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Perceptions of Parents of K-5 English Language Learners Regarding Teacher-Parents Nights

Jean David Annulysse
Walden University

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Walden University

College of Education

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Jean David Annulyse

has been found to be complete and satisfactory in all respects,
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the review committee have been made.

Review Committee

Dr. Peter Kiriakidis, Committee Chairperson, Education Faculty

Dr. Kevin Johnson, Committee Member, Education Faculty

Dr. Leslie VanGelder, University Reviewer, Education Faculty

Chief Academic Officer and Provost

Sue Subocz, Ph.D.

Walden University

2021

Abstract

Perceptions of Parents of K-5 English Language Learners Regarding Teacher-Parents

Nights

by

Jean David Annulyse

MA, Montclair State University, 2006

BA, State University of Haiti, 2001

Project Study Submitted in Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Education

Walden University

July 2021

Abstract

Fewer than 10% of the parents of K-5 English language learners (ELLs) participated in teacher-parents interview nights in a Northeastern United States urban public elementary school district. The purpose of this basic qualitative research was to identify the factors influencing the capacity of the parents of K-5 ELLs to participate in teacher-parents interview nights. The research question focused on identifying the factors influencing the capacity of the parents of K-5 ELLs to participate in teacher-parents interview nights. The conceptual framework was the school community theory developed by Epstein, which posits separate responsibilities of families and schools, shared responsibilities of families and schools, and sequential responsibilities of families and schools. Purposeful sampling was used to select 10 parents of K-5 ELLs who participated in teacher-parents interview nights. Data were collected via semistructured interviews. Data were analyzed using thematic analysis for emergent themes. The themes that emerged involved a focus on home learning environments, language barriers, challenges with technology, and need for specific communication strategies with teachers during parent-teacher nights. The project aspect of this study was a professional development (PD) training for school principals to better involve the parents of K-5 ELLs to participate in teacher-parents interview nights. Implications for positive social change include PD training for school principals and teachers to support parental involvement of the parents of K-5 ELLs in teacher-parents interview nights for the benefits of ELLs.

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Dedication

Many people helped me in writing this project study. I scarcely name a few of them. I dedicate this work to my four sisters for their unconditional love. I am especially indebted to my colleague Dr. Maryse Austin, who was always encouraging me to move on when I felt like giving it up. Also, I am grateful to my colleague Dr. Isaiah Joseph for his robust support throughout the doctoral journey. Some friends have made a tremendous impact on my life such as Clody Bruno Prophete, Jean-Raymond Lubin, and Jean-Claude Cenatus, to name a few.

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My father. The man who set the stages of my life. He was not just my dad, but he was my mentor and my coach. He went above and beyond with the standards of what a man's duties are. He always had words of wisdom to share with me. He helped me understand life and reach my full potential. I treasure these memories. I love you, dad.

My mother. You believed in us so much that you invested your entire life in ourselves. You did not back up from any sacrifice on the way to give my sisters and me a future. After carrying us 9 months in your womb, you bore us all your life in your heart. We will never forget you.

My sisters. You are an endless source of support to me in the journey of life, more specifically throughout my professional career. I am so grateful for what you have done for me.

Dr. Peter Kiriakidis, PhD, who was my committee chairperson and who helped me move forward in the dissertation process.

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Section 1: The Problem

The Local Problem

The project site was a northeastern urban elementary school where about 10% of the parents of K-5 English language learners (ELLs) participated in teacher-parents interview nights. According to the school principal of the study site, fewer than 10% of the parents of K-5 ELLs participated in teacher-parents interview nights. Specifically, according to the coordinator of ELLs, a significant number of the parents of K-5 ELLs had not participated in teacher-parents interview nights. The problem addressed in this project study was that fewer than 10% of the parents of K-5 ELLs participated in teacher-parents interview nights at the study site.

Stakeholders such as principals and teachers should encourage parents to participate in school activities (Flores, 2018). Leddy (2018) stated that parents have difficulties in meeting with school officials. Petrone (2016) studied Mexican parental involvement and analyzed the schooling experiences of students and found a lack of parental involvement. Gonzales and Gabel (2017) studied diverse parents and reported that school administrators affect parental involvement and linguistically diverse students. Harji et al. (2016) studied parental involvement of ELLs and concluded that parent-to-teacher meetings are efficient ways to help students increase their proficiency in literacy. Similar to Harji et al.'s findings, Gilbert et al. (2017) concluded that English language fluency of the parents of ELLs affected parental involvement.

Rationale

Evidence of the Problem at the Local Level

Parent-to-teacher interview nights are considered an opportunity for parents to get involved in their children's education. At the project site, the majority of learners are ELLs. According to the school meeting notes taken by the school principal at the study site, during teacher-parents interview nights, fewer than 10% of the parents of ELLs participated in teacher-parents interview nights. According to the coordinator of teacher-parents interview nights, about 10% of the parents of ELLs had participated in teacher-parents interview nights for the past 3 consecutive academic years.

Teachers reported to school and school district administrators that they need the parents of K-5 ELLs to participate in teacher-parents interview nights to help these learners (school principal, personal communication, March 17, 2020). Also, teachers had complained to school administrators that parental participation in teacher-parents interview nights was needed to help ELLs develop proficiency in English learners (K-5 inclusion teacher, personal communication, March 11, 2020). Fewer than 10% of the parents of ELLs had participated in meetings regarding ELL curricula (school ELL coordinator, personal communication, March 1, 2020).

At the study site, the superintendent of the local school district, school principal, and assistant principal provided the following information about parental involvement. The school principal stated that school administrators struggle to maintain parental involvement. The school principal and assistant principal said that they reported to school district administrators that they struggle to involve the parents of K-5 ELLs in teacher-

parents interview nights. School district administrators decided to support the instructional leadership capacity of school administrators by visiting the school during the parent-teacher interviews nights to help school administrators to involve the parents of ELLs in these important school activities, according to the superintendent of the local school district. Although senior district administrators provided feedback to school administrators, the district director reported to the board of education that fewer than 10% of the parents of ELLs had participated in meetings. Thus, the purpose of this basic qualitative research design was to identify the factors influencing the capacity of the parents of K-5 ELLs to participate in teacher-parents interview nights.

Evidence from Professional Literature

School leaders seek to foster meaningful parent-teacher communication (Goodman & Hooks, 2016). Parental involvement can help students with learning (Brown et al., 2019; Valli et al., 2016). Researchers reported that parents influence children's education (Gonzales & Gabel, 2017).

While home literacy is critical in helping students who read below grade level, the more literate parents are, the more they could assist their children (Wood et al., 2018). Also, researchers indicated that parental involvement is a way to increase students' academic performance (Harji et al., 2016; Ma et al., 2016; Park & Holloway, 2017). Low parental involvement results in literacy deficiencies (Wood et al., 2018). A lack of parents' literacy background limits their participation in their children's academic journey (Quan, 2017).

Parental involvement of bilingual children is difficult in the United States' way of life (Hernandez & Konrady, 2018). Parental involvement of bilingual children should include the development of partnerships between teachers and parents (Flores, 2018; Gonzales & Gabel, 2017; Zeynep et al., 2016). Bilingual parents have difficulties in meeting with school officials (Leddy, 2018), and such difficulties include language barriers (Hampden-Thompson, & Galindo, 2017).

Dunn (2019) stated that cultural relevancy affects parental involvement. Families of ELL learners face a challenging problem of transitioning from the cultural values of their home countries to those of the United States (Miranda & Cherng, 2018). The backgrounds of those families affect their participation in their children's education (Miranda & Cherng, 2018) including parents' English proficiency (Jung & Zhang, 2016).

Scholars have indicated that there is a significant relationship between parental involvement and students' academic success (Tebben, 2017). Fisher (2016) demonstrated that school-related parental involvement includes in-school or out-of-school activities. Epstein et al. (2002) stated that cooperation between school and home may translate into students' improvement and higher state test scores.

According to Park and Holloway (2017), parental involvement increases student achievement. According to Valli et al. (2016), parental involvement supports students' learning. Gonzales and Gabel (2017) stated that parents have a significant effect on the educational lives of their children.

Definition of Key Terms

Key terms are defined as follows:

English language learners (ELLs): An ELL is any student whose primary language is not English (Crosson et al., 2019).

Emergent bilingual: Emergent bilingual students come from a home where a language other than English is spoken and are in the process of developing English proficiency for accessing grade-level content (Crosson et al., 2019).

Literacy teachers: Literacy teachers are those who teach English to ELLs. These teachers need to understand the academic needs of ELLs (Crosson et al., 2019).

Parent-students interactions: This describes the interactions between parents and students aiming to help students learn educational concepts (Sheehan et al., 2019).

Parental involvement: Parental involvement in schools is a partnership among school teachers, administrators, and parents to promote growth of children (Leddy, 2018).

Significance of the Study

The problem this study addressed was that fewer than 10% of the parents of K-5 ELLs participated in teacher-parents interview nights at the study site. The findings of this project study help stakeholders such as teachers and school and district administrators to increase participation of the parents of K-5 ELLs to participate in teacher-parents interview nights at the study site. Teachers and school administrators can use the findings to support the parents of K-5 ELLs regarding participation in teacher-parents interview nights at the study site.

The findings help school principals with strategies to support the parents of K-5 ELLs to participate in teacher-parents interview nights. The findings help researchers to conduct research on parental involvement of the parents of K-5 ELLs in teacher-parents interview nights. The parents of K-5 ELLs and community members benefit from the findings by understanding their societal roles to participate in teacher-parents interview nights.

The findings benefit policymakers and professionals in the education field to support the parents of K-5 ELLs regarding their involvement in teacher-parents interview nights by aiding in the design and implementation of strategies for teachers and principals via specialized training on how to increase parental participation in teacher-parents interview nights. Positive social change may be implemented via a professional development (PD) training for school principals and teachers to support parental involvement of the parents of K-5 ELLs in teacher-parents interview nights for the benefits of ELLs.

Research Question

The research question that guided this project study was:

What factors are influencing the capacity of the parents of K-5 ELLs to participate in teacher-parents interview nights?

Review of the Literature

I searched for peer-reviewed journal articles published in the past 5 years. For the literature review of this project study, I used Walden University's Library and online databases such as SAGE Journals Online, ERIC, Google Scholar, and ProQuest. The

search terms included: *leadership practices, school principals, assistant school principals, parental involvement, ways to increase parental involvement, teacher-to-parent meetings, teach-parent interview nights, parents and homework, parents of ELLs, school communication, teachers and parents, and theories regarding parental involvement*. I found over 1,000 peer-reviewed journal articles published between 2015 and 2021.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework that guided this project study was the theory of Epstein et al. (2002). The Epstein theory is a model used as a framework for parental involvement (Epstein et al., 2002). The Epstein theory outlines six types of family involvement behaviors: positive home conditions, communication, involvement at school, home learning activities, shared decision making within the school, and community partnerships (Epstein et al., 2002).

The Epstein theory includes the role of the parents and their support in educational efforts. Based on the Epstein model, parents can support educational activities (Epstein et al., 2002). According to Epstein, communication between parents and schools must be a bidirectional endeavor (Epstein et al., 2002).

Epstein encouraged schools to create a place for parent ownership within the school through shared decision making (Epstein et al., 2002). The Epstein model has been used to empower parents to have a voice within the school and has recognized the work of parents in the home. School teachers and administrators are encouraged to use

the Epstein model to help parents with effective strategies within the home (Epstein et al., 2002).

Epstein suggested that parental involvement should be defined and evaluated in the school's terms rather than the families' terms (Epstein et al., 2002). Parental involvement helps students (Flores, 2018). I used this conceptual framework to examine the perceptions of parents of ELLs regarding parental involvement. This conceptual framework was central in seeking answers to the research question, which was formed based on the Epstein model. I used the Epstein model to create the interview protocol containing open-ended interview questions (see Appendix B).

Review of the Broader Literature

English as a Second Language (ESL)

People from around the globe come to United States to live and work. For these immigrants, English is their second or third spoken language. Immigrants need to communicate in English. However, many immigrants lack proficiency in English (Sonmez, 2019). According to Irby et al. (2018), English as a second language (ESL) classes are designed for immigrants who are lacking proficiency in English. ESL classes are designed to prepare students in English listening, speaking, reading, and writing (Przymus, 2016). In elementary schools, foreign students learning English are tested every year using different instruments to assess their proficiency in English listening, speaking, reading, and writing (Franco-Fuenmayor et al., 2015). When ESL students meet literacy standards with a good level of command of the English language, they exit the ESL program and are integrated into mainstream classes.

English Language Learners (ELLs)

Another name for ESL students is ELLs. Researchers have been using ELLs and ESL interchangeably (Gupta, 2019). An increasing number of ELLs are entering the United States classrooms every year (Irby et al., 2018). ELLs made up 10% of the school population of the United States (Franco-Fuenmayor et al., 2015). About 5 million K-12 students are identified as ELLs (Gupta, 2019). Approximately 10% of students aged 5-17 are foreign-born (Irby et al., 2018).

Types of ELLs

ELLs are diverse students. Calderon and Slakk (2019) classified ELLs as migrants, special education, reclassified, general education, with interrupted formal education, highly schooled newcomers, long term ELLs, and those who suffer trauma and posttraumatic stress disorder. Migrant students move from home to home, city to city, or state to state (Calderon & Slakk, 2019). The experiences of ELLs differ from non-ELL learners (Irby et al., 2018). In addition to language barriers, ELLs may have cognitive or behavioral obstacles that result in their classifications as special education ELLs (Gupta, 2019). ELLs take on average 3 to 7 years to become proficient in English (Calderon & Slakk, 2019). Some ELLs may stay in the ESL program longer than 7 years (Calderon & Slakk, 2019).

Needs of ELLs

ELLs lack proficiency in English. To communicate orally and in writing, ELLs need adequate literacy skills (Calderon & Slakk, 2019). Because ELLs do not understand English well enough, ELLs cannot communicate with native speakers (Calderon & Slakk,

2019). ELLs need to develop English language skills to succeed in school and society (Irby et al., 2018). Literacy teachers need to know how to help ELLs (Irby et al., 2018).

ELLs in the Classroom

The behavior of ELLs in schools may reflect their cultures (Jusoh et al., 2020). For example, in some Caribbean countries, students do not look at the teacher in the eyes (Jusoh et al., 2020). The fact that an ELLs are used to sit all day in the classroom, listening to teachers, may explain their reluctance to participate in group activities (Calderon & Slakk, 2019). Teachers who teach ELLs need to help these students (Morales & DiNapoli, 2018). Teachers need to welcome ELLs and understand their academic needs (Jusoh et al., 2020). Teaching strategies should include ways to introduce ELLs to the American way of life (Gupta, 2019). Teachers of ELLs need to introduce these learners to classroom, school, and transition routines (Calderon & Slakk, 2019). Also, teachers of ELLs need to teach ELLs the importance of attendance and homework (Jusoh et al., 2020).

Differentiated Instruction to Teach ELLs

ELLs need to be empowered to learn English (Park & Holloway, 2017). However, ELLs have difficulties in learning English. For example, ELLs have difficulty in processing information to master English (Talat, 2018). Teachers need to modify their lessons to meet the needs of ELLs (Sonmez, 2019).

Teachers who teach ELLs also need to modify assessment of ELLs (Valli et al., 2016). Teachers of ELLs should use images and videos to teach English to ELLs (Flores, 2018). Jusoh et al. (2020) stated that teachers need to modify their questions to encourage

ELLs to participate in the lesson by creating an interactive and participative learning environment. Differentiated instructional strategies could be in the form of modified pronunciation, changing the rate of reading speed, using basic vocabulary, self-repetition, pauses, rephrasing, and translation (Gonzales & Gabel, 2017). Gupta (2019) suggested the following principles to teach ELLs: (a) know your students and their motivations to learn the second language, (b) create a welcoming classroom environment, (c) build background knowledge, (d) provide comprehensible input by building vocabulary, (e) include different opportunities for interaction and action, (f) use multiple modalities during instruction, and (g) conduct ongoing reviews and assessments.

Characteristics of ELLs

ELLs have their own characteristics. Anxiety can impede the learning language process of ELLs (Santiago et al., 2018). Teachers of ELLs need to create a supportive learning environment to help these learners learn English (Talat, 2018).

Teachers of ELLs should assess the strengths of ELLs by providing positive feedback (Alismail, 2016). For example, teachers of ELLs could assess learners on the content of a lesson instead of grammar (Talat, 2018). Another example is that ELLs are literate in their native language and know how to transfer knowledge; however, these learners may lack the appropriate English language skills (Santiago et al., 2018).

ELLs who lack language proficiency may experience anxiety and go through a silent period during which they only observe and listen to the teacher (Morales & DiNapoli, 2018). According to Morales and DiNapoli (2018), Spanish ELLs may process information during a lesson better when they are using their native language to

conceptualize ideas. Spanish ELLs' unwillingness to speak should not be perceived as a fact that learning does not take place (Morales & DiNapoli, 2018).

According to Santiago et al. (2018), effective school intervention programs for elementary ELLs can help them reduce anxiety. Teachers of ELLs need to create a learning environment where ELLs feel safe and accepted (Santiago et al., 2018). Teachers of ELLs should consider the background and culture of these learners (Alismail, 2016).

Some ELLs may have had negative learning experiences (Alismail, 2016). According to Alismail (2016), bilingual educators need to create a culturally diverse environment for ELLs. Teachers of ELLs need to have equally high expectations for all students (Vera et al., 2016). Teachers of literacy need to teach 21st century skills by using research-based curricula and pedagogy (Cheatham & Nyegenye, 2017).

Learning takes place when students participate in the learning process (Cheatham & Nyegenye, 2017). With deep learning, ELLs should be able to make sense of learning by applying knowledge gained (Flores, 2018). ELLs need to know how to apply critical thinking skills to real-life problem-solving (Vera et al., 2016). Parents' leadership interests and level of education could significantly predict children's educational success (Vera et al., 2016).

Characteristics of Bilingualism

Bilingualism is an important form of communication for people who speak a common language (Sonmez, 2019); however, some bilingual students live in homes where only the native languages are spoken (Sonmez, 2019). Language enclave homes

are homes where the dominant language is not English (Liang, 2018). Parents in language enclave homes do not always encourage students' progress in learning the new language (Liang, 2018). In other bilingual or multilingual homes, parents do not support their children to speak their native languages (Liang, 2018).

To develop proficiency both in native languages and in English, teachers of bilingual students may encourage parents to speak their native languages at home (Liang, 2018). If a child speaks a language other than English, teachers should embrace it as a resource (Sonmez, 2019). Multilingualism reflects diversity and should be celebrated.

Expectations of Parents of ELLs

Not only teachers but also parents should help ELLs increase their proficiency in English. Parental help is needed to prepare ELLs to apply their knowledge in real-life situations (Santiago et al., 2018). Parents expect teachers of ELLs to have direct conversations with them (Gupta, 2019). Teacher-parent professional relationships can help ELLs (Hampden-Thompson & Galindo, 2017).

Parents entrust school teachers and administrators with their children (Calderon & Slakk, 2019). According to Gupta (2019), parents of ELLs expect school teachers to be their partner in the education of their children. Cheatham and Nyegenye (2017) reported that parent-teacher dialogues about young children and school meetings are critical. Vera et al. (2016) said that parents with higher levels of formal education, when encouraged by teachers to be involved, expressed leadership interests.

Parents expect school teachers to communicate with them by expressing ideas and thoughts clearly (Cheatham & Nyegenye, 2017). Also, parents expect their children to

develop critical thinking skills in order to make decisions (Cheatham & Nyegenye, 2017). Parents who have higher levels of formal education expect their children to be valued (Vera et al., 2016). Also, parents of ELLs want their children to be respected (Sonmez, 2019). According to Cheatham and Nyegenye (2017), parents of ELLs expect their children to be taught by highly effective teachers who could prepare their children for the future.

Teaching Strategies for Literacy Teachers who Teach ELLs

ELLs strive to succeed academically. According to Sprangler (2017), because 85% of literacy state scores are on English vocabulary, teachers of ELLs need to apply teaching strategies to help ELLs increase proficiency in English vocabulary. In literacy, words are tiered into three categories: (a) in Tier 1, words are used in daily conversations, (b) Tier 2, words are academic words, and (c) Tier 3, words are used in specific contents (Sprangler, 2017). Teachers of ELLs should focus on tier two words in order for ELLs to build academic skills (Sprangler, 2017). Thus, teachers who teach ELLs need to encourage these students to engage in conversations with the teacher and their peers.

Teachers who teach ELLs should engage these students in high-level discussions with peers. Teachers should focus on helping ELLs upgrade their vocabulary skills (Sprangler, 2017). Teachers who teach ELLs should teach new words daily for ELLs to increase proficiency in English (Sprangler, 2017). A teaching strategy for literacy teachers to use is repeating new vocabularies for ELLs to understand their meaning and know how to compose sentences (Sprangler, 2017). For example, project-based teaching

is an efficient way to teach vocabulary to ELLs. Thus, literacy teachers should continuously review vocabularies with ELLs.

Elementary school learners need support from teachers. Teachers of ELLs should apply teaching strategies for ELLs to increase proficiency in English (Sprangler, 2017). An example of a positive teaching strategy is to reward learners for doing well academically (Louie & Sierschynski, 2015). Another example of a teaching strategy is for literacy teachers of ELLs to use wordless books and to engage ELLs in discussions about the content of the books (Louie & Sierschynski, 2015).

A positive school climate fosters a learning environment where learners can learn and grow academically. Literacy teachers who teach ELLs should use teaching strategies to provide these learners with clear expectations as to what they need to do to excel academically (Santiago et al., 2018). Also, literacy teachers of ELLs need to encourage these learners to develop discussion skills (Louie & Sierschynski, 2015).

Teachers of ELLs should encourage the development of social skills by teaching these learners how to learn cooperatively (Talat, 2018). Literacy teachers of ELLs need to encourage these learners to develop discussion skills (Louie & Sierschynski, 2015). Literacy teachers who teach ELLs should focus on helping ELLs to follow teaching directions. Another teaching strategy is to motivate ELLs to learn new concepts (Welch, 2015). For example, literacy teachers can help ELLs participate in class activities (Gonzales & Gabel, 2017). A final example of a teaching strategy is to use formative and summative assessments to determine the learning needs of ELLs (Park & Holloway, 2017).

Bilingual Parents

Bilingual learners are those whose native language is not English. These learners could live in a home where English is not spoken (Zeynep et al., 2016). Bilingual parents may prefer to speak their native language at home (Welch, 2015). Bilingual parents could have the same academic expectations for their children as the parents of native English speakers (Zeynep et al., 2016). For example, parents expect teachers to work together in the process of educating their children.

Bilingual parents expect their children to gain literacy skills in listening, speaking, reading, and writing (Welch, 2015). Parents of bilingual learners expect teachers to provide positive learning experiences to their children (Valli et al., 2016). According to Welch (2015), literacy teachers should create bilingual interactional space in bilingual classrooms. A bilingual interactional space could promote a positive bilingual identity for expanding linguistic repertoires (Welch, 2015).

According to Welch (2015), teachers should evaluate learners' work and provide them with feedback regarding what to do to meet assignments' requirements. Regarding ELLs, teachers should provide verbal feedback using a positive language (Welch, 2015). Teachers' feedback could help students to bridge the gap between where students are and where they need to be (Louie & Sierschynski, 2015). Positive feedback could encourage learners to be more confident while learning English (Talat, 2018).

Teachers of ELLs should provide clear and explicit feedback to identify the strengths and weaknesses of ELLs. ELLs use the teacher's feedback to improve their schoolwork. Parents expect to receive feedback from teachers to inform them of the

performance of their children in the classes they are taking. Feedback could be used by teachers of ELLs as a way to build a relationship between parents and educators (Talat, 2018).

Challenges of Bilingual Parents

Bilingual parents could have low socioeconomic status and could face difficulties that could affect their participation in school activities concerning meeting with school officials (Hernandez & Konrady, 2018). Hernandez and Konrady (2018) reported that poverty, racism, discrimination, and inequality are among the multiple setbacks to integrate into the United States' way of life. Leddy (2018) reported that such difficulties include means of transportation, time, and language barriers.

Perceptions of Bilingual Parents Regarding Parental Involvement

Bilingual parents' expectations of school teachers may be a projection of what defines schools in their home country. Because cultures impact educational systems, parents of bilingual learners may have different perceptions of what schools are in the United States (Zeynep et al., 2016). Parents of bilingual learners are more likely to compare education in their country to education in the United States (Welch, 2015).

Teachers of ELLs may make assumptions regarding the perceptions of parents to participate in school activities (Louie & Sierschynski, 2015). According to Calderon and Slakk (2019), teachers of ELLs should evaluate their assumptions regarding the perceptions of bilingual parents about education in the United States (Calderon & Slakk, 2019). Also, teachers of ELLs should make connections with bilingual parents to

potentially reduce misconceptions regarding the perceptions of bilingual parents about the education of their children in the United States (Gonzales & Gabel, 2017).

According to Zeynep et al. (2016), a way to expand the participation of parents of bilingual children in school activities is through the development of partnerships between teachers and parents. According to Brown et al. (2019), parents should support the school's initiatives such as parental involvement. School-family relationships are increasing students' academic outcomes (Hampden-Thompson & Galindo, 2017).

Teachers need to provide education to all children. Parental involvement can be expressed in different ways (Ma et al., 2016). Parental involvement in school activities may include participation in back-to-school nights (Ma et al., 2016). Flores (2018) reported that parental involvement is a way to help students academically. Scholars have examined the family's role in school-community partnerships. Parents' literacy coaching at home could have profound positive results on children from multilingual and multicultural families (Brown et al., 2019). Brown et al. (2019) stated that the double bearing of parental involvement is that children can academically grow while staying connected with their families.

Parents should be involved in the educational lives of their children (Brown et al., 2019). Petrone (2016) reported that expanding the educational involvement of bilingual parents could have significant effects on students' academic achievement. Petrone revealed that a way to expand the participation of parents of bilingual learners is through the development of communication between teachers and parents.

School-family relationships could help learners do well in school. The linguistic and cultural diversity characteristic of the United States can be mostly attributed to an increasing number of immigrants (Liang, 2018). Expanding the educational involvement of bilingual parents could impact student achievement (Martínez-Álvarez, 2017).

According to Martínez-Álvarez (2017), a lack of competency in the learners' native language could result in a disconnect from their parents, their roots, and their cultures, that could result in behavioral problems in the classroom. Full proficiency in both languages could help students maintain a common way of communication with their bilingual parents (Liang, 2018). High expectations from teachers of ELLs and the use of appropriate teaching strategies could help ELLs reach their learning goals.

The perceptions of bilingual parents include communication with teachers. Teachers should encourage parental involvement in school activities (Anthony & Ogg, 2019). According to Anthony and Ogg (2019), school-based involvement and home-school communication are predictors of students' reading achievement, a key factor of student academic success.

When parents are engaged in school activities, students have fewer behavioral problems, better attendance, lower suspension rates, fewer instances of violent behavior, higher grades, and higher state test scores (Anthony & Ogg, 2019). Barger et al. (2019) reported that parental involvement is positively associated with students' academic achievement. Regarding parental involvement, teachers who teach bilingual learners literacy should have multicultural perspectives that could be obtained through multicultural education (Alismail, 2016).

Teachers of ELLs could build cultural proficiency by connecting with the families and communities of ELLs (Wright et al., 2018). Wright et al. (2018) stated that teachers could visit students' homes. Home visits by teachers could have significant impact on children's language arts scores (Wright et al., 2018). Louie and Sierschynski (2015) stated that parental involvement supports students' learning and aids school improvement.

The cultural gap between parents and teachers may create a misunderstanding from the part of teachers of the behavior of parents of bilingual students (Dunn, 2019). Belinda and Carlyn (2016) stated that cultural relevancy impacts parental involvement. Teachers could interpret the lack of parental involvement as an expression of refusal of parents to cooperate with teachers (Goodman & Hooks, 2016). Goodman and Hooks (2016) provided insights for teachers and leaders seeking to foster meaningful, authentic home-school communication in new immigrant destination communities. Miranda and Cherng (2018) showed that many families are challenged with transitioning from the cultural values of their home countries to those of the United States.

According to Brown et al. (2019), parents should support the school's initiative. Scholars have reported that parents influence children's education (Gonzales & Gabel, 2017). Parental involvement is a way to increase students' academic performance (Flores, 2018). Barger et al. (2019) reported that parental involvement is positively associated with students' academic achievement. According to Anthony and Ogg (2019), school-based involvement and home-school communication are predictors of students' reading achievement, a key factor of student academic success. Strong school-family

relationships increase students' academic outcomes (Hampden-Thompson & Galindo, 2017). Low parental involvement results in literacy deficiencies (Wood et al., 2018).

Bilingual Parents and School or Community Partnerships

Scholars have examined the family's role in school-community partnerships. According to Wood et al. (2018), Wright et al. (2018), and Hernandez and Konrady (2018), parental involvement supports students' learning and aids school improvement. Therefore, school officials need to create parents-school partnership (Anthony & Ogg, 2019). According to Barger et al. (2019), Liang (2018), and Sonmez (2019), school teachers and administrators should expand the educational participation of bilinguals by forming a parent-school partnership. Flores (2018), Gonzales and Gabel (2017), and Zeynep et al. (2016) stated that an effective way to expand the participation of parents of bilingual children is through the development of partnerships between teachers and parents. Parent-teacher or parent-school, or school-family partnerships is an important factor that affects students' academic success (Brown et al., 2019; Calderon & Slakk, 2019; Sonmez, 2019). Thus, partnerships between parents and schools are important.

Parents influence the educational lives of children (Gonzales & Gabel, 2017). School-family partnerships can help students' academic outcomes (Wood et al., 2018). Further, school-family partnerships can be created to meet parents' expectations (Jackson, 2018). Jackson (2018) suggested seven principles that teachers could consider to create parent-teacher partnerships: (a) start where your students are, (b) know where they are going, (c) expect them to get there, (d) support them along the way, (e) focus on quality vs. quantity, (f) use feedback, and (g) never work better than your students.

According to Miranda and Cherng (2018), parents' education level can affect parents' participation in their children's education process.

Teachers of ELLs need to be mindful of cultural elements (Goodman & Hooks, 2016; Jackson, 2018; Wood et al., 2018). According to Shillingford et al. (2018), parents of ELLs experience systemic barriers that increase stressors such as household stress, cultural misunderstandings, and perhaps isolation in the school setting. Lack of English language skills could lead to discrimination against bilingual children (Dunn, 2019). ELLs may not participate in collaborative work in the classroom (Belinda & Carlyn, 2016).

Factors of Lack of Parental Involvement

Parents of ELLs may not participate in the education of their children. Schools could be improved when parents of ELLs are involved in their children's education (Luet, 2017). English-language barriers, long hours of work or multiple jobs, and lack of childcare could affect the parents of ELLs to participate in school activities (Jeremy et al., 2019).

ELLs could live in a traumatic situation characterized by incarceration, poverty, homelessness, unemployment, lack of insurance, lack of educational resources, deportation, depression/suicide, and socioeconomically disadvantaged (Jeremy et al., 2019). ELLs could not be performing at their best levels because of the hardships with their personal lives (Luet, 2017). Parents are not involved in school activities because of the means of transportation or work constraint (Barger et al., 2019). Dretzke and Rickers (2016) stated that major parental responsibilities create obstacles for parents to participate

in school activities. Thus, teachers need to know about the factors that affect parental involvement of ELL learners.

ELL Learners in Urban Public Elementary Schools

Many ELLs attend urban elementary schools in the United States. Not all teachers are prepared to work in urban schools (Shernoff et al., 2015). ELLs need highly qualified teachers to help them improve proficiency in English (Barger et al., 2019). According to Allen and FitzGerald (2017), race and culture should be considered by teachers to help ELLs in urban public schools to reach their potential. For the wellbeing of ELLs, teachers need to be prepared to face the challenges associated with the needs of ELLs (Shernoff et al., 2015). Hammonds (2017) reported that some teachers quit their jobs due to students' underachievement.

Implications

The findings from this study are intended to help literacy teachers who teach ELLs regarding parental involvement. I developed a PD plan for literacy teachers to assist them with strategies regarding the involvement of parents of ELLs in school activities. The content of the PD includes strategies that teachers of ELLs can use towards parental involvement.

K-5 school principals can use the findings to increase parental involvement. The findings may also help senior school district administrators with strategies to support literacy teachers regarding the involvement of parents of ELLs in school activities. Both teachers and school administrators can use the findings to support the parents of K-5 ELLs regarding parental involvement. Positive social change may be implemented via

PD training for school principals and teachers to support involvement of the parents of K-5 ELLs in teacher-parents interview nights for the benefits of ELLs.

Summary

The project site was a northeastern urban public elementary school district. The problem addressed was that fewer than 10% of the parents of K-5 ELLs participated in teacher-parents interview nights at the study site. The purpose of this basic qualitative research design was to identify the factors influencing the capacity of the parents of K-5 ELLs to participate in teacher-parents interview nights. The research question was designed to identify the factors influencing the capacity of the parents of K-5 ELLs to participate in teacher-parents interview nights.

The conceptual framework was the school community theory developed by Epstein (2002), which posits separate responsibilities of families and schools, shared responsibilities of families and schools, and sequential responsibilities of families and schools. Purposeful sampling was used to select 10 parents of K-5 ELLs. Data were collected via semistructured face-to-face interviews. Data were analyzed using thematic analysis for emergent themes.

In Section 2, a description of the methodology for this project study including data collection and analysis is presented. In Section 3, I present a description of the project for this study including data findings. In Section 4, reflections as a learner during this project study as well as the strengths and weaknesses of the project as it addresses the problem and the implications for future research opportunities are presented.

Section 2: The Methodology

Research Design and Approach

Description and Justification

The problem addressed in this project study was that fewer than 10% of the parents of K-5 ELLs participated in teacher-parents interview nights at the study site. The purpose of this basic qualitative research design was to identify the factors influencing the capacity of the parents of K-5 ELLs to participate in teacher-parents interview nights. The research question was developed to identify the factors influencing the capacity of the parents of K-5 ELLs to participate in teacher-parents interview nights. Purposeful sampling was used to select 10 parents of K-5 ELLs.

Basic Qualitative Research Design

A basic qualitative research design was appropriate for this project study to identify the factors influencing the capacity of the parents of K-5 ELLs to participate in teacher-parents interview nights. Qualitative research is about collecting non-numerical data (Johnson & Matthews, 2017). Data are collected based on words from a small sample (Johnson & Matthews, 2017).

Justification for Research Design

For this project study, a basic qualitative research design was used. Studying the factors influencing the capacity of the parents of K-5 ELLs to participate in teacher-parents interview nights required qualitative data about the perceptions of parents of ELLs. To gain an in-depth understanding of the study phenomenon, I asked the same interview questions such as why, how, and what. An ethnographic design was not

selected because the focus of this study was not on an entire cultural group (see Merriam & Tisbdell, 2016). The stories of the participants were not interpreted (see Creswell & Creswell, 2017). I did not select a case study because case studies are used when researchers are asking why and how questions. Case studies are used to examine the causes of underlying principles (Yin, 2017). Grounded theory was not selected because the purpose of this study was not to develop a theory (see Merriam & Tisbdell, 2016). The mixed methods approach was not appropriate for this study because no quantitative data were collected for this study. I did not collect numerical data and had no independent and dependent variables. Thus, I used a basic qualitative design to construct meaning from data and participant interviews (see Creswell & Creswell, 2017).

Participants

Population and Sampling

The setting for this project study was an urban public elementary school within a school district located in northern United States. The school had about 450 students, 24 teachers, five paraprofessionals, a principal, and an assistant principal. Students attending the school were 80% ELLs and 20% regular students. About 85% of all students were performing below proficiency in literacy.

According to Creswell and Creswell (2017), the sample size for a qualitative study varies from study to study. The sample was the parents of K-5 ELLs. Purposeful sampling was used to select parents of K-5 ELLs intentionally to participate in this project study. Of the 360 parents of K-5 ELLs, I identified 30 who met the selection criteria and 10 agreed to participate in this study. Thus, the sample was 10 participants.

Criteria for Selecting Participants

A participant selection criterion is the participant's experience with the phenomenon under study (see Creswell & Creswell, 2017). The central criteria used to select participants considers those who may inform the study's research questions (see Creswell & Creswell, 2017). The participants were the parents of K-5 ELLs. The selection criteria included adults who were the parents of K-5 ELLs and whose children were enrolled at the elementary school under study for at least 1 academic year.

Justification of Participants

Parents of K-5 ELLs were intentionally selected to participate in this project study to collect qualitative data to answer the research question. At the project site, there were 360 parents of K-5 ELLs. I identified 30 parents of K-5 ELLs who met the selection criteria. Of the 30 parents of K-5 ELLs, 10 agreed to participate in this project study. I interviewed 10 parents of K-5 ELLs and did not invite more parents of K-5 ELL learners because I reached data saturation. By interviewing 10 parents of K-5 ELLs, I collected qualitative data.

Procedure for Gaining Access to Participants

I sought Institution Review Board (IRB) approval from the project site and Walden University. According to the district administrator responsible for IRB, all parents of K-5 ELLs had provided the school with email addresses (school official, personal communication, February 12, 2020). After I received IRB approval (approval # 01/15/2021/00594945), I started the data collection process. The purpose of the IRB was

to ensure that the rights and welfare of the human research subjects were protected (see Creswell & Creswell, 2017).

I generated a list of emails of parents of K-5 ELLs who met the selection criteria. I sent out emails to those parents that included information about the purpose and significance of the project study and the methodology for data collection. In the email, I requested that those parents willing to be interviewed to respond with “I consent.”

Establishing a Researcher-Participant Working Relationship

For this project study, qualitative data were collected via semistructured interviews vis Zoom due to COVID-19 pandemic. During the interviews, I develop a professional working relationship with the interviewees. As a novice researcher, I created a rapport with parents of K-5 ELLs.

During the interviews, I maintained high participant confidentiality. I informed the participants of how I protected their confidentiality, privacy, and anonymity. During the interviews, I ensured that the parents of K-5 ELLs were comfortable in asking questions for clarity. Also, during the interviews, I made sure that the parents of K-5 ELLs felt comfortable to honestly share their perceptions regarding parental involvement.

Measures for Protecting Study Participants

Prior to IRB approval, I completed the training *Protecting Human Research Participants* offered by the National Institute of Health. I obtained the CITI certificate. I addressed ethical issues such as anonymity, informed consent, and confidentiality during this project study. Research ethics were implemented to protect the rights of the participants and minimize harm (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). I did not include in the

findings the names of the participants or the name of the school or the name of the school district.

I used an interview protocol (see Appendix B) during the interviews for consistency. I addressed each participant professionally and informed the participants that participation in this project study was voluntary and that all interviews were treated confidentially. I informed the participants that they could withdraw from this project study at any time during the data collection process.

I am the only one who has access to the interviews transcripts and did not include the identities of the participants in the findings. I did not share the interview transcripts with school or district administrators. I will keep all data on my personal computer, which is password protected. Interview transcripts will be stored electronically in my house in a password-protected file on my personal computer.

All files containing the interview transcripts have been encrypted. Data will be kept secure for 5 years, per the protocol of Walden University. After 5 years, I will destroy all data.

Data Collection

Justification for Data Collection Methods

A basic qualitative research design was used to conduct this project study. I collected data through interviews. I did not need to collect quantitative data because I did not study the relationship among variables. I conducted interviews to collect qualitative data to answer the research question.

Qualitative Data Collection Process

Upon IRB approval from the project site and Walden University, I used the email addresses that parents of K-5 ELLs had provided to school officials and searched for parents who met the selection criteria. I sent out emails to those parents who met the selection criteria and I included information about the purpose and significance of the project study and the methodology for data collection. In the emails, I requested that those parents willing to be interviewed to respond with “I consent.” Those parents who agreed to participate in the study, I invited to interviews. I conducted interviews for this project study. The interviews were semistructured and one-on-one via Zoom due to COVID-19 pandemic. I conducted the interviews using an interview protocol that I developed containing the interview questions that were open-ended questions based on the conceptual framework (see Appendix B). The interviews occurred on a day and at a time that was agreed upon with each participant. During the interviews, each participant was encouraged to ask questions. Each interview was about 1 hour. I recorded each interview with the permission of each participant.

Systems for Keeping Track of Data

After each interview, I transcribed the interview data within 2 days. Each interview transcript was treated confidentially to protect the privacy and confidentiality of each participant’s personal information and the interview data. Each recorded interview session is stored on my laptop, which is password protected, and will be kept on a jump drive for 5 years. Both the laptop and jump drive are secured by password. The jump drive will be stored in a locked file cabinet in my home office.

Role of the Researcher

When this study was conducted, I was an elementary school teacher teaching ELLs for 10 years. When I collected data, I was a novice researcher. I did not know the participants and had no supervisory role over them. I established a good working relationship with each participant during the semistructured one-on-one interviews.

During the data collection, I followed ethical procedures set forth by the school district's IRB to protect the rights of the participants. I am the only person having access to the interview transcripts and all email correspondences with the participants. I will delete all electronic interview transcripts after 5 years of the completion of the doctoral project study.

Sufficiency of Data Collection

I interviewed the participants using the open-ended interview questions (see Appendix B). I did not know data saturation was reached until I conducted the interviews. When the participants shared the same responses and no new information gleaned from the interviews, then I knew that I had reached data saturation. The sample size was 10 parents of ELLs, which was sufficient to represent a description of the participants' responses.

Data Analysis

I transcribed the interviews verbatim. I saved each interview transcript into a MS Word document, which is password-protected on a personal laptop. I scheduled follow-up meetings with the participants to review and confirm the accuracy of the interview transcripts. When the participants acknowledged that the interview transcripts were

accurate, I organized the interview transcripts using the NVivo program. I used axial coding to identify common words and phrases by charting similar terms and phrases to identify subcategories that emerged from similar responses. I examined the participants' responses in conjunction with the literature review and the conceptual framework to identify repetitive phrases and words from the semistructured one-on-one interviews. I used thematic analysis for emergent themes.

Evidence of Quality of Data

Member checking is a way to validate the interview transcripts (Creswell & Creswell, 2019). I used member checking to minimize my biases. Member checking was conducted for the trustworthiness of this project study. I believe that member checking contributed to the credibility of the findings of this project study. I compared and combined the responses of the participants in conjunction with the literature review and conceptual framework. Thus, the interview transcripts were a true reflection of the perceptions of the participants.

Discrepant Cases

I searched the interview transcripts for discrepant cases. No discrepant cases were found during the thematic analysis. Thus, no discrepant cases were included in the findings. Discrepant cases could have been used by stakeholders such as school teachers teaching ELLs and school administrators, at the project site, in decision making processes regarding the involvement of the parents of ELLs in after-school activities.

Assumptions, Limitations, Scope, and Delimitations

Assumptions

I assumed that the parents of K-5 ELLs who participated in interviews provided honest responses during the semistructured face-to-face one-one-one interviews. Another assumption was that the parents of K-5 ELLs needed support from teachers and administrators regarding parental involvement. I also assumed that the teachers of K-5 ELLs had reached out to these parents to encourage them to participate in school activities.

Limitations

The sample size of 10 parents of K-5 ELLs was a limitation. The parents of K-5 ELLs could have responded to the interview questions based on their experiences in communicating with the teachers of their children at the study site. A limitation was that school literacy teachers were not interviewed. Another limitation was that the children of the parents of K-5 ELLs were not interviewed.

Scope of Project Study

The study site was a public school district. The scope of this project study was one public elementary school. The parents of K-5 ELLs were not participating in school activities after school hours.

Delimitations

The study site was limited to the geographic boundaries within one public school district. The semistructured, face-to-face, one-on-one interviews were limited to 10

participants who were the parents of K-5 ELLs. The findings may not be generalized or transferred to other similar public school districts serving ELLs.

Data Analysis Results

I used thematic analysis, and four themes emerged. The first theme was that all 10 participants reported that they create a home learning environment to help their children learn literacy. The second theme was that the parents of ELLs are not participating in school activities because of language barriers. The third theme was that the participants experienced challenges with the use of the online learning platforms and felt frustrated with technological difficulties and expenses for a laptop and access to the internet. The fourth theme was that all participants reported specific strategies to help them communicate with the teachers during parents-to-teacher nights to talk about literacy learning materials and activities for the academic progress of their children. A summary of the themes is presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Summary of Emergent Themes

Theme #	Description
1	The parents of ELLs create a home learning environment to help their children learn literacy.
2	The parents of ELLs are not participating in school activities because of language barriers.
3	The parents of ELLs experienced challenges with online learning due to COVID-19.
4	The parents of ELLs recommended frequent phone calls from the teacher regarding the literacy curriculum and resources and participation in parents-to-teacher nights to promote the academic progress of their children.

Theme #1: Parents Create a Supportive Home Learning Environment to Help Their Children Learn Literacy

All of the 10 participants reported that they create a home learning environment to help their children learn literacy. P1 said, “I create a home learning environment for my children to learn English.” P2 reported, “To the best of our parental ability, we try to create a learning environment where our children do their literacy school work.” For example, P2 said that they create a home learning environment where their children work on their literacy homework assigned by the teachers. P2 also stated that a home learning environment needs to support their children to learn literacy. P1, P2, and P3 reported that a home learning environment is essential for their children to learn literacy. P3 implied that they help their children to learn literacy by exploring new reading and writing concepts in a supported home learning environment. For example, P3 stated that they use literacy examples to help their children learn English by using specific literacy books focusing on literacy proficiency. For instance, P3 emphasized that their children need a supportive home learning environment to learn new concepts and to apply what they have learned by doing their literacy homework.

P4 mentioned that they help their children by creating a supportive home learning environment for their children to focus on learning literacy. For example, P4 creates a supportive home learning environment by helping their children read stories. P4 also mentioned that they help their children complete literacy homework in a supported home learning environment. P5 provided similar responses to P1, P2, and P4 that as parents they “provide a supportive home learning environment for their children” to increase

proficiency in literacy. P6 is creating a supportive home learning environment for their children to read literacy books to complete their homework. P7 is creating a supportive home learning environment because as parents they believe that a home learning environment can help their children learn English. P7 mentioned that they “provide opportunities for learning at home.” Also, P7 said that the home learning environment “must help children learn literacy concepts by reading to their children literacy passages from a book.” For instance, P7 creates a supportive home learning environment for their children to complete literacy homework. P8 also creates a supportive home learning environment where their children watch educational programs on TV to increase their proficiency in literacy. P8 creates a supportive home learning environment by encouraging their children to improve proficiency in literacy by practicing phrases and sentences in English. P8 emphasized that by creating a supportive home learning environment, their children use and repeat passages they have read to learn English. For example, P8 said, “In my supportive home learning environment, my children are encouraged to read, repeat what they have read, and write phrases about what they have read as a way to increase proficiency in literacy.” The example P8 mentioned is about helping their children learn about sentence structures and how to express ideas in English by engaging their children in conversations at home. P9 mentioned that they support their children by helping them complete literacy homework. Also, P9 said that they create a supportive home learning environment for their children to learn English by reading and writing in English. P9 has purchased literacy books to support their children to increase proficiency in literacy. P10 reported that they create a supportive home learning

environment by allocating space in the house for their children to have no disturbances while reading and writing. P10 also said that they are creating an environment that fosters learning.

All of the 10 participants create a supportive home learning environment to help their children learn English by reading and writing to increase proficiency in literacy. Also, all of the participants emphasized that they support their children by helping them do school work assigned by the literacy teachers. Thus, all participants focused on supporting their children learn English because the participants believe that a learning environment is essential for their children to learn literacy at home by exploring new reading and writing concepts in a supported home learning environment. The participants use literacy books focusing on literacy proficiency. Also, the participants help their children learn new concepts by applying what they have learned while doing their literacy homework. For example, the participants encourage their children to repeat passages they have read from literacy books to learn English. Another example is that the participants encourage their children to write phrases about what they have read as a way to increase proficiency in literacy. Thus, all of the 10 participants are helping their children learn English by creating a supportive home learning environment for their children to complete literacy homework.

Theme #2: Parents of Ells Are Not Participating in School Activities Because of Language Barriers

All of the participants reported that they are not participating in school activities because of language barriers. P1 said, "I have not really been involved in what is going

on at the school. The reason is that language barriers.” P1 provided examples that language barriers “is a negative factor affecting communication with school teachers during parents-to-teacher nights.” P2 reported, “I am very interested by the progress of my children; however, language barriers are a factor that prevents me from attending school activities.” Also, P2 said, “I am willing to regularly participate in school activities after school hours; however, how may I communicate with the teachers when my language skills are limited.” P3 mentioned that parents-to-teacher meetings are important to learn from the teacher about the progress of their children. P3 also stated that meetings with the teacher are not occurring due to “language barriers.” P4 used to attend “school activities in the homeland; however, here in the United States, language barriers are a factor influencing their capacity to attend such activities. P4 mentioned that she “missed those school meetings with the teachers before their relocated to the United States.” Although, P4 “is trying her best to participate in school activities” language barriers are preventing her from attending school activities at the school where her son is attending at the study site. P5 implied that she is willing to “attend every invitation from the school to meet the teacher and to discuss her son’s academic progress.” P5 is willing to attend school activities to “pick up her son’s report cards and other curriculum night activities” but she is not participating in school activities because of language barriers. P6 said, “As for participation in school activities, I try my best to participate in school activities especially when it comes to pick up report cards and to attend back-to-school nights; however, I am not participating in school activities due to language barriers.” P7 “is willing to meet with the teachers of her children to discuss the academic progress of their

children but she is not participating in school activities because of language barriers.” P8 mentioned that because of language barriers, teachers place the report cards in her son’s backpack without communication.” P9 said, “I am not very involved at the school; however, I go the school meetings but I need to understand what the school teacher is telling me.” P9 “attends back-to-school nights to pick up the report cards of her children by greeting the teachers without having a conversation because of language barriers.” P10 reported, “My involvement at school includes visits to my daughter’s classroom to see the teacher regarding homework assignments without direct communication with the teachers because of language barriers.” P10 attends school meetings without understanding what is being communicated because of language barriers.

All of the participants reported that language barriers are preventing them from participating in school activities. The participants have not been involved in school activities because they cannot communicate with the teachers in English because of language barriers. All of the participants agreed that language barriers are negatively affecting communication with school teachers during parents-to-teacher nights. Although the participants are interested in the progress of their children, language barriers are a factor that prevents them from attending school activities. The participants are available to participate in school activities after school hours; however, communicating with the teachers is a challenge because the participants have limited language skills. The participants emphasized that parents-to-teacher meetings are important to them to learn from the teachers about the progress of their children. The participants mentioned that they used to attend school activities in their homeland; however, in the United States,

language barriers are preventing them from participating in school activities. The participants showed nostalgia to attending school activities in their homeland and mentioned that they missed those school meetings with the teachers. All of the participants said they are trying their best to participate in school activities; however, language barriers are preventing them from attending school activities at the school where their children attend.

To the participants, invitations from the school to meet the teachers to discuss their children's academic progress are very important. All of the participants are willing to attend school activities or to pick up their children's report cards; however, they are not participating in school activities because of language barriers. The participants are willing to be involved in school activities to understand what the school teachers are telling them about their children's education. In conclusion, all of the participants reported that they are not participating in school activities because of language barriers.

Theme #3: Parents of ELLs Experience Challenges with Online Learning Due to COVID-19

The parents of ELLs focus on their children's education. All of the participants reported that their main focus is to support their children to do well in school. The participants agreed that the school teachers can help their children to grow academically. Due to COVID-19 and online learning, the participants reported struggles with online learning technologies because they lacked the teaching skills to help their children.

All of the participants said that online learning was challenging because their focus was on teachers delivering the curriculum and on them focusing on the children's

education at home. P1 felt that during the lockdowns, due to COVID-19, she wanted to be able to communicate well enough with the teachers to be involved in the school's decision-making processes for online learning to focus on her children's education. P2 was also willing to participate in the school's online learning decision-making processes for online learning; however, she felt unable to support the teachers. P3 said that as a parent, she is interested in collaborating with the teachers to be able to focus on her children's education. P3 is supervising the children at home during homework times to make sure her children stay on task. P3 also had to purchase a computer and access to the internet for online learning to take place from her home. P4 mentioned that she helps her children with homework; however, she is not a certified teacher to teach her children. P4 relied on the online learning platform and on her children's ability to understand what academic work was assigned by the teachers.

P5 said she did not have the right skills to communicate with the teachers to help her children complete homework by using online learning as required by the school during the pandemic. P6 said that she supervised her children during the online lessons with the teachers by purchasing literacy books, a laptop, and access to the internet. P7 like P1 to P6, purchased a laptop and access to the internet to facilitate learning at home; however, she reported challenges such as lack of knowledge, extra expenses to facilitate online learning and frustration for being unable to support her children to focus on homework during the pandemic.

Similar to P1-P7, P8 mentioned that pre COVID-19 she was helping her children to focus on their homework; however, during the pandemic she faced challenges not only

with her children's frustration to learn how to use online learning but also with technological challenges such as having access to the online learning platform and how to submit assignments online. P9 mentioned that as a parent she had to learn new concepts about the online learning technologies. P9 had to learn how to communicate online with teachers for her children to focus on completing homework. P10 experienced challenges with her children having to use online learning and felt frustrated with technological difficulties and expenses for a laptop and access to the internet.

All of the participants found online learning to be challenging because they lack technological skills. The participants focus on teachers delivering the curriculum and on their children to complete school work while staying at home. Due to COVID-19, the participants wanted to be able to communicate well enough with the teachers to be involved in the school's decision-making processes for online learning by focusing on their children's education. The participants felt unable to support the teachers although they were interested in collaborating with the teachers by focusing on their children's education. The participants had to purchase a computer and access to the internet for online learning to take place from their homes. Also, the participants relied on the online learning platform and on their children's ability to understand what academic work was assigned by the teachers. The participants expressed frustration by not having the right communication skills to communicate with the teachers to help their children learn by using online learning platforms as required by the school during the pandemic. For example, these participants purchased literacy books, a laptop, and access to the internet to facilitate learning at home. All of the participants faced challenges such as the lack of

knowledge of using online learning platforms, having extra expenses to facilitate online learning, and frustration for being unable to support their children to learn from home while doing homework during the pandemic.

In conclusion, the participants have been helping their children to focus on their homework; however, during the COVID-19 pandemic the participants faced challenges not only with their children's frustration to learn how to use online learning platforms but also with technological challenges such as having access to the online learning platform and how to submit assignments online. The participants had to learn new concepts about the online learning technologies and how to communicate online with teachers for their children to focus on learning from home. Thus, all of the participants experienced challenges with the use of the online learning platforms and felt frustrated with technological difficulties and expenses for a laptop and access to the internet.

Theme #4: Frequent Phone Calls from The Teacher

All of the participants reported that specific strategies may help them to communicate with the teachers during their participation in school activities. P1 said that phone calls from the teacher is a good strategy to use to encourage parents of ELLs to participant in after-school hours activities such as parents-to-teacher nights. P1 also mentioned that the teacher should share information about the curriculum for parents to understand what it is taught at school. Another strategy is to let the parents know what literacy resources are needed to help their children increase proficiency in literacy. Therefore, P1 suggested frequent phone calls from the teacher regarding the literacy

curriculum and resources and participation in parents-to-teacher nights for the academic progress of their children.

P2 reported that a good strategy to use to encourage parents of ELLs to participate in parents-to-teacher nights is phone calls from the teacher. P1 also reported that information about the curriculum should be shared with the parents to let the parents know what literacy resources are needed to help their children learn English. P2 recommended frequent phone calls as a way to communicate with the parents of ELLs regarding the academic progress of their children, the literacy curriculum and resources, and participation in parents-to-teacher nights for the academic progress of their children.

P3 said that frequent phone calls from the teacher is a good strategy to encourage parents of ELLs to participate in parents-to-teacher nights to share information about the literacy curriculum for parents to understand how to best support their children to learn English. P3 also stated that another strategy is to let the parents know what literacy resources are needed to help their children increase proficiency in literacy. P3 suggested frequent phone calls from the teacher regarding the literacy curriculum, literacy resources, and participation in parents-to-teacher nights for the academic progress of their children.

P4 mentioned that a good strategy to use to encourage parents of ELLs to participate in parents-to-teacher nights is frequent phone calls from the teacher to share information about the literacy curriculum. P4 also mentioned that a strategy to use is to let the parents of ELLs know what literacy resources are required for their children to increase proficiency in literacy. P4 concluded that frequent phone calls from the teacher

regarding parents-to-teacher nights about the academic progress of their children, the literacy curriculum, literacy resources, and participation in parents-to-teacher nights for the academic progress of their children.

P5 stated that the parents of ELLs are encouraged to participate in parents-to-teacher nights when the teacher makes frequent phone calls. P5 finds that parents-to-teacher nights are needed to voice their concerns about the literacy curriculum and to share information about the literacy curriculum because such face-to-face meetings are informative to these parents who can learn about the expectations of the teacher regarding the literacy curriculum. P5 also stated that a strategy to use is to let the parents of ELLs know what literacy resources are required for their children to increase proficiency in literacy. P5 summarized that frequent phone calls from the teacher encourage parents to participate in parents-to-teacher nights to voice their concerns about the academic progress of their children, the literacy curriculum, and literacy resources for the academic progress of their children.

P6 stated that the parents of ELLs are willing to participate in parents-to-teacher nights to discuss the literacy curriculum with the teachers. P6 also stated that parents-to-teacher nights are needed for decision-making literacy initiatives at school by being encouraged to work with the teachers face-to-face for these parents to learn about the literacy curriculum. P6 also stated that a strategy to use is to let the parents of ELLs know what literacy learning materials are required for their children to increase proficiency in literacy. P6 mentioned that frequent phone calls from the teacher encourage them to

participate in parents-to-teacher nights to talk about the academic progress of their children, and the literacy teaching materials for the academic progress of their children.

P7 stated that as parents they are willing to participate in parents-to-teacher nights to discuss the literacy teaching materials and books with the teachers. P7 also stated that school activities such as parents-to-teacher nights are excellent ways to discuss literacy initiatives at school via face-to-face interactions with the teachers regarding the literacy curriculum. P7 also stated that a strategy to use is to let the parents of ELLs know what literacy learning materials are required for their children to increase proficiency in literacy. P7 stated that frequent phone calls from the teacher encourage them to participate in parents-to-teacher nights to talk about literacy learning materials and the literacy curriculum for the academic progress of their children.

P8 stated that they are willing to participate in parents-to-teacher nights to discuss the literacy curriculum and teaching materials with the teachers. P8 also stated that parents-to-teacher nights are face-to-face events giving parents the opportunity to discuss literacy concerns with the teachers. P8 also stated that a strategy to use is to let the parents of ELLs know what literacy learning materials are required for their children to work on literacy learning activities for their children to increase proficiency in literacy. P8 stated that teachers should encourage parents of ELLs to participate in parents-to-teacher nights to talk about literacy learning materials and activities based on the literacy curriculum for the academic progress of their children.

P9 stated that they are willing to participate in parents-to-teacher nights to share their ideas and expertise regarding the literacy curriculum and teaching materials with the

teachers. P9 also stated that parents-to-teacher nights are important to the parents of ELLs to discuss literacy curriculum and learning activities so that parents can actively participate in teaching literacy decision-making processes at the school level such as literacy teaching activities and resources. P9 also stated that a strategy to use is to let the parents of ELLs know what literacy learning materials are required for their children to work on literacy learning activities for their children to increase proficiency in literacy by asking the parents of ELLs for their input. P9 stated that teachers should encourage parents of ELLs to participate in parents-to-teacher nights to talk about literacy learning materials and activities for the academic progress of their children.

P10 stated that they are participating in parents-to-teacher nights to not only support their children but also to share ideas and expertise regarding the literacy curriculum and teaching materials with the teachers. P10 also stated that parents-to-teacher nights are important to the parents of ELLs to support the learning of their children by discussing literacy curriculum and learning activities for the parents to actively participate in teaching literacy decision-making processes at the school level regarding literacy teaching activities and resources. P10 also stated that a strategy to use is to let the parents of ELLs know what literacy learning materials such as homework assignments are to be completed by their children for their children to increase proficiency in literacy by supporting their children via interactions with the teachers. P10 stated that teachers should encourage parents of ELLs to participate in parents-to-teacher nights to talk about literacy learning materials and activities for the academic progress of their children. In conclusion, all of the participants reported specific strategies to help

them communicate with the teachers during parents- -teacher nights to talk about literacy learning materials and activities for the academic progress of their children.

Summary and Conclusions

I transcribed the interviews verbatim and scheduled follow-up meetings with the participants to review and confirm the accuracy of the interview transcripts. I used axial coding to identify subcategories that emerged from similar responses. I used thematic analysis and four themes emerged (Table 1). The first theme was that all of the 10 participants reported that they create a home learning environment to help their children learn literacy. The second theme was that the parents of ELLs are not participating in school activities because of language barriers. The third theme was that the participants experienced challenges with the use of the online learning platforms and felt frustrated with technological difficulties and expenses for a laptop and access to the internet. The fourth theme was that all of the participants reported specific strategies to help them communicate with the teachers during parents- teacher nights to talk about literacy learning materials and activities for the academic progress of their children. A summary of the themes is presented in Table 1. In the next section, I present the project.

Section 3: The Project

Introduction

The project site was an urban public school district. The problem addressed was that fewer than 10% of the parents of K-5 ELLs participated in teacher-parents interview nights at the study site. The purpose of this basic qualitative research design was to identify the factors influencing the capacity of the parents of K-5 ELLs to participate in teacher-parents interview nights. Purposeful sampling was used to interview 10 parents of K-5 ELLs. Data were collected via semi-structured face-to-face interviews. Data were analyzed using thematic analysis for emergent themes. The themes were that the parents of K-5 ELLs: (a) create a home learning environment to help their children learn literacy, (b) are not participating in school activities because of language barriers, (c) experience challenges with the use of the online learning platforms and feel frustrated with technological difficulties and expenses for a laptop and access to the internet, and (d) use specific strategies to communicate with the teachers during parents-to-teacher nights. The recommendation for this project study is a district-wide PD training for school principals to better involve the parents of K-5 ELLs in teacher-parents interview nights.

Project Purpose

The PD is designed for elementary school principals to better involve the parents of K-5 ELLs in teacher-parents interview nights (see Appendix A). The project is the PD for elementary school principals to use the findings to influence the capacity of the parents of K-5 ELLs to participate in teacher-parents interview nights. The PD is a supplemental support for elementary school principals. The PD includes strategies (a) for

elementary school principals to use to influence parents of K-5 ELLs to participate in teacher-parents interview nights, (b) to support the parents of K-5 ELLs, (c) to communicate with the parents of K-5 ELLs, (d) to implement teacher-parents nights with the parents of K-5 ELLs, (e) to encourage elementary school principals and the parents of K-5 ELLs to communicate regarding school activities, (f) to help the parents of K-5 ELLs better assist their children to learn literacy, (g) to participate in school activities with language barriers, and (h) to support the parents of K-5 ELLs with challenges of the online learning platforms.

Project Outcomes

The attendees of the PD will be elementary school principals. The attendees will receive training on specific strategies to use to encourage the parents of K-5 ELLs to participate in teacher-parents interview nights. The focus of the content of the PD is on how to support the parents of K-5 ELLs to communicate with school administrators regarding participation in school activities. The attendees will learn strategies for how the parents of K-5 ELLs could participate in teacher-parents interview nights and how to communicate with these parents not only to participate in teacher-parents nights but also to help these parents to better assist their children to learn literacy.

Project Outline

The attendees will participate in PD sessions. The sessions will be presented on different school days. The attendees will learn strategies to use to encourage the parents of K-5 ELLs to participate in school activities such as teacher-parents interview nights. The attendees will also learn how to support the parents of K-5 ELLs by communicating

with them to implement teacher-parents nights with these parents. The main goal of the PD sessions is to encourage elementary school principals to communicate with the parents of K-5 ELLs regarding school activities to learn how these parents can support their children to learn literacy. Another goal of the PD sessions is to learn ways to encourage the participation of these parents in school activities.

Project Implementation

For the project implementation, I will communicate with the school administrator to request permission to present the PD's content to the attendees. I will invite elementary school principals to attend the PD sessions. Specially, I will request: (a) presentation materials for the PowerPoint presentation slides (see Appendix A), (b) access to use the auditorium for the PD sessions, and (c) a list of elementary school principals who can attend the PD sessions. Each session of the PD will contain discussions based on the findings of this project study. I will: (a) work with senior school district administrators to invite school administrators to attend the PD sessions, (b) inform other school districts in the area of the availability of the PD, (c) present each PD session by using the PowerPoint presentation slides (see Appendix A), and (d) evaluate the PD (see Appendix C).

Rationale

The rationale for developing the PD sessions is to help elementary school principals use specific strategies to promote the attendance of parents of K-5 ELLs at school activities. I designed the PD to assist school administrators at the study site to use new ways to invite the parents of K-5 ELLs to participate in school activities. The

strategies found in Appendix A may be used by school principals to influence the parents of K-5 ELLs to participate in school activities such as teacher-parents interview nights. The strategies include ways to communicate with the parents of K-5 ELLs regarding school activities for the benefit of ELLs. The rationale for developing the PD sessions is for the attendees such as elementary school principals and the parents of K-5 ELLs to communicate about and participate in school activities to help their children learn literacy. During the PD sessions, I will share strategies with the attendees to help these parents participate in school activities despite the language barriers and support them with challenges of the face-to-face or online learning environment.

Review of the Literature

After I identified the aforementioned themes (Table 1), I searched peer-reviewed articles on *parental involvement strategies, elementary school principals and parents, parents of K-5 ELLs, parents of ELLs, participation of parents of ELLs in teacher-parents interview nights, supporting parents of K-5 ELLs, communicating with the parents of K-5 ELLs, implementing teacher-parents nights with the parents of K-5 ELLs, ways to encourage elementary school principals and the parents of K-5 ELLs to communicate regarding school activities, helping the parents of K-5 ELLs to better assist their children to learn literacy, parents participating in school activities with language barriers, and supporting the parents of K-5 ELLs with challenges of the learning environment* via Walden's Library to access online databases. I found peer-reviewed articles on parental involvement. I found limited articles on the perceptions of parents of

bilingual students regarding teacher-parents nights. Also, I found that parental involvement is considered a partnership between schools and parents.

Learning environment

Researchers have demonstrated that parental involvement could positively have an effect on children's academic success. Analyzing parental involvement among low-income families in elementary schools, Ucus (2017) reported that there is a relationship between socioeconomics and family involvement in elementary school. Ucus demonstrated that behaviors could affect children's learning opportunities in schools. Because a student's social behavior could be affected by his relations with his parents, parental involvement in children's education may result in the reduction of behavioral problems of students.

School administrators should create family-school partnerships. The development of effective partnerships with families and schools interested Ratliffe and Ponte (2018) who through a phenomenological approach examined the perspectives of immigrants and local parents with regards to family-school partnerships. Ratliffe and Ponte demonstrated that parents valued the relational aspect of family-school partnerships. However, the participants who were parents believed that school administrators need to do more to reduce barriers between school and home. School administrators should strive to create family-school partnerships for the benefit of students.

Parents of ELLs Have Language Barriers

Parents of ELLs have language barriers. Caniglia et al. (2018) investigated the effect of language barriers on the participation of parents of ELLs in school activities. Caniglia et al. investigated home connection with the school regarding ELLs to determine how the language barrier affects students' achievement. Caniglia et al. demonstrated that the language barrier has an effect on the achievement of ELLs. Caniglia et al. concluded that school activities such as homework could result in family cooperation with the school. School administrators should involve parents of ELLs in school activities such as homework for the academic growth of students.

School administrators need professional training on parental involvement. Using a case study, Mendoza (2016) examined reading strategies that support literacy development and home-to-school connections to support ELLs in K-3. Mendoza interviewed 22 teachers and investigated the reading strategies, resources, and approaches used with ELLs and how parents expressed interest in their children's academic progress. Mendoza revealed that educational leaders need to provide teachers with PD hours aimed at empowering them to encourage parents to participate in their children's schooling process by focusing on students' reading development. According to Mendoza, parental involvement translates into a significant increase in students' reading scores.

School administrators need PD on parental engagement in schools. Hopkins and Schultz (2019) investigated parental engagement in schools and demonstrated that because bilingual teachers can interact with students and their families in their native language, bilingual teachers are important resources that should be placed at every grade

level in schools with a large representation of bilingual students. Considering this idea, Hopkins and Shultz argued that bilingual teachers can be a resource for monolingual teachers, and at the same time be a medium between school and home. School administrators should be using successful means to communicate with the parents of ELLs. Lake and Beisly (2019) examined the issue of communication with dual language learners and reported that not all ELLs benefit from the service of bilingual teachers because bilingual students are sometimes serviced by monolinguals. Lake and Beisly suggested the use of translation software programs to facilitate comprehension to help bilinguals grow academically and to be proficient in English. Translation apps such as speak and Translate, Microsoft Translator, and Google Translate can help teachers transfer knowledge to their children and be used as a channel of communication with families. Perez and Levers (2017) studied how parent-teacher engagement affects students' success. Through a hermeneutic phenomenological–existential study, Perez and Levers examined the interactions of eight teachers and nine parents in an urban elementary school in western Pennsylvania. Perez and Levers demonstrated that school officials' attitudes and behaviors are key factors in the process of bringing parents and teachers together. Similarly, exploring the factors that influence student's academic achievement, Avenet et al. (2019) revealed that parental involvement tends to increase as students poorly perform in school. School administrators should use technology for parental engagement in schools.

Specific Communication Strategies for Parental Participation

Regarding school-community partnerships, school administrators need to find ways for parents to communicate with stakeholders (Turner, 2019). School administrators should make wise choices to support parents to show interest in school activities (John et al., 2018). John et al. (2018) examined the effect of parental involvement on school choice. John et al. noted that parental involvement can influence parents' school selection. Parents can make choices regarding private, religious, and home schools. Parents can choose alternative, magnet, charter, schools within schools, online or virtual, and open enrollment (John et al., 2018). John et al. demonstrated that parents' perceptions can determine the choice made for their children. School-community partnerships could help school administrators find ways for parents to communicate with school stakeholders.

School climate and school choice can influence parental involvement (Parsons & Shim, 2019). John et al. (2018) examined the effect of parental involvement on school choice and noted that parental involvement could potentially influence parents' choice regarding the educational institution that will prepare their children. Collaboration between parents and school stakeholders such as administrators and teachers can help students increase their proficiency in literacy. Javier et al. (2019) investigated the effect of collaboration between teachers and parents on the development of students' vocabulary skills. Javier et al. revealed a significant increase in students' reading scores in literacy due to parental involvement. Javier et al. reported that parental involvement is

an efficient way to improve students' vocabulary. In this way, parent-teacher partnerships could have a positive effect on students' literacy levels and performance.

School administrators should create parent-school partnerships. Snell (2018) studied parent-school partnerships in a public elementary school with a significant immigrant population. Snell showed that immigrant parents' perspectives about their role in their children's education could be different from those of schools and teachers. Although parents see themselves as collaborators with the school, they thought that there are some expectations about the responsibilities of school, and things that would be part of a family's responsibility. For instance, the home could teach manners and school would take care of children's academic growth. School administrators should create parent-school partnerships for the academic growth of students.

Parental involvement in the education of children is essential. The immigrant population in schools is a growing trend. Hence, laws have been enacted to provide special services to non-native English speakers such as ESL and bilingual teaching (Malsbary & Appelgate, 2016). Hanada and Shermanb (2018) suggested that teachers craft their lessons to meet the needs of ELLs. Marina et al. (2020) revealed the importance of immigrant families' active participation in the wellbeing of schools. Marina et al. proposed strategies that leaders of parent associations and parents-teacher assemblies may use to integrate parents into their children's schooling process. Like the research of Marina et al., O'Neal et al. (2018) demonstrated that ELLs and their families tend to settle in geographical locations that are rural. According to Reed (2010), rural populations are becoming more and more diverse. Marina et al. and O'Neal et al.

concluded that educators are not always prepared and equipped to meet the educational needs of diverse students including ELLs.

School administrators could influence parental participation schools. Parsons and Shim (2019) researched ways that positively influence parental participation and suggested that administrators should design plans to involve the parents of ELLs. Also, Parsons and Shim suggested that having parents assume leadership roles in the implementation of academic programs may increase their motivation to participate in school activities. Parsons and Shim concluded that to decrease language barriers, the school district should include the parents of ELLs in school activities. In conclusion, school administrators could encourage the parents of ELLs to participate in schools.

Challenges with Technology

The literature on parental involvement is extensive. Schools can use communication software to communicate with parents. For example, ClassDojo is an in-class communication application that teachers could use to record information on students' progress. Parents could also use ClassDojo to access their children's data. Bahaceci (2019) investigated how ClassDojo has an effect on student-teacher-parents interactions. Bahaceci used semistructured opinion questionnaires for students, parents, and teachers to collect data. Bahaceci demonstrated that the use of ClassDojo could be used to increase parental involvement. Few researchers have explored the perceptions of parents of bilingual students concerning teacher-parents nights as ways to create partnerships between schools and parents. Turner (2019) said that a school-community

partnership should be created by school administrators. School administrators can encourage teachers to use communication software to communicate with parents.

Parental involvement in school could reduce absenteeism in school. Using 10 school districts, Robinson (2018) evaluated the effect of parent-focused intervention on student attendance in Grades K–5. Robinson said that parents can help reduce absenteeism by being involved in schools. Also, Robinson suggested that educators should work toward increasing parental involvement in all aspects of their children’s education. School administrators should focus on parental involvement for the benefit of students.

Social networking may influence positively parents’ participation in school activities. Curry et al. (2016) explained that social networks have an effect on parents’ motivational beliefs to participate in school activities. Specifically, Curry et al. (2016) study included 30 fifth-grade parents from 56 elementary schools in an urban district in the Midwest. Curry et al. (2016) concluded that there is a positive relationship between belonging in a parent’s social network and cooperating with the school.

Project Description

The project site is a public school located in the United States. The school was bilingual. I developed the PD plan. The PD content will be presented to elementary school principals. The attendees will attend PD sessions that contain the findings of this project study.

Needed Resources, Existing Supports, Barriers, and Solutions

I used the findings of this project study to develop the PD content. The attendees will be elementary school principals to learn how to encourage the parents of ELLs to participate in school activities. Specifically, I will request funding from senior school district administrators to present the PD sessions to the attendees. Thus, to implement the PD at the local school district, I will ask senior district administrators for permission to present the content of the PD to the attendees. Therefore, I will present the PD content at the study site and will request presentation materials for the PowerPoint Presentations slides (see Appendix A). The attendees will be asked to attend the PD sessions in the auditorium of the school.

Project Implementation and Timetable

I developed the project timetable. In this timetable, I include strategies to show the attendees ways to support the parents of ELLs to participate in school activities (see Table 2). The PD will be offered at the local school district to elementary school principals.

Roles and Responsibilities

The roles and responsibilities of senior school district administrators will be to register elementary school principals to the PD sessions. Because I developed the PD content based on the findings of this project study, I will take a leading role in presenting the PD sessions to elementary school principals at the study site. I will use the PowerPoint presentation slides (Appendix A). Also, I will invite elementary school principals at the study site to participate in the PD. The roles and responsibilities of the

attendees will be to learn strategies to encourage the parents of ELLs to participate in school activities for the benefit of ELLs.

Table 2*PD for Elementary School Principals*

Session	Time	Strategies
#1	4:00-5:00 pm	Influence the parents of K-5 ELLs to participate in teacher-parents interview nights.
	5:00-6:00 pm	Support the parents of K-5 ELLs with language barriers.
	6:00-7:00 pm	Communicate with the parents of K-5 ELLs.
#2	4:00-5:00 pm	Implement teacher-parents nights with the parents of K-5 ELLs.
	5:00-6:00 pm	Support the parents of K-5 ELLs with language barriers.
	6:00-7:00 pm	Encourage elementary school principals and the parents of K-5 ELLs to communicate regarding school activities.
#3	4:00-5:00 pm	Help the parents of K-5 ELLs to better assist their children to learn literacy.
	5:00-6:00 pm	Participate in school activities despite language barriers
	6:00-7:00 pm	Support the parents of K-5 ELLs with challenges of the online learning platforms.

Project Evaluation Plan

I will present the PD content to the attendees. After 3 consecutive years, I will evaluate the PD content. Specifically, the attendees will be asked to provide written feedback by completing an evaluation form (see Appendix B). The purpose of the project

evaluation will be to strengthen the PD content regarding parental involvement (i.e., the parents of ELLs to participate in school activities for the benefit of ELLs.). I will use outcome-based evaluation to evaluate the PD content.

Project Implications

At the project site, I will present the PD content to the attendees regarding parental involvement. I will present specific strategies and hands-on activities for elementary school principals to use for the parents of ELLs to participate in school activities. The PD content contains hands-on activities for elementary school principals as follows: (a) how to influence the parents of K-5 ELLs to participate in teacher-parents interview nights, (b) how to support the parents of K-5 ELLs, (c) how to communicate with the parents of K-5 ELLs, (d) how to implement teachers-parents nights with the parents of K-5 ELLs, (e) how to encourage elementary school principals and the parents of K-5 ELLs to communicate regarding school activities, (f) how to help the parents of K-5 ELLs to better assist their children to learn literacy, (g) how to participate in school activities with language barriers, and (h) how to support the parents of K-5 ELLs with challenges of the online learning platforms. Senior school district administrators should allow elementary school principals to attend the PD sessions that I will present. The attendees will benefit from the project by learning how to successfully encourage the parents of ELLs to participate in school activities. ELLs will benefit from the PD outcomes because their parents will be more involved in school activities. The parents of ELLs will benefit from the project by understanding their roles such as participating in after school activities. Implications for positive social change include PD training for

school principals and teachers to support parental involvement of the parents of K-5 ELLs in teacher-parents interview nights for the benefits of ELLs.

Direction for Future Research

I interviewed the participants within one school district. I created an interview protocol based on the conceptual framework. Future scholars willing to replicate this project study should interview more parents of ELLs at different schools. Scholars may wish to interview elementary school principals. Scholars should also interview teachers teaching ELLs to identify factors influencing their decisions to support the parents of ELLs to participate in school activities.

Summary

By conducting this project study, four themes emerged (Table 1). The project is a PD. The attendees will be elementary school principals. The PD is a supplemental support for the attendees (see Appendix A) to support the parents of ELLs to participate in school activities. In Section 4, I present the reflections and conclusions.

Section 4: Reflections and Conclusions

In this section, I present the strengths and limitations of this project. I also present recommendations for elementary school principals. I conclude this section with scholarship and change. The project site was a northeastern urban elementary school where about 10% of the parents of K-5 ELLs participated in teacher-parents interview nights.

Project Strengths and Limitations

I have been an elementary school teacher for the past 10 years. I have a passion to help ELLs. Also, I enjoy teaching ELLs. During the data collection and analysis processes of this project, I was a novice researcher. I did not know the participants and had no supervisory role over them. During the interviews with the participants, I established a good working relationship with each participant and followed ethical procedures set forth by Walden University's IRB to protect the rights of the participants.

Based on my teaching experience as an elementary school teacher and a novice researcher, I understood the themes that emerged from the thematic analysis. I developed the PD content based on the themes (Table1), literature review, conceptual framework, and teaching experience. The project, which is a PD for elementary school principals, is based on these themes that the parents of K-5 ELLs: (a) create a home learning environment to help their children learn literacy, (b) are not participating in school activities because of language barriers, (c) experience challenges with the use of the online learning platforms and feel frustrated with technological difficulties and expenses for a laptop and access to the internet, and (d) use specific strategies to communicate with

the teachers during parents-to-teacher nights. Thus, the project is a PD for the attendees to better involve the parents of K-5 ELLs to participate in teacher-parents interview nights. Implications for positive social change include PD training for school principals and teachers to support parental involvement of the parents of K-5 ELLs in teacher-parents interview nights for the benefits of ELLs.

School principals need to support parents to show interest in school activities (John et al., 2018). Javier et al. (2019) reported a significant increase in students' reading scores in literacy due to parental involvement. Ratliffe and Ponte (2018) believed that school administrators need to do more to reduce barriers between school and home. Hanada and Shermanb (2018) said that the needs of ELLs need to be addressed by schools. Marina et al. (2020) and O'Neal et al. (2018) said that educators are not always prepared to meet the educational needs of ELLs. Caniglia et al. (2018) reported that school activities result in family cooperation with the school. Mendoza (2016) stated that parental involvement has an effect on students' achievement. Parsons and Shim (2019) suggested that administrators should involve the parents of ELLs. Robinson (2018) wrote that educators should increase parental involvement in school activities. As such, I developed this project because a substantial level of parental involvement is acquired in elementary school activities. I believe that a strength of this project is the involvement of the attendees regarding parental involvement supporting ELLs. Also, I believe that the PD sessions will help the attendees encourage the parents of ELLs to participate in school activities. The PD timeframe could be a limitation because the attendees may not be able to attend the PD sessions given their work schedules.

Recommendations for Alternative Approaches

Because the project deliverable is a PD, alternative approaches include recommendations for the development of a policy to support the parents of ELLs to participate in school activities at the study site. Other alternative approaches include the use of strategies (Table 1 and Appendix A) as an intervention program to support the parents of ELLs to participate in school activities. School principals and senior district administrators could influence the parents of ELLs to participate in school activities through the implementation of strategies found in Appendix A. Thus, the findings of this project added valuable information to leadership practices of elementary school principals that encourage parents of ELLs to participate in school activities at an early age in elementary school settings. This project, which is a PD, could include elementary school principals, senior district administrators, and teachers of ELLs to understand of the needs of ELLs by supporting parental involvement in school activities. In conclusion, involving the parents of ELLs in school activities at an early age in elementary school settings would support the learning of ELLs.

Scholarship, Project Development and Evaluation, and Leadership and Change

The project site was a northeastern urban public elementary school district where fewer than 10% of the parents of K-5 ELLs participated in school activities such as teacher-parents interview nights. I conducted a basic qualitative research design to identify the factors influencing the capacity of the parents of K-5 ELLs to participate in school activities. By conducting this project study, I learned how to apply research knowledge to collect and analyze data based on the conceptual framework. Using the

conceptual framework, I developed the interview protocol containing the interview questions. Also, I learned how to apply for and obtain IRB approval. After I obtained IRB approval, I learned how to recruit participants and how to schedule interviews. After each interview was conducted, I learned to organize interview transcripts. I learned how to apply thematic analysis for emergent themes. Overall, by conducting this project study, I had a positive experience, which I will use in the future to conduct more qualitative research not only at the study site but also at other school districts.

Specifically, I was a novice researcher and applied knowledge from the research courses I took at Walden University to conduct a basic qualitative research design for this project study. While preparing the four sections of this project and its appendices, I developed skills in data collection and analysis, presentation of findings in qualitative form such as narratives, and thorough literature review that was in line with the findings of this project study.

I was an elementary school teacher teaching ELLs for 7 years. I am a state-certified educator with 13 years of experience in the school setting. I have a passion for helping ELLs and their parents for the benefit of the students and the community. I will mentor colleagues based on this project to assist the parents of ELLs to be involved in school activities by using the strategies found in Appendix A.

I will present the PD content to school administrators at the study site. I will also approach other school districts in the area to support the parents of ELLs. After 3 consecutive years, I will evaluate the PD (see Appendix C) to strengthen its content regarding the involvement of the parents of ELLs in school activities by using outcome-

based evaluation. Positive social change will occur via the PD training for school principals to support the parents of K-5 ELLs in teacher-parents interview nights for the benefits of ELLs.

Importance of the Work

I developed the PD content based on the emergent themes. The themes were that the parents of K-5 ELLs: (a) create a home learning environment to help their children learn literacy, (b) are not participating in school activities because of language barriers, (c) experience challenges with the use of the online learning platforms and feel frustrated with technological difficulties and expenses for a laptop and access to the internet, and (d) use specific strategies to communicate with the teachers during parents-to-teacher nights. The project is a PD training for school principals to better involve the parents of K-5 ELLs in teacher-parents interview nights. I learned from the participants, who were the parents of K-5 ELLs, about the factors influencing the capacity of these parents to participate in teacher-parents interview nights. Also, I learned how to manage time when conducting interviews and analyzing interview transcripts. In conclusion, I enjoyed the entire process of conducting this project study.

This project study was very important at the study site because the factors influencing the capacity of the parents of K-5 ELLs to participate in teacher-parents interview nights were not previously explored. This doctoral journey has had a positive effect on my career as a school teacher and a novice researcher. I have a professional responsibility to better involve the parents of K-5 ELLs to participate in teacher-parents interview nights.

Implications, Applications, and Directions for Future Research

Implications for positive social change include PD training for school principals and teachers to support involvement of the parents of K-5 ELLs in teacher-parents interview nights for the benefits of ELLs. The attendees will learn new strategies to better involve the parents of K-5 ELLs to participate in teacher-parents interview nights. Also, the attendees will engage in hands-on activities to learn how to encourage the parents of K-5 ELLs to participate in teacher-parents interview nights. I believe that the attendees will apply knowledge at their schools to better communicate with K-5 ELL parents and encourage them to participate in teacher-parents interview nights. I also believe that senior school district administrators could promote the PD to K-12 school principals who lead diverse student populations. I recommend that future researchers interview the parents of K-12 ELLs to identify strategies to better support ELLs. I also recommend that future researchers collect state test scores of ELLs after the implementation of this project to measure the effect of the PD on the state test scores of ELLs.

Conclusion

In this section, I presented the strengths and limitations of this project. I also presented recommendations for elementary school principals. I concluded this section with a discussion of scholarship and change.

I developed this project because a substantial level of parental involvement is required in elementary school activities. The PD content added valuable information to leadership practices of elementary school principals that support the participation of parents of ELLs in school activities.

I learned how to organize the interview transcripts and how to apply thematic analysis for emergent themes. I had a positive experience, which I will use in the future to conduct more qualitative research not only at the study site but also at other school districts. I will present the PD content to school administrators at the study site. I enjoyed the entire process of conducting this project study.

The PD attendees will learn new strategies to better involve the parents of K-5 ELLs to participate in teacher-parents interview nights. The strategies found in PD have implications for positive social change including PD training for school principals and teachers to support involvement of parents in teacher-parents interview nights for the benefits of ELLs.

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Appendix A: The Project

Professional Development for Elementary School Principals

Workshop

**A 3-day PD for Elementary School
Principals Regarding Parental
Involvement of the Parents of K -5 ELLs in
School Activities**

by
Jean Annulyse

Edd Chairperson: Dr. Peter Kiriakidis, PhD



Day I: English Language Learners' History

- ▶ English language learners (ELLs)
- ▶ English/Home language
- ▶ Language barriers, a cause for the achievement gap of ELLs
- ▶ Brown vs. Board of Education

Day I: Eligibility

- ▶ School district home language survey for students
- ▶ Language proficiency testing
- ▶ English as a second language services at the district language.

Day I: Home Language Survey Questions (United States Department of Education)

- ▶ What is the primary language used in the home, regardless of the language spoken by the student?
- ▶ What is the language most often spoken by the student?
- ▶ What is the language that the student first acquired?

Day I: Knowing ELLs

- ▶ 2.2 million children in the United States ages 5-17 years were foreign born (*American Community Survey, 2016, U.S. Census*)
- ▶ 4.9 million K-12 students were identified as ELLs (*National Center for Education Statistics, U.S. Department of Education, 2016*)
- ▶ *Reading development*

Day I: ELLs

- ▶ Knowing ELLs individually and by their background
 - a) Left their parents and close ones in their home countries
 - b) Death in a country where the language spoken is not theirs
 - c) Live with their parents or not
- ▶ By their learning styles, academic level, and resilience

Day I: Types of ELLs

- ▶ Highly schooled newcomers (HSN)
- ▶ Students with interrupted Formal education (SIFE)
- ▶ General education students
- ▶ Special education (SE-ELLs)
- ▶ Migrants Els (M-ELLs)
- ▶ Reclassified (R-ELLs)

Day I: Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP)'s Acquisition Stages

- ▶ Stage I: Pre-production (0-6 months)
- ▶ Stage II: Early Production (6 months- 1 year)
- ▶ Stage III: Immediate Fluency (3-5 years)
- ▶ Stage IV: Advance Fluency (5-7 years)

Day I: Assessing ELLs

- ▶ 150% of time allowed to native English speakers
- ▶ Modification of texts
- ▶ Reading directions
- ▶ Use of bilingual dictionaries

Day I: Exiting ELLs

- ▶ ACCESS-ELLs
- ▶ Teacher's recommendations
- ▶ Parent's option

Day I: Legal Matters

- ▶ Title I
- ▶ 20 students or more must provide bilingual services
- ▶ Less than 20, assist with ESL service
- ▶ Sheltered instruction
- ▶ High intensity English as a second language
- ▶ Dual language (Two-way immersion)

Day 1: ELLs

- ▶ Classroom frames of mind
- ▶ School frames of mind
- ▶ Transition routines
- ▶ Learning routines

Day 1: Academic Needs of ELLs

- ▶ Instruct in a language that is slightly above student's English language level
- ▶ Include visuals, manipulatives, and culture clues to support learning
- ▶ Break down lessons into easy understandable sections
- ▶ Differentiate instruction
- ▶ Lower anxiety level
- ▶ Encourage students to freely express themselves

Day 1: Use of Cognitive Activities to Enhance Proficiency

Specific activities

b) Group activities

c) Challenging activities

Day 2: Parent's Way of Communicating with the School

- ▶ Phone calls
- ▶ ClassDojo
- ▶ Text messaging
- ▶ Emails
- ▶ Family-school partnerships

Day 2: School Communication with ELLs' Parents

- ▶ Provide translation services
- ▶ Build relationships
- ▶ Provide English language programs for parents
- ▶ Encourage parents to take leadership positions
- ▶ School-community partnerships

Day 2: School Communication with ELLs' Parents

- ▶ Provide translation services
- ▶ Build relationships
- ▶ Provide English language programs for parents
- ▶ Encourage parents to take leadership positions
- ▶ School-community partnerships

Day 2: Parents of ELLs Experiencing Challenges with Online Learning

- ▶ Basic technology training for parents
- ▶ Computers to children
- ▶ Internet service to children
- ▶ Appropriate learning environment

Day 2: Parents' Intervention

- ▶ At home
- ▶ At school
- ▶ Increase home-to-school connection

Day 2: Parents' Intervention

At home:

- a) Bedtime story reading
- b) Assistance with homework
- c) Coaching

Day 2: Supporting Home Learning Environment to Help ELLs Learn Literacy

- ▶ Literacy materials in English and native language
- ▶ Supervise children in native language or in English
- ▶ Provide a safe and quiet space for children to participate in class
- ▶ Parent's perception vs. school climate/school choice

Day 2: Parents' Intervention

At School:

- ▶ Maintain communication with teachers
- ▶ Participation in school leadership
- ▶ Back-to-school nights

Day 2: Parents Intervention:

- ▶ Tend to increase when students do poor and decrease when students do well.

At school:

- a) Participation in parents/teachers' nights
- b) Participation in school leadership
- c) Support school initiative
- d) Active participants in the wellbeing of schools

Day 3: Impact of Parental Involvement on ELLs

- ▶ Better literacy skills
- ▶ Increase in test scores
- ▶ Better social skills
- ▶ Increase in self-esteem

Day 3: Guidelines

- ▶ Identifying and Assessing Students
- ▶ Providing Language Assistance
- ▶ Providing Staff Development, and Supporting the ELLs' Program
- ▶ Providing Meaningful Access to All Curricular and Extracurricular Programs
- ▶ Avoiding Segregation

Day 3: Guidelines

- ▶ Evaluating ELLs for Special Education and Providing Dual Services
- ▶ Meeting the Needs of Students Who OptOut
- ▶ Monitoring and Exiting ELLs from ELL Program
- ▶ Evaluating the Effectiveness of the Program
- ▶ Ensuring Meaningful Communication with ELL Parents

Day 3: Students Completing Tasks by Using the Instructional Leadership Model

- ▶ Express achievement goals for ELLs
- ▶ Formulate specific instructions and activities
- ▶ Follow a comprehensive instructional sequence
- ▶ Teach by examples
- ▶ Use repetition

Day 3: Strategies for Principals

- ▶ Foster a welcoming environment that values the cultures of parents of ELLs
- ▶ Create and execute community outreach projects
- ▶ Staff development for teachers of ELLs
- ▶ Stay abide by the objectives and guidelines established by policymakers

Day 3: A Welcoming Environment that Values the Cultures of Parents of ELLs

- ▶ Celebrate the cultures from which ELLs come by displaying culture cues
- ▶ Communicate with them in their native language
- ▶ Encourage the use of any language
- ▶ Share community resources with them

Day 3: Strategies for School to Consider

- ▶ Connect with the families
- ▶ Show respect to their traditions
- ▶ Organize activities to commemorate special events
- ▶ Invite ELL's families to partake in activities

Day 3: Strategies for School to Consider

- ▶ Give staff development to ELL teachers
- ▶ Train and coach teachers through instructional leadership
- ▶ Meet the needs of students whose parents opted out of the ELL program
- ▶ Monitor ELLs after exiting the program

Day 3: Strategies for Leaders to Consider

- ▶ Periodical staff developments for non bilingual teachers on different topics
- ▶ Use bilingual teachers as resources for non bilingual teachers
- ▶ Apply theories and concepts such as student centered instruction
- ▶ Teachers prepare students to be problem solvers

Day 3: Strategies for School Leaders

- ▶ Common planning
- ▶ Collaborative teaching
- ▶ Create group coordination and cooperation
- ▶ Reciprocal teaching for successful instructional practices
- ▶ Teachers can coach their peers through instructional coaching practices

Day 3: Strategies for Parents to Participate in School Activities

- ▶ Show respect to their language difference
- ▶ Provide translation service for parents of ELLs
- ▶ Encourage district officials to provide free English learning programs for parents
- ▶ Promote ELL parents' inclusion

Day 3: Teachers' Proficiency

- ▶ Maximize instructional time
- ▶ Develop critical thinking skills
- ▶ Emphasize students' problem-solving skills
- ▶ Provide feedback to children
- ▶ Use of exemplars
- ▶ Student's engagement
- ▶ Minimize behavioral issues

Day 3: Teachers' Proficiency

- ▶ Encourage the development of teacher leadership skills.
- ▶ Design a roadmap for innovative practice
- ▶ Supervise and assess instructional practices
- ▶ Apply personal experience and gain proficiency

Day 3: Teachers Should

- ▶ Create a welcoming environment
- ▶ Value ELLs' strengths and their cultures
- ▶ Provide translation, peer tutoring
- ▶ Plan and deliver lessons based on students' needs

Day 3: Teachers' Teaching Practices

- ▶ Consider discussions, exercises, and practice of effective communication
- ▶ Assign group tasks to the students to enhance their character
- ▶ Collaborative learning
- ▶ Groupings
- ▶ Group activities and individual tasks
- ▶ Monitor and promote participation along with interaction

Day 3: Teachers' Practices

- ▶ Promote engagement for developing social behavior
- ▶ Promote engagement to develop individual learning
- ▶ Build self-esteem in students who portray negative traits
- ▶ Foster ethical values

Day 3: ELLs' Learning Styles

- ▶ Take students' learning styles into consideration
- ▶ Using various teaching tools:
 - a) visuals
 - b) manipulative
 - c) audio
 - d) exemplars
- ▶ Total Physical Response

Day 3: Teaching Tools

- ▶ Using various teaching tools:
 - a) visuals
 - b) manipulative
 - c) audio
 - d) exemplars

Day 3: Implement Differentiated Instruction

- ▶ Take students' academic level into consideration
- ▶ Promote exposure to build background
- ▶ Individual instruction
- ▶ Group instruction
- ▶ State and local standards

Day 3: Expectations for Achievement

- ▶ Teach students grade level curriculum expectations
- ▶ Share with students and parents the pacing guide for each subject
- ▶ Teach core values
- ▶ Train students to develop literacy skills

Day 3: Students' Achievement

- ▶ Self-check
- ▶ Positive feedback
- ▶ Formative assessment
- ▶ Summative assessment

Day 3: Considerations for Principals

- ▶ Define the philosophy and the climate of the school
- ▶ School principals must ensure that the objectives and guidelines established by policymakers are followed
- ▶ Consistency and enforcement of school rules
- ▶ Implement policies that integrate bilinguals

Appendix B: Interview Protocol

The conceptual framework that will guide this project study is the theory Epstein et al. (2002). The Epstein model is used as a framework for parental involvement (Epstein et al., 2002). The Epstein model outlines six types of family involvement behaviors: positive home conditions, communication, involvement at school, home learning activities, shared decision making within the school, and community partnerships (Epstein et al., 2002).

1. Tell me about your positive home conditions.
2. Tell me about your communication with teachers.
3. Tell me about your involvement at school.
4. Tell me about home learning activities.
5. Tell me about shared decision-making process within the school
6. Tell me about shared decision-making process within community partnerships
7. Tell me about your role as a parent regarding your supporting in educational efforts.
8. Tell me about parental involvement.
9. Tell me about your parental involvement.
10. Tell me how parental involvement may help your children.

Appendix C: PD Evaluation

Presenter: Jean David Annulyse

Sessions #: _____

Date: _____

Please write below your feedback on this session's overall quality of the PD content:

Please write below how the PD content can be improved:

Any other suggestions?