimiento, se desconoce cuánto se sabe; luego llega el

Aprendizaje transformacional
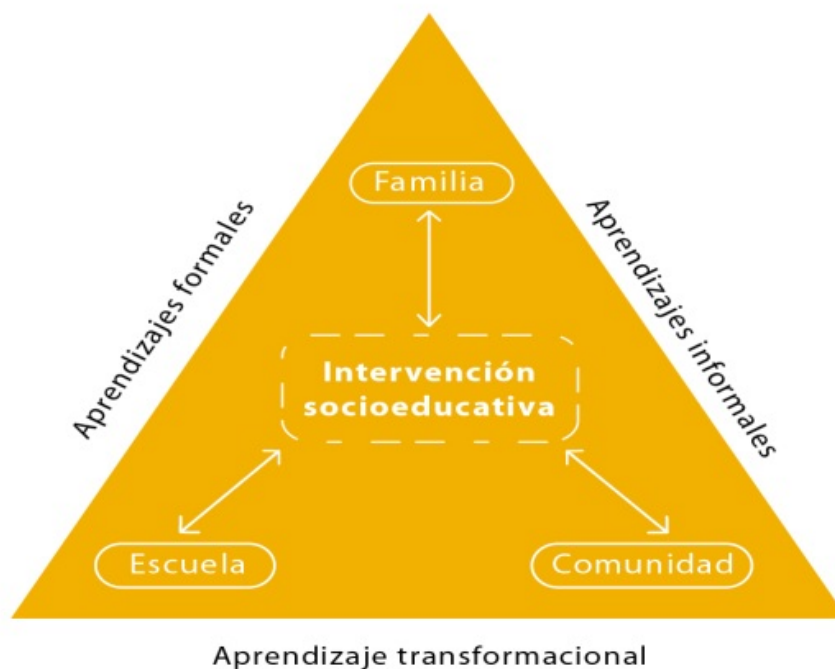
momento que se comprende cuánto no se sabe; esto lleva a entender que ya se tiene un primer conocimiento sobre cuánto se sabe. Llegar al conocimiento mismo para hacer de éste un uso en la vida diaria crea antes confusión para quien se encuentra en medio de un proceso de aprendizaje. Por ejemplo es dado que en la educación formal, psicológicamente la mente asume que se sabe poco cuando se tiene que enfrentar una prueba o evaluación estandarizada, que más que medir aplicación, se inclina por contabilizar cantidad de conocimientos.

Proceso Mediado del Aprendizaje

¿Cuántas alumnas y alumnos en sus primeros años de formación básica, se quedan en medio de esta confusión sin lograr superarla? Se torna necesario dirigir la atención de los jóvenes y adultos para el adecuado acompañamiento en este momento importante de construcción del aprendizaje. Es aquí en donde la comunicación pedagógica hace su aporte: se desarrollan estrategias mediadas que facilitan el aprendizaje en donde lo confuso se transforma en familiar y lo incomprensible en algo obvio: saber bien lo que se sabe.

Los procesos de aprendizaje mediados por la comunicación pedagógica, demandan una construcción de conocimientos por parte de los participantes, según sus necesidades e intencionalidades personales, haciendo posible la generación de experiencias significativas, esto a partir de la interactividad entre: el tema para ubicar al aprendiz en una intercomunicación dinámica y constructiva tanto escrita como verbal; el aprendizaje, que lo involucra en el proceso

mismo; y por último el diseño y manejo de los materiales que apoyan este proceso generativo del conocer.

Proceso Generativo del Aprendizaje
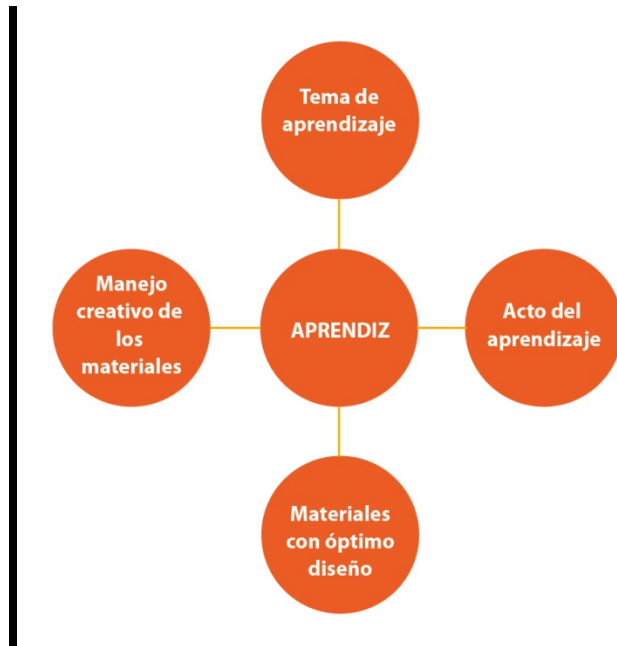
Características y Objetivos del Modelo Integral

"Educación Integral e Integradora para Tod@s" es la frase distintiva de este Modelo Integral de Comunicación Pedagógica, que hace alusión a la consecución de un desarrollo educativo integral en donde niñas, niños, jóvenes y adultos, transiten de una situación de vulnerabilidad (educativa, económica y social, principalmente) hacia el empoderamiento individual y colectivo de conocimientos y saberes que los lleven a acceder a una igualdad de oportunidades educativas, para así intervenir y participar efectivamente en las diferentes esferas de la sociedad.

En un marco de colaboración, cooperación y gestión interinstitucional, el modelo busca propiciar un cambio transformacional desde las escuelas primarias, con el propósito de contribuir en el logro de una educación integral con padres de familia, docentes y demás jóvenes y adultos implicados, para así responder a la exigencia de implementar estrategias que garanticen la permanencia y adecuada trayectoria académica de las niñas y niños, y que en consecuencia, tengan como resultado la efectiva conclusión de su educación básica.

El Modelo Integral está destinado para que instancias del gobierno federal, estatal y municipal en sinergia con autoridades educativas y escolares; brinden un panorama pedagógico que fortalezca a la calidad en la educación básica, mediante una formación integral en intervención socioeducativa que involucra la participación activa y dinámica de jóvenes y adultos desde otros ámbitos como la familia y la comunidad. Se identifican como beneficiarios directos de la aplicación, a las niñas y niños inscritos en los tres niveles de educación obligatoria

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y los integrantes de la comunidad escolar; mientras que sus familias y habitantes locales, cercanos a las escuelas, son los beneficiarios indirectos de los resultados esperados.

Frente a este reto educativo, el Modelo Integral se plantea como desafíos:
- La construcción de ambientes educativos para un mejor y mayor acceso del conocimiento, que tengan como propósito favorecer la continuidad en la aplicación de los aprendizajes entre la escuela y la vida cotidiana con la familia y la comunidad.
- La formación de actores educativos en la aprehensión de estilos flexibles de comunicación que los lleve a interactuar de manera eficiente con los beneficiarios – agentes educativos-, mediante un efectivo desarrollo de su potencial cognitivo, afectivo y conductual para la educación.
- La implementación de estrategias de intervención que, desde el ámbito escolar, propicien el involucramiento de jóvenes y adultos integrantes de las familias y las comunidades locales, en el ejercicio de una educación que trasciende a las aulas.

En este contexto de intervención socioeducativa, el Modelo Integral se define como:
- Una estrategia de formación intergeneracional (niñas, niños, jóvenes y adultos) en apoyo a la educación básica.
- Un puente para la vinculación del aprendizaje formal e informal que genera procesos y ambientes de intervención socioeducativa.
- Una vía de interlocución que favorece la participación social entre la familia y la comunidad con otros sectores asociados.
- Un mecanismo de intervención que articula escuela, familia y comunidad.
- Un sistema que genera procesos de autogestión y autonomía en escuelas con rezago educativo y marginación social.

Desde una perspectiva de enseñanza-aprendizaje informal, las niñas y los niños desde sus primeros años de vida escolar, también forman parte de esta estrategia de intervención convergente, heterogénea, contextualizada, y por tanto, ampliamente aplicativa con los actores y agentes educativos que se involucran.

Estructura y Herramientas de Intervención del Modelo Integral
El Modelo Integral tiene una estructura base que se define por componentes, ámbitos de intervención, actores y ejes temáticos. Con una estrategia de atención por áreas y modalidades para la formación, asesoría y capacitación, se busca propiciar un primer perfil de facilitador como actor o agente educativo, para que durante la aplicación, actúe como mediador en la intervención con niñas y niños, quienes vienen siendo los beneficiarios secundarios en este modelo.
La categorización de *los componentes* responde a la necesidad de estructurar una dinámica del aprendizaje integral que da cuenta sobre la necesidad que tanto jóvenes como adultos, tienen para aprender de forma permanente y diferente a como se enseña en un ámbito escolarizado. Éstos se traducen en seis áreas de atención específicas para la formación y capacitación pedagógica, la gestión educativa y participación social; así como la prevención educativa y comunitaria.

Áreas de atención especifica

Componentes	Descripción
1. Formación pedagógica para la mejora educativa.	Convoca a docentes, directores para que junto con autoridades educativas, orienten su desarrollo profesional hacia nuevas formas de aprendizaje que alienten a las niñas y niños, por alcanzar un logro educativo con calidad, en donde se involucra a padres de familia y tutores como el apoyo indispensable para la mejora en los hábitos de estudio desde otros ámbitos fuera de la escuela.
2. Capacitación pedagógica para padres de familia, jóvenes y adultos.	Ofrece orientaciones pedagógicas para desarrollar ambientes de aprendizaje que fortalecen las competencias necesarias para el óptimo desempeño en el empleo formal e informal.
3. Asesoría técnica en gestión educativa.	Favorece el desarrollo de la gestión educativa en sus distintas expresiones en la escuela, mediante la aplicación de técnicas efectivas que trascienden hacia el ámbito familiar y comunitario.
4. Asesoría técnica en participación social.	Centra su atención en el liderazgo transformacional como una herramienta que fomenta la participación social para articular los procesos de aprendizaje entre la escuela, familia y comunidad.
5. Capacitación para la autogestión.	Construye procesos de formación colectiva para el óptimo desempeño de líderes educativos y comunitarios, preocupados y unidos por la mejora en las condiciones de vida en los ámbitos escolar, familiar y comunitaria.
6. Formación en prevención educativa y comunitaria.	Promueve estrategias de intervención que evidencian la disminución de los efectos en la salud, como las adicciones, los hábitos alimenticios; entre otros problemas centrales identificados en la escuela, familia y comunidad.

Los ámbitos de intervención, hacen referencia al hogar, la escuela y la comunidad como los espacios físicos en que deban aplicarse las estrategias de intervención; mientras que por

familia, escuela y comunidad, se refiere a los contextos comunicativos en que deben darse dichas estrategias. En contraparte, los actores son aquellas personas que por su rol, función, ocupación, dedicación, liderazgo o razón social, se caracterizan como potenciales actores y agentes educativos para la intervención en estos ámbitos.

Los ejes temáticos son el marco pedagógico que por sí mismos y en articulación, buscan propiciar dinámicas significativas en donde alfabetizar, implica construir procesos de aprendizaje que aluden a la capacidad de interacción de los sujetos de intervención:

- El *fomento de la lectoescritura* se enfoca en el carácter intergeneracional de la familia para demostrar que, letrados y no letrados, pueden generar juntos procesos de enseñanza y aprendizaje con sentido y significado social.

En el amplio campo de la educación formal, la tendencia sobre la alfabetización funcional coloca en grave desventaja a quienes por diversas razones han quedado excluidos de la educación básica. Niñas, niños, jóvenes y adultos son categorizados por cifras e indicadores que están lejos de comprender su verdadera dimensión cognoscitiva. La lectura y escritura son prácticas sociales que se manifiestan en las actividades cotidianas entre quienes conocen y desconocen el grado convencional del aprendizaje.

Especialistas disciplinarios expresan que nadie sabe leer del todo. Sin embargo, las prácticas cotidianas en la familia son un importante referente en el desarrollo de habilidades básicas como la asociación, inferencia y desciframiento de signos, códigos y símbolos que se construyen y aprenden de manera compartida y colectiva. Una persona que no tiene experiencia en alfabetización formal, conoce su entorno, lee señales, explica sus ideas mediante el dibujo, descifra imágenes, fundamenta su postura, entre otras capacidades lógicas y naturales de su conocimiento.

Desde el contexto socioeducativo, se asume que leer y escribir son formas que adoptan las personas para lograr objetivos sociales y culturales, desde que se nace hasta el término mismo de la vida. La intuición motora de la lectoescritura es un elemento esencial para la vida humana. En el enfoque pedagógico comunicacional, estás prácticas sociales se conceptualizan en un uso práctico de la literacidad (símbolos gráficos que se escriben y se leen) que da sentido y significado a la interacción dada entre los integrantes de la familia, escuela y comunidad.

Con este enfoque de la literacidad como práctica social que relaciona a la familia, escuela y comunidad es que la lectoescritura se inserta como un eje articulador del valor social de leer y escribir en los tres ámbitos de la intervención socioeducativa. El uso que se hace del lenguaje en sus ámbitos y contextos es fundamental para comprender cómo se transmiten los significados; por lo que interesa que los jóvenes y adultos relacionados con las niñas y los niños, promuevan en ellos la capacidad comunicativa en todas sus formas de expresión, para así facilitar la socialización de sus actos y la integración con sus entornos próximos.

Es importante recalcar que la adquisición y desarrollo del lenguaje es una de las condiciones que marcan sus procesos de aprendizaje formal e informal. Desde aquí que el involucramiento de la familia como primer actor educativo sea vital, sobre todo si de formación inicial en edad temprana se trata. ¿Cómo hacer partícipe a los integrantes de una familia que tienen problemas de alfabetización?

El Modelo Integral en su conjunto, ofrece estrategias, métodos y herramientas con los que se pretenden hacer hincapié en los procesos por los cuales las niñas y los niños aprenden a leer en el hogar sin una instrucción planificada y en donde resalta la necesidad innata de comunicarse. La estrategia pedagógica centrada en este eje de lectoescritura parte de las realidades socioculturales de los implicados, de su lenguaje y sus formas de conocer el mundo. Se promueve la participación social mediante el adecuado manejo del lenguaje, incorporando lo intereses y necesidades particulares de los sujetos de intervención en colaboración cercana con el interventor que acompaña y guía el proceso.

- Con el *fortalecimiento de comunidades de aprendizaje*, se pretende exaltar el aprendizaje transformacional y la participación social, con dinámicas que trascienden los muros del aula y la propia escuela, en beneficio de los educandos hacia la mejora del logro educativo.

Una comunidad de aprendizaje se constituye por un grupo de personas que comparten fines comunes y que se unen para trabajar en el logro de objetivos mutuos, lo que implica además del trabajo en equipo una organización para el trabajo colaborativo. En este marco de intervención, una red de tutoría se presenta como la estrategia por la cual se hace posible la colaboración, al intercambiar experiencias, conocimientos y saberes entre los integrantes de la comunidad, sin que en ello interfieran jerarquías y niveles de mando.

En este eje temático, la participación social es factor esencial para promover la inclusión como principio fundamental en este tipo de agrupaciones de aprendizaje; en estos círculos, personas de todas las edades y nivel de conocimiento, mejoran en forma continua al fortalecer su capacidad de construir lo que sea que deseen obtener como resultado de su unión.

Como organización colectiva, los implicados construyen además un sentido de identidad y pertenencia de grupo, de cohesión y continuidad al compartir experiencias y retroalimentar sus conocimientos a partir de los saberes adquiridos. En este tipo de ambientes, la diversidad es una característica esencial de la convivencia. Todos los involucrados deben tener oportunidad de disfrutar los procesos. En el contexto escolar, una comunidad de aprendizaje incorpora la participación de los padres de familia y la comunidad como la clave para el éxito académico y personal de las niñas y los niños.

Tanto los padres de familia como escuela se necesitan mutuamente para la adecuada educación de las niñas y los niños; los primeros requiere ayuda para saber conducir el desarrollo de sus hijas e hijos en sus diferentes etapas de crecimiento escolar; la segunda no puede prescindir de las familias para promover cambios e introducir trasformaciones que lleven a una renovación constante y permanente. En este contexto de aprendizaje compartido, la red de tutoría se inserta como la dinámica que activa el conjunto común de las ideas; una práctica de transferencia que se ajusta a las condiciones de sus generadores, manifestándose como un sistema en constante innovación y mejora con óptimos beneficios.

- La *construcción de comunidades letradas*, implica que desde la comunidad local se organicen grupos de personas interesadas en un aprendizaje integrador que los coloque como líderes educativos y comunitarios, como una vía para la mejora su condición de vida a partir de sus formas de convivencia, organización, cultura y lengua propia.

Una comunidad letrada está ligada a todas aquellas prácticas sociales en las que está presente la literacidad. Con el enfoque de intervención, se concibe la alfabetización como una práctica social con medios y herramientas que permiten la apropiación del conocimiento que, como acción innata a todo individuo, supone el papel activo de los actores sociales letrados y no letrados, vinculados por la oralidad como un sistema de comunicación rudimentaria, a la vez que fundamental, y que al sumarse con la lectura y escritura potencializan el sentido y significado de las decisiones tomadas en la vida cotidiana.

Antes de la invención de la escritura, la imprenta y de los sofisticados sistemas de información, ya existía la comunicación. Históricamente se sabe que antes de las primeras

civilizaciones, el hombre entró en comunicación con otros y su entorno a través de la transmisión de señales rudimentarias como la oralidad. No existía entonces el alfabeto, nadie era un ser alfabetizado, sólo había interrelaciones humanas que se valían del trazo o dibujo, por ejemplo, para expresar ideas.

En la actualidad se vive una revolución tecnológica que ha cambiado las formas de expresión: de convencionales a innovadoras interacciones digitales. Sin embargo, la oralidad sigue prevaleciendo con sus renovadas acepciones, en donde la escritura es el complemento clave en un sistema de comunicación pensado para el aprendizaje. ¿Cómo hacer para que estos dos polos de la literacidad confluyan de manera efectiva en organizaciones con personas que no las dominan?

Generando prácticas letradas que tengan sentido y significado mediante su aplicación en la vida cotidiana. Vinculando la lectura y escritura con prácticas más comunes como la socialización, comprendiendo que fuera de lo convencional, los grupos de personas desarrollan sus propias maneras de leer y escribir, según sus formas de convivencia y de relación social e institucional.

El modelo integra además cuatro categorías de herramientas de intervención que consisten en:

- **Mapeo de aprendizaje para la intervención socioeducativa:** caracteriza las seis áreas de atención –componentes- que articulan los procesos de aprendizaje –formal, no formal e informal- en los ámbitos de intervención –escuela, familia y comunidad-, a partir de los tres ejes temáticos que comprende la propuesta de comunicación pedagógica.
- **Formación integral de actores y agentes educativos:** Plan estratégico orientado a la formación de actores y agentes educativos en dos etapas: certificación de facilitadores para la intervención y certificación de actores y agentes educativos en ámbitos de intervención.
- **Recursos educativos para la formación:** serie educativa de tres cuadernillos, dedicados a la sensibilización para el desarrollo del aprendizaje entre niñas, niños, jóvenes y adultos, en ambientes de intervención socioeducativa.
- **Recursos didácticos para la intervención:** Colección de 12 series didácticas en 36 paquetes integrados por una guía de actividades, una antología con glosario de términos, un juego didáctico para trabajar el ámbito familiar y comunitario; más un cuaderno de trabajo en los que están dedicados a la intervención desde la escuela.

Mapeo de aprendizaje para intervención socioeducativa

Intervención socioeducativa		Enfoque pedagógico comunicacional			Recursos didácticos de intervención
Áreas de atención *Componentes*	**Estrategias de intervención**	**Fomento de la lectoescritura (FAMILIA)**	**Fortalecimiento de comunidades de aprendizaje (ESCUELA)**	**Construcción de comunidades letradas (COMUNIDAD)**	**Colección** *Prácticas pedagógicas en la familia, escuela y comunidad*
E d u c a c i ó n f o r m a l / n o Formación pedagógica para la mejora educativa	Competencias básicas para la mejora del logro educativo/comunitario	Herramientas de lectura y escritura para promover la alfabetización desde el hogar	Metodología básica para potenciar el aprendizaje en Español y matemáticas	Autogestión comunitaria para potenciar el desarrollo local	**Serie didáctica** *Mejora del logro educativo/comunitario*
	Prácticas de lectoescritura para la mejora del aprendizaje	Herramientas didácticas para practicar la	Desarrollo de la lectoescritura con la participación de los	Habilidades de lectoescritura para la formulación de	**Serie didáctica** *Prácticas de lectoescritura*

		lectoescritura desde el hogar	padres de familia dentro y fuera del aula	proyectos productivos	
Capacitación pedagógica para padres de familia, jóvenes y adultos	Alfabetización digital como apoyo didáctico en la mejora del logro educativo	Prácticas mediadas de fomento a la lectura y escritura en el hogar	Uso didáctico de las TIC´s para promover el aprendizaje en español y matemáticas	Comunidades letradas en red digital	**Serie didáctica** *Alfabetización digital*
	Metodologías participativas	Técnicas participativas para potenciar la lectoescritura en el hogar	Métodos y técnicas participativas para la inclusión social y educativa	Diagnóstico comunitario para el desarrollo local	**Serie didáctica** *Metodologías participativas*
Asesoría en gestión educativa	Gestión estratégica para la mejora educativa y calidad de vida	Habilidades de lectoescritura para la organización familiar	Proyectos escolares para la mejora educativa & calidad de vida	Proyectos productivos para la inclusión social y educativa	**Serie didáctica** *Gestión estratégica*
	Integración de Centros Culturales Comunitarios	Acervos escolares para la lectoescritura en familia	Manejo didáctico de los acervos escolares para promover la lectoescritura participativa	Animación de la lectoescritura en el desarrollo local	**Serie didáctica** *Centros Culturales Comunitarios*
Asesoría técnica en participación social	Consolidación de la participación social en las escuelas	Habilidades de lectoescritura para la participación social	Participación social de la familia en la gestión escolar	La participación comunitaria en la gestión de la escuela	**Serie didáctica** *Participación social*
	Liderazgo transformacional	Liderazgo transformacional para el fomento de la lectoescritura en el hogar	Estilos de liderazgo para potenciar el aprendizaje en el aula	Estilos y prácticas de liderazgo para el desarrollo comunitario	**Serie didáctica** *Liderazgo transformacional*
Capacitación para la autogestión	Sistematización de experiencias	Sistematización de experiencias prácticas en lectura y escritura en el hogar	Técnicas y herramientas para la sistematización de los aprendizajes desde el aula	Sistematización de experiencias comunitarias	**Serie didáctica** *Sistematización de experiencias*
	Educación financiera para la mejora educativa, calidad de vida y desarrollo comunitario	Competencias básicas para el manejo de finanzas en el hogar	Administración organizacional en la escuela	Administración y financiamiento de proyectos productivos	**Serie didáctica** *Educación financiera*
Formación en prevención educativa y comunitaria	Prevención para la salud familiar, escolar y comunitaria.	Herramientas para el manejo de factores de resiliencia en el hogar.	Estrategias y técnicas para la prevención de adicciones en la escuela.	Participación comunitaria en la salud preventiva.	**Serie didáctica** *Prevención en salud*
	Promoción para la salud familiar, escolar y comunitaria.	Promoción de la resiliencia con madres adolescentes y Jefas de familia.	Formación educativa en prevención de adicciones.	Formación en promoción de la salud preventiva comunitaria.	**Serie didáctica** *Promoción en salud*
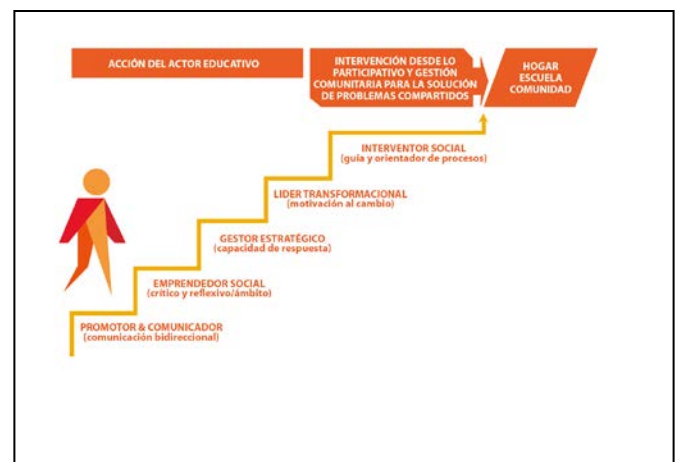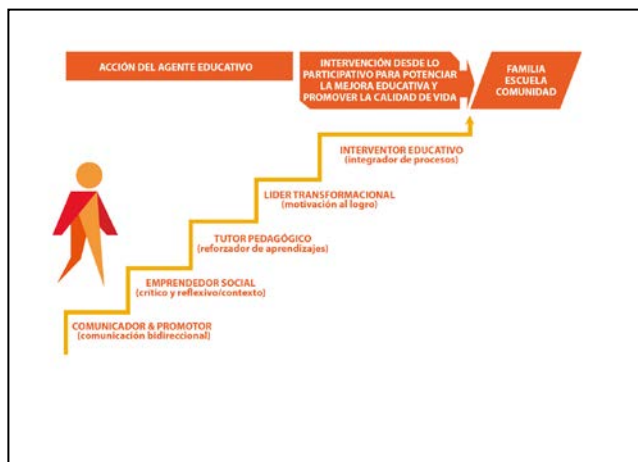
Fases de Aplicación del Modelo Integral

La estructura y versatilidad de las herramientas que comprende el Modelo Integral de Comunicación Pedagógica, permite a sus usuarios potenciales entablar un proceso de trabajo interinstitucional con el CREFAL, que lleva a la consecución de resultados esperados, con impactos en el corto, mediano y largo plazo. Este proceso de aplicación que lleva a cabo en tres fases: planeación, implementación y evaluación.

1. Planeación

El CREFAL y las instancias interesadas en la aplicación del Modelo Integral, realizan los acuerdos interinstitucionales para la organización de cobertura, estrategia de formación de facilitadores, plan de intervención; así como el establecimiento del convenio institucional y plan presupuestal de las tres etapas. Estos procesos implican:

a) *Organización de cobertura:* la selección de escuelas y diagnostico situacional para la detección de necesidades, según las áreas de atención que ofrece el modelo.

b) *Estrategia de formación de facilitadores:* realiza el proceso de formación en un tiempo aproximado de tres meses hasta llegar a la primera certificación de Actores y agentes educativos, como facilitadores para la intervención.

c) *Plan de intervención:* los facilitadores certificados organizan y determinan la modalidad que deberá desarrollarse para la intervención en las escuelas.

El resultado de esta primera fase se traduce especialmente en la ***Certificación de facilitadores*** como actores y agentes educativos para la cobertura de escuelas seleccionadas. Como productos se obtienen:

1.- Los prototipos de los materiales educativos definidos para el proceso de sensibilización.

2.- Los prototipos de los materiales didácticos definidos para el proceso de intervención en las escuelas con las familias y las comunidades locales.

3.- El primer *Informe técnico* sobre el proceso de formación y evaluación para la certificación de facilitadores.

2. Implementación

El proceso de implementación se enfoca principalmente en la intervención socioeducativa que realizan los facilitadores directamente con la comunidad escolar, las familias y los habitantes locales involucrados en los procesos de formación integral que se vive desde las escuelas. El proceso de trabajo integra los elementos:

- Plan de intervención en las escuelas con las familias y la comunidad local.
- Matriz de responsabilidades para la intervención de los facilitadores, el seguimiento y cronograma correspondiente.
- Materiales educativos para la sensibilización de los beneficiarios, sobre los procesos de intervención socioeducativa en la escuela, familia y comunidad.
- Materiales didácticos para desarrollar las estrategias de intervención específicas identificadas en el mapeo de aprendizaje, según la detección de necesidades formativas en el ámbito de la escuela, familia y comunidad.

El resultado de esta fase se traduce en la segunda ***Certificación de actores y agentes educativos*** como principal indicador de impacto del proceso de intervención por parte de los facilitadores. Como productos se obtiene un segundo *informe técnico* con el monitoreo de resultados; instrumento que guía la mejora en la aplicación de las estrategias de intervención de los facilitadores.

3. Evaluación de impacto

El proceso de evaluación de impacto que se calcula tenga una duración de dos a tres meses, gira en torno a una interrogante fundamental sobre ¿cuál sería la situación de las escuelas si no se aplica el Modelo Integral?, respuesta que se compara con el diagnostico situacional que se construye desde la primera fase. Las variables dependientes en esta fase se instauran en la calidad de la prestación de servicios:

a) Asesoría
b) Formación
c) Seguimiento
d) Diseño de materiales educativos
e) Diseño de materiales didácticos
f) Niveles de certificación

Como variables independientes se identifica la constancia y permanencia de los actores y agentes educativos formados para la intervención. Sin embargo, este aspecto puede fortalecerse con la óptima selección que se realiza desde la primera fase.

El resultado de esta fase se traduce en la ***Certificación de escuelas*** en la mejora del logro educativa, calidad de vida en las familias y la promoción del desarrollo comunitario en su Nivel I. Como producto el CREFAL entrega el tercer *informe técnico;* un estudio con énfasis en los cambios de conducta de los beneficiarios y las transformaciones en los procesos de aprendizaje como relevante incidencia en el desempeño académico de docentes, niñas y niños en las escuelas.

4. Potencial de desarrollo y criterios de certificación

La flexibilidad de aplicación del Modelo en tres etapas por ciclo escolar, con posibilidad de réplica hasta por dos años, permite a sus destinatarios tomar decisiones de formación integral, con base en el mapeo de aprendizaje para la intervención socioeducativa, en consonancia con las necesidades básicas y/o prioritarias que en función del logro educativo, sean detectadas en las escuelas. El número de escuelas por abarcar en un lapso de tres años, dependerá de la capacidad de atención en infraestructura y metas por alcanzar por la instancia solicitante.

Niveles Para la Certificación

BENEFICIARIOS	NIVEL I	NIVEL II	NIVEL III	METAS DE LARGO ALCANCE
Facilitadores para la intervención Actores y	Eficiencia en la formación de dos áreas de atención	Eficiencia en la formación de cuatro áreas de atención	Eficiencia en la formación de seis áreas de atención	Docentes que mejoran sus resultados en su

agentes educativos	completas y su aplicación en los ámbitos de escuela, familia y comunidad, con óptimos resultados de metas alcanzadas que reditúen en un mínimo del 40% de la población escolar total.	completas y su aplicación en los ámbitos de escuela, familia y comunidad, con óptimos resultados de metas alcanzadas que reditúen en un mínimo del 40% de la población escolar total.	completas y su aplicación en los ámbitos de escuela, familia y comunidad, con óptimos resultados de metas alcanzadas que reditúen en un mínimo del 40% de la población escolar total.	desarrollo profesional.
Escuelas en la mejora del logro educativo				Niñas y niños que superan el nivel insuficiente de su desempeño académico. Incremento de la participación social en las escuelas con mayor presencia de padres de familia y miembros de la comunidad local.

Investigación: Primeras Evidencias

Una parte fundamental en el proceso de construcción del Modelo Integral, se enmarca en la investigación educativa que se está desarrollando de manera paralela al mismo, con el propósito de contar con las evidencias que de manera especializada otorguen veracidad, autenticad y fundamento a las acciones de gestión estratégica y de comunicación pedagógica que se requiere un programa con esta envergadura. Para ello, se planteó como primer instancia contar con un marco teórico-metodológico, especializado en los temas y problemas educativos relacionados con los proceso de lectura, escritura, así como con la comprensión lógico-matemática que se mide en pruebas estandarizadas como Enlace.

Como parte del planteamiento del problema para la investigación, se destacó que el foco de tensión se centra en las niñas y niños que están cursando la formación básica en el nivel de primaria, y que están inscritos en 11 escuelas primarias seleccionadas –población muestra- como campo para una aplicación de prueba de las estrategias de intervención, según su situación y circunstancia de rezago académico, además de otros aspectos de índole social y económica que caracterizan a las comunidades en que se ubican.

Modelo de Intervención Socioeducativa

Al inicio del proceso de la línea de investigación "Modelo Educativos en el marco del Aprendizaje a lo Largo de Toda la Vida", y de la que se deriva el diseño a aplicación del Modelo Integral, como primer paso importante se realizó el un modelo sistémico de intervención socioeducativa, que dio como referencia los criterios fundamentales para tender un puente entre las directrices establecidas por la política educativa en un nivel global del campo de la educación básica, y la posibilidad de resolver las problemáticas educativas que caracterizan a comunidades y escuelas en situación de vulnerabilidad, rezago social y económico.

Con esta línea de investigación, se empezó a dar respuesta a cómo hacer transitar a un programa de atención de servicios educativos, hacia un modelo integral de atención para la familia, escuela y comunidad. Este reto implicó que primero se desarrollara una metodología base que sustentara las acciones, estrategias e intervenciones en donde el principal enfoque de

atención es la propia familia como contexto y características que la definen como el espacio socializador de niñas, niños, jóvenes y adultos en convivencia de un entorno físico que es el hogar.

En el proceso de aplicación de la investigación, la integración del modelo sistémico requirió el generar las primeras estrategias de intervención que por su efectividad y eficacia, deberán servir de réplica para resolver problemas sociales y educativos que aquejan a la población muestra; por lo que los propósitos de indagación en su primer proceso giraron en torno a:

- Desarrollar y analizar los componentes del modelo sistémico en su acepción teórica y metodológica, con la finalidad de establecer las herramientas básicas para la puesta en marcha del Modelo Integral.
- Visualizar en los ámbitos político, social, educativo y de desarrollo económico en que se ubica la población muestra, para en ello fundamentar la construcción de un Modelo Integral de Comunicación Pedagógica, como siguiente nivel de alcance de la investigación.
- Esquematizar los componentes, ámbitos, enfoque pedagógico comunicacional y ejes temáticos, con el fin de diseñar las estrategias de intervención socioeducativa que evidencian la experiencia de un Modelo Integral de Comunicación Pedagógica.

Modelo Integral de Comunicación Pedagógica

Después de definir la estructura del modelo sistémico de intervención socioeducativa, la labor de investigación continuó con la construcción del enfoque de comunicación pedagógica sirviera en la orientación de las estrategias de intervención socioeducativa para el desarrollo de competencias que impulsan el aprendizaje entre los miembros de una familia. Con esta visión se dio inicio indagación para sobre las estrategias educativas esenciales que llevan a elevar los vínculos existentes de la comunicación, hacia un proceso mediado que potencializa el aprendizaje entre los miembros familiares, con carácter participativo, creativo y expresivo, en donde cada individuo –infante y adulto- intercambie experiencias relacionales entre lo que se conoce y aprende en el hogar, y lo que se conoce y aprende en la escuela.

Con estos propósitos, el desarrollo científico-académico de la investigación está generando productos estratégicos que se plantean para que respondan a la necesidades educativas específicas de un grupo de 11 escuelas muestra con sus respectivas familias y comunidades en donde el rezago educativo, altos niveles de pobreza y marginación, entre otros aspectos; se viven día a día a través de sus variadas formas de expresión, en donde la lengua materna -como el tzotzil y el náhuatl- se entremezcla con el idioma español, dando como resultado una complejidad lingüística y fonológica a las interacciones, mismas que se revaloran en la medida en que sus usuarios las integran –como lenguas- en su bagaje cultural para generar interacción y sentido en sus formas particulares de relacionarse; y por tanto, de aprender de su entorno dentro y fuera del núcleo familiar.

En resumen, se puede decir que la línea orientadora de la investigación dentro de la fase de construcción del Modelo Integral, se preocupó por resolver:

Como premisa principal:

- ¿Cómo se desarrolla la construcción social del aprendizaje en ámbitos como el hogar y la comunidad?

En las variantes de la indagación:

- ¿Qué tipo de situaciones manejan las niñas, niños, jóvenes y adultos, para el desarrollo del lenguaje como base para la comprensión lectora?
- ¿En qué tipo de situaciones el infante y el adulto desarrollan el pensamiento racional, como base para el pensamiento lógico-matemático?
- ¿Cómo debe ser el desempeño de los integrantes de la familia como agentes educativos dentro y fuera del hogar?
- ¿Cómo puede la familia incursionar desde el hogar como transformadora de las prácticas educativas en la escuela?
- ¿Cuál debe ser la contribución de la familia para eficientar los logros educativos que se plantea la escuela?
- ¿Qué debe modificar la escuela en su rol y estructura para que la familia asuma formalmente su papel como agente educativo para con las niñas y los niños?

Como parte del proceso de aplicación de la línea de investigación, durante el mes de agosto del 2011, el CREFAL llevó a cabo un trabajo conjunto con docentes, directores, autoridades locales y padres de familia en sus propias instalaciones, con el propósito de construir un primer diagnóstico situacional de las escuelas muestra, junto con los actores educativos que las integran.

Como un primer acercamiento de exploración en cuanto a las condiciones que caracterizan los contextos de la población muestra, se obtuvieron diversos resultados interesantes, según los ejes temáticos que fueron puestos a prueba: Fomento de la lectoescritura, Fortalecimiento de comunidades de aprendizaje y, la Construcción de comunidades letradas.

Antes cabe señalar que se diseñó un cuestionario dividido en tres secciones que corresponde a cada uno de los tres ejes antes mencionados, en donde se incluyó una serie de tres preguntas por eje, y una pregunta por contexto de exploración: familia, escuela y comunidad. Con este primer acercamiento, se reconocieron los aspectos relevantes que fueron considerados en la configuración de los componentes del modelo sistémico. En total se entrevistaron a 35 participantes, provenientes de cada una de las cinco entidades en que fueron seleccionadas las escuelas.

Este primer acercamiento a las condiciones educativas, familiares y comunitarias en relación con los procesos de lectura, escritura y pensamiento matemático, se evidenció que tanto en el aprendizaje formal como en el informal, estás prácticas están estrechamente relacionadas con la vida cotidiana de las niñas, niños, jóvenes y adultos, y en la mayoría de los casos están determinadas por las condiciones favorables o desfavorables en que se encuentran las familias en cada uno de los ámbitos hogar, escuela y comunidad.

En el primer eje en donde sobresalen las iniciativas de la Secretaria de Educación Pública, se pudo advertir que existen claros esfuerzos por incluir a los padres de familia en las diferentes estrategias de trabajo; sin embargo, no se están tomando en cuenta que en las escuelas primarias en situación vulnerable como las focalizadas para este programa, apenas pudieron cursar hasta el segundo año de primaria básica; hecho que los pone en cierta desventaja frente al tipo de acciones que se instrumentan. Por otra parte, si bien no es determinante, las condiciones precarias de infraestructura e instalaciones en las escuelas es otro factor que influye para el

fomento a la participación tanto de los propios docentes, autoridades escolares y los padres de familia.

A Manera de Conclusión

Como se ha podido constatar, las estrategias de intervención, las técnicas y herramientas para el aprendizaje, en su enfoque comunicacional tienen en cuenta dos tipos de prácticas: la literacidad convencional que se gesta en las aulas y la literacidad vernácula que se desarrolla en el diario acontecer. La complementariedad de ambas posturas a través de ambientes de aprendizaje colaborativo y significativo, lleva al enriquecimiento del conocimiento mismo, propiciando una incidencia favorable en el logro educativo y la calidad de vida. La producción textual en estas dos dimensiones cobra un valor potencial cuando se traducen en aplicaciones reales que ayudan a resolver problemas también reales.

Es evidente, que pese a las circunstancias mencionadas, existe un importante potencial para incentivar la cooperación, siempre y cuando se consideren las desigualdades socioeconómicas que caracterizan a estas familias, escuelas y sus comunidades, y se oriente a los maestros en cuanto a la mejor manera de asumir un papel de liderazgo en la localidad y fortalecerse vía la colaboración de los grupos de organización de Participación Social. Esto muestra una vez más, que las estrategias deben estar encaminadas a brindar herramientas educativas necesarias para que docentes, alumnas, alumnos y padres de familia se conviertan en protagonistas de sus procesos tanto educativos como de transformación social comunitaria.

Por otra parte, queda como antecedente importante que la vinculación interinstitucional e intersectorial es imprescindible como plataforma dinámica para la aplicación del Modelo Integral. Es así como con esta experiencia, el CREFAL incursiona en el campo de la educación básica con la mirada experta y disciplinada en la alfabetización de jóvenes y adultos, para ofrecer un nuevo enfoque de la educación formal, no formal e informal, enmarcando el énfasis en el *saber ser y saber hacer* del aprendizaje a lo largo de la vida, proponiendo una estrategia integral de comunicación pedagógica que incluye a toda persona sin distingo de edad y capacidad intelectual.

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