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Teachers' Perceptions of Strategies for Parents to Improve Reading Development

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Walden University

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Chiekara Shaniecious Grace Waters-Jackson

has been found to be complete and satisfactory in all respects,
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Walden University
2021

Abstract

Teachers' Perceptions of Strategies for Parents to Improve Reading Development

by

Chiekara Shaniecious Grace Waters-Jackson

MA, Albany State University, 2010

BS, Albany State University, 2007

Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Education

Walden University

February 2021

Abstract

The problem addressed in the study is the significant numbers of elementary school students who fail to demonstrate proficiency in reading/language arts as determined by the Georgia Milestones English Language Arts Test. The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to investigate teachers' perceptions of effective research-based parental involvement strategies, materials, and training programs that may enable parents to help their children develop grade-level reading skills. Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory and Epstein's parental involvement model are the conceptual frameworks that guided this study. The research questions addressed effective strategies, materials, and training programs for academic success. Data were collected from individual interviews from 10 grade 2 and 3 teachers from a rural school district. A line-by-line analysis was followed by a coding matrix to categorize collected data into themes and patterns. The study indicated that teachers want to establish more parental involvement and provide parents with the necessary tools to increase student achievement. It is recommended that parents take time to read daily, practice asking and answering questions, activating prior knowledge, and reading different things of interest to promote and connect through learning experiences. Implications for positive social change include supporting parental involvement at home and creating learning environments that support and motivate students to learn and achieve academic success.

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Dedication

First, giving all honor and praises to God, who without his favor, this doctoral journey would not have been possible. I want to say I owe it all to you; thank you for my family and friends who have been with me during this entire process. To my colleagues who inquired and encouraged me, I say thank you. To my loving mother, Carolyn, thank you for life, for my talents, for always being there, and for being my rock. To my Grandma Gracie, my aunts: La’Vonda, Sholanda, and Barbara; my brothers: Covaree and Toris; “I DID IT”!

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Chapter 1

Introduction

Reading is an essential life skill. Researchers assert a correlation between reading proficiency and academic success (Dogan, Ogut, & Kim, 2015; Schwabe, McElvany, & Trendtel, 2015). Students who read proficiently often perform well academically in all subjects (Cooper, Moore, Powers, Cleveland, & Greenberg, 2014). There has been a focus on students reading on grade level by the end of third-grade (Wilder, 2014; Workman, 2014). Yet, achievement in reading cannot be accomplished only at school (Klemencic, Mirazchiyski, & Sandoval-Hernandez, 2014). A major factor identified in the literature that affects reading achievement is parental involvement (Castro et al., 2015; Wilder, 2014).

There are varied definitions of parental involvement, and there is no published formula for the amount or type of parental involvement necessary to increase student educational outcomes (Cooper et al., 2014). Parental involvement in a child's education has been defined as parents' or guardians' interactions that support a child's cognitive and social-emotional development (Dogan et al., 2015). According to Dogan et al. (2015), parental involvement in education can be defined as parents' interaction with schools and their children to benefit their children's educational success. Castro et al. (2015) defined parental involvement as "... the active participation of parents in all aspects of their children's social, emotional and academic development" (p. 34). According to Lam and Ducreaux (2013), parental involvement includes home-based, school-based, and social activities. Homebased activities include parents providing homework help, reading with their children, and teaching their children school-related

skills. School-based activities include attending parent-teacher conferences, attending school events, visiting the school, and communicating with their child's teacher.

According to Li and Fischer (2017), parental involvement in elementary schools improves student achievement. When parents are involved in their child's education, students are more motivated to learn (Li & Fischer, 2017). Parental involvement relates to fewer behavior problems in school, better attendance, lower dropout rates, and less grade retention (Ross, 2016). Parental involvement is also associated with increased learning and academic achievement (Wilder, 2014). Yet, some parents hesitate to assist their children in homework or may be unsure of how to support their children academically at home (Gonida & Cortina, 2014, p. 10). Parental involvement is important to the success of students' academic achievement. Many researchers point to parental contribution as a major source of student achievement and overall academic success (Avvisati, Gurgand, Guyon, & Maurin, 2014; Galindo & Sheldon, 2012). Levin and Aram (2012) and Stacer and Perrucci (2013) agreed that parents who are more involved and have the necessary school-home connections have students who are more likely to be high achievers than their peers. Early childhood education is where parents play the most vital role in academic success. This study looked deeply into the need for parents and educators to connect to gain higher achievement at the foundational level.

In this chapter, I discuss background information and the necessity for this study. I examine the problem and purpose of the study, along with three research questions. I also discuss the study's conceptual framework and the research design, which consists of the nature of the study, scope, and the limitations. The chapter ends with an explanation of how the study may affect the educational community.

Background

In Georgia, the Georgia Milestones Achievement Test is the state standardized test that uses a variety of questions to test students' knowledge and skills of content standards. Each student is scored into one of four categories. A student's score that is categorized as that of a beginning learner indicates that the student did not demonstrate proficiency in state content standards. A score that is categorized as that of a developing learner indicates that the student only demonstrated partial proficiency using the state content standards. Students whose scores are categorized as that of a proficient learner indicate that the pupil demonstrated proficiency of content area standards. A student's score categorized as a distinguished learner demonstrated advanced proficiency (Georgia Department of Education, 2020).

At the schools that served as the research sites for this study, significant numbers and percentages of students who attended the school failed to demonstrate proficiency on the state standardized test in reading. For example, at an elementary school in Georgia, significant numbers of students failed to demonstrate proficiency in reading /language arts as determined by the state assessment measure, the Georgia Milestones English Language Arts Test. For example, of the 650 elementary school students tested in English/language arts, only 12% or 78 scored distinguished, and 34.3% or 223 students scored proficient. However, in comparison, 39.4% or 256 students scored developing, and 14.3% or 93 of the 650 students tested scored beginning. The statistics are similar to those of the elementary students who attended schools in the district that served as the research site. A school improvement plan was developed in the district to address the

significant number and percentages of elementary school students' underachievement in reading.

Problem Statement

Parents' awareness concerning effective strategies for reinforcing reading instruction at home is a concern among teachers and administrators at the primary and elementary schools that served as the research site. Additionally, parents' ability to support the development of reading skills among their elementary-age children is a topic that numerous researchers have addressed through applied research (Sim & Berthelsen, 2014). Parents' awareness of effective reading strategies to reinforce instruction at home is very important to students' achievement and success. The problem that I addressed in this study is the significant number of elementary school students who fail to demonstrate proficiency in reading /language arts as determined by the Georgia Milestones English Language Arts Test. In this qualitative study, I examined elementary teachers' perceptions of parental involvement strategies to reinforce second-and third-grade students' reading instruction.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this qualitative study was to investigate teachers' perceptions of effective research-based parental involvement strategies, materials, and training programs that might enable parents to assist their children with developing grade-level reading skills. Active parental involvement in school leads to families that are involved in increasing student achievement (Dessoff, 2009). Identifying teacher perceptions of different strategies to give parents help at home could lead to planning and implementing

viable solutions that could significantly improve parental involvement and increase student achievement.

Research Questions

The following research questions guided this study:

Research Question 1 (RQ1): What are primary and elementary teachers' perceptions of research-based strategies that may enable parents to assist their children with developing grade-level reading skills in Grades 2 and 3?

Research Question 2 (RQ2): What type of materials do teachers think may enable parents to assist their children with developing grade-level reading skills in Grades 2 and 3?

Research Question 3 (RQ3): What type of training program may enable parents to assist their children with developing grade-level reading skills in Grades 2 and 3?

Conceptual Framework

I used two conceptual frameworks to guide this qualitative study:

Bronfenbrenner's (1994) ecological theory and Epstein's (2011) parental model.

Bronfenbrenner's (1994) ecological theory, also known as the human ecology theory, suggests subsystems influence students' academic achievement. According to

Bronfenbrenner's theory, five subsystems affect human growth and development. The

Bronfenbrenner systems are microsystems, mesosystems, exosystems, macrosystems,

and chronosystems (1994). The microsystem includes family, school, church, and the

neighborhood in which children live. The mesosystem consists of the interaction of two

microsystems; an example might be the interaction of both family and school. The

exosystem is the indirect environment, such as a parent's place of employment. The

macrosystem is culture, and the chronosystem is time. Bronfenbrenner's system of organizing the many influences on children formed the theoretical foundation of this study.

Some researchers have applied Bronfenbrenner's theory to studying student achievement in reading (e.g. Chiu & Chow, 2015; Hampden-Thompson & Galindo, 2017). Froiland, Powell, and Diamond (2014) found that family and neighborhood played a vital role in students' early literacy in the United States. Bronfenbrenner's theory was appropriate for this study because it takes into consideration how multiple systems relate to the academic achievement of children. The framework relates to the study approach because, like the study, the ecological theory seeks to understand a phenomenon in real-life situations (Yin, 2008).

Epstein's (2011) parental model served as a conceptual framework for this study. Epstein's framework includes six dimensions of parental involvement, which foster parental involvement for not just parents but also teachers and students. This model provides a guide for all stakeholders on the importance of collaborating effectively so doing so will ensure that it impacts student learning positively. It explains how schools can work with families and communities to assist them in becoming and staying informed and involved in their child's education. This framework requires stakeholders to work together diligently to build a strong school system that impacts each child's education. Many schools have used Epstein's framework as a blueprint to increase parental involvement and assist educators in developing school and family partnership programs (Epstein, 2005). Additionally, Epstein's Model provides a guide for determining specific areas of involvement that may be lacking and establishing how those areas can be

improved. Epstein's parental involvement model identifies six types of parental involvement: (a) parenting, (b) communicating, (c) volunteering, (d) learning at home, (e) decision-making, and (f) collaborating with the community. Categories above are operationalized in terms of two dimensions: participation at home and participation at school (Park & Holloway, 2013).

The first type of involvement, parenting, involves helping parents establish a home environment that is conducive to learning. How parents support education at home can be impacted by their partnership with the school. Not all parents understand the importance of being involved in their child's education and those parents that do sometimes do not know the necessary steps to become involved. This is where the school steps in and takes on the task of providing information to parents on how they can become more involved with their children, along with the school (Weaver, 2005). Families should be provided with information from the school regardless of whether they can attend or not; they are the ones who need the information most (Epstein, 2005). When parents and teachers join forces and work together, rather than separately, it has a positive influence on their students' lives. Once parents have a clear understanding of the importance of their involvement, then they may be motivated to become more involved. The second type of involvement, communicating, involves parent-school initiated contact about student progress along with school activities. Epstein (2005) defined communication as the ability to design effective forms of school-to-home and home-to-school communication about school programs and student progress. Schools must take the initiative to create a good communication system between the school and home (Epstein, 2011). Various forms of communication can be used, such as daily or weekly

progress reports and parent-teacher conferences, to keep parents informed of their child's academic progress.

When communication between the home and school is effective, it brings about positive results. Making certain students aware of their academic progress can be beneficial to them. When parents know policies, procedures, and programs within the school, it enables parents to provide additional support in the educational experience (Epstein, 2005). The goal of communication is to keep families informed about what is happening at school, keep them involved in programs, and keep them up to date on their child's academic progress (Epstein, 2011). Designing practices and activities with this goal in mind will help schools improve parental involvement levels.

The third type of involvement, volunteering, involves enlisting help and support from individuals to assist not only the school but the students. Volunteering encompasses a variety of duties. It is less about being present in the school and more about supporting the goals of the school and the learning process in any way possible (Epstein, 2009). In this area, schools need to understand that time may be a barrier for parents. According to Wherry (2009), flexible timing is a key factor in increasing parental involvement. When scheduling conferences, programs, and other school-related functions, it is important to be flexible with time to ensure parents who work or have other responsibilities have the chance to attend. Having effective volunteer programs can be a great asset to the school. Volunteers may assist with a variety of activities such as assemblies, sporting events, performances, awards ceremonies, and other student activities (Epstein, 2009). Volunteers may also take the time to assist teachers and students in the classroom. When volunteers assist in the classroom, the adult-child ratio increases, which allows teachers

to put forth more one-on-one attention with students. Epstein (2009) stated educators tend to involve families in a variety of ways when parents take the initiative to become more involved.

The fourth type of involvement, learning at home, involves teachers providing parents with the necessary information and resources to ensure that students are not just learning in the classroom but reinforcing learning during the day at home, as well. Resources may consist of interactive activities shared with parents at home, linking schoolwork to real life (Epstein, 2011). At home, learning can yield positive results for all stakeholders, including students, when they complete efficiently planned activities and strategies. Often, parents want to assist their children with home learning but are unclear on how to go about doing so. The school can assist with this matter by providing parents with information and strategies that can be used to assist students with home learning. Parents must be aware of homework policies and procedures. When parents are aware, it can increase the completion of their child's homework assignments. The more parents support their child's educational experiences; children may view their parent as an advocate, resulting in an increase of self-confidence in personal ability and attitude toward school (Epstein, 2005).

The fifth type of involvement, decision-making, involves establishing parent leaders and representatives to be involved in school-based decisions. Including parents in school decision-making and planning fosters an environment of collaboration and success for all students and inspires parents to initiate school-related discussions at home. Epstein (2005) argued that decision-making involvement surpasses the school and extends into the district level, as well. The academic success of students is derived from all

stakeholders collaborating and working together to improve education. Decision-making should include all stakeholders that shared vision and goals. The voices of families can be very instrumental in the decision-making process. Families can help in a variety of ways, such as helping to develop mission statements, assisting with designing, reviewing, and improving school policies, and helping to create policies, which positively affect students and families (Epstein, 2005).

Collaborating with the community is the sixth type of involvement, which entails enlisting resources from the community to assist with various school programs, activities, family resources, and student learning. Epstein (2005) defined community as those concerned about the quality of education regardless of whether they have children attending the school. Involving all stakeholders is necessary for the academic success of the school and students (Epstein, 2011). When schools employ this aspect of parental involvement, they can create a community of learning and academic achievement. When students participate in activities with the community in which they live, they tend to gain self-confidence and ownership of their community (Epstein, 2009).

“The positive aspects of Epstein's Model are that it encompasses the traditional definitions of parental involvement and recognizes the role of parents in the home, including supporting educational efforts and providing an environment where educational activities are supported and encouraged.” (Epstein, 2009, p. 137)

Epstein believed that schools could create a mutual atmosphere of respect that supports the development of children by reaching out to parents because they are an intricate part of the school (Epstein, 2009).

Epstein's (2005) six types of involvement emphasized that when parents and schools collaborate and work together, students achieve academically. Each type of involvement incorporates various practices of partnerships and challenges. I used Epstein's Model to gauge perceptions of teachers concerning parental involvement as it relates to communicating with parents, assisting with learning at home, and encouraging parents to volunteer at the K-8 Center. This model can encourage teachers to motivate parents to cooperate, which is an important step in establishing a meaningful connection between the parents and the school (Dor & Rucker-Naidu, 2012). In this study, I focused solely on the perceptions of teachers. Teachers' perceptions of parents can be key elements to help determine teachers' expectations of parents and how teachers communicate with them. The results of this study could contribute to the body of knowledge needed to establish ways to improve parental involvement.

Nature of the Study

I conducted this study using a qualitative methodology to collect data from teachers who are employed at Elementary School A, located in Georgia. A qualitative research methodology does not allow for the manipulation of variables. I collected the qualitative data for this study from the second and third-grade teachers who participated in semi-structured interviews. During qualitative studies, researchers interpret the information that participants convey during their interviews and use data collected during interviews to understand the lived experiences of human subjects (Marshall, Cardon, Poddar, & Fontenot, 2013). They use interviews to listen to the personal experiences of individuals from their own perspectives. When conducting interviews, researchers must

assume that the subjects are knowledgeable and that their perceptions are meaningful and worthy of being investigated (Marshall et al., 2013). Nonetheless, the quality of the data collected during interviews depends on the researcher (Fusch & Ness 2015). During the interview, I asked open-ended questions that allowed participants to elaborate more in-depth and to express their opinion openly.

Definitions

The following terms are defined to assist in developing a mutual understanding of their use:

Academic achievement: Academic achievement or (academic) performance is the extent to which a student, teacher, or institution has achieved their short or long-term educational goals (n.d.)

Beginning Learners: Students who do not yet demonstrate proficiency in the knowledge and skills necessary at this grade level/course of learning, as specified in Georgia's content standards. The students need substantial academic support to be prepared for the next grade level or course and to be on track for college and career readiness (Georgia Department of Education, 2020).

Developing Learners: Students who demonstrate partial proficiency in the knowledge and skills necessary at this grade level/course of learning, as specified in Georgia's content standards. The students need additional academic support to ensure success in the next grade level or course and to be on track for college and career readiness (Georgia Department of Education, 2020).

Distinguished Learners: Students who demonstrate advanced proficiency in the knowledge and skills necessary at this grade level/course of learning, as specified in

Georgia's content standards. The students are well prepared for the next grade level or course and are well prepared for college and career readiness (Georgia Department of Education, 2020).

Parental Involvement: Parental involvement refers to a situation where parents are directly involved in the education of their children, they involve themselves and are involved by the school and teachers in the learning process of their children, and they fulfill their duties as parents in making sure that the learner is assisted in the process of learning as much as they possibly can (Ntekane, 2018).

Proficient Learners: Students who demonstrate proficiency in the knowledge and skills necessary at this grade level/course of learning, as specified in Georgia's content standards. The students are prepared for the next grade level or course and are on track for college and career readiness (Georgia Department of Education, 2020).

Assumptions and Limitations

Assumptions are beliefs that shape how research questions are answered (Creswell, 2012). I assumed that participants knew of parental involvement, but they may not have known answers to all the interview questions. I also assumed that the questions were reliable and not biased. Finally, I assumed that the teachers who participated in the study understood the questions that are asked during the interview and provided honest answers representing their perceptions and beliefs.

Limitations are characteristics that influence or impact the interpretation of results acquired from research performed during the study (Creswell, 2012). The participants of the study represented Elementary School A in one district in the state of Georgia. The study only revealed the perceptions of the teachers who took part in the study and did not

represent all of the teachers within the study site. Therefore, the results of this study may not generalize to other regions and grade levels. I had no control over the years of experience and professional development participation of each teacher.

Scope and Delimitations

The scope of the study was general education elementary school teachers, who had provided instruction to second and third-grade students in one school district in the state of Georgia. The study took place at an elementary school.

Delimitations are factors over which the researcher has no control and “narrow the scope of a study” (Creswell, 2003, p. 148). One delimitation was that this research study was representative of elementary school teachers who had varying years of experience. Another delimitation was that the participants had earned different levels of college degrees. A third delimitation was that I had no control over the professional development and teacher training in which the teachers participated.

Significance

Scholars promote parental involvement as a practical approach to reinforcing what they are taught at school (Fan, Williams, & Wolters, 2012). Parental involvement is effective in assisting children with learning to read at grade level (Barnyak, 2011; Levin & Aram, 2012; Sim & Berthelsen, 2014). Scholars have maintained that students who develop the ability to read effectively are more likely to pursue post-secondary education in preparation for gainful employment (Murnane et al., 2012; Prado & Plourde, 2011). The implications for positive social change included increased parental involvement, improved student reading skills, and higher rates of students completing high school and enrolling in postsecondary education. The problem was significant to the larger

educational context because students in the United States are not performing as well as students in other developed countries.

The global economy is dependent on well-skilled workers (Kornhaber, Griffith & Tyler, 2014). If the United States is going to compete within the global economy, it is vital to address students' underachievement in reading. Children in the larger educational context could benefit from increased teacher effectiveness in reading instruction. Teachers' perceptions of parent involvement can be critical elements in determining teachers' expectations of parents and how teachers communicate with parents (Dor & Rucker-Naidu, 2012; Semke & Sheridan, 2012). Meaningful interaction between parents and teachers stems from teachers' approach to fostering relationships that are perceived as positive by parents (Whitaker & Hoover-Dempsey, 2013).

This study's research might provide the school district with necessary information regarding how teachers perceive parental involvement. Information gathered from this study might be used by the district and administration to form professional development sessions for teachers with information on various strategies, which can aid in increasing parental involvement. Parents may be able to use the results to understand better how significant their involvement is in their child's education. Parents need to be informed and involved so they can become partners with, and advocates in the school. Teachers may use the results to establish new strategies to motivate parents to become more involved in their children's education. Many times, teachers are frustrated with the lack of parental involvement but rarely receive specific training about strategies that can be used to effectively involve parents (Robbins & Searby, 2013). Administrators may use the results

to develop activities and programs that will promote communication and build partnerships between parents, teachers, and the school.

Summary

Chapter 1 presented an introduction to this study. The current study was concerned with the significant numbers and percentages of second-and third-grade students who attend elementary school A in a district located in Georgia, and the results from the GA Milestones show they need more reading development and understanding. Researchers put forth that parental involvement is necessary to increase student educational outcomes. Parental involvement has been defined as parents' or guardians' participation in-home and school-based activities that will reinforce what children are taught at school to improve achievement. However, some parents may be unsure of how they can best provide support to their children. In a school district located in the state of Georgia, significant numbers and percentages of the Georgia Milestones English Language Arts Test are low. Because parental involvement might increase the academic performance of these students, during this study teachers' perception of effective research-based parental involvement strategies, materials, and training programs that might enable parents to assist their children with developing grade-level reading skills were investigated. Three research questions guided this study:

1. What are primary and elementary teachers' perceptions of research-based strategies that may enable parents to assist their children with developing grade-level reading skills in Grades 2 and 3?
2. What type of materials do teachers think may enable parents to assist their children with developing grade-level reading skills in Grades 2 and 3?

3. What type of training program may enable parents to assist their children with developing grade-level reading skills in Grades 2 and 3?

Two conceptual frameworks guided this qualitative study: Bronfenbrenner's (1994) ecological theory and Epstein's (2011) parental model. I presented components of both conceptual frameworks in Chapter 1. Additionally, this study is qualitative. I interviewed second-and third-grade teachers to answer the research questions.

The results of this study might help educators and parents determine how students' learning could best be supported and reinforced at home. Teachers might use the results to establish new strategies to motivate parents to become more involved in their children's education. Chapter 2 presented the literature, which focused on parental involvement and its influence on reading achievement.

Chapter 2

Introduction

Researchers asserted that the persistent gap in achievement between most students who demonstrate inferior performance and their classmates who demonstrate proficiency is due to a lack of parental involvement among their parents (Hill, 2016). Previous researchers focused on parental involvement issues had been generalized to populations of all racial groups, or they had explored the phenomenon from teachers' and administrators' perspectives (Latunde & Clark-Louque, 2016). A review of the literature indicated that there are unique psychological and socioeconomic barriers faced by some parents which decrease the likelihood that they would frequently become involved in such activities as parent-teacher conferences, parent meetings, tutoring, and fundraising (Vega et al. 2015; Wang & Huguley, 2012). The problem that I addressed in this qualitative study was that parents of children in Grades 2 and 3 are unaware of effective strategies for reinforcing reading instruction at home, and therefore, are unable to assist their children in the development of grade-level reading skills. The purpose of this qualitative study was to investigate teachers' perceptions of effective research-based parental involvement strategies, materials, and training programs that might enable parents to assist their children with developing grade-level reading skills.

Literature Search Strategy

The strategy I utilized for reviewing the literature consisted of determining the definition of parental involvement, researching studies to determine the significance of parental involvement, and identifying constructivism as the foundational framework utilized for this study. I included a review of literature that discussed reading strategies

for students in Grades 2 and 3, identified materials to support teachers and parents during training, and recognized a successful training design. To locate information regarding the research topic, I included information in the literature review about parental involvement and effective strategies for increasing second-and third-grade students' performance in reading.

I conducted the literature review using Walden University's library of electronic databases, ProQuest, books, dissertations, and peer-reviewed journal articles to search for key terms. The key terms and phrases were *components of reading*, *parental involvement*, and *the impact of parental involvement on achievement*. I read publications in peer-reviewed journals, identifying and analyzing significant research that led to the identification of related works, including empirical and qualitative literature.

Components of Reading Instruction

The National Reading Panel (2000) put forth that every effective reading program should include the following five components: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension instruction. Findings from various research studies support the use of scientific-based instruction in each of the areas may improve the reading performance of K–3 students (Edwards & Taub, 2016). However, there is no script nor definitive pedagogical strategies that serve as a cure-all for addressing the academic for elementary students who are not proficient readers. Instead, scientifically proven reading strategies increase the reading achievement of K–3 students such as providing explicit, systematic small group instruction and frequent progress monitoring (Kruse, Spencer, Olszewski, & Goldstein, 2015). While the National Reading Panel

(NICHD, 2000), recommends using systematic, explicit reading instruction for struggling readers, teacher effectiveness is the most influential factor, which impacts student achievement (Kruse et al., 2015; Lipp & Helfrich, 2016; Steinberg & Sartain, 2015). As gatekeepers, who are responsible for implementing grade level policies, and as the primary source of reading instruction, K–3 teachers' perceptions of effective reading strategies for fostering reading comprehension should be explored (Lipp & Helfrich, 2016).

Teachers differ in how they address these areas to provide reading instruction to their students. However, the most effective approaches are those, which use instruction that is systematic and explicit. According to Archer (2011), explicit instruction is systematic, direct, engaging, and success-oriented. Explicit instruction refers to teachers' communication with students about the standards that will be taught and what is expected. When using explicit instruction, teachers also model and demonstrate what is expected. Systematic instruction refers to the planned progressive sequence of the lessons taught, which are based on clearly defined objectives and provide students with numerous opportunities for meaningful learning that leads to the mastery and retention of new information.

Phonemic awareness. A phoneme is the smallest unit of sound (Olszewski, et al., 2017; Wade-Woolley, 2016). Graphemes represent phonemes, which are single letters or clusters of letters that represent single sounds. Phonemic awareness refers to one's knowledge of how combinations of individual sounds form words. Phonemic awareness is defined commonly as the understanding that spoken words are made up of separate units of sound blended when words are pronounced (Olszewski, et al., 2017; Wade-

Woolley, 2016). Phonemic awareness also includes blending sounds and isolating them (Carlisle, Thomas, & McCathren, 2016; Valbuena, 2014).

There are strategies for teaching phonemic awareness. An isolating phoneme is a strategy that involves identifying sounds at the beginning, middle, and end of words (Carlson, Jenkins, & Brownell, 2013). The National Reading Panel (NICHHD, 2000), also suggested blending onset-rime, which involves combining sounds to form words. Deleting phonemes involves putting together and talking about sounds from a word. Segmenting words into phonemes involves counting each word's sounds. Adding phonemes involves making new words by adding sounds. Substituting phonemes involves making new words by replacing sounds (Valbuena, 2014).

Pirzadi et al. (2017) reported that there are four phases of literacy associated with phonemic awareness. The pre-alphabetic phase refers to a student's ability to make connections between that seen in print, pronunciation, and word meanings. For example, learners may recognize McDonald's or Coca-Cola logos without reading letters or words. At this stage, learners do not make connections between print, sounds, and meaning. The second phase, the partial alphabetic phase, is concerned with a learner's ability to make partial connections between some letters within a printed word. During this phase, meaning and pronunciation are stored in one's oral vocabulary. Within the third phase, the full alphabetic phase, the learner can connect between the word's sequence of letters, meaning, and pronunciation. Within the fourth phase, the learner can understand how new words are formed and can use a cluster of letters to make new words.

The National Reading Panel (2000) examined phonemic awareness instruction's influence on students' vocabulary, phonemic awareness, word reading fluency, and

reading comprehension development. The student included 80 Spanish-speaking kindergarteners. The students attended one of three public elementary schools located in predominantly Hispanic communities. All the students were eligible to receive free or reduced-priced meals. None of the students had participated in a preschool program. Each student participated in a daily 2-hour reading block using basal readers. Student grouping was by English-language ability levels, and students received supplementary instruction from teachers, reading coaches, and teachers' assistants. To measure the students' vocabulary development, the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test was used. Phonemic awareness and oral reading fluency were measured according to Dynamic Indicators of Basic Early Literacy Skills. Reading comprehension was measured using the Terranova reading comprehension subtest. They were divided into four groups based on Spanish-language ability and received vocabulary lessons and lessons focused on phonemic awareness. Analyses of the data indicated the following: (a) vocabulary instruction increased the scores of students who were at or above Spanish receptive vocabulary, (b) Phonemic awareness instruction improved the students' vocabulary scores, and (c) building on students' prior Spanish knowledge had the greatest impact on the reading comprehension of second-grade students. The researchers link the implications and importance of these findings to existing scholarship.

Phonics. In the 1790s, the method of breaking words down into sounds was first introduced in the U.S. (Morrow & Tracey, 1997). Phonics is the relationship between sounds and written letters and words. Phonics is also defined rules that denote the relationship between letters, sounds, and words of spoken language, which is sometimes irregular, due to the relationship between letters and individual sounds (Konza, 2014;

O'Rourke, Olshtroon, & O'Halloran, 2016). Uhry (1999) further defined English-language phonics instruction that, on the other hand, involves memorizing the names of 26 letters as well as approximately 98 letter-sound combinations.

There are two types of systematic phonics instruction. Synthetic phonics is associated with sounding out words by matching sounds to letters and blending the sounds to form words (McGeown & Medford, 2014). Larger-unit phonics is associated with detecting and blending words. The National Reading Panel (2000) proposed that effective systematic phonics instruction should be presented in various grouping patterns such as one-on-one tutoring, small groups, and whole-class instruction (Ehri, Nunes, Stahl, & Willows, 2001). During phonics instruction, teachers should explain how letters and letter combinations represent specific sounds. Teachers should also include multiple practice opportunities. The ultimate goal in phonics instruction is to connect sound to text. Therefore, during phonics lessons, the focus should progress from letter and sound recognition to applying decoding skills to text so that students understand that the purpose of phonics is to help them read more proficiently. When students can identify relationships between letters, sounds, and the language they have a less difficult time identifying words and comprehending meaning (Uhry, 1999). Experts say that in a whole-language classroom, some kids will learn to read despite the lack of effective instruction. "Explicit instruction is the systematic sequential presentation of phonics skills using isolated, direct instruction strategies" (Morrow & Tracey, 1997, p. 646). Without explicit and systematic phonics instruction, many children won't ever learn to read very well. According to Massengill and Sundberg (2006), children should learn through "active" exploration of the relationships between letter names, the sounds of

letter names, their visual characteristics, and the motor movement involved in their formation. Incorporating phonics workbooks, word games, singing and movement can be very effective learning tools for students.

Fluency. Fluency is the ability to read text aloud and accurately with rapid pacing and intonation (Shengtian & Gadke, 2017). Fluent readers spend less time and effort on word recognition and more time on comprehension (Katzir, Goldberg, Aryeh, Donnelley, & Wolf, 2013; Park, Chaparro, Preciado, & Cummings, 2015). Fluency also involves putting together words and phrases with an expression so that reading resembles natural conversation or speech (Strickland, Boon, & Spencer, 2013). Students who spend more time decoding words are less likely to comprehend what they are reading. Students who do not read with fluency often do not, because they are unable to decode words and construct meaning from print (Wanzek & Roberts, 2013).

The National Reading Panel (2000) offered several strategies that teachers can use to improve fluency; two strategies are repeated reading and guided oral reading. Repeated reading involves rereading passages a certain number of times and providing opportunities to reflect on what they read. Repeated reading activities included listening to modeled fluent reading, choral reading, and reading in unison. Guided oral reading refers to the support for students as they attempt to read unfamiliar words (Denton, Fletcher, Taylor, Barth, & 2014). Peers, parents, and the classroom teacher may provide support to the student during guided reading (Denton et al., 2014). Guided reading lessons also foster fluency. Guiding reading lessons should include an introduction to a passage that connects to the students' background knowledge and an introduction to vocabulary words that are essential to understanding the text. Modeling fluency is

important because it provides a model that demonstrates fast, accurate word recognition, and oral verbal expression (Al Otaiba, Petscher, Pappamihiel, Williams, Dyrland, & Connor, 2009).

Teachers may read a passage aloud as students follow along. After modeling occurs, students should have numerous opportunities to read the same text repeatedly aloud at least four times, either with one of their peers, in a small group, or to themselves. After reading the text several times, the teacher should engage students in a discussion about the text to enhance comprehension (Al Otaiba et al., 2009). Other strategies for increasing fluency include pronouncing unfamiliar words so that students can focus on constructing meaning, grouping words into meaningful phrases, having a less fluent reader read aloud simultaneously with a more fluent reading, and using a recording of a passage as the student reads along silently (National Reading Panel, 2000).

Kuhn, Rasinski, and Zimmerman (2014) identified three research-based instructional strategies for teaching fluency in the classroom. Derived from previously identified good practices and principles, combined strategies put into three curricula were available for use in the classroom (Kuhn et al., 2014). Reading fluency normally is developed from practice in reading texts that require more than decoding words (Kuhn et al., 2014). Fluency involves reading at the normal talking rates with prosody or expression with appropriate phrasing, and comprehension of the text being read (Kuhn et al., 2014). These practices include giving learners connected texts to read; providing feedback and modeling that focus on word recognition, phrasing, and expression; incorporating scaffolding to provide support for reading more difficult texts; and providing a reading of texts by students (Kuhn et al., 2014).

The three approaches to fluency instruction outlined by Kuhn et al. (2014) are Fluency Oriented Reading Instruction (FORI), Wide Reading Fluency Oriented Instruction (Wide FORI), and the Fluency Development Lesson (FDL). FORI includes scaffolded repetition using grade-level texts over a 5-day cycle that begins with a new text on the first day of the cycle (Kuhn et al., 2014). Pre-teaching activities include providing background knowledge, webbing, or vocabulary building. The cycle begins with full support from the teacher on the first day and lessens throughout the 5-day cycle, leading to more independent reading by the student (Kuhn et al., 2014). The process includes copies of the texts being read in class to take home, discussions of the texts, graphic organizers, and question and answer sequences. The process also includes echo reading, where the teacher reads a short passage of two or three sentences that the students then echo or repeat; choral reading led by the teacher; partner reading; and extension or literacy activities (Kuhn et al., 2014).

While FORI involves a single text read repeatedly over the 5-day cycle, Wide FORI has three different texts used over the same interval (Kuhn et al., 2014). The 5-day cycle for Wide FORI introduces the primary text on the first day of the cycle, followed by echo reading of the primary text, extension activities, and echo reading of the two texts (Kuhn et al., 2014). FDL is based on both FORI and Wide FORI but is accelerated and completed in 1 day. Intending to read a new text every day, passages include poetry and other rhythmic texts, such as song lyrics and speeches incorporating rhythm and rhyme to provide ways for students to predict and memorize parts of texts or words from the texts (Kuhn et al., 2014). While poetry usage has declined in recent years, CCLB standards suggest poetry is a genre that fits well ineffective reading instruction (Kuhn et

al., 2014). By reading a new text each day, the goal of FDL instruction is for students to read with accuracy, fluency, and comprehension (Kuhn et al., 2014).

As a result of the research by Kuhn et al. (2014), these three strategies are considered viable instructional techniques for teaching reading fluency. The researchers cited the number of times students read each day as a critical factor in the success of any program (Kuhn et al., 2014). Using challenging texts with extensive scaffolding was identified as another critical factor.

Allington (2014) identified research studies that focused on the relationship between reading volume and reading fluency and analyzed the findings. After fluency was recognized by the National Reading Panel (2000) as a scientifically-based critical component of reading, more research followed on the role of reading volume in the development of reading proficiency (Allington, 2014). Allington cited a study by Dahl and Samuels in 1977 that revealed that repeated reading interventions promoted reading fluency, accuracy, and comprehension of struggling readers far better than reading words in isolation. Other studies cited by Allington (2014) indicated that repeated reading was an effective intervention for reading fluency for both general education and special education students. The volume of reading that students do in repeated reading activities helped students become more fluent readers, especially when an adult was present, rather than a peer or an audio-tape recording (Allington, 2014).

Vocabulary. Students can increase their vocabulary in several ways. For example, students can increase their vocabulary indirectly by listening and speaking to the people around them, by reading independently, and by being read to by others (Griffin & Murtagh, 2015). Students should receive explicit vocabulary instruction,

especially as it relates to new words in disciplines such as social studies and science (Griffin & Murtagh, 2015). Students may also increase their vocabulary directly by writing definitions from dictionaries, thesauruses, and textbooks (Fisher & Frey, 2014). Definitions should include examples and non-examples. Teachers may also teach vocabulary by teaching root words, prefixes, and suffixes so that students can use context clues to figure out the meanings of unfamiliar words. Another strategy is to read aloud to students and model the process of decoding words (Fisher & Frey, 2014). Class discussions about unfamiliar words before, during, and after reading a passage aloud so that students have opportunities to connect to unfamiliar words with their background knowledge may also be beneficial (Al Otaiba et al., 2009). Other strategies for teaching and increasing vocabulary include providing students with repeated exposure to unfamiliar words to increase (Duff, Tomblin, & Catts, 2015). The frequency with which a word is encountered increases new words, introducing words in a meaningful context, and rewriting the text by substituting complex definitions with more simple ones to make passages easier to understand (Fisher & Frey, 2014; Wolfgramm, Suter, & Goksel, 2016).

Wasik, Hindman, and Snell (2016) wrote that two other factors contribute to vocabulary growth outside of formal direct instruction. One is the frequent introduction of unfamiliar words. The second factor is the volume of words that are read. Specifically, for vocabulary to grow, students must be exposed to words that are not a part of his or her current vocabulary through written text as students are exposed to more unfamiliar words by interacting with text than by engaging in speech or listening to the television or radio (Wasik et al., 2016). Ultimately, students increase their vocabulary through active engagement. Wasik et al. (2016) asserted that active engagement involves students'

approach to understanding unfamiliar words, which should be active rather than passive. Active approaches to understanding unfamiliar vocabulary include (a) discussing new words with peers; (b) asking questions and clarifying definitions about unfamiliar words as a passage is being read; (c) matching definitions to new words; (d) using words in different contexts, so that they can demonstrate the depth of their understanding; and (e) being frequently exposed to a plethora of new words so that students have frequent opportunities to see, hear, read, and write new words in different contexts. Teachers may also provide students with numerous opportunities to associate new words with unfamiliar words and by introducing them to new words in sentences (Ruston & Schwanenflugel, 2010). In addition to increasing vocabulary growth through direct instruction, students' vocabulary can also grow outside of formal learning environments (Ruston & Schwanenflugel, 2010).

Kucan (2012) emphasized the importance of the verbal environment in a classroom where vocabulary is a main part of the instructional process. The careful selection of books and poems read aloud that includes imaginative language to describe and explain is a technique that enhances the verbal environment in a classroom. The use of dictionaries as a resource in the classroom is essential. In choosing vocabulary words to be used in the instructional process, Beck, McKeown, and Kucan (2008) developed a system for identifying words that have three tiers. Tier 1 consists of words that are easily understood or explained, while Tier 2 words are words that students would find in texts that would not be part of their everyday vocabulary (Beck, McKeown, & Kucan). Kucan (2012) emphasized the importance of the verbal environment in a classroom where vocabulary is a main part of the instructional process. Tier three words are content-

specific. Several strategies were identified to maintain a verbal environment, which would engage students in vocabulary development. The careful selection of books and poems read aloud that includes imaginative language to describe and explain is a technique that enhances the verbal environment in a classroom. The use of dictionaries as a resource in the classroom is essential.

The research by Graham et al. (2015) was designed to determine the effect of vocabulary instruction in social studies. Based on the report by the National Reading Panel (NICHD, 2000), which identified teaching vocabulary explicitly as an important strategy for classroom instruction, the researchers focused on multi-component instruction of vocabulary to teach vocabulary (Graham et al., 2015). The results of the study indicated that the vocabulary intervention had a greater impact on vocabulary assessment and a smaller, but still significant, impact on reading comprehension assessments. Researchers at Harvard Graduate School of Education conducted a longitudinal study of a program called Word Generation (WG), a research-based vocabulary program designed to teach middle school students through core classes of language arts, mathematics, social studies, and science (Jones, et al., 2016).

The vocabulary program involved using brief passages that contained five high-utility target words (Jones et al., 2016). Designed to create classroom discussion that improves word knowledge, reasoning, and expression, WG creates instructional strategies that focus on higher-ordered skills, such as analysis, synthesis, problem-solving skills, and high-quality critiques (Jones et al., 2016). The WG program depends on discussions that are critical to reading comprehension, reasoning perspectives, and language skills

(Jones et al., 2016). The discussions are created from issues written in academic language.

Researchers at Harvard Graduate School of Education reported on a 2-year segment of the study (Jones et al., 2016). Data were collected from (a) a WG Academic Vocabulary Assessment, the Global Integrated Student Assessments (GISA), created by the Educational Testing Service, using a grant from the Institute of Education Sciences (IES) Reading for Understanding Initiative; (b) the Core Academic Language Skills Instrument (CALSI), which assesses the ability of students to understand, create, and reflect on language forms; and (c) the Perspective Taking Survey (PTS), which is designed to assess the ability of a student to articulate perspective when given a text that presents a social conflict (Jones et al., 2016). Analysis of the data from these assessments provided evidence of a significant increase in the tested primary constructs. The analysis showed the mean levels of the primary constructs tested were significantly higher for the upper grades in the middle schools being tested compared to fourth graders who were tested (Jones et al., 2016).

In the 2000 report, the National Reading Panel found that significant gains in reading comprehension occurred when readers experienced cognitive strategy instruction. In the National Reading Panel (NICHD, 2000) discussion of text comprehension, they indicated that explicit instruction teaches students to use specific cognitive strategies when reading. The National Reading Panel (NICHD, 2000) identified the following reading comprehension strategies: (a) Comprehension monitoring teaches students how to monitor how well they understand the text being read and to analyze and deal with comprehension problems they encounter; (b) Cooperative learning is a strategy in which

readers work together in groups, listen to their peers, and help each other use strategies in the context of what is being read to promote reading comprehension; (c) Curriculum strategies are integrated into the curriculum to help readers improve reading achievement within the academic environment; (d) Graphic organizers enhance meanings and relationships of ideas to relate words in the text to improve comprehension and memory (NICHD, 2000); (e) Listening actively improves memory and comprehension in relation to the text being read; (f) With mental imagery or visualization, readers can improve understanding of the text being read; (g) Mnemonic devices help readers to organize information in order to establish relationships within the text; (h) Multiple strategies which is using several processes together, readers can coordinate links and can construct meaning from text; (i) Prior knowledge refers to readers having relevant knowledge of the text being read, they can improve their reading ability and academic achievement; and (j) Psycholinguistic is a strategy whereby readers use relevant knowledge about language to identify links to previous connections.

Ness (2016) conducted a study to identify how frequently reading comprehension instruction was used in middle and high school social studies and science classrooms. Ness cited the 2000 report from the National Reading Panel and their strategies for increasing reading comprehension. Also, Ness listed five other strategies:

1. Semantic organizers. Ness (2016) linked the use of semantic organizers to graphic organizers. By combining graphic and semantic organizers, readers can represent meanings and relationships by relating writing or drawing to ideas created by the words in the text.

2. Story structure is used when the reader analyzes the text to answer strategic questions about the plot and can map out a timeline and events in the story.
3. Question-answering is when the reader answers questions about the text and receives feedback from the instructor.
4. Question generation allows the reader to create questions related to the text that will increase comprehension.
5. Summarization is when the reader can organize the main ideas by analyzing the meaning of the text.

In the study, Ness (2016) found that reading comprehension instruction comprised only about 3% of instructional time in the classroom. Solis et al. (2014) conducted a longitudinal study within an RTI framework that addressed adolescents with reading disabilities and poor reading comprehension. The researchers found that students who experienced reading difficulties, particularly older readers, needed extensive intervention (Solis et al., 2014). Recommendations resulting from this research included using a database, a decision-making format to modify instruction consistent with PLCs, using a conceptual framework that emphasizes reading for understanding, and studying the effect of group size when delivering reading instruction (Solis et al., 2014). When considering intensive interventions in reading for students with reading disabilities, three questions should be considered (Vaughn & Wanzek, 2014). The questions consist of these:

1. Whether these intensive interventions can be provided in the general education setting and at what grade level?

2. Whether sufficient research has been conducted to develop and implement these intensive interventions?

3. Whether these interventions can be implemented within the school environment (Vaughn & Wanzek, 2014)?

In a later study in which the authors cited research by Vaughn and Wanzek, based on 3 years of intensive intervention that showed significant increases in reading comprehension, researchers found comprehension strategy instruction used in an intensive yearlong intervention with sixth-graders suggests that these intensive interventions have an impact on older readers (Roberts, Fletcher, Stuebing, Barth, & Vaughn, 2013). During the last 10 years, educators at the district and school level that is the setting for the proposed research have focused on increasing reading achievement for students in the district through teacher in-service on how to teach reading. Incorporating this into classrooms, in addition to teaching strategies on classroom instruction, with a focus on reading comprehension will increase the students' ability to be reading on grade level.

Comprehension. Comprehension is the goal of reading instruction, involves constructing meaning from words (Kamhi, & Catts 2017; Ferrer, Vidal-Abarca, Serrano, & Gilaberts, 2017). Students who understand what they read are likely to become proficient readers. Third-grade students should be provided with simple comprehension strategies such as using graphic organizers and story maps that allow them to translate what they remember and understand from a passage (Carlson, Jenkins, Li, & Brownell, 2013; O'Rourke, Olshtroon, & O'Halloran, 2016). Two more popular strategies for teaching comprehension are incorporating students' background knowledge and

generating questions.

Students' prior knowledge is important because it is the mechanism through which they process meaning to new information encountered in the text (Carlson et al., 2013). However, students who do not have the background knowledge that connects them with a passage may find it difficult to recall facts and to make inferences but instead ignore the information. To make connections between text and students' prior knowledge, teachers can lead a class or small-group discussion on a topic so that the learners have an opportunity to benefit from the background knowledge of their peers, as students who have had personal experiences with a topic can share them to help their peers to help them understand what they are about to read (Pirzadi et al., 2012; O'Rourke et al., 2016). Teachers should also incorporate students' background knowledge into lessons to help them comprehend meaning from text (Pirzadi et al., 2012; O'Rourke et al., 2016). Encouraging students to take notes while they are reading is also an effective way to help students comprehend what was read. Students may also use note-taking to formulate questions about things that are confusing and to identify answers to questions that were answered as they were reading.

Questioning is a skill used by proficient readers (Basar & Gurbuz, 2017; Ness, 2016; Rouse, Alber-Morgan, Cullen, & Sawyer, 2014). Proficient readers use questioning to deepen their understanding of the text and to connect to their prior knowledge (Ness, 2016; Rouse, Alber-Morgan, et al., 2014). In addition to using questioning to connect to prior knowledge, this strategy can also be used to predict sequence and to identify the writer's purpose, perspective, or style (Basar & Gurbuz, 2017). Ness (2016) asserts that questioning is beneficial because it improves students' ability to recall information,

demonstrates greater accuracy for answering, and better identify central themes and main ideas. Before teachers can generate questions, teachers should model how questions are formulated and provide practice for students to generate questions (Gómez, 2017). In addition to using prior knowledge by incorporating into lessons what students already know about a topic and formulating questions so that students have opportunities to search for answers teachers may use several other strategies to help students comprehend text (Gómez, 2017). For example, teachers should demonstrate to students how to make predictions using what they can bring to a text from what they previously already know. Additionally, teachers should teach students how to recognize story structure so that they understand better the elements of a story such as the setting, plot, characters, and themes (Kuşdemir & Bulut, 2018). Students should also be taught how to summarize text so that they understand important information as well as the main idea (Kuşdemir & Bulut, 2018; Ness, 2016).

Edwards and Taub (2016) investigated the relationship between blending, sound segmentation, and reading comprehension. The study included 84 Black students and two students from two or more races, who were in either the first or second, and 6 to 10 years old. Thirty-eight of the participants were male and 48 were female. All the students received free or reduced-priced meals. The study was carried out in an inner-city Title I charter school in Florida. Edwards and Taub (2016) put forth that they used Black students because few empirical studies investigate the impact of reading instruction on elementary school-age Black students. Sixty-one percent of Black students do not achieve proficiency in reading by Grade 4 compared to 26% of White students. Another reason is due to language patterns. For example, Black students tend to use dialect while White

students tend to speak Standard English. The dialect used by Black students may hurt their reading performance as it relates to comprehension, phonemic awareness, phoneme blending, and segmentation. The findings also indicated that blending had a moderate to a large direct effect on the students' reading comprehension scores, which was consistent with previous research. Because of the study, Edwards and Taub (2016) suggested that when providing phonemic instruction, teachers should use short words, pictures, and sound and spelling patterns. The researchers also recommended that teachers spend at least 15 minutes per day on phonemic awareness instruction and they provide interventions, which include blending acquisition. The results of the study offered by Kelley, Roe, Blanchard, and Atwill (2015) supported the effectiveness of phonemic awareness instruction on the reading performance of English Language Learners.

Parental Involvement

Achievement in reading cannot be accomplished only at school (Klemencic, Mirazchiyski, & Sandoval-Hernandez, 2014). Parents, schools, and communities need to work together to foster and encourage children's literacy development (Jeewek & Gerwin, 2012). Education begins at home, as parents can make a significant impact on their children's lives. Parental involvement is related to fewer behavior problems in school, better attendance, lower dropout rates, and less grade retention (Ross, 2016). Parental involvement is also associated with increased learning and academic achievement (Wilder, 2014). The perception of teachers toward the involvement of parents in children's education is very narrow (Fan, Williams, & Wolters, 2012). Teachers tend only to look at parent involvement in school settings. This perception involves bringing teachers together with parents to ensure academic success. Teachers'

attitudes toward parental involvement will often negatively affect parent participation in school settings. Teachers who feel they have total control in the classroom might create an unwelcome atmosphere for parents wishing to participate (Avvisati et al., 2013). Teachers with this attitude may hold the belief they are the experts requiring no extra assistance from parents.

There are varied definitions of parental involvement, and there is no published formula for the amount or type of parental involvement necessary to increase student educational outcomes (Goodall and Montgomery, 2013). Castro et al. (2015) defined parental involvement as "... the active participation of parents in all aspects of their children's social, emotional and academic development" (p. 34). According to Lam and Ducreaux (2013), parental involvement includes home-based, school-based, and social activities. Home-based activities are those that include parents providing homework help, reading with their children, and teaching their children school-related skills. School-based activities include attending parent-teacher conferences, attending school events, visiting the school, and communicating with their child's teacher. Based on this model to facilitate students' success, parents should be involved both at home and school. The definition of parental involvement varies from parent to parent. One parent may deem attending school functions as an acceptable level of parental involvement while another may feel home-based activities should be done in addition to school-based activities.

Parental involvement promotes student achievement in reading (Klemencic, Mirazchiyski, & Sandoval-Hernandez, 2014). Parents assist in developing literacy skills in their children (Buckingham et al. 2013). Parental involvement makes the greatest difference in reading during the early years (Hemmerechts, Agirdag, & Kavadias, 2016).

According to the ecological systems theory of Bronfenbrenner (1994), children learn and are influenced by their environment (Bronfenbrenner). The family and home environment have the largest influence on children (Hampden-Thompson, Guzman, & Lippman, 2013).

Activities that promote reading achievement in children are not limited to school-related activities. Hampden-Thompson, Guzman, and Lippman (2013) found that students benefit from varied social and cultural communication. The following activities were associated with higher scores in reading: conversations with parents about general issues; discussions with parents about “books, film or TV; as well as political or social issues” (Hampden-Thompson, Guzman, & Lippman, 2013, p. 255). Eating meals together also improve reading development. Families who share meals often have time to talk during the meal; these conversations help with vocabulary and literacy skills development. Harris and Graves (2010) determined that cultural activities such as visiting museums, libraries, and zoos were associated with higher reading achievement. Mothers do activities such as teaching and practicing, drawing, doing crafts, playing educational games, singing, and rhyming to encourage their children’s instruction at home (Suizzo et al, 2014).

Another indicator of success in reading was the parents’ attitudes toward reading (Ozturk, Hill, & Yates, 2016; Yeo, Ong, & Ng, 2016). Students who are poor readers often have parents who are poor readers (Silinskas et al, 2012). Parents, who stressed the importance of reading to their children by modeling reading, have children who are more likely to read (Clark, 2010). Araujo and Costa (2015) found parents reading to their children, reading with their children, and allowing the children to choose in reading

materials improved student engagement in reading. Parent-child communication about school is also linked to reading achievement (Clark,2010). While some researchers contend there is a direct relationship between parental involvement and students' reading achievement, others suggest the relationship is indirect. According to Senechal and LeFevre (2002), "... early parent involvement was not directly linked to subsequent reading performance; instead, there were indirect relations between parent involvement and reading outcomes" (p. 655). Whether direct or indirect, parental involvement can increase the reading performance of students.

Significance of parental involvement. Gardner (1991) identified seven bits of intelligence (1991). These bits of intelligence indicate that students have different minds and understand, remember, perform, and learn in different ways. According to Gardner, we now know how to understand ourselves, other individuals, how to make things and to solve problems, do math logically, think musically, and understand the world better through language.

A key factor in student achievement is parental involvement. The stages discussed by Gardner recognize that students learn through a variety of spectrums. Various studies have addressed the aspect of parental involvement with its impact on student achievement in elementary schools. Such studies established the correlation between family background factors like income levels, parental involvement, parents' educational levels, and student achievement. Joyce Epstein, a leading expert on parental involvement, noted that good relations between the home and the school have the potential of optimizing children's development by promoting consistency and better learning-related practices.

This literature provided a summary of parental involvement. In this section, six categories of parental involvement, teachers' perceptions of parental involvement, parental roles, barriers to parental involvement, parental support and academic success, cognitive and metacognitive skills, strategies to develop grade-level reading skills, materials to support parents, and training program design will be present.

Six categories of parental involvement. Joyce Epstein derives six categories of parental-involvement programs in schools. These categories include parenting, communicating, volunteering, learning, decision-making, and community collaboration. Indeed, parental involvement may include parenting where elementary school leaders promote the development of children and provide advice on friendly learning environments. Moreover, parental involvement includes volunteering where school leaders allow parents to visit their children at school. Communication allows parents to communicate with school leaders regarding the children's academic and behavioral progress. Parental involvement permits parents to participate in important decision-making processes relating to the children's progress.

As a leading researcher, Epstein breaks each category down into details. Parenting includes helping parents understand the stages of childhood. The learning cycle begins at home. "Parenting focuses on helping parents develop skills that will help support educational efforts of the school and will encourage learning to go beyond the classroom" (Epstein, 1995, p. 202). Parents are children's first teachers. The home environment needs to be a safe environment in which children and parents can work diligently to increase success academically.

Communicating is Epstein's second involvement category. This occurs when teachers show parents what children are doing in school. A conference between teacher and parent can inform parents if the student is making progress, and what areas, if any, need help." Regular sources of communication to parents may include avenues such as telephone calls, newsletters, and electronic mail.

Volunteering is the third involvement category. This category allows parents to come to the school to observe or accommodate the students. Parents should always feel welcome within the classroom. Parents do not know how to assist in the classroom, but they do recognize the significance of their involvement.

The fourth type of involvement of Epstein is learning at home. Helping at home includes "encouraging, listening, reacting, praising, guiding, monitoring, and discussing - not teaching school subjects" (Epstein, 2011, p. 43). Doing homework every night is a great way to help at home. This gives students extra practice time and assists them with a better understanding of the skill at hand.

Decision-making is the fifth type of involvement. This category will include parents in school decisions, governance, and planning (Epstein et al., 2002). School leaders and parents work together to improve educational academics. When making decisions at school, it is a protocol to notify a parent. Parents and teachers should work from the same agenda to achieve successfully academic goals. Collaboration between parents and teachers is vital.

The final involvement is collaborating with the community. Community support combined with parental involvement has greater success than any other involvement form. "To be effective, the form of involvement should be focused on improving

achievement and design to engage families and students in developing specific knowledge and skills” (Henderson & Mapp, 2002, p. 44). Developing workshops for parents at the elementary level with different trainings can be beneficial.

Teachers’ perceptions of parental involvement. Most teachers focus their attention on students within the school setting. Though they are concerned about the involvement of parents in children’s education, teachers often find it hard to provide effective opportunities for parental involvement. A form of parental involvement involves a partnership between parents and teachers and school leaders (Park & Holloway, 2013). Involvement is via what they do at the school or what they do with teachers in the classroom setting.” Parents’ involvement includes volunteering and helping children with homework. Teachers acknowledge that parents’ involvement in children’s education is of great importance to overall success.

Teachers perceive that parents can be involved in children’s education without necessarily being involved in the school setting (Baquedano-López, Alexander, & Hernández, 2013). Most teachers’ perceptions, however, of parent involvement are centered on the school. Teachers who believe involvement should be school-centered believe in activities such as (a) teaching values and morals, (b) building the self-esteem of the children, (c) supplying educational experiences, (d) furnishing the elementary needs of life, (e) providing warmth, and (f) communicating with teachers regarding the performance and behaviors of the children.

Parental roles. The role played by school leaders is equally crucial within the relevant schemes. Students spend much of their time at school, so the role played by school leaders is of great significance. School leaders establish the basis of acumen and

deep-rooted professionalism to bring change for the future. These leaders decide whether a student will receive enough time to manifest skills and abilities (Ismail, 2011). The school environment, therefore, establishes a place for learning the basics and for exploring the possibilities that lie ahead. Due to these alternatives and possibilities, students could gain a maximum advantage because they have teachers to guide them, friends to play with, and an overall environment of growth and development. This environment helps the basis of advancement of thought and practice, which remains significant (Robinson, 2011). The school is indeed a shining light for students who get into a routine and can learn new things as they progress in this environment. Students are given the room to showcase what is hidden within them and to explore it to the maximum possible levels. The school leaders require respect by young students because learning proactively with or without awareness is vital; to be successful, parents must realize fully this requirement.

On the other hand, Hoover-Dempsey and Sandler's theory on parental involvement focuses on psychosocial aspects that define the elementary school correlation among student outcomes and involvement of parents (Chen & Gregory, 2010). This theory seeks to determine how parental involvement has positive influences and why parents involve themselves in their children's education (Chen & Gregory, 2010). It is a five-tiered process, with Level 1 being the basic; each tier is derived from the previous. Level 1 has three concepts: personal motivation, invitations, and life contexts. Level 1.5 defines different types of involvement. The second level debates the influence of parents' attributes needed for success in schools. The third level suggests

that actions remain inactive unless parents have a say. Level 4 holds students accountable and as authors of their success and Level 5 is the goal of student achievement.

Parental involvement can adopt different forms of learning in elementary school. Indeed, Ohio Education Association states that parents can show involvement by (a) reading to a child, a nightly routine with homework check, and teachers discussing progressions; (b) voting in school board elections; (c) assisting elementary schools to set standards that are challenging academically; (d) limiting television watching; and (e) advocating for a superior education in the community (Ohio Education Association, 2014). Parental involvement is fundamental as it enhances critical contributions to student achievement in elementary schools that define academic success. Moreover, parental involvement creates a better home environment that fosters learning.

Parental involvement has a greater impression on a student's academic success than other related factors, such as income, education level, or cultural background (Zeng & Xie, 2014). Parental involvement delivers a clear memo to students that schoolwork is important to parents and, hence, the motivation for academic commitment and success (Center on Education Policy, 2012). Researchers, however, have yet to establish the actual extent to which parental involvement can influence student motivation (Center on Education Policy, 2012). A correlation does exist between parental involvement and children's success in elementary school. Moreover, other studies established the link between children's educational development and parental involvement. This confirms the potential for parental involvement in motivating academic success among students in elementary schools (Lowe & Dotterer, 2013).

Parental involvement encourages positive attitudes among teachers and students promoting students' feelings of competence and control about academics (Center on Education Policy, 2012). Parents manage to motivate students by (a) believing in children's competence, (b) providing for children's academic needs, (c) supporting children in solving problems, (d) initiating academic projects, and (e) having high academic expectations for the children (Center on Education Policy, 2012). Discussing reading materials with children and creating opportunities at home to apply what children are learning in school enables parents to foster a reading culture at home that improves academic success (Center on Education Policy, 2012).

Parents have a mandate to (a) control television watching, (b) monitor homework, (c) offer extracurricular activities to complement school lessons, (d) encourage innovation and creativity, and (e) develop children's special talents (Center on Education Policy, 2012). Researchers ascertained that this capacity allows parents to create a cohesive environment at home that helps children to develop feelings of competence, control, curiosity, and promotes positive attitudes about academics (Center on Education Policy, 2012). Parents are facing specific challenges, however, in utilizing their capacity towards motivating their children. Some encounter time and resource constraints while others do not understand their role leading to differences in parents' involvement and capabilities (Center on Education Policy, 2012).

From this context, we can assert that the significance of parents' involvement in student's learning may depend on the parent's capabilities. As such, we cannot derive a universal impact of parental involvement on student's learning in elementary schools that relate to the researcher's inability to establish the actual extent that parental involvement

influences student motivation (Lowe & Dotterer, 2013). Moreover, we should not underestimate students' success when parents are showing involvement.

Although other factors like cognitive power determine student achievement (Pinantoan, 2013), parental involvement and support at home play the greatest role in determining the student's academic success, teachers' satisfaction, and teacher-parent contact in elementary school (Chung-Kai & Chia-Hung, 2012). Notably, students with both parents involved in their academics, when compared to parents who have no concern about the children's progress at school, will be more apt to succeed in academics and enjoy learning. This effect is clear in the earliest years of schooling where students with involved parents have a greater chance of recording academic success (Pinantoan, 2013). Parental involvement is especially significant to students in kindergarten through fifth grade. Certain studies confirm that parental involvement significantly drops off during the middle school years as students are approaching maturity and tend to disregard parental advice (Pinantoan, 2013).

Another factor that determines the level and significance of parental involvement in a student's academic performance is the economic class of the parents. Parents in the middle or upper class have an immense capacity to support their children's education, unlike lower-class parents who lack the resources or necessary abilities to support their children's pursuit of education. Moreover, the parent's level of education determines the significance of the parent's involvement in children's education (Zeng & Xie, 2014). Parents with advanced degrees, compared to parents with bachelor's degrees or no degree, have a greater impact on children's academic or education status (Pinantoan, 2013). Other studies established that a parent's gender also affects the level and quality of

influence of involvement on children's education. Such studies asserted that a supportive father when compared to children with a supportive mother, motivates children to attain slightly higher grades.

The combined efforts of schools, families, students, and the community toward elementary education help students to perform better, enjoy learning and advance to higher education levels. By talking to children about school, planning for college education, and creating extracurricular activities, parents propel students to academic success (National Education Association, 2012). Moreover, students derive greater academic gains when elementary school leaders involve parents in supporting the learning process at home and school.

Indeed, specific research establishes the potential of involving parents in the learning process to create additional success opportunities. This study defines the positive outcomes of parental involvement toward children's learning and development. Parental involvement also fosters good health for children and the community, which plays a fundamental role in enhancing academic performance. Parental involvement may also relate to the promotion of good behavior and social adjustment among students. Good morals taught and exhibited by parents help students to grow up to practice the same morals.

Parents absorb the responsibility of teaching good morals that relate to their cultures to children in elementary school. This helps in nurturing students who are ethical and productive. Various positive behaviors among children in elementary school that relate to parental involvement include enriched school attendance, positive behavior in the classroom, and blossoming emotional student well-being. A better learning

environment created by parents at home is more relevant to children's academic success than the economic level, education level, or cultural background of parents (Racine Education Association & Racine Educational Assistants Association, 2014).

Achievement in reading relies more on home learning activities than school activities. For instance, talking to children about books and stories as well as reading to them define the most significant activities that increase children's reading capacity (Racine Education Association & Racine Educational Assistants Association, 2014). Moreover, discussing school matters, helping with homework, monitoring, and organizing a child's time, and parental involvement leads to significant student achievement (Racine Education Association & Racine Educational Assistants Association, 2014). A great way to forecast achievement in the elementary setting is to help parents (a) build a strong environment of learning at home, (b) support education in the community and at school, and (c) set expectations high and viable for achievement academically (Sackmann, 2014). In this context, researchers defined academic success in the form of improved academic performance, lower absenteeism, good behavior, and improved confidence among parents in children's schooling (Racine Education Association & Racine Educational Assistants Association, 2014).

Various factors jeopardize a parent's involvement in education. Researchers established alcohol abuse, violence, and antisocial behavior as barriers to parental involvement (Sackmann, 2014). A reduction in involvement derives dismal academic performance in students and impairs the parent's ability to (a) participate in school events, (b) establish good relations between educators and students, and (c) monitor the effectiveness of school happenings on children's performance. On the other hand,

researchers noted that the benefits of parental involvement cut across all ages and grade levels but in different magnitudes (Sackmann, 2014). Students, educators, parents, and all stakeholders in education believe that parental involvement fosters academic success. As a result, more parents are now attending school meetings or serving in committees that make important decisions on students' academic pursuits.

Relevant studies established that parental involvement is positive at both the secondary and elementary levels; however, the largest effect of parental involvement often occurs at the elementary level (Hill & Tyson, 2009). A recent meta-analysis regarding high academic performance and cognitive outcomes for middle schoolers derived a stronger correlation between parental involvement in school life than homework (Hill & Tyson, 2009). The meta-analysis also derived fewer behavioral problems and higher chances of completing high school for students whose parents supported their education (Hill & Tyson, 2009). Additionally, other studies investigated the impact of racial or ethnic socialization and parental involvement in education regarding Black youth and their cognitive ability and academic achievement (Banerjee, Harrell, & Johnson, 2011). The study revealed that the mother's cultural-exposure messages influenced the children's scores on passage comprehension (Banerjee et al., 2011). Significant cultural exposure and increased parental involvement in children's education enables students to register higher passage comprehension scores (Banerjee et al., 2011).

The subject of parental involvement in children's education and the benefits it derives to the entire education system is vital. Specific and extensive empirical theoretical literature asserted that the education of children should relate positively with

success from school, competency, and parental involvement. Managing parental involvement in early childhood education poses a great challenge since it affects the relationship between parents and educators in elementary schools (Nargis, 2013). How parents feel toward the entire school system and their involvement in the educational setting will influence their support and effect on the academic success of the children (Nargis, 2013). Growing up in a relaxed and harmonious atmosphere allows students and parents to establish effective relationships with educators and other students that help in communicating, socializing, and creating positive experiences towards education (Nargis, 2013).

Another study relied on data from the Parent and Family Involvement Survey to investigate economic and social resources, perceptions of parents, and experiences with children's schools among Black, Latino, and White parents (Stacer & Perrucci, 2013). Results agreed with other studies and confirmed minority parents, when compared to White parents, register reduced involvement in their children's education (Stacer & Perrucci, 2013). This study noted that socioeconomic factors such as family income and parent education also influence parental involvement. Other factors that influence parental involvement in elementary schools include family structure and parental employment (Stacer & Perrucci, 2013). The number of hours that parents work determines the available hours that parents spend with their children on education matters (Stacer & Perrucci, 2013). Family structure also influences parental involvement, where families with both parents register higher participation in elementary education than single parents do (Pinantoan, 2013). Mostly, parents involve themselves with female

children more than male and in earlier grades more than later grades (Stacer & Perrucci, 2013).

Family engagement is a successful way of improving student academic progress (Paredes, 2011). With the support of families, students can engage in more extended instruction at home. Teachers and families need to become a team if we want to see students succeed and surpass our expectations (Paredes, 2011). School leaders can arrange interactive sessions and workshops to solicit advice and suggestions from parents regarding how their children can achieve distinction and good grades.

These interactive sessions and workshops bring parents and teachers together to find out where each of them might be going wrong about the children. Immense learning is derived and is beneficial for the basis of learning and adaptation at a later stage. Examples are given that can be utilized as best-case scenarios. Additionally, it is helpful to find out what one might have gone through in past experiences so resources can be allocated and work assigned, and what more can be learned with the advent of time.

These interactive sessions and workshops pave the way for new findings that have a positive impact on the lives of the students, as well as the parents and teachers. Often, students are also involved within these sessions and workshops to gain a firsthand idea for what they essentially feel and to incorporate their thoughts and understandings. When this is done, success creeps into the related equations and immense learning is derived that can be adapted later across the board. This is a good step forward, especially for students, since they are proactively learning and will continue to do so. This harnesses growth, development, and productivity (Kirby, 2011).

Another study analyzed student-perceived parental involvement regarding academic success, relational outcomes, and behavioral effects for low-achieving adolescents (Chen & Gregory, 2010) and found some forms of parental involvement are more effective than others when evaluating the performance of low-achieving adolescents who are enrolled in school (Chen & Gregory, 2010). Parents who expect good grades, desire to see academic success, and hold high expectations for their children are valued more by educators (Chen & Gregory, 2010). Other studies sought to explore the effect of teachers' gender on the amount of parental involvement regarding fathers' involvement in their children's schooling during elementary school (Unal, 2010). Previous research confirmed fathers are less involved than mothers are in their children's education (Unal, 2010). Fathers record low involvement subject to institutional practices and school barriers, not knowing how to assist with their children's education, and fear of exposure to poor communication skills (Unal, 2010).

Barriers to parental involvement. Teachers are not aware of most barriers that hinder parents from participating fully in their children's education. They mostly assume that it is all about logistic barriers to include long working hours. Teachers perceive jobs and chores as occupying most parents, and hence, cause a lack of time for their children. They also view the education level of the parents as the main barrier to parental involvement in the education of the children. According to teachers, children with the most educated parents, when compared to less-educated parents, become more involved in their children's education (Park & Holloway, 2013). The performance of students with educated parents is, therefore, higher than the performance of other students. Though

uneducated parents may wish to be involved fully in their children's education, the level of education they have attained hinders them. What most teachers do not recognize is that many barriers that are related to the psychology or the environment of the school exist.

Minority-immigrant parents, when compared to native-born parents, experience even greater barriers to participation (Turney; Kao, 2009). Such barriers relate to language and time spent in the United States (Turney; Kao, 2009). In this context, parental encouragement among Hispanic students fosters academic performance among all students (Chen & Gregory, 2010). The study revealed that mothers who assisted with schoolwork had positive effects on all adolescents' academic engagement at all academic levels (Plunkett et al., 2009). As stated in other studies, however, girls of the second generation are more influenced by fathers (Plunkett et al., 2009). Additionally, mothers who were involved had an indirect effect on boys of the second-generation (Plunkett et al., 2009).

Other barriers exist that may hinder parental involvement. Some of these barriers are a lack of parenting skills, education, language skills, parent-teacher relationships, time, money, and transportation (Comer, 2005). Additional barriers include parents' negative perception of the school environment, bad communication, and work commitments (Comer, 2005). By eliminating some of the barriers, more programs are creating new evidence to ensure parental involvement. Teachers and parents can work together to increase a student's achievement. Hornby (2000) stated that education is the key to getting out of poverty for low-income minority parents. Many assume that minority parents are not concerned about education, but studies show they are more

concerned than previously thought (Comer, 2005; Hornby, 2000). These parents know education is key to their children advancing out of poverty (Comer, 2005; Hornby, 2000).

Parental support and academic success. Recent research indicated that parental involvement promotes greater outcomes. “When parents dedicate time, offer praise, show affection and develop close relationships with their children of varying school ages, their children are less likely to require discipline at the school or treatment for social or emotional problems” (Caspse, 2006/2007, p. 2). Defining what student achievement means is, therefore, important. It begins with gaining insight into how students learn the various study domains and how they find what this world holds for them. Student achievement comes about as students do well academically, obtain skills to utilize in life and give back to the community.

In addition to strong parental involvement, co-curricular and extracurricular activities are beneficial to student success. This is due in part to the combination of studies and physical activities that push students to excel. Participating in various fields also makes an individual stand out in a league. It is with the persistence of both parents and teachers that students can learn new things and forge a route of their own. When students can do this with confidence and ease, they can be judged rightly as achievers within the school, as well as in their personal lives. Understanding what comprises student achievement, then, becomes mandatory, as well as how parents and teachers can work together to touch new bases and explore creative grounds for catering to the end objective of student achievement.

While both teachers and parents are focused on what specific factors bring about academic success in students, both play pertinent though individual roles in ensuring that

the children grow and develop in natural ways as well. When this comes about, success is discerned under different levels and stages. “Closing the achievement gap and increasing student learning requires the collaboration of various interested groups, most notably parents” (LaRocque, Kleiman, & Darling (2011). Both teachers and parents should understand what children can acquire and at what speed. When they are aware of the methodologies behind educating children, they can spend time wisely on them. While this might seem difficult in the beginning, it is integral to comprehending where to apply the pertinent skills and where value shall reign within the relevant quarters. Attention must come from both angles because this is effective for students in the end.

Teachers’ perceptions of parental involvement are evaluated through student results. Even though this is an area that is primarily taken care of by teachers, it is expected that students are proactively coached at home as well. When it comes to the home front, the role of parents becomes even more significant. Teachers usually make their point clear whenever they meet with parents. They must manifest their truest selves through persistence and adherence to education, which is their highest priority. Teachers usually come out with guns blazing anytime they suspect parents are not doing their job. They discuss this through parent-teacher meetings, workshops, and one-on-one sessions. Teachers will often send notes home when they desire input from the parents for student betterment (Lasse, 2012). Teachers are playing their role well since they are keeping the parents abreast of changes and developments that are shaping up with the students. As times change, it is imperative to comprehend that the role of teachers and parents will become even more necessary to gain information concerning students. The behavioral issues and performance mechanisms of students give a good measure of who is playing

their role well (Zepeda, 2013). Teachers, therefore, find a way to connect with parents of students because it is much required in this day-and-age. This will be a turning point for students in a strategic fashion (Lasse, 2012; Zepeda, 2013).

Strategies for students in Grade 2. Reading is important in students' lives and a connection has been noted between poor reading, suspensions, and dropout rates among students (Blanton, 2015; Keyes, Cartledge, Gibson, & Robinson-Ervin, 2016; le Roux, Swartz, & Swart, 2014). An increased rate of students who are from backgrounds of poverty fails when learning to read. Reading instruction, including vocabulary, phonemic awareness, comprehension, fluency, and alphabetic principle is crucial for these students (Keyes et al., 2016). Moreover, informational texts are also important for students when trying to comprehend the material presented in all subjects (Enfield, 2014).

Enfield (2014) conducted a qualitative study for investigating the actions of teachers while reading narrative and informational texts to determine their ability to engage students within the classroom. The researcher observed and evaluated teachers as they taught (Enfield, 2014). Participants included two teachers and approximately 48 students enrolled in the first and second grades. Teachers were provided with a demonstration lesson by Enfield (2014) as an example of how to utilize informational text with the science unit being taught. Additionally, a time was provided for discussion after the demonstration. Enfield gave the teachers a list of potential books to utilize within the classroom. The researcher recorded the teachers as they taught whole-group lessons (Enfield, 2014). The recordings were then annotated and coded by Enfield so that each one could be analyzed to determine what teachers did within the classroom that was effective in impacting students when learning about science. Enfield discovered that the

actions of teachers can positively support students who are inquisitive and engaged during reading activities. Moreover, reading purposes and making predictions were activities Enfield found to impact how students engage with texts (Enfield, 2014). Foorman, Herrera, Petscher, Mitchell, and Truckenmiller (2015) expanded the topic of engaging students with texts to include factors that are related to students' reading comprehension.

Following the work of Enfield (2014), Foorman et al. (2015) conducted a study to examine the relationship between reading, oral language structure, and comprehension. Foorman et al. sought to determine if a relationship was evident between listening comprehension, vocabulary, syntax, and phonological awareness. Participants included 218 kindergarten students, 372 students enrolled in Grade 1, and 273 students enrolled in Grade 2. Foorman et al. (2015) measured all participants individually to determine each participant's level of listening comprehension, phonological awareness, vocabulary, and syntax. The measurements were completed by utilizing subtests specifically for each category (Foorman et al., 2015). Results indicated that students' oral language was directly related to listening comprehension, syntax, and vocabulary and was a prediction of students' reading comprehension. Similar to the study implemented by Foorman et al. (2015), Keyes et al. (2016) conducted a study to determine effective strategies to assist students with reading fluency.

After the study conducted by Foorman et al. (2015), Keyes et al. (2016) conducted a similar study. The purpose of the qualitative study conducted by Keyes et al. was to examine a reading intervention to determine the efficacy in assisting students enrolled in the second grade with reading fluency when reading aloud, generalization,

and comprehension. Keyes et al. conducted the study within a charter school.

Participants included six students enrolled in the second grade. Three of the participants were being taught reading in a first-grade classroom.

Participants who were selected to participate in this study scored below grade level on achievement tests were recommended by a teacher and scored in the at-risk range on benchmark assessments for oral reading fluency (Keyes et al., 2016). Students were provided computer-delivered intervention sessions individually but with two students present at the same time in the room. Students selected a story on the computer and read the story (Keyes et al., 2016). The program would provide definitions to students who clicked on any unfamiliar words. Each session was based on the reading level of each student. At the culmination of the intervention, from the six participants, five increased their oral reading fluency (Keyes et al., 2016).

Strategies for students in Grade 3. Reading comprehension is the goal of reading. To comprehend text, readers must acquire information from the text, integrate and synthesize the text, recognize words, construct the meaning of the words, and extract the meaning of the word as it is utilized within the text (Tighe, Wagner, & Schatschneider, 2015). Strategies students should implement during reading are listening, decoding, fluency, phonological skills, reasoning, vocabulary knowledge, working memory, morphological awareness, inferencing, and comprehension monitoring (Tighe et al., 2015).

le Roux et al. (2014) conducted a mixed-methods study to evaluate a reading program that utilized animals and determined if progress was made on comprehension, accuracy, and reading rate of students in Grade 3. Students who were identified by a

reading test as poor readers were the participants in the study. Participants included 102 students. The number of students who read to a dog with a volunteer present was 27. The number of students who read to an adult was 24, and 26 students read to a teddy bear with an adult present (le Roux et al., 2014).

le Roux et al. (2014) utilized a pretest and posttest to determine the success of the intervention. The three groups of students participated in the reading program over 10 weeks with the therapy dogs and adults assisting. The pretest was implemented before the intervention (le Roux et al., 2014). A reading program was then, implemented during the 10 weeks. Following the reading program, a posttest was implemented (le Roux et al., 2014). The third data collection was another posttest conducted over 8 weeks upon completion of the program. Data were analyzed, and no significant difference was found in the result of the three groups of students (le Roux et al., 2014). Dorsey (2015) expanded the research on reading achievement simultaneous to the work of le Roux et al. (2014).

Similar to the research conducted by le Roux et al. (2014), Dorsey (2015) conducted a mixed-methods study to determine if reading impacted continued academic success for students not demonstrating proficiency on assessments. The researchers found that three components are integral to reading. These components are comprehension, fluency, and accuracy. Participants included 239 students from 12 third-grade classrooms (Dorsey, 2015).

Third-grade teachers completed a survey to provide insight regarding the program's effectiveness on student achievement (Dorsey, 2015). Eight 12th-grade teachers were also asked to complete a survey to determine their perceptions of the

reading program's efficacy. After the surveys were collected interviews were conducted with three teachers (Dorsey, 2015). The interviews were transcribed and recorded for later analysis. Results indicated that the reading achievement scores of third-grade students were strong indicators of future failure, graduation, and a grade-point average of ninth-grade students (Dorsey, 2015).

Strategies and Materials to Support Parents with Mentoring

Parents are integral to students' academic success and are mentors as their children grow and mature (Mills, O'Keefe, Hass, & Johnson, 2014). Some reading strategies utilized by parents when they come across unknown material include (a) using context clues, (b) asking someone else, (c) reading ahead, (d) thinking back on prior knowledge, and (e) skipping the word to decipher with later text the meaning (Mills et al., 2014). Training programs designed for parents are beneficial for teachers, parents, and students (Terlitsky & Wilkins, 2015). Through these programs' parents acquire reading skills, teachers gain assistance from parents in teaching the students, and students have help at home and school when learning to read.

Parents influence and impact children's literacy in four areas to include the verbal environment, provision of materials that promote literacy, such as books, expectations, and engagement (Terlitsky & Wilkins, 2015). Moreover, the family's socioeconomic status is also a big factor in the literacy exposure children receive. Additionally, parents who have higher levels of education provide more literacy within the home environment and often read to the children (Terlitsky & Wilkins, 2015). Recommended strategies to prevent illiteracy are for teachers to conduct home visits with the parents and children, scaffolding, and providing parents with programs to promote family literacy. Materials

provided during the programs included opportunities to visit libraries, materials to make story bags and puppets to utilize during storytelling, and ideas to assist parents with making up stories and books. Additional strategies that are effective include journaling, circle time, assisted reading, and offer additional group meetings and workshops to assist parents (Rasinski & Young, 2014; Terlitsky & Wilkins, 2015).

Mitchell and Begeny (2014) conducted a study to determine if a noticeable impact was made after children completed a reading fluency intervention program conducted by parents during the summer months. Mitchell and Begeny noted that goals for students often are shared by teachers and parents. Because of this, parents need to provide tutoring at home for students to improve their academic skills. Participants included 12 students who were enrolled in the first grade, five students who were transitioning into the third-grade, and 16 caregivers (Mitchell & Begeny, 2014). All students were struggling with reading.

To begin the study parents were given a qualitative questionnaire to determine what level of literature and literacy environment the students were receiving at home (Mitchell & Begeny, 2014). Parents were also asked to complete a questionnaire at the culmination of the study to determine what academic activities students were participating in during the summer. Mitchell and Begeny (2014) conducted a training workshop for parents over 2 days. Student participants were also asked to complete a pretest and posttest. Parents were also provided with instructional materials during the workshop (Mitchell & Begeny, 2014).

Materials included protocols for implementing reading strategies, directions that were scripted for parents to read to their children, and a form to track the progress of the

children. Additional materials included a graph to assist with setting goals and providing feedback, a chart for stars to provide motivational rewards for students, and copies of passages for parents to follow along and score the students as they read (Mitchell & Begeny, 2014). After the workshop, Mitchell and Begeny requested that parents implement the program at least three times during the week for 10 minutes each session. At the culmination of the intervention, students who participated in the sessions improved in the use of sight words, fluency, and comprehension. Moreover, parents not only recommended continued use of the program, but they noticed such an improvement that they were going to recommend it to other parents (Mitchell & Begeny, 2014).

Moreover, the studies conducted by Enfield (2014), Foorman et al. (2015), and Keyes et al. (2016) related to this study because they focused on strategies to teach and utilize with students in Grade 2. Enfield conducted a qualitative study of the actions of teachers while reading narrative and informational texts to determine their ability to engage students within the classroom. Foorman et al. conducted a study to examine the relationship between reading, oral language structure, and comprehension. Finally, the purpose of the qualitative study conducted by Keyes et al. was to examine a reading intervention to determine the efficacy in assisting students enrolled in the second grade with reading fluency when reading aloud, generalization, and comprehension.

Studies conducted by le Roux et al. (2014) and Dorsey (2015) also related to this study because the focal point of these studies was developing successful strategies to teach and utilize with students when learning to read in Grade 3. le Roux et al. conducted a mixed-methods study to evaluate a reading program that utilized animals and determine if progress was made on comprehension, accuracy, and reading rate of students in Grade

3. Dorsey conducted a mixed-methods study to determine if reading impacted continued academic success for students because students were not demonstrating proficiency on assessments.

Mitchell and Begeny (2014) conducted a study related to this study that reviewed strategies and materials to support parents with mentoring. The studies conducted by Pagan and Sénéchal (2014) and Blanton (2015) were also related to this study because they focused on elements of a training program that were successful in assisting parents with strategies to assist their children. The researchers mentioned above used qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods as the forms for data collections to report the results of the various studies. All the studies in this literature review included groups of parents, teachers, and students who strove to assist students with achievement and parents with strategies to implement to improve their children's academic performance.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to support the current school improvement plan by (a) exploring research-based strategies with teachers that may enable parents to assist their children in the development of grade-level reading skills, (b) collaborating with teachers to identify the most effective strategies for use at each grade level, and (c) developing a training program for parents of children at each grade level to improve both parents' abilities to reinforce reading instruction at home and students' reading skills. I addressed the research questions and problem of this study with the utilization of the study design. I consulted literature for this study about strategies that assisted students with reading and that could be taught by parents and teachers. These mentoring strategies and materials were specifically helpful for students in Grades 2 and Grade 3

independently and for assisting parents with their involvement in academic achievement in their children's reading.

Conclusion

The research revealed that parental involvement often increases academic performance because of parents' efforts at home in conjunction with the school (Tan & Goldberg, 2009). Two key components, namely homes and schools, are bridged with parental involvement. Although they both operate differently, they both act together to influence children. This study may provide more insight into educational leaders, teachers, and curriculum supervisors to enhance parental participation for greater success. Improving student achievement and success rates are the main common goals for parents and teachers. To promote positive social change, students must be prepared to address academic competencies that transition to advanced education, and as a result, strengthen the workforce (Price-Mitchell, 2009). Furthermore, this will create a positive social change within schools through program evaluations by increasing parental involvement and teacher relationships to better foster a strong education for students to be academically successful.

Chapter 3

Introduction

To begin this chapter, I described the research design and why I chose it. Besides, I explained my role, as a researcher in the study, the number of selected participants, and how I chose them. I disclosed what instruments I used, and shared details about data collection, and analysis for credibility, dependability, transferability, and confirmability (Yin, 2008).

The purpose of this qualitative study was to investigate teachers' perceptions of effective research-based parental involvement strategies, materials, and training programs that may enable parents to assist their children with developing grade-level reading skills.

Research Design and Rationale

The following research questions guided this study:

RQ1. What are primary and elementary teachers' perceptions of research-based strategies that may enable parents to assist their children with developing grade-level reading skills in Grades 2 and 3?

RQ2. What type of materials do teachers think may enable parents to assist their children with developing grade-level reading skills in Grades 2 and 3?

RQ3. What type of training program may enable parents to assist their children with developing grade-level reading skills in Grades 2 and 3?

A qualitative study is an inquiry-based approach useful for exploring and understanding a central phenomenon (Merriam, 2009). In comparison, one uses a quantitative research study to utilize numerical data to describe a research problem or to explain the relationship between and among variables. Whereas qualitative research

studies concern how, what, and why, quantitative research studies provide-statistical explanations about a research problem (Creswell, 2012). I chose a qualitative approach to investigate teachers' perceptions of effective research-based parental involvement strategies, materials, and training programs that might enable parents to assist their children with developing grade-level reading skills.

Role of the Researcher

I am currently a teacher in the district where the study took place. However, I have never acted as a supervising teacher or as an administrator. Additionally, there were no personal benefits that the participants would receive for being a part of this study. I took the role of an observer for this study. I led interviews of a group of educators directly involved with parents, students, and practices, and analyzed gathered information to gain more knowledge of parental involvement benefits as it relates to the community and student achievement. The study took place at an elementary school very similar to where I work with second-and third-grade teachers. I had no personal relationships with any of the volunteers for this study.

Methodology

The methodology of this research is qualitative. To build the methodology of a study, many components must work together; components include data collection instruments, participants, and a plan for data analysis. Researchers must consider the research questions, problem, theories, and purpose to implement a plan for information analysis and data collection (Miles et al., 2014). Information from studies of qualitative inquiry is instrumental when identifying, exploring, and explaining the participants' perceived views and interests involving lived experiences (Gay, Mills, & Airasian, 2012).

Qualitative approaches, when compared to quantitative methods, enable researchers to acquire a more specific understanding and a larger range of information (Mertler & Charles, 2011). I interviewed a purposeful sample of Grades 2 and 3 teachers currently employed at the school, and the limited number of participants allowed greater exploration of the topic during the study. This qualitative approach permitted me to focus on teacher perceptions of strategies parents could use at home to support students' academic achievement.

Saini and Shlonsky (2012) stated that qualitative research involves studying people or things within a natural setting and trying to interpret the phenomena exhibited based on the meanings brought to them by the people. The use of this research design by a researcher can help to understand the perspectives of the participants. Purposefully-chosen teachers participating in this study included Grades 2 and 3 teachers at an elementary school in the state of Georgia. Because of this employment, the participants personally provided perspectives and data through responses to the interview questions of this study.

I created the interview instrument to reflect the literature review so responses to questions could answer the research questions. The interview protocol served to gather the needed data from the participant. I developed interview questions so answers could address concerns, and teachers' and administrators' perceptions, and so pieces of training could be put into place to better understand the problem and fix it. Responses collected from participants provided evidence of what strategies parents could use, what training teachers thought needed to be set in place, and the necessary materials needed to

complete work. This is more feasible with a team set in place with parents and teachers (Cooper, Crosnoe, Suizzo, & Pituch, 2010).

Research studies support the notion that parental involvement can impact students' academic outcomes (Almuammria, 2015; Leithwood & Patrician, 2015). Further, information from research literature supports that parental involvement can increase students' achievement (Wang & Sheikh-Khalil, 2014). The purpose of this qualitative study was to investigate teachers' perceptions of effective research-based parental involvement strategies, materials, and training programs that may enable parents to assist their children with developing grade-level reading skills. As stated by Merriam, "Data are collected through interviews, observations, or document analysis" (p. 23). This study used two of the three mentioned in Merriam.

Participant Selection

A group of elementary teachers in Grades 2 and 3 constituted/ made up the participation pool for this study. These educators volunteered to offer their expertise on the subject matter. There were 10 teachers total: nine women and one man, eight Black and two White, with one teacher having 23 years of teaching experience. The purpose of this qualitative study was to investigate teachers' perceptions of effective research-based parental involvement strategies, materials, and training programs that may enable parents to assist their children with developing grade-level reading skills.

A researcher often uses purposive sampling (Creswell, 2012) to select participants for a study and when he or she wishes to gain insight about a phenomenon from individuals who share common characteristics. This involves identifying and selecting individuals or groups of individuals that are especially knowledgeable about or

experienced with a phenomenon of interest (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). The use of purposeful sampling allowed for an understanding of teachers' perceptions of effective research-based parental involvement strategies, materials, and training programs that may enable parents to assist their children with developing grade-level reading skills. The selection criteria for participation in this study were: (a) participants must have been employed in the district where the study was conducted, (b) participants must have had 3 or more years of teaching experience, and (c) participants must have taught either second or third-grade.

Instrumentation

I derived interview questions from the research questions and created the questions that dealt with teacher fidelity and perceptions of strategies that parents could use at home to improve reading skills. I examined expressed data for teachers' views and any welcomed necessary advice that would be beneficial to parents for academic success. Interviews were necessary for this study because all the information gathered would be appropriate and useful. Teachers gave quality information from firsthand experiences.

Procedures for Recruitment, Participation, and Data Collection

The collection of data was in the form of interviews with teachers. The primary source of data was the interviews from the participants. Interviewing is necessary when behaviors, feelings, or how people interpret the world around them are not observable (Merriam, 2009). I conducted interviews to gain more insight into teachers' perceptions of parents' influence on second-and third-grade reading skills. Interviews were most appropriate for this study; according to (Creswell, 2012) they could provide a deeper

understanding of the views, experiences, and beliefs of the study participants. The interview questions consisted of strategies, pieces of training, and ways teachers can help parents become more involved, and how parents can gain motivation to have become more involved. The questions were open-ended throughout the process. Interviewees received a copy of the questions before the interview session, allowing them to familiarize themselves with content, and I audiotaped and recorded the interview. Participants were aware of the recording before the interview process began. Interviews took place after school each day. Participants understood the interview might last 60–90 minutes and I offered an extension if needed, but often less time elapsed (see Appendix A for Interview Questions).

There was an interview protocol set to keep the process aligned and structured. Interview protocols involve a set of questions developed before the interview session and used for all participants interviewed as a guide to establishing a process for the interview process used to reduce the chances for random questions by interviewers (Merriam, 2009). Questions applied to the study and I organized interview data from the interviews. I transcribed recordings and completed an analysis of the interviews within the following 48 hours. After interview completion, I examined data further for differences and similarities. I obtained approval from Walden Institutional Review Board (IRB; approval number [09-26-19-00292900]) before the beginning of the study. Upon approval, the principal contacted the superintendent, and the district granted permission for the study. Participants received a consent form to ensure confidential information and anonymity. I requested confirmation from volunteered teacher participants to my Walden's email address, answering the invitation to participate. I discussed a meeting time and place with

each individual that was convenient for his/her schedule and conducted semi-structured interviews. Thus, a participant could present new ideas during the interview (Creswell, 2009).

Data Analysis Plan

I saved all data on a personal computer with password protection. I labeled all files with a code and a date for identification, but without names. I used electronic and hand-written note-taking to record data and also wrote in a reflective personal journal having all colored-coded information used to contrast and compare notes to the research questions. I used Microsoft Word as the primary means of taking electronic notes. Summary transcripts and write-ups included labels, notes, and codes (Creswell, 2012). A Microsoft spreadsheet held coded themes and key ideas for tracking data. Grouped commonalities were color-coded, and there were three categories of themes.

Coding consisted of the process of identifying themes in accounts and attaching labels to identify them (Creswell). Themes are features of accounts made by participants, aggregated together to form a major idea relevant to the research problem (Creswell, 2012). When conclusions, ideas, or statements frequently appear in data, these ideas are articulated in themes that relate to the research problem or question. I looked at what phrases or words interviewed teachers used; interviewed teachers sometimes used phrases or words and responses, and common ones were color-coded. Creswell (2012) stated throughout the data collection and analysis process, the findings and interpretations had to be accurate.

Issues of Trustworthiness

There could be a validation of credibility, validity, and accuracy of findings through coding, peer debriefing, and member check. I worked closely with a coworker who had already conducted a study on parental involvement who served as my debriefer. Her role was to ask probing questions about the conclusions, methods, biases, and provide feedback concerning the accuracy and completeness of the researcher's data collection and data analysis procedures (Janesick, 2007).

Member checks served to decrease the chances of reporting incorrect data with the overall goal of providing accurate, credible, and valid findings. Member checks took place verbally during the interview process (Creswell, 2012), so I restarted and summarized information given to me from participants. Then, I questioned the participants to ensure understanding. Member checks involve allowing the participants to comment on the accuracy of the interpretation of their interviews. During and after each interview, I asked participants if the notes related to their recorded responses were thorough and accurate, and if interpretations and notes related to their responses accurately conveyed their statements and viewpoints (Birt, Scott, Cavers, Campbell, & Walter, 2016). The use of coding, peer debriefing, and member check decreased personal bias. Participants could edit, elaborate, clarify, delete, or add their own words from the interpreted patterns and themes recorded by the researcher.

I transcribed qualitative responses, garnered through each interview, into a Microsoft Word file, and analyzed responses to identify any overarching themes or patterns. I used themes or patterns observed during the interviews to form general reflective descriptions of teachers' perspectives. Stake (2005) defined data analysis as a

process of methodically probing, examining, classifying, and categorizing the data collected. I analyzed and used collective data to answer the corresponding research questions.

A transcription of data used Microsoft Word for word documentation of the interviews. According to Spring (2012), transcribing the data within 24 hours of each interview was important to maintain the accuracy of the data. I reviewed the data multiple times, simultaneously, to have a full understanding of the responses given. A password-protected flash drive held all saved information. Participants had an opportunity to review the data for accuracy.

Coding is when words or phrases that appear frequently throughout the data are written down using shorthand and transmitted into words and phrases (Creswell, 2012). I kept on Microsoft Word coded commonalities, key concepts, emerging themes, notes, codes, and phrases from the teacher interviews, while taking time to analyze the data. I used electronic and hand-written methods to record data. While comparing reflective notes to the research questions, I used a personal reflective journal to record all provided information.

Ethical Procedures

When conducting qualitative research one must consider ethical factors due to the nature of the data collection methods. Establishing trust with the participants of the study is essential. I established trust by informing and reminding the participants of their confidentiality rights. The interviews took place in an agreed-upon private and neutral location, where there were no interruptions so that the participants felt comfortable and relaxed. Informed consent obtained from all participants involved in the study included

methods to protect human subjects. Consent forms are important because the cooperation of the participants is an integral part of data collection. “Informed consent is an essential part of all research endeavors that involve human participants. The human rights of research participants must be protected” (Byrne, 2001). I informed participants that they could opt-out of the study at any time if they chose to do so. An assigned pseudonym protected participants’ anonymity and privacy. There would be a minimal psychological, relationship, legal, economic/professional, physical, or any other risks associated with their participation. Minimal risk refers to the probability that the harm or discomfort anticipated would not be greater than those ordinarily encountered in daily life for informed participants.

Participants would not receive any direct benefits from this study and gathered information would fulfill the purpose of the study. Contact information and data will be stored at my home in a locked file cabinet and on a password-protected computer. I am the only person that will have a key to the file cabinet and access to the password-protected computer. After the study is completed, I will shred the collected data associated with the study.

Summary

Answers to research questions, understanding the elements of the research, and finding the different parts, how they play a role, and how everything works together is vital in a qualitative study. To gain awareness and understanding of how teachers can assist parents was the central focus of this study. To ensure I ethically completed this research, it was important to explain my role. I gave the methodology in descriptive detail. I chose participants to evaluate second and third-graders. To benefit the study, I

explained the instruments of the focus group and interviews. I highlighted the procedures of the analysis to show how I conducted the research. Similarities and differences in the research questions answers were color-coded. In line with keeping ethics present, specific methods also showed credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

In the next chapter, I explained the results of the research. The purpose was restarted again as a reminder, followed by the introduction of the setting and demographics. I discussed information about the data collected, the process, and the analysis. I discussed evidence of trustworthiness as previously done in Chapter 3. The ending of the chapter would include tables, transcripts, and other figures beneficial to the presentation.

Chapter 4

Introduction

The purpose of this qualitative study was to investigate 10 teachers' perceptions of effective research-based parental involvement strategies, materials, and training programs that might enable parents to assist their children with developing grade-level reading skills in an interview process. Gathered data included details from interviews. Educators came together to discuss their views on parent involvement and how to be of assistance in making efforts stronger so the student could perform on or above grade level.

Reading strategies and skills are important for academic success. Researchers have noted a correlation between reading proficiency and academic success (Dogan, Ogut & Kim, 2015; Schwabe, McElvany, & Trendtel, 2015). However, in Georgia, significant numbers of students fail to demonstrate proficiency in reading /language arts (GDOE, 2020). Students cannot accomplish reading proficiency at school alone, but through collaboration between teachers and parents, working together to foster students' academic skills (Klemencic et al., 2014). Parental involvement through social, home-and school-based activities such as providing homework help has been found to positively impact reading achievement (Castro et al., 2015; Lam, & Ducreaux, 2013; Wilder, 2014). Effective strategies for reinforcing reading instruction at home is a concern among teachers and administrators at the primary and elementary schools that served as the research site.

I conducted the study using a qualitative methodology, collecting data through semi-structured interviews with teachers who were employed at Elementary School A

located in Georgia. Participant selection was through purposeful sampling. I understood teachers' perceptions of effective research-based parental involvement strategies, materials, and training programs that may enable parents to assist their children with developing grade-level reading skills by using purposeful sampling. During the interviews, I asked open-ended questions that allowed the participants to elaborate more in-depth and to express openly their opinions.

Three research questions guided this study:

RQ1. What are the primary and elementary teachers' perception of research-based strategies that may enable parents to assist their children with developing grade-level reading skills in Grades 2 and 3?

RQ2. What type of materials do teachers think may enable parents to assist their children with developing grade-level reading skills in Grades 2 and 3?

RQ3. What type of training program may enable parents to assist their children with developing grade-level reading skills in Grades 2 and 3?

Demographics/Setting

The teachers were all excited to participate when presented the idea to benefit students and parents. Each voluntary participant for this study consisted of 10 elementary school teachers, which consisted of one or 10% of males and nine or 90% of females. The race of the teachers included eight or 80% of Blacks, two or 20% of Whites, zero Hispanic, zero Asians, and zero who identified themselves as being from more than one race. There were 0% of participants, who identified themselves as other. There were zero participants whose highest level of education was a bachelor's degree. There were five or 50%, whose highest level of education was a master's degree. There were three or 30%,

whose highest level of education was a specialist degree, and two or 20% whose highest level of education was a doctorate. The participants' average years of experience was 14.3 years. The participants' average years in their current teaching position was 34.2 years. Table 1 below displays the demographics of the participants of this study. I assigned numbers 1–10 to each participant to protect their identity.

Table 1

Participants' Information

Respondent	Gender	Race	Highest Level of Education	Years of Experience	Current Position	Years in Current
1	Female	Black	Specialist	16	Teacher	4
2	Female	White	Masters	3	Teacher	3
3	Female	Black	Masters	11	Teacher	3
4	Male	Black	Masters	15	Teacher	2
5	Female	Black	Specialist	16	Teacher	2
6	Female	White	Masters	8	Teacher	5
7	Female	Black	Masters	9	Teacher	4
8	Female	Black	Doctorate	23	Teacher	7
9	Female	Black	Specialist	18	Teacher	4
10	Female	Black	Doctorate	14	Teacher	2

Data Collection

The data analysis process used data collected from participants. I closely reviewed the transcripts from the interviews and developed themes based on the framework. Data collection for this study was through interviews from second-and third-grade teachers. I conducted interviews to gain more insight into teachers' perceptions of how parents might influence second-and third-grade reading skills. Merriam (2009) stated conducting interviews was necessary to collect information about the participants' behaviors, feelings, or how people interpret the world around them as those things are not

observable. Interviews were most appropriate for this study because answers to questions provided a deeper understanding of the views, experiences, and beliefs of the study participants (Creswell, 2012).

The interview questions consisted of strategies, training, and ways teachers could help parents become more involved and how parents could become more motivated to be involved. The questions were open-ended throughout the process. Interviewees received questions before the interview session so each could familiarize themselves.

To ensure accuracy, I audiotaped and recorded the interviews. To keep the process aligned and structured, there were set interview protocols. Interview protocols involved a set of questions developed before the interview session and used for all participants interviewed as a guide, establishing a process for the interview process to reduce the chances for random questions by interviewers (Merriam, 2009). I organized interview data by commonalities from teacher responses with different colors of commonly used words or phrases, ideas, or words that interviewees repeated consistently during the interview process.

To describe the meaning of a particular text, I formed phrase or word patterns. I wrote the words and phrases at the top of each page of the transcripts to identify correctly possible emerging themes.

I obtained Walden's IRB approval before the beginning of the study. Upon approval, the principal contacted the superintendent and the district granted permission for the study. I requested volunteered teacher participants to send a confirmation to Walden's email address answering an invitation to participate. Participants received a consent form to ensure confidential information and anonymity. I discussed a meeting

time and place with everyone convenient for him/her schedule and conducted interviews. This allowed the introduction of new ideas during the interview by the participant (Creswell, 2009). Appendix A contains interview questions.

The 10 participants of this study participated in teacher interviews, which took place in the teachers' classrooms. This study did not include any names of teachers who participated; instead, I assigned alphanumeric codes-numbers 1 through 10 to the participants, including the recordings to maintain their confidentiality. Each interview lasted approximately 30–45 minutes and I recorded each on a digital voice recorder and kept them. I transcribed each interview with Microsoft Word. After which, I read through each interview twice to correct mistakes, and after transcribing each interview, I emailed each teacher his/her respective interviews for review.

Data Analysis

Through the data collection process, I generated themes and codes and organized them based on the teachers' experience and perceptions of parental involvement. I transcribed the data using hand-written notes and Microsoft Word, organizing interview data into tables and charts, featuring key categories from the framework to develop themes. An analysis of codes and themes could help to create a detailed story concerning useful strategies. The participants had an opportunity to review the data for accuracy based on an email sent to each teacher separately asking for confirmation and accuracy of data. Teachers reviewed their interviews and made changes when necessary. Afterward, I received back the transcripts via email, and I re-read each transcript and marked, transcripts according to typologies. I counted similar words and phrases, grouping them, and then, counting them for frequency. All recordings, transcripts, and other documents

are currently stored in a locked file cabinet in my home and on my password-protected computer, where they will remain for 5 years. After 5 years, I will shred all documents associated with the study and erase information files on the computer so that the data is destroyed.

Evidence of Trustworthiness

I assured trustworthiness via attention to four areas within qualitative research (Shenton, 2004): credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

Participant-gathered data must be verified, by the participants, to ensure trustworthiness (Shenton, 2004).

Being aware of biases contributes to the trustworthiness of the researcher (Patton, 2015). When collecting and analyzing data, the researcher must acknowledge how his values might impose biases (Allwood, 2011; Kemparaj & Chavan, 2013; Phillips, Dwan, Hepworth, Pearce, & Hall, 2014). I ensured credibility by using member checks. The data from this study could come from any part of the community and could be implemented in other schools. I peer-debriefed and recruited a coworker to check analysis and information, for extra confidence.

Credibility

I used member checks, coding, and peer debriefing to increase credibility in this study so there would not be any issues with trustworthiness. Credibility is one method used to establish trustworthiness in qualitative research (Birt, Scott, Caversm Campbell, & Walter, 2016). Credible research presents an accurate depiction of the lived experience that would be recognized by anyone who has also lived the experience (Quick & Hall, 2015). Credibility is established by prolonged engagement with the participants to obtain

data saturation of the phenomenon (Quick & Hall, 2015). The researcher can enhance credibility by having participants review the written transcripts and verifying accuracy (Quick & Hall, 2015). Credibility is enhanced when the data collection, analysis, and interpretation are discussed in detail to provide a clear process of the research (Quick & Hall, 2015). I gave the participants a summary of the analyzed data. The participants verified that they answered questions and concerns. After each participant reviewed the transcripts, they agreed that the information from the interview was accurate.

Transferability

Transferability is one method used to assess trustworthiness in qualitative research (Kornbluh, 2015). Transferability refers to how research findings are applied in other settings (Kornbluh, 2015). Researchers may indicate additional areas where the information may be transferred. Researchers must provide detailed information on the participants and the demographics to determine transferability (Kemperaj & Chavan, 2013; Kornbluh, 2015). Transferability is achieved when the reader, not involved in the research, can identify and see oneself in what is being read.

All concepts from this study could be transferred to other areas of education. It was a study on young elementary students, but parents and teachers could benefit from the study as well. It is critical in education to form a team that will build and support a child's social development and academic success and growth. Any community can use the information provided in this study, especially one that has a low socioeconomic status. Providing informative information from educators can lead parents to have more successful moments at home with their children.

Dependability

I used a coworker as a peer reviewer. She is an educator who has worked with parents one-on-one for many years, in early childhood settings with learners. She has worked numerous years with data usage that mirrors the demographics of the school in the study. The information collected from the data was a valuable way to provide parents and teachers tools to use while teaching 21st-century children.

Confirmability

The participants are the only ones who can legitimately judge the credibility of the results. Participants ensured confirmability was demonstrated when the data represented exactly what the participants stated during the interviews (Patton, 2015). Reviewing the data to ensure the findings are exact and can be traced to the original participants that stated it, assisted in assuring confirmability (Phillip et al., 2014). Two or more people should agree with the data's accuracy (Kemparaj & Chavan, 2013). Confirmability is established when creditability, transferability, and dependability are achieved (Kemparaj & Chavan, 2013).

As a part of the data analysis, I used a peer check system to bring an objective approach. The educator and I worked closely together on many projects. I have an easily-understood tone, so participants could acknowledge any biased situation in the results. I reviewed the data and final chapters in January. Based on the knowledge, information given, the school of the study, and daily conversations with the educator, I could complete this study. All participants in the study were volunteers. Everyone was happy to

assist and become a part of this project in which their opinions mattered and voices would be heard.

Results

I based the results of this study on data gathered for each of the three guiding research questions, using teacher interviews to determine the findings within this study. The intent of a number of the interview questions directly inquired what training would benefit parents to be more motivated and engaged in assisting their children to achieve grade level in reading (or higher) in Grades 2 and 3 (interview questions 3, 5, 6, 8, 9, 11). Interview questions 2, 13, 16 addresses what research-based strategies teachers have that would be helpful for parents to support improved on-level reading skills. Interview questions 1, 4, 7, 12, 14, 15 address what type of materials would assist parents with helping their children's learning process. The remaining interview questions (4, 9, 10) are teachers gathered data regarding collaboration with parents and suggestions on increasing parental involvement/volunteering/participation to support their children's learning.

General/overarching themes based on responses from the participants' experiences and perceptions of strategies can be used to formulate effective strategies to improve reading development. Several most-used words and phrases emerged as the themes that answered the research questions. I analyzed commonalities among the phrases, three themes emerged from the data (See Table 2), after I coded data from the transcription from teacher interviews. I created a folder in Microsoft Word with each interview question, notes, and commonalities.

Table 2

Research Questions and Resulting/Overarching Themes

Number	Research Question	Interview Questions	Overarching Theme
RQ 1	What are primary/elementary teachers' perception about researched-based strategies that may enable parents to assist their grade level reading skills in Grade 2 and 3?	2 13 16	Parents need information on Differentiated Reading Instruction needed for their children's reading and favored learning modality (modalities)
RQ 2	What type of materials do teachers think may enable parents to assist their children with developing grade level reading skills in Grade 2 and 3?	1 4 7 10 12 14 15	Parents need access to grade level books, magazines, educational games, other resources that appeal visually, kinesthetically, and auditorily to their children's learning styles
RQ 3	What type of training program may enable parents to assist their children with developing grade level reading skills in Grade 2 and 3?	3 5 6 8 9 11	Parents should participate in informative training about curricula, how content is taught, and teacher expectations

Interview question 1. The first question I designed was to collect qualitative data about the participants' years of teaching experience: "How long have you been teaching?" Data collected and analyzed for the first interview question indicated that collectively, the participants had 14.3 years of teaching experience. Experiences provided by teachers that have years invested in teaching will be extremely useful. On the other hand, "Teachers who feel they have total control in the classroom might create an unwelcome atmosphere for parents wishing to participate" (Avvisati et al., 2013). This question relates to RQ2. Depending on how long the teacher has taught, he/she may be stuck in selfish ways of saying what happens in their classroom. A new teacher is more prone to be more welcoming of parents rather than a veteran teacher. Teachers have to be aware of revolving changes to stay abreast of the teaching world and to keep parents updated with accurate information and materials.

Teacher 1 answered, "I have been teaching for 16 years."

Teacher 2 answered, "13 years."

Teacher 3 answered, "I have been teaching for 11 years."

Teacher 4 answered, "15 years."

Teacher 5 answered, "16 years."

Teacher 6 answered, "Eight years."

Teacher 7 answered, "Nine years."

Teacher 8 answered, "I have been teaching for 23 years."

Teacher 9 answered, "18 years."

Teacher 10 answered, "I have been currently teaching for 14 years."

Interview question 2. The second interview question I designed was to collect qualitative data about the participants' perceptions about the effect parents have on their children's reading development skills. Overall, the participants perceived that parents either can have a positive or negative impact on their children's reading development skills. Parental involvement makes the greatest difference in reading during the early years (Hemmerechts, Agirdag, & Kavadias, 2016). They perceived parents' influence as positive when they consistently interact with their children by providing resources, exposing them to different activities, and when they model reading and speaking. However, the participants perceived parental involvement to harm their children's reading development skills when they don't spend time reading to them, model reading, and when they do not model a love for reading. According to Lam and Ducreaux (2013), parental involvement includes home-based, school-based, and social activities. This question relates to RQ1. Involved parents will not mind helping their child in any way with strategies that can be given to necessary development skills.

When asked the second interview question, "What kind of effect do you think parents have on students' reading development skills?"

Teacher 1 answered, "I think parents can have a positive effect on students reading development skills if they take out time to work with them daily. Parents can have a negative effect if they don't take out time to work with them."

Teacher 2 answered,

Parents are children's first teachers. We have the ability as parents to give our children an advantage when entering school if we have already begun to build their foundational reading skills at home. Children who are read to at a young age

have a greater vocabulary, phonemic awareness, and usually become readers faster than children who have not been read to.

Teacher 3 answered,

Parents are a child's first teacher. Language and reading skills begin at home, before grade school, and before daycare. The only effect parents have on students' reading development skills is to what they expose their children. If parents begin exposing their children to different reading resources such as books, magazines, online books, etc., they will have a jumpstart on the reading process. However, some parents do not offer their children resources at home and use basic items around their house to help make a connection between words and pictures and they perform just as well as students that have resources.

Teacher 4 answered: "Parents have an invaluable effect on students reading and development skills. They have much earlier access to students than teachers."

Teacher 5 answered, "Research tells us that children who are read to, even in the early stages of pregnancy and throughout early childhood, have significant advantages in language acquisition and literacy. Parents who value reading will have children who love to read."

Teacher 6 answered,

I think reading is a skill that starts as an early intervention with parents reading to their children before they can even talk and form sentences. Once they start talking children should begin listening to their parents read and also try reading with them.

Teacher 7 answered,

Parents have a tremendous amount of effect on their child's reading developmental skills. Parents are their child's first teacher. If their parents model a love for reading and good reading skills, it increases the child's chances of becoming a successful reader.

Teacher 8 answered,

I think this question could be answered in a variety of ways. First, some parents are illiterate and may not be of great help because of their shortcomings. These parents can help their child by seeking resources such as tutors and other auditory/visuals to assist.

Teacher 9 answered, "Parents have a positive effect on students' reading development skills. Students will be more motivated to read when a parent shows interest in their reading development."

Teacher 10 answered,

Depending on the reading development skills of the students, parents can still have a positive or negative effect on students' reading development. Parents who are involved with students' academic areas of needs usually have children in school that perform either average or above average in the area of reading (unless there is a specific learning/ and or medical disability). Parents who are not involved usually have children who perform poorly in academic areas. Although, this is not quite always the case, there are cases as to which this concept holds.

A simple task of picking up and reading a book every night or even singing will increase reading skills. Teachers 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, and 10 all stated how parents are a child's first teacher. Reading to them while in the womb 'in the early stages of pregnancy.'

Interview question 3. The third interview question I asked stated, “How do you think parental reading skills can be increased to better help students?” and was designed to collect qualitative data pertaining to the participants’ perceptions about how parental reading skills can be increased to better help students. “Parents, who stressed the importance of reading to their children by modeling reading, have children who are more likely to read” (Clark, 2010). Responses from the participants indicated that they most often perceived involving parents in workshops and professional learning as a means for increasing parental reading skills. According to the ecological systems theory of Bronfenbrenner (1994), children could learn from and be influenced by their environment. This question relates to RQ3.

Teacher 1 answered, “I think parents should look for resources and different strategies to better increase their help with students reading skills.”

Teacher 2 answered, “Parent Literacy classes/workshops would be helpful. Teaching parents to find books they are interested in and increase their love of reading. Children emulate what they see, not what we say. If we read, they will want to read.”

Teacher 3 answered,

Parental reading skills can be increased by inviting parents out to schools to provide them with a thorough explanation of the curriculum and what their children are required to learn in school. I think they should also participate in workshops that target parents that have deficits in reading. If parents understood what their children must learn, they can be of better assistance at home when assisting with homework.

Teacher 4 answered: “Increasing parental knowledge of different strategies and interventions can help students.”

Teacher 5 answered, “I think that when parents have a sound foundation in literacy, they are able to enforce reading with their children as well as be a resource to them with or without solicitation.”

Teacher 6 answered, “I think parents can attend workshops or some type of professional learning that can actually help them improve or even show how to help their children at home.”

Teacher 7 answered, “Parents need to be aware of some of the strategies that teachers are using at the school so that they can use those strategies at home as well.”

Teacher 8 answered,

Teachers can assist parents by providing a list of resources that the parent and student can learn together. Reading workshops provided at the school level can also increase a parents’ understanding of the content. I would also suggest parents sitting/observing as the teacher instructs reading. This will help strengthen their confidence in learning reading skills.

Teacher 9 answered, “Parents can attend parent workshops to learn reading strategies to increase their child’s reading development.”

Teacher 10 answered, “Parental reading skills can be increased through classes that involve peer tutoring, practice, and exposure.”

According to Teachers 1, 3, and 5, parents need to be given the proper resources to help at home. Teachers 2, 6, 9, and 10 discuss parents’ participation in workshops and professional learning would allow them to understand the curriculum and what their

children are required to learn in school and how they can assist their children with homework. Teachers 4, 7 have a need for strategies for peer tutoring and providing practice. Therefore, the skill can be better taught at home when parents have assurance and understanding. Teacher 8 ironically said, “all of the above.”

Interview question 4. The fourth interview question I designed was to collect qualitative data pertaining to the participants’ perceptions about how parents can gain reading skills to better help students. “Parents, schools, and communities need to work together to foster and encourage children’s literacy development” (Jewek & Gerwin, 2012). This question relates to RQs 2 and 3. Being able to communicate with parents is a necessity in providing materials as well as providing adequate workshops and training courses. Joyce Epstein, a leading expert on parental involvement, noted that good relations between home and school have the potential of optimizing children's development by promoting consistency and better learning-related practices (Epstein, 1995). Common communication between teachers and parents must be established for student success in all areas.

When asked, “How do you collaborate with parents?”

Teacher 1 answered, “I collaborate with parents by sending home study guides to help their child at home.”

Teacher 2 answered, “I send positive notes home, phone calls. I let my students’ parents know that we are on the same team, and I want their child to grow and succeed in their time with me.”

Teacher 3 answered, “I collaborate with parents through parent teacher conferences, parent workshops, family nights, or any school functions that allows parents to come out and participate.”

Teacher 4 answered, “Discuss different ways to impact student learning.”

Teacher 5 answered, “I collaborate with parents via face to face and through multiple technological platforms.”

Teacher 6 answered, “I communicate with parents weekly for the most part. I have regular meetings concerning their IEPs yearly, which talk about their academic goals. I also send letters home and make phone calls when necessary.”

Teacher 7 answered, “I try to build a rapport with parents through phone calls, messaging apps such as Class Dojo, etc. I also try to let them know what is going on in and class and why.”

Interview question 5. The fifth interview question I designed was to collect qualitative data pertaining to the participants’ perceptions of the types of training parents need in order to become better teachers at home. “Achievement in reading cannot be accomplished only at school” (Klemencic, Mirazchiyski, & Sandoval-Hernandez, 2014). Overall, the participants’ responses indicated that they believe parents need to become trained on how to model the reading process, instructional strategies, and critical thinking skills. Some responses indicated that in addition to focuses on academics, in order to become better home teachers, parents should participate in training that focuses on behavior management, building routines and schedule, and healthy eating. When asked the fifth interview question, “What trainings do you think parents need to become better at home teachers?” This question relates to RQ3.

Teacher 1 answered, “I think parents should attend workshops/trainings on the different classroom disciplines, so they can stay abreast of the different things their students’ have to learn.”

Teacher 2 answered, “Behavior Management, building a Routine and Schedule, teaching them about the importance of healthy food and regular bedtimes.”

Teacher 3 answered,

One training that I think parents need to become better at home teachers is a Parent Curriculum Training. This will allow teachers to share information with parents about what their child is learning in school and provide parents with resources that helps them teach/review skills with their child.

Teacher 4 answered: “How to use questioning techniques to facilitate critical thinking.”

Teacher 5 answered, “I think that parents need to have access to many of the resources that teachers have. There are so many educational games and lessons that are accessible online that would benefit parents and their children.”

Teacher 6 answered,

Anything dealing with ELA/Math. I think how lessons actually are taught in class. I think actually letting them do a class with a teacher where they learn like their children to see how their class is run every day, so they know what to expect.

Teacher 7 answered, “Parents need to be aware of some of the strategies the teachers are using at school with their child. This can be technology or something as simple as asking and answering questions.”

Teacher 8 answered, “Parents would need to become students themselves. So, I would suggest more hands-on learning in the classroom alongside academic nights that involve teachers teaching parents how instructional strategies at school are used during reading or math.”

Teacher 9 answered,

Trainings that model the reading process would be beneficial to parents to ensure students become better readers. Parents can help with reading comprehension by listening to their child read and then ask questions about the story on what he or she read. Also, parent can play word games at home or in the car.

Teacher 10 answered, “Training that involves disciplinarian techniques, activities and pieces of training that teach parents how to be patient when assisting their children in educational tasks would be beneficial to parents to become better at home teachers.”

Teachers 1, 3, 5, 6, 7, and 8 all mentioned parents should participate in workshops that inform them about the curriculum, classroom disciplines, and teacher resources so that they will understand what their children are learning in school, how lessons are taught in class, and teachers’ expectations for students’ demonstration of learning.

Teacher 8 answered, “Most of my parents and I collaborate through different forms of communication about their children’s academic success. I use phone conferences, parent letters, teacher conferences, classroom observations, and academic nights.”

Teacher 9 answered, “I collaborate with parents through parent-teacher conferences, school-wide events, family night events, Class Dojo, and Weekly Newsletters.”

Teacher 10 answered, “Collaboration with parents take place in the forms of parent-teacher conferences, remind 101, class dojo, phone calls, e-mails, notes, and PTO /parent-teacher organization events.” Parent-teacher collaboration is ‘a must’ in schools. It is sometimes hard to get in touch and have constant communication at all times. At least having a common ground of how and what is going on in the child’s education status should be mandatory to keep everyone on the same page. All levels of communication are important. All teachers mentioned some form of communication from Class Dojo, parent teacher conferences, family nights, face-to-face, letters, phone calls, email, or texts.

Interview question 6. The sixth interview question I designed was to collect qualitative data pertaining to the participants’ perceptions of the types of training teachers need to handle students that do not involve parents in order to be successful readers. The respondents’ responses indicated they perceived that teachers need cultural sensitivity training. Training should also include engaging reluctant readers, accommodating individual students’ learning needs through various interventions and strategies.

There are varied definitions of parental involvement, and there is no published formula for the amount or type of parental involvement necessary to increase student educational outcomes (Goodall & Montgomery, 2013). Castro et al. (2015) defined parental involvement as “... the active participation of parents in all aspects of their children’s social, emotional and academic development. (p. 34)

Other topics suggested by the teacher respondents included behavioral and classroom management, and relationship building. When asked the sixth interview question, “What trainings do you think teachers need to be able to handle students that do

not have those involved parents in order to be successful readers?” This question relates to RQ3.

Teacher 1 answered, “Teachers need more training on cultural diversity.”

Teacher 2 answered, “Behavior Management, Relationship Building, Classroom Management, Strategies to Engage Reluctant Readers.”

Teacher 3 answered,

I don’t think there should not be a training for teachers. All students are different, with different learning styles from different backgrounds. It is the job of a teacher to ensure all her students are successful readers. Teachers should just simply teach and use effective instructional strategies that cater to the needs of each student in his/her class.

Teacher 4 answered, “Different interventions and strategies to promote engagement.”

Teacher 5 answered,

I think parents need cultural sensitivity training. Many educators have had the privilege of having great parental support (mother, father, or both). Many of our children do not have that. That is why they need to learn as many techniques as possible to be able to assist children with that demographic.

Teacher 6 answered, “I think training with the parent facilitator dealing with collaborating with parents will help.”

Teacher 7 answered,

Teachers have to learn that in a perfect world all parents would be involved in their child’s education, but we do not live in a perfect world. They have to learn to

continue to make contact and do the best they can with that child during the day, while they are in their classroom.

Teacher 8 answered, “Teachers need cultural awareness training involving the what and how of parents who are illiterate and/or have alternate schedules that do not allow them to spend quality educational time with their child.”

Teacher 9 answered, “Teachers can attend training that discusses how to help students to be successful readers when there is no parental support. A reading club or mentors can be used at the school to help these students.”

Teacher 10 answered, “Training that could help teachers include parental involvement training presented by the school parent facilitator could be beneficial.”

Training for parents should be given all year long. Teaching and learning are always evolving and changing. Technology is a major tool in school. Knowing how to incorporate it as a learning/teaching device at home will help improve skills. The teachers all expressed different pieces of training that are needed. Teachers 1, 5, and 8 talked about cultural diversity training because no families are the same.

Interview question 7. The seventh interview question I designed was to collect qualitative data about the participants’ perceptions of the changes they would like to see in their schools concerning parental involvement and students reading on grade level. “According to the ecological systems theory of Bronfenbrenner (1994), children learn and are influenced by their environment.” Overall, the respondents indicated similarities that they would like to see increased parental involvement at their respective schools. Several respondents further explained how their schools should increase parental involvement. “Parenting focuses on helping parents develop skills that will help support

educational efforts of the school and will encourage learning to go beyond the classroom” (Epstein, 1995, p. 202). Examples included involving parents through literacy nights where they are exposed to fun games and programs that can be used at home to increase students’ motivation for engaging in literacy and recognition through celebrations for students who have increased reading achievement due to their parents being involved, and on grade level, for parents to be involved. This question relates to RQ 2. This can go hand in hand with having the proper materials needed to increase academic success.

When asked the seventh interview question, “As a teacher, what would you like to see changed in your school setting concerning parental involvement and students reading on grade level?”

Teacher 1 answered, “I would like to see more parents involved in their child’s education.”

Teacher 2 answered,

As I mentioned before, building a love of reading into the parents or at least showing them the importance of engaging in their child’s literacy. Having literacy nights where we share fun games or programs that the children can use at home to increase their literacy and excitement for reading.

Teacher 3 answered,

I would like for ALL of our parents to care about their child’s education. I would like for our school to host a parent meeting that allows parents to be honest with teachers and administrators about why they don’t participate in school functions, communicate with their child’s teacher, and why they only take interest in activities such as field day. I would also like to have something in place that is

geared towards closing the gap with students that are below grade level and making sure students stay on grade level once they get there.

Teacher 4 answered, “I would like to see more parental involvement geared towards reading achievement.”

Teacher 5 answered, “I think that we have an open invitation for parents to be involved with the numerous activities that are provided. I think that more incentives/celebrations should be in place for students who are reading on grade level for parents to be involved.”

Teacher 6 answered, “I would love to see more parental involvement, but I would want my team to come up with creative ways to get parents to show up for events.”

Teacher 7 answered, “I would like to see more parental involvement opportunities that involve literacy. Opportunities that give parents the chance to volunteer in the classroom or media center to help promote literacy.”

Teacher 8 answered, “I would love to see more parents observing to learn to help their child at home.”

Teacher 9 answered, “I would like to see more parents recognized for their parental involvement in my school setting. Also, I would like to see students receiving more incentives for reading on grade level.”

Teacher 10 answered, “I would like to see parents take more of a positive role such as coming to parent-teacher conferences, attending PTO/PTA meetings, and volunteering in the class setting.” Students are more structured, and teachers are more conversational. This happens when parents and teachers are constantly seeing and interacting together. Having strong parents behind a teacher does not give the student any

time to enter failure. All 10 teachers responded with some type of activity that involved parents to be available and present.

Interview question 8. The eighth interview question I designed was to collect qualitative data about the participants' perceptions of successful methods or activities they currently use in their classroom to increase reading skills. Teacher responses to the eighth research question indicated that most of the participants perceived small group instruction and activities as successful methods or activities they currently use in their classroom to increase reading skills. According to the participants, small group instruction provides opportunities for students to participate in guided reading, practice, and remediation. "According to the ecological systems theory of Bronfenbrenner (1994), children learn and are influenced by their environment" (Bronfenbrenner). Other successful methods and activities included using a variety of text to increase vocabulary comprehension skills, incorporating technology, and informing students about how reading proficiency is currently beneficial and in the future. Other methods included involving students in tracking their progress, using Saxon Phonics, modeling think-aloud, and using graphic organizers. "Reading instruction, to include vocabulary, phonemic awareness, comprehension, fluency, and alphabetic principle is crucial for these students" (Keyes et al., 2016) for students that perform at failing levels. This question relates to RQ 3.

When asked the eighth interview question, "What are successful methods or activities currently being used in your classroom to increase reading skills?"

Teacher 1 answered, “Some of the successful methods/activities used in my classroom include: small group activities, tiered lessons, read-aloud, use of graphic organizers, guided reading practice, partner reading, etc.”

Teacher 2 answered,

I show excitement for reading and literacy skills. I talk to the children about how far reading can take them in their schooling and future. I encourage them to keep going and keep trying, even when they struggle. I teach them to be respectful of others when they struggle to read, give them space and time to practice. We do not make fun of each other or talk over one another when someone is reading. I also engage the kids with hands-on and interactive activities during flex groups and try to use technology when possible to engage the whole group.

Teacher 3 answered, “Small group instruction and providing my student with multiple opportunities to read a variety of text which increases their vocabulary and improves their comprehension skills.”

Teacher 4 answered, “annotating texts.”

Teacher 5 answered, “I think accountability for learning is important. When students are actively involved in tracking their progress, they are more inclined to monitor their reading for progress.”

Teacher 6 answered, “Remediation. Guided Reading small groups.”

Teacher 7 answered, “We utilize Saxon Phonics daily, as well as a Phonological Awareness manual daily. We also model through think-aloud reading strategies to help with comprehension. Students also receive EIP services and participate in guided reading.”

Teacher 8 answered, “I use much modeling and I incorporate graphic organizers to increase higher-order thinking skills.”

Teacher 9 answered, “I use guided reading, partner reading, one on one instruction, hands-on learning content reading skills activities to increase reading skills in my classroom.”

Teacher 10 answered, “Guided reading, PBIS, and a positive classroom climate that fosters trust.” Reading is an important skill that students must learn in school. There are many different ways to teach different skills. Teachers have to differentiate instruction to fit the necessary need for a student. Guided reading and small group instruction are two of my favorites. Having actual hands-on activities for the students in a setting of no more than six in one group while making learning engaging and fun, has been very successful for me. Teachers 1, 2, 3, 6, 9, and 10 incorporate small group and guided reading instruction to fit better the needs of the students.

Interview question 9. The ninth interview question I designed was to collect qualitative data about the participants’ perceptions of how they would like to see parental involvement increased. “Joyce Epstein, a leading expert on parental involvement, noted that good relations between home and the school have the potential of optimizing children's development by promoting consistency and better learning-related practices.” The majority of the teacher respondents indicated that they would like to see parental involvement increased through volunteering in the classroom. Other responses from the interviews included increasing parent visibility throughout the school in general. Additionally, respondents indicated the desire for more positive interaction between parents and teachers. Helping at home includes “encouraging, listening, reacting,

praising, guiding, monitoring, and discussing -not teaching school subjects” (Epstein, 2001, p. 43). This question relates to RQ 3. Teachers know what areas parents need to be more proficient in, and therefore, workshops and training can be offered to better support parents where they are weak to increase academic success in the students.

When asked the ninth interview question, “In what areas would you like to see parental involvement increased?”

Teacher 1 answered, “I would like to see parents more actively engaged with their child’s learning by connecting with the school and volunteering.”

Teacher 2 answered,

I want to see parents engage with the schools and teachers positively. I want them to take ownership of their child’s education and realize that they are a valuable part of it, regardless of their background or education.

Teacher 3 answered, “I would like to see parent-teacher relationships increase. If the parent is unaware of what their child is struggling in at school, how can that parent assist? The parent must have a positive relationship with the child’s teacher.”

Teacher 4 answered, “Academics.”

Teacher 5 answered,

I would like to see parental involvement increased with all content areas. Parents are involved when their children are performing, awarded, or in a sporting activity. I think that parents should be involved in every aspect of their children’s lives.

Teacher 6 answered, “I think in all aspects of the school as a whole. In all subject areas. Volunteering in the classroom is helpful. Eating lunch with students etc.”

Teacher 7 answered, “I would like to see parental involvement increased both academically and socially.”

Teacher 8 answered,

The main concern for me is a parental aspiration. Even when parents are not able to be present at school, their positive talks and outlooks for their children make a world of a difference. All students can learn! Some need more of a push than others. That is when the parent as a teacher and motivator is most important.

Teacher 9 answered, “I would like to see parental involvement increased at the school I currently worked at. Attendance at most school events is very low in attendance.

Teacher 10 answered, “I would like to parent involvement increased in the classroom setting.” Parents can play many roles in increasing involvement. It doesn’t take much. If the parent is always working to support the family, a letter written on the refrigerator with a few words of encouragement can be very beneficial. For example, “Make sure you read, complete your homework, and study before bed.” A parent stopping by the classroom to make sure the student is on task and behaving on a lunch break is another example. Lastly, just showing teachers that a parent cares with a simple note in the weekly folder is involvement as well. All teachers mentioned that parent involvement needs to increase at the school in the classroom to help mold the child academically, socially, and emotionally.

Interview question 10. The tenth interview question I designed was to collect qualitative data about the participants’ perceptions of whether or not they think parental

involvement increases reading achievement. Participants who answered, “Yes,” were asked to provide further explanation about how parental involvement increases reading achievement. An analysis of the teachers’ responses suggested that they all perceived parental involvement as increasing student reading achievement. Parental involvement promotes student achievement in reading (Klemencic, Mirazchiyski, & Sandoval-Hernandez, 2014). Parents assist in developing literacy skills in their children (Buckingham, et al. 2013). Parental involvement makes the greatest difference in reading during the early years (Hemmerechts, Agirdag, & Kavadias, 2016). Further analysis of how they perceived parental involvement as increasing student reading achievement indicated that parental involvement is most beneficial when it reinforces the skills taught in school. “Parental involvement delivers a clear memo to students that schoolwork is important to parents and, hence, the motivation for academic commitment and success” (Center on Education Policy, 2012). Equally mentioned were the participants’ perceptions of the importance of parental involvement because it emphasizes the value of literacy by demonstrating the importance of reading. This question is related to RQ number 2. Parents must know that they are a key ingredient to their child’s education.

When asked the tenth interview question, “Do you think parental involvement increases student reading achievement? If yes, how?”

Teacher 1 answered, “Yes, I think parental involvement would increase student reading achievement because the parents would be able to reinforce the skills taught in school.”

Teacher 2 answered, “Yes, as I stated above if parents are engaged, children will be.”

Teacher 3 answered,

Yes, I think parental involvement increases student reading achievement to a certain extent. Parents that take time out to read to or read with their child at home will improve their reading skills. Students rarely have quiet time or one on one time at school where they can just sit and read for enjoyment. At home is the perfect place for that, in some cases. Parents can help their child sound out words, ask questions about the book they are reading, or just simply listen to their child read. Just being able to read will not increase student achievement. A child must understand what they are reading and be able to answer questions. If parents are reviewing skills that are taught in class such as the main idea, inference, or author's purpose, then parents may increase reading achievement.

Teacher 4 answered, "It increases student reading achievement by exposing them and demonstrating the importance of reading."

Teacher 5 answered, "I do. For one, it shows the child that the parent(s) cares. When they know they care, and they are involved, they are more apt to perform."

Teacher 6 answered, "Yes. It allows the student to read more and understand what they are reading and help students recall what they read."

Teacher 7 answered, "Yes. It shows students that their parents care and are also monitoring what they are accomplishing at school."

Teacher 8 answered, "Parental involvement gives a student a better outlook on reading. Some students may still struggle with reading but can make more progress when the parent is involved."

Teacher 9 answered, “Yes, parental involvement does increase student reading achievement. Parent involvement and the amount of time spent reading at home are major predictors of student success in reading, literacy development, and overall learning.”

Teacher 10 answered, “I do believe that parental involvement increases student achievement to a degree depending on the situation at hand.” Parents can be skill reinforcers at home with students. Reading passages can be read, broken down to better understanding, with questions to ensure. Learning sight words is a great skill for parents to develop better readers at home. The importance of improvement is to have repetition. All 10 teachers agreed that parental involvement increases reading achievement because it shows importance and motivation at home.

Interview question 11. The eleventh interview question I designed was to collect qualitative data about the participants’ perceptions of the kinds of support needed to teach parents successfully how to be successful at home. “Parents have a mandate to (a) control television watching, (b) monitor homework, (c) offer extracurricular activities to complement school lessons, (d) encourage innovation and creativity, and (e) develop children’s special talents” (Center on Education Policy, 2012). While the nine out of 10 teacher participants who answered this question did indicate that parents need support, an analysis of the responses did not reveal a consensus among the participants about the kinds of support needed to teach parents successfully how to be successful at home. Instead, the responses indicated a plethora of suggestions. For example, one teacher indicated that the school begins by conducting a needs assessment from parents so that teachers will know what types of support they need to be successful at home. Other teachers indicated that parents need to be informed about how they can help their children

with homework, routines, and scheduling as well as resources and material that can help foster reading skills. Other teachers suggest that parents collaborate with teachers who have a successful home to school connection and/or collaboration. When asked the eleventh interview question, “What kinds of support do you think you may need to successfully teach parents how to be successful at home?” This question relates to RQ3.

Teacher 1 answered, “I think a needs assessment from parents can effectively help teachers to know what parents need to help successfully at home.”

Teacher 2 answered, “Behavior management, building a routine and schedule, teaching them about the importance of healthy food and regular bedtimes. Greater accountability when they are not doing their part as well.”

Teacher 3 answered,

I will need a team of teachers that are willing to sit down with parents and help them understand what is being taught in class and teach them. It is difficult for many parents today to help their children with homework. Textbooks are used rarely in schools anymore and many resources are pulled offline. Some families don't have access to computers to pull those resources.

Teacher 4 answered, “How to increase parental engagement.”

Teacher 5 answered,

I think that having workshops to help parents know the skills that are involved in reading is essential. Often parents think that reading is all about fluency and if the child can read fluently, they are good readers. Parents need to know the comprehension skills in the standards that will help their children become better readers.

Teacher 6 did not answer the question.

Teacher 7 answered, “More opportunities to address parents in a whole group setting. A meeting that they would be willing to attend.”

Teacher 8 answered, “I think teachers need the opportunity to talk with other teachers who have a successful home to school connection and/or collaboration. Teachers learn from each other.”

Teacher 9 answered, “I would need various reading resources and materials to effectively support parents on how to be successful at home. Parents would be able to take home some resources and materials to use with their child with reading.”

Teacher 10 answered, “Support from administration, community, stakeholders, and students would help.” For parents to successfully teach or reinforce skills at home, they must know and understand the skills being taught. Parents and teachers must collaborate to encourage the learning process. Teachers 3, 4, and 5 think demonstrations to parents for reading comprehension and skills are important.

Interview question 12. The twelfth interview question I designed was to collect qualitative data about the participants’ suggestions for improving parental reading development skills in the future. Most of the teachers indicated that more training is needed to successfully teach parents how to be successful at home. “Parental involvement and support at-home play the greatest role in determining the student’s academic success, teachers' satisfaction, and teacher-parent contact in elementary school” (Chung-Kai & Chia-Hung, 2012). The participants communicated that training should include classes, workshops, online activities, and small classes. Also, teachers indicated a need for more support that focuses on providing instruction and motivating struggling readings,

encouraging students at home, using the public library. “Students’ prior knowledge is important because it is the mechanism through which they process meaning to new information encountered in the text” (Carlson et al., 2013; Wang, 2016). Just having regular conversation nightly with a child can make a difference by being able to make connections. When asked the twelfth interview question, “What suggestions do you have for improving parental reading development skills in the future?” This question relates to RQs 2 and 3. Some teachers mentioned training and workshops where the proper materials will be provided for parents.

Teacher 1 answered, “Parents should encourage reading more at home, take their child to the public library to check out books and anything that positively influence reading achievement.”

Teacher 2 answered,

As I mentioned before, building a love of reading into the parents or at least showing them the importance of engaging in their child’s literacy. Having literacy nights where we share fun games or programs that the children can use at home to increase their literacy and excitement for reading.

Teacher 3 answered, “I think we should have an adult educator to offer classes or sessions to parents that are struggling readers.”

Teacher 4 answered, “Schedule more training.”

Teacher 5 answered, “I think in the future, in-depth training on the standards should be held with parents so that they know what the children are learning and expected to know...”

Teacher 6 answered, “Make sure technology is available as a resource.”

Teacher 7 answered, “Sending home flyers and offering workshops.”

Teacher 8 answered, “Generational changes count. So, suggestions would depend on the generation of parents. From online activities to sitting in smaller classes may help.”

Teacher 9 answered,

The school can provide monthly reading development training for parents and teachers. Teachers can model various reading strategies with parents to use at home with their children. Surveys can be given to parents to get feedback on what they need to improve their child’s reading development. Feedback from the surveys will help the school provide meaningful support to parents in the future.

Teacher 10 answered, “Get parent and student buy-in. Gain parent trust. Be consistent.” Reading skills can always be improved. Teachers 1 and 2 want to make reading fun with library visits and fun literary nights at school. Teachers 3, 4, 5, 7, and 9 would like to see continuous workshops and training for reading development.

Interview question 13. The thirteenth interview question I designed was to collect qualitative data about the participants’ perceptions of strategies parents can practice so students can learn reading skills at home. At home, learning is just as important as being in the classroom. “A great way to forecast achievement in the elementary setting is to help parents (a) build a strong environment of learning at home, (b) support education in the community and at school, and (c) set expectations high and viable for achievement academically” (Sackmann, 2014). Parents are teachers as well. When asked the thirteenth interview question, “What strategies do you believe parents can practice so students can learn reading skills at home?” This question relates to RQ1.

Teacher 1 answered, “I think parents should read more to students to help with learning reading skills at home. Some strategies parents could use to help students become great readers are chunking words, rereading, and making connections.”

Teacher 2 answered,

Parents can ask open-ended questions about the books their child reads; not just simple 5 W’s questions. I would like for them to get in the habit of asking their child to retell the story making sure they do this in sequence, story elements, and author’s purpose.

Teacher 3 answered,

One strategy that parents can practice at home with their children is a picture-word relationship. For example, most students were not taught the names of restaurants or department stores by their teachers. While driving in the car or walking in the mall, parents can have their child read the names of signs/icons they see in passing. Inside of the home, parents can have their children practice sight words. The majority of the text students read in Grades K–5 is composed of 50% sight words. Students have a higher chance of understanding grade-level text if they have mastered sight words.

Teacher 4 answered, “I encourage parents to make reading fun and interactive. Make reading a part of your everyday lives-when you shop, when you cook, etc. Also, let your child see you reading for fun sometimes, and read together daily.”

Teacher 5 answered, “Parents should be able to practice the strategy of asking and answering questions. Parents should ask their child-specific questions aligned to the skill and also know what answers to look for from their child.”

Teacher 6 answered, “Let students read things they are interested in (out loud), read with students (signs, billboards, etc.), make a word list each week.”

Teacher 7 answered,

Parents need to make reading a daily habit with their children. This includes reading to them and listening to them read. Parents also need to teach children to ask and answer questions about the text they are reading. This will help with their self-monitoring skills. They also need to teach them word attack skills. Last but not least, they need to teach them to reread for understanding.

Teacher 8 answered,

I believe parents can start by providing their children with a variety of books to read for pleasure. They can visit the public library or visit online reading programs and make selections that are on grade level that the child can read independently and one selection above grade level that they can read along with their child. It is also important that parents serve as models for students. They should read aloud with them and set aside time for reading. For younger children reading may involve helping them learn letter sounds and acquiring new vocabulary. Parents can create note cards that will serve as a reminder for new vocabulary. Parents should also incorporate the read, talk, read, and write strategy. Reading should involve some form of comprehension check. This check can happen by taking time to stop and talk with the child about chunks of the text. Writing also allows them the opportunity to express their feelings and opinions about what they read.

Teacher 9 answered, “Parents can practice by activating prior knowledge, going on picture walks, rereading skills, asking and answering questions, and finding textual evidence.”

Teacher 10 answered, “I think the main strategy that parents can utilize is reading (modeling) to students.” All 10 teachers described reading as essential: Taking time to read daily, practice asking and answering questions, activating prior knowledge, and reading different things of interest. All great strategies for parents and students.

Interview question 14. The fourteenth interview question I designed was to collect qualitative data about the participants’ perceptions of parents’ motivation skills for students at home. “Parental involvement delivers a clear memo to students that schoolwork is important to parents and, hence, the motivation for academic commitment and success” (Center on Education Policy, 2012). This question relates to RQ 2. Motivation is an emotional material needed for all children. It can be given physically or verbally or in written form. Being motivated to learn increases students wanting to achieve abilities. When asked the fourteenth interview question, “How do you motivate parents to assist their child at home?”

Teacher 1 answered, “When giving instructions about strategies to use at home, I demonstrate how to effectively use the strategy. I also tell the parents how the strategy teaches a skill to help their child to become a great reader.”

Teacher 2 answered,

I have just been encouraging any way I can. I have quite a few parents who will text me about their concerns. I’ve sent websites to help with their reading and

math. I am asking them not to make their child work all day. We have sent a schedule, but some are making them work all day.

Teacher 3 answered,

Motivation comes from reality. Parents of struggling students are usually in denial. From my encounter with these parents, they won't believe it until they see it. I usually have them come in with their students and show them what their child is struggling with and how they can help them at home. No parent wants their child to be retained. It is at that point where they will try to do everything they can to make sure their child is promoted to the next grade. It is hard for parents to help at home if they don't understand the content. By providing parents will step-by-step instructions or making it 100% clear of how to help their child, parents will be more willing/motivated to help. For parents of students that are doing well, their motivation will come naturally. When teachers reach not only to parents of struggling students but to all parents, that encourages parents to make their child stays on track and do not fall behind. All parents like getting good phone calls about student progress and behavior. So to answer the question, you motivate parents by showing them that you care and you show them that you care simply by communicating! Communication is the key!

Teacher 4 answered,

Make sure they understand that what children learn at school is most effective and long-lasting when it is reinforced at home. I have seen tremendous results with students who are struggling when their parents and teachers begin to work as a team. It does work.

Teacher 5 answered, “Parents can be motivated to assist their child at home through encouragement, providing needed and available resources, and assurance to the parents.”

Teacher 6 answered, “Make a to-do list and reward yourself and praise the parent.”

Teacher 7 answered,

I encourage parents by providing them with information and resources that they can use to help their children become better readers. For example, I will provide them with a handout or pamphlet that gives them examples of the types of questions to help their child with comprehension. I also provide parents with book recommendations and explain to them what skill this will help their child with. For example, I may encourage parents to read Dr. Seuss with their children because it helps them with rhyming.

Teacher 8 answered, “The greatest motivator would have to be to remind parents that they are their child’s greatest resource outside of school. They need to understand that for their child to be successful, they have to ensure that the child gets additional practice at home.”

Teacher 9 answered, “One way to motivate parents to assist at home is by offering incentives.”

Teacher 10 answered, “We can motivate parents at home to assist their students by putting them on a schedule.” For some parents, motivational skills come naturally. Teachers 1, 3, and 5 say when teachers and parents work together and constantly concentrate on the student to improve, they all work together to motivate each other.

Interview question 15. The fifteenth interview question I designed was to collect qualitative data about the participants' perceptions of parents' and what materials are needed for students at home. Students need all the necessary resources to be successful at home. Discussing reading materials with children and creating opportunities at home to apply what children are learning in school enables parents to foster a reading culture at home that improves academic success (Center on Education Policy, 2012).

When asked the fifteenth interview question, "What type of materials do teachers think may enhance parents to help with reading skills at home?" This question relates to RQ 2.

Teacher 1 answered, "Books will be a good resource to help parents with reading skills at home."

Teacher 2 answered, "I think just reading with their child will help them. I have sent numerous websites for books to read with their child and those that will read to them."

Teacher 3 answered,

- Sight word cards
- Grade-level text with comprehension questions
- Grammar activities
- Phonics activities

Out of the above materials, the most effective resource will be sight word cards.

Knowledge of sight words improves fluency, and when fluency increases so does student comprehension. Phonics is also important. Students must understand the letter-sound correlation to read basic grade-appropriate words. Grammar skills are also important and plays a vital role in understanding sentence formation.

Teacher 4 answered, “I send home books, flashcards, and games. Also, I give parents websites their child can use on their tablets or computers at home-Starfall, Abcya.”

Teacher 5 answered, “Materials such as reading books, technology, and online tools can aid parents in helping their child’s reading skills at home.”

Teacher 6 answered, “Youtube and making games.”

Teacher 7 answered, “I believe that parents need access to quality text to help improve their child’s reading skills at home. They also need materials that will help their child with decoding skills and fluency.”

Teacher 8 answered,

I think it is helpful if parents are aware of what is being taught in class. This will assist the child easier at home. Parents need to stay in touch with their child’s teacher. They should be using the same language and strategies that make is used in class. Access to online materials will also help.

Teacher 9 answered, “I think anchor charts, study guides, and graphic sources are some materials parents can use to help with reading skills at home.”

Teacher 10 answered, “All materials are useful. Even materials around the house from magazines to newspapers.” Teachers 1- 5 all mentioned the keywords “books” are essential materials needed at home. Reading any type of book daily will increase fluency and comprehension levels.

Interview question 16. The sixteenth interview question I designed was to collect qualitative data about the participants’ perceptions of parents’ fundamental skills for students at home. “Parents know education is key to their children advancing out of

poverty” (Comer, 2005; Hornby, 2000). The foundation of reading begins with fundamental skills. When asked the sixteenth interview question, “What fundamental skills of reading should parents know to be able teach students at home?” This question relates to RQ1.

Teacher 1 answered, “Rhyming words, decoding words, and sight words are a few of the many skills needed to help parents teach students at home.”

Teacher 2 answered, “I hope parents will help a student identify unknown words instead of just telling the word to the child. They need to practice skills they have already learned, like their phonics and breaking up segments, etc.”

Teacher 3 answered, “The fundamental skills of reading that parents should know to be able to teach their child at home is reading and comprehension. Parents are incapable of helping their own child if they are unable to read their child’s text.”

Teacher 4 answered,

A basic knowledge of reading and comprehension is really all they need. I tell them often that the best thing they can do for their child is to read aloud to them, let them read to you, and then ask them questions about what they have read.

Teacher 5 answered, “Although parents should be knowledgeable of all reading skills, the fundamental reading skills that parents should be able to teach students in phonemic awareness, and reading comprehension.”

Teacher 6 answered, “Alphabets, sounds, sight words, and punctuation marks (stop at period, slow down at comma).”

Teacher 7 answered,

Parents need some knowledge of phonics and phonological awareness. They need to understand why these skills are so important. Parents need to be aware of some spelling rules and patterns. This will help them teach their child what to do when and if they encounter words they do not know. Parents have to understand that all of these factors play a major role in overall reading comprehension.

Teacher 8 answered,

I think the greatest fundamental skill parents should know is comprehension.

Parents need to know how to encourage students to think about what they have read and express thoughts about what they've read. Comprehension is understanding the written word. Parents must know how to encourage students to use comprehension questions to check their understanding.

Teacher 9 answered, "I think parents need to know basic phonics and spelling skills/rules to help teach students at home."

Teacher 10 answered, "I think parents should focus on vocabulary. This is an easy skill that they can utilize to help the vocabulary acquisition of students." Teachers 3, 4, 5, 7, and 8 all agreed that comprehension is the fundamental skill students need to be able to be a fluent reader when one understands what is being read.

Evolving Themes

To portray accurately the participants' perceptions of parental involvement and strategies to improve reading development accordingly for this qualitative study, data were recorded, analyzed, and interpreted in a manner, which ensured validity and credibility. Interviews were audio-taped and personally transcribed, which allowed me to gain a better understanding of the data and provided additional opportunities for

reflection between interviews. Via member-checks participants asked to comment on the interpretation of the data to ensure credibility and accuracy did so. To further ensure credibility, guard against researcher bias, and guarantee the plausibility of the data and analysis, a colleague unfamiliar with the study conducted a peer review. This section presents the findings for each of the research questions that guided this study.

Research Question 1. What are primary and elementary teachers' perception of research-based strategies that may enable parents to assist their children with developing grade level reading skills in Grades 2 and 3?

An analysis of the data indicated that the participants believed that parents should be offered workshops and training which focuses on a several topics. Suggestions for the topics for the workshops including discipline, modeling, explaining the curriculum, comprehension, and accessing resources. There were many similarities among the teacher responses, indicating that parents need information on how to help.

Teacher 2 answered, "Parent Literacy classes/workshops would be helpful. Teaching parents to find books they are interested in and increase their love of reading."

Teacher 5 answered, "I think that having workshops to help parents know the skills that are involved in reading is essential... I think parents need cultural sensitivity training."

Teacher 6 answered,

I think parents can attend workshops or some type of professional learning that can actually help them improve or even show how to help their children at home...I think trainings with the parent facilitator dealing with collaborating with parents will help.

Teacher 7 answered, "...offering workshops to show parents how to accurately complete assignments at home."

Teacher 8 answered, "Reading workshops provided at the school level can also increase parent's understanding of the content."

Teacher 9 answered, "Parents can attend parent workshops to learn reading strategies to increase their child's reading development."

Research Question 2. What type of materials do teachers think may enable parents to assist their children with developing grade level reading skills in Grades 2 and 3?

An analysis of the data indicated that the teacher participants believed that parents should be offered resources to assist their children with developing grade level reading skills in Grades 2 and 3. Suggestions for resources included book, magazines, educational games, access to tutors auditory/visuals and information for many parents today to help their children with homework. The participants also perceived parents receiving materials from the schools that they can take home that would assist children at home. To answer the second research question, following the data, a theme evolved.

Teacher 1 answered, "I think parents should look for resources and different strategies to better increase their help with students reading skills."

Teacher 3 answered,

If parents begin exposing their children to different reading resources such as book, magazines, online books, etc.... they will have a jumpstart on reading process. However, there are parents that do not offer their children resources at

home and use basic item around their house to help make a connection between words and pictures and they perform just as good as students that have resources.

Teacher 5 answered, “I think that parents need to have access to many of the resources that teachers have. There are so many educational games and lessons that are accessible online that would benefit parents and their children.”

Teacher 8 answered,

First, some parents are illiterate and may not be of great help because of their shortcomings. These parents can help their child by seeking resources such as tutors and other auditory/visuals to assist...Teachers can assist parents by providing a list of resources that the parent and student can learn together.

Reading workshops provided at the school level can also increase a parents’ understanding of the content.

Teacher 9 answered, “I would need various reading resources and materials to effectively support parents on how to be successful at home. Parents would be able to take home some resources and materials to use with their child with reading.”

Research Question 3. What type of training program may enable parents to assist their children with developing grade-level reading skills in Grades 2 and 3?

The participants’ responses indicated that they believe that parents should participate in workshops and training that inform them about the curriculum so that they will understand what their children are learning in school, how lessons are taught in class and teachers’ expectations for students’ demonstration of learning.

Teacher 1 answered, “I think parents should attend workshops/training on the different classroom disciplines I think parents should attend workshops/training on

the different classroom disciplines, so they can stay abreast of the different things their students' have to learn..."

Teacher 3 answered,

I think they should also participate in workshops that target parents that have deficits in reading...One training that I think parents need to become better at home teachers is Parent Curriculum Training. This will allow teachers to share information with parents about what their child is learning in school and provide parents with resources that help them teach/review skills with their child.

Teacher 8 answered, "Teachers need cultural awareness training involving the what and how of parents who are illiterate and/or have alternate schedules that do not allow them to spend quality educational time with their child."

Teacher 9 answered,

Training that model the reading process would be beneficial to parents to ensure students become better readers. Parents can help with reading comprehension by listening to their child read then ask questions about the story on what he or she read. Parents can play word games at home or in the car. The school can provide monthly reading development training for parents and teachers.

Teacher 10 answered, "Pieces of training that involve disciplinarian techniques, activities and pieces of training that teach parents how to be patient when assisting their children in educational tasks would be beneficial to parents to become better at home teachers."

Some teachers indicated that parents need to become trained in how to model the reading process, instructional strategies, and critical thinking skills. The following theme emerged from the qualitative data that I collected to answer the third research question.

Evolving Themes

Theme 1. Parents need hands-on experiences and information on Differentiated reading instruction needed for their children's reading levels and favored learning modality (modalities) - this theme was developed because parents need necessary tools and strategies to meet the learning needs at home. When learning is hands-on, a student creates something. Workshops can teach parents the necessary skills needed to be successful at home. Parents can have a visual image of what a student learns in class.

Teacher 1 answered, "I think parents should attend workshops/training on the different classroom disciplines I think parents should attend workshops/training on the different classroom disciplines, so they can stay abreast of the different things their students' have to learn..."

Teacher 2 answered, "Parent Literacy classes/workshops would be helpful. Teaching parents to find books they are interested in and increase their love of reading."

Teacher 3 answered,

I think they should also participate in workshops that target parents that have deficits in reading...One training that I think parents need to become better at home teachers is Parent Curriculum Training. This will allow teachers to share information with parents about what their child is learning in school and provide parents with resources that help them teach/review skills with their child.

Teacher 5 answered, “I think that having workshops to help parents know the skills that are involved in reading is essential... I think parents need cultural sensitivity training.”

Teacher 6 answered,

I think parents can attend workshops or some type of professional learning that can help them improve or even show how to help their children at home...I think training with the parent facilitator dealing with collaborating with parents will help.

Teacher 7 answered, “...offering workshops to show parents how to accurately complete assignments at home.”

Teacher 8 answered, “Reading workshops provided at the school level can also increase parent’s understanding of the content.”

Teacher 9 answered, “Parents can attend parent workshops to learn reading strategies to increase their child’s reading development.”

Theme 2. Parents need access to quality materials: grade-level books, magazines, educational games, and other resources that appeal visually, kinesthetically, and auditorily to their children’s learning styles- this theme evolved because parents need different resources to help develop reading skills. All children learn differently, and therefore, parents need to be able to access the appropriate materials needed to reach the child’s learning level. Parents have to learn how to connect the child’s interests, curiosities, and passions to learning.

Teacher 1 answered, “I think parents should look for resources and different strategies to better increase their help with students reading skills.”

Teacher 3 answered,

If parents begin exposing their children to different reading resources such as books, magazines, online books, etc.... they will have a jumpstart on the reading process. However, some parents do not offer their children resources at home and use basic items around their house to help make a connection between words and pictures and they perform just as well as students that have resources.

Teacher 5 answered, "I think that parents need to have access to many of the resources that teachers have. There are so many educational games and lessons that are accessible online that would benefit parents and their children."

Teacher 8 answered,

First, some parents are illiterate and may not be of great help because of their shortcomings. These parents can help their child by seeking resources such as tutors and other auditory/visuals to assist... Teachers can assist parents by providing a list of resources that the parent and student can learn together. Reading workshops provided at the school level can also increase a parents' understanding of the content.

Teacher 9 answered, "I would need various reading resources and materials to effectively support parents on how to be successful at home. Parents would be able to take home some resources and materials to use with their child with reading."

Theme 3. Parents should participate in training that informs them about curricula, how content is taught at school, and teacher expectations -this theme was developed because parents and teachers need to be on the same agenda to have more academic success. A strong support system at home and school increase student learning.

Communication has to be regular. Keeping parents on the same learning curve with necessary training will create a stronger foundation at home for students to continue learning.

Teacher 1 answered, "I think parents should attend workshops/training on the different classroom disciplines, so they can stay abreast of the different things their students' have to learn."

Teacher 2 answered, "Behavior management, building a routine and schedule, teaching them about the importance of healthy food and regular bedtimes."

Teacher 3 answered,

One training that I think parents need to become better at home teachers is Parent Curriculum Training. This will allow teachers to share information with parents about what their child is learning in school and provide parents with resources that help them teach/review skills with their child.

Teacher 4 answered, "How to use questioning techniques to facilitate critical thinking."

Teacher 5 answered, "I think that parents need to have access to many of the resources that teachers have. There are so many educational games and lessons that are accessible online that would benefit parents and their children."

Teacher 6 answered,

Anything dealing with ELA/Math. I think about how lessons are taught in class. I think letting them do a class with a teacher where they learn to like their children to see how their class is run every day, so they know what to expect.

Teacher 7 answered, “Parents need to be aware of some of the strategies the teachers are using at school with their child. This can be technology or something as simple as asking and answering questions.”

Teacher 8 answered, “Parents would need to become students themselves. So, I would suggest more hands-on learning in the classroom alongside academic nights that involve teachers teaching parents how instructional strategies at school are used during reading or math.”

Teacher 9 answered,

Training that model the reading process would be beneficial to parents to ensure students become better readers. Parents can help with reading comprehension by listening to their child read then ask questions about the story on what he or she read. Also, a parent can play word games at home or in the car.

Teacher 10 answered,

“Training that involves disciplinarian techniques, activities, and training that teach parents how to be patient when assisting their children in educational tasks would be beneficial to parents to become better at home teachers.” This suggests that parents have more strategies and techniques on how to talk and interact with their child calmly and patiently when reinforcing skills at home.

Summary

The purpose of this basic qualitative study was to investigate teachers’ perceptions of effective research-based parental involvement strategies, materials, and training programs that may enable parents to assist their children with developing grade-

level reading skills. I conducted the study using a qualitative methodology to collect data from teachers who are employed at Elementary School A located in Georgia. During the interviews, the researcher asked open-ended questions that allowed the participants to elaborate more in-depth and to express openly their opinions. The previous sections discussed in-detail the themes that emerged from the data analysis. Each of the 10 participants participated in a structured interview. During the interview, I asked 16 questions of each participant. I transcribed each interview and used member checking for accuracy. Generated themes and codes after the data collection process. Three research questions guided the study: What is primary and elementary teachers' perception of research-based strategies that may enable parents to assist their children with developing grade-level reading skills in Grades 2 and 3? What type of materials do teachers think may enable parents to assist their children with developing grade-level reading skills in Grades 2 and 3? and What type of training program may enable parents to assist their children with developing grade-level reading skills in Grades 2 and 3? First, I collected the data from each interview, analyzed it, and presented gathered information in Chapter 4. Second, I again analyzed the data to answer the research questions. The following themes emerged from the data:

To answer RQ1: Parents need information on differentiated reading instruction;

To answer RQ2: Parents need access to quality materials: grade-level books, magazines, educational games, and other resources that appeal visually, kinesthetically, and auditorily to their children's learning styles;

To answer RQ3: Parents should participate in training that informs them about curricula, how content is taught at school, and teacher expectations.

In Chapter 5, I discussed findings from the study about how they relate to the previous literature in this field and how the results may contribute to a greater understanding of teachers' perceptions of effective research-based parental involvement strategies, materials, and training programs that may enable parents to assist their children with developing grade-level reading skills. One of the most important things to do in life is to learn to read. Parents have to encourage children to have a love for reading.

Chapter 5

Introduction

Learning to read and write early is important for several reasons. Children who learn to read when they are young could read books and grow in reading skills and knowledge, and children who learn to write early have the opportunity to write stories and share thoughts via texts (Dogan et al., 2015). Children who know the alphabet (a) make use of a lot of words, (b) can write their names and other words, (c) have knowledge of reading direction, (d) have an interest in reading and writing, (e) can read words and have syntactic knowledge before school begins; that is, they are in a better position to succeed than those children who do not have these skills (Dogan et al., 2015; Schwabe et al., 2015). Early reading and writing knowledge among children can prevent school problems and failures as well as reduce the need for special interventions provided by teachers and support staff (Castro et al., 2015).

To develop, achieve goals in life, and participate in society, individuals need to be able to read and understand written texts (Castro et al., 2015; Dogan et al., 2015; Schwabe et al., 2015). Since parents are unable to assist their children in the development of grade-level reading skills, many students at Elementary School A have not developed the necessary reading skills to demonstrate grade-level, state-mandated standards. Although individual teachers have expressed the willingness to assist parents in the use of effective strategies to reinforce reading instruction at home, the school had no related plan for school-wide use. The addressed problem in this qualitative study is that parents of children in Grades 2 and 3 are unaware of effective strategies to reinforce reading instruction at home and are unable to assist their children in the development of grade-

level reading skills. This section includes recommendations for action, implications for social change, as well as implications for future study.

The purpose of this qualitative study was to support the current school improvement plan by (a) exploring research-based strategies with teachers that may enable parents to assist their children in the development of grade-level reading skills; (b) collaborating with teachers to identify the most effective, research-based strategies for use at Grades 2 and 3; and (c) developing a training program, with embedded materials, for parents of children at each grade level to improve parents' abilities to reinforce reading instruction at home and students' reading skills.

Without parents reinforcing reading instruction at home, the majority of at-risk children attending the elementary school are unable to read at grade level. Teachers and parents need a positive partnership to obtain more student success.

Perhaps when more parents become involved in students' educational process it will improve student achievement (Stacer & Perrucci, 2013). If parents are equipped to promote alphabetic knowledge with their children to encourage awareness of written words, promote the understanding of the messages they represent, and to engage with their children in such a way as to promote the enjoyment of reading and writing books, perhaps, the stumbling blocks could be removed and the need for reading remediation would be minimized. Additionally, increased academic achievement in reading will result in improved student reading skills and higher rates of students completing high school and enrolling in postsecondary education.

Interpretation of the Findings

Findings for this study indicate that teachers perceive the following:

1. Parents may benefit from training that focuses on differentiated research-based interventions, which focus on phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension.
2. Parents need information about how they can acquire and utilize resources such as books, magazines, educational games, etc.
3. Parents may benefit from workshops where teachers model different strategies for teaching children at home.
4. Parents should be offered on-going workshop opportunities, which expose them to grade-level reading standards, how they are taught, teachers' expectations for students' demonstration of reading proficiency at each level. When parents have the necessary tools, reading can become a regular activity at home. Parents can make reading fun and engaging so the child can be excited to continue learning after school hours.

This study relied on the Constructivist Theory. Constructivism evolved from the social development theory founded by Vygotsky (Pritchard & Woollard, 2010) and the cognitive development theory founded by Piaget (Ultanir, 2012). According to Ultanir (2012), constructivism is an epistemology that explains the nature of knowledge through which individuals perceive, interpret, and construct their knowledge. Piaget determined that children pass through four stages that are critical for cognitive development: (a) the sensorimotor stage between birth and 2 years, (b) the preoperational stage between 2 and 7, (c) the concrete operational stage 7 and 11, and (d) the formal operational stage from age 12 through adulthood (Kausar, 2010; Pritchard & Woollard, 2010; Ultanir, 2012).

One considers the Constructivist Theory foundational when appreciating the important role parents play in their children's reading proficiency. When applying the principles of constructivism as stated by Brown (2014), a parent can: (a) help their children construct meaning during learning, (b) model reading strategies for their children, (c) reinforce learning through language, (d) engage their children in educational and social activities that help promote learning, and (e) provide experiences that will help build on their children's prior knowledge.

The findings from this study suggest that students must evolve through the five pillars of reading which are: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension to reach proficiency. The findings of this study may close the gap found in the literature, which focuses on the importance of parents' awareness of effective strategies for reinforcing reading instruction at home to assist their children in reading and the lack of addressing that gap.

Research question 1. What is primary and elementary teachers' perception of research-based strategies that may enable parents to assist their children with developing grade-level reading skills in Grades 2 and 3? The first finding related to this study was that parents may benefit from workshops that focus on differentiated research-based interventions that specifically focus on phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension.

Strategies that can help increase reading skills are research question number one focus. All 10 interviewed teachers agreed that having the necessary tools will increase and produce success. The basic building blocks of reading are essential: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension. If parents are able to

reinforce these skills at home, the child is likely to read successfully on grade level.

Teacher 3 stated,

One strategy that parents can practice at home with their children is the picture-word relationship. For example, most students were not taught the names of restaurants or department stores by their teachers. While driving in the car or walking in the mall, parents can have their child read the names of signs/icons they see in passing. Inside of the home, parents can have their children practice sight words. The majority of the text students read in Grades K–5 is composed of 50% sight words. Students have a higher chance of understanding grade-level text if they have mastered sight words.

This strategy can be very beneficial, and the child can make connections just by noticing signs and pictures. One must master sight words to read.

The National Reading Panel (2000) put forth that every effective reading program should include the following five components: phonemic awareness, phonics, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension instruction. Findings from various research studies support the use of scientific-based instruction in each of the areas may improve the reading performance of K–3 students (Edwards & Taub, 2016). However, there are no definitive pedagogical strategies that serve as a panacea for addressing the academic for elementary students who are not proficient readers. Instead, there are scientifically proven reading strategies that increase the reading achievement of K–3 students such as providing explicit systematic small group instruction and frequent progress monitoring (Kruse, Spencer, Olszeweski, & Goldstein, 2015). While the National Reading Panel

(NICHD, 2000) recommends the use of systematic explicit reading instruction for struggling readers, teacher effectiveness is the most influential factor that impacts student achievement (Kruse et al., 2015). As gatekeepers, who are responsible for implementing grade level policies, and as the primary source of reading instruction, K–3 teachers' perceptions of effective reading strategies for fostering reading comprehension should be explored (Lipp & Helfrich, 2016).

Teachers differ in how they address these areas to provide reading instruction to their students. However, the most effective approaches are those in which instruction is systematic and explicit. Explicit instruction refers to teachers' communication with students about the standards that will be taught and what is expected. When using explicit instruction, teachers also model and demonstrate what is expected. Systematic instruction refers to the planned progressive sequence of the lessons taught, which is based on clearly defined objectives and that provides students with numerous opportunities for meaningful instruction. Another component of systematic instruction is the continuous use of assessments used to monitor students' progress (Wade-Woolley, 2016).

Research Question 2. What type of materials do teachers think may enable parents to assist their children with developing grade-level reading skills in Grades 2 and 3? Finding 2- Parents need information about how they can acquire and utilize resources such as books, magazines, educational games, etc.

The second research question focused on the necessary materials needed for parents to be successful at home. Teachers and parents must be on the same page. Teacher 9 stated,

I think it is helpful if parents are aware of what is being taught in class. This will make assisting the child easier at home. Parents need to stay in touch with their child's teacher. They should be using the same language and strategies that are used in class. Access to online materials will also help.

Whatever teachers use at school to teach; parents should have similar materials as well.

Henry, Castek, O'Byrne, and Zawilinski (2012) wrote that parents must meet with teachers to discuss their child's reading level either face-to-face, over the phone, or through email. It is also important for parents and teachers to develop a plan together, which considers knowledge of the child's personality, ability, routines of reading practice at home, and modifications. A timeline for re-evaluating the progress should be considered. During parent-teacher collaboration, teachers should share methods for obtaining resources that parents can use to help their children with language and literacy development. Teachers may share resources such as audiobooks, websites, and strategies for literacy development. Teachers may also inform parents of how technology can help families meet the literacy needs of their children. However, while literacy resources have been associated with the number of books found in a child's home, literacy resources also encompass informal experiences that build students' knowledge so that they can refer to information while reading (Liu, Georgiou, & Manolitsis, 2018). Technology is taking over educational learning because it is more engaging and fun. There are several educational websites that teachers can share with parents as well.

Mitchell and Begeny (2014) conducted a study to determine if there was a noticeable impact after children completed a reading fluency intervention program

conducted by parents during the summer months. The researchers, as a result of the study, suggested that materials include protocols for implementing reading strategies, directions that were scripted for parents to read to their children, and a form to track the progress of the children. Additional materials included a graph to assist with setting goals and providing feedback, a chart for stars to provide motivational rewards for students, and copies of passages for parents to follow along and score the students as they read (Mitchell & Begeny, 2014).

Research Question 3. What type of training program may enable parents to assist their children with developing grade-level reading skills in Grades 2 and 3?
Finding 3- Parents may benefit from workshops where teachers model different strategies for teaching children at home.

Research Question 3 focused on what trainings the school should provide for parents. Training should be ongoing all year long due to monthly/every day classroom changes. Teachers should model to parents what and how to teach at home. Not all families are culturally the same. Parents need different trainings in different areas. The 10 teachers interviewed expressed their desires of wanted trainings. Teacher 9 stated, “The school can provide monthly reading development training for parents and teachers.” This way both parties will receive information.

There is strong empirical evidence that the home literacy environment has an impact on literacy skills (Bano, Jabeen, & Qutoshi, 2018; Terlitsky & Wilkins, 2015). Parents and teachers have a common goal, which is to facilitate the best educational experience possible for students. Consistent adult support at home is a key factor in reading proficiency. Parents and teachers alike communicated that when they

can work together regularly to ensure that all students have their physical, emotional, and intellectual needs met. We know that the best educational outcomes occur when each of these needs is met.

Teachers can provide a wealth of materials for students, but if parental support is absent at home, children may not develop a positive attitude toward learning. Reading is one skill in particular where at-home support is vital for healthy progression. The participants offered several strategies that parents can use at home with their children. First, they can model a positive reading experience to motivate children to become interested in and excited about reading. Activities such as reading the newspaper or a book are activities, which promote reading as an enjoyable experience. Further analysis of the data indicates that parents should set aside a designated reading time, as one-on-one, individualized attention is highly effective, and demonstrates to a child that reading is important. Another strategy offered by the participants is to create an environment of literacy by creating home libraries with a diverse selection of fiction and nonfiction books and informational books. The participants also suggested making reading part of daily life by exposing children to opportunities to expand their vocabularies and encourage them to write.

In particular, the reading development of young students deserves attention, as it is a key factor in reading comprehension (Huntsinger, Jose, & Luo, 2016). Young children's vocabulary knowledge and their knowledge of syntactic structure originate from the oral language used at home, which influences their later literacy skills such as reading and writing (Bano et al., 2018). McConnell and Kubina (2016) noted that students benefit from parent instruction, yet very few studies report the precise level of

intervention fidelity as measured by completion and accuracy within a reading program. van der Pluijm, van Gelderen, and Kessels (2019) wrote that parents with less education seem to initiate relatively few literacy activities such as reading to their children, talking with children about school, and spending time helping with schoolwork. Empirical studies show strong relationships between the way mothers engage their children in learning experiences that promote reading skills (Bano, Jabeen, & Qutoshi, 2018). Parents with more education and knowledge can better explain homework and study skills after hours.

Wasik and Van Horn (2012) stated that there are many parents with little or no schooling and very limited literacy skills in their first or second language, who are also struggling with their oral skills in the second language and with the notion that print carries meaning. Therefore, teachers should also provide support to parents with little education by addressing their home literacy experiences, home literacy activities, their beliefs about what counts in educating children, and in their knowledge about activities that trigger language development. Also, teachers should recommend family literacy interventions that use talk and play activities adapted to family situations to promote reading proficiency.

Brown, Schell, Denton, and Knode (2019) recommended using talk and play activities and a combination of responsive communication and oral language strategies. Suitable activities are storytelling, sharing experiences about past events, or forms of social play. The main goal should be to support parents to facilitate the child to be an equal discussion partner leading to an enrichment of the child's vocabulary. Second, the researchers suggested demonstrating explicit instructions to follow the child's initiative,

to change turns, and to wait for the child to respond. Another suggestion was using scaffolding by following the child's perspective and challenging the child by supporting the use of acquired language and a new language. Teachers can model how parents can ask open questions adapted to the specific matter of interest of a child. Parents can also ask their children to share their past experiences and relate them to text. Their final recommendation was to collaborate with parents by providing training sessions with children during school activities and home visits.

Finding 4- Parents should be offered on-going workshop opportunities, which expose them to grade-level common core reading standards, how they are taught, and teachers' expectations for students' demonstration of reading proficiency at each level.

Hoyt (2016) wrote that there is a positive correlation between parent involvement and a child's success. With the new academic standard referred to as Common Core, teachers must implement new standards in a more advanced way of teaching. Parents want confirmation about these new changes with their child's learning. However, teachers have trouble finding ways to involve parents because of factors such as a language barrier, and also, parental educational levels. According to Hoyt (2016), teachers can help parents to understand Common Core Standards by providing access to resources and providing ways in which the parents can help their kids at home. If the teachers become more willing to provide help involving the parents, then the parents will soon become more willing to participate more and help their child improve in their academics. Musty (2015) suggested that teachers can engage parents in the educational process by communicating the standards their children are expected to know and be able to do. The new Common Core State Standards clearly state the expectations for each

grade level and provide examples of real-world application (Musty, 2015). When parents are aware of the standards, they can align with teachers to support classroom learning activities and vocabulary building with real-world applications found at home. Teachers providing parents with the proper tools can enhance a child's learning experience. Parents getting the information at school, and then, reviewing it at home help to increase the child's level of understanding of the information provided. Making and applying learning to everyday life situations, students can better apply themselves and acquire understanding.

Terlitsky and Wilkins (2015) noted that workshops are integral to the success of students and parents who want to be part of their children's education. According to Terlitsky and Wilkins (2015), workshops should provide skills needed to support the literacy development of their children. Parents can receive instruction on how to be involved and implemented coaching sessions can prepare them and their children for reading activities; they can become familiar with the same tasks their children are expected to complete during the sessions (Terlitsky & Wilkins, 2015). Parents should meet with trainers who can model and explain how to conduct the task clearly and concisely to assist their children. This promotes self-efficacy and positive performance in children. Workshops with vital information given to parents can better prepare the parents as teachers at home with all the necessary skills. Parents will be able to demonstrate learning at home.

Activities and strategies to be taught during training should include tutoring, activities to be completed as a group, shared reading with the incorporation of guided reading, and games that include singing and rhyming (Hindman, Skibbe, & Foster, 2014;

Terlitsky & Wilkins, 2015). After the training program, parents and children generally utilize learned strategies and obtain improved relationships, praise, and awards, leading to additional techniques for discipline, and parents volunteer and communicate more often with school leaders. These improvements might serve as encouragement for teachers to have more positive attitudes toward parents (Terlitsky & Wilkins, 2015). Moreover, there could be more motivation on the part of students due to improved efficacy exhibited by both parents and students. Motivation is key. There is more effort put forth with motivation and inspiration given rather than being forced which can just make a child shut down completely.

Limitations of the Study

There were not many limitations to the study. The participants of the study were all from the same school and many shared ideas, based on opinions and experience. I conducted this study at an elementary school with teachers of years of experience that varied. The number of years and teacher development all exceed 2 years minimum. Professional developments and training cannot be truly determined. This was not an issue because all the volunteered participants answered all questions to the best of their ability and knowledge level without any questions or misunderstandings. The information given was not just guessing. All teachers were able to answer openly and honestly. There was no pressure, and everyone chose to participate to give time and thoughts to the study.

Recommendations

After I collected data, coded, themed, analyzed it, I interpreted recommendations for necessary parental resources and training needed in all educational settings. Parental

involvement is very important. If parents know what roles to play, teachers will have an easier job to maintain. Suggestions for training, workshops, and resources into homes can be offered. This will allow children to reach their highest level of potential with parental help. These elements may impact slowly, but with the positive outcomes, the schools and communities will all be affected. Teachers and parents can benefit from finding ways to become better partners for our children's future.

The findings from this study suggest that when parents are equipped and enthused participants in their children's literacy learning, their children's literacy achievement increases. Parents who do not engage in planned literacy activities have children with lower literacy achievement. This study acknowledges that there are specific research-based activities that may increase the reading proficiency of second-and third-grade students. A recommendation is that the school district involved in this study host parent workshops, designed to equip parents to provide their preschool-age children with skills that promote reading proficiency.

Workshops offered to parents of second-and third-grade students might benefit all community educational stakeholders. Further, professional educators who have sufficient training in reading should begin designing instructional classes for parents. The aim is to equip parents who may be less efficacious in their literacy knowledge and to inspire them to engage in literacy-promoting activities with their children. Parents and teachers alike may benefit from becoming aware of the study findings because they may acknowledge and promote the need for parent education. To disseminate the study findings, I will share the study findings at professional development sessions for elementary teachers.

Implications

Researchers agree that when adults are taught to use the teaching tools of reading, their children's academic progress improved (Basar & Gurbuz, 2017; Kamhi & Catt, 2017; Edwards & Taub, 2016; Fisher & Frey, 2014). Shared book reading, conversations, and writing interactions are effective ways parents support their children's literacy achievement, and parents may be taught to effectively utilize these techniques with their children (Brown et al., 2019; Hoyt, 2016; Musty, 2015). This study aimed to investigate teachers' perceptions of effective research-based parental involvement strategies, materials, and training programs that may enable parents to assist their children with developing grade-level reading skills. This study addressed elements of parenting that may increase children's chances of reaching their potentials as readers.

Positive social change includes teachers' knowledge of strategies that parents can use at home to improve children's literacy success. To provide parents opportunities to learn how they may effectively support their children's literacy achievement, local educators may begin designing and offering parent education programs. These programs would be designed to teach parents to effectively promote their children's literacy success, even before their students' entrance into the formal classroom setting. The parent education programs would be offered to parents of second and third-graders who are enrolled in a school district in Georgia.

Implications for Future Study

This study makes evident that parents are impactful when it comes to reading achievement. Low achieving students may meet success with increased frequency and improved quality of parent-promoted reading interventions with their children.

A mixed-method, longitudinal study that follows parents of elementary students of all ages may give a more complete picture of parents' impact on their children's reading proficiency. The inclusion of multiple school districts representing more diverse family backgrounds would also add to the understanding of parents' contribution to their children's literacy success. Other topics for further examination may include: (a) the evaluation of existing programs that could be utilized to teach parents how to best foster strong reading skills, and (b) available programming to be made available to parents of preschoolers that could serve to equip them to be more effective in their role as their children's first teachers. I would recommend a quantitative survey study to gather program performance data from present and former participants of existing programs.

Conclusion

In conclusion, parents of children who are among the highest achieving in the area of literacy go beyond wanting their children to succeed, imparting the importance of education, and being informed about their children's school and literacy lives. Parents of the highest achieving students impart a love for reading, provide literacy artifacts in the home, read to their children, and are often, readers themselves. However, what separates these parents from the parents of lower-achieving students is the stance they take regarding their role in their children's literacy lives. Parents of the highest achieving students see themselves as their children's first teachers. They enjoy their children and invest in materials, including literacy artifacts, but they also invest their time to provide effective literacy

instruction at home. They engage in such events because they believe they impact their children's reading skills.

Useful actions include equipping and enthusing parents to become their children's most effective first teachers. Education leaders must begin offering workshops that teach parents how best to engage with their children, so they will be equipped for success upon entrance into formal schooling.

Promoting high quality, at-home literacy experiences could be key in closing the gap between successful and struggling readers. By increasing opportunities that promote literacy, it may be possible to reduce the number of struggling readers. This study aimed to investigate teachers' perceptions of effective research-based parental involvement strategies, materials, and training programs that may enable parents to assist their children with developing grade-level reading skills.

Researcher's Reflection

My experience with the research process has been humbling. My preconceived ideas were challenged and were often refuted. The management of the voluminous data was exhausting, and the literature on the topic of parents' impact on early childhood literacy is so plentiful that I often doubted I could fairly represent what is available or that my study had anything to offer the vast world of literacy education. The process of member checking allowed me to hear how the interview process caused many parents to consider anew what they were doing with their children when it comes to literacy. Many parents shared that they adjusted some routines from speaking aloud about what they had done in the past, and now, are more purposeful in their time reading with their children.

The study, too, had an impact on me. I am no longer an educator with a few hunches about how parents may impact their children's literacy achievement. I am an expert on the topic. I am an expert who knows that there is always more to learn. The more I know, the more I want to know more.

I began acting on the literature I had been gathering long before I completed this research study. I have begun to offer learning opportunities to parents, so they may more effectively contribute to their children's literacy success. I have become a passionate advocate for equipping families to effectively promote literacy within their homes to reduce the number of children who are ill-equipped to be successful in the formal classroom. If Americans hope to reduce the achievement gap, I believe we must acknowledge parents as their children's most influential teachers, and we must begin developing them into the most effective teachers they can be.

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Appendix A: Interview Questions for Teachers

1. How long have you been teaching?
2. What kind of effect do you think parents have on students' reading development skills?
3. How do you think parental reading skills can be increased to better help students?
4. How do you collaborate with parents?
5. What trainings do you think parents need to become better at home teachers?
6. What trainings do you think teachers need to be able to handle students that do not have those involved parents in order to be successful readers?
7. As a teacher, what would you like to see changed in your school setting concerning parental involvement and students reading on grade level?
8. What are successful methods or activities currently being used in your classroom to increase reading skills?
9. In what areas would you like to see parental involvement increased?
10. Do you think parental involvement increase student reading achievement? If yes, how?

11. What kinds of support do you think you may need to successfully teach parents how to be successful at home?
12. What suggestions do you have for improving parental reading development skills in the future?
13. What strategies do you believe parents can practice so students can learn reading skills at home?
14. How do you motivate parents to assist their child at home?
15. What type of materials do teachers think may enhance parents to help with reading skills at home?
16. What fundamental skills of reading should parents know to be able to teach students at home?