

The Positive Impact of Parent Involvement on Student
Achievement in a Diverse Community

A Special Project

Presented to

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Masters of Education

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FACULTY APPROVAL

The Positive Impact of Parent Involvement on Student
Achievement in a Diverse Community

Approved for the Faculty

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ABSTRACT

This project was to prove that parents who were knowledgeable in student curriculum would be involved in providing assistance with a child's homework and that child's achievement would improve. The author created a survey to learn what parents were lacking in knowledge about student curriculum. From the results of the survey, the author hosted an informational evening. After the open house the author presented the same survey and compared the results of both to determine if the evening had been successful. The researcher compared test scores of students whose parents had attended parent night to scores of students whose parents had not. The surveys completed showed that parent involvement of parents' who understood the curriculum did have a positive impact on student achievement.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Background for the Project

Student achievement had been an issue in America since the Russians launched Sputnik into space in 1957 and the United States officially became second in the space race. Since then, there had been a continued concern of what American politicians, schools and teachers had done to increase student achievement so that the students of the United States were continuing to remain current with other countries. Continued concern had been evident in the amount of research and studies that had been conducted in the subject area of correlating student success with engagement in academic activities as young as pre-school. In Rebecca Marcon's study, "Moving up the Grades: Relationship between Preschool Model and Later School Success", the researcher showed not only the impact of preschool on a child's future success but the type of preschool model implemented. As predicted and through investigation the finding was a direct link between children's later school achievement and the students' preschool model of influence, (Marcon,2002).

In Washington State the impact of the No Child Left Behind Act had been felt in the schools by the mandatory testing of the Washington Assessment of Student Learning. Although the Washington Assessment of Student Learning had been previously piloted in 1997, the assessment became an even more invaluable tool in the testing of students in Washington, by more closely tracking and monitoring student achievement in the subject areas outlined in No Child Left

Behind. Once assessments, benchmarks and expectations of the Washington Assessment of Student Learning were established, came the inevitable questioning of how to increase students' academic success and to have that success be shown through the test scores of the Washington Assessment of Student Learning. As the question of how to increase students' academic success and to have that success be shown through tests scores was different for different districts within the state, the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, distributed, *The Nine Characteristics of High-Performing Schools: A research-based resource for schools and districts to assist with improving student learning* (2007), in which the document stated, "In a nutshell, school improvement teams must decide what is important in the school to increase student learning, establish processes for implementing what they have determined is most important, monitor to ensure the effectiveness of implementation, and finally reflect and adjust practices as the cycle continues," (Office of Superintendent of Public Schools, p16).

Statement of the Problem

Students' achievement had been assessed through various measures throughout the history of education. Scientifically based researched had become a measure of quality assessments in the educational community. In the subject area of reading, one such scientifically based research program for kindergarten and first grade students that came out was *Readwell*. When researched by the author, the kindergarten small group *Readwell* program was found to have five prelude

units and twenty regular units. When a student completed a unit the child was then tested for accuracy, fluency and comprehension.

At the school to be studied by the researcher, the goal found to be set for kindergarten students was that all students would have completed and passed unit 6 with a strong pass by mid January when the second quarter report card was given to parents. Over the past two years, since kindergarten *Readwell* was implemented at the school studied, 61% of students met the goal of successfully completing and passing unit 6 by 2nd quarter report card in 2006, and 63% of students met the goal of successfully completing and passing unit 6 by 2nd quarter report card in 2007. This data was calculated by and attained from the reading coach of the school that was studied. The problem the school was encountering, was how to increase the student achievement gap of 62%-63% of students meeting the mid year goal of successfully completing and passing *Readwell* unit 6, to 100% of students completing and passing *Readwell* unit 6 by 2nd report card. With all teachers giving direct instruction, being highly qualified and trained by Reading First staff of the *Readwell* program, the question of how to increase student achievement was looked at beyond further training of the staff.

One significant influence that has been studied was the effect that parent participation had on students' success in the classroom. Having worked in a school district with a 74.3% Hispanic population and 37.5% of the population being transitional bilingual as of May 2006 (Washington State Report Card, 2006), brought to mind the questions; How does one increase parent involvement in a school with a diverse population in comparison to the cultural and language differences of that of the staff, to positively impact student

academic achievement, and will showing increase of parent involvement in a student population that is diverse compared to the cultural and language differences of that of the staff at the school, show significant, direct correlation in student academic achievement, such as an increase in the number of students able to successfully complete the *Readwell* unit 6 assessment by the end of the 2nd quarter term?

Purpose of the Project

The purpose of this project was to explore the outside factors that had a direction correlation on the impact of student achievement, and by positively impacting an external factor(s), improve the achievement of a student within the classroom. The major factor considered for this project was the impact of parent involvement. For this research, parent involvement was defined as, a parent, guardian or adult family member living within the home of a school age (5-18 years old) child, that assisted with homework on a regular basis, (two or more hours a school week), attended parent conferences on a regular basis, (one or more a year), and attended a family, community, school function at least once throughout the school year. To measure the impact of parent involvement and guide the research, the following questions were created and answered by the researcher:

1. How does one increase parent involvement in a school with a diverse population in comparison to the cultural and language differences of that of the staff, to positively impact student academic achievement?, and,

2. Will showing increase of parent involvement in a student population that is diverse compared to the cultural and language differences of that of the staff at the school, show significant, direct correlation in student academic achievement?

Delimitations

The study took place in Central Washington with a town population of 5,455 with a rural community total population of approximately 13,000. City facilities include a Library, Aquatic Center, four parks with picnic sites and a museum (currently being developed). The economic base was provided by agricultural related industries (processing, shipping, storage & supplying) with over 200,000 acres of irrigated land under production, all types of seed and vegetable, crops were grown along with large acreage's of soft fruits, (Current News, 2007).

The school where the research took place housed all kindergarten and first grade classrooms for the entire community. The kindergarten population was 163 students with 60% of the kindergarteners having English as a second language and 80.47% of the kindergarteners being on free and reduced lunch. There were eight kindergarten teachers at the school each having between 20 and 21 students. The information stated was collected by the researcher of the paper from the administrative assistant of the school studied, in a verbal conversation, on November 15, 2007. Kindergarteners received 90 minutes of direct reading instruction, per the Reading First grant directives. Forty five minutes of

instruction were whole group instruction where each teacher presented kindergarten *Readwell* instruction in such areas as letter naming, phonemic awareness activities, such as onset and rime, and white board dictation to each teacher's 20 to 21 students, respectively. The remaining 45 minutes of direct reading instruction were given in small group reading where students were put in groups of five to six students based on each student's ability (after taking the *Readwell* placement test, assessing letter naming, letter sounds and basic phonic blending skills), and worked with a teacher or paraprofessional. The students were able to move among the groups as each student's need of instruction changed. The students were able to walk to a different classroom other than a child's homeroom, if a reading group that was more appropriate for an individual child's level was elsewhere. The students received, 2 minutes of letter naming fluency practice prior to the start of kindergarten *Readwell* instruction following 2 more minutes of letter naming fluency practice, within the 45 minutes of small group instruction.

Assumptions

Prior to this study, the students at the school where the study was conducted received half day kindergarten, (2 hours and 45 minutes of school a day), where as the year of this study the students received full day kindergarten, (5 hours and 15 minutes of school a day). However, although the author assumed the extended amount of time would have a positive impact on the level of student achievement, the number of minutes designated to direct reading instruction were the same as the two previous years.

The researcher assumed all teachers were highly qualified and implemented the same quality of direct instruction. All students were placed in appropriate small reading groups based on each student's kindergarten *Readwell* placement exams and on each students continuing need throughout the school year. Students were continuously enrolled and did not have significant absences, (more than 10 in 2 quarters of school).

Further more, the researcher assumed all parents had an equal opportunity to participate in all conferences and seminars given. All parents had an equal opportunity to receive and share verbal and written information, documentation and/or any other form of communication in a language the parent could fluently understand, read and/or speak in.

Research Questions

1. How does one increase parent involvement in a school with a diverse population in comparison to the cultural and language differences of that of the staff, to positively impact student academic achievement?
2. Will showing increase of parent involvement in a student population that is diverse compared to the cultural and language differences of that of the staff at the school, show significant, direct correlation in student academic achievement?

Significance of the Project

By completing this project the author was able to show the significance of understanding the relationship between schools and parent involvement having a

positive impact on student achievement. Therefore, this study increased student achievement and in doing so, created a model for other schools to follow or duplicate to increase student achievement. Increased student achievement at the kindergarten level gave students a solid foundation at the beginning of the students' academic careers and provided the children with a positive start for greater potential.

Procedure

To answer the first research question, "How does one increase parent involvement in a school with a diverse population in comparison to the cultural and language differences of that of the staff, to positively impact student academic achievement?", the author had to first understand what parents of the kindergarten students already knew about parent involvement and wanted to learn. The author created a survey that was given to all parents of kindergarten students during August open house kindergarten conferences. The survey focused primarily on the kindergarten reading program, as the overall object of the project was to increase student achievement in the area of reading. From the results of the survey the researcher learned what the parents knew about the reading program and what the parents needed to learn to better assist the children in reading. With the knowledge of what the parents needed to know to better assist the kindergarteners in reading, a parent kindergarten open house was hosted by the kindergarten teachers. From the survey results, the researcher and colleagues of the researcher conducted the open house forum with a Spanish speaking translator, (based on the language spoken in the homes by many of the parents),

with dialogue and terms that were appropriate in consideration of the educational level of the parents and at a time that was convenient for the parents based on the hours of the local businesses that provided jobs to a majority of the parents. After the open house forum, the parents were asked to once again complete the same survey that the parents had completed at the August open house. The results of the second survey were compared to that of the first. From comparing the results of the surveys, (to determine if parents received information that was useful in assisting the parents in aiding the children with the kindergarten reading work), tracking the parents that filled out both surveys and attended the open house forum, the researcher was able to determine the parents with high levels of parent involvement to the students' 2nd quarter last completed and passed *Readwell* unit. The results of the comparing the *Readwell* unit of the students at mid year to the parents with high levels of parent involvement, then concluded in the results of this study that parent involvement positively impacted student achievement.

Definition of Terms

Brown vs. the Board of Education On May 17, 1954, the United States Supreme Court announced the decision that "separate educational facilities are inherently unequal," (Brown vs. the Board of Education, p1). The decision effectively denied the legal basis for segregation in Kansas and 20 other states with segregated classrooms and would forever change race relations in the United States.

Highly Qualified The No Child Left Behind definition of a highly qualified teacher was one who had met the following three criteria:

- Had earned at least a bachelor's degree.
- Held full state certification.
- Had demonstrated subject matter knowledge and teaching skill in each core academic subjects the teacher was assigned to teach.

(U.S. Department of Education, *No Child Left Behind: A Toolkit for Teachers*, p6)

Reading First The Reading First program focused on putting proven methods of early reading instruction in classrooms. Through Reading First, states and districts received support to apply scientifically based reading research—and the proven instructional and assessment tools consistent with the research—to ensure that all children learned to read well by the end of third grade. The program provided formula grants to states that submitted an approved application. Funds were allocated to states according to the proportion of children age 5 to 17 who resided within the state and who were from families with incomes below the poverty line. (U.S. Department of Education. *Reading First*. p.1)

Scientifically Based Research Scientific merit and good methods alone did not make the best scientific research. The research had to be relevant to the practice and the research had to be significant. The more significant the research, the more people were effected by something, the more severe the issue was that was being effected, obviously the more important the research, (Reyna, 2002).

Title I Title One, an act of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, was a set of programs set up by the United States Department of Education to

distribute funding to schools and school districts with a high percentage of students from low-income families. (Wikipedia. Title 1. p.1)

Acronyms

NCLB: No Child Left Behind

WASL: Washington Assessment of Student Learning

CHAPTER 2

Review of Selected Literature

Introduction

Throughout this study, one significant influence that had been studied was the effect that parent participation had on students' success in the classroom. Having worked in a school district with a 74.3% Hispanic population and 37.5% of the population being Transitional Bilingual as of May 2006 (Washington State Report Card, 2006), brought to mind the questions; How does one increase parent involvement in a school with a diverse population in comparison to the cultural and language differences of that of the staff, to positively impact student academic achievement?, and, Will showing increase of parent involvement in a student population that is diverse compared to the cultural and language differences of that of the staff at the school, show significant, direct correlation in student academic achievement, such as an increase in the number of students able to successfully complete the *Readwell* unit 10 assessment by the end of the 2nd quarter term?

The following research presented broke down the various factors that influenced the variables of this research. The first three subsets of research explored the dynamics of the students' atmosphere. Understanding the school setting that the students were in was essential in being able to understand how to explain to parents the reasoning for the reading program the school had adopted because of Reading First, the dynamics of the *Readwell* program that was adopted, and the structure in which the reading program was carried out, which was a walk to read program.

The last three subsets were a focus on parent involvement and the various factors related to different ways parents were involved. Parent involvement was not only defined differently among various professionals, but within different communities, cultures and economic statuses as well. To create appropriate and valid research tools, such as the surveys presented in this research document, understanding the cultural and ethnic tradition and customs of the parents and students was imperative to the author. By having a greater understanding, the author, was able to have truer and more accurate results.

Reading First

The reason that this paper was written was influenced by the drive of the author's school to succeed in the subject of reading. To understand why the subject of reading was such an important issue in the author's school, the author had to go to the source of why the school had focused so much energy towards reading. The reason for the drive of success in reading was due to a Reading First Grant that the school researched had received. Reading First is a federal education program in the United States mandated under the No Child Left Behind Act and administered by the Department of Education which requires that schools funded by Reading First use "scientifically-based" reading instruction. Program funding is allocated to Title I Schools for "Scientifically based reading Research" and also for hiring coaches, who assist teachers in learning the newest Scientifically Based Research for use in classrooms. Coaches analyze data to drive instruction for individual children in every classroom. Reading First is limited to kindergarten through third-grade classes," (Wikipedia, p.1)

Receiving the Reading First Grant allowed the school researched to have funds available to improve reading in the school, but the grant also made the school accountable. If the school researched had not continued to show significant increase in reading test scores, the school would no longer have been eligible to receive those funds. “The duration of the initial sub-grant is three years with a year to year continuation for up to three additional years without re-competition based on student and implementation performance,” (Office of Superintendent, 2005, p.2). The Washington State Reading First power point continued to state, “At the end of year one of continuation funding 60% of students must have been at benchmark in three out of four grades and at the end of year two of continuation funding 65% students must have been at benchmark in three out of four grades,” (Office of Superintendent, 2005, p.10).

Readwell

As stated by the Reading First Grant, the reading program chosen by a school receiving a grant must have adopted a scientifically based researched reading program. The reading program adopted by the school the author researched for this document was *Readwell*. The *Readwell* program was an appropriate selection based on the high population of second language learners, (60% of the kindergarteners having English as a second language), at the school researched, supported by the Institute of Education Services and the Department of Education that stated, “*Readwell* was found to have potentially positive effects on reading achievement of elementary school English language learner. *Read Well* is a research-based reading curriculum designed to improve student literacy.

This program includes explicit, systematic instruction in English decoding, sustained practice of decoding skills and fluency, and instruction in vocabulary and concepts presented in text. It also provides support for English language learner (ELL) students through scaffolded lesson instruction and oral language priming activities,” (Institute of Education Services, 2006, p.1).

The *Readwell* program was not only beneficial for second language learners, but for all kindergarteners as well, because of the way the program was designed to know where each student was in terms of reading readiness, and allowing each student to move at a reading rate that was best for each child. As stated by Sopris West, “With multiple entry points into the *Readwell* curriculum, each student is assessed and placed into the small group that matches his or her skill level. Ongoing assessment and progress monitoring inform instruction. Daily instruction in phonemic awareness and phonics, vocabulary, reading fluency, and comprehension builds the foundation necessary for students to become lifelong readers,” (Sopris West Education Services – A Cambium Learning Company, p.1). The program also stood out in the respect that stories were given rich cultural and enrichment subjects that allowed students to learn about various subjects such as travel, music, and environment through reading.

Walk to Read

“Walk to Read” was phrase used to describe the format of how the *Readwell* program was implemented at the researched school. Rather than students staying in the homeroom that the students were assigned to, students

were assigned to a room that had the most appropriate reading group available to meet the need of each child.

After all students were assessed by the *Readwell* placement test, a spreadsheet was created of all the units that all of the kindergarten students in the school, were ready to enter. Groups of five to six students having the same placement test score result were created. The groups were based solely on the placement test score rather than the homeroom of the child. Each kindergarten teacher, as well as three reading specialists, took two to three of the groups. Students therefore walked to whatever reading group they were assigned, with whatever teacher had that group, for the small group instruction time of 45 minutes.

Parent Involvement Based on Academic and/or Extracurricular Activities

Parent involvement was a very broad and obscure term to be defined in the research read. In some studies involvement outside of academia was considered tradition. In the United States, traditional activities included activities such as fund raising for events, supporting field trips, supplying tools needed by students for various needs and being a spectator at anything from a band concert to a football game, (Halsey, 2004). Other articles reviewed more directly related research to the various academic involvement of family. When analyzing research by Sy, academic involvement was organized into two categories: managerial and structural. Managerial involvement included direct hands-on practices (e.g., reading with children, participating in school activities and events), while structural involvement included indirect practices, such as exerting

control over the child's home environment (e.g., maintaining rules about after-school time use). The impact of Sy's research was the concept that parent involvement was not always defined as something occurring at the child's school, but perhaps at times and/or even more significantly, in the home. (Sy, S, Rowley, S, & Schulenberg, J. 2007)

Because of the various definitions found throughout the research that were presented throughout this paper in regards to parent involvement, the author found the necessity to define for this document what parent involvement would be defined as. In this document "parent involvement" was therefore defined as a parent, guardian or adult family member living within the home of a school age (5-18 years old) child, that assisted with homework on a regular basis, (two or more hours a school week), attended parent conferences on a regular basis, (one or more a year), and attended a family, community, school function at least once throughout the school year.

Parent Involvement Based on Ethnicity and Culture of Students and Parents

After studying the most current and available research, the understanding that not all cultures and socioeconomic classes defined parent involvement the same became very clear. What a Caucasian, middle class, family may have seen as involved and questioning, may have been considered unconformity to a Mexican American family. In research done, Latinos had a very specific and valid belief for why Latinos did not attend certain school functions, but the parents lack of involvement was not seen as a positive support of the school, but more an attitude of indifference, even by other parents who may have understood

the Latinos point of conforming to the educational systems, (Olivos, 2004). In other cultures, such as Asian cultures, parents would have considered vocalizing opinions about the educational process and/or participating too much rude or inappropriate, much the same way the Latino families would have. In Asian tradition there was a very fine line established between that of a parent's role, and that of a teacher's role. A parent's role was at home, where the teacher's role was at school. The cultural norms of Asians and Mexicans similarly, were readily identified as opposite of European American cultures, where parents' involvement in school activities and governance was not only accepted but encouraged by the teachers and school districts, (Sy, 2007).

Reviewing cultures and understanding what was valued as positive participation and interaction with schools had been critical in realizing the importance in creating this author's own research. When delving deeper into the issues, one found the communication and interactions were not only within the schools, but within the community as well. At times the communications and interactions led to underlying hostility within the community. As Machtinger found, "While many people agree on the crucial role of parents and the community, this seeming unity sometimes disguises differences over the appropriate role for parents and the community," (Machtinger, 2007, p.4). Machtinger elaborated that two different types of involvement were 1. parents being involved through activities, such as fund raising, attending conferences, etc, and 2. parents and the community being the ones that schools were held accountable to. Parents and community were not meant to be just participants in the already established status quo but the activists of change and improvement,

for without parents and community willing to buck the system in such a way, there would have never been Brown vs. Board of Education.

Finally, the cultural perceptions and insights of teachers educating culturally diverse students in the schools had to be taken into consideration. In a study by Debra DeCastro-Ambrosetti and Grace Cho, of 160, (91 (57%) were female and 69 (43%) were male. The ethnic distribution of the respondents was 59% majority and 41% minority ethnic groups.), secondary education pre-service and in-service teacher enrolled in education classes (Two were multicultural education courses and three were courses that had family involvement strategies, as well as diversity components embedded within the curricula), 73% of the respondents disagreed with the survey item "Minority parents from low socio-economic backgrounds tend to place great value on education." In addition, 83% of the participants disagreed with the survey item, "A major reason for the pattern of low academic achievement among poor minorities is the structure and values of schools, not the home." (DeCastro-Ambrosetti & Cho, 2005)

Parent Involvement Based on Students' Grade Levels

Parent involvement had proven to differ not only based on the variables of type of culture, but based on the grade level of the students of the parents as well. Participation in school activities had been proven to be higher at the elementary level. With higher levels of parent involvement, had come a greater success rate of students passing with more competencies. In a study of elementary schools, Sheldon (2005) found that schools with stronger partnership programs tended to have had more students passing standardized state achievement tests. The analyses showed that overall partnership program quality consisted of two

components: (1) the degree to which schools organized, planned, and implemented the programs and (2) the degree to which schools reached out to family and community partners, (Sheldon, 2005). The most valuable concept taken away from Sheldon's research was the fact that parental involvement had made a difference, but parental involvement must have been measured by quality and type to have been deemed effective in the direct correlation of that involvement with student achievement in academic areas.

Summary

After review of the six subsets of literature, the key areas of focus when conducting the research for this document were:

1. The involvement of parent participation within the school activities must have been designated and well defined to show growth in an area tested.
2. Students and parents culture contributed to the definition of involvement. The understanding of the involvement by teachers was considered valuable as well.
3. Parent participation at various grade levels impacted the success of student achievement. However, the quantity and quality of participation was evaluated, as a considerable factor in any given program implemented, when a proven correlation of parent involvement to students' academic achievement was proven.

CHAPTER 3

Methodology and Treatment of Data

Introduction

All kindergarten students at the focus study school received the same amount of direction instruction time in the kindergarten *Readwell* program, which was 45 minutes in a small group of no more than six students. During the small group reading time, the students received, two minutes of letter naming fluency practice prior to the start of kindergarten *Readwell* instruction following two more minutes of letter naming fluency practice, within the 45 minutes of small group instruction. During the 45 minutes the students worked on letter naming, sound identification, smooth and bumpy blending, phonemic awareness, accuracy and fluency skills built within the small group kindergarten *Readwell* program. Homework was sent home with each child every night that was to take three to five minutes. The homework assignment was a solo story from the *Readwell* unit that each student was currently studying in, or a previous unit, if the goal of the homework was to increase fluency.

The student was to have a parent or adult listen as the student read the *Readwell* homework each night. During the reading, the parent or adult was to:

1. Encourage the student to blend words the child struggled with
2. Make instantaneous corrections to errors and
3. Sign the student's small group reading homework log

Therefore, the objective of this research was to survey parents' knowledge in regards to the parents' understanding of the students' daily homework and then conduct a parent night to inform parents based on the information received in the

survey. The question asked by the researcher was, would parents that understood the students' homework be able to help students and therefore make the children more likely to succeed?

Methodology

The research done for this work was qualitative. Surveys were given to all kindergarten parents of the 163 registered kindergarten students, in which the parents were asked to state opinions on a scale rating 1 – 5, of Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree, as well as a column for, “I don't know”, in August at the first kindergarten parent/teacher conferences. [See page 54.] The researcher then took the answers to the questions on the survey and found that 34% of parents that completed the survey did not agree to understanding, strongly agree to understanding or know what the students' reading homework was. The researcher also found that 50% of parents that completed the survey did not agree to understanding, strongly agree to understanding or know what the students' would be graded on in reading for the kindergarten report card.

A parent night was held in October prior to the walk to read, small reading group program, beginning in the classrooms. [See page 56.] Because of the answers from the first survey the researcher knew that explaining the reading program and the homework from the reading program to the parents was imperative. From the responses gathered on the survey the researcher found providing all information verbal and written, to the parents in English and Spanish throughout the course of the parent night was invaluable. Because of the large population of parents with small children, free daycare was provided for all children in a separate classroom near the gym where the parent night was held.

To make the atmosphere welcoming, snacks and door prizes were offered to parents in attendance.

Because 34% of parents that completed the survey did not agree to understanding, strongly agree to understanding or know what the students' reading homework was and 50% of parents that completed the survey did not agree to understanding, strongly agree to understanding or know what the students' would be graded on in reading for the kindergarten report card, the evening was divided into four parts to better focus attention on the need of helping parents understand the reading homework and what would be on the kindergarten report card.

First, two teachers acted out how a parent listening and assisting a child with reading homework would look. Acting out the process of doing reading homework showed the parents everything from the way the child should be sitting and tracking the words with the students' fingers to how to correct errors if a child made one during the course of completing the reading homework.

Before moving on to the third part of the evening, the second part of the evening was to ask parents if there were any questions. The researcher wanted parents to have an opportunity to ask questions through out the evening rather than just at the end in case parents had specific questions at specific times or may have forgotten the question if not answer at the time or feel overwhelmed by the amount of information that was being given. The researcher and the colleagues of the researcher wanted parents to feel comfortable and free to ask questions so that the parents would have a greater understanding and would therefore be more likely to implement the skills and strategies presented at the parent night.

Third, an explanation of the first report card with a reading grade that would be sent to each family of a student in November, was explained. The parents were shown how the reading grade was broken down into different subtests. Explanations of what the subjects given under Reading on the report card, were given. The researcher and the colleagues of the researcher wanted parents to have a clear concise understanding of what ways the parents could be aiding the students in reading skills.

Fourth, the parents were asked if any questions had arisen while discussion of the report card was being given. Again, having the parents have full comprehension of the skills, the way the skills would be tested, and finally the way the skills being tested would be reported to the parents was essential in having cooperation and buy in of the program from the parents.

At the conclusion of the parent night the survey that had been given in August was once again given. Having the answers from the second survey allowed the researcher to have data to compare to the results of the first survey, and thus determine if the parent night was beneficial to the parents in the parents' understanding of the reading program and how to assist the children.

Participants

Two sets of participants were created for this project. The first set of participants was the kindergarten students that participated in the *Readwell* program and were expected to meet the 2nd semester goal of completing unit 6 in the *Readwell* program. The second set of participants was the parents of the kindergarten students. The parents were asked to participate in completing two surveys and attend one parent night.

The Kindergarten Students

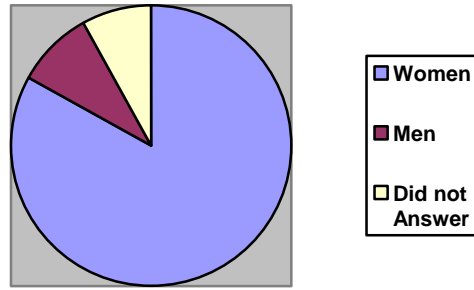
The school where the research took place housed all kindergarten and first grade classrooms for the entire community. The kindergarten population was 163 students with 60% of the kindergarteners having English as a second language and 80.47% of the kindergarteners being on free and reduced lunch. There were eight kindergarten teachers at the school each having between 20 and 21 students. All classes had between a 50% - 60% ratio of girls and a 50%-40% ratio of boys. The information stated was collected by the researcher of the paper from the administrative assistant of the school studied in a verbal conversation on November 15, 2007.

The Parents of the Kindergarten Students

Of the 163 students' parents that were all given equal opportunity to complete a survey both at the beginning of the school year as well as at the parent open house in either English or Spanish, 90 surveys were completed and returned. Having 90 surveys of 163 students' parents returned meant there was a 55% return of surveys.

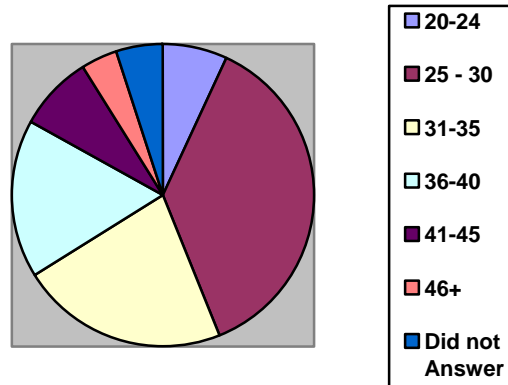
Of the completed surveys, 83% were completed by mothers or adult women guardians, 9% were completed by fathers or men adult men guardians, and 8% of respondents did not complete the question asking the sex of the person filling out the survey.

Percentage of Surveys completed by Male and Female Parents of Kindergarten



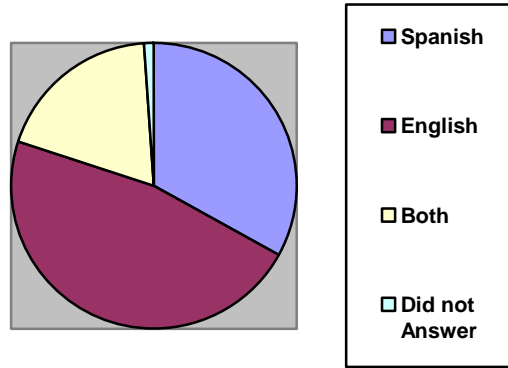
Of the participants completing the survey, 7% were between 20 and 24 years of age, 37% were between 25 and 30 years of age, 22% were between 31 and 35 years of age, 17% were between 36 and 40 years of age, 8% were between 41 and 45 years of age, 4% were 46 years of age or older and 5% of respondents did not complete the question asking the age of the person filling out the survey.

Percentage of Ages of Parents of Kindergarten Students



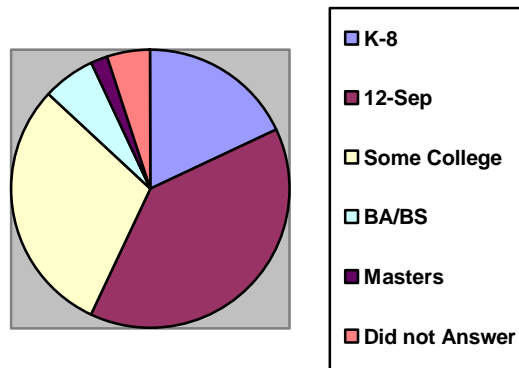
Of the participants completing the survey, 47% spoke English in the home, 33% spoke Spanish in the home, 19% spoke both English and Spanish in the home and 1% of respondents did not complete the question asking the language spoken in the home of the person filling out the survey.

Percentage of Language Spoken in the Home of Kindergarten Students



Of the participants completing the survey, 18% had completed a kindergarten through 8th grade education, 39% had completed a 9th grade through 12th grade education, 30% had completed some level of college, 6% had received a bachelor of science or bachelor of arts college degree, 2% had received a masters of college certificate, and 5% of respondents did not complete the question asking the level of education received of the person filling out the survey.

Percentage of Education of Parents of Kindergarten Students



Instruments

There were two instruments used for this project. The first instrument was that used to test the kindergarten students at 2nd quarter report card testing time. The test given to the kindergarten students was the unit 6 *Readwell* test. [See page 58.] All students were given instruction by highly qualified teachers up until 2nd quarter report card testing time as well as after. All students who had completed

unit 5 and were in the process of completing unit 6 were given the opportunity to take the *Readwell* unit 6 test. This test was considered to have met a high measure of validity by the researcher as the test was measuring an intended content area for which the test was being given. This test was also considered reliable by the researcher as the test given was administered exactly the same by each teacher or paraprofessional proctoring the test as all teachers and paraprofessionals had been given specific training in the *Readwell* curriculum by the Reading First staff provided by the Office of Superintendent of Instruction at the Reading Summer Institute.

The second instrument used for this research project was the survey given to parents of kindergarten students to measure the parents knowledge of the reading curriculum used at the school researched, the kindergarten homework, the kindergarten report card used at the school researched and the importance of reading throughout kindergarten. The survey was also an opportunity to ask parents how comfortable parents felt talking to the reading teachers of the students about reading, reading homework, and who to talk to at the school if questions arose about reading. The survey given to parents was considered to be constructive by the researcher as the survey was measuring responses to the specific questions intended to be evaluated. This survey was also considered appropriate and useful by the researcher as the survey was translated into all languages spoken and read by the participants taking the survey, as well as read to those unable to read the questions due to illiteracy. All participants completing the survey were given the same opportunity to attend and participate in both the

parent/teacher conferences and kindergarten parent night open house. All communication, whether written or verbal was given in both Spanish and English.

Design

For this research project there were two designs to consider. The first design was to consider the design used to measure the students reading level. The kindergarteners at the school researched were expected to be at unit 6 of the kindergarten *Readwell* curriculum by the second quarter report card testing period. The design created in this project compared the number of students that completed unit 6 or higher and the students that did not. The numbers of students that met the unit 6 goal was compared with the 2005/2006 and 2006/2007 school years when a parent survey and parent night were not held, and the 2007-2008 school year, when a parent survey and parent night were held.

The second design was the pre and post survey given to parents comparing the knowledge of the parents about the reading curriculum used at the school researched, the kindergarten homework, the kindergarten report card used at the school researched and the importance of reading throughout kindergarten, before and after attending the parent night. The survey was also an opportunity to ask parents how comfortable parents felt talking to the reading teachers of the students about reading, reading homework, and who to talk to at the school if questions arose about reading. Having this comparison allowed the researcher to measure the effectiveness of the parent night in regards to the items discussed within the survey.

Procedure

To answer the first research question, “How does one increase parent involvement in a school with a diverse population in comparison to the cultural and language differences of that of the staff, to positively impact student academic achievement?”, the author had to first understand what parents of the kindergarten students already knew about parent involvement and wanted to learn. The author created a survey that was given to all parents of kindergarten students during the August open house kindergarten conferences. The survey focused primarily on the kindergarten reading program, as the overall object of the project was to increase student achievement in the area of reading. From the results of the survey the researcher learned what the parents knew about the reading program and what the parents needed to learn to better assist the children in reading. With the knowledge of what the parents needed to know to better assist the kindergarteners in reading, a parent kindergarten open house was hosted by the kindergarten teachers. From the survey results, the researcher and colleagues of the researcher conducted the open house forum with a Spanish speaking translator, (based on the language spoken in the homes by many of the parents), with dialogue and terms that were appropriate in consideration of the educational level of the parents and at a time that was convenient for the parents based on the hours of the local businesses that provided jobs to a majority of the parents. After the open house forum, the parents were asked to once again complete the same survey that the parents had completed at the August open house. The results of the second survey were compared to that of the first. From comparing the results of the surveys, (to determine if parents received information

that was useful in assisting the parents in aiding the children with the kindergarten reading work), tracking the parents that filled out both surveys and attended the open house forum, the researcher was able to determine the parents with high levels of parent involvement to the students' 2nd quarter last completed and passed *Readwell* unit. The results of comparing the *Readwell* unit of the students at mid year to the students that had parents with high levels of parent involvement showed that parent involvement positively impacted student achievement.

Treatment of the Data

The first treatment of data the researcher conducted was to measure the effectiveness of understanding of parents attending the kindergarten parent night. All parents of kindergarten students were given an equal opportunity to attend the kindergarten parent night open house as well as complete the pre and post surveys. Of the 163 kindergarten students' parents, 60 completed the survey at the August parent/teacher conference, 11 completed the survey at the kindergarten parent night open house, 19 parents completed both, and 73 did not complete a survey at either time.

Of the 19 parents that completed both of the surveys and attended the kindergarten parent open house, 95% of these parents' children passed the *Readwell* unit 6 test or higher. The researcher then completed two tests to determine if there was significance in the kinder parent night having an effect on the comprehension of the parents helping students with kindergarten reading homework, and if so, if parents having the information to better assist the students

with reading homework, then had a direct effect on the students meeting the school goal of passing *Readwell* unit 6 by second quarter.

Comparing results from the first parent survey given [See page 59] with the results of the second survey given after parent night [See page 60] the researcher was able to investigate the effectiveness of the parents' comprehension before and after the kinder parent night in regards to the parents' understanding of the students' reading homework. The question, will parents attending the kindergarten informational evening have a greater understanding of the kindergarten reading homework was answered yes by looking at the results of the two surveys. Comparing surveys was also interesting in that some parents stated in the first survey great understanding of the reading program, rated only average understanding after attending the parent night. When the researcher talked with parents who had responded high the first time and then a bit lower the second time, the author found the parents were surprised at the amount of information there was about the kindergarten reading program and wanted to learn even more. The level of the parents' knowledge had not decreased, but some parents were concerned what was known originally was not as great as first thought.

Looking at the answers gained from the surveys of the parents and comparing it to the scores of the students who passed unit 6 of *Readwell* the researcher was able to determine that the parents who attended the kindergarten parent night and had a greater understanding of the kindergarten reading homework, had a significant impact on the students passing unit 6 of the *Readwell* curriculum. The question, will parents who attend the kindergarten parent night and have a greater understanding of the kindergarten reading homework, have a

significant impact on the students passing unit 6 of the *Readwell* program, was answered yes.

Summary

Knowing what areas of the reading curriculum that the parents of kindergarten students understood at the school being researched was key to the author of this document. Once realizing the holes in the information that parents had about the kindergarten reading program, the researcher questioned if providing an informational parent night where parents could learn more about the curriculum that would increase the parents understanding would be beneficial. Comparing the results of the surveys of parents before and after the parent night showed that parents who had attended the kindergarten parent night had a better understanding of the kindergarten homework and would thus be better able to assist the students with the kindergarten reading homework. The researcher then asked if parents who had a greater understanding of the kindergarten reading homework and were better able to assist them, would have a positive impact on the reading unit the student reached in the classroom? The question was answered yes, by the surveys that were completed by parents that filled out the questionnaire before and after attending the kindergarten informational night. The research conducted by the author proved that parents who attended the kindergarten parent night and had a greater understanding of the kindergarten reading homework, did have a significant impact on the students passing unit 6 of the *Readwell* program.

CHAPTER 4

Analysis of the Data

Introduction

At the school researched making reading a priority was crucial with the *Reading First Grant* the school had accepted. To measure the increase in reading the kindergarten cohort had created with the reading coach, quarterly standards for students to be at in order for the students to complete the kindergarten *Readwell* program by the end of the school year. The 2nd quarter measuring point was the expectation that all students should have completed unit 6 of the kindergarten *Readwell* program. For two years, only 61% of students met the unit 6 goal in 2006, and only 63% met the unit 6 goal in 2007 by 2nd quarter. The author questioned whether parent involvement with students' homework would increase student achievement in reading and thus improve the percentage of students passing the unit 6 kindergarten *Readwell* test at the end of 2nd quarter.

Description of the Environment

The study took place in Central Washington with a town population of 5,455 with a rural community total population of approximately 13,000. City facilities included a Library, Aquatic Center, four parks with picnic sites and a museum (currently being developed). The economic base was provided by agricultural related industries (processing, shipping, storage & supplying) with over 200,000 acres of irrigated land under production, all types of seed and vegetable, crops were grown along with large acreage's of soft fruits, (Current News, 2007).

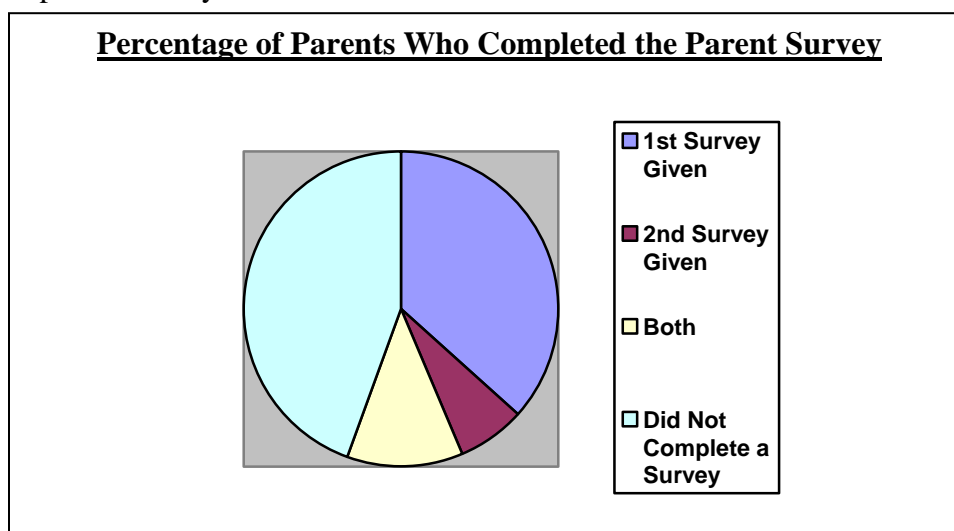
The school where the research took place housed all kindergarten and first grade classrooms for the entire community. The kindergarten population was 163 students with 60% of the kindergarteners having English as a second language and 80.47% of the kindergarteners being on free and reduced lunch. There were eight kindergarten teachers at the school each having between 20 and 21 students. The information stated was collected by the researcher of the paper from the administrative assistant of the school studied in a verbal conversation on November 15, 2007. Kindergarteners received 90 minutes of direct reading instruction, per the *Reading First Grant* directives. Forty five minutes of instruction were whole group instruction where each teacher presented kindergarten *Readwell* instruction in such areas as letter naming, phonemic awareness activities such as onset and rime and white board dictation to each teacher's 20 to 21 students, respectively. The remaining 45 minutes of direct reading instruction were given in small group reading where students were put in groups of five to six students based on each student's ability (after taking the *Readwell* placement test, assessing letter naming, letter sounds and basic phonic blending skills), and worked with a teacher or paraprofessional. The students were able to move among the groups as each student's need of instruction changed. The students were able to walk to a different classroom other than a child's homeroom if a reading group that was more appropriate for an individual child's level was elsewhere. The students received 2 minutes of letter naming fluency practice prior to the start of kindergarten *Readwell* instruction following 2 more minutes of letter naming fluency practice within the 45 minutes of small group instruction.

Research Questions

1. How does one increase parent involvement in a school with a diverse population in comparison to the cultural and language differences of that of the staff to positively impact student academic achievement?
2. Will showing increase of parent involvement in a student population that is diverse compared to the cultural and language differences of that of the staff at the school show significant, direct correlation in student academic achievement?

Results of the Study

The first results of the study the researcher wanted to learn was, what was the effectiveness of understanding of parents attending the kindergarten parent night? All parents of kindergarten students were given an equal opportunity to attend the kindergarten parent night open house as well as complete the pre and post surveys. Of the 163 kindergarten students' parents, 60 completed the survey at the August parent/teacher conference, 11 completed the survey at the kindergarten parent night open house, 19 parents completed both, and 73 did not complete a survey at either time.



Of the 19 parents that completed both of the surveys and attended the kindergarten parent open house, 95% of the parents' children passed the *Readwell* unit 6 test or higher. The researcher then completed two tests to determine if there was significance in the kinder parent night having an effect on the comprehension of the parents helping students with kindergarten reading homework, and if so, if those parents having the information to better assist the students with reading homework, then had a direct effect on the students meeting the school goal of passing *Readwell* unit 6 by second quarter.

Comparing the pre kindergarten parent night and post kindergarten parent night surveys the researcher was able to investigate the effectiveness of the parents' comprehension before and after in regards to the parents' understanding of the students' reading homework. The question asked was, would a parent attending the kindergarten parent night have a greater understanding of the kindergarten reading homework and thus be able to assist a student with reading homework?

To the survey question, “I understand my child’s reading homework”, parents answered:
 “I don’t know” which was given an identification of 1
 “Strongly disagree” which was given an identification of 2
 “Disagree” which was given an identification of 3
 “Neutral” which was given an identification of 4
 “Agree” which was given an identification of 5, or
 “Strongly agree” which was given an identification of 6

(These are identifications not values.)

	Parent/Teacher Conference Survey Score	After attending Kindergarten Parent Night Open House
Parent 1	5	5
Parent 2	6	5
Parent 3	1	5
Parent 4	5	6
Parent 5	6	6
Parent 6	5	5
Parent 7	1	5
Parent 8	6	5
Parent 9	1	4
Parent 10	6	6
Parent 11	6	4
Parent 12	6	6
Parent 13	5	6
Parent 14	5	5
Parent 15	1	6
Parent 16	2	6
Parent 17	6	6
Parent 18	6	6
Parent 19	4	5

The question answered from the survey showed that most parents who had attended the kindergarten parent night had a better understanding of the kindergarten homework than before the informational evening and were thus able to better assist the students with the kindergarten reading homework.

Comparing the information from the surveys the researcher was able to determine that the parents who attended the kindergarten parent night and had a greater understanding of the kindergarten reading homework, had a significant impact on the students passing unit 6 of the *Readwell* curriculum. The question, would parents that attend the kindergarten parent night and have a greater

understanding of the kindergarten reading homework have an impact on the students passing unit 6 of the *Readwell* program, was answered yes.

	Parents that completed both surveys and attended Parent Night	Parents that did not complete both surveys and/or did not attend Parent Night
students that passed unit 6 of the <i>Readwell</i> curriculum	18	130
Students that did not pass unit 6 of the <i>Readwell</i> curriculum	1	14

The information from the surveys shows that parents who attended the kindergarten parent night and had a greater understanding of the kindergarten reading homework, did have a significant impact on the students passing unit 6 of the *Readwell* program.

Findings

Comparing the pre and post kindergarten parent night surveys the researcher found both questions;

1. Would a parent attending the kindergarten parent night have a greater understanding of the kindergarten reading homework, and

2. Would parents who attended the kindergarten parent night and had a greater understanding of the kindergarten reading homework, have an impact on the students passing unit 6 of the *Readwell* program?

were answered yes. The positive answers to the two questions supported finding answers for the two research questions stated within the research project which were;

1. How does one increase parent involvement in a school with a diverse population in comparison to the cultural and language differences of that of the staff, to positively impact student academic achievement?
2. Will showing increase of parent involvement in a student population that is diverse compared to the cultural and language differences of that of the staff at the school, show significant, direct correlation in student academic achievement?

For the first question, How does one increase parent involvement in a school with a diverse population in comparison to the cultural and language differences of that of the staff, to positively impact academic achievement?, the research showed that one successful way, was to have a parent information night about the subject that the school wants to see an increase in parent involvement in. The author feels the keys to making the parent night successful that was observed for this project, was the understanding of the culture by the teachers hosting the parent night. Parents were provided child care which was critical financially and culturally. All documents and speaking was translated into the native tongue of those in attendance of the

parent night. The time of the parent night was conducive for parents were working. Snacks and door prizes were provided to encourage a comfortable and welcoming atmosphere rather than a sterile and/or too professional environment. Finally and most importantly parents were given several opportunities to ask questions and participate and were encouraged to do so. Parents were encouraged to be apart of the evening, not just be spectators during the evening.

For the second research question, Will showing increase of parent involvement in a student population that is diverse compared to the cultural and language differences of that of the staff at the school, show significant, direct correlation in student academic achievement?, the research in this document proved that yes, increased parent involvement would have a significant and positive direct correlation in student academic achievement. The research measured the student academic achievement as the kindergarten students at the school researched passing the kindergarten *Readwell* unit 6 test at the end of the 2nd quarter testing time. In 2006 only 61% of students passed the unit 6 test at the end of 2nd quarter. In 2007 only 63% of students passed the unit 6 test at the end of 2nd quarter. In 2008, after a parent survey to ask parents what information was lacking in the parents understanding the kindergarten reading program, one parent night held to address the questions and concerned raised for the survey and then a second survey given to measure effectiveness of the parent night, 91% of kindergarten students passed the unit 6 kindergarten *Readwell* test at the end of 2nd quarter.

Discussion

The findings of the author were encouraging and exciting. The author realized that a lot of work went into creating the survey, analyzing the details of the survey and conducting the parent night, but the rewards in terms of student achievement far outweighed the effort. The findings of this research project were helpful not only to the teachers of the school where the research was conducted but to the administration as well. The teachers were able to better recognize the need of knowing what the parents' of the students knew about the reading program and the standards of the school, and the administration was better able to understand the need of supporting teachers both financially and with time to conduct surveys, analyze data and host parent nights.

Summary

Analyzing the data within the research project allowed the author to measure the success of the parent survey, the parent night, and the impact of parent involvement on students' academic achievements. Through comparing the pre and post kindergarten parent night surveys, the researcher found both questions;

1. Would a parent attending the kindergarten parent night have a greater understanding of the kindergarten reading homework, and
2. Would parents who attended the kindergarten parent night and had a greater understanding of the kindergarten reading homework, have a significant impact on the students passing unit 6 of the *Readwell* program,

were answered yes. The answers from the surveys supported finding answers for the two research questions stated within the research project which were;

1. How does one increase parent involvement in a school with a diverse population in comparison to the cultural and language differences of that of the staff, to positively impact student academic achievement?
2. Will showing increase of parent involvement in a student population that is diverse compared to the cultural and language differences of that of the staff at the school, show significant, direct correlation in student academic achievement?

The first research questions, How does one increase parent involvement in a school with a diverse population in comparison to the cultural and language differences of that of the staff to positively impact student academic achievement?, was answered within the research project by creating a parent night in response to answering questions and concerns of parents stated in an initial parent survey that was given at the beginning of the school year to parents of incoming kindergarten students. The success of the parent night was proven through a second survey given to parents upon attending the parent night and the results from the kindergarten *Readwell* unit 6 test, of the students' of the parents that attended the kinder night. The author recognizes that there are various ways to skin a cat though, and that although research presented within this document proves that a parent night was successful, there could be other ways to increase parent involvement in diverse communities that were not presented in this research.

The second research question, Will showing an increase of parent involvement in a student population that is diverse compared to the cultural and language differences of that of the staff at the school, show significant, direct correlation in student academic achievement?, was answered yes. Through statistical analysis of a chi-square the author was able to prove that parent involvement did have a positive direct impact on student achievement. Understanding the correlation between parent involvement and student achievement inspired the author to make the school researched aware of the data in hopes of increasing teacher awareness, so that teachers in turn would educate parents and provide opportunities for parents to question and give input about the programs, and for administration to support teachers financially and with time to implement strategies of increasing parent involvement.

CHAPTER 5

Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations

Introduction

The importance of parent involvement in a child's education was researched by the author to conclude if involvement was worthwhile. The author questioned whether parents that had a greater understanding of students' academic curriculum would have a positive impact on student's learning and thus students would have higher academic achievements compared to that of peers. The question was answered positively and the data analyzed supported the research.

Summary

The purpose of this project was to explore the outside factors that had a direct correlation on the impact of student achievement, and by positively impacting an external factor(s), improve the achievement of a student within the classroom. The major factor considered for this project was the impact of parent involvement. To measure the impact of parent involvement and guide the research, the following questions were created and answered by the researcher:

3. How does one increase parent involvement in a school with a diverse population in comparison to the cultural and language differences of that of the staff, to positively impact student academic achievement?, and,
4. Will showing increase of parent involvement in a student population that is diverse compared to the cultural and language differences of that of the staff

at the school, show significant, direct correlation in student academic achievement?

To answer the first research question, How does one increase parent involvement in a school with a diverse population in comparison to the cultural and language differences of that of the staff, to positively impact student academic achievement?, the author had to first understand what parents of the kindergarten students already knew about parent involvement and wanted to learn. The author created a survey that was given to all parents of kindergarten students during August open house kindergarten conferences. The survey focused primarily on the kindergarten reading program, as the overall object of the project was to increase student achievement in the area of reading. From the results of the survey the researcher learned what the parents knew about the reading program and what the parents needed to learn to better assist the children in reading. With the knowledge of what the parents needed to know to better assist the kindergarteners in reading, a parent kindergarten open house was hosted by the kindergarten teachers. From the survey results, the researcher and colleagues of the researcher conducted the open house forum with a Spanish speaking translator, (based on the language spoken in the homes by many of the parents), with dialogue and terms that were appropriate in consideration of the educational level of the parents and at a time that was convenient for the parents based on the hours of the local businesses that provided jobs to a majority of the parents. After the open house forum, the parents were asked to once again complete the same survey that the parents had completed at the August open house. The results of

the second survey were compared to that of the first. From comparing the results of the surveys, (to determine if parents received information that was useful in assisting the parents in aiding the children with the kindergarten reading work), tracking the parents that filled out both surveys and attended the open house forum, the researcher was able to determine the parents with high levels of parent involvement to the students' 2nd quarter last completed and passed *Readwell* unit. The researcher questioned if providing a parent night where parents could learn more about the curriculum would increase the parents understanding. The question was answered yes. Comparing the pre and posted kindergarten parent night surveys proved that parents who had attended the kindergarten parent night had a better understanding of the kindergarten homework and were thus able to better assist the students with the kindergarten reading homework. The researcher also questioned if parents who had a greater understanding of the kindergarten reading homework and were better able to assist them, would have a positive impact on the reading unit the student reached in the classroom. The question was answered yes. Comparing scores of the students whose parents had attended the kindergarten parent open house to those of students whose parents had not attended the kindergarten open house proved that parents who attended had a greater understanding of the kindergarten reading homework, did have a significant impact on the students passing unit 6 of the *Readwell* program.

Finally, the research proved success laterally when comparing the number of kindergarteners passing the unit 6 *Readwell* assessment over the past three years. In 2006 only 61% of students passed the unit 6 test at the end of 2nd quarter. In 2007 only 63% of students passed the unit 6 test at the end of 2nd

quarter. In 2008, after a parent survey to ask parents what information was lacking in the parents understanding the kindergarten reading program, one parent night held to address the questions and concerns raised for the survey and then a second survey given to measure effectiveness of the parent night, 91% of kindergarten students passed the unit 6 kindergarten *Readwell* test at the end of 2nd quarter.

Conclusions

By completing this project the author was able to show the significance of understanding the relationship between schools and parent involvement having a positive impact on student achievement. Given the analysis of the data the researcher found both questions;

3. Would a parent attending the kindergarten parent night would have a greater understanding of the kindergarten reading homework, and
4. Would parents who attended the kindergarten parent night and had a greater understanding of the kindergarten reading homework, have a significant impact on the students passing unit 6 of the *Readwell* program,

were answered yes. Comparing the results of the pre and post kindergarten parent night open house survey and answering the questions positively supported finding answers for the two research questions stated within the research project which were;

3. How does one increase parent involvement in a school with a diverse population in comparison to the cultural and language differences of that of the staff, to positively impact student academic achievement?
4. Will showing increase of parent involvement in a student population that is diverse compared to the cultural and language differences of that of the staff at the school, show significant, direct correlation in student academic achievement?

The findings of the author were encouraging and exciting. The author realized that a lot of work went into creating the survey, analyzing the details of the survey and conducting the parent night, but the rewards in terms of student achievement far outweighed the effort. The findings of this research project were helpful not only to the teachers of the school where the research was conducted but to the administration as well. The teachers were able to better recognize the need of knowing what the parents' of the students knew about the reading program and the standards of the school, and the administration was better able to understand the need of supporting teachers both financially and with time to conduct surveys, analyze data and host parent nights.

Recommendations

The author recommends that schools duplicating this study or one similar to this study be very aware of the cultural needs of the parents attending a parent night, such as languages spoken, time of the evening, child care provided, and most importantly comfort of the atmosphere for parents in attendance.

The author recommends based on the conclusions of this research that administrators with similar school demographics, consider implementing parent surveys and parents nights and most importantly providing the teachers conducting these events and analyzing this data the time needed to do so properly and the financial support of the time outside the classroom day.

The author recommends that teachers recognize a greater need for parent/teacher communication in schools with a population similar to that researched for this project and through that receiving of greater communication offer answers to parents about curriculum, school and homework.

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Appendices

[Appendix 1 – Parent Survey]

Dear Parents,

As a Kindergarten teacher I am constantly looking to improve my skills as an educator and in doing so am currently in the process of receiving my masters. To complete my final thesis project, I will be conducting a study on the direct relationship of parent involvement with reading homework to students reading success at school, measured by what reading unit students are in, compared to the Kindergarten benchmark the staff has set at Mt. View.

To help me in my research, I would appreciate you, taking the time to complete this survey at this time, again in October and finally in January. It will not only guide me in my research for my master's project, but give me, as well as the entire Kindergarten staff, specific areas to improve on in communication with you in regards to your child's education.

Thank you for your participation!

Sincerely,

Jody Stadelman

August Pre-Conference: Yellow
October Conferences: Orange
January Parent Night: Blue

Student Name: _____
(First and Last Name)

Parent Survey

Parent Name (not required but would be appreciated for comparative data research):

(Circle the answer that applies to you):

Sex: Male	Age: 20-24	36-40
Female	25-30	41-45
	31-35	46 +

Language Spoken in the Home: English Spanish Other: _____

Highest Level of Education:	K - 8 th	B.A./B.S.
	9 th - 12 th	Masters
	Some College	Masters +

	Strong Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	I don't know
1. I know what my child's reading curriculum is						
2. I know what the Washington state reading grade level expectations are for my child						
3. I feel comfortable talking to my child's teacher about reading						
4. I understand my child's reading homework						
5. I don't feel comfortable helping my child with their reading homework						
6. I know who to talk to at my child's school if I have a question about their reading homework						
7. I know what my child's reading teacher's academic expectations are for my child.						
8. My involvement in my child's reading homework impacts my child's success in reading.						
9. I help my child with their reading homework on a regular basis (4-5 days a week)						
10. I know what my child will be graded on in reading, on their report card						
11. I understand and feel I can help my child succeed in the reading areas that are on their report card.						
12. Kindergarten is not an important year in my child's reading career.						
13. Attendance directly affects my child's reading success in Kindergarten						

[Appendix 2 – Itinerary for Parent Night]

1st Quarterly Kinder Parent Night



Itinerary

6:00 - 6:05	Introductions
6:05 - 6:20	How to help/guide your child with their reading homework (An acting out by Mrs. Kurz and Mrs. Miller)
6:20 - 6:25	Any questions about how to help with Reading Homework?
6:25 - 6:40	What will be on your child's first report card and how you can help at home.
6:40 - 6:45	Any questions about how to help your child get ready for their first report card?
6:45 - 7:00	Go over results of last survey Take new survey Talk with other parents and/or meet with teachers for individual questions

1er Trimestre de Noche de Padres de Kinder



Itinerario

6:00 - 6:05	Introducción
6:05 - 6:20	Como ayudar/guiar a su niño/a con su tarea de lectura (Una actuación por la Sra. Kurz y Sra. Miller)
6:20 - 6:25	Cualquier pregunta que tenga sobre como ayudar en la Tarea de Lectura?
6:25 - 6:40	Que vendrá en el reporte de su niño/a y como puede ayudar en casa.
6:40 - 6:45	Cualquier pregunta de como preparar a su niño/a para su primera carta del reporte?
6:45 - 7:00	Repasar los resultados de la ultima encuesta Llenar una nueva encuesta Hablar con otros padres y/o platicar con las maestras de preguntas individuales

UNIT 6 DECODING ASSESSMENT

ADMINISTRATION

SUBTEST A. SOUNDS

GOAL 5/6

D m e d th A

SUBTEST B. SMOOTH AND BUMPY BLENDING

GOAL 2/2

D a d Dad

SUBTEST C. SMOOTH BLENDING

GOAL 3/4

see am add seed

SUBTEST D. TRICKY WORDS (AND "I'M")


GOAL 3/3

the I'm said

SUBTEST E. SENTENCES

GOAL 8/9

★ Desired Fluency: 20 seconds or less

I see the  .
Sam said, "I am mad."

SCORING

STRONG PASS

WEAK PASS

NO PASS

If the student needs assistance, the item is incorrect.

The student meets the goals on all subtests and has attained the desired fluency. Proceed to Unit 7.

The student meets the goals on 4 out of 5 subtests and/or fails to attain the desired fluency. Proceed to Unit 7. Add additional practice on difficult skills and/or provide repeated readings on Solo Stories from previous units.

The student fails to meet the goal on two or more subtests. Provide additional practice and retest. If necessary, administer assessments from earlier units to determine where to begin a Jell-Well Review.

[Appendix 4 – Pre Kindergarten Parent Night Parent Survey Results]

Number of Responses to each Question

	Strong Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	I don't know
1. I know what my child's reading curriculum is	2	4	6	12	21	33
2. I know what the Washington state reading grade level expectations are for my child	2	5	4	10	14	40
3. I feel comfortable talking to my child's teacher about reading	0	1	4	30	38	3
4. I understand my child's reading Homework	1	2	4	25	30	13
5. I don't feel comfortable helping my child with their reading homework	31	20	1	6	10	6
6. I know who to talk to at my child's school if I have a question about their reading homework	2	2	3	21	39	9
7. I know what my child's reading teacher's academic expectations are for my child.	2	5	6	11	21	29
8. My involvement in my child's reading homework impacts my child's success in reading.	0	0	0	18	17	5
9. I help my child with their reading homework on a regular basis (4-5 days a week)	0	1	7	20	12	10
10. I know what my child will be graded on in reading, on their report card	2	4	5	16	24	24
11. I understand and feel I can help my child succeed in the reading areas that are on their report card.	0	1	1	22	40	9
12. Kindergarten is not an important year in my child's reading career.	45	18	1	2	5	2
13. Attendance directly affects my child's reading success in Kindergarten	1	0	1	23	48	2

[Appendix 4 – Post Kindergarten Parent Night Parent Survey Results]

Number of Responses to each Question

	Strong Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	I don't know
1. I know what my child's reading curriculum is	0	0	3	20	5	1
2. I know what the Washington state reading grade level expectations are for my child	0	1	7	13	3	5
3. I feel comfortable talking to my child's teacher about reading	0	0	0	15	13	1
4. I understand my child's reading homework	0	0	2	19	8	0
5. I don't feel comfortable helping my child with their reading homework	15	9	0	3	2	0
6. I know who to talk to at my child's school if I have a question about their reading homework	0	1	0	15	12	1
7. I know what my child's reading teacher's academic expectations are for my child.	0	0	6	15	5	2
8. My involvement in my child's reading homework impacts my child's success in reading.	0	0	1	9	18	1
9. I help my child with their reading homework on a regular basis (4-5 days a week)	0	0	2	11	16	0
10. I know what my child will be graded on in reading, on their report card	0	0	4	12	11	1
11. I understand and feel I can help my child succeed in the reading areas that are on their report card.	0	0	1	15	13	0
12. Kindergarten is not an important year in my child's reading career.	17	12	0	0	0	0
13. Attendance directly affects my child's reading success in Kindergarten	1	4	0	10	14	0