CALL FOR PAPERS
The Publications Officers are now accepting submissions for Volume 7, No. 1 of Texas English Language Teaching (TexELT), an online journal, a publication of Texas Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages-Region V (TexTESOL V).

This is a peer-reviewed electronic publication which will be posted on the TexTESOL V website and will be available free of charge to members through email Newsletter link and to the general public through the public access portions of the TexTESOL V website. Submissions are due April 9, 2018. It is anticipated that manuscripts selected for consideration will be sent to members of the peer jury of readers by April 16, 2018 and returned to the Publications Officers with Level One Protocol advice by April 30, 2018. Online publication is tentatively scheduled for September 2018.

All submissions should be sent electronically to ritadeyoe@yahoo.com. If you do not receive a return email confirming receipt within three days, please send a follow-up email.
Publication Priorities

Action Research Reports

Brief reports on action research in which the writer has developed a plan to do something in a particular way to try to improve student outcomes, gives some evidence of having compared that approach with previous or simultaneous alternative approaches, evaluates the outcomes, and critically examines both implementation issues and outcomes. This does not need to be at the level of an experimental or quasi-experimental design, but ought to present evidence of thorough planning of details, and be based on a review of relevant available literature.

Critical Reviews of Textbooks, Teaching Materials, and Teacher Preparation Texts and Resources

Brief critical reviews of new textbooks and materials for teaching English or preparing teachers of English as a Second Language at any of the levels (elementary, secondary, adult, and higher education), in which the writer points out personal experiences in using the text or materials—positive and negative—and/or details benefits and defects, as perceived by the reviewer, for the sorts of student populations our membership serves within the North Texas context. TexTESOL V members work in both urban schools and colleges with extensive bilingual, newcomer and ESL programs and also in rural districts with limited programs and few ESL-qualified professionals. The reviewer should state clearly his/her own context and experience and the settings for which the text or materials reviewed are considered.

Research Syntheses for Application

Well-structured syntheses of the best practices for our regional needs or the needs of a particular type of situation that exists in our region, according to research from a wide variety of sources, but with critical attention to "applicability", and the perceived quality of the research.

Criteria for Consideration

1. The research topic should be of fairly general interest to practicing ESL teachers at one or more of the levels addressed by our Interest Sections: Elementary, Secondary, Adult and/or Parent Education, Higher Education. This includes post-secondary ESL students and Bilingual/ESL Teacher Preparation.
2. The manuscript should be in Times New Roman 12pt font and should follow APA format 6th edition for citing all sources. You may request information on this format from the Publications Coordinator.
3. The manuscript should be sufficiently edited with regard to errors in grammar, spelling, punctuation, idiomatic usage and document format to resolve all errors identified by Spell Check.
4. All sources should be cited properly and completely so that the reader can easily consult the original source or access it electronically if it is available online.
5. All authors are solely responsible for ensuring that no plagiarism occurs in their submissions, and authors whose work is selected for publication will need to sign a statement to that effect. At their option, the editors may submit papers to an anti-plagiarism service for originality comparisons.
6. No specific length is required because the online publication format does not create arbitrary limitations on the quantity that can be published. However, our members (and our peer jury) will prefer brevity with substance and simplicity with sufficient detail to comprehend fully the contexts and applications discussed.

Peer Reviewers and Editors for TexELT Texas English Language Teaching, Volume 6, Issue 1

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Deyoe-Chiullán, R. (2017). Welcome to the sixth issue of *Texas English Language Teaching (TexELT).* *TexELT: Texas English Language Teaching,* 6(1), 4.


Editors’ Biographies. *TexELT: Texas English Language Teaching,* 6(1), 84-86.


Welcome to the Sixth Issue of Texas English Language Teaching (TexELT)

The sixth issue of TexELT will be one of the longest in pages, even though it includes just two very thorough research studies. One article is by an innovative ESL teacher and program developer with a special concern for newcomer students and the other is by a campus reading specialist and ESL team leader recently promoted to school assistant principal. One article is the culmination of extended investigation regarding the effectiveness of the Families and Community Educating (FACE) Newcomer Program for English language learners (ELLs). This program was designed to enhance language, reading, and mathematics learning and to increase student well-being. The other article, based on the author’s master’s degree research, was conducted at a Title I middle school where parent involvement was lower than that of the other middle schools in the school district. The author’s purpose was to gain insight into the best methods of communication with the students’ parents to increase their involvement with the school on their children’s behalf.

The TexELT publications team this year, as last year, included our Publications Copy Coordinator, Dr. Jeyashree (Jey) Venkatesan, another TexTESOL V Board member, Les Brinkerhoff, who served as a reviewer, and TexTESOL V member, Dr. Lana Sloan, who served as a second stage editor with strengths in copy editing, including in-depth experience with the details of APA format. As previously, our talented and hard-working primary content reviewer and former TexTESOL V Board member, Margaret Redus, made essential major commitments early on and throughout the editing process as our primary content reviewer and as the primary content editor. She persevered through several revisions to guide the authors in shaping their manuscripts so that their messages would be clear, understandable, and useful for the professional purposes of our readership. For final stage copy editing issues, we continued to rely on our TexTESOL V Board Publications Copy Coordinator Dr. Jeyashree Venkatesan. Thus once again, we have had the good fortune to bring these talented individuals together with our authors to produce a valuable contribution to our profession.

--Rita Deyoe-Chiullán, Ph. D., Publications Coordinator, TexTESOL V and Editor, TexELT, 6(1).

Citation
Introduction to the Contents of This Issue

In the closing article in this issue, Dr. Rita Deyoe-Chiullan, our editor, presents an eloquent invocation for educators in the USA, especially those practicing in English Language Learning environments, as they begin the new school year 2017-2018. At this time of heightened tensions for our students and their families, and in our impacted educational environments, the roles of programmatic evaluation and self-examination take on increased urgency. In this issue of TexELT, the articles showcase examples of ways in which two educators have used research to inform administrative decisions.

In the first article, Diane Sumney, an ESL teacher and Director of FACE (Families and Community Educating), Cassidy Elementary, Fayette County Public Schools, Lexington, Kentucky, reports on research into the effectiveness of this program at the end of its first five years. Students were incoming African and Iraqi refugees, grades 1-8, with little or no education. As a district ESL teacher, she had worked with Dr. Aminata Caro, professor of Anthropology at the University of Kentucky, and a district family resource coordinator to develop FACE and was thus deeply familiar with its goals. An important area of concern in both the development and operation of FACE was increasing the children’s sense of well-being through a whole-child approach and by involving the students’ families and volunteers from the wider community.

The second article describes a study undertaken by Crystal Roach as a campus reading specialist and ESL team leader at a middle school in a suburban neighborhood with significant socioeconomic and English-language challenges. In this school, teachers and fellow support staff members had expressed concern about low parent involvement at their school relative to other district schools. Following a review of parent involvement resources, Crystal developed an extensive parent survey and then an open-ended shorter staff survey. Results from the parent survey in particular yielded helpful and somewhat unexpected feedback on parental behavior and communication preferences.

We close this volume with the above-mentioned and timely editorial by Dr. Rita Deyoe-Chiullán. May it provide motivation and inspiration for its readers as they serve their students this year.

--Margaret Redus, M.L.A., Primary Content Reviewer and Content Editor, TexELT, 6(1).

Citation

An Evaluation of Families and Community Educating (FACE) Newcomer Program for English Language Learners*

by

Diane Furlong Sumney

English as a Second Language Teacher, 
Fayette County Schools, Lexington, Kentucky

Abstract

This evaluative quasi-experimental study assessed the effectiveness of the Families and Community Educating (FACE) Newcomer Program for English language learners (ELLs) with little or no prior education in their first language. The FACE program was designed to enhance language, reading, and mathematics learning and to increase student well-being. FACE uses a whole-child approach and involves students’ families and the wider community. The study, a goals-based analysis of quantitative and qualitative data, involved 44 students in Grades 1-8 at Cassidy Elementary School as well as other schools in Fayette County Public Schools, in Lexington, Kentucky. Half were participants in the FACE program, and half were not. The study found that the reading and mathematics scores of students in the program were not statistically different from those not in the program, when factoring in non-controlled variables. However, there was a clear advantage in language acquisition and sense of well-being for students in the FACE program. The study provided clear evidence that FACE, with its whole-child approach and involvement of family and community, was successful in its attempt to build self-esteem in newcomers. Results suggested that programs which adopt these methods can provide significant support to newcomers and enhance their communication skills and their adjustment to a new culture. Results also suggested that new ways of incorporating reading and mathematics are needed to help students make educational progress.

Keywords: Newcomer, refugee, language acquisition, mental health, elementary school

*This research was done as a Masters of Arts in Education program requirement for the University of the Cumberlands and was revised and expanded as an article for this publication.

Citation

Introduction

This evaluative quasi-experimental study assessed the effectiveness of the Families and Community Educating (FACE) Newcomer Program for English language learners (ELLs) with little or no prior education. The FACE program was designed to enhance language, reading, and mathematics learning and to increase student well-being. FACE uses a whole-child approach and involves students’ families and the wider community. The study, a goals-based analysis of quantitative and qualitative data, involved 44 students in Grades 1-8 in Fayette County Public Schools, Lexington, Kentucky. Half were newcomer students who were participants in the FACE program at Cassidy Elementary or Morton Middle School; the other half were also Fayette County students who were newcomers from similar backgrounds with respect to countries of origin, languages, and time spent in the United States, but they did not participate in a newcomer program.

As part of district-wide testing, the World Class Instructional Design and Assessment Test (WIDA) and the WIDA Access Placement Test (W-APT) were used to evaluate language acquisition, and the Northwest Evaluation Association’s Measure of Academic Progress (MAP) tests were used to evaluate reading and mathematics skills. Student well-being was assessed through surveys completed by classroom teachers.

Problem Statement

In 2007, Cassidy Elementary, a Fayette County Public School, in Lexington, Kentucky, began to develop a program for the influx of African and Iraqi newcomer refugees who had little or no prior education. These students made up 20% of the school population, and the majority of these students qualified for the free and reduced lunch program.

In the process of program development, programs similar to Cassidy’s FACE Newcomer Program were reviewed for their effectiveness. In several countries, newcomer programs had been developed in an attempt to support refugee students with little or no previous educational experience. These programs provided students with additional instruction in mathematics, reading, and English and with services to support student well-being. Studies revealed these programs were proving to be imperative for the success of newcomer students. Without this support, students were in danger of becoming marginalized in society (Ferfolja, 2010). The study in this article was designed to determine whether the Cassidy FACE Newcomer Program was meeting its intended goals.

Purpose and Significance

After a review and analysis of the literature concerning newcomer programs, a goals-based program evaluation of the Families and Community Educating (FACE) Newcomer Program at Cassidy Elementary School was conducted to determine whether the program’s goals were being met. These goals had been developed in 2007 at the inception of the program and remained in effect at the time of the study in 2012 after five years of the program’s implementation.
Goals of the FACE Newcomer Program: To improve understanding in content areas in order to close the gap in existing abilities and knowledge and to
1. Improve English language skills through structured and conversational language exercises.
2. Introduce and reinforce students’ math and reading abilities to perform at grade level.
3. Increase social skills and promote behavioral adaptation and mental well-being for students who have experienced trauma.

The FACE program was designed for refugee students with little or no prior education, who had been in the country up to three years, and whose reading levels were at least two years below grade level as determined by the World Class Instructional Design and Assessment Test (WIDA), WIDA Access Placement Test (W-APT), and the Northwest Evaluation Association’s Measure of Academic Progress (MAP). The FACE program incorporates areas of study designed for students to gain the knowledge they have not learned because of the grade level in which they entered school.

FACE was developed by Dr. Aminata Cairo, Professor of Anthropology at the University of Kentucky; Diane F. Sumney, ESL teacher, Cassidy Elementary; and Jill Blackman, Family Resource Coordinator at Morton Middle and Cassidy Elementary Schools in Fayette County Public Schools, in Lexington, Kentucky. The program adopted methods from studies of well-being, such as Blackwell and Melzack (2000), and incorporated information gleaned from responses of parents and teachers via questionnaires and interviews. The program operated at Cassidy Elementary and Morton Middle School from 2007 until 2012. At that time, the program was transferred to Breckinridge Elementary School to support the shifting newcomer refugee population at that location.

The program was led by the developers, one additional ESL teacher, Cassidy’s Family Resource support staff, and non-ESL Cassidy parents. Volunteers from the University of Kentucky and Transylvania University, as well as high school students from Fayette County schools and community partners, assisted with the program. The volunteers were required to participate in a two-hour ESL newcomer training before beginning their service. This training included instruction for tutoring in beginning speaking, reading, and mathematics and offered methods for encouraging student well-being (Cairo, 2012).

The program’s mode of instruction for mathematics delivery was very basic: teacher-made addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division problems and rote memorization for learning addition and multiplication facts. The mode of instruction for beginning reading was based on the Slingerland Multisensory Approach. More advanced students used short reading passages to develop both fluency and reading skills, such as recognition of fact and opinion and main idea.

The well-being delivery format included in the extended school sessions included group problem-solving games, singing, art, and activities for physical dexterity, such as tumbling on floor mats or dancing. This component also included both teaching cultural skills and also practicing them through social activities. These elements within the program helped children feel a part of a community with other non-English speaking children, and at the same time helped them learn more about American culture.
Thus, the program addressed educational, cultural, social, and language barriers for students (Cairo, 2012). These modes of instruction were in contrast to the newcomers’ general population education where they have to rely on the computer most of the time for instruction.

Key Definitions

Several important terms must be defined for the purposes of this study.

- **Newcomer** students are generally defined as those who because of war, turmoil, or remote location in their native country have literacy skills in neither their mother language nor the language of instruction in their current school.
- **ELL** refers to English language learners or those students whose first language is not English.
- **A refugee**, as defined by the United Nations, is a citizen of a nation who seeks protection in another country because of a fear of being persecuted or killed because of ethnicity, religion, nationality, social group, or political opinion. It is important to note that the terms “refugee” and “immigrant” are not synonymous. An **immigrant** is a person who leaves his or her country without duress.
- The acronym **RFEP** stands for Reclassified Fluent English Proficient and denotes students who have achieved a 5 or 6 rating on the WIDA Test and are, thereby, classified as English proficient.
- **The PSP** or Personal Student Profile is the English learner’s individual lesson plan with accommodations detailed according to the student’s English ability.
- This study uses a **goals-based program evaluation** to determine whether the goals of a prescribed program are being met.

Literature Review

Current literature on programs designed for newcomer English language programs described successful methods and courses of action. Many programs sought to support newcomer refugee children by implementing special classes which included sheltered instruction within the school day and out-of-school sessions which continued with the same in school objectives, as well as built-in supports for dealing with trauma, cultural appreciation, and parental involvement. The literature also reviewed programs with afterschool sessions that served as an extension of the in-school program.

As of 2008, Leaks and Stonehill reported that newcomer refugees with greater education and health needs were settling in smaller cities where infrastructure was weak. Many teachers lacked knowledge of intervention strategies to meet the newcomers’ need for basic conceptual understanding and methods or to provide basic experiences on which they could build knowledge (Dooley, 2009). This proved especially problematic when the student was in an upper grade, such as in middle school or high school (Friedlander, 1991).

The rate of learning for these children was affected by their lack of knowledge in their first language. Cummins (1982) indicated that BICS (basic interpersonal communication skills) could take up to two years to learn, while CALP (cognitive academic language proficiency) could take from five to eight years. Research also indicated that students who were non-literate in their first language could take much longer to acquire CALP (Larson-Freeman & Long, 1999).
Government intervention was proposed in the form of re-training teachers, mental health services, afterschool tutoring, and more family support services so that marginalization for newcomer students might be reduced or avoided (Kanu, 2008). Most newcomer programs used some level of sheltered instruction or Sheltered Instructional Observation Protocol (SIOP). The process of SIOP enabled students to receive the background knowledge essential for academic success (Beck as cited by Naidoo, 2009). Because SIOP required newcomers to be grouped for instruction, the teacher could present the needed knowledge in a comprehensive manner that utilized language, activities, methods, and techniques commensurate with the level of the student’s ability (Richards & Rodgers, 2002).

The Australian Literacy and Numeracy Foundation followed this SIOP approach in its newcomer program. Using small groups with an appropriate level of instruction allowed students in the group to make personal connections, which served to reduce anxiety in the learners (Naidoo, 2009). The Literacy Transition Pilot Program (LTPP) of Australia improved on these strategies by breaking information down into small components, insuring that students had not missed basic information and then scaffolding learning beginning with the smallest pieces of information (Cranitch, 2010). The program used a well-being battery to gauge its effectiveness. This assessment was given in two parts, one for teachers and one for students. The results indicated a positive change sufficient to find that the program was successful.

While the studies of Naidoo (2009) and Cranitch (2009) showed that programs focused on changes in instructional techniques were helpful, some researchers suggested that other strategies might also be needed to increase the likelihood of these students’ success. Measuring success in improvement through teacher surveys, Friedlander (1991) found that most successful newcomer programs incorporated a whole-child approach. This approach involved providing extracurricular activities, support personnel (such as family resource coordinators), referral services, transportation, career orientation, tutoring, and health services.

Several successful newcomer programs, such as the LTPP program in Australia, consistently built in a component for students coping with symptoms of post-traumatic stress by developing smaller, structured, and more consciously supportive classes. Learning coping skills and practicing behavior modification techniques enabled students to feel more self-control and less tension. Test data indicated that the multifaceted structure of the program promoted well-being, closed gaps in pre-knowledge, and developed literacy (Cranitch, 2010). Likewise, the Victoria Foundation (2011) designed identification/response charts to help teachers respond appropriately to situations in which students faced emotional challenges. Recognizing the need to establish well-being in refugees, Rousseau et al. developed a newcomer program which resulted in higher self-esteem using creative expressions, such as storytelling and painting (Rousseau, Drapeau, Heusch, & Lacroix, 2005). Researchers observed and measured the increase in self-esteem by tracking positive actions demonstrated by the children. An evaluation of the program’s data indicated that a creative expression program for newcomer children showed significant results in well-being.

The success seen in these programs suggested that a program that incorporated both cognitive development and well-being components might serve the needs of the students more than the use of either by itself. Application of both approaches gave attention to increasing academic achievement and
personal adjustment. The research on the whole-child approach indicated that such a combination would be beneficial.

Successful newcomer programs recognized and incorporated the students’ culture by placing children in a newcomer class for up to two years to provide a place where extrinsic culture, such as dress, food, and certain gender roles, could be expressed (Nykiel-Herbert, 2010). This environment provided familiar settings in which to learn. In this way, newcomers were neither alienated within the mainstream classroom with no verbal communication possible nor given inferior instructional materials, such as coloring sheets while the rest of the room had deliberate instruction (Nykiel-Herbert, 2010).

Use of newcomer classes could include a multicultural education approach because such classes include students from multiple cultures. Thus, even in this less mainstream environment, students learned that cultural differences made for a richer society. Such classes more easily incorporated and recognized the culture of the poor and children of color within the school’s curriculum and environment, and so avoided the isolation and invisibility which further impede development (Hanley, 2010). Cultural inclusiveness could also be integrated within the curriculum through storytelling. This activity allows storytellers to bring their culture into the classroom and into their new world, ultimately forming in themselves a healthy new identity. Because storytelling is more highly valued than literacy in some cultures, storytellers could gain status, and students could process their past and present conditions. Storytelling also promotes language development, a precursor to literacy (Perry, 2007).

When newcomer classes were used, schools were encouraged to develop methods to teach students, their families, and the host culture about each other so that misconceptions would occur less often within their lives outside the program (Victorian Foundation for the Survivors of Torture, 2011). In addition, development of these services was recommended to help newcomers and their families feel welcomed. Such services included good orientation procedures, home visits, ongoing care for the newcomers’ well-being, and understanding of the host culture.

Schools were also encouraged to develop ways to show that the host country had an appreciation for the newcomers’ culture (Matthews, 2008). Rogoff (2003) espoused the belief that the culture of the child’s home supported and enabled cognitive development more than the new culture did. Therefore, to encourage the work of the program, meetings should be established between school and home to help to remove barriers to parental involvement, such as language, transportation, job schedule, and cultural orientation (Githembe, 2009; Hope, 2011). Evaluations of such programs demonstrated an increased attendance at school and afterschool activities.

The whole-child approach within newcomer school programs for refugees was also advocated by Cranitch (2010). She asserted that a focus on the whole child was required if students were to make satisfactory academic progress and begin to develop a sense of well-being. This focus included sheltered instruction within the school day and supplemental activities during and after school to encourage the acquisition of basic knowledge that would facilitate learning at grade level. Teachers and schools were urged to recognize that these newcomers had experienced trauma and to respond to them by providing a stable, structured environment. At the same time, newcomer programs were encouraged to provide creative expression times to enable children to gain self-esteem and to provide an outlet for self-expression (Rousseau, Drapeau, Heusch, & Lacroix, 2005).
In summary, every program studied included cultural appreciation, inclusiveness, and cultural understanding so that children were respected for their differences, and came to see their common likenesses. These studies were also unanimous in asserting that parental involvement was an essential part of all programs. It must be pointed out that all programs were evaluated as a continuum between the daily classroom and afterschool instruction time. Intentional instruction was provided; afternoon sessions were not simply places for students to complete homework (Cranitch, 2010; Rousseau, Drapeau, Heusch, & Lacroix, 2005).

**Methodology**

**Problem Statement and Research Questions**

Newcomer programs have been developed in several host countries in an attempt to support the refugee student with little or no previous educational experience. This support includes providing additional instruction in mathematics, reading, and English and offering services which promote student well-being. Newcomer students also need additional instruction in comportment because they have little or no understanding of how to behave in a classroom or to learn in a structured setting (Rousseau, Drapeau, Heusch, & Lacroix, 2005).

These newcomer programs are imperative if refugee students are to be successful. Without the support such centers provide, these students are in danger of becoming marginalized in society (Ferfolja, 2010). The goals-based research of the FACE program at Cassidy Elementary attempted to answer the following questions formulated to correspond to criteria of the FACE program:

1. Has participation in the FACE program improved students’ math and reading abilities, as well as their understanding in content areas to help facilitate closing the gap in existing abilities and knowledge as needed to perform at grade level?

2. Has participation in the FACE program improved students’ English conversational language skills as well as academic language skills?

3. Has the FACE program increased social skills and promoted behavioral adaptation and mental well-being for students who have experienced trauma?

**Research Design**

This research study, a quasi-experimental design using nonequivalent groups, was a program evaluation that was used to provide feedback to concerned stakeholders to determine whether the FACE program was meeting its desired results and, if not, to determine where changes were needed so that positive results would be achieved (Boulmetis, 2005). Specifically, FACE was evaluated to ascertain if the program was meeting its stated goals for English language learners in grades 1-8 in the Fayette County School District who had interrupted or no prior education indicated on their Personal Student Profile (PSP) before entering the United States and who had participated in the program during the school year and the summer program for at least two years.
Research Techniques
Quantitative results were measured by the students’ MAP and WIDA scores from the 2011-2012 school year. These scores were compared with similar English language learners within the school district who had not participated in the FACE program but were also newcomers to education. Grade cohorts in the FACE group were compared to non-FACE participants. The sample populations included 22 students served in FACE and 22 in the control group.

Descriptive statistics were used in this study to answer research questions concerning reading, mathematics, and language improvement. To measure increased social skills and general well-being of newcomer students, a teacher questionnaire was used.

Data Collection Sources and Techniques
Data were collected from MAP mathematics and reading scores. WIDA Language Scores were also collected. Student well-being and social skill assessments were attained from a teacher questionnaire survey produced on Survey Monkey and sent electronically to Cassidy Elementary teachers. Qualitative data were gathered from the responses to elicit information from the informed group composed of teachers and administration. A Likert scale was used to gain a summated level of the responses to give an overall impression of each student’s well-being.

Data Analysis Sources and Techniques
To analyze mathematics, reading, and language improvement data, measures of central tendency were used. Increased social skills and general well-being data were analyzed by charting responses to find the mean response in each well-being category. A methodology table is included below illustrating the evaluation’s overall design.

<table>
<thead>
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<th>Goals-Based Program Evaluation Methodology Table</th>
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<tr>
<td>Research Questions</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Has participation in the FACE program improved students’ math and reading abilities as well as their understanding in content areas to help facilitate closing the gap in existing abilities and knowledge as needed to perform at grade level?</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Has participation in the FACE program improved students’ English conversational language skills as well as academic language skills?</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Has the FACE program increased social skills and promoted behavioral adaptation and mental well-being for students who have experienced trauma?</strong></td>
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Research Ethics

Research ethics protocol was followed throughout this study, first by gaining authorization and approval from Fayette County Public Schools. A consent letter accompanied the survey request to the participants. Anonymity, consent, confidentiality, and voluntary participation were practiced by the researcher.

Analysis and Findings

The results of the program evaluation appear below.

(1) Has participation in the FACE program improved students’ math and reading abilities, as well as their understanding in content areas to help facilitate closing the gap in existing abilities and knowledge as needed to perform at grade level?

FACE participants’ quantitative data from MAP mathematics scores were compared with those of a control group of students who did not participate. Fall testing indicated that the FACE group began the school year with a significant advantage in MAP scores as compared to the control group. When data were compared again in the spring, the control group had surpassed the FACE group. In fact, the FACE group actually declined in its scores from the fall. The spring data showed several students in the FACE middle school group with negative growth. It was noted, however, that the students who showed negative scores all had the same teacher, thus presenting a confounding variable. The teacher had refused to modify her mathematics lessons during the school year, even after being instructed to do so by the building and district administration.

The MAP reading data analysis also demonstrated no significant gains in reading from the group’s fall to spring scores. In the fall, the data showed no significant difference between the FACE reading scores and the control group reading scores. In the spring, the FACE group’s scores did not decline, but neither did they move upward by a statistically significant amount.

Thus, for mathematics and reading skills, the data analysis indicated that the FACE program did not significantly facilitate closing the gap in abilities and knowledge that were needed for students to perform at grade level. However, the researchers found that literature pointed to the problem (Cranitch, 2010; Rousseau, Drapeau, Heusch, & Lacroix, 2005). It indicated that newcomer programs should include an extended school day with a concentration on instruction rather than homework. FACE had begun the extended instructional model at the beginning of the program but had altered its model for the last two years to concentrate on homework in the extended school session. This change was not deliberate but a gradual result due to requests from regular classroom teachers and newcomer students expressing the need for help with homework. As a result of these findings, the program was restructured for the next fall and returned to having an extended instructional period after school rather than a homework session. Homework was suspended during weeks when the extended school model was in session.
After the initial finding of failure in advancing mathematics and reading scores, the researcher turned to further analysis. The chart below shows a different picture when the elementary scores were separated from the middle school scores. The elementary MAP results were much higher for reading and mathematics.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mean Scores Separated by Elementary and Middle School Scores</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Elementary School Scores</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Reading</strong></td>
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<td>FACE Group</td>
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<td>Control Group</td>
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<td><strong>Difference</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Results</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Middle School MAP Scores</strong></td>
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<td><strong>Reading</strong></td>
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<td>FACE Group</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Difference</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Results</strong></td>
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</table>

(2) Has participation in the FACE program improved English conversational language skills as well as academic language skills?

FACE participants’ growth in language was measured with the World Class Instructional Design and Assessment Test (WIDA) which was taken each year in January. Because language takes time to develop, it was decided that entry-level scores would be measured against the 2012 WIDA scores, providing a three-year period of growth. The comparison showed a significant increase of 23.3% for FACE students. These results, when compared with the control group’s time-span January scores point to present January scores, were 16.86%, also a significant difference. When the FACE students were directly compared with the control group’s time-span January scores to present January scores, the FACE group showed a 5.9% increase over the control group. The FACE group had six Reclassified Fluent English Proficient (RFEP) students at the end of the year who graduated from the program, while the control group had one. This analysis of the data showed that participation in the FACE program improved English in both conversational and academic language skills.
### Language Increases Between Control Group and Test Group

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<td># of excluded values</td>
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<td># of binned values</td>
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<td>22</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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<tr>
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<td>4.4</td>
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<td>1.95</td>
<td>6</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mean</td>
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<td>3.42273</td>
<td>1.1175</td>
<td>4.224</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Standard deviation</td>
<td>0.157197</td>
<td>0.825159</td>
<td>0.241107</td>
<td>0.962324</td>
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<tr>
<td>Standard error</td>
<td>0.0335145</td>
<td>0.175924</td>
<td>0.492158</td>
<td>0.192465</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lower 95% CI of mean</td>
<td>0.992121</td>
<td>3.05687</td>
<td>1.01569</td>
<td>3.82678</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upper 95% CI of mean</td>
<td>1.13152</td>
<td>3.78858</td>
<td>1.21931</td>
<td>4.62122</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(3) Has the FACE program increased social skills and promoted behavioral adaptation and mental well-being for students who have experienced trauma?

A single survey was given to teachers at the end of the school year. Analysis of the qualitative data from the survey concerning the well-being of FACE students indicated that they were progressing in all three categories measured: (1) gaining social skills, (2) adapting to the new environment, and (3) attaining mental well-being. The method for teacher response to each statement in the survey was marking the level of agreement on a Likert scale with a low of 1 and a high of 10. In the survey, 19 teachers ranked gaining social skills the highest of the three categories with an average 8.6. This indicated that the newcomer students were making friends. For behavioral adaptation, the score was 8.4, showing that the newcomers were adapting to their new environment.
The lowest ranked category was mental well-being, with 7.63. While this is not a troubling score, it indicated that teachers saw more of a deficiency in this area. Mental well-being was not being addressed as deliberately in the school year of the study, 2011-2012, as it had been at the inception of the program. At the beginning, as with the programs in the literature review, well-being was addressed almost daily. However, for 2011-2012, the FACE program held well-being sessions once a week and then only for grades 3 through 8. The survey findings mean that the FACE program must revisit its initial goals and plan for either in-school or extended instructional sessions to develop lessons which will help children to improve in mental well-being.

Overall, the teacher survey showed a mean score of 8.21 out of 10. This means that, for this school year, the FACE Newcomer Program met its goal of increased social skills, behavioral adaptation, and mental well-being for students who had experienced trauma. The following chart indicates teachers’ responses in each survey question and category.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher Questions and Survey Results</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Social Skills Question/Response Average</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The newcomer student in my classroom interacts with native speakers on the playground, in the lunchroom, and in peer learning settings.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The newcomer student in my classroom has an American friend.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The newcomer student in my classroom is accepted by the American students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>MEAN</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Behavioral Adaptation Question/Response</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The newcomer student in my classroom is attentive.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The newcomer student in my classroom looks forward to participation in FACE activities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The newcomer student in my classroom enjoys participating in classroom activities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The newcomer student in my classroom demonstrates a growing understanding of the structure of an American school day.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>MEAN</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mental Well-being</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The newcomer student in my classroom is well adjusted and has few, if any, outbursts or discipline problems.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The newcomer student in my classroom has healthy self-esteem.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The newcomer student in my classroom rarely cries.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>MEAN</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>OVERALL MEAN OF RESPONSES</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Conclusion

Summary of Findings

Findings of the FACE program evaluation indicated the program had met two of its three goals. The data showed that the language scores of students in the FACE newcomer program increased by a statistically significant margin compared to the control group. The FACE program also helped students attain a higher level of well-being. The year-end instructors’ behavioral surveys indicated that teachers considered students’ social skills and behavioral adaptations high with an 8.5 on a 10-point scale. Including their mental well-being responses resulted in an overall mean of 8.21.

The data indicated that the FACE Newcomer Program did not meet the reading and mathematics goals. The scores of the students in the FACE program and those in the control group showed neither statistical difference nor a statistical gain. Further study would be needed to ascertain how the program could be changed or focused to produce a more positive outcome for reading and mathematics skills. Organizers might want to consider adding customized modules of reading and mathematics instruction to the curricula. They might explore ways of including such instruction within elements of the program that involve cultural exchanges.

From the author’s experience working with refugee children for 10 years, she observed evidence that the FACE program enhanced well-being by providing basic knowledge in nearly all topics. Students were given the opportunity to learn simple tasks such as using scissors. Number words for counting were introduced, as well as the concept of one-to-one correspondence, even to older students who were unfamiliar with this concept. Students were given background knowledge by working in and exploring a modern two-story school building: using indoor plumbing and water fountains, automatically opening doors, and riding in elevators. Washing hands and brushing teeth also produced a sense of well-being for these children.

The study provides clear evidence that this FACE program, with its whole-child approach and involvement of family and community, is successful in its attempt to build self-esteem in newcomers. Its results suggest that programs that adopt these methods can provide significant support for newcomers and enhance their communication skills and their adjustment to a new culture. They also suggest that new ways of incorporating reading and mathematics are needed to help students make educational progress in those areas.
Significance of Study to School Principal Standards

This study indicates that the FACE program responds to and fulfills important elements of PSEL or the Professional Standards for Educational Leaders. PSEL Standard 1 states, “Effective educational leaders develop, advocate, and enact a shared mission, vision, and core values of high-quality education and academic success and well-being of each student.” The significance of this study to Standard 1 involves the imperative for leaders to act when there is a need. In this case, leaders saw the need to develop and implement a new program for a new population within the school. A part of the stewardship of the program was to see how well the program was staying aligned to its vision. Evaluation is an effective way to see if the program was successful at educating every student in its care. It was also beneficial in helping stakeholders understand what was needed (Council of Chief State School Officers, 2015).

FACE also meets the challenge of PSEL Standard 8, which states, “Effective educational leaders engage families and the community in meaningful, reciprocal, and mutually beneficial ways to promote each student’s academic success and well-being.” The FACE program and this evaluation demonstrated Cassidy Elementary School’s response to its diverse community and that community’s special needs within the school. The stakeholders realized immediately that the FACE program could not manage without reaching out to community resources for support by way of volunteers, health organizations, and financial support. Without engaging the community, FACE could never have happened. It is an effective leader’s goal to be as familiar as possible with all the resources a community has to offer and how to use those resources to build a more effective learning environment.

TSSA (Technology Standards for School Administrators)

The success of the FACE program may also be evaluated in relation to the Technology Standards for School Administrators (TSSA). Standard III states, “Productivity and Professional Practice: Educational leaders apply technology to enhance their professional practice and to increase their own productivity and that of others” (Technology Standards for School Administrators Collaborative, 2001). This program evaluation was an example of such uses of technology. Many aspects of this project were made possible by technology. First, the project was undertaken as a requirement in an online course. In addition, much of the data was collected through the Fayette County School database. The survey was conducted through SurveyMonkey. In addition to the collection of data, the literature research was accessed through online databases. Finally, the collected data were analyzed through use of Excel. Using these findings, educational leaders should be able to share and show others how to enhance the education of refugee students and, at the same time, enhance their own professional practice.
Limitations of Study

Limitations to this study were two-fold. The study covered a specific amount of time, limiting the evaluation of the program only to the program goals. A complete study would include attendance in the program and its relationship to improvement for students. Analyzing mean gains from year to year to detect if there are certain years where students consistently seem to make more gains would also help make this study more comprehensive.

Recommendations for Future Study

The FACE evaluation discovered the newcomer program had met two of its three goals. However, questions about the program remain and could be answered in a future study. First, an analysis of student growth by grades and the locations of concentrations of growth could be helpful for future planning and instruction. Perhaps separating middle school and elementary school data for this purpose would be useful to achieve a more complete picture of the program.

Another important element of the FACE program which warrants analysis is the family component. As the literature review indicated, family participation and involvement are essential. The FACE program includes sections within the program for parents, but an analysis of these activities would be helpful to see if this component is functioning to its greatest potential.

Finally, a study of how to better utilize volunteers within a program such as FACE would be valuable. Each school year, FACE has more than 100 committed volunteers from the community, with each volunteer pledging at least 10 hours of service. The program needs to involve each volunteer as effectively as possible to maximize learning for the newcomer children of the FACE program.
References

http://www.understandingchildhood.net/documents/22Farfromthebattle.pdf


Author’s Biography

Diane Sumney has taught in inner city schools in Memphis and Dallas and in rural districts in Mississippi. Through the Dallas district’s federal desegregation order in 1981, she was chosen to teach in a then newly implemented intermediate learning center. The center was designed to increase academic success within the inner city school population. After several years and a move to Lexington, Kentucky, in 1997, she has worked with English language learners in the city's ESL program. In 2008, Mrs. Sumney was instrumental in developing a newcomer center to support refugee children and their parents from the war-torn countries of the Democratic Republic of Congo, Nepal, and Iraq. This program has been adopted by other schools that have significant refugee populations.

Mrs. Sumney completed her B. A. in Elementary Education at Lipscomb University. She has also completed a master’s degree in education. In addition to language acquisition, Mrs. Sumney has made, community development, inclusion, and the mental well-being of newly arrived children major goals of her teaching and advocacy. She has been a presenter at the TESOL National Conference, the National Immigrant and Refugee Conference, and the Kentucky Migrant Network Coalition as well as a visiting expert in college classes, churches, and civic groups.

Acknowledgements

I wish to acknowledge Dr. Jerry Sumney, my husband, for his patience, and the time spent encouraging me to reach higher and think more thoroughly. I would also to thank my colleagues in F.A.C.E. (Families and Community Educating): Jill Blackman, Family Resource Center Coordinator at Morton Middle and Cassidy Elementary Schools; Aminata Cairo, professor, Leiden University at The Hague, and Christa Mendes, ESL teacher, Fayette County Public Schools. I would also like to acknowledge Cassidy Elementary School's principal, Rhonda Fister, for the trust and respect she has demonstrated to her faculty and to the developers of the program described in this article.

Moreover, I must express gratitude to the students and families of the F.A.C.E. Newcomer Program who taught me courage, generosity, and determination.

Citation

Examining Parent Involvement in a Title I Middle School*

by

Crystal Roach

Assistant Principal, Denton Creek Elementary
Coppell, TX

Abstract

This action research project was conducted at a Title I middle school where parent involvement was lower than that of the other middle schools in the school district. The goal of the research was to gain insight into the best methods of communication with the students’ parents to increase their involvement with the school on their children’s behalf. This school was located in a suburban neighborhood and served about 850 students. Sixty percent of the students’ families were classified as being of lower socioeconomic status, and the ethnic breakdown was approximately 52% Hispanic, 19% African American, 19% white, and 9% Asian. Data were gathered from parents through surveys developed in the parents’ native languages by staff members and sent home through SurveyMonkey. Parents rated themselves in three areas: (1) their involvement in their child’s education at home, (2) their teaching of responsibility and respect in the home, and (3) their involvement in activities at their child’s school. For school-to-home messages, data indicated that parents preferred more traditional communications, such as email, phone calls, and notes/flyers and only using newer technological methods, such as text messages, Facebook posts, or apps, for reminders. Data also suggested parents were much more involved in their child’s education at home than teachers realized.

Keywords: Parent involvement, communication, low SES, Title I school

*This research was submitted to Lamar University as an action research report to meet a requirement for the Masters degree in Educational Administration. Parts were revised and expanded for this article publication.

Citation

Introduction

This action research project was conducted at a Title I middle school where parent involvement was lower than that of the other middle schools in the school district. The goal of the research was to gain insight into the best methods of communication with the students’ parents to increase their involvement with the school on their children’s behalf. This school was located in a suburban neighborhood and served about 850 students.  Sixty percent of the students’ families were classified as being of lower socioeconomic status. In terms of ethnic identity, about 52% of the students are Hispanic, 19% African American, 19% white, and 9% Asian. In addition to parent input gathered through surveys, staff provided input on their attitudes about parent involvement at this campus through SurveyMonkey.

The research project began when the researcher, who had been a staff member at this campus for six years, approached five different experienced teachers and the principal informally about conducting a needs-based assessment for the school. They all indicated that an important area of concern was a lack of parent involvement. This lack was evidenced through low attendance rates at school open house events, few parents attending parent conferences or returning phone calls, and teachers not physically seeing many parents at the school.

As a result of the educators’ input, the researcher developed a research design with two surveys, one for the parents and one for the staff. Parents were asked about their level of involvement in several areas affecting their child at school. They were also asked how they preferred for the school to communicate with them. Staff members were surveyed to determine their attitudes toward parent involvement on this campus. Following analyses of results from the parent and staff surveys, the researcher presented findings to the faculty. By hearing responses from the parents and their own collective views, the staff could acknowledge and respond to the challenges the parents faced daily and create a better process for involving parents in their children’s education. To develop the parent survey instrument, the researcher looked online at several examples of surveys used by other schools. The parent survey from the Academic Development Institute (2007) was selected as the basis of this survey. Additional questions and options for parents to mention barriers were added to obtain school-specific information. The survey was compiled with statements of responsibility and involvement to generate a complete picture of all the ways parents might be involved in their child’s education. In building content for barriers from which parents could choose, the researcher drew on her background knowledge from six years of working with the families in parent conferences or informally in conversations. Finally, the survey was organized into three types of parent involvement: (1) involvement in the child’s education at home, (2) the teaching of responsibility and respect in the home, and (3) involvement in activities at the child’s school.
Problem Statement

The action research discussed in this paper was a specific way to query parents directly on their points of view to learn about their involvement in their child’s education and to identify the most effective methods for communicating with them. The parent survey was designed to answer these questions:

1. What prevents parents of the students in this school from being involved in their children’s education?
2. Which methods of communication provide the best avenue for the campus to reach the widest range of parents?

Staff members were asked to give feedback on three open-ended questions concerning parent involvement in the school to get in touch with their own attitudes as a way to better facilitate open communication with parents:

(1) What does parent involvement mean to you?
(2) What do you think is the biggest reason for lack of parent involvement?
(3) What is the Number 1 way you wish parents were involved in their children’s education?

Significance of the Study

While there has been much research done on the impact of socioeconomic status on student learning, not much work has been completed in the area of communication with parents in the specific socioeconomic levels of students at this school. This study is further significant in that it contradicts the current suggestion from school district personnel that internet-related communication is the best way for educators to stay relevant to the times and connect with parents. However, in a low socioeconomic neighborhood, not all families have internet access or digital devices, so careful consideration must be given to the best ways to connect with the families there.

Definitions

**Socioeconomic status. (SES).** Socioeconomic status is commonly defined as the social standing or class of an individual or group. It is often measured as a combination of education, income, and occupation. (American Psychological Association, 2015).

**Texas Academic Performance Report. (TAPR).** These reports provide statistics for all public-school campuses in the state. They show state testing data as well as demographic information, the number of students who speak English as a second language, and the percentage of students who qualify as low income based on Texas state standards (Texas Education Agency, 2015).

**Title I campus.** Schools enrolling at least 40% of children from low-income families are eligible to use Title I funds for school-wide programs designed to upgrade their entire educational programs to improve achievement for all students, particularly the lowest-achieving students. (U.S. Department of Education, 2015).
Review of the Literature

Research over the past several decades has documented a positive link between children’s success and the parents’ involvement (Domina, 2005; Eccles & Harold, 1993; Epstein, 2011). Domina’s findings suggested that parental involvement alone does not improve children's learning, but that some behavioral problems are prevented by the parents being involved. Furthermore, the involvement of parents with low socioeconomic status may be more effective than that of parents with high socioeconomic status. Eccles and Harold focused specifically on involvement at the adolescent stage and reported that, although parent involvement at this age level tends to decline, that trend can be reversed. They noted that in the teenage years, it is just as important or possibly more important, especially in high-risk communities, for parents to be involved in their children’s education. Parent-school collaboration is a critical way to promote healthy development of young adolescents. Finally, Epstein examined the importance of parent involvement through a different lens, that of the preparation and training of educators. Epstein expressed a belief that when fully equipped with the right tools and support, educators can do a better job of communicating with parents and helping them to problem-solve when situations arise concerning their child’s success.

Obstacles to Parent Involvement

At the campus of this research project, 64% of students are living in poverty as defined by federal guidelines. To better understand how parent involvement is affected by poverty, in general, the researcher looked for insight from other research done on the effect of poverty on involvement in education.

Poverty is a common obstacle in American education. In fact, the United States Census Bureau (2014) reported that the percentage of households that fell below the poverty level in Texas was at almost 18%. Parents who struggle with poverty issues take on stress related to possible outcomes for their children. Wilhelm (2005) argued that when naming almost any worry—pregnancy, abuse, illness, isolation, lack of motivation, or even death—poor children and their families are most at risk. While Wilhelm did not directly identify the level of stress accompanying the poverty affecting parent involvement, he alluded to the idea that parents living in poverty would be more likely to have a higher level of distraction from their children’s education.

Another body of research on teaching children in poverty has been completed by Coley and Baker (2013). The manifestations of childhood poverty include limited access to health insurance, food insecurity, parent underemployment, and inadequate access to and quality of childcare. With these basic needs requiring resolution, the education of their child faces stiff competition for the parents’ time, effort, and energy.

Millward (2002) researched the prevalence of low-income parents in Australia who worked non-standard hours. She looked at the impact on families that had one or both parents who worked early mornings, evenings, or nights. She found that many of the parents reported that they missed important events during their children’s days, such as sharing a meal, attending school events, helping with homework, or spending time together on the weekends. One reason parents gave for working a non-traditional schedule was because of the costs of childcare. Their spouse could care for the children while they worked opposite hours, and this helped keep costs lower. Available jobs or job demands were also reasons cited for parents working non-traditional hours.
Millward urged teachers to consider that various work schedules may make it impossible for parents to participate fully in their children’s education and may not reflect their desire to be in attendance for school events or the importance they place on their children’s getting a quality education.

Durand and Perez (2013) explored cultural influences that impact Latino families in terms of actively participating in school activities. They also considered Latino parents’ perceptions of what the school expects based on their family values and beliefs. In their work, they interviewed 12 parents of preschoolers and kindergartners who attended a bilingual school. The majority of parents expressed value for education, being engaged in activities with their children, and modeled positive behaviors for their children, regardless of their education level or immigrant status. While parents with more education were more comfortable with questioning policies in place and wanted an open-door policy, all parents interviewed cited supportive relationships and a bilingual climate as factors that made them feel more welcome in the school.

Hill and Torres (2010) addressed a perception among teachers that Latino families are uninvolved with and not invested in their children’s education. They mentioned various factors, such as a potential language barrier, an inability to be physically present in schools, and the relatively poor achievement of Latino children as contributing to this perception. These researchers found that, although the Latino families had a strong desire for upward mobility, as well as a deep value for education and a yearning for a better life, Latino students still have the highest dropout rate of any demographic group. They reported that, among the reasons Latino parents were less involved in their children’s school activities, were misunderstandings, mistrust, and frustration.

**Forms of Parent Involvement**

There are many ways that educators can view parent involvement on their campuses. Christianakis (2011) defined the type of parent involvement on her campus as “help labor”. She took a very in-depth look at how her teachers viewed parent involvement and the value the teachers put on those parents who often volunteered in the ways the teachers saw as appropriate. Her results showed that teachers thought the most involved parents were those who often came to the school to cut out pictures or shapes for teachers or to work on various other tasks, such as putting up bulletin boards or making photocopies.

Christianakis (2011) argued that the issue of importance on her campus was not a lack of parent involvement, but rather a lack of resources in the form of paraprofessionals or assistants that could be utilized to do many of the jobs that teachers had expected parents to do. Although it seemed like the campus needed more involvement on the surface, it was just that the staff needed more help, and, without additional staff, they relied on parents to pick up the extra pieces. While “help labor” is helpful to teachers and is certainly one common form of parent involvement, it is a mistake to view it as the only form of parent involvement.

Another way to consider parent involvement is through the dynamics of the interaction between parents and educators. Christianakis (2011) described two main models of parent involvement: parent-teacher partnerships and parent empowerment. With the partnership model, teachers and parents unify to make decisions about a child’s education together such as accommodations the child may need in order to be successful or perhaps creating a tutorial schedule that will benefit the child academically.
Both teachers and parents are considered equal partners with this model and are both working toward a common goal of success for the child. The parent empowerment model puts the parents in a role of authority and decision making when it comes to the child. The parents might take on a leadership position in the school, such as organizing a special program or creating a policymaking group that discusses concerns with the school board.

Kabir and Akter (2014) noted that partnerships do not stop with teachers and students but also include parents, school board, and community members. In terms of the formation of a child’s education, the teacher and parent are critical, but often the school board and/or community members can also make a great impact. Positive parental involvement might include parents encouraging their child’s interaction with community groups, such as sports teams, churches, or volunteer organizations. When these opportunities are provided, the parents help to enrich their children’s life experiences in other areas such as social, emotional, or spiritual.

Another form of parent involvement is educating parents to understand their children’s educational experience better while empowering them to take on leadership roles in the school or community. Bolivar and Chrispeels (2011) described a 12-week parent leadership project that allowed Hispanic parents to become more involved in a purposeful way in their children’s education. The researchers found that when opportunities were provided for trust building, knowledge exchange, and leadership development, parents were more apt to effect changes that would benefit their children in the school setting. They explained that social and intellectual capital can inform research on parent involvement because they can show a community’s ability to engage in taking action.

Van der Schuit, Peeters, Segers, Van Balkom, and Verhoeven (2009) provided an in-depth look at another type of parent involvement. They focused on the literacy support for preschool age children that parents offered in the home including the types of materials and parent-made activities that were available to their children. They evaluated the children’s receptive and expressive language and auditory discrimination to find results of pre-literacy practices and found that the more practice with and opportunity to access literacy materials the child had at home, the higher the child’s achievement test scores were. Preschool children with access to literacy materials frequently were able to read, write, or speak on a regular basis; these increased abilities in turn improved their academic learning as compared to the academic learning of those without access to a literacy-rich home environment.

The Academic Development Institute (ADI, 2007) created a comprehensive brochure for elementary teachers and parents to analyze the major components of parent involvement and school communication. The Institute compiled information from many educators, and one idea shared in the section of the brochure on two-way communication was from a contributor, Dr. Paul Baker at Illinois State University. He mentioned that it is beneficial for a group of parents, along with a teacher, to meet informally in a home to discuss the value being highlighted in that session and the group’s expectations. Dr. Baker (ADI 2007, 82) suggested that having these meetings with a small group of parents in the home once during the year would have a dramatic, cumulative effect.

Flett, Conderman, and Lock (2001) explained that utilizing parents' skills and areas of expertise to foster student learning was an excellent way to involve parents in their children's education. For example, there might be parents who could share occupational information, such as how to build a birdhouse, or cultural skills, such as cooking ethnic foods with the students.
Methods of Communication

Olsen, Fiechtl, and Rule (2012) researched the impact of doing “virtual home visits” at times when the parents are at home, thus meeting the needs of the family. Further investigation revealed how these virtual home visits would impact the parents’ level of involvement and would also conserve school resources, such as staff travel time, especially in rural areas where homes are spread out. To collect information from the families in an organized way, the researchers utilized the Home Visit Observation Form developed at Iowa State University (McBride & Peterson, 1997 cited by Olsen, Fiechtl, & Rule, 2012).

Another method of communicating and gaining feedback from parents is surveys sent by mail. The Parent and Family Involvement in Education Survey from the National Household Education Surveys Program (NHES) conducts regular surveys to meet its primary goal of describing Americans’ educational experiences to offer policymakers, researchers, and educators a variety of statistics on the condition of education in the United States. (Noel, Stark, & Redford, 2015). In 2015, the NHES conducted a survey through the mail to gain information from families across the country and reported they had 73% participation from those sent surveys. This result indicates that educators might follow their lead and consider mail surveys. When parents have all the time they need to answer questions and return the survey, they are more apt to answer honestly and not feel rushed. They can give feedback and still be involved despite their busy work schedules.

Using the primary language of the parent in communication is another suggestion. When Durand and Perez (2013) interviewed parents in their research, all the parents attributed supportive relationships with school personnel and a bilingual climate as the most important sources of feeling welcomed at school. This finding implies that a strong, positive relationship with school personnel and a bilingual environment need to be provided so that parents can communicate more effectively with the school.

Sending positive messages to parents frequently is another recommendation for schools to consider. The Academic Development Institute (2007) suggested that school staff should use “happy grams” to send home positive comments about students. Blank happy grams should be used as well. These blank forms could be included in weekly or monthly newsletters to parents. These would be sent so that parents could send positive notes to teachers thanking them for something positive they have done for their child. Since parents are often used to receiving phone calls or notes about problem behaviors or academic concerns, getting these positive notes is a way to build stronger relationships and communication between parents and the school.

Action Research Design Subjects

The parent survey was offered to all the parents of students in this Title I middle school serving grades 6, 7, and 8. Demographics for the student population were reported in the Texas Academic Performance Report for this campus (Texas Education Agency, 2015), and the parents of these students were assumed to roughly reflect the same patterns. Ethnic identity was given as Hispanic 52%, African American 19%, White 19%, and Asian 9%. Sixty-one percent of the students were categorized as economically disadvantaged. Since by federal government standards, schools with 40% of the students in this category can qualify for Title I funds, this campus has a substantially higher number of students who are living in poverty than a typical campus.
Twelve percent of students are classified as English language learners (ELLs), although many more students actually speak another language in their homes. A number of those students were served through ESL in the past and exited the program prior to sixth grade. Twenty-seven percent of the student population is reported to be “at-risk” of dropping out of school using state-defined criteria only (TEC §29.081, Compensatory and Accelerated Instruction). Some of the at-risk factors include being retained in a previous grade level, not passing state standardized tests in the previous year, receiving a disciplinary placement for behavior, or being homeless. (PEIMS Data Standards, TEA, 2010). Many of these factors are affected by the level of parent involvement.

For the staff, the Texas Academic Performance Report for this campus offers the following data. Of 64 staff members, 14 are male and 50 are female. Twenty-one of these staff members have five or fewer years of experience. Seventeen staff members have between six and 10 years of experience, 14 have 11-20 years of experience, and 12 have served in education for more than 20 years (Texas Education Agency, 2015).

School Personnel by Position

Various school personnel were involved in the gathering of data as well as in receiving the presentation of information. Their roles are as follows:

- Administrators - building principal and assistant principals.
- Teachers - certified teachers in grades 6-8 including core subject areas of reading, mathematics, science, and history as well as elective areas such as fine arts and foreign languages.
- Paraprofessional staff - non-certified staff including teacher aides, special education support staff, and ESL paraprofessionals.
- Parent liaison - non-certified staff member who primarily contacts parents in Spanish and English to relay information from the school, such as academic and behavior concerns; gathers information from the home, such as medical issues, and teaches the ESL parent classes on campus.

The Parent Survey

Parents of students in this school participated in the survey on a voluntary basis, and those who filled out surveys were able to do so in the comfort of their homes. Two versions of the parent survey were prepared, one in English and one in Spanish. The campus parent liaison, a native Spanish speaker, provided the translation of the survey.

In this parent survey, parents were asked to rate their level of involvement in their child’s education in three areas:

- Involvement in their child’s education in the home
- Teaching responsibility and respect in the home
- Involvement in activities at their child’s school

After each section, parents had an opportunity to describe why any part of this type of responsibility was difficult for them. Eight possible reasons were provided, so parents could circle the phrases that were applicable in order. This was done to decrease the amount of time needed to complete the survey.
Next, parents were asked about the best form of communication from the school. The answers to these questions provided data to draw conclusions to the original research questions for this case study.

1. What prevents parents from being involved in their children’s education?
2. Which methods of communication provide the best avenue for the campus to reach the widest range of parents?

See Appendix A for the full parent survey.

Organization of the Staff Survey

The staff survey was sent to all personnel who work with children on this campus in order to obtain a wide variety of perspectives on parent involvement. Staff participation in the survey was not required; feedback and commentary were strictly voluntary.

The goal of the survey was to find out how staff members felt about the following topics:

1. What does parent involvement mean to you?
2. What do you think is the biggest reason for lack of parent involvement?
3. What is the Number 1 way you wish parents were involved in their children’s education?

See Appendix B for the full Staff Survey.

Procedures

The first step of this research was deciding on a topic that was important to the culture and mission of the campus. Once that was done, the researcher, in the first week of the school year, informed campus administrators about the background of the topic and the action plan for the research. It was critical for the administration to understand that parents would give their input on the ways that they preferred to be informed, contacted, and educated to best help their child in partnership with the school.

After that, the researcher gathered information needed to develop the research. Topics included challenges that families face in education, various methods of communication in general, cultural obstacles, such as language barriers, and the meaning of the term “parent involvement.”

The researcher designed the parent survey (Appendix A) to gather both quantitative and qualitative data. Quantitative data were obtained through Likert scales that parents used to report on their attitudes toward parent involvement. Qualitative data came from open-ended questions.

The parent survey (Appendix A) was administered beginning in January. All of the middle school students received parent surveys to take to their parents to complete. These parent surveys were distributed by the teacher in the students’ language arts class. Since roughly 90% or more of the students speak English, Spanish, or both, the language arts teacher asked students the language their parents preferred. Surveys were then sent home in the language the students specified. The parents were asked to complete and return the survey within the next 2 weeks, with students returning surveys to their language arts teachers. Students were reminded daily to return them.

The staff survey (Appendix B) was designed to be taken online using SurveyMonkey software. The researcher asked the principal to send the survey to all school staff. Staff members received the survey via school email with a link for SurveyMonkey, and they answered three open-ended questions to offer their views on parent involvement and communication with parents.
The researcher analyzed responses to the staff survey to find two types of results: (1) common links in teacher attitudes toward parent involvement and (2) communication as well as discrepancies between staff beliefs and parents’ beliefs reported in the parent survey.

Results of the parents’ survey were formatted into a PowerPoint presentation to report the findings to the staff on this campus. The data from the presentation provided information on the parents’ answers to questions about their involvement and the best ways for the school to communicate with them. The staff synthesized this information with their own reported attitudes to gain an understanding of how this campus needed to improve its parent involvement and communication.

**Findings**

**Parent Survey**

Quantitative data in the parent surveys were obtained via a scale parents used when reflecting on their attitudes toward various forms of parent involvement. The amount of responsibility parents took toward each of 28 examples of involvement was indicated by a point rating of 3, 2, or 1. Parents also ranked nine types of communication on a scale from 1 to 5 to indicate their level of preference for each type. Qualitative data were obtained from some open-ended questions.

Parent surveys were sent to 856 parents. About 400 surveys were sent home in Spanish and the rest in English. Students returned 222 completed surveys, 97 in Spanish and 125 in English.

The data received represented almost 25% of the school population and was considered to be a reliable reference to parent attitudes and opinions concerning their involvement in school as well as the most effective means of communication for them.

**Parent Involvement in Their Child’s Education in the Home**

The first section of the parent survey consisted of nine phrases for ways that parents might demonstrate their involvement in their children’s education at home. To rate themselves, parents used this point scale: (3) I meet this responsibility consistently and well, (2) I meet this responsibility some of the time and fairly well, or (1) I rarely or never meet this responsibility. In addition, for each of the nine statements of responsibility, parents indicated their main barriers to performing them.

For each responsibility, results were calculated by dividing the number of parents rating themselves per category by the total number of parents responding for that responsibility. Percentages are shown as whole numbers after rounding. Following are the results of the self-ratings of Parent Involvement in the Home portion of the survey:
Self-Ratings for Parent Involvement in Their Child’s Education in the Home

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responsibility</th>
<th>Met consistently and well (3)</th>
<th>Met some of the time and fairly well (2)</th>
<th>Met rarely or never met (1)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Know what skills our child is learning each week</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>12%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complete activities at home such as science fair, math practice, or reading books together.</td>
<td>46%</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Read with or to our child (or monitor independent reading) for 20 minutes each day</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>29%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide a quiet, well-lit place for our child to read</td>
<td>79%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encourage our child to read for pleasure</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regularly check our child’s grades, and discuss progress and success with them</td>
<td>82%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Play board games or card games as a family</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>32%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visit the public library with our child</td>
<td>24%</td>
<td>38%</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talk about reading with our child- (what our child is reading and what we are reading)</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>42%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average % per self-rating category</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In the category of parent involvement at home, results indicated strong parental performance. Of the nine responsibilities listed, over 75% of the parents rated themselves as high (3-met consistently and well) for three: “provide a quiet, well-lit place for our child to read,” “encourage our child to read for pleasure,” and “regularly check our child’s grades and discuss progress and success with them.” Combining the parents’ scores for the high (3) and middle (2-met some of the time and fairly well) options yielded over 75% for three more responsibilities: “know what skills our child is learning each week,” “complete activities at home such as science fair, math practice, or reading books together,” and “talk about reading with our child (what our child is reading and what we are reading).” In the low category (1-met rarely to never met), three categories emerged with responses of 25% or greater: “visit the public library with our child,” “read with or to our child (or monitor independent reading) for 20 minutes each day,” and “play board games or card games as a family.” An overall average of 50% of parents rated themselves as a (3) to say they meet these responsibilities consistently and well.

Barriers to Parent Involvement in Their Child’s Education at Home

This portion of the survey was designed to help the researcher understand factors that limit parent involvement at home. Parents whose self-rating for a listed responsibility was high (3-met consistently and well) were asked to bypass this section. Parents who had rated themselves as (2-met some of the time and fairly well) or as (1-met rarely or never met) were asked to indicate any of the listed eight barriers that kept them from meeting that responsibility.) Thus, a parent responder could circle one barrier per responsibility or several. However, when tallying results for this section, the researcher noticed that some parents with scores of 2 or 1 did not indicate any barriers at all.
The table below was developed to analyze results of all circled barriers without regard to the parent’s eligibility to mark barriers for a given item. In it, the total number of circled barriers is shown per responsibility and per type of barrier. The percentage of circled barriers is also shown per responsibility and per type of barrier. Percentages are shown as whole numbers after rounding.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Barriers</th>
<th>Know skills child is learning</th>
<th>Complete activities for school at home</th>
<th>Read with, to, or monitor 20 min. daily</th>
<th>Provide quiet, well-lit place to read</th>
<th>Encourage reading for pleasure and to learn</th>
<th>Check grades, discuss progress, success</th>
<th>Play family board, card games</th>
<th>Visit public library with child</th>
<th>Talk about reading with child</th>
<th>Total per type of barrier</th>
<th>% per type of barrier</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Childcare</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amount of time</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowing how</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>13%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having materials, info</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work schedule/hours</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>186</td>
<td>41%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using English</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total per responsibility</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>452</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% per responsibility</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>4%</td>
<td>0%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The first step in reporting results on barriers was evaluating the percentage of responses per barrier. The most reported barrier was overwhelmingly “work schedule/hours,” at 41%. This barrier was followed by “amount of time it takes” with 19%. The barriers “having materials or information” and “knowing how to do it” were close behind at 15% and 13% respectively. Only 1% percent of parents selected “cost” as a barrier. This result was quite understandable since many of these types of activities did not require money to participate.

The second step in analysis was to consider the percentage of responses per responsibility. Close together at the top were “knowing the skills our child is learning” and “visiting the public library” with 20% and 19%. These responsibilities were followed at 17% by “completing activities for school at home” and “monitoring our child’s reading 20 minutes per day.”
In terms of marking barriers, no parents circled “play board games or card games as a family.” It is possible there were limiting factors such as the child’s lack of interest in board games or the family’s not having board games. Many middle school students play online games with their friends, so it is possible that these games displace their interest in board games at home. Other responsibilities with a low percentage of parent response were “providing a well-lit area for our child to study” and “checking grades or progress.” However, these responsibilities had a high percentage of parents who rated themselves as (3-met consistently and well).

**Presentation Slides for Reporting Results of the Parent Survey to the School Staff**

For the formal teacher presentation for this portion of the survey, the researcher used pie charts and bar graphs. Results for the first question are below. The results for all the items in the section are shown in Appendix C.

![Pie chart showing parents' responses to the question: Know what skills our child is learning each week.](image-url)
Parents’ Teaching Responsibility and Respect in the Home

The second section of survey questions asked parents to evaluate nine phrases for ways they taught responsibility and respect in the home using the same point scale: (3) to indicate I meet this responsibility consistently and well, (2) to indicate I meet this responsibility some of the time and fairly well, or (1) to indicate I rarely or never meet this responsibility.
For each responsibility, results were calculated by dividing the number of parents rating themselves per category by the total number of parents responding for that responsibility. Percentages are shown as whole numbers after rounding.

**Self-ratings for Parents’ Teaching Responsibility and Respect in the Home**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responsibility</th>
<th>Met consistently and well (3)</th>
<th>Met some of the time and fairly well (2)</th>
<th>Met rarely to never met (1)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Make sure our child attends school regularly, on time, and is prepared to learn with necessary supplies and homework completed</td>
<td>91%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expect our child to behave responsibly and treat other people with respect</td>
<td>95%</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teach our child to help other people</td>
<td>89%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teach and reinforce table manners and telephone manners</td>
<td>83%</td>
<td>16%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teach our child to make proper introductions and greet people warmly and respectfully</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listen attentively to our child each day</td>
<td>80%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teach and model acceptance of responsibility for the positive and negative outcomes of personal behavior</td>
<td>87%</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teach and model responsible decision making</td>
<td>86%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Model good citizenship and encourage our child to demonstrate good citizenship in the classroom, school, home, and community</td>
<td>91%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average % per self-rating category</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is notable that at least 80% of parents felt confident that they performed all of the tasks related to teaching responsibility and respect in the home consistently and well (score of 3). Only 1% of parents said that they rarely or never met a responsibility (score of 1), and this self-rating was for two tasks: “reinforce table and telephone manners” and “listen to our child attentively.” None of the parents said they struggle with the other seven tasks. In the middle category (score of 2), the highest responses were for “teach and reinforce table and telephone manners” at 16% and “listen attentively to our child each day” at 19%.

**Presentation Slides for Reporting Results of Parent Involvement to the School Staff**

For the formal teacher presentation for this portion of the survey, the researcher used pie charts and bar graphs. Results for the first question are below. The results for all the items in the section are shown in Appendix D.
Parent Involvement in Activities at Their Child’s School

The third set of Likert scale phrases gave parents an opportunity to respond to 10 phrases about their involvement in their child’s education at the school. They used the same point system to rate this type of involvement: (3) I meet this responsibility consistently and well, (2) I meet this responsibility some of the time and fairly well, or (1) I rarely or never meet this responsibility. Parents were asked to indicate the main reason for the barrier if they ranked themselves as either a 1 or 2 on each item.

For each responsibility, results were calculated by dividing the number of parents rating themselves per category by the total number of parents responding for that responsibility. Percentages are shown as whole numbers after rounding.
**Self-Rating Results for Parent Involvement in Activities at Their Child’s School**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responsibility</th>
<th>Met consistently and well (3)</th>
<th>Met some of the time and fairly well (2)</th>
<th>Met rarely to never met (1)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attend parent-teacher-student conferences</td>
<td>75%</td>
<td>19%</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attend open house events</td>
<td>44%</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicate frequently with our child’s teachers, through notes, email or conversations, about how well our child is doing and what we can do to help</td>
<td>43%</td>
<td>39%</td>
<td>18%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participate in programs offered by the school/district for parents, including workshops or courses</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>31%</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attend PTA meetings</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>63%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteer to help with extracurricular activities like band concerts, theater productions or speech tournaments</td>
<td>21%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>56%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support with funding (pay PTA dues, school fund raisers, restaurant nights, or box tops program)</td>
<td>37%</td>
<td>32%</td>
<td>31%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteer during the school day (school store, lunch mentor, career day, SBIC committee, teacher appreciation, or field trip escort, etc.)</td>
<td>12%</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>73%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attend student performances (sports games, band concerts, choir concerts, theater shows, robotics competitions, award assemblies)</td>
<td>74%</td>
<td>18%</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteer to help teachers with making copies, preparing materials, bulletin boards, etc.</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>74%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average % of responses per self-rating category</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Self-ratings in this section of the survey were generally much lower than in the previous two sections. In the high performance category (score of 3), parents rated themselves at 74% or above for only two responsibilities: “attend parent-teacher-student conferences” and “attend student performances.” In fact, there were much higher percentages of parents who selected a low category (1- rarely or never meet this responsibility) than high (3- met consistently and well) for five skills: “participate in programs offered by the school/district” (44%/25% respectively), “attend PTA meetings” (63%/14%), “volunteer to help with extracurricular activities” (56%/21%), “volunteer during the school day” (73%/12%), and “volunteer to help teachers with tasks at school” (74%/8%).
Barriers to Parent Involvement in Activities at their Child’s School

This portion of the survey was designed to help the researcher understand factors that limit parents’ involvement at their children’s school. Parents whose self-rating for a listed responsibility was high (3-met consistently and well) were asked to bypass this section. Parents who had rated themselves as (2-met some of the tie and fairly well) or as (1-met rarely or never met) were asked to indicate any of the listed eight barriers that kept them from meeting that responsibility.) Thus, a parent responder could circle one barrier or several per responsibility. However, when tallying results for this section, the researcher noticed that some parents with scores of 2 or 1 did not indicate any barriers at all.

The table below was developed to analyze results of all chosen barriers without regard to the parents’ eligibility to mark barriers for a given item. In it, the total number of circled barriers is shown per responsibility and per type of barrier. The percentage of circled barriers is also shown per responsibility and per type of barrier. Percentages are shown as whole numbers after rounding.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Responsibility</th>
<th>Attend parent, teacher, student conferences</th>
<th>Attend open house events</th>
<th>Communicate frequently with teacher about child’s progress</th>
<th>Participate in programs offered by school/district for parents</th>
<th>Attend PTA meetings</th>
<th>Volunteer to help with extracurricular activities</th>
<th>Support volunteer during school day</th>
<th>Attend student performances</th>
<th>Volunteer to help teacher with copies etc.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Child-care</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amount of time</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowing how</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having materials, info</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work schedule, hours</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Using English</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td># per responsibility</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>63</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>127</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% per responsibility</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>7%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>14%</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The first step in reporting results on barriers was evaluating the percentage of responses per barrier. The highest reported barrier was “work schedule/hours,” at 55%. Parents reported this to be a barrier in school involvement a total of 494 times. A distant second-place ranking was “amount of time it takes” with 17% of parents claiming it as a barrier. “Childcare” and “transportation” tied as least chosen at 4% of parents.
The second step in analysis was to consider the percentage of responses per responsibility. At the top were “volunteer to help with making copies” and “volunteer during the school day” with 15% and 14% respectively. These were followed closely by a tie of 13% for “volunteer to help with extra-curricular activities” and “attend PTA meetings.”

Since 74% of parents rated themselves as (3-met consistently and well) for “attend student performances,” it was no surprise that only 4% reported barriers for this task. “Attend parent-teacher conferences” was also low in response with 5% of parents reporting barriers for it.

**Presentation Slides for Reporting Results of Parent Survey to the School Staff**

For the formal teacher presentation for this portion of the survey, the researcher used pie charts and bar graphs. Results for the first question are below. The results for all the items in the section are shown in Appendix E.

### Attend parent-teacher-student conferences

- 165: I meet this responsibility consistently and well
- 42: I meet this responsibility some of the time and fairly well
- 12: I rarely or never meet this responsibility
Open-Ended Questions on Parent Survey

Next, parents were asked how many families they personally knew at the school. This response helped the researcher determine whether there was a link between being involved and being connected to several other families at the school.

Results on Number of Other School Families that My Family Knows

In this question, the term “family” implied that the responding parent knew another parent with a child or children in the school. Percentages were calculated based on the total number of answers for this section.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How many other families (parents/students) do you personally know at the school?</th>
<th>none</th>
<th>1-3</th>
<th>4-10</th>
<th>more than 10</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td># of parents responding</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of parents responding</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>41%</td>
<td>29%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

On this question, 77% of the parents (170) offered input; 23% of the parents (52) did not. Forty-one percent of the parents indicated they knew 1-3 school families and were thus considered to be somewhat connected to the school community. Twenty-nine percent of the parents knew 4-10 families and were considered to have a good level of connection to the school community. Nineteen percent of the parents knew more than 10 families and were considered to be involved, informed, and supported by others at the school. The lowest percentage, 11%, did not know any other families at the school. The researcher felt it was likely that these parents were new to the school and might feel more isolated until they have time to form relationships with other parents and their children on this campus.
Presentation Slides for Reporting Results of the Parent Survey to the School Staff

For the formal teacher presentation for this question in the parent survey, the researcher used this pie chart.

In the next section of the parent survey, parents were given a list of nine types of communication that the school can use. Parents rated each type of communication on a scale of 1 to 5 to describe the best methods for them.

Results on Best Type of Communication from the School for My Family

On this question, 77% of the parents (170) offered input; 23% of the parents (52) did not. Some parents used the same rating for several ways to communicate, which the researcher interpreted as meaning the parents considered them as equally effective. For example, a parent might have rated email, phone call, and home visit with a score of (5), and then rated school newsletter, Twitter, notes in the mail, and note with the student with a score of (1). To get the average totals, the scores were totaled per method of communication and then divided by total responses and rounded to the nearest tenth.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What is the best type of communication for you?</th>
<th>Rated on a scale of 1-5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Email</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Phone call/phone tree</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Notes/flyers sent home with student</td>
<td>4.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Notes/flyers in the mail</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. School Newsletter</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. PTA Facebook Page</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Home Visit</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. School Twitter page</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Virtual home visit/Facetime</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Three answers were tied as the most popular form of communication with 4.2 out of 5 points: email, phone calls, and notes sent home with students. The next most popular types were tied at 3.5 out of 5 points: notes in the mail and the school newsletter sent via email to the parent. The PTA Facebook page scored 2.3. Finally, home visits (1.9), Twitter (1.9), and Facetime (1.8) were the lowest ranking methods for the school to communicate with the parents.

Presentation Slides for Reporting Results of the Parent Survey to the School Staff

For the formal teacher presentation for this question in the parent survey, the researcher used this bar chart.

![Bar Chart: Best Type of Communication for You 1-5](chart.jpg)
Interest in Scheduling a Home Visit

Finally, the last section of the survey gave parents a chance to request a home visit if they were interested. They could mark “yes” and then provide their name, phone number, and address so that a home visit by two staff members could be set up. Twenty-seven parents indicated interest and completed this portion of the survey. Staff from the school made plans to visit those parents. About half of those parents had received home visits in the past and welcomed the staff coming again to talk about their progress and continue to build relationships. The other half of the parents had never had a home visit but were interested in seeing what one was like and wanted to invite staff to come visit with them about their children’s success. In the year following this survey, staff performed about 115 home visits total for this campus.

Summary of Combined Findings on the Parent Survey

As was expected feedback from parents varied depending on the type of involvement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Involvement in responsibilities per type</th>
<th>Parents self-rated as 3 (met consistently and well)</th>
<th>Parents self-rated as 2 (met some of the time and fairly well)</th>
<th>Parents self-rated as 1 (met rarely or never met)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>child’s education in the home</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>33%</td>
<td>17%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>teaching of responsibility and respect in the home</td>
<td>88%</td>
<td>11%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>activities at their child’s school</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>26%</td>
<td>39%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average rating per category</td>
<td>58%</td>
<td>23%</td>
<td>19%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In terms of parent self-ratings, the researcher looked first at the percentages of parents who rated themselves high per type of involvement (3-met consistently and well). A very high percentage (88%) of parents felt extremely comfortable with their abilities and performance in tasks listed for “parent involvement in teaching respect and responsibility in the home.” Half of the parents (50%) felt they did a consistent and good job with tasks listed for “parent involvement their child’s education in the home.” However, only 35% of this parent group rated themselves with a 3 for tasks listed for “parent involvement in activities at their child’s at school.” As an overall percentage, more parents rated themselves with a (3) than with the combined ratings of (2) and (1).

Results among categories of parents self-rated as (1-met rarely or never met) showed sharp contrasts. While a large percentage of parents (39%) admitted to rarely or never engaging in activities in the school, none (0%) said they rarely or never taught respect and responsibility to their child, and only 17% felt they rarely or never performed the listed responsibilities for activities for the child’s education at home.

Results showed that the parent respondents were much more engaged and involved with their children when it came to working with them and interacting with them in the home rather than in participating in activities at the school.
It makes sense that, since parents spend most of their time together with their children in the home, they would meet these responsibilities more proficiently. This direct feedback was valuable to school personnel, who had previously been unsure if some of these home-based activities were taking place. It was a positive experience for staff to have evidence from parents that their children were engaged with them in various activities at home.

School personnel had expected that school-centered responsibilities and involvement might be the most difficult for parents, and results confirmed their expectation. Nonetheless, seeing the parents’ specific reasons or barriers to school-based involvement offered the staff important insights.

It was of interest to the researcher that, while research had suggested that virtual home visits might be a very effective way to communicate with parents, these parents ranked it as one of the least effective methods for them. The researcher conjectures the lack of devices at home or synchronous time available could both be contributors. Another assumption in the research was that mailing correspondence to the child’s home would be an effective way to reach parents and communicate easily. These parents ranked this form of communication quite high in comparison to others, as the researcher had anticipated.

**Summary of Findings on the Staff Survey**

Staff members were asked to give feedback on three open-ended questions concerning parent involvement in the school:

(1) What does parent involvement mean to you?
(2) What do you think is the biggest reason for lack of parent involvement?
(3) What is the Number 1 way you wish parents were involved in their child’s education?

Participation in the survey, which was online via SurveyMonkey, was voluntary, and 63 out of 90 (or 70%) of staff members responded.

For the first question, “What does parent involvement mean to you?” the most common responses centered on partnerships with the parents.

Typical answers from staff included these:

- Collaboration with the teacher (including thinking of strategies to correct behavior, getting input from the parent on learning styles, and working together with the parent to set goals).
- Conversation (including returning teacher phone calls, engaging in conversations about their child’s past success and challenges, and talking about what both the teacher and parent can do to support the child).
- Exchange of information (from parent to teacher and teacher to parent).
- Parent support when the school asks for parent involvement (including volunteering for school events, coming to open house, and assisting with correcting inappropriate behaviors from their child).
Other responses included these.
- Attending student performances
- Inquiring about their child's progress and helping meet the goals that the school set for their child, such as completing all assignments or projects
- Communicating in face-to-face conferences, phone calls, and emails
- Checking grades and being aware of the child's progress
- Having an idea about the curriculum their child was studying

For the second question, staff members were asked to give their opinion on the biggest reason for lack of parent involvement. Most staff mentioned these barriers:
- Work schedules
- Difficulty speaking English
- Parents’ assumption that the school would contact them if there were problems with their child's performance

Only three, or 4%, of staff members thought that a major reason that parents were not involved was because they did not care.

The final question was the Number 1 way that the staff would like to see parents involved.

Answers included these:
- Increased communication, both initiated by the parent and responding to a communication from the school
- Watching their children perform
- Supporting teachers by reinforcing positive behaviors such as completing school work and being respectful
- Checking on their child's grades often through the online parent portal

Feedback from School Personnel Following Presentation of Parent Survey Findings

After the professional development presentation at which school personnel saw the results of the parent survey, the researcher asked for feedback from the staff. The recurring comment from the staff was that the best result of the research was getting real data and responses from our parents about their own level of involvement in their children’s education. Teachers always want to know what parents think and how they can help them best. This action research offered teachers in this school a much clearer view of the parents’ perspectives, and that understanding was a valued bridge for the future work of the staff with the students and with their parents.

For the parent survey, one specific suggestion was made. A teacher questioned the omission of the Remind App in the list of options for the best forms of communication. This app is a fairly new method of communication the school offers to parents that can be used on mobile devices. Some teachers have started using Remind App over the past two years on a voluntary basis to remind parents about upcoming tests, homework assignments, or after-school activities. In the case of the Remind App, teachers who used it have given feedback on its benefits during informal conversations with the researcher. In the future, a more extensive list of options could be provided on the parent survey to make sure all possibilities used by the school are offered to parents.
Limitations of the Research Survey

There were limitations in this action research project. In the parent survey, several areas should be considered. One possible problem was language. While surveys were sent to parents in English and Spanish, about 5% of the students speak another language in their home, so their parents may not have completed the survey due to a lack of understanding. Additionally, some parents did not answer every question in each section. Also, a few students reported that the length of the survey and the style of the questions may have been confusing to their parents and caused them to circle the same answer (circle #3 for example) for every item in the section. In two sections of the parent survey, parents were asked to indicate the reason a low-scoring item was a barrier. In about 35% of the questions, when a low score was given, no reason was indicated. Due to the missing reasons, the responses may not be adequately representative of the barriers the parents face.

In terms of the staff survey, the use of only open-ended questions meant that only qualitative responses were received. Thus, the respondents’ ideas and answers were open to interpretation by the researcher.

Conclusion

In this action research study, the parents of students at a Title I middle school with a low rate of parental involvement were provided a pathway to let their voices be heard and help educators better understand how they could communicate more effectively with them and how they could promote their involvement. The study addressed these essential questions:

1. What prevents parents from being involved in their children’s education?
2. Which methods of communication provide the best avenue for the campus to reach the widest range of parents?

In terms of the first question, parents reported the primary barrier to their involvement was their “work schedule/work hours.” Unfortunately, a lack of time due to work demands is a factor that will always affect low-income working families.

In response to types of communication, these parents indicated a higher and equal preference for communication from the school (such as messages from teachers and messages about PTA and extracurricular activities) to be made by phone, email, or notes sent home with their child. No one method was preferred over another. This result indicated that it is important for all teachers in this school to personally ask parents how they can best communicate with them. Keeping a simple spreadsheet to track parent responses would allow each teacher to organize parents into groups of those who would rather get a phone call than an email, for example.

These parents did not seem to think, in general, that getting home visits or FaceTime calls would be the best way to reach them. In reality, with a campus population of nearly 900 students, it would be impossible for teachers and staff to be able to do either of these with all parents. Teachers often have over 100-150 students on their rosters, so having individualized time to talk face-to-face is rare. However, for some of the most at-risk and struggling students, doing home visits or FaceTime conversations could be enough to start a lasting relationship to partner with the parents in their children’s education.
References


Wilhelm, J. D. (2005). Learning rich or working poor. Voices From the Middle, 13(1), 53.
Appendix A – Parent Survey

Parent Involvement Survey

Please tell how you support your child’s education at home. (Rate on scale)

3 = I meet this responsibility consistently and well.
2 = I meet this responsibility some of the time and fairly well.
1 = I rarely or never meet this responsibility.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parental Involvement Action Description in the Home *Adapted from the Academic Development Institute, 2007</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Know what skills our child is learning each week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complete activities at home such as science fair, math practice, or reading books together</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Read with, or to, our child (or monitor independent reading) for 20 minutes each day</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide a quiet, well-lit place for our child to read.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encourage our child to read for pleasure and to learn.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regularly check our child’s grades and discuss progress and success with them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Play board games or card games as a family.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visit the public library with our child.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talk about reading with our child—what our child is reading and what we are reading.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For any items that you ranked 1 or 2, please list the reasons for barriers to the task.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parental Involvement Action Description in the Home</th>
<th>Main Reason(s) for barriers (circle all that apply)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Know what skills our child is learning each week</td>
<td>Childcare, Amount of time it takes, Knowing how to do it, Having materials/information available, Transportation, Work schedule/hours, Communicating in English is difficult, cost is too high</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complete activities at home such as science fair, math practice, or reading books together</td>
<td>Childcare, Amount of time it takes, Knowing how to do it, Having materials/information available, Transportation, Work schedule/hours, Communicating in English is difficult, cost is too high</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activity</td>
<td>Childcare, Amount of time it takes, Knowing how to do it, Having materials/information available, Transportation, Work schedule/hours, Communicating in English is difficult, cost is too high</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Read with, or to, our child (or monitor independent reading) for 20 minutes each day</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide a quiet, well-lit place for our child to read</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encourage our child to read for pleasure and to learn</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regularly check our child’s grades and discuss progress and success with them</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Play board games or card games as a family</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Visit the public library with our child</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Talk about reading with our child—what our child is reading and what we are reading</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Please tell how you teach your child respect and responsibility at home.
3 = I meet this responsibility consistently and well.
2 = I meet this responsibility some of the time and fairly well.
1 = I rarely or never meet this responsibility.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>3</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Make sure that our child attends school regularly, is on time, and is prepared to learn, with necessary supplies and homework completed.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expect our child to behave responsibly and treat other people with respect.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teach our child to help other people.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teach and reinforce table manners and telephone manners.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teach our child to make proper introductions and greet people warmly and respectfully. Teach and encourage our child to look for the good in other people and to pay and receive sincere compliments.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Listen attentively to our child each day.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teach and model acceptance of responsibility for the positive and negative outcomes of personal behavior.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teach and model responsible decision making.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Model good citizenship and encourage our child to demonstrate good citizenship in the classroom, school, home, and community.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please tell how you support your child’s education at school.
3 = I meet this responsibility consistently and well.
2 = I meet this responsibility some of the time and fairly well.
1 = I rarely or never meet this responsibility.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>3</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attend parent-teacher-student conferences</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attend open house events</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicate frequently with our child’s teacher, through notes, email or conversation, about how well our child is doing and what we can do to help.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participate in programs offered by the school/district for parents, including workshops or courses</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attend PTA meetings</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Volunteer to help with extra-curricular activities like band activities, theater rehearsals or productions, or speech tournaments.

Support with funding (pay for PTA dues, school fund raisers, restaurant nights, or box tops program)

Volunteer during the school day (school store, lunch mentor, career day, SBIC committee, teacher appreciation, or field trip escort, etc)

Attend student performances (sports games, band concerts, choir concerts, theater shows, robotics competitions, award assemblies)

Volunteer to help teachers with making copies, cutting out materials, preparing materials for activities, making bulletin boards, etc.

For any items that you ranked 1 or 2, please list the reasons for barriers to this task.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Parental Involvement Action Description in School</th>
<th>Main Reason(s) for barriers (circle all that apply)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attend parent-teacher-student conferences</td>
<td>Childcare, Amount of time it takes, Knowing how to do it, Having materials/information available, Transportation, Work schedule/hours, Communicating in English is difficult, cost is too high</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attend open house events</td>
<td>Childcare, Amount of time it takes, Knowing how to do it, Having materials/information available, Transportation, Work schedule/hours, Communicating in English is difficult, cost is too high</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicate frequently with our child’s teacher, through notes, email or conversation, about how well our child is doing and what we can do to help.</td>
<td>Childcare, Amount of time it takes, Knowing how to do it, Having materials/information available, Transportation, Work schedule/hours, Communicating in English is difficult, cost is too high</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participate in programs offered by the school/district for parents, including workshops or courses</td>
<td>Childcare, Amount of time it takes, Knowing how to do it, Having materials/information available, Transportation, Work schedule/hours, Communicating in English is difficult, cost is too high</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Task</td>
<td>Obstacles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attend PTA meetings</td>
<td>Childcare, Amount of time it takes, Knowing how to do it, Having materials/information available, Transportation, Work schedule/hours, Communicating in English is difficult, cost is too high</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteer to help with extra-curricular activities like band activities, theater rehearsals or productions, or speech tournaments.</td>
<td>Childcare, Amount of time it takes, Knowing how to do it, Having materials/information available, Transportation, Work schedule/hours, Communicating in English is difficult, cost is too high</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Support with funding (pay for PTA dues, school fundraisers, restaurant nights, or box tops program)</td>
<td>Childcare, Amount of time it takes, Knowing how to do it, Having materials/information available, Transportation, Work schedule/hours, Communicating in English is difficult, cost is too high</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteer during the school day (school store, lunch mentor, career day, SBIC committee, teacher appreciation, or field trip escort, etc)</td>
<td>Childcare, Amount of time it takes, Knowing how to do it, Having materials/information available, Transportation, Work schedule/hours, Communicating in English is difficult, cost is too high</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attend student performances (sports games, band concerts, choir concerts, theater shows, robotics competitions, award assemblies)</td>
<td>Childcare, Amount of time it takes, Knowing how to do it, Having materials/information available, Transportation, Work schedule/hours, Communicating in English is difficult, cost is too high</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Volunteer to help teachers with making copies, cutting out materials, preparing materials for activities, making bulletin boards, etc.</td>
<td>Childcare, Amount of time it takes, Knowing how to do it, Having materials/information available, Transportation, Work schedule/hours, Communicating in English is difficult, cost is too high</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Many times, parents rely on other parents or students to get information from the school about upcoming events, assignments, or projects. How many other families (parents/student) do you personally know at the school?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>0</th>
<th>1-3</th>
<th>4-10</th>
<th>More than 10</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Please rate these forms of communication from the school.
Rate your preference on a scale 1-5. (1 is worst, 5 is best)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Communication</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>School newsletter</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Email</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phone call/Phone tree</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home visit</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Virtual home visit via Facetime or video chat</td>
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<tr>
<td>PTA Facebook page</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Twitter</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Notes/flyers in the mail</td>
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<tr>
<td>Notes/flyers sent home with students</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Some students have participated in a home visit in the past. Would you like for 2 staff members to come to visit your family at home and bring information to you from school? (please circle one)  Yes  No

If yes, please give the following information:
Student name: ________________________________
Home address: _________________________________________________________________
Phone #: ________________________________
Appendix B – Staff Survey

The researcher asked the principal to send this survey to staff by email with a link to SurveyMonkey. These were the 3 questions:

1. What does parent involvement mean to you?
2. What do you think is the biggest reason for lack of parent involvement?
3. What is the Number 1 way you wish parents were involved in their child's education?
Appendix C
Presentation Charts for Parent Survey
Parent Involvement in Their Child’s Education in the Home

Know what skills our child is learning each week

Main Reason For Barrier
Complete activities at home such as science fair, math practice, or reading books together

- 101 respondents meet this responsibility consistently and well.
- 80 respondents meet this responsibility some of the time and fairly well.
- 38 respondents rarely or never meet this responsibility.

Main Reason For Barrier

- Childcare: 13
- Amount of time it takes: 21
- Knowing how to do it: 19
- Having materials/information available: 0
- Transportation: 23
- Work schedule/Hours: 0
- Communication in English is difficult: 0
- Cost is too high: 1

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TexELT: Texas English Language Teaching
ISSN 2325-2979
A Peer-Reviewed Online Journal
Volume Six, Issue One	September 2017
Read with, or to our child (or monitor independent reading) for 20 minutes each day

- I meet this responsibility consistently and well: 63
- I meet this responsibility some of the time and fairly well: 63
- I rarely or never meet this responsibility: 92

Main Reason For Barrier

- Childcare: 2
- Amount of time it takes: 17
- Knowing how to do it: 2
- Having materials/information available: 8
- Transportation: 0
- Work schedule/hours: 42
- Communicating in English is difficult: 7
- Cost is too high: 0
Provide a quiet, well-lit place for our child to read

Main Reason For Barrier

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Childcare</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amount of time it takes</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowing how to do it</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having materials/information</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work Schedule/Hours</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicating in English is difficult</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost is too high</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Encourage our child to read for pleasure and to learn

- I meet this responsibility consistently and well
- I meet this responsibility some of the time and fairly well
- I rarely or never meet this responsibility

Main Reason For Barrier

- Childcare: 0
- Amount of time it takes: 2
- Knowing how to do it: 5
- Having materials/information available: 3
- Transportation: 0
- Work Schedule/hours: 11
- Communicating in English is difficult: 3
- Cost is too high: 0
Regularly check our child's grades and discuss progress and success with them

- I meet this responsibility consistently and well: 180
- I meet this responsibility some of the time and fairly well: 35
- I rarely or never meet this responsibility: 4

Main Reason For Barrier

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Childcare</td>
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<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowing how to do it</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having materials/information</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work Schedule/hours</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicating in English is difficult</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost is too high</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Play board games or card games as a family

- I meet this responsibility consistently and well: 70
- I meet this responsibility some of the time and fairly well: 54
- I rarely or never meet this responsibility: 92

Main Reason For Barrier

- Communicating in English is difficult: 49
- Cost is too high: 3
- Other: 1

- Amount of time it takes: 27
- Knowing how to do it: 6
- Having materials/information: 11
- Transportation: 0
- Childcare: 1
Talk about reading with our child-(what our child is reading and what we are reading)

- 34% I meet this responsibility consistently and well
- 92% I meet this responsibility some of the time and fairly well
- 92% I rarely or never meet this responsibility

Main Reason For Barrier

- Childcare: 3
- Amount of time it takes: 13
- Knowing how to do it: 5
- Having materials/information available: 6
- Transportation: 0
- Work Schedule/Hours: 23
- Communicating in English is difficult: 8
- Cost is too high: 1
Make sure that our child attends school regularly, is on time, and is prepared to learn, with necessary supplies and homework completed

- I meet this responsibility consistently and well
- I meet this responsibility some of the time and fairly well
- I rarely or never meet this responsibility

Expect our child to behave responsibly and treat other people with respect

- I meet this responsibility consistently and well
- I meet this responsibility some of the time and fairly well
- I rarely or never meet this responsibility

Teach our child to help other people

- I meet this responsibility consistently and well
- I meet this responsibility some of the time and fairly well
- I rarely or never meet this responsibility
Teach and reinforce table manners and telephone manners

- I meet this responsibility consistently and well: 34
- I meet this responsibility some of the time and fairly well: 181
- Total: 215

Teach our child to make proper introductions and greet people warmly and respectfully

- I meet this responsibility consistently and well: 21
- I meet this responsibility some of the time and fairly well: 197
- I rarely or never meet this responsibility: 1
- Total: 219

Listen attentively to our child each day

- I meet this responsibility consistently and well: 41
- I meet this responsibility some of the time and fairly well: 174
- I rarely or never meet this responsibility: 3
- Total: 218
Teach and model acceptance of responsibility for the positive and negative outcomes of personal behavior

- I meet this responsibility consistently and well (27)
- I meet this responsibility some of the time and fairly well (189)
- I rarely or never meet this responsibility (0)

Teach and model responsible decision making

- I meet this responsibility consistently and well (1)
- I meet this responsibility some of the time and fairly well (28)
- I rarely or never meet this responsibility (185)

Model good citizenship and encourage our child to demonstrate good citizenship in the classroom, school, home, and community

- I meet this responsibility consistently and well (20)
- I meet this responsibility some of the time and fairly well (0)
- I rarely or never meet this responsibility (196)
Appendix E
Presentation Charts for Parent Survey
Parent Involvement in the School

Attend parent-teacher-student conferences

Main Reason For Barrier

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Count</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Childcare</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amount of time it takes</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowing how to do it</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having materials/information</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work schedule/hours</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicating in English is difficult</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost is too high</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Communicate frequently with our child's teachers, through notes, email or conversations, about how well our child is doing and what we can do to help

- 39% meet this responsibility consistently and well
- 93% meet this responsibility some of the time and fairly well

Main Reason For Barrier

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Childcare</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amount of time it takes</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowing how to do it</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Having materials/information</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transportation</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work schedule/hours</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicating in English is difficult</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost is too high</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Participate in programs offered by the school/district for parents, including workshops or courses

- 96: I meet this responsibility consistently and well
- 53: I meet this responsibility some of the time and fairly well
- 67: I rarely or never meet this responsibility

Main Reason For Barrier

- Childcare: 3
- Amount of time it takes: 20
- Knowing how to do it: 4
- Having materials/information: 7
- Transportation: 5
- Work schedule/hours: 61
- Communicating in English is: 4
- Cost is too high: 0
Volunteer to help with extra-curricular activities like band concerts, theater productions, or speech tournaments

Main Reason For Barrier

- Childcare: 5
- Amount of time it takes: 19
- Knowing how to do it: 6
- Having materials/information: 7
- Transportation: 3
- Work Schedule/hours: 70
- Communicating in English is difficult: 4
- Cost is too high: 1
Support with funding (pay PTA dues, school fund raisers, restaurant nights, or box tops program)

- I meet this responsibility consistently and well: 80
- I meet this responsibility some of the time and fairly well: 67
- I rarely or never meet this responsibility: 70

Main Reason For Barrier

- Cost is too high: 15
- Communicating in English is difficult: 5
- Work Schedule/hours: 21
- Transportation: 4
- Having materials/information: 3
- Knowing how to do it: 9
- Amount of time it takes: 1
- Childcare: 1
Volunteer during the school day (school store, lunch mentor, career day, SBIC committee, teacher appreciation, or field trip escort, etc.)

Main Reason For Barrier

- Childcare: 6
- Amount of time it takes: 19
- Knowing how to do it: 4
- Having materials/information: 5
- Transportation: 6
- Work Schedule/Hours: 81
- Communicating in English is difficult: 6
- Cost too high: 0
Attend student performances (sports games, band concerts, choir concerts, theater shows, robotics competitions, award assemblies)

Main Reason For Barrier

- Communication in English is difficult: 16
- Work Schedule/hours: 3
- Having materials/information: 3
- Transportation: 2
- Knowing how to do it: 2
- Amount of time it takes: 6
- Childcare: 3
- Cost is too high: 0
Volunteer to help teachers with making copies, cutting out materials, preparing materials for activities, making bulletin boards, etc.

- I meet this responsibility consistently and well: 159
- I meet this responsibility some of the time and fairly well: 37

Main Reason For Barrier

- Childcare: 4
- Amount of time it takes: 24
- Knowing how to do it: 7
- Having materials/information: 14
- Transportation: 4
- Work Schedule/hours: 78
- Communicating in English is difficult: 7
- Cost is too high: 0
Author’s Biography

Crystal Roach, M.Ed., has been an educator for 15 years. She taught 4th grade (monolingual and dual language) and 2nd grade before moving to a position in Title I intervention for bilingual and monolingual students in elementary. After 8 years of elementary experience, she moved to middle school and was a Reading Specialist and ESL team leader for 6 years before taking on a new role as an instructional coach.

Crystal has presented at the district, state, and national level on topics ranging from ESL Support Systems and Teacher Mentoring to Developing School-Wide Home Visit Programs. After being chosen by the U.S. Department of Education for the Teach to Lead Program, she worked with a team of colleagues to develop a logic model for expanding teacher leadership opportunities on her campus.

Advocating for all students and ensuring that every learner has access to a high quality education is a passion of hers, and she is also a second language (Spanish) learner herself. Crystal has contributed to the education community through interactions on Twitter (@roachteach) and also 2 other educational publications. Mrs. Roach is currently an elementary assistant principal at Denton Creek Elementary, a dual language campus, in Coppell, Texas.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank Dr. Deyoe-Chiullan and her team of peer reviewers and editors for helping me to improve upon my original presentation of research. I learned a great deal from the input of the TexELT team throughout the revision and editing process for this article.

Also I would like to thank my two principals Gloria Martinez and Kris Vernon over the past seven years in Plano ISD for their support and encouragement for every lofty goal and idea I have had while working under their mentorship. They have a gift for inspiring, pushing, and leading the way.

Finally, and most importantly, I need to thank the students and their families that have welcomed me into their homes and lives over the past 15 years and have inspired me to learn how we can better serve them. I have heartfelt appreciation for the hundreds of parents who contributed to this research through their participation.

Citation

Where we are now as teachers of language

by
Rita Deyoe-Chiullán, Ph.D., TexELT Editor
Adjunct Professor, American College of Education

I’ve never really had “writer’s block” although I’ve often procrastinated when I needed to write something. I started to compose something here about the lack of coherence among our professed beliefs, theories, approaches, methods, and techniques in many of our schools and other educational institutions. I was looking forward to citing Richards and Rogers’ (2014) third edition of a well-respected text entitled Approaches and Methods in Language Teaching (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press), which I received yesterday to bolster the course content for a doctoral level methods and materials course I’m supposed to be writing.

Then I started thinking about how our lives and those of our students have changed in the past 12 months, and suddenly, I was just numb. I felt grief for children born here whose lives will be marked forever by the random deportation of a wage-earning parent, grief for youths who weren’t born here but who are not equipped to make a living if deported, grief for those whose anger and resentment causes them to lash out at anyone who isn’t like them, grief for those who have suffered their whole lives from the verbal and visual oppression that is often sanctioned as “our proud history” and that surrounds us daily.

I was heartened by news that in Boston a multitude showed up to protest against hate and in support of tolerance. I am somewhat reassured as I think of all of our wonderful bilingual and ESL teachers and their colleagues who share our concerns and our students. I am sure you will care for the vulnerable students you serve, whether those students are four years old or 84 years old. Our mission as teachers and guides to help others grow in health, wisdom, and competence has been enlarged by the events of the past 12 months. We have a lot more to do than to polish pronunciation, disambiguate pronoun references, and highlight needed idiomatic usage.

It rests on our shoulders especially to see the sorrow, the fear, the anger, and the grief of our students. And in seeing, to not turn away or look past it but to look into the souls of our learners who need to know that what they do is worthy of respect, that they are deserving of having dignity, that their contributions are valued and recognized. It rests on our hearts to be open to the learning our students offer to us every day in their ideas, their thoughts, their imaginative creations, and yes, in their grammar errors, and their mispronunciations. We cannot impart wisdom without renewing our commitment as learners to recognize when a lesson is needed, find a guide to teach us, and in turn, teach others, so that all of us may grow in health, knowledge, wisdom, and love for each other.

Citation
Deyoe-Chiullán, R. (2017). Where we are now as teachers of language. TexELT: Texas English Language Teaching, 6(1), 83.
Dr. Rita Deyoe-Chiullán has taught bilingual students of all ages in the U.S. and Colombia for over forty-five years. Currently she teaches graduate online courses for the American College of Education. Her scholarly efforts focus on preparing qualified bilingual and ESL teachers.

Her most interesting professional challenge recently has been authoring new online graduate courses in linguistics and methods and materials for second language learners for the American College of Education.

Dr. Deyoe-Chiullán’s most exciting recent project has been developing and editing this peer-reviewed online journal, *Texas English Language Teaching* (TexELT), under the sponsorship of the TexTESOL V Board, where she serves as Publications Coordinator.

Dr. Jeyashree Venkatesan has taught English as a second language and college composition in the U.S. and India for several years. She has taught in many local colleges such as Texas Wesleyan, Texas Christian University, Tarrant County College, and Northlake College. Currently, she is a Professor of ESL at Collin College.

Dr. Venkatesan continues to faithfully contribute her excellent copy editing skills as the TexTESOL V Board’s Publications Copy Coordinator. Fortunately, she also agreed to serve as a reviewer for TexELT in addition to providing her copy editing skills at various levels of the publication process.
More recently she taught ESOL credit courses in all skills areas to adults at two local community colleges, with a focus on the skills of writing/grammar and worked part-time as a Writing Tutor at the Richland College Writing Center. Again this year, Margaret has dedicated many hours reading manuscripts, suggesting revisions to make the messages clearer and patiently re-reading after revisions were made to be sure the next draft was more effective.

TexELT Primary Content Reviewer and Content Editor’s Biography

Margaret Redus has been a member of TexTESOL V for many years. Within TexTESOL V, she served as Treasurer and later Membership Officer. She holds a B.A in elementary education with a minor in English and an M.L.A with a specialization in bilingual education. She began her career in education with 6 ½ years teaching primary grades in Dallas ISD.

More recently she taught ESOL credit courses in all skills areas to adults at two local community colleges, with a focus on the skills of writing/grammar and worked part-time as a Writing Tutor at the Richland College Writing Center. Again this year, Margaret has dedicated many hours reading manuscripts, suggesting revisions to make the messages clearer and patiently re-reading after revisions were made to be sure the next draft was more effective.

TexELT Content Reviewer and Content and Format Editor’s Biography

Dr. Alana (Lana) Sloan has been a professional educator for more than 30 years, serving 22 years in K-12 and 12 years in higher education. She is also an award-winning journalist and received a Living Legend Award from the Dallas Press Club in 2013 for her lifetime contributions as a reporter-editor for the Dallas Times Herald and a freelance writer.

Currently, Dr. Sloan is the Assistant Provost for Curriculum Production at the American College of Education, an online institution serving students nationwide and globally. In 1981, after pursuing an undergraduate degree for 13 years in her spare time, Dr. Sloan completed a Bachelor’s Degree in Elementary Education at the University of North Texas and fulfilled a lifelong dream of becoming a teacher. She served 22 years in the Dallas Independent School District, where she also combined her experience in journalism and education as a curriculum developer.

In 2003, Dr. Sloan founded Wordsmiths Publishing Company and Educational Consultants, Inc. Through Wordsmiths, Dr. Sloan joined American College of Education as a creator of the college’s original curriculum. Inspired by her colleagues at American College of Education, she has since earned a Master’s Degree and a Doctorate in Educational Administration at Texas A&M University-Commerce.
Technology Coordinator’s Biography

Jayson Hammett is a Program Manager for Project ELL, a data management and consulting company based in Texas. His teaching experience includes positions as a World Languages Instructional Specialist for the Arlington Independent School District, teaching Spanish as a Second Language in Dallas, and teaching writing in Wylie, Lake Worth, and Arlington. As a Response to Intervention Facilitator, he supported teachers and students by establishing a standard for implementation and intervention across schools. With a Masters of Education in Policy Studies, a Principal Certification, a Bachelor’s degree focused on Linguistics and Foreign Language Acquisition, and an Associate Degree in Interpreting for the Deaf, his passion for languages is apparent in all he does. His recent projects include a data analysis program that allows teachers to monitor students’ development in language proficiency while simultaneously comparing academic proficiency. He is honored to be a part of TexTESOL V, a wonderful organization set on providing the best for language learners of all ages.

Higher Education/Adult Education Representative and Content Reviewer’s Biography

Leslie A. Brinkerhoff, Jr. oversees the Continuing Education Program of ESL for Mountain View College in Dallas, Texas. He teaches credit classes for upper level writing courses for the ESOL program there as well. Prior to working at Mountain View College, he worked in several countries of Africa, particularly francophone, as a literacy consultant assisting local communities in the development of literacy programs fitted to local cultures, languages in use, and other environmental factors.

He graduated with a Master's degree in Linguistics from the University of Texas in Arlington and a Bachelor's in French from Houghton College in New York State. He is fluent in French and has an intermediate ability to communicate in Spanish.
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TREASURER Cindy Brennan is a World Language Instructional Specialist in Arlington ISD. She has taught ESL students from PK to high school and teaches ESL methodology classes at the university level. She is a frequent presenter for school district and conference professional development.

ADVERTISING REPRESENTATIVE Katie Welch is a Lecturer of linguistics in the School of Education at the University of North Texas-Dallas.

MEMBERSHIP REPRESENTATIVE Katy Lake is currently a Library Assistant at The Hockaday School in Dallas, where she works with a diverse group of students from the USA and around the world.

SECONDARY EDUCATION REPRESENTATIVE (This position became vacant recently due to a resignation from the Board and subsequent reassignment of roles.)

HIGHER EDUCATION/ADULT EDUCATION REPRESENTATIVE Les Brinkerhoff oversees the Continuing Education Program of ESL for Mountain View College in Dallas, Texas, and teaches credit classes for upper level writing courses in ESOL.

ELEMENTARY EDUCATION REPRESENTATIVE Claudia Vanegas-Anderson is an ESL educator for the Welcome Center at Clack Middle School, Abeline ISD, serving international and refugee students as they acclimate to American culture and learn English without losing their identity.

ADVOCACY REPRESENTATIVE Liz Martin served as a bilingual teacher, a bilingual specialist, and then became the Bilingual/ESL Program Director. She retired in December 2011 after 33 years in Grand Prairie ISD.

MEMBER AT LARGE REPRESENTATIVE Marie Heath is the ESL coordinator for Plano ISD.

TECHNOLOGY COORDINATOR Jayson Hammett is a Program Manager for Project ELL, a data management and consulting company based in Texas. His teaching experience includes a position as a World Languages Instructional Specialist for the Arlington Independent School District, as well as a variety of other second language and ESL instructional roles.

PUBLICATIONS COORDINATOR Dr. Rita Deyoe-Chiullán teaches courses for bilingual and ESL teachers as an Adjunct Professor at the American College of Education.

PUBLICATIONS COPY COORDINATOR Dr. Jeyashree Venkatesan is a professor of ESL at Collin College.
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