

2016

# Educational Stakeholders' Perceptions of Parental Involvement in an Urban School Setting

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Cassandra Grady

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2016

Abstract

Educational Stakeholders' Perceptions of Parental Involvement in an Urban School Setting

by

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## Abstract

Diverse populations of students in public schools have led to differences in how the phrase *parental involvement* is understood. The problem at one local elementary preparatory school in urban Southern California was this varied understanding on what parental involvement entailed, specifically in school activities. The purpose of this study was to examine the perceptions of parents, teachers, and administrators regarding parental involvement and the influence of parental involvement on student academic progress. Bandura's theory of self-efficacy and Lee and Bowen's theory of social and cultural capital provided lenses into parental involvement and students' academic progress. A qualitative case study design was used with a purposeful sample of 5 parents, 8 teachers, and 3 administrators of 4th and 5th grade students at this preparatory elementary school. Individual interviews were transcribed and then subjected to constant comparative analysis until theoretical saturation occurred. Interpretations were then member-checked to ensure their credibility. Findings indicated all participants believed parental involvement was essential for students' academic progress, but differed in their views of the term itself. Parents believed involvement was ensuring homework completion, teachers believed parental involvement should be parent's engagement in every aspect of their child's life, and administrators believed parents were involved when they participated in school-wide committees. This project study is significant because the findings can be used by the local site leadership team to create workshops for parents, teachers, and administrators to help develop a common understanding of parental involvement and the influence parental involvement can have on student academic progress.

## Dedication

I would like to dedicate this work to parents, teachers, and administrators who recognize the power of collaboration, who are concerned about the education of children, and who are willing to promote a school environment which cultivates partnerships which result in the academic progress of all children.

## Acknowledgments

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## Section 1: The Problem

There have been many studies on the influence of parental involvement on academic progression of students (Almuammria, 2015; Bower & Griffin, 2011; Kim & Page, 2013; Leithwood & Patrician, 2015). Parents from different cultures, with different beliefs and experiences, send their children to American schools (Rapp & Duncan, 2012). One of five United States children under the age of 6 is a minority and it is estimated that by the year 2020, this number will increase to 30% of all U. S. children (Rapp & Duncan, 2012). The ability to meet the academic and social needs of these students is imperative (Capps et al. 2004 as cited in Lahaie, 2008; Crichlow, 2013).

American schools, in general, include many cultures, but public schools tend to reflect the culture of schooling, European, that dominates in the United States. The European approach was developed in the nineteenth century to systematically develop civic virtue in the actions of individuals, and is characterized by Northern European Protestant Reform Movement (Kohi, 2012). Popkewitz (2011) maintained that one of the goals of education was to produce Americans who were like-minded and inclusive. Many believe these goals have resulted in a culture of schooling that tends to devalue the religion, traditions, and languages of non-White students, and promotes an educational system that perpetuates White cultural superiority (Guttek, 2012; Kohi, 2012; Worrell, 2014). Crichlow (2013) stated: “An educator must directly confront the vested interest White people have in maintaining the status quo, force them to grapple with the ethics of privilege.” (p. 255). The legacy of the reformers’ educational system persists today in the form of colonial practices; they implied that the playing field was level for all people (Ali, 2012). However, it is likely

that cultural perceptions, which may exist across the nation in public schools about the term parental involvement, what it implies, and the ability of parents to influence the academic progress of their children, has resulted in inequitable academic progress for minority students (Baquedano-Lopez, Alexander, & Hernandez, 2013).

### **The Local Problem**

Literature supported the notion that parental involvement in public schools increased student achievement (Hill & Tyson, 2009; Wang & Sheikh-Khalil, 2014). The problem in Western School District was that, despite their efforts to involve parents, attendance at workshops was 10% of the parent population and did not represent the diverse population of students (Parents as Equal Partners in Their Children's Education, 2011). The pseudonymous school in this study, Hope Inspired Preparatory School, instituted a monthly meeting called, Coffee with the Principal. Parents, all of whom received a written invitation, were served coffee and pastries and were encouraged to participate in informal discussions about students' needs and parents' concerns about grade-level academic expectations. Also, each grade level at the school conducted quarterly parent meetings. During these meetings teachers informed parents of grade specific content and expectations. While over 1,000 students attend the school, school records show that less than 100 parents have attended any given meeting.

According to the school district's report card survey 2014-2015, 39% of the personnel at Hope Inspired Preparatory School believed that parents are partners with the school in decisions made about their children's education. The school's 2016-2017 Single Plan for Student Achievement (SPSA) contained an allocation of over \$10,000.00 for

parent involvement. The vision statement for parental involvement stated that “Parents will be full and equal partners in the educational process through active communication and involvement based on understanding mutual respect for diverse backgrounds” (p. 6). In spite of these efforts, parental involvement in the school remained low; most parents were not involved in the meetings or in workshops that could promote children’s academic progress.

To ensure that schools developed a parental involvement model, on December 14, 2010 Western School District passed the “Parents as Equal Partners in the Education of their Children” resolution. A taskforce was formed consisting of district-appointed personnel and stakeholders who were responsible for developing parental involvement tools for schools in the Western School District. The purpose of the tools was to involve and equip parents so that they could take an active role in their children’s education. The taskforce had three objectives: (a) clarify the role of parents and the school system as equal partners in the education of students, (b) validate parents’ expectations of the public education system, and (c) underscore the responsibilities of parents in supporting their children’s education (p. 5). Furthermore, taskforce members resolved to identify and remove barriers that could impede parental involvement and, in turn, create conditions that would allow parents opportunities to be active participants in their children’s education.

In addition, awareness of the needs of families would inform the alignment of parental involvement programs, partnerships, and services. The Chair of Parents as Equal Partners stated that “Meaningful parental engagement is when schools see parents/guardian as equal partners in promoting student achievement and recognize parents’ talents and

skills as resources to promote children's educational development" (p. 4). Western School District recognized that parents are a vital component in students' academic success.

Nationally, policies have been in place to increase parental involvement in the educational experience of children. All of the following policies addressed parental involvement: the Reagan administration's 1986 policy, the Clinton administration's 2000 policy, the 2002 Bush policy goals, and the No Child Left Behind Act, 2002. In the section of the policy titled *Helping Your Child Succeed in School*, the United States Department of Education (2010) stated that studies, (Epstein, 2001; Jeynes, 2010), supported parental involvement as an indicator of students' academic success more than socioeconomic status and parent education attainment. The Department of Education acknowledged that children who achieved academic progress had parents who were actively involved in their education.

Leithwood and Patrician (2015) observed that children's academic performance and behavior in school was affected by the lack of parental involvement. When parents were not involved in their children's education students became frustrated and discouraged. Because of their inability to achieve academic proficiency they often exhibited disruptive and combative behavior to avoid academic tasks (Kim & Page, 2013; Leithwood & Patrician; 2015). On the other hand, when parents were involved there was a positive change in students' behaviors (Avvisati, Gurgand, Guyon, & Maurin, 2014; Cooper & Crosnoe 2007).

Elmore and Gaylord-Harden (2013) found that lack of parental involvement resulted in students' low self-esteem at school and lower levels of intrinsic motivation.

Students who did not have a good relationship with their parents and did not have a clear understanding of their parents' expectations were likely to be less interested in school and more likely to drop out of school (Castro et al., 2015; Upadyaya & Salmela-Aro, 2013). Miller, Kuykendall, and Thomas (2013) found that across school districts in the United States, communities, teachers, parents, and students agreed that education is important.

The Alliance for Excellent Education (2009, 2014, & 2015) estimated that, nationally, more than 7,000 students drop out of school each day; African Americans and Latinos will be the majority populations in the United States by the year 2043, and disproportionately they will make up the majority of high school drop outs. The State of America's Children report (2010, 2014) calculated that if students who dropped out of the class of 2011 had graduated from high school, they would have earned about \$154 billion in additional income over the course of their lifetime. If this trend of dropping out of school continues, about 1.3 million students will drop out of school over the next decade. They will most likely be unemployed and will rely on government assistance, resulting in a national deficit of \$3 trillion (The State of America's Children, 2010, 2014).

According to *Trends in High School Dropout and Completion Rates in the United States* (2011), students who dropped out of school made up the majority of the nation's institutionalized population. The cost for youth who drop out of school is approximately \$240, 000 over his or her lifetime (Chapman, Laird, & KewalRamani, 2011). Fajoju, Aluede, and Ojugo (2016) studied the correlation between parental involvement and students' academic progress. They found that when parents communicated with teachers, checked homework, and encouraged their children to read and practice skills at home,



children progressed 13.5% in science, 16.1% in mathematics, and 15.3% in English. With so many dire predictions of consequences for academic failure, involving parents in meaningful ways is paramount to helping students experience success in school.

### **Rationale**

Parental involvement is essential to closing the achievement gap in urban schools (Bower & Griffith, 2011). The purpose of this study was to examine stakeholders' views of the term "parental involvement" and their ability to support students' academic progress. Examining the ways stakeholders viewed this term, and their ability to support it, could lead to developing ways to increase parental involvement in this diverse urban school.

Parental involvement influences children's academic progress (Al-Zoubi, & Younes, 2015).). When parents provided academic support, participated in school events, and were in consistent communication with teachers there was an increase in children's positive attitude about school and achieving academic progress (Al-Zoubi, & Younes, 2015; Booth & Dunn, 2013; Whaley & Noel, 2013). Oostdam and Hooge's (2013) study found compelling evidence that parental involvement improved children's motivation to succeed in school, which resulted in better grades. When parents were actively involved in their children's education, truancy decreased and children recognized the value of education (Vaughn et al., 2013). Conversely, children who skipped school most likely had parents who were not involved in their education (Vaughn et al., 2013). The project study I developed was informed by examining how the term "parental involvement" was viewed by parents, teachers, and administrators, and parents' ability to influence academic progress

at Hope Inspired Preparatory School. The project may be the vehicle whereby stakeholders begin to increase parental involvement and students' academic progress.

### **Definition of Terms**

To better understand research on parental involvement and its potential influence on student academic achievement, the following terms were defined:

*Students of color:* Students of color are students who are African-American, Native American, Latina/o, Asian, or Pacific Islander students. (Chambers & Huggins, 2014).

*Dominant culture:* In a society in which there are several ethnic cultures, one culture is usually dominant and consequently sets the norms for language and cultural expectations. The dominant culture has disproportionately greater political and economic power in a society. (Lindsey, Robins, & Terrell, 2013).

*Academic progress:* Academic progress represents a student's academic growth over time. (Heuristic (n.d.). In The Glossary of Education Reform. Retrieved from <http://edglossary.org/>

*Parental Involvement:* Parents participating in a general school meeting; a scheduled meeting with their child's teacher; a school event; volunteering or serving on committee. Parent involvement at home is when parents talk to their children about school, expect them to do well, make sure that out-of-school activities are constructive. (Heuristic. (n.d.). In Child Trends Data Bank. Retrieved from [www.childtrends.org](http://www.childtrends.org)

*Professional Development:* The term professional development may be used in reference to professional learning intended to help administrators and teachers improve

their professional knowledge, competence, skill, and effectiveness (The Glossary of Education Reform, 2013, Professional Development section, para 1).

### **Significance of the Study**

Parental involvement, particularly in diverse student populations, is critical to student success (Louque & Latunde, 2014). Successful schools recognize the importance of reaching parents and involving them in school decision making, as well as involving parents in their children's acquisition of content (Louque & Latunde, 2014). Students of involved parents were likely to be high academic achievers (DeWitte et al., 2013; Rapp & Duncan, 2012). The implementation of national mandates concerning parental involvement programs indicated that school personnel recognized the importance of parents as partners in their children's education, yet there were still feelings of marginalization among parents from diverse cultures (Yull, Blitz, & Murray, 2014). In spite of government-mandated parental involvement policies, which sought to incorporate students of color and their families in a partnership with schools, inequities were evident in student achievement scores and were reflected in educational data which compared the achievement scores of minority students to those of White students (Baquedano-Lopez, Alexander, & Hernandez, 2013).

A gap in practice at the local school was evident by the failure to involve parents in student success meetings and workshops. According to school records, 10% of parents attended workshops, where at least 60% had been anticipated. Low attendance at these workshops and forums with the principal and teachers—gatherings that were designed to inform and involve parents—indicated weak parental involvement. To address this gap and

to work toward a remedy, it was important to understand how the stakeholders at Hope Inspired Preparatory School viewed the term “parental involvement.” How they understood the term, and their ability to influence students’ academic progress, were examined in this study. These findings may be useful in developing a project that could increase parental involvement, social and cultural capital, and parent self-efficacy.

### **Research Questions**

Parental involvement is vital for students’ academic success in urban schools (Durand, & Perez, 2013). The following guiding questions for this qualitative case study provided context to examine the definition of “parental involvement” from three stakeholders: parents, teachers, and administrators. The following questions were developed to examine whether views of parental involvement influences perceived parent involvement and their ability to support students’ academic progress.

RQ1-What does the term, parental involvement, mean to *parents* at Hope Inspired Preparatory School, and how do parents view their ability to influence students’ academic progress?

RQ2-What does the term, parental involvement, mean to *teachers* at Hope Inspired Preparatory School, and how do teachers view their ability to influence students’ academic progress?

RQ3-What does the term, parental involvement, mean to *administrators* at Hope Inspired Preparatory School, and how do administrators view their ability to influence students’ academic progress?

## **Review of the Literature**

### **Research Strategy**

In order to provide the foundation for this study, a comprehensive review of current and seminal research was conducted. The search used the following electronic databases: peer reviewed scholarly journals, Education Research Complete, SocINDEX, Google Scholar, and Educational Resource Information Center (ERIC). The following search terms were used: *efficacy*, *parental involvement*, *family engagement*, *parental expectations*, *parents' role in education* and *social/cultural capital*. The review is organized into the following subsections: social and cultural capital, parental involvement, cultural differences, barriers to parental involvement, and teachers' and administrators' perceptions of parental involvement. These subsections guided the review of the literature on how parents, teachers, and administrators view the term, parental involvement, and their ability to help students make academic progress.

### **Conceptual Framework**

The conceptual frameworks which grounded this study were Bandura's (1977) theory of self-efficacy and Lee and Bowen's (2006) theory of social and cultural capital. Self-efficacy beliefs dictated feelings, thoughts, and motivations (Bandura, 1977). The lens of self-efficacy provided insight into parents' perceived ability to support their children's academic progress. Parents with high self-efficacy recognized their involvement resulted in positive academic results, whereas parents who were unsure of their efficacy to assist their children relied entirely on teachers to educate their children (Bandura, 1993, Giallo, Treyvaud, Cooklin, & Wade, 2013). Efficacious parents were confident that they could

help their children with homework and believed that academic progress was supported by their involvement (O'Sullivan-Hackford, Chen, & Fish, 2014). Whereas, parents who lacked self-efficacy did not believe their involvement would make a difference in their children's academic progress and did not help their children with homework (O'Sullivan-Hackford, Chen, & Fish, 2014). Parents recognized the importance of supporting their children's academic progress, but because of they may feel incapable may choose not to be involved (Yamaoto, Holloway, & Suzuki, 2016)

The beliefs of teachers and administrators on parental involvement can have a vitalizing or demoralizing influence on school culture (Hamel, Shaw, & Taylor, 2013). When teachers' efforts to involve parents were unsuccessful their self-efficacy was impacted, and they questioned their ability to teach and connect with parents (Mahmood, 2013). Administrators have the potential to create partnerships between schools and home that value and accept parental involvement (Young, Austin, & Growe, 2013). Efficacious administrators recognized that their definition of parental involvement differed from the diverse population they served and considered the cultures of parents and students when developing parental involvement programs.

Lee and Bowen (2006) echoed the importance of parental involvement with their notion of cultural and social capital. Social capital is the awareness of social controls such as educational values which will promote children's school progress. Whereas, cultural capital is defined as the capacity of knowledge an individual possesses as a member of a particular cultural group (Lee & Bowen, 2006). The lenses of efficacy and sociocultural capital become even more important as the cultural diversity of an area or school increases.

Therefore, a project that may increase self-efficacy of all stakeholders and enhance the social and cultural capital of parents could result in increased parental involvement and in the development of an effective home-school connection. Moreover, the project could potentially promote students' academic progress.

### **Current Literature**

Parental involvement influences students' academic progress, however, the ability to involve parents remains a concern (Reece, Staudte, & Ogle, 2013). Diverse populations in urban schools have resulted in cultural differences regarding the term parental involvement. The literature review presents research regarding the theoretical framework of self-efficacy, social capital, and culture capital and their influence on parental involvement.

**Social and cultural capital.** There have been several studies on parents' social and cultural capital as significant components in determining children's educational outcomes (Bukodi & Goldthorpe, 2012; Jaeger, 2007; Lareau, 1987; Monkman, Ronald, & Theramene, 2005; Parcel, Dufur & Troutman, 2013; Vincent, Rollock, Ball, & Gillborn, 2012). Social capital is the knowledge parents attain through relationships which provide information on resources available to support their children's academic progress (Lee & Bowen, 2006; Leithwood & Patrician, 2015). When families adhered to norms which included value systems, ways of thinking and modes of behavior which were considered acceptable in specific settings by the dominant culture their social capital increased (Apple, 2013, Edgerton, & Roberts, 2014; Winkle-Wagner & Rachelle, 2010). These families became familiar with how the school system worked and were able to access what they needed from the school system (Apple, 2013). They knew whom to contact when their

children were having problems at school, they were assertive in school communications, and they were knowledgeable about how to assist their children's learning in school (Waite, 2013; Wegmann & Bowen, 2010).

Although similar to social capital, cultural capital has explicit distinctions. Cultural capital is defined as the capacity of knowledge an individual possesses as a member of a particular cultural group (Lee & Bowen, 2006, Worrell, 2014). This form of capital is inherited from parents and is considered intergenerational. (Potter & Roska, 2013; Redford, Johnson, & Honnold, 2009). This inheritance may take place in two ways, by exposure to parents' cultural capital, or by parents' making a conscience effort to transfer their cultural capital to their children (Kraaykamp & Eijck, 2010). The cultural capital framework identified behaviors and norms which schools valued. When cultural capital was a part of children's *habitus*, or way of life, it was evidenced in children's mannerisms, language, and their knowledge (Bourdieu, 1977; Trainor, 2010). Children's familiarity with the acceptable behaviors and the norms of the dominant culture were perceived as high achieving and received preferential treatment from teachers (Jaeger, 2011).

Gaddis (2013) maintained that the attainment of cultural capital was significant because it changed students' views about their ability to achieve academic progress and their value of education. The effects of cultural capital manifested in three ways; children of families with cultural capital are: (a) better learners (b) are familiarized with abstract and intellectual issues, and (c) are approached by teachers more positively. Because of their familiarity with dominant culture norms, these children fared better in school than children from disadvantaged backgrounds (Gaddis, 2013).



Cultural capital has also been compared to the idea of a “field,” a place of belonging, many fields exist. However, everyone is not privy to the same field. Fields are based on an individual’s schooling and family (Winkle-Wagner, 2010). The implication in educational settings was that although all students possessed a form of cultural capital, only certain students’ cultural capital was considered valuable (Winkle-Wagner, 2010). And so, children who possessed the dominant culture’s form of cultural capital were equipped to succeed in school (Fan, 2014; Jaeger, 2011). Conversely, lack of cultural capital may become a barrier to the home-school connection and students’ academic progress (Edgerton, & Roberts, 2014; Wegmann & Bowen, 2010).

**Cultural differences.** Educational systems were designed to recognize and reward students whose families were familiar with high-status institutionalized cultural signals for that reason, educators often misinterpreted minority students’ and their parents’ cultural capital (Jaegar, 2011, Richman, & Mandara, 2013). School systems appeared to be equal, but underneath the surface, they were a value-laden institution that did not operate in meritocracy; but were biased in favor of students who possessed the attributes of the dominant culture (Toldson, & Lemmons, 2013). The inability to conform to the dominant culture of the school system had alienated parents of color, and thereby disenfranchised students of color (Bourdieu, 1977; Howard, 2013; Williams & Sanchez, 2013).

Minority status is a group’s position of power in the society. However, minority status does not reflect a group’s population in society but is reflective of the subordinate position the group holds in the power structure of society (Defreese, 2014; Ogbu, 1978). Minority parents may choose to be disengaged in their children’s education because they

believed the barriers they encountered, such as language and cultural differences were insurmountable (Carey, 2013; Rodriguez, 2013; Schnee & Bose, 2010). However, minority children's academic progress improved, and minority parents' involvement increased when schools learned to integrate children's home cultures and values into school communities (Souto-Manning, 2010).

Most parents would like to support their children's academic progress, but they are not clear about how to effectively achieve academic goals (Nelson & Guerra, 2014). Fan, Williams, and Walters (2011) examined parental involvement programs in public schools and found efforts to increase parental involvement planned the same activities for parents across ethnic groups. No consideration was given to how academic progress was attained in culturally diverse groups (Fan, Williams, & Walters, 2011, Marshall, Shah, & Donato, 2012).

Walker, Ice, and Hoover-Dempsey (2011) reported that Latino parents valued education and expected their children to do well in school. However, culturally some Latino parents believed that it was disrespectful to engage in a teaching role with their children (Walker, Ice, & Hoover-Dempsey, 2011). Khalilfa (2010) contended that schools devalued the social capital of Black students, and often viewed Black students as confrontational. The relationship teachers and school personnel had with Black students was the same relationship they had with Black parents resulting in parents' negative perspectives of schools (McGrady & Reynolds, 2013). Consequently, minority parents did not feel welcomed at schools and believed that schools did not want them to be involved, and were likely to be less involved (Williams & Sanchez, 2013). Therefore, schools should

systematically learn the beliefs of minority parents to increase parental involvement (Gillanders, McKinney, & Ritchie, 2012).

On the other hand, Vera et al. (2012) posited that educated immigrant parents understood the United States schooling system and were not concerned with interfering with teachers' instruction, but were aware of the importance of communicating with teachers. These parents were aware of cultural expectations and made the most of the resources provided by schools to assist in supporting their children's education (Vera et al., 2012). Yet, there remained a population of parents who maintained their cultural beliefs about their role in their children's education. These parents continued to be a source of contention among educators who considered these parents uninvolved and unconcerned about their children's education (Vera et al., 2012). Educators were frustrated by the lack of parental involvement by minority families in public schools, yet schools continued to develop parental involvement programs which marginalized low socio-economic and minority parents while providing support and resources for parents of White and middle-class children (Kavanagh & Hickey, 2013).

In contrast, parental involvement increased when educators valued the cultural capital parents and students brought to school by taking the time to learn how students and parents viewed the world (Bernhard, 2010; Day, 2013). When educators became knowledgeable about diverse cultural values, they were able to interpret parents' involvement in a more informed, less evaluative way (Patel & Corter, 2013). In so doing, schools provided parents the social capital needed to make schools a place where parents felt comfortable and were able to participate in education (Durand & Perez, 2013; Okeke,

2014). However, when schools merely accepted that cultural differences existed, schools preserved the control of privileges by the dominant culture (Anderson, 2012).

**Parental involvement.** Hashmi and Akhter (2013) maintained that parents were considered involved when they communicated with teachers and when they engaged in activities at home which supported their children's academic progress. However, the definition of parental involvement remains ambiguous and may be viewed differently by parents, students, and teachers, and may differ between schools and geographic locations (Lam & Ducreux, 2013)

Perspectives on parental involvement starting at prekindergarten level through middle school level concluded that teachers and school administrators from urban area schools had different understandings of parental involvement (Graves & Wright, 2011; Williams & Sanchez, 2012). Administrators' and teachers' definitions of parental involvement tended to ensure the success of the school while disregarding the needs of the families which schools served (Bower & Griffin, 2011). Ryan, Casas, Kelley-Vance, and Ryalls (2010) observed that most definitions of parental involvement focused on activities that were visible to school personnel and did not consider parental involvement which took place at home.

Nevertheless, theorists and researchers agreed that parents are a child's first teacher, and a driving force in a child's attainment of educational success (Goodall & Montgomery, 2014; McCaleb, 2013). Parents were involved in their children's learning from the time children were learning to talk, walk, and learning how to interact with others (Goodall & Montgomery, 2014). Before a child enrolls in school, parents would have spent more than

of 43,800 hours with their child. When a child enters school, a child spends 1,260 hours with an educator in comparison to the 7,490 hours spent with parents (LaRocque, Klieman, Darling, & Sharon, 2011). More importantly, parental involvement before children entered school positioned children on an academic trajectory (Sy, Gottfried, & Gottfried, 2013). Therefore, the enduring influence of parental involvement should compel educators to involve parents early in students' education for optimal students' academic progress (Al-Alwan, 2014; Froiland, Peterson, & Davison, 2012).

**Home-school connection.** Evans and Radina (2014) maintained that students' academic progress was a result of meaningful partnerships between family, school, and community. Georgiou and Tourva (2007) observed that when parents viewed themselves as teachers they became more involved in their children's education, and their involvement had an impact on their children's academic progress. More importantly, parental expectations informed children of the importance parents placed on academic progress and were internalized by children (Bempechat & Shernoff, 2012).

Jeynes (2010) studied parental involvement and found parental involvement, as well as programs which promoted parental involvement connected to higher student academic achievement. Parental involvement influenced children's academic progress by fostering independent learning among children (Jeynes, 2010). Karbach, Gottschling, Spengler, Hegewald, and Spinath (2013) posited that when parents built on students' autonomy and independence, students developed intrinsic motivation for achievement which connected to the school and their future goals. Additionally, children were encouraged to achieve in school when they were concerned with meeting parents' expectations and gaining their

parents' approval. When parents shared stories about their struggles to overcome poverty children wanted to please their parents by doing well academically in school (Ceballo, Maurizi, Suarez, & Aretakis, 2014, Cheung & Pomerantz, 2012)

Parental involvement in the form of the home-school connection was not effective for all students. Mexican-American families had a positive influence on student academic progress when they engaged in parent home-based involvement, rather than participation in school organizations (Altschul, 2011). Trask-Tate and Cunningham (2010) observed that parental involvement had a positive effect on the academic achievement of Black female students, but did not have an effect on Black males. Notably, Black males were positively influenced when parents engaged in discussion related to the cultural heritage of Blacks with their sons (Howard, 2013). These conversations were a source of ethnic pride and identity for boys and promoted academic progress (Williams & Bryan, 2013). Home-based parental involvement positively influenced adolescent children of African American parents and was an example of a different type of parental involvement (Williams & Bryan, 2013). Discussions were indicative of the socialization practices of Black parents, as well as demonstrative of the cultural influence of parental involvement on students' academic progress (Hayes, 2012). This Afro-Centric worldview valued humanist and communitarian principles which countered the institutional discrimination embedded in our society, and directly conflicted with the United States beliefs regarding achievement (Trask-Tate & Cunningham, 2010). Because forms of involvement which took place in the home were not measurable by schools they were not given consideration and parents were viewed as non-involved (Hayes, 2012). Subsequently, to be successful and functional families developed

the skills needed to operate within two different cultures (Buttaro, Battle, & Pastrana, 2010; Green-Gibson, & Collett, 2014)

**Types of parental involvement.** Irrespective of socioeconomic status, parents can be involved in their children's education (Patel & Corter, 2013). Graves and Wright (2011) suggested that multiple typologies of involvement be considered to determine the influence of parental involvement on academic progress. Stylianides and Stylianides (2010) maintained that seven parent-child interaction activities promoted parental involvement: (a) parents reading to their child, (b) parents telling their child stories, (c) parents helping their child do art, (d) parents building things with their child, (e) parents teaching their child about nature, (f) parents playing games with their child, and (g) parents playing sports with their child. Participation in these activities offered children multiplicity of opportunities which promoted reading skills, social skills, and prepared children for entry into school. Also, the parent-child interaction would most likely continue throughout the students' education, promoting parental involvement and students' academic progress (Stylianides & Stylianides, 2010; Vellymalay, 2013)

Moreover, when children entered school, their academic progress improved when parents acted as teachers, supporters, advocates, and decision makers (Estell & Perdue, 2013; Grace, Jethro & Aina, 2012). Parents were teachers when they created an environment at home which supported learning. Parents were supporters when they provided extra support to students, parents were advocates when they helped students negotiate the school system in order to receive fair treatment, and parents were decision

makers when they served on decision- making councils and committees in schools (Greene, 2013; Williams & Bryan, 2013).

McKenna and Millen (2013) examined parental involvement through the grounded theory models of parent voice and parent presence. The first model, parent voice is represented by discussions parents have about their educational aspirations for their children. Parent voice is also expressed through concerns, frustrations, and feelings of disrespect parents experience within the educational process relating to lack of resources at their children's school and lack of communication between schools and parents. (McKenna & Millen, 2013).

The second model, parent presence, can be formal, or informal. Formal parent presence was helping with homework, being a member of the Parent Teacher Association (PTA), and attending school events (McKenna & Millen, 2013). Informal presence consisted of cooking food, or helping at school events (McKenna & Millen, 2013). Regardless of the manner in which parents chose to be involved, when given opportunities to express their thoughts regarding their children's education, parents were motivated and supported their children. Parent participation whether it be voice or presence was of great assistance to educators and promoted students' academic progress (Nicoll, 2014).

Many urban schools ascribed to the Epstein Model of Parental Involvement (Epstein, 2010; Epstein, 2011) which contained six family involvement components: (a) positive home conditions; (b) communication; (c) involvement at school; (d) home learning activities; (e) shared decision making within the school; and (f) community partnerships. Seemingly, this model included all areas of students' lives in which parents could be



effectively involved in their children's education. However, Bower and Griffin (2011) conducted a case study which questioned the effects of the Epstein Model on parental involvement in high-minority and high-poverty elementary schools and found that the model did not capture how parents of color were involved in their children's education (Bower & Griffin, 2011).

Silinskas, Niemi, Lerkkanen and Nurmi (2013) argued that parental involvement, especially with homework, was in response to their children's poor academic performance. Consequently, because parents lacked the understanding of curriculum content this type of involvement was not always beneficial for children (Wilder, 2014). On the other hand, Karbach, Gottschling, Spengler, Hedgewald, & Spinath (2013) posited because cognitive ability was a better predictor of students' academic progress, students performed worse in school when parents instituted guidelines and expectations.

**Barriers to parental involvement.** Schnee and Bose (2010) and (Whitaker & Dempsey, 2013) examined cases in which parents were considered uninvolved and discussed ways parents from diverse backgrounds supported their children's learning and found that one of the hindrances to parental involvement was cultural expectations of schools. The culture of White students often permeated public schools and was often the only cultural capital recognized by teachers and administrators (Green-Gibson & Collett, 2014). This practice disregarded the diverse community that schools served, discouraged parental involvement, and propagated the academic disparity between White students and minority students (Khalifa, 2010). Also, parents' beliefs about their role, knowledge, and skills—and the time and energy needed to be adequately involved—were also barriers to

their involvement (Crosnoe & Cooper, 2010; Hornby & Lafaele, 2011; Patel & Corter, 2013).

Notably, parental involvement programs in public schools often valued, and only included, expectations that benefited schools, while ignoring the need for inclusiveness of families of color that would ensure the success of all families and students (Griffin, 2011). The feeling of exclusion by parents of color has not only resulted in the lack of parental involvement but has implications for students' academic progress (Griffin, 2011).

Minority parents felt that some forms of parental involvement which schools incorporated were not meaningful ways to involve them in their children's education and often marginalized minority parents while creating access to school systems of academic progress for the dominant culture and middle-class parents (Baquedano-Lopez et al., 2013). Williams and Sanchez (2011) observed that negative experiences at school during their childhood had served as a potential barrier to parental involvement for African-American parents. African-American mothers who felt as though they were discriminated against as children only became involved as a way to protect their children from discrimination (Rowley, Helaire, & Banerjee 2010; Milner, 2013).

Another barrier to parental involvement was the difficulty parents had engaging in a content area in which they were unfamiliar with, or were not comfortable with when they were students (Froiland & Davison, 2014; Schnee & Bose, 2010). For parents to be more involved with homework, schools reengaged parents in these content areas. Reengaging parents modeled how parents can support their children's learning and increased their self-efficacy to support students' academic progress (Schnee & Bose, 2010).

Durand and Perez (2013) noted cultural differences were a barrier to parental involvement. However, when educators attained cultural knowledge, there was a shift in their beliefs regarding parental involvement which promoted an efficient home-school connection (Calzada et al., 2015). Conversely, when schools ignored that the lives of minority families were shaped by class, race, and immigrant inequality, schools operated from the deficit perspective, which devalued the cultures of others (Baquedano-Lopez et al., 2013). Deficit thinking contributed student's academic failure to lack of readiness for school, family lifestyle, and parent's disinterest in education (Nelson & Guerra, 2014; Lowenhaupt, 2014; Walker, 2010).

**Teachers and administrators.** Teachers recognized the need for parent and teacher collaboration to successfully educate children (Dor & Rucker-Naidu, 2012). In Dor and Rucker-Naidu's (2012) study of teachers and parental involvement, teachers were asked to define parental involvement. The majority of teachers interviewed defined parental involvement as volunteering, school fundraising, or activities that assisted teachers and school's daily routines. Makgopa and Mokhele's (2013) study regarding teachers' views of parental involvement concurred with Dor and Rucker-Naidu (2012), teachers considered parents involved in their children's education when parents volunteered at school, attended school events, and maintained communication with the teacher. However, teachers considered parents truly involved when their involvement extended outside the classroom. Therefore, teachers expected parents to monitor and assist with homework and provide an environment that cultivated learning in their homes (Makgopa & Mokhele, 2013).

Teachers reported that their course studies relating to parental involvement discussed societal barriers to parental involvement, such as poverty, language, and cultural differences, but did not provide explicit instruction on how to effectively involve parents (Mahmood, 2013). They were informed that these factors led to low expectations for parental involvement in urban school areas (Mahmood, 2013). On the other hand, teachers were advised that because middle-class parents considered themselves equal to teachers, one of the expectations of teaching in schools with high socio-economic levels was parental involvement. However, teachers found that these parents were often busy and did not have time to connect (Mahmood, 2013).

Hindin and Mueller (2016) maintained that teachers needed to develop knowledge of diverse families, and an understanding of what factors influenced their views of parental involvement, as well as their disposition and knowledge of parental involvement. Although teachers had views of what parental involvement should look like in school and at home, teachers still contended with ways in which to involve parents and suggested that they needed more training on how to effectively engage parents (Wong, K, 2015).

Students' academic progress is one of the functions and objectives of the school community (Watson & Bogotch, 2016). The responsibility of administrators is to promote meaningful collaboration between stakeholders to meet academic goals (Ravitch, 2013; Watson & Bogotch, 2016). Although districts promised to support school partnerships, given the amount of curriculum teachers needed to cover, administrators were concerned about district expectations and what teachers and other school personnel could actually do. As a result, administrators instructed to form partnerships with teachers, parents, and the

community found coordinating partnerships challenging (Casto, 2016). Consequently, administrators needed to develop programs which met district mandates, but did not overwhelm teachers and other school personnel (Casto, 2016).

### **Self-Efficacy**

Self-efficacy is a person's belief in her ability to handle a specific task or situation (Bandura, 1977, Holzberger, Philip, & Kunter, 2013). Teacher self-efficacy involves the ability to motivate students and the ability to collaborate with parents and colleagues (Malinen et al., 2013). Self-efficacy may be obtained from four sources: (a) mastery experiences, (b) vicarious experiences, (c) social persuasion, and (e) somatic and emotional states (Bandura, 1977, Tschannen-Moran & Woolfolk Hoy, 2007). Because the ability to succeed is evident, mastery experiences were the most powerful sources of self-efficacy. This source of self-efficacy was achieved through workshops, observations, and collaboration (Malinen et al., 2013).

The responsibilities of school leadership are complex (Airola, Bengston, Davis, & Peer, 2014). To meet the needs of a changing school culture and comply with school district mandates administrators must have instructional leadership efficacy. This type of efficacy is an administrators' belief in their ability to motivate teachers, maintain a positive school environment, and promote academic progress for students. When school administrator's attended capacity building workshops their sense of efficacy increased and they accomplished instructional leadership tasks (Airola, Bengston, Davis, & Peer, 2014).

Parents recognized that students needed their support to achieve academic progress (Yamamoto, Holloway & Suzuki, 2016). Self-efficacy beliefs in parenting situations are

termed *parental self-efficacy* (PSE) beliefs are obtained from experiences gained after engaging in specific tasks for an adequate amount of time (Murdock, 2013). Yamamoto, Holloway, and Suzuki (2016) observed a direct correlation between parent self-efficacy and parental involvement: it increased when they participated in programs that provided experiential knowledge about learning strategies and school norms (Shiffman, 2013). Parents with high self-efficacy were actively involved in their children's education. Whereas, parents who considered themselves ineffective, because of lack of self-efficacy, were not likely to engage in activities with their children (Giallo, Ttyvaud, Cooklin, & Wade, 2013).

### **Implications**

When parents are given opportunities to gain social and cultural capital and develop self-efficacy, they may serve as a bridge to connect home and school. The findings derived from data regarding this project study may help parents, teachers, and administrators collaborate to develop a view of the term parental involvement which is inclusive. This view may increase parental involvement, and may result in increased students' academic progress. Moreover, a partnership between schools and parents may decrease the disparity of academic progress between White and minority students

A project which includes parent workshops to increase the self-efficacy of parents to support students' academic progress, as well as cultural sensitivity workshops for supporting teachers and administrators may increase parental involvement. Applying Bandura's (1977) theory of self-efficacy to the home-school connection and Lee and Bowen's theory of social and cultural capital to the term parental involvement may

contribute to the body of knowledge regarding ways in which parental involvement is viewed by culturally diverse parents, school administrators, and teachers in an urban school.

### **Summary**

Section 1: (a) described the local problem, (b) introduced the purpose of the study, (c) the significance of the study, (d) rationale, and (e) implications for social change. The lack of parental involvement at the culturally diverse target school was disconcerting to teachers and administrators. Examining how the term parental involvement was perceived by stakeholders was crucial to developing a project that may lead to an effective partnership between home and school, which could result in students' academic progress.

Also included in Section 1 was review of literature which further examined parental involvement, barriers to parental involvement, social and cultural capital, cultural differences, and self-efficacy. Literature established the positive affect of parental involvement on students' academic achievement. In spite of this, parents from culturally diverse backgrounds experienced barriers to their involvement. Some parents were not comfortable navigating through an unfamiliar school system. Therefore, they were perceived as uninvolved by teachers and administrators.

Section 1 concluded with teachers' and administrators' views regarding parental involvement, and research questions which guided the study and project. Teachers' and administrators' perception of the term parental involvement was significant to the development of a project which included an understanding of the diverse school community they serve. Section 2, Methodology, will discuss: (a) chosen design method, (b)

participants, (c) data collection procedures, (d) present data analysis, and will identify themes and patterns within the data along with interpretation of data and findings. The project derived from the findings is presented in Section 3. Reflection on the study findings and other scholarly insights will be presented in Section 4.



## Section 2: The Methodology

### **Introduction**

The purpose of this qualitative case study was to examine how parents, teachers, and administrators perceived the term “parental involvement” and to examine their ability to influence students’ academic progress. I chose a qualitative research design so that I could examine a social problem to understand the cause individuals or groups ascribe to the reasons for the problem (Creswell, 2012; Yilmaz, 2013). I wanted to stimulate interest in a new phenomenon with the goal of beginning discussions regarding the phenomena’s potential significance to the field of education (Freebody, & Frieberg, 2006; Marshall, & Rossman, 2014). Consequently, discussions about how parents, administrators, and teachers perceived the term “parental involvement”, and their ability to influence students’ academic progress.

### **Research Design and Approach**

This qualitative study used a constructivist case study design. Open-ended questions used in a case study can may promote more sharing of personal experiences. Schwandt (2000) stated: “Human beings do not find or discover knowledge so much as construct or make it” (p.197). Qualitative methods, such as interviews, are predominant in constructivist methodology (Mertens, 2014). To understand an issue, the constructivist looks at perceptions formed from distinct experiences. Participants in this study had an opportunity to share their experiences in the school setting. Their perceptions were a part of the findings about the term “parental involvement”, and how each stakeholder group viewed parents’ ability to influence students’ academic progress.

Findings were used to develop parental involvement programs which included diverse cultures and ideas about an effective home-school connection. The findings were also used to develop cultural sensitivity workshops for educators and administrators; the goal was to promote collaboration between parents and the school community in order to improve students' academic progress.

I chose a qualitative case study design for this project study because a case study would allow me to focus on the complexity and uniqueness of this case and how this could influence the social context being studied (Glesne, 2011; Punch, 2013). My case study was used to examine phenomena and provide thorough descriptions and in-depth analysis. I used inductive analysis and rich descriptions to report the findings (Merriam, 2009). Also, this approach allows readers to place themselves in the lives of participants and compare their lives to other possible cases (Merriam, 2009; Marshall, & Rossman, 2014). My case study findings may be applicable to similar urban school communities.

A case study approach is prudent when the researcher has identified boundaries within a case or several cases and uses this approach to study a particular case or to compare cases (Glesne, 2011; Houghton, Casey, Shaw, & Murphy, 2013). A case study approach is an appropriate method to examine a particular situation by gaining access to participants who find the researcher trustworthy, and because of its efficacy has been used by several researchers (Carlson & Buttram, 2004; Houghton, Casey, Shaw, & Murphy, 2013; Pahl & Kelly, 2005).

Findings of this qualitative case study may benefit students, parents, teachers, and administrators. During cultural sensitivity workshops teachers' and administrators' will be

encouraged to discuss cultural differences. Workshop discussions could increase the self-efficacy of teachers and administrators so that they could better serve the diverse population of students who attend urban schools and their parents. More importantly, discussions and collaboration may lead to developing a perception of the term *parental involvement* which values cultural differences. Additionally, findings may result in the development of workshops that may increase parents' self-efficacy, social and cultural capital, and may result in students' academic progress at home and school.

### **Justification of Research Design**

Qualitative researchers study real-world situations to examine how individuals or groups manage and survive in a specific situation, or setting (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2013; Yin, 2011). To make sense of aspects of everyday life experiences, qualitative researchers study the experiences of people in their natural settings. When conditions are controlled, as in other traditional research methods, the findings depict how individuals behave in an artificial context. In qualitative research human behavior is examined within the bounds of the participant's natural setting and the goal is to understand the world from the viewpoint of those living in it, and the influence perspective has on participants' actions in a specific setting (Hatch, 2002). To understand the influence of parental involvement and parents' ability to help students make academic progress, I examined how the term parental involvement was perceived by teachers, parents, and administrators in a culturally diverse urban school setting.

The relevance of qualitative research findings to the lives of individuals, groups, and institutions is noteworthy. According to Yin (2013), "The events and ideas that emerge

during qualitative research may represent meanings given to real life events by the people who live them” (p 15). Qualitative research is the vehicle whereby the researcher can gain a deeper understanding of phenomena. Using open-ended questioning allows the researcher to develop new and unexpected insights, and may correct misinterpretations that are sometimes associated with quantitative findings (Kalinowski, Lai, Fidler, & Cumming, 2010; Yilmaz, 2013).

Qualitative design includes several approaches of inquiry. Namely, phenomenological, grounded theory, and ethnographic approaches. However, these approaches were not effective in supporting the problem addressed in this study (Marshall, & Rossman, 2014; Yin, 2011). A phenomenological design requires participants to have the same shared experience (Creswell, 2013). The diversity of participants in this study, their roles, and their cultural perspectives, did not fit into the parameters of this design. Therefore, this approach was not appropriate. Another qualitative approach is the grounded theory design. As Creswell (2013) stated, “Grounded theory is based on an existing theory and assumes that the natural occurrence of social behavior within real-world contexts is best analyzed by deriving ‘bottom up’ grounded categories and concepts” (p.88). The grounded theory design is used when a researcher’s objective is to explain that existing conditions contributed to the occurrence of phenomena. Because grounded theory focuses primarily on concepts studied over a period of time, it was not appropriate for this study. One-time interviews were used in this study to examine how the term, parental involvement, was viewed by participants, and did not involve collection of data over a period of time. Ethnomethodology differs from the aforementioned qualitative designs and

is used to study a specific cultural group's social rituals, mannerisms, and symbols (Creswell, 2013). This study did not focus on a specific ethnic group but was concerned with the diverse cultures represented in the school setting.

The qualitative case study approach is suggested when there are questions as to "why" or "how" situations exist. Qualitative case study research is designed to examine phenomena in the context of contemporary real world situations (Edmonds & Kennedy, 2012). During the data collection process researchers seek to obtain recent and relevant information regarding the phenomena being studied (Edmonds & Kennedy, 2012; Yin, 2013).

The focus of this project study was the view of the term "parental involvement" and the parents', teachers', and administrators' ability to influence students' academic progress. The constructivist case study design was an effective approach which provided guidance for the project study (Epstein, 2011). A case study approach is an opportunity to ask open-ended questions that delve deeper into an issue that is still evolving (Epstein, 2011). The qualitative approach was preferred over the quantitative approach because numerical data results derived from quantitative data lacked the narrative data that is summarized in qualitative data collections (Mertens, 2014). Studies indicated that the role of stakeholders in education remains perplexing and a source of debate among stakeholders (Froiland, & Davison, 2014; McGrady & Reynolds, 2013; Potter & Roska, 2013). Therefore, an approach was justified in which participants' narrative responses addressed research questions about their view of the term parental involvement, and how they perceived their ability to support students' academic progress.

## Participants

The selection of participants is a critical component of an effective research project. The dynamics of the relationship between researcher and participants have a direct effect on qualitative research (Hatch, 2002). I needed to build an honest relationship with participants. For this kind of relationship to be established when conducting a case study, it is recommended approximately 4-5 participants in each sample (Creswell, 2012).

To gain rich in depth information and to learn the most about the phenomena from the perspectives of participants, I used purposeful sampling. As Creswell (2012) stated, “In purposeful sampling researchers intentionally select individuals and sites to learn or understand the central phenomenon” (p. 206). This sampling strategy requires determining criteria for participant selection, as well as what site would be observed and used to identify variations and differences (Merriam, 2009, Palinkas et al., 2015). “The logic and power of purposeful sampling leads to selecting information- rich cases for study in depth” (Patton, 2002, p.46). Certain categories of individuals in a purposeful sample may present perspectives about the phenomena which are unique, different, or important to the study (Robinson, 2014).

**Criteria for selecting participants.** After submission of the study proposal and obtaining permission to conduct the study, I was granted approval from the Walden University IRB (No. 11-24-14-0145248). Findings of the study may influence the parental involvement practices at the targeted school. Therefore, parents, teachers, and administrators at Hope Inspired Preparatory School were invited. There were 135 invitations sent to t candidates. Seventy invitations were mailed to prospective fourth and

fifth grade parent participants, 65 invitations were placed in prospective teacher and administrator participants' school mailboxes. Teachers and administrators returned their completed consent forms to my mailbox, or directly to me. Parent participants completed consent forms were returned via mail and given to me by the school office supervisor. Examining participants' perceptions of the term "parental involvement", and how they perceived their ability to support students' academic progress was crucial to studying the connection between parental involvement and students' academic progress in an urban school setting.

After reminding teachers, eight teacher consent forms were returned. Three of five administrators consented to participate in the study. The responses from parents took a considerably longer time. In fact, after mailing 70 invitations, I received no responses for three weeks. I checked school mail daily and found no responses. Eventually, I received three responses by mail, and two were hand delivered to me at the school site totaling five responses.

**Justification for the number of participants.** Creswell (2012) suggested a small sample size for case studies. I received 16 consenting responses from invited participants. A smaller sample size facilitated a more in-depth inquiry per individual interview of the phenomena being studied. A smaller sample size also allowed more time to place participants at ease during individual interview sessions.

**Procedure for gaining access to participants.** To obtain consent to conduct the study at the target school site, I presented documentation from the community partner and discussed the purpose of the study with the principal of the target school site. I assured the

principal of the confidentiality for both the school and the participants. I maintained confidentiality with the use of pseudonyms when referencing the school, the school district, and participants. The school office manager provided a mailing list for fourth and fifth grade classes to me so I could contact parent participants.

**Establishing a researcher-participant working relationship.** A consent form/invitation was mailed to parents with a postage return envelope to invite their participation in the study (Appendices B & C). Invitations for administrators and teachers to participate in the study were enclosed in envelopes and placed in teachers' and administrators' mailboxes at the school (Appendices D & E). The invitation included a brief description of the project study, outlined the time for the one-time interview session, and provided contact information for questions regarding the research study. Invited participants were given information regarding the purpose of the study, their expected participation, and how the findings of the study may be used to effect change regarding the term, "parental involvement," and how their role is viewed in helping students make academic progress.

Upon receipt of completed consent forms, participants received a phone call inviting them to 15-20-minute, face-to-face interview sessions. During the phone call, participants were informed that their participation was voluntary, about interview procedures, and their right to discontinue participation in the study at any time. Participants were also informed that their responses might be used to develop programs in schools that may promote an effective home-school connection. Participants were comfortable with the meeting place and agreed upon times for individual interviews. A rapport was developed



with participants throughout my years teaching at the target site. Therefore, participants were at ease with consenting to be a part of the study.

### **Ethical Protection of Participants**

Magolda and Weems (2002) maintained that researchers should consider their role as an outsider, or an insider when conducting a study. Consideration must be given to several issues: participants' fear of disclosing, how to be supportive of participants, how to be respectful of participants' cultures and mannerisms. Hatch (2002) maintained, "Researchers must be sensitive to vulnerable populations, imbalanced power relations, and placing participants at risk" (p. 66). All participants were assigned a pseudonym to ensure ethical protection, and no personal information was shared outside of the project study. The letter of informed consent delineated the purpose of the research, and that the study was a part of my Doctor of Education program at Walden University. All participants who accepted the invitation and signed the letter of consent participated fully in the project study. In addition, audio-taped interviews, transcripts, and observational notes were placed in a locked cabinet in my home office to protect participants from unethical breeches.

### **Data Collection**

**Justification for data collection.** Semistructured interviews using open-ended questions with teachers, parents, and administrators at Hope Inspired Preparatory School, as well as observational notes taken during interview sessions were a source of data collection for my qualitative case study. Guided questions are central to case studies and are an important source of evidence (Yin, 2009). Qualitative researchers often begin an interview session with prepared questions; however, researchers often add questions

throughout the interview process. When semistructured interviews begin with open-ended questions, questions can be refocused, clarifying questions may be asked, and responses may give rise to an interesting, or novel theme (Baskarada, 2014).

The interview process during qualitative research promotes close interaction between researcher and participant and is a distance-reducing experience that engages the feelings of the researcher and the participant (Glesne, 2011). Yin (2009) argued that interviewing people with different perspectives from the same organization provides valuable information. Participants in the study attended individual audio-recorded interview sessions. Baskarada (2014) suggested that to obtain sufficient information regarding the phenomena being examined, there should be no less than 15 interviews. There were 16 total interview sessions during the study.

Establishing accuracy and validity of findings is important. According to Yin (2009), “Case study findings are likely to be more convincing and accurate if [they] are based on several different sources of information” (p. 116). The use of multiple sources during inquiry allow data triangulation and cross-referencing of themes, which provide validity and credibility of data results (Merriam, 2009). Notes taken during interview sessions serve as a source of insight into participants’ body language and non-verbal cues, as well as provide an alternative to audio recording if the audio system fails (Creswell, 2012). Cross-referencing themes from interviews with teachers, parents, and administrators on their perception of how the term, parental involvement, and how they view their ability to support students’ academic progress, as well as notes taken during interview sessions, provided triangulation and strengthened the findings of my study.

**Data collection instrument and sources.** Open-ended questions were developed as a result of the literature review on parental involvement and educational outcomes that addressed the views of parents, teachers, and administrators on the term “parental involvement” at Hope Inspired Preparatory School and their ability to influence students’ academic progress. In-depth interviews provide a lens into which the research can ascertain how participants construct meaning from the experiences and make sense of their world (Hatch, 2002; Seidman, 2013). Interview guides progressively move the conversation from the general idea to an in-depth probe of each participant’s experiences (Rubin & Rubin, 2011). Using interview guides during interview sessions provided an opportunity to engage participants in dialogue that was authentic and personal, resulting in responses that related to their experiences regarding the term “parental involvement” and their ability to support students’ academic progress.

Parent interview questions related to their understanding of the term “parental involvement,” and their ability to influence their children’s academic progress (Appendix D). Teacher interview questions related to their view of the term “parental involvement,” their experiences with parents, and how they viewed parents’ ability to influence students’ academic progress (Appendix C). Administrator interview questions related to their school-wide views regarding the term “parental involvement,” and their ability to influence students’ academic progress (Appendix B). Interviews were the primary source of data collection; observational notes served as a secondary source of data collection.

**Source of data collection instrument sufficiency.** To ensure validity and reliability of the data, qualitative research makes use of different strategies to assess the

accuracy of data (Creswell, 2013). Parents', teachers', and administrators' responses to open-ended interview questions were a source of data collection. Construct validity was supported by multiple sources of evidence regarding the same construct (Yin, 2009). I submitted parent interview questions to an expert in the field of parental involvement to ensure the validity of the protocol. This person was a director of the Parent Teacher Association. Her position provided many opportunities to engage with parents and educators. I formulated interview questions for administrators and teachers. Recording participants' responses to the interview questions provided descriptive validity and avoids embellishment of statements (Hannes, Lockwood, & Pearson, 2010; Seidman, 2013; Wolcott, 1994). Audio-recorded interviews were sent to Rev.com Transcribing Service to ensure accuracy. A non-disclosure agreement was signed by the transcribing service (Appendix H). Member checking was used as an additional triangulation method when participants reviewed and provided feedback of their interview transcriptions for accuracy (Koelsch, 2013).

Another validity measure used was descriptive writing. Yilmaz (2013) surmised "rich and detailed, or *thick description* of setting and participants is a must" (p. 321). When participants and settings are described in detail readers can compare information to other settings to determine whether findings are transferrable (Creswell, 2013). This study took place at an urban school with demographics that are not unique to urban communities. Findings of the study may be indicative of how teachers, administrators, and parents perceive the term, "parental involvement", and their ability to influence students' academic

progress in other urban school communities. Therefore, this information may be transferrable to similar school settings.

Data were analyzed using constant comparative analysis of the multiple data sources. I obtained data from three sources, parents, teachers, and administrators, including margin notes and notes of non-verbal cues during the interviews establishing trustworthiness of the study. Multiple means of data contributes to research trustworthiness and authenticity (Glesne, 2011). Triangulating improves confidence in reported findings (Hatch, 2002).

My view of parental involvement may be a source of subjectivity, so I kept a self-reflective journal. Self-reflective journals are interactive and are used to evaluate interview techniques and ask questions regarding the work (Mosselson, 2010). Goodall (2000) suggested, “the incorporation of *reflexivity*, the process of personally and academically reflecting on lived experiences in ways that reveal deep connections between writer and his or her subject, is essential to the integrity of qualitative research” (p.137). Transcripts, recordings, and my reflective journal will be kept in a locked cabinet in my home for five years, creating an *audit trail* (Carlson, 2010).

**Processes for data collection.** After being granted permission by the local school district to conduct the study, the data collection process took approximately six weeks. Subsequent to the returning of consent forms, I contacted participants by telephone to schedule individual interviews. Semi-structured interviews were scheduled after school hours at the convenience of the interviewee. Interviews were held in a classroom at the

school site. While conducting interviews I took observational notes which would inform data analysis.

**Systems for keeping data.** Data collected during individual interviews were kept in file folders label with participants' pseudonyms in a locked file cabinet in my home office, also to facilitate data analysis, responses to interview questions were color coded and cataloged according to emerging themes. Password protected copies of transcribed interviews remained in my computerized data file until I began the analysis process.

### **Role of the Researcher**

I have been a teacher in the school district for ten years. I have taught first grade and fourth grade. I am currently a fourth grade teacher at the target school. Parent participants were not parents of my students and were not coerced to participate in the study. The research site was chosen because I sought to examine a local problem that directly influences parents and students' academic progress.

As an educator, I have a vested interest in understanding how the term, *parental involvement*, is perceived by stakeholders, parents, teachers, and administrators. Examination of the phenomena "parental involvement" remains a topic of discussion amongst educators locally, nationally, and globally. The findings of my study may influence social change that may benefit schools, parents, and students to help students' academic progress.

### **Data Analysis**

**Process of data analysis.** The process of data analysis involves making sense of data, moving to a deeper understanding of data, representing data, and interpreting the

larger meaning of data (Vogt, Vogt, Gardner, & Haeffele, 2014). Creswell (2013) suggested the following five steps in the process of data analysis: (a) organize and prepare the data for analysis; (b) read through all the data; (c) begin detailed analysis with a coding process; (d) use the coding process to generate a description of the setting or people as well as categories or themes for analysis; and (e) decide how the description and themes will be represented in the narrative. Implementing these steps will provide in-depth descriptions of the phenomena which will inform research findings. Creswell (2013) prescribed that researchers should prepare data for analysis by coding description and themes about the central phenomena.

**Coding.** Baskarada (2014) maintained that coding is vital in qualitative data analysis. The coding process facilitated the division of data into manageable pieces. The first step in coding is reading interview transcripts and observational notes to formulate categories and relationships (Baskarada, 2014). Data may be coded according to words, phrases, numbers, letters, colors, or any combination thereof (Merriam, 2009). Each participant in the study was assigned an alphabetic letter and a role label.

The coding processes involved two cycles. The first cycle of coding referred to as process coding, attunes the researcher to participants' perspectives by reading through transcripts to identify common words and phrases in participants' responses (Saldana, 2015). I examined each transcribed response by highlighting responses that contained common words or phrases the same color. The color changed as different themes emerged. During the second coding cycle, pattern/focused coding, notice is taken of reoccurring patterns (Saldana, 2015). After reading through transcripts of interviews and reviewing

notes taken during interview sessions, I began to identify emerging themes which informed the narrative. Completion of cycle one and two leads to codifying, the arrangement of data in systematic order, which groups, organizes, and links data, and provides meaning and develops explanations, thereby developing themes (Grbich, 2013).

Accounting for occurrences related to broader identified themes, sub-themes was counted and coded and addressed in the narrative. Along with observational notations, each coded transcript gave way to emerging themes which in turn provided answers to research questions. Tables 1, 2, and 3 summarized the data that emerged from descriptions of experiences related to the phenomena parental involvement, and their ability to influence students' academic progress. Member checking by participants of transcribed interviews did not identify the need for any changes in participants' responses. Upon final approval of the study, the local school district and participants will be provided information regarding access to the published findings of the project study.

**Evidence of quality and procedures.** In the context of case studies, “data analysis consists of examining, categorizing, tabulating, and recombining evidence to draw empirically based conclusions” (Yin, 2009, p.126). Jorgensen (1989) maintained that an objective of qualitative analysis is to identify conceptual similarities and differences. Data obtained from participants were consistent with qualitative case study protocols and procedures. The use of descriptive narratives and charts provided insights into study findings and strengthened the credibility of findings (Kaczynski, Salmona, & Smith, 2014).

In addition, delineation of procedures for participant selection and data collection were systematic and in accordance with the chosen qualitative research design. Findings of



the project study will be made public through links to publication websites. The findings also produced a project aimed at addressing some of the concerns identified by the participants. Section 3 will further explain this process.

**Procedures for dealing with discrepant cases.** Research that may contain adverse findings that are not consistent with other research findings should be disclosed to readers (Lodico, Spaulding, & Voegtle, 2010). Merriam (2009) suggested that during data collection that researchers look for data that is in conflict with their findings. All data is usable and should provide credibility for the project study and the phenomena being studied. During my study, there were no evidence of adverse findings

**Preparing for analysis.** Preparation for analysis begins by first referring to the research questions which provide a framework the study (Punch, 2013). The following research questions guided the study: (1) what does the term “parental involvement” mean to parents at Hope Inspired Preparatory School, and how do they view their ability to influence students’ academic progress? (2) what does the term “parental involvement” mean to teachers at Hope Inspired Preparatory School, and how do they view their ability to influence students’ academic progress? And (3) what does the term “parental involvement” mean to administrators at Hope Inspired Preparatory School, and how do they view their ability to influence students’ academic progress? The purpose of my study was to examine how the term “parental involvement” was perceived by stakeholders at the target school, and their ability to influence students’ academic progress.

Project study data were gathered from two sources; semi-structured interviews using opened questions, from the three stakeholder groups, and observational notes. Journal

notes, interview protocols, and member checking provided triangulation and justified significance of data. Semi-structured interviews were audio-recorded, downloaded to my home personal computer, and transcribed. A notebook was used for observational notes during each interview session.

### **Data Analysis Results**

The research questions for this qualitative case study were addressed in the findings. The study took place at Hope Inspired Preparatory School located in an urban city which serves a diverse population of students and parents. Study participants included 5 parents, 8 teachers, and 3 administrators. Data were analyzed using themes, recurring patterns that emerged across data and are “the big ideas” which emerged from codes (Merriam, 2009). There were three broad themes regarding the term “parental involvement”, and two themes pertaining to parents’ ability to influence students’ academic progress. These themes were instrumental in interpreting data and reporting research findings.

Research Question 1: What does the term parental involvement mean to parents at Hope Inspired Preparatory School, and how do they view their ability to influence students' academic progress?

*Table 1 - Interview Questions Parents: Cycle 2 Coding, Sub-Themes, and Broad Themes*

<b>Interview Questions</b>	<b>Examples of Parental Involvement</b>	<b>Cycle 2 Coding</b>	<b>Sub-Themes</b>	<b>Broad Theme</b>
1. How would you define "Parental Involvement"?	Speaking to the teacher on a daily basis, Being comfortable with your child's teacher, Checking homework, Going on field trips, Volunteering	Feeling comfortable communicating with teacher	Developing relationships with school and teacher	Being involved in your child's education
2. What would you say, if any is the correlation between parental involvement and student progress?	Support what teachers are doing in the classroom	Students do better in school	Students value education	Increase in home-school connection
3. How often do you assist your child with homework?	Understanding curriculum and standards, Assisting with homework in all content areas	Parents are interested in attending workshops, Scheduling conflicts	Parents lack the knowledge of skills and content to assist students	Lack of self-efficacy

Parents were asked to define the term parental involvement. Parent participants viewed volunteering, helping with homework, going on field trips, and communicating with the teacher as parental involvement. Parent C stated, "I define parental involvement as checking homework, coming to parent conferences, and going on field trips." Parent E

stated, “I try to communicate with the teacher when I pick my children up from school, I think that is being involved.”

When parents were asked if there was a connection to students’ academic progress and their involvement, all parent participants agreed that their involvement is necessary. Parent D said, “Teachers have them [children] the majority of the day, but when they come home, we have to piggyback on what they’re doing and then be in constant contact with the teacher so that we can work side by side.” Parent D shared that she believed in teacher parent partnerships, so she tries to keep communication open. Parents agreed that communicating with their children’s teacher was important. Parents were asked if they assisted students with homework. Parent C answered, “I try to check homework as often as I can.” Parent D confessed that although she had been working with her children she finds today’s curriculum challenging. Parent A stated, “I need some help, so much stress dealing with his homework.” Parents conceded that they were doing their best to assist their children, but lacked the self-efficacy to provide the support needed to help them achieve.

Participants were asked if they attended parent workshops. Parent A expressed that she could not attend workshops because they were scheduled during her work time. Parent B stated, “I’m very busy, every time they have the once a month thing with the principal, I have other obligations, so that’s why I haven’t made it. I need to know a little bit more in advance so that I can reschedule, so that I can come.” Overall, parents had similar views about the term parental involvement. However, the barriers mentioned by parents to their involvement were short notice regarding parent meetings, work schedules, and lack of information.

Research Question 2: What does the term parental involvement mean to teachers at Hope Inspired Preparatory School, and how do they view their ability to influence students' academic progress?

Table 2

*Interview Questions Teachers: Cycle 2 Coding, Subthemes, and Broad Themes*

Interview questions	Examples of parental involvement	Cycle 2 coding	Sub-themes	Broad theme
1. How would you define parental involvement?	Helping with homework, involved in the community, volunteering in the classroom, all around participation in their children's lives	Supporting schools and teachers	Collaboration between teachers and parents	Reinforces the importance of education
2. What would you say is the correlation between parental involvement and student success, if any?	Knowledge of students' academic progress	Parent involvement is important	Increase in students' confidence	Students achieve academic progress
3. What has been your experience when interacting with parents?	Parents are given teachers cell phone numbers, Parents are given opportunities to volunteer in the classroom, Parents are made aware of school and classroom expectations	Open door policy	Lack of parent support regarding teacher academic/behavioral concerns, Language barrier, cultural differences	Lack of parental involvement

Teachers were asked to define the term parental involvement. Teachers' responses considered students' socioemotional needs as well as their academic needs. Teacher P defined parental involvement as "A parent who is actively involved in a child's well-being, life, social activities, schoolwork, and academic, everything regarding the child." Teacher P continued by sharing that parents need to know who their children's friends are and ask questions to be aware of what is going on in their child's life. Teacher P expressed that parents are truly involved when they are engaged in every aspect of their children's lives. Teachers believed parental involvement extends beyond academics and that parents should be involved in every aspect of their children's lives.

Teacher participants were asked if they believed that parents influenced student academic success. Teacher P believed that there was a definite connection between students' academic progress and parental involvement. Teacher P explained that when parents are involved, children participate more in school. Teacher L stated, "Parents being involved boosts the confidence level and they [students] participate in school." Teacher L further explained that when parents are involved students raise their hands more to respond in class, and demonstrate confidence in their schoolwork. Also, when parents are actively involved they recognize the relationship between school and home. Teachers agreed that students understood the value of education and strived to achieve when parents were involved. Teacher M said "I can tell the first month of school if there is parental involvement by the way the homework comes back, its neater, written in complete sentences." Teacher M continued, "If there is communication at home with the parents, they come with a little more knowledge." Teacher P stated, "When children know their

parents are in, they're on board, we are a team." When parents promote a home-school connection by communicating with teachers and having high expectations for their children it is evident in students' participation in the classroom.

Teachers were asked about their interaction with parents at the target school.

Teacher J responded, "Some of my students' parents are not comfortable because they are Non-English speakers." Teacher J added, "My experience in the inner city urban community has a lot of hands-off parenting. In suburban schools, parents support their children academically." Teacher J shared that she believes that some parents' respect for the teaching profession leads to their thinking that teachers are the end all to end all, or they may be uncomfortable with the educational system. Teacher K shared, "That out of 30 students only 3 parents responded to her beginning of the year welcome letter, those parents' children are the ones who are doing well in her class. Those parents are involved." Teacher L observed that some Spanish speaking parents feel like they can't help in the classroom because they only speak Spanish. Teachers admitted that cultural differences and language barriers may be a barrier to parental involvement at the target school. Teacher Q responded, "For people to get involved you have to give them an incentive." Teacher Q shared that she believes that sometimes African-American parents feel they are owed something because of what has happened to them in the past. They feel entitlement because they have been through a lot. Teachers believed that they have tried to develop a relationship with all of their students' parents, but have not been successful. Teachers' views of the term parental involvement differed from parents' views. However, they agreed that parents have the ability to influence students' academic progress. Teachers

acknowledged that language, efficacy, and social and cultural differences were barriers to parental involvement.



Research Question 3: What does the term parental involvement mean to administrators at Hope Inspired Preparatory School, and how do they view their ability to influence students' academic progress?

*Table 3 - Interview Questions Administrators: Cycle 2 Coding, Sub-Themes, and Broad Themes*

<b>Interview questions</b>	<b>Examples of parental involvement</b>	<b>Cycle 2 coding</b>	<b>Sub-themes</b>	<b>Broad theme</b>
1. How would you define "Parental Involvement"?	Member of PTA Classroom visits	Involved in decision making regarding children's education/State standards	Knowledge of curriculum	Communication with school and teachers
2. What would you say, if any is the correlation between parental involvement and student success?	Parent-teacher communication	Students put forth more effort, Students value education	Less discipline problems	Accountability of students, Parental involvement is important
3. How involved are parents at Hope Inspired Preparatory School?	Attend parent workshops	Less than 50% of parents attend meetings and workshops	Under representation of school population	Lack of parental involvement, An inability to make a home and school connection

Administrators were asked to define parental involvement. Administrator H considered parental involvement "The heart and soul, acknowledging that when they (parents) are on board with students and what their goals and expectations are for academic achievement, students do well." Administrator H explained that when parents interact with students regarding their academic goals and behavior, they do better in school. Administrator F viewed parents involved when they are involved at home and school.

Administrator F stated, “Parents being part of the decision making with their children’s education as well as assisting in the classroom for the progress of their child is involvement.”

Administrators were asked if they believed parental involvement influenced students’ academic progress. Administrator F stated, “I believe students put more effort in their work when they know that their parents will be holding them accountable.”

Administrator G shared that when there is communication between parents and teachers, students show academic progress. Administrator H added, that when parents let students know what their expectations are for school, students do better in school.

When asked about the involvement of parents at Hope Inspired Preparatory School Administrator F replied:

“In my opinion, I don’t think we have the amount of parent involvement that’s needed to make the school run as successfully, as it could. If I were to rate percentage wise, I would say that we have less than 40% involved parents. We have to look at the segment of our population to see why we have disproportionate number of subgroups who are not represented by their parents.”

Administrator F further explained that some parents have jobs that do not allow for time off to attend school meetings, or events. These parents are only paid for hours worked.

Administrator F stated, “We need to reconsider the times in which events are scheduled, because there are parents who cannot afford to take off work to attend during the day.”

Administrator H stated, “We need to have more opportunities to network with them

[parents]. Offering workshops at different times to meet their schedule needs.”

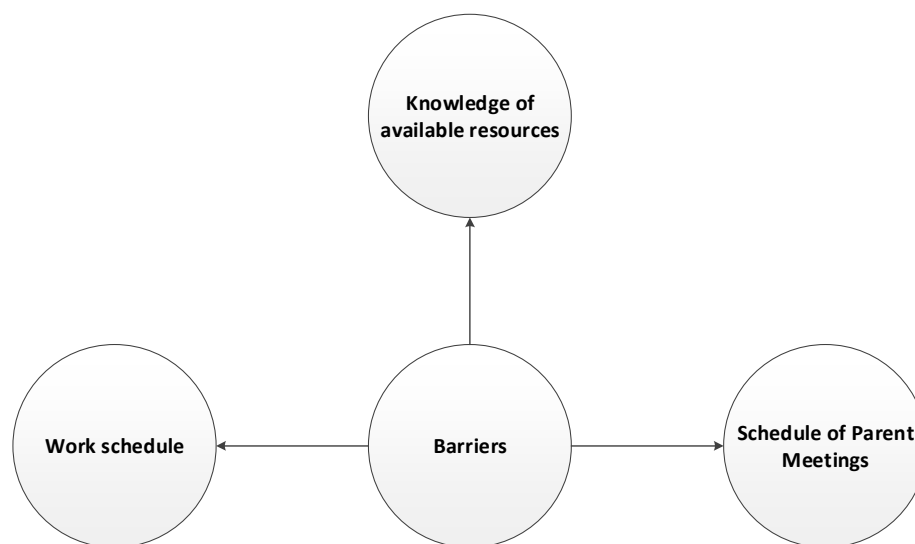
Administrator G admitted:

“Just developing the plan, to get most parents more involved, I think is going to be something. Parents need to be consistent learners, so we need to provide them with resources, community resources. Parents have to be taught themselves, most do not know school expectations.”

Administrators’ view of the term parental involvement differs from parents and teachers.

They agreed that parents have the ability to influence students’ academic progress.

However, administrators struggle with how to develop programs to meet parents’ needs.



*Figure 1.* Barriers to parental involvement.

## **Findings**

Research findings pertaining to the positive influence of parental involvement on students’ academic progress were similar to the existing literature (Al-Zoubi, & Younes, 2015; Elmore & Gaylord-Harden, 2013; Fajaju, Aluede, Ojugo, 2016, Oostdam & Hooge,

2013; Miller, Kuykendall, & Thomas, 2013). Meeting the educational needs of an increasingly global society has become a challenge (Crichlow, 2013). Although there are national mandates to increase parental involvement schools have not been given specific ways to effectively involve parents from culturally diverse backgrounds (Tran, 2013). Consequently, administrators and teachers continue to develop programs which do not consider the needs of the population of parents and students they serve (Kavanagh & Hickey, 2013).

This project may add to the literature by proposing that teachers and administrators consider their efficacy in relationship to cultural norms and how it affects their perception of parental involvement. Their understanding of how diverse cultures perceive parental involvement could inform the development of inclusive parental involvement programs which would increase parents' self-efficacy to support their children's education and may result in increased parental involvement

The research questions queried how the term parental involvement was perceived by stakeholders, and their ability to influence students' academic progress Findings supported the notion of differing meanings for parents, teachers, and administrators regarding the term "parental involvement Themes which emerged from data were parents, teachers, and administrators agreed that parental involvement was a critical component for students' academic progress, and parents have the ability to influence students' academic progress Parents desired to be involved, but the definition of parental involvement is not universal or shared by teachers, administrators, and parents. Parents viewed the term parental involvement as helping with homework, attending parent conferences,

volunteering, and going on field trips. All parent participants expressed concern regarding their ability to support students' academic progress and welcomed the opportunity to attend workshops that may increase their ability to influence their children's academic progress.

Teachers viewed the term parental involvement, as parents not only connecting to the school and their children's teacher, and assisting with homework, but also instilling in their children the importance of education. Teachers believed barriers of language, culture, and efficacy have impeded some parents' ability to influence their children's academic progress. Administrators viewed the term parental involvement as parents being involved in school leadership counsels and attending workshops that would increase their efficacy to support their children academically and developmentally. Administrators were challenged to develop a parental involvement program that will meet the needs of their diverse population. Study findings verified disconnect between the views of stakeholders regarding the term parental involvement, which can impact their ability to influence students' academic progress.

Findings of the study supported the development of professional development/training workshops for parents, teachers, and administrators. Parent workshops may increase parents' efficacy to assist their children with schoolwork and to participate in parent-led school organizations. (Fan, Williams, & Wolters, 2012; Murray, Ackerman-Spain, Williams & Ryley, 2011). Culturally diverse communities may benefit from workshops which consider the role of each stakeholder in the equitable education of children (Ishimaru, 2014). In addition, workshops were developed which engaged teacher and administrators in cultural sensitivity activities that addressed how culture influences

views about parental involvement and teacher-parent communication (O'Donnell, & Kirkner, 2014). Opportunities were given for articulation between parents, teachers, and administrators to promote an effective home-school connection that may increase students' academic progress and parental involvement (Portwood, Brooks-Nelson & Schoeneberger, 2015). When the term parental involvement is defined through collaboration between stakeholders, it may promote students' academic progress. A shared vision may facilitate the development of programs and workshops that may increase parental involvement (Bryan & Henry, 2012).

### **Evidence of Quality**

Data analysis and interpretation is the means by which qualitative research findings establish validity and accuracy (Creswell, 2012). Triangulation provided evidence of quality. Triangulation was achieved by conducting semistructured interviews with three different stakeholders at Hope Inspired Preparatory School relating to how parents, teachers, and administrators perceived the term, parental involvement, and their ability to influence students' academic progress. In qualitative case study research design, using multiple sources strengthens the design (Burns, & Grove, 2005; Ryan-Nicholls & Will 2009; & Yin, 2009). Cross-checking of data from different sources was also a source of triangulation (Merriam, 2009). Member checking supported the quality of findings. Member checking allowed participants to read interview transcripts to ensure accuracy and credibility (Houghton et al., 2013). Participants received a copy of their transcribed audio interview to review for accuracy. There were no reported concerns regarding transcribed interviews.

As a result of study findings, a project was designed which included workshops for parents and educators. According to the literature, (Abdulghani et al., 2014; Eller, Lev, & Feurer, 2014; Chiu, C. H., Liu, P. L., & Kang, S. C., 2014) workshops are a way to meet the individual needs of participants. Workshop and professional development session objectives were the result of themes that emerged during interviews, and observational notations. The goal of parent workshops was to increase parent, teacher, and administrator self-efficacy. The goal of professional development workshops for teachers and administrators was to develop and increase cultural sensitivity, which may lead to a better understanding of how to best involve culturally diverse parents in the education of their children. Workshops and informational sessions may strengthen the partnership between parents, teachers, and administrators which in turn may increase parental involvement and may result in students' academic progress.

Parents are essential to their children's social and educational development (O'Donnell & Kirkner, 2014). When schools develop culturally inclusive programs which build partnerships with schools, parents, and community organizations parental involvement may increase (O'Donnell, & Kirkner, 2014). Collaborative family involvement programs may have a positive influence on children and their families, thereby supporting the educational goals of schools (O'Donnell, & Kirkner, 2014).

## **Conclusion**

An explanation of the qualitative case study design proposed for the research study was presented in Section 2. Because interviews and observational notes were the data source, the qualitative case-study design was an appropriate choice to address the problem

and research questions. Also included in this section was an outline of protocols for participant selection, access to participants, and participant ethical protection. The research study design informed the method of data collection, which consisted of semi-structured interviews which included open-ended questions, and observation notes derived from interview sessions. In this section I identified my role as researcher, my relationship to participants, and my position at the target school site. A description of how data were collected, stored, and protected was detailed, and issues of discrepant cases were addressed to ensure authenticity of findings.

Section 3 is an outline of the project developed from the findings of the project study. This section includes identification of project goals and rationale, and the theoretical framework supported by review of the literature. The professional development/training genre supports themes identified in Section 2.



## Section 3: The Project

### **Introduction**

Although there has been a plethora of research on the influence of parental involvement on the academic progress of children, the dissonance between school and home remains a local concern (Froiland, & Davison, 2014; Richman & Mandara, 2013; Watson, & Bogotch, 2016; Young, Austin, & Growe, 2013). To develop strategies that would increase parental involvement, it was first necessary to examine how parents, teachers, and school administrators perceived the term parental involvement, and their ability to influence students' academic progress (King & Ganotice, 2014).

Analysis of the data indicated that parents, teachers, and administrators agreed that parental involvement was connected to students' academic progress. But their views on the term "parental involvement" differed, as well as their views on their ability to influence students' academic progress. Therefore, I was led to configure a project that would increase parental involvement at the target research site. This section covers the following topics; description and goals, rationale for the design, review of literature, proposed implementation schedule, project evaluation, as well as implications for social change

### **Description and Goals**

This project study addressed the importance of providing parents with the tools needed to help with involvement. Parental involvement programs, in which parents and teachers share responsibility for students' academic progress, are essential for an effective home-school connection (Porumbu & Necsoi, 2013). The project has two objectives: (a) to build parents' self-efficacy and their social and cultural capital so that they could

participate in their children's education. Supporting students at home provides parents opportunities to enrich their children's academic experiences (Gonida & Cortina, 2014). The second objective was (b) to increase the self-efficacy of administrators and teachers in helping to increase parental involvement (and thus better understand the parents and students they serve) by attending cultural sensitivity workshops.

According to Bryan and Henry (2012), shared values or principles was the impetus of a healthy collaboration process for less advantaged families. Collaboration between stakeholders may lead to developing a shared perception of the term parental involvement. Moreover, when parents and teachers work as a team there is an increase in students' academic performance and social development (Kraft, & Dougherty, 2013; Morrison, Storey, & Zhang, 2011). Thus it is necessary that educators, administrators, and parents view the academic progress of students as a collaborative effort (Kraft, & Dougherty, 2013).

Parent Workshop sessions will be held at the target school site. Most parents reside within proximity of the school. Therefore, it will be convenient to conduct sessions there. Parent workshops will be held twice a month. The first session will take place during morning hours and the second session will be held on a Saturday morning. All sessions will be videotaped to allow parents the opportunity to check out DVDs of missed sessions. One of the goals of workshops will be to inform parents of grade level expectations in literacy, math, and science. Parents have the opportunity to increase their self-efficacy by engaging in tasks which may potentially promote learning at home through practical activities such as, reading aloud to their children, grocery shopping, and reading signs while traveling in

the car, bus, or walking. These activities have the potential to develop life-long habits of communication between parent and child that may support academic progress.

Another goal will be to increase parents' social and cultural capital. Parents will participate in sessions which discuss how students learn best. Students learn the following ways: (a) musical/ auditory, (b) spatial/visual, (c) kinesthetic, logical/mathematical, and linguistic/verbal (Pritchard, 2013). Observing how their children learn will inform activities that are connected to skills and content. Parents may be able to apply these concepts to their acquisition of knowledge. This understanding may result in a new way to communicate with teachers and administrators.

Teachers and administrators will participate in professional development sessions which address diversity. I hold a Master's Degree in Multicultural Education; therefore, I will facilitate cultural sensitivity workshops. During these sessions, teachers and administrators will discuss parental involvement definitions and cultural norms regarding parental involvement. The goal of cultural sensitivity workshops is to obtain insight into how culture influences ones' view of the term parental involvement and the ability to influence students' academic progress.

### **Rationale**

The local problem was the lack of parental involvement at Hope Inspired Preparatory School. To find explanations for the perceived lack of parental involvement, I examined the view of the term "parental involvement" and their ability to influence student academic success from the perspectives of teachers, administrators, and parents at Hope Inspired Preparatory School. Findings of the study informed the project. The Professional

Development Project Model was chosen as a result of data analysis which indicated that barriers to parental involvement included parents' lack of understanding of grade level objectives, student expectations, and lack of school communication (Bryan & Henry, 2012, Huang, 2013). This genre will be most effective because it addresses the needs of a target audience through trainings, workshops, and explicit learning outcomes. The target audience for this project is teachers, parents and administrators at Hope Inspired Preparatory School. The goal of the project is to increase parental involvement at the targeted school and increase stakeholders' efficacy to support students' academic progress

**Communication.** Using technology to communicate school events, incentives, and, translation, will increase parents' opportunities to participate in monthly workshops (Strickland, 2015). Effective communication will be a significant part of the proposed study, and may result in increased parental involvement.

**Parent self-efficacy.** The project choice includes grade-specific curriculum sessions to meet the needs of parents. Parents will receive practical and meaningful information. They will be given tools such as (1) how to monitor their children's academic progress, (2) practical ways to assist with homework, and (3) how to maintain the home-school connection. Workshop sessions may increase parent self-efficacy while building parents' ability to support children at home and school.

All parent participants revealed by their responses during interview sessions, that they considered parental involvement important for students' academic progress. Review of literature regarding parental involvement suggested that when parents were knowledgeable,

they were comfortable in school settings, and their involvement increased (Hafizi & Papa, 2012, Turner, 2015).

In addition, developing parents as leaders is a component of the project. Building parents' ability to participate effectively in decisions regarding their children's education at school sites may increase their social and cultural capital (Ferrara, 2015). When parents became leaders they also became role models for the community and other parents (Robbins & Searby, 2013). Subsequently, when minority parents participated in school leadership council teachers' awareness of culture and community was heightened, and there was an increase in home-school connection (Robbins & Searby, 2013).

During this project, parents will be encouraged to participate in school and district programs. Participation on committees and councils would give parents opportunities to be part of decisions about their children's education at the school site. Membership in organizations such as School Site Council and Parent Teacher Association (PTA) provide leadership training opportunities (Cunningham, Kreider, & Ocon, 2012). The information received in training will potentially increase their self-efficacy to contribute to conversations regarding curriculum and budget at the local school site while building their comfort level, and helping parents to further develop a partnership between home and school.

**Teacher and administrator self-efficacy.** Although teaching staff and parents agreed that parental involvement was necessary for students' academic progress, there were variances as to what comprises parental involvement. Analysis of data indicated that administrators, teachers, and parents viewed parental involvement differently. Baek (2010)

stated, that when there is a discussion about the home-school connection, there is dissonance between parents and teachers pertaining to what the parent's position and role should be regarding school. Choosing a project which included three sessions of cultural sensitivity workshops for teachers and administrators may increase their efficacy regarding ways to connect with their culturally diverse population. Workshops may increase awareness of cultural differences regarding parental involvement; thereby developing and strengthening the partnership between parents, schools, and teachers.

Social and Cultural Capital. Epstein (2010) mentioned three conceptual domains whereby children can learn and develop; family, school, and community. Within these three domains parental involvement was the domain in which maximum learning was achieved.

Therefore, the development of this project was prudently constructed to actualize the home-school connection by increasing parents' social/cultural capital, which may increase their involvement and may result in students' academic progress.

### **Conducting the Literature Review**

The topic of parental involvement contained extensive research. I began my search for articles that focused on the components of my project, teacher sensitivity, and parent capacity by utilizing Walden University's online library and Google Scholar. The online databases included: Education Research Complete, peer reviewed scholarly journals, Eric, and Sage. Terms placed in the search engine included but were not limited to *parental involvement and student academic success, parental involvement barriers, parental involvement and schools, teachers and culture, culture sensitivity and teachers, parent efficacy, parent workshops, parent communication, parents, schools, and community,*

*parental involvement and teachers*. To find scholarly studies related to my project, it was necessary to include multiple terms.

### **Review of the Literature**

The project choice was influenced by the work of Vygotsky and the work of Bandura. Vygotsky (1978) maintained that social interaction was necessary for learning to take place. In this regard, providing parents with tools to assist students would equip parents to partner with teachers to meet their children's academic needs. Wood and Bandura (1989) stated that "People's self-beliefs of efficacy also determine their level of motivation" (p. 364). Whereas, acquisition of information may increase parent motivation; knowledge may increase their understanding of educational standards and norms, thereby increasing their ability to participate in decisions relating to their children's education.

Involving parents in the education has been a national and local goal for many years (Young, Austin, & Growe, 2013). Yet, there remain differences in what is considered parental involvement. Findings of the study indicated that teachers considered parents involved when they were involved in every aspect of their children's lives. Administrators considered parents involved when they participated in school-wide events and attended parent workshops. Conversely, parents considered themselves involved when they attend parent conferences and special school events (Shute, Hansen, Underwood, & Razzouk, 2011). Subsequently, parents and teachers do not have a shared definition or view of "parental involvement."

## **Barriers to Parental Involvement**

Parent participants in the study stated that the targeted school site did not consider working parents when scheduling parent workshops and that there was a lack of communication regarding parental involvement expectations. Padak and Rasinski (2010) asserted that families actively participated in schools when there was sufficient communication and when they felt connected, and valued. As Stacer and Perrucci (2013) stated, “The strongest, most consistent effects on parental involvement were linked to parents’ perceived opportunity-to-participate that schools make available to them” (p. 350). Consequently, a project that addresses ways in which administrators, teachers, and parents may create an effective home-school connection is needed.

Review of the Literature supported the claim that parental involvement is promotes students’ academic progress (Galindo & Sheldon, 2012; Mandarakas, 2014). The No Child Behind Act of 2001 instituted policies which mandated schools develop programs which promoted parental involvement; however not all parents were willing, or able to be involved. Schools need to make a concerted effort to include disenfranchised parents’ involvement in schools (Clark, 2014). Increasing parents’ self-efficacy may support their involvement in school and their ability to assist their children at home (Park & Holloway, 2013). The following subsections provide a summary of research on components needed to develop an effective home-school connection.

### **Effective Communication**

Lack of communication between parents, teachers, and administrators at Hope Inspired Preparatory School was a barrier to parental involvement. According to study findings,



parents did not feel as though they received enough information regarding grade level expectations. More importantly, some parents were not able to attend parent meetings because meetings were scheduled during parents' working hours. Park and Holloway (2013) maintained that school outreach efforts predicted parental involvement. When elementary schools intentionally reached out to parents, parents were encouraged to be active in their child's education and parents understood their role in their child's education (Hoover-Dempsey, Ice, & Whitaker, 2009).

Parent meetings and workshops should be scheduled to consider the availability of all parents. To develop an effective home-school connection parental involvement programs/workshops must take into account what parents need. Strickland (2015) stated that an effective parental involvement program maintained consistent communication between school and home. When parents perceived that teachers and schools welcomed their participation, and when parents were aware of school expectations of involvement, they made a decision to be involved (Whitaker & Hoover- Dempsey, 2013). Findings of the study indicated that one of the barriers to parental involvement was communication. Communication between school and home established a supportive environment for parents as well as students and was the foundation of a strong partnership (Padak & Rasinski, 2010). Teachers and administrators used various ways to promote effective and meaningful communication. Technology allowed schools to use different forms of social media, such as email, Twitter, and Facebook to communicate with parents (Padak & Rasinski, 2010). Also, translating written communication for families with limited English,

and providing translators for workshops increased parents' efficacy and their involvement in school activities (Padak & Rasinski, 2010).

According to Akin and Neumann (2013), proactive educators considered parents and the community a part of the academic success team. Consequently, they cultivated partnerships with parents and the community to circumvent the marginalization of students. More importantly, Williamson, Archibald, and McGregor (2010) found that student academic success was a product of shared concerns of community partners. Therefore, effective communication between parents and schools is essential when promoting parental involvement.

### **Parent Workshops**

Parental involvement is a right, responsibility, and a social need (Castro et al., 2015). Without an active home-school connection students most likely will not attain academic progress (Castro et al., 2015). Families need to collaborate with schools by monitoring students' progress, and by supporting students' learning at home (Sylaj, 2013). Findings of the study indicated that parents were not comfortable assisting their children with homework, were not aware of grade-level expectations, or meaningful ways to engage with their children at home. Parent workshops will increase parents' understanding of grade-level curriculum, and how they can best support the academic progress of their children.

Bolivar and Chrispeel (2011) observed that when parents were given explicit information, interacted with other parents, educators, and community members regarding educational systems, parents' efficacy increased. Providing parents with guidance

regarding how to and what to communicate to children who were experiencing challenges in school, parents maintained a positive learning experience at home (Fan, Williams, & Wolters, 2012). These interactions may result in increased use of school and community resources to support children academically as well as socially.

Because some parents did not understand how children were evaluated and assessed, they did not monitor their children's academic progress (Deslandes & Rivard, 2013). Portwood, Brooks-Nelson, and Schoeneberger (2015) evaluated Parent University, a parent engagement program designed to engage traditionally underserved parents. Results of their evaluation indicated that students' school performance increased when parents attended workshops that connected to academic outcomes. Workshops that integrated data were a way to improve and support effective parental involvement (Portwood, Brooks-Nelson, & Schoeneberger, 2015). Parents were empowered when workshops built their knowledge of evaluation and learning (Murray, Ackerman-Spain, Williams, & Ryley, 2011). When schools planned meetings that regarded parents as a valued part of the educational system, parents maintained the home-school connection (Hafizi & Papa, 2012).

Building parents' self-efficacy to participate in decisions in relation to school budgets and curriculum could be another benefit of parent workshops. Parents' understanding of academic goals may allow them to contribute to conversations related to choosing curricula. Their participation in decisions regarding education becomes a source of pride for students, and students gain a positive perspective of school (Hafizi & Papa, 2012). Moreover, Cunningham, Kreider, and Ocon (2012) found that when parents received training, they extended their involvement in educational activities beyond school-

based activities and decision-making. They became aware and involved in entities which influenced education on a broader scale. The parent workshops that I propose may empower parents to influence students' academic goals and may increase their ability to participate in school-wide and district-wide educational policy making processes.

### **Cultural Sensitivity Workshops**

Differences in views regarding the term parental involvement of parents, schools, and educators were a barrier to parental involvement (Vincent, 2013). Instruction in teacher education courses regarding diversity often dealt with ensuring that participants were knowledgeable about nondiscrimination laws and policies, but did not lead to competency in working with diverse groups of people (Frisby, 2013; Rubaii & Calrusse, 2014). Cultural awareness is acceptance and understanding of one's cultural heritage and how it affects one's behavior, worldview, and the impact it has on others (Rubaii, & Calrusse, 2014).

Our society is becoming increasingly globalized, and interactions between different cultures are resulting in cultural misunderstandings (Aylett et al., 2014). To promote parental involvement, administrators and teachers need to be culturally aware, so that they may be culturally responsive. Findings of the study indicated that parental involvement programs at Hope Inspired Preparatory School did not consider working parents, needs of parents, and were not culturally inclusive. When schools were culturally responsive parental involvement strategies reflected the student body and strived to form effective home-school connections (Gonzalez & Jackson, 2013). A result of having both cultural awareness and knowledge is the ability to communicate effectively with others, mutual respect for others, empathy for others, and capacity to trust individuals who are different

from you (Rice & Matthews, 2012; Thapa, Cohen, Guffey, & Higgins-D'Alessandro, 2013). These components may help create an environment of collaboration and mutual respect among parents, teachers, and administrators. Trust is crucial for group interactions to be successful (Bolivar & Chrispeels, 2011). Therefore, Cultural Sensitivity Workshops may address misconceptions and beliefs educators have regarding parents they may consider uninvolved parents.

Chiner, Cardona-Molto, and Puerta (2015) maintained that teachers need to recognize that there is a difference between their personal and professional beliefs about diversity. Schools and educators view parents as a homogeneous group (Shah, & Donato, 2012). An understanding of cultural differences can be a way to support parents who wished to be a part of their children's education, and was an important first step toward closing the achievement gap (Suizzo et al., 2014). If schools are sincere about parental involvement they must value and legitimize parents' contributions (Wallace, 2013). Cultural sensitivity workshops may give educators opportunities to learn about different cultures, and may encourage educators and administrators to value the diversity of cultures represented at Hope Inspired Preparatory School (Esteban-Guitart & Moll, 2013; Figueroa, 2011).

Because parent input is essential in developing an effective definition of parental involvement, cultural sensitivity workshops will conclude with parents and educators collaborating and developing a shared definition/view of parental involvement (Young, Austin, & Growe, 2013). This proposed project may promote the home-school connection by increasing teachers and administrators' efficacy to develop a view of the term parental

involvement which is inclusive of parents' cultures and beliefs, as well as teacher and school expectations. Also this project may increase parents' self-efficacy to influence their children's academic progress.

### **Project Description**

The project will include professional development opportunities for teachers and administrators. The project will also include workshops that will provide support for parents. According to findings parents experienced challenges supporting the academic goals of their children. The purpose of workshops and professional development sessions is to increase parental involvement at the targeted school site. In addition, workshop components may increase parental involvement and promote student academic process by increasing parent self-efficacy, social and cultural capital.

One of the barriers to parental involvement at the target school was the lack of communication. To facilitate parent workshop participation and to address the need for timely communication, there was a need to change workshop schedules and how times were communicated to parents. To increase parental involvement, parents will receive notification of workshops at least two weeks in advance. Communication will be disseminated in three ways, telephone, fliers, and school marquee. Flyers will be sent home by students, school marquee will display meeting times and dates, and telephone reminder messages will be sent three days before workshop meetings. All communication will be sent in Spanish and English.

Workshops for specific grade levels will take place twice a month for the duration of the school year (August 2016 - May 2017) excluding holidays. For example,

kindergarten and grade 1 workshops will be held the first week of each month. Parents wanted a time when they could attend workshops. Therefore, sessions will take place one-week day and will be repeated the following Saturday. Grades 2 and 3 workshops will be combined, and grades fourth and fifth workshops will be combined. Grade six is considered middle school, so their workshops will not be combined with another grade level. All workshop sessions will be audiotaped. Workshop times and weekdays will be determined by parent preferences as indicated on the workshop preference survey.

Workshops will be facilitated by grade-level teacher leaders in Spanish and English. Topics will include grade-level specific curriculum standards, student learning style models, as well as ways in which parents may become involved school-wide (Appendix A). Parents will also receive a list of resources. The list will include community resources, such as tutoring opportunities to assist students, and community events. Parents will engage in grade-level ‘make and take activities’. These activities allow parents to experience hands on grade-level activities that may increase their understanding of learning goals. Sessions will allow parents opportunities to ask questions and suggest topics of interest and concern.

Cultural sensitivity workshops will be conducted once a month for three consecutive months. Approximate dates for workshop sessions are August 2016- November 2016. Workshop Participants will be teachers, administrators and school personnel who interact with parents. I have a Master’s Degree in Multicultural Education, Therefore I am qualified to conduct these workshops. Workshops will address cultural norms, include discussions about parental involvement definitions, teacher expectations,

and ways to create an effective home-school connection. Teachers and administrators will be asked to complete an online evaluation after the last workshop (see Appendix A).

### **Potential Resources and Existing Support**

Potential resources for the implementation of effective communication are two community representatives who are present at the target school site. They will assist with preparation of flyers and with recording the Connect Ed phone reminders. Because teachers expressed a desire to connect with parents, they will support parent workshops and volunteer to facilitate workshops for specific grade levels.

The target school also has a Parent Teacher Association (PTA). Despite an active campaign to recruit members, they are not supported by many parents at the targeted school. I believe they would support an effort to increase parental involvement and can use workshops as an opportunity to provide parents with information regarding the role of the PTA at the target school.

Also, school administrators should support parent workshops and educator Cultural Sensitivity Workshops. They expressed a desire to better the relationship between teachers and parents. These workshops could open dialogue that may result in a better understanding of how cultural norms shape the definition of parental involvement.

### **Proposal for Implementation and Timetable**

Data derived from research findings indicated that working parents were concerned about the lack of consideration for their work schedules when planning parent workshops. Therefore, during the first week of school a survey will be sent to parents regarding convenient times and days for parent workshops. I will meet with the principal to discuss



cultural sensitivity workshops times and schedules. Notifications will be placed in teachers' and administrators' school mailboxes and in the school's weekly bulletin. Ideally, parent workshops will begin August, 2016, after summer break, and will end May, 2017. The first session of each workshop will be an overview of workshop expectations and purpose and will conclude with a question and answer session.

### **Roles and Responsibilities**

My role will be workshop facilitator for the cultural sensitivity workshop. I will provide relevant literature, videos, and data to support the need for cultural awareness, as well as facilitate discussion. The expectation is that educators will engage in meaningful dialogue regarding the need to understand cultural definitions of parental involvement.

Parent workshops will be facilitated by teacher leaders. Teacher leaders will be responsible for workshop topics and materials. Combined grade level teacher leaders will collaborate to maintain consistency in workshop topics and goals. Community Representatives will be responsible for disseminating timely communication in connection with parent workshop times and days. Representatives will create flyers, Connect Ed messages, and provide information on the school marquee regarding parent workshop times and dates. The principal, or designee, will be responsible for making certain that parent workshop dates and times are placed on the school calendar and website.

### **Project Evaluation Plan**

Parents will sign-in at each session. Sign-in sheets, as well as CD check-out logs, will be used to evaluate parental involvement in workshops. Also, PTA officials will be asked to monitor attendance at their meetings and determine whether there has been an

increase in parent attendance at meetings. In addition, Community Representatives will monitor parental involvement school-wide. For example, more parents attending School Site Council meetings, more parents requesting forms that will allow them to assist in the classroom. I will collect sign-in sheets and confer with teachers to determine if they have observed an increase in parental involvement in their classrooms, with homework, and increased communication between themselves and parents. These forms of evaluation will determine the effectiveness of workshops. According to Henry, Smith, Kershaw, and Zulli, (2013) a program's effectiveness can be determined by using outcome based evaluations. The goal of parent workshops is to increase parent self-efficacy to be active participants in their children's education. Monitoring parents' participation in workshops, school-wide activities, and teacher interaction would measure an increase in parental involvement at school and the home-school connection. The willingness of parents to participate on school committees and in decision-making forums will measure parent self-efficacy and attained social and cultural capital.

Cultural sensitivity workshops will be evaluated using self-assessments to determine workshop success. Retrospective self-assessments are useful in examining educator workshop effectiveness. This process asks participants to "look back" and assess their level of understanding and knowledge before workshop sessions. Self-reflection is a way to identify prejudices and assumptions which may be a product of a person's cultural background (Furman, 2012; Mandarakas, 2014). At the conclusion of each workshop session, teachers and administrators will be asked to complete a written evaluation. The evaluation will give them an opportunity to express their thoughts about workshop content,

as well as paradigm shifts in their definition of parental involvement. Moreover, teachers and administrators may indicate ways in which they intend to apply their new understanding of cultural norms in the classroom, and when interacting with parents school-wide.

At the conclusion of the project, I will follow-up with teachers and administrators to discuss parent workshop outcomes and teacher workshop outcomes. The effectiveness of workshops will determine whether or not workshops continue at the school site. If they are continued, collaboration will continue between teacher leaders, administrators, and community representatives.

### **Project Implications**

#### **Local Community**

Parents, teachers, and administrators agreed that student academic success was connected to the home-school connection. Olmstead (2013) suggested that there were two forms of parental involvement reactive and proactive Parents who attended meetings, family activities and volunteered were considered reactive. On the other hand, parents who helped with homework were informed about school events and monitored their child's academic progress were considered proactive (Olmstead, 2013). Ideally, effective parental involvement would include both reactive and proactive involvement. The implementation of workshops will potentially increase parents' ability to be proactive and reactive Parcel, Dufur, and Zito (2010) stated that parental involvement programs which took into consideration disparities based on race, ethnicity, and culture between parents, children,

and school, supported academic achievement and provided parents school social capital needed to be involved.

Participation in cultural sensitivity workshops have implications for change in behaviors of teachers and administrators in school settings. Workshops may change how teachers and administrators view and interact with parents. When teachers and administrators understand ways diverse cultural norms affect definitions of parental involvement, they may be inclusive and respectful of cultural norms, which may result in a positive influence on parents' social experiences at school (Parcel et al., 2010). Therefore, an effective home-school connection will benefit all stakeholders, parents, students, teachers, and school administrators

### **Far-Reaching**

The effects of sensitivity workshops for educators and grade-level workshops for parents may produce positive social change by defining effective parental involvement. Parcel, Dufur, and Zito (2010) observed that when parents experienced an increase in school capital, there was an increase in social adjustments and academic outcomes. Parents were empowered: (a) when their contributions are valued by teachers, (b) when they are invited into the school, (c) when teachers demonstrated teaching strategies, (d) when they are allowed to volunteer in their children's classrooms, and (e) when teachers motivated parents by creating opportunities for parent participation in their children's education (Lewis, Kim, & Bey, 2011). Monthly communication between teachers and parents may transcend the assumption that parents may have about their ability to assist their children with schoolwork. Also, teachers may perhaps gain an understanding of how culture shapes

ones' definition of social norms, specifically parental involvement. Teachers may view parents' involvement differently and see parents as capable collaborators. More importantly, the triad of school, student, and teacher will be strengthened through the home-school connection.

### **Conclusion**

Addressing the role of parents in their child's education is of concern in the broad educational context, as well as in the local setting. Questions that guided this study examined stakeholders' views of the term "parental involvement". Findings indicated that teachers, administrators, and parents viewed how the term, parental involvement, differently. The study also examined what parents considered barriers to parental involvement. Findings confirmed what previous research studies have reported. Disparity in the attainment of social/cultural capital and the misinterpretation of diverse cultural norms were causes for communication failure between teachers, school, and parents. The failure to communicate prevented students from benefiting from the collaboration between teachers and parents. Understanding how culture influences parents' interactions with school and teachers may result in an inclusive view of parental involvement which values contributions of all stakeholders.

Workshop session components encourage participants to reflect on self to understand others. Teachers and administrators may apply their new understanding of cultural norms when engaging and collaborating with parents. Providing support for parents through workshops which not only model academic strategies but include

discussions relating to teacher and school expectations, and learning styles may promote partnership and strengthen the connection between school and home.

Section 3 discussed what research maintained was necessary for effective parent workshops and effective cultural sensitivity workshops. This section also included how workshops would be implemented. Section 4 includes the strengths and limitations of the study, recommendations for implementing workshops, and my reflections on the project.

## Section 4: Reflections and Conclusions

### **Introduction**

This section discusses strengths and limitations of the project. The following sections are included: (a) reflections of scholarship, (b) project development, (c) evaluation of parent workshops, (d) cultural sensitivity workshops, (e) leadership and change and (f) an introspective analysis of self as practitioner and project developer. Concluding this section is a discussion regarding potential impact on social change, direction for future research.

### **Project Strengths and Limitations**

#### **Project Strengths**

This project has the following strengths: (a) the topics reflect what parents stated were barriers to parental involvement. Attending workshops developed for parents will give parents information on curriculum, grade-level standards, teacher expectations, student evaluations, and effective ways they can influence their children's academic progress. (b) cultural sensitivity workshops. These workshops may provide teachers with a new lens with which to view parents' participation in education, as well as an introspective look into their own cultural beliefs about parental involvement. Teacher workshops may promote discussion among teachers about their view of the term "parental involvement." Discussions, coupled with research that discusses how culture influences parents' interactions with teachers and schools, may provide insight into parental involvement practices. When parents understand the expectations of the school and its teachers, and when teachers understand how culture defines parental involvement, there may be an

opportunity for collaboration between parents and teachers to craft a shared vision for students' academic progress.

There are limitations that may affect the project. Scheduling parent workshops on days that will accommodate most parents and that will allow for maximum participation may be a challenge. In addition, teacher leaders will need time to prepare grade-specific activities for parent workshops. Also, teachers will need money to provide materials for workshop activities.

Another limitation to the project is that attendance at teacher workshops is voluntary. According to union policies workshop attendance cannot be mandated. Therefore, teachers will have to commit to remaining after school hours to discuss openly ways in which teacher beliefs and school culture affect their perception of parental involvement. Teachers are often overwhelmed with demands of teaching and may opt not to participate in workshop sessions. Their non-participation may impede progress toward improving the school-home connection.

### **Recommendations for Remediation of Limitations**

A recommendation for scheduling parent workshops that may not conflict with school activities is to present parents with available times and days for workshops in the form of a survey. Responses will indicate best times and days to schedule workshops. In order to compensate teacher leaders, the principal may offer teacher leaders a stipend for prep time before school, or after school hours.

Regarding funding for workshop materials, I would recommend that the principal include materials for workshops in the school's budget. To encourage teacher participation



in workshops, sessions may be scheduled once a month on a day agreed upon by teachers. To promote open discussion in workshop sessions, facilitators could set session norms regarding discussion protocols. This may lower the affective filter and allow teachers to speak freely regarding their perceptions. Also, designing sessions that are interactive, relevant, and providing snacks may promote teacher participation.

### **Recommendations for Alternative Approaches**

Promoting the home-school connection may also be achieved by incorporating technology. Giving parents opportunities to access webinars that speak to the importance of parental involvement and the various ways they may become involved will create a community of learners among parents. Also, another alternative approach would be combined workshops. Workshops where parents and teachers engage in learning together will build a strong partnership between home and school.

An alternative approach to culture sensitivity workshops would be district professional development sessions on culture sensitivity. The problem that exists at the targeted school site is not unique. Researchers have observed that lack of parental involvement persisted from kindergarten through high school (Galindo & Sheldon, 2012). Consequently, it would be prudent for school districts to invest in discourse that may potentially lead to an understanding of how culture of both teachers and parents affect the definition of parental involvement. District professional development sessions may result in authentic inclusion of parents in the education of their children, and may bring about an increase in student academic achievement.

## **Scholarship, Project Development and Evaluation, and Leadership and Change**

### **Scholarship**

Oliver (2010) defined scholarship as “the pursuit of transformational truth grounded in the pursuit to improve the human condition through new understandings gained from looking at ourselves and the world differently” (p. 27). “Scholarship properly communicated and critiqued serves as the building blocks for knowledge growth in a field” (Shulman, 1998, p.5). My researches began with reading peer-reviewed and seminal works of scholars who have conducted studies, collected and analyzed data, and have presented findings on the topic. During the process of developing this project I learned through research the varied perspectives regarding my topic of study. As I delved into the subject of parents, teachers, and schooling I became cognizant of the plethora of information relating to parental involvement. Conversely, I also realized that although extensively studied, stakeholders are not definitive regarding effective modes of parental involvement that may increase students’ academic progress. Thus, development of a project that speaks to needs of parents and educators was warranted. Accessing peer reviewed, and seminal scholarly literature was the building blocks for my project.

One of the tenets of the scholarship of teaching and learning is professionalism. In my profession as an educator I am a perpetual scholar. I am responsible to discover, to connect, to apply, and teach (Oliver, 2010). During the process of examining the definition of parental involvement, social and cultural capital, self-efficacy, and the systemic exclusion of minority parents, I discovered disconnect between home and school. The project I proposed may potentially bridge the gap between school and home.

**Analysis of Self as Scholar**

Scholars work through integral parts of the research by examining what others have concluded regarding the topic of study (Anderson & Gold, 2015). In addition, a scholar is reflective during the research process, has a strong sense of self and continues to seek answers long after the research project has taken place (Anderson & Gold, 2015). I have researched extensively to answer the questions presented in my study. In doing so, I have examined what others have written regarding my topic. I now have a deeper understanding of phenomena that is complexed and perplexing. I now realize the value of questioning, and probing for answers to questions that may bring about societal changes. Therefore, I will continue to examine areas of education that will inform my ability and increase my capacity to be an effective educator and practitioner.

**Analysis of Self as Practitioner**

The practitioner who is challenged by a situation in an educational situation seeks to delve beneath the surface of the problem to find reasons for the challenging situation (Lawrence & Murray, 2013). The failure to connect with an essential component of students' education was a concern. While researching how the term, parental involvement, and parents' role in students' academic progress, I learned that my topic has been widely researched, but still remains worthy of further research. In addition, extensively researching the topic gave me a better understanding of how differences in roles and cultural ideologies influence how the term, parental involvement, how personal involvement is perceived. This new understanding has given me insight into the intentions of the parents of the students I serve, and how to effectively involve parents in the education of children.

### **Analysis of Self as Project Developer**

Developing a project that incorporated needs identified in my study took careful planning. Deciding on the genre of the project was not difficult. However, making certain that all aspects of the workshops were feasible and practical took critical thinking and problem solving. Oftentimes plans look doable in theory, but are not practical in practice. For the project to be successful it had to be developed with all participants in mind, teachers, parents, and administrators. Workshop topics needed to include active listening, understanding of participants' needs, and value participants' time. After developing the project, I reviewed all components and was satisfied with the outcome.

### **Leadership and Change**

Leadership that brings about change requires the leader to be flexible, intuitive, and inclusive. Being goal-orientated and not respecting the needs of others will hinder progress. To bring about effective change a leader may have to adapt their leadership style to obtain desired results. Leadership styles can be defined as participative, members of the team value involvement, transactional, members of the team are motivated by rewards, or transformational, members of the team value collaboration (Clarke, 2013). When implementing parent workshops the transactional style of leadership may work best to bring about change. Whereas, the transformational style of leadership may be effective when implementing sensitivity workshops for teachers.

When designing workshops for parents and teachers I analyzed what participants stated in their interview sessions as a need. Teachers and administrators needed to be supported by parents. Parents needed better communication between school and home and

support assisting their children's academic progress. Designing workshops that targeted the needs of participants would earn their trust. Weichun, Newman, Miao, and Hooke (2013) maintained that trust is paramount in bringing about change. Participants must view leaders as partners. More importantly, in order to bring about lasting change, participants must believe that there is a shared vision between them and leadership.

### **Reflection on Importance of the Work**

Failure to involve parents in the education of their children was addressed at the national level. In the 2001 No Child Left Behind Act, included a parental involvement component. As a result, school districts nation-wide were mandated to develop comprehensive parent involvement programs to address the problem. Researchers, educators, and policy makers have examined reasons for academic disparities between minority children and white children, and have identified the lack of parent participation in education as a problem that transcends socioeconomic status (Yull, Blitz, & Murray, 2014).

Many states, districts, and schools have made some progress in developing parental involvement programs. Yet, there remains disunity between educators, schools, and families. Educators do not understand the families of the students they serve, and families do not understand their children's school (Epstein, 2010). Through review of the literature I learned that researchers agreed that parents are a necessary component for students' academic progress. However, there is no parental involvement program design that speaks to the needs of all parents and students. Therefore, workshops that addressed the need for shared vision and discussed cultural norms may result in collaboration between school and home regarding a definition of parental involvement that may promote students' academic

progress. Herein lies the importance of the work to develop parent involvement programs that have the potential to promote effective parent, teacher, and school partnerships. Thereby, supporting and promoting equity in education for all parents and students.

### **Implications, Applications, and Directions for Future Research**

There is potential for a profound impact on social change when there is mutual respect between educators and parents regardless of socioeconomic status, ethnicity, or culture. This new appreciation of diverse cultures may manifest in an increase in students' academic progress. When schools and educators value parents as essential participants, children's educational journey there is a potential for increased communication regarding student needs and how parents can influence students academically.

The proposed project may be successful in promoting partnership between teachers, schools, and families. This partnership may potentially address academic needs of students, concerns of educators, and provide parents with tools to assist their children at home. Through partnership a caring community is formed consisting of shared interests and responsibilities. The goal of partnership is to create programs and opportunities for students to succeed now and in the future (Epstein, 2010). Application of strategies learned in parent workshops may increase parents' efficacy in assisting students with homework and their understanding of teacher and school expectations. In addition, teachers may apply their understanding of how parents' culture effects their definition of parental involvement to promote the connection between school and home.

Future research may involve the examination of teacher and parent collaborative workshops. Research may take a close look at how combined workshops influence

students' academic progress, and their perception concerning the value of education. The study may include student interviews as well as monitoring test scores of students whose parents are active participants in collaborative workshops.

### **Conclusion**

This section was an introspective view of learning outcomes. Included in this section were discussions regarding acquired learning pertaining to scholarship, leadership and change, and self as a scholar and practitioner. Also included in this section was discourse on self as a project developer and how the project has the potential to bring about social and systemic change. Implementation of the proposed project may access one of the most valuable assets to education, parents. More importantly, it might allow educators to view cultural diversity as a difference, not a deficit. Understanding parents' participation in their children's education through the lens of the parents' culture and self-efficacy may strengthen the home-school partnership. The strategic transformation of parental involvement programs potentially will promote partnerships between stakeholders, create an effective home-school connection, and support students' academic progress.

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## Appendix A: The Project

## Sample Agenda (K-6)

## PARENT WORKSHOP

Welcome - Principal

Introduction of Grade-Level Teacher Facilitator

Review of grade-level standards for Math and Language Arts

How to use the Hundreds Chart for addition and subtraction

Provide grade level resources for at home reading

Make & Take – Hundreds Chart

Parent tip for the month

Question & Answer

Closing- Principal/ Teacher Leader



Subsequent workshops will include topics relating to developmentally appropriate behavior, modalities of learning, and how to access community resources. Parents will receive information about nutrition, cognitive and social benchmarks. Parents will learn how the different ways children learn. Also, there will be presenters from the Parent Teacher Association, School Site Council, local city council, and community leaders. Representatives will inform parents of ways in which they can extend their involvement beyond the classroom. These forums along with academic support workshops will take place throughout the school year and will encourage parents' participation in workshops as well as demonstrate the support of community leaders, community activists, and stakeholders in educating their children.

The success of workshops and forums will be measured by workshop sign-in sheets. An increase in attendance may indicate that parents find the information valuable and may have invited other parents. Also, success will be measured by an increase in parent participation, according to enrollment cards, in the PTA. Another means of measurement will be parents actively involved in School Site Council meetings, which is the decision-making body of the school. Moreover, success may be measured by an observable increase in parental involvement at the school site by teachers and administrators.

# Cultural Sensitivity Workshop

Cassandra Grady, Facilitator

## What does it mean to be culturally sensitive?

- Cultural sensitivity is generally defined as the awareness of similarities and differences across cultures that influence individuals' values, beliefs, and behavior that are difficult to separate from the learning process.

- Edyman Sato (2015)

## Where do you stand in terms of cultural sensitivity?

- Do you make assumptions?
- Do you have a conscious or unconscious bias?
- Do you form opinions about students or co-workers before really getting to know them?
- Do you have predetermined feelings or notions about a particular culture without truly having an understanding of that culture?

## Activity: Pre-assessment

- What are some of the different cultures in my school? (List three to five on your paper.)
- What characteristics come to mind when I think of each group? (Write a word or two next to each culture on your list.)
- Where did these impressions come from? (TV, family, media, religion, travel, etc.)
- How do I treat people based on these assumptions?



## 3 Minute Discussion



- With your group or someone near you, discuss a time when someone had made an assumption about you. This assumption might have been based on a group you belong to - ethnic, religious, professional, age, gender, or otherwise.

*How did it make you feel?*

## Scenario #1

A sixth grade teacher in New York looks over her new class roster and sees that about half of her students have Asian last names. She says, "Good, a smart class at last."

What bias has she shown? Why are her comments inaccurate and inappropriate?

## Things to Consider

- The teacher is subscribing to the stereotype that all Asian students are smart.
- She is not considering the fact that all students are different intellectually regardless of ethnicity.
- She is also implying that if the students were not Asian that they would not be as intelligent.
- These are dangerous assumptions to make

## Scenario #2

A 4<sup>th</sup> grade teacher is planning the yearly field trip that involves a one-night sleep over. She is confused when the parents of a child from El Salvador refuse to let their child attend.

What should this teacher consider?  
Why might these parents be concerned about this trip?

## Things to Consider

- Is this an uncommon practice in their native country?
- Was there a history of violence or terror in that country that makes parents fearful of sending children to unfamiliar place?
- Would a trip of this nature be against the value system of the native culture?

## Scenario #3

A mother comes to pick up her child from a pre-school class to find her daughter without her shoes. The mother is upset and tells the teacher that she wants her child to keep her shoes on at all times.

What might be the issue here? What should the teacher do?

## Things to Consider

- There are areas of the world where people contract parasites through the feet. Is the parent fearful of this?
- Is it a sign of disrespect in the native country to be without shoes in a school or public place.
- The teacher should take the time to understand the parents concern and be sensitive to the fear or value that is behind this issue.

## Be Aware of Cultural Differences

- Everything we do, regarding time, personal space, body language, voice volume, small talk, eye contact, hygiene, and eating is shaped by our culture.
- When you have a student and/or parent that appears to have a cultural difference take the time to understand the differences.

## Cultural Awareness

- Do not interpret the behavior of others through the eyes of your own culture.
- Do be aware of how much culture affects language acquisition and behavior.



## What Educators Can Do

- Express positive value in whatever appears "foreign" to the native English speaker.
- Demonstrate a positive attitude of new cultures.
- Plan instruction that includes the integration of cultural histories.
- Develop lessons that spark questions, discussions and critical thinking.
- Foster feelings of "being at home"



## In Summary

- Creating a school and/or classroom environment that is accepting, appreciative of differences, and free of stereotypes and judgments will benefit ALL students.
- Knowing how to sensitively communicate with families will foster their confidence in the school system and benefit the student in a variety of ways.

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## Workshop 2- September 2016

## Cultural Sensitivity Workshop 2

An Introduction to Culture

Introduction/Review of Objectives

Ice Breaker

Content Overview: Cultural Descriptors

Activity

Group Discussion of Activity

Closure

By the end of this discussion, participants should be able to:

1. Define the term culture
2. Define herself or himself using cultural descriptors

### Ice Breaker

Each person will name one to five places he or she has lived, and offer one expectation, concern or hope that he or she has for this cultural awareness learning experience.

### Content Overview: Cultural Descriptors

Culture is the system of shared beliefs; values, customs, behaviors, and artifacts that the members of society embrace. Culture is transmitted from generation to generation through learning, a process known as enculturation. Our culture helps to shape and influence our perceptions and behaviors.

Society has assigned many descriptors to assist us in defining our culture. Global, or worldwide descriptors, such as ethnicity, race, nationality, religion and socioeconomic class, or status are broad categories that are often used to help define who we are as cultural beings. Often these terms are used interchangeably, which can lead to confusion. The following will help to distinguish some difference and highlight the similarities in these common cultural descriptors.

Ethnicity refers to a group of people within a larger society who have a common ancestry, memories of a shared historical past, and a cultural focus on one or more symbolic elements that help to define them as people. In other words, one's ethnicity is their membership in a subgroup within an environment dominated by another culture i.e. Italian American, Jewish American, etc. These subgroups can be characterized by religion, language, customs, traditions, physical characteristics, and ancestral origin.

Race is a group of people who are classified together on the bases of a common history, nationality, or geographical location. In other words race is an ethnic group that has assumed biological basis or physical attributes that are believed to be characteristic of that group i.e. hair type and color of the skin. Often times it is difficult to identify one's racial background based on physical characteristics because many people have multiple racial and ethnic backgrounds.

Example to help clarify race and ethnicity: John is a male in his twenties. His skin color is black, his eyes are brown and his hair is tightly woven. For all accounts one might assume that John is African American. However, he was born in Jamaica. John considers his race to be black, and his ethnicity to be Jamaican.

Sue, D. W. & Sue, D. (2003). *Counseling the culturally diverse: Theory and practice* (4th Ed.). New York: John Wiley & Sons.

Cultural identity is not exclusive. People identify themselves in many ways because they belong to many different cultural groups. Cultural identity is important for one's sense of self and in relating to other people. A strong cultural identity can contribute to a person's overall wellbeing. Identifying with a particular culture gives us a feeling of belonging and security. It also provides us with access to social networks, which provide support, shared values and aspiration. These can help break down barriers and build a sense of trust between people—a phenomenon sometimes referred to as social capital—although excessively strong cultural identity can also contribute to barriers between groups. Sometimes minority cultures feel excluded from society if the majority of those in authority obstruct or are intolerant of their cultural practices.

#### Activity - Getting to Know Your Cultural Descriptors

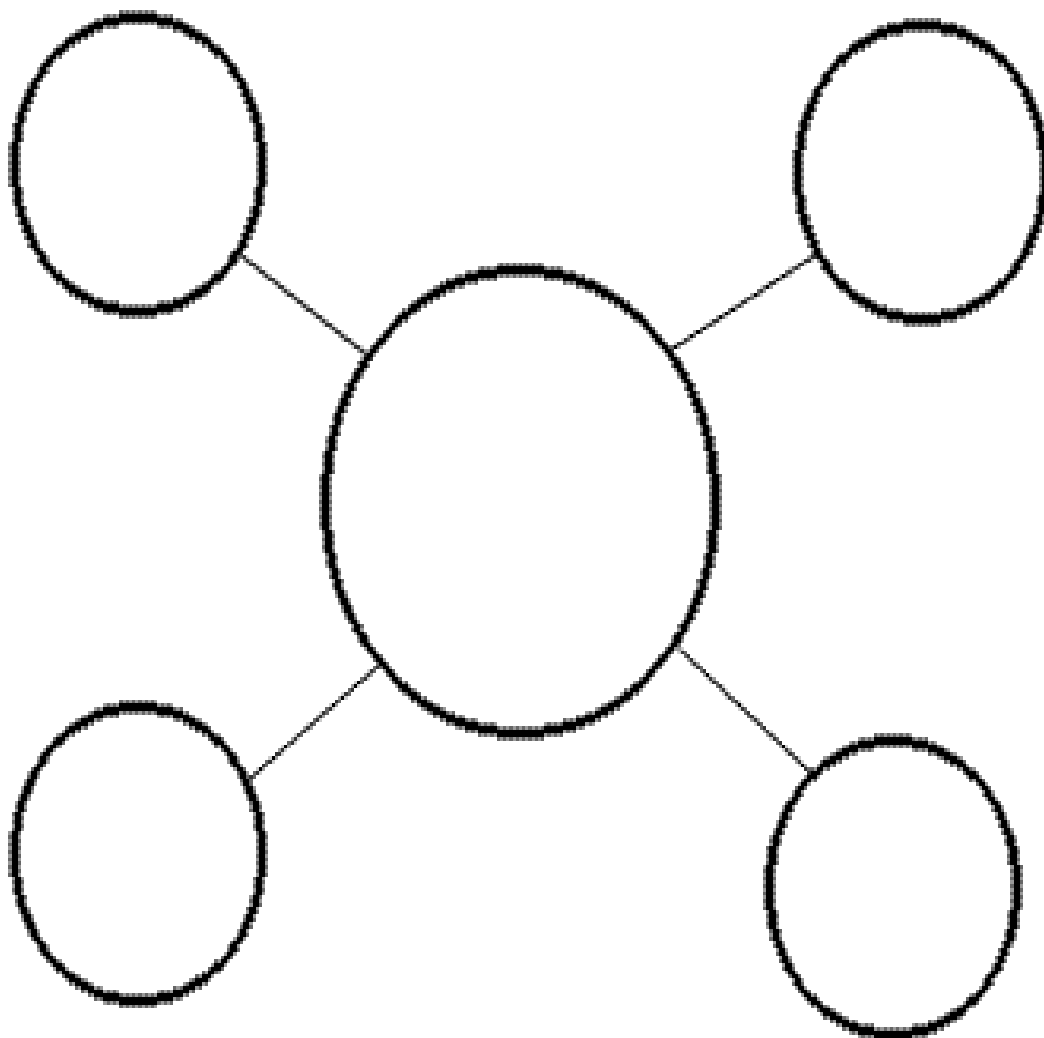
- 1.) Using a mind mapping technique, write your name in the center circle.
- 2.) Fill in each satellite circle with a dimension of the identity that you consider to be among the most important in defining yourself. Some examples that might fit into the satellite circles: female, Jewish, brother, student, Asian American, middle class, etc.
- 3.) Once you have chosen your identifiers, choose a partner. Each partner in a group should discuss a) when they felt most proud to be associated with one of the identifiers they selected and when they felt particularly sad or embarrassed to be associated with an identifier.
- 4.) Share a stereotype you have heard about one dimension of your identity that fails to describe you accurately. Complete the sentence at the bottom of the handout by filling in the blanks: "I am (a/an) \_\_\_\_\_ but I am not a/an \_\_\_\_\_." For example: I am a Christian but I am not conservative.
- 5) Group discussion questions:
  - 1.) How do the dimensions of your identity that you chose as important differ from the dimensions that other people chose?
  - 2.) How does the way we identify ourselves culturally, differ from the way other people identify us?
  - 3.) How do the dimensions of your identity that you chose as important differ from the dimensions other people use to make judgments about you?
  - 4.) How do your "fill in the blank" responses challenge common stereotypes?
  - 5.) Where do stereotypes come from?

6.) How can we eliminate stereotypes?

Activity adapted from What is Culture?

<http://www.sasked.gob.sk.ca/docs/midlsoc/gr8/81topics.htm>

Cultural Descriptor Mapping Handout



Complete the following:

“I am (a/an)\_\_\_\_\_ but I am NOT (a/an)  
\_\_\_\_\_.”

Cultural Sensitivity Workshop #3- October 2016

Diversity: A beautiful mosaic

Introduction/Review of Objective

Ice Breaker

Content Overview: Appreciation verses tolerance, risks and benefits of diversity, incorporating diversity into one’s life

Activity

Group discussion activity – Reflection

Please participate in the workshop evaluation that will be sent to your email.

By the end of this discussion, participants should be able to:

- 1) Understand the difference between tolerance and appreciation
- 2) Explain the benefits and risks of diversity
- 3) Plan ways to incorporate diversity into their own life

### Ice Breaker

Answer the following question:

I appreciate \_\_\_\_\_ and I tolerate \_\_\_\_\_

### Content Overview

Cultural Diversity matters to every single one of us, both professionally and personally. When a group or segment of our population is excluded or oppressed, all of us are denied. For our businesses and communities to not only survive, but to thrive, each of us needs to be aware and sensitive to ALL the members of the community. Our communities are rich with resources. When all segments are respected and utilized, it benefits everyone involved.

What are the benefits diversity?

What are the risks of diversity?

### Activity One: Chain of Diversity

This activity focuses on differences and similarities among people from different groups

- 1.) Pass bundles of colored strips around the room. Take six strips
- 2.) Think of ways in which they are similar to and different from the other people in the room. On each strip write down one similarity and one difference.
- 3.) When completed, you should have written six ways in which you are similar and six ways in which you are different from the other people in the room/
- 4.) Be prepared to share what you have written on two of your strips with the whole group.
- 5.) Start a chain by overlapping and gluing together the ends of one strip. Pass a glue stick to each person. Add all six of your strips to the chain.
- 6.) Continue around the room until all everyone has added their strips to the chain.

Reflection:

Reflect on the many things you have in common, as well as the ways that each person in the group is different

## Cultural Sensitivity Workshop Evaluation

**1. Who is primarily responsible for making sure that a child understands what is being taught in school?**

- Parents
- Schools
- Children

**2. Who is primarily responsible for ensuring good communication between home and school?**

- Parents
- Schools
- Children

**3. Overall, are you satisfied with the teaching experience at Hope Inspired Preparatory School?, neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with it, or dissatisfied with it?**

- Extremely satisfied
- Moderately satisfied
- Slightly satisfied
- Neither satisfied nor dissatisfied
- Slightly dissatisfied



Moderately dissatisfied

Extremely dissatisfied

**4. How much support does the administration at Hope Inspired Elementary**

**School give to the teaching staff?**

A great deal

A lot

A moderate amount

A little

None at all

**5. Did your instructor present the material too quickly, too slowly, or at about the right speed?**

A great deal too quickly

Quite a bit too quickly

Somewhat too quickly

About the right speed

Somewhat too slowly

Quite a bit too slowly

A great deal too slowly

**6. How much support do the parents with children at Hope Inspired****Elementary School give to the teaching staff?**

- A great deal
- A lot
- A moderate amount
- A little
- None at all

**7. Who is primarily responsible for making sure that a child is supported to do****his or her best in school?**

- Parents
- Schools
- Children

**\* 8. How will you apply information from this workshop when interacting with parents?**

## Appendix B: Administrator Interview Questions

**Administrator Interview Questions**

1. How would you define “parental involvement?”
2. How involved are parents at 93<sup>rd</sup> Street School?
3. What would you say, if any is the correlation between parental involvement and student success?
4. What evidence do you have?
5. Is there a need for more parental involvement? If so, what do you think should be in place to meet the need?

## Appendix C: Teacher Interview Questions

**Teacher Interview Questions**

1. How would you define “parental involvement”?
2. Over the last two years have you seen an increase, or decline in parental involvement among the parents of your students?
3. What do you attribute this to?
4. What do you believe is the correlation between parental involvement and student academic success?
5. How are you promoting parental involvement in your classroom? What have been the results?

## Appendix D: Parent Interview Questions

**Parent Interview Questions**

1. How many children do you have?
2. How many of your children attend 93<sup>rd</sup> Street School?
3. How many year(s) have your child/children attended 93<sup>rd</sup> Street Elementary School?
4. How many parent conferences have you attended?
5. Tell me about your relationship with your child's teacher. How often do you speak with him/her?
6. Do you visit your child's classroom? How often? What is the purpose of your visit?
7. How many school activities, (plays, math night, science night etc.), have you attended?
8. How would you define "parental involvement"?
9. Do you believe that parental involvement is important for student success? Explain.
10. Describe ways in which you are involved in your child's academic success.
11. How often do you help your child/children with their homework?
12. Describe your relationship with the principal and school administrators?
13. How would you describe 93<sup>rd</sup> Street School's relationship with parents?
14. What workshops or information sessions would you be interested in attending?  
Why?

## Appendix E: Transcription Sample

- [inaudible 00:00:03] before, why?
- Speaker 2: Good afternoon [redacted] and thank you for allowing me to interview you this afternoon. We have five questions that will guide our discussion and just feel free to answer any way you like. You do know that you're being recorded?
- [redacted] Yes, I do.
- Speaker 2: Okay, thank you. How would you define parental involvement?
- [redacted] For me, parental involvement would be what they do with their children at home and what they do at school, what they are willing to participate in what the children do at school. All-around participation in their children's lives.
- Speaker 2: Over the last two years, have you seen an increase or decline in parental involvement among the parents of your students?
- [redacted]: In my particular class, if I compare this year to last year, I have more participation in terms of when I communicate with them, they do respond. I had 100% as far as my parent conferences, which is different than I've had in the past. I think the fact that they know about the testing is getting them more involved. They are hearing more about it, so they're more concerned about where their children are, so it's been more over the past couple of years.
- Speaker 2: I hear you, thank you. I hear you saying that you think some of it is attributed to the testing. Can you attribute it to anything else besides testing?
- [redacted] I think that because this is my fourth year here, the parents know me now, so they feel comfortable coming up. The children know me because either they've had siblings in my room. It's communication on my part with them, the fact that they feel welcome to the classroom because my door is open. [inaudible 00:01:50] they can knock in, they can come in, so I encourage that because that's how you get them involved is to let them know that this is not a hiding place, this is not a secret. I'm not concerned about them seeing me teach, so they know that they can come. I try to answer the questions when they say, "I'm never seen this before," and try to inform them as best I can.
- Speaker 2: Okay, thank you. What do you believe is the correlation between parental involvement and student academic success?
- [redacted] Wow, I believe that that's an absolute necessity because if the parents aren't involved, the children really don't understand that this is important. But they are involved with their soccer team, but not their school, then the soccer team becomes a top priority and the children might feel that school

is secondary When the parents really put in that time, the effort, the energy and talk to them about it as well that school is important, "This is like your job, one thing you have to do." When they need something, they get it for them, then that is the modeling of what's important. It has to be automatic. Children understand it that's what it is. I see that that's different. Beside the testing and being afraid, the parents are fearful that their children won't succeed, so now that they understand that they're a part of it, then that becomes important as well.

When the children know their parents are in, they're on board, we are a team, then that helps.

Speaker 2: What do you think that fear comes from?

█: For some of the parents, they want [inaudible 00:03:28] in school. For others in the past, the children have had low grades and they've had that maybe recommendation for retention, even if they didn't let them being retained. They know that in society right now, even people who are well educated are struggling. That fear would certainly be from their own personal lives or from the fact that they know what's going on in the society and that their children are going to face this and maybe more.

Speaker 2: Thank you, how are you promoting and you alluded to that in the previous question that you have an open door policy, but how else are you promoting parental involvement in your classroom and what has been the results of your promotion of parental involvement? You said something to that effect though.

█ I think that the fact that I communicate with them in writing, I have their phone numbers, I called them from my cell phone. I'm not hiding from them. I'm not worried about them having my cell phone number. I can change that when it becomes an issue, so that if they have a question, they know they can call me, although I don't have them calling me, but they certainly answer me. I'm involved with their children at recess and at before and after school. I'm also teaching intervention, so they know that I'm on the helping side of having their kids to help, I'm really trying to work to motivate them and to give encouragement to every child, even the ones that are struggling because everybody has a place, they could find something they could do, but you have to work at it and work for it. I think that communication is a big key.

Giving the children the benefit of the doubt in terms of their assignments, not giving them a grade, but the benefit of the doubt.

Speaker 2: What is the benefit of the doubt?

If they don't get it right the first time that it's possible for them to get it right that a failure one time doesn't mean a failure forever and taking the time, being with them individually. I have a [inaudible 00:05:23] in my room, so I can send some of the children who are really struggling to her and then get back to me and having the room setup, so they are on the computer. It mean that they're in contact with your learning at their own speed or their own rate and I do my best to get everybody on the computer three times a week. Also, looking for their strengths and talking to them about their strengths, which means that I will pay attention. Once they know you're paying attention to them, then you get more time when they're paying attention to you because I know that's the difference. With the parents, having real conversation with them, I was talking to somebody yesterday, trying to figure out what it is it is better this year? I realize that when I begin my conversation with them, especially a child who is having challenges, I ask them, "What's going on at home that I need to know about?"

Rather than telling them, "You know I'm having this problem with this child and I don't know what to do," I ask them what's going on. More often than not, they have the same issues at home. Then, I tell them what I'm doing here and asking them what they are doing about it and very often I find [inaudible 00:06:36] hands up and they say, "Can you help me?" I tell them what I think. Sometimes, share what I do with my own kids or what I've done in the past, so they know that I'm on board to really help them. That's the bottom line. Well, they know you're not against them that you will [inaudible 00:06:54] child and that if we work together, we actually complete that whole triangle with the child, the parent and the teacher or a school community, so making sure that they understand is what I believe.

Speaker 2: Hey, thank you so much for sharing. Do you have any questions or concerns for me that, have any questions for me?

[REDACTED]: No, I don't think so. I think maybe [inaudible 00:07:17] questions, I didn't talk about the fact that I believe that campus is open to them, to the parent, so they feel comfortable coming in, which is a start that they could come to the office and if they ask to come [inaudible 00:07:29]. Other than that that's it. Thank you for asking me.

Speaker 2: Okay, thank you for your interview. That concludes our interview for today. You're welcome.



## Appendix F: Cycle 2 Coding

Interview Q. 2		
Participant		Coding
	What would you say, if any is the correlation between parental involvement and student success?	
PA	<p>“I think it’s really important for us, the parents to be involved in the kid’s academic. That’s the way we know how they are doing in classroom. Also, parents need to get more involved so they can help the teacher.”</p>	Support teachers
PB	<p>“Very important. I just don’t have a problem asking the teacher whatever I need to know so I can help my kids.”</p>	Communication with teachers
PC	<p>“I think because I am involved with children’s education, I think they do good in school. I think if more parents did that, I think more students would love school.”</p>	Value education, do well in school
PD	<p>“Very important. T’s most definitely, you need it because the teachers have the majority of the day, but when they come home, we have to piggyback</p>	Communication/supporting teachers

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	On what they're doing and then be in constant contact with the teacher to find out what's going on, so they can work side by side	
PE	"It's very important, but you know having more than one child, they learn differently."	Need support
TF	"I believe students put more effort in their work when they know that their parents will be holding them accountable for it."	Accountability, value education
AG	"...There needs to be a bill passed, where parents are allowed once a month, full day to come in to the school and sit with the child from 8:2:00."	Opportunities for parental involvement
AH	"I would like to see them acknowledging that they are on board with students and what their goals and expectations are for academic achievement	Value education
TI	"I think that when students are doing well, parents take that as a personal reflection of themselves, and rightly so because the children represent you in many ways."	Value education
TJ	"I think there is a correlation, but parents that work multiple, triple jobs don't always have time to be as involved as they want to, but that doesn't	Non-involvement, work barriers, culture of the community

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mean an aunt can't do it, or a sister, or whatever.

My experience in inner city urban community has  
been a lot of hands-off parenting.

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T= Teacher Participant

A= Administrator Participant

P= Parent Participant

## Appendix G: Workshop Evaluation

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Name (optional) \_\_\_\_\_

On a scale of 1-4 (please circle your response)

How relevant was the information presented in today's workshop

- 1- Not relevant
- 2- Somewhat relevant
- 3- Very relevant
- 4- Extremely relevant

How likely are you to implement what you learned?

1. Not likely
2. Somewhat likely
3. Very likely
4. Definitely

What new understanding (s) did you gain from today's workshop? Please be specific in your response.

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What questions do you still have regarding Cultural Sensitivity?

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## Appendix H: Client Non-Disclosure Agreement

### CLIENT NON-DISCLOSURE AGREEMENT

This CLIENT NON-DISCLOSURE AGREEMENT, effective as of the date last set forth below (this "Agreement"), between the undersigned actual or potential client ("Client") and **Rev.com, Inc.** ("Rev.com") is made to confirm the understanding and agreement of the parties hereto with respect to certain proprietary information being provided to Rev.com for the purpose of performing translation, transcription, video captions and other document related services (the "Rev.com Services"). In consideration for the mutual agreements contained herein and the other provisions of this Agreement, the parties hereto agree as follows:

#### 1. Scope of Confidential Information

1.1. "Confidential Information" means, subject to the exceptions set forth in Section 1.2 hereof, any documents or other text supplied by Client to Rev.com for the purpose of performing the Rev.com Services.

1.2. Confidential Information does not include information that: (i) was available to Rev.com prior to disclosure of such information by Client and free of any confidentiality obligation in favor of Client known to Rev.com at the time of disclosure; (ii) is made available to Rev.com from a third party not known by Rev.com at the time of such availability to be subject to a confidentiality obligation in favor of Client; (iii) is made available to third parties by Client without restriction on the disclosure of such information; (iv) is or becomes available to the public other than as a result of disclosure by Rev.com prohibited by this Agreement; or (v) is developed independently by Rev.com or Rev.com's directors, officers, members, partners, employees, consultants, contractors, agents, representatives or affiliated entities (collectively, "Associated Persons").

#### 2. Use and Disclosure of Confidential Information

2.1. Rev.com will keep secret and will not disclose to anyone any of the Confidential Information, other than furnishing the Confidential Information to Associated Persons; provided that such Associated Persons are bound by agreements respecting confidential information. Rev.com will not use any of the Confidential Information for any purpose other than performing the Rev.com Services on Client's behalf. Rev.com will use reasonable care and adequate measures to protect the security of the Confidential Information and to attempt to prevent any Confidential Information from being disclosed or otherwise made available to unauthorized persons or used in violation of the foregoing.

2.2. Notwithstanding anything to the contrary herein, Rev.com is free to make, and this Agreement does not restrict, disclosure of any Confidential Information in a judicial, legislative or administrative investigation or proceeding or to a government or other regulatory agency; provided that, if permitted by law, Rev.com provides to Client prior notice of the intended disclosure and permits Client to intervene

therein to protect its interests in the Confidential Information, and cooperate and assist Client in seeking to obtain such protection.

#### 3. Certain Rights and Limitations

3.1. All Confidential Information will remain the property of Client.

3.2. This Agreement imposes no obligations on either party to purchase, sell, license, transfer or otherwise transact in any products, services or technology.

#### 4. Termination

4.1. Upon Client's written request, Rev.com agrees to use good faith efforts to return promptly to Client any Confidential Information that is in writing and in the possession of Rev.com and to certify the return or destruction of all Confidential Information; provided that Rev.com may retain a summary description of Confidential Information for archival purposes.

4.2. The rights and obligations of the parties hereto contained in Sections 2 (Use and Disclosure of Confidential Information) (subject to Section 2.1), 3 (Certain Rights and Limitations), 4 (Termination), and 5 (Miscellaneous) will survive the return of any tangible embodiments of Confidential Information and any termination of this Agreement.

#### 5. Miscellaneous

5.1. Client and Rev.com are independent contractors and will so represent themselves in all regards. Nothing in this Agreement will be construed to make either party the agent or legal representative of the other or to make the parties partners or joint venturers, and neither party may bind the other in any way. This Agreement will be governed by and construed in accordance with the laws of the State of California governing such agreements, without regard to conflicts-of-law principles. The sole and exclusive jurisdiction and venue for any litigation arising out of this Agreement shall be an appropriate federal or state court located in the State of California, and the parties agree not to raise, and waive, any objections or defenses based upon venue or forum non conveniens. This Agreement (together with any

agreement for the Rev.com Services) contains the complete and exclusive agreement of the parties with respect to the subject matter hereof and supersedes all prior agreements and understandings with respect thereto, whether written or oral, express or implied. If any provision of this Agreement is held invalid, illegal or unenforceable by a court of competent jurisdiction, such will not affect any other provision of this Agreement, which will remain in full force and effect. No amendment or alteration of the terms of this Agreement will be effective unless made in writing and

executed by both parties hereto. A failure or delay in exercising any right in respect to this Agreement will not be presumed to operate as a waiver, and a single or partial exercise of any right will not be presumed to preclude any subsequent or further exercise of that right or the exercise of any other right. Any modification or waiver of any provision of this Agreement will not be effective unless made in writing. Any such waiver will be effective only in the specific instance and for the purpose given.

**IN WITNESS WHEREOF**, the parties have caused this Agreement to be executed below by their duly authorized signatories.

**CLIENT**

**REV.COM, INC.**

Print Name: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

By: \_\_\_\_\_

By: *Cheryl Brown* \_\_\_\_\_

Name:  
Title:  
Date:

Name: Cheryl Brown  
Title: Account Manager  
Date: July 13, 2016

Address for notices to Client:

Address for notices to Rev.com, Inc.:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

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