

Building a Framework to Improve
Literacy Skills for Kindergarten Bilingual Students Through Parent Involvement

A Special Project

Presented to

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Heritage University

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirement for the Degree of
Master of Education

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2015

FACULTY APPROVAL

Building a Framework to Improve
Literacy Skills for Kindergarten Bilingual Students Through Parent Involvement

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this project was to build a framework that addressed the implementation of Latino parent involvement with reading at home. The framework was implemented by training parents with grade level specific strategies, focused on documenting their effects on student reading achievement. The framework was built after in-depth exploration of parent involvement frameworks, combining the various theorists' frameworks specifically addressing emergent literacy. The combined framework was implemented in an urban classroom of 20 Spanish monolingual students. The participants were in a bilingual late-exit model. The outcome of the research found that the type of training parents received had the most impact on a student's reading level attainment.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

Background for the Project

Throughout education, teachers, administrators and scholars firmly recognized that parent involvement had been established as having a positive effect on academic achievement. Not only were these two concepts recognized as such, but there was a vast amount of literature contributing to this philosophy:

The literature linking parent involvement to student achievement is extensive.

Many different types of parenting practices and behaviors have been associated with positive student outcomes. Those include authoritative parenting practices, high expectations and aspirations; parent-teacher communications, participation in school events or activities, parental assistance at home, and participation in and discussion about learning activities; participation in school-level governing or decision-making roles; and strong parent social networks or social capital.

(Desimone, 1999, p.3)

Through research of a broad amount of frameworks and implementation of parental involvement programs in schools, educators had come to accept the importance and impact of parent involvement. The major concern of parental involvement was communicating the how and what type of parental involvement educators wanted families to demonstrate with students. Key founders in parental involvement research such as Epstein (1997) had found six different forms of parental involvement. Researchers such as Keyes (2002) found parent involvement relationships as a form of strategies for educators to connect with parents. For these reasons the State of

Washington had funded and pushed new programs with parent involvement relationships such as Washington Kindergarten Inventory of Developing Skills (WaKIDS) for preschool and kindergarten level students. With this new focus and other movements the school district in which this study took place specifically had dedicated great focus to programs such as Action Teams for Partnerships (ATP), a program created by the John Hopkins University. This program worked with families in creating and implementing school-wide activity nights. Another program was the Parent Connection Meeting part of the WaKIDS program that was held before the start of the school year so that kindergarten students could meet their teachers and teachers could begin to build positive relationships with new families, as well as welcoming families into the Washington K-12 system as partners in their child's education.

The Early Learning Center (ELC) where this study took place was one of the school district's full-day kindergarten schools. The ELC's focus after changing to full-day was to fully implement WaKIDS with the intention of retaining full-day kindergarten funding and demonstrating improvement in the school's School Improvement Plan (SIP).

Statement of the Problem:

The ELC remained on the SIP plan because it had continually scored below the state average standards. All the schools in the district were failing according to the federal No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. The law required consistent academic improvement until meeting standards. Parent involvement was such a crucial piece to success that it was the schools' third goal in its school improvement plans outlined in the following words: School Improvement Goal #3: As measured by the average percent of students with parents participating in family events using sign-in sheets, the percent of

high level of community and parent involvement would increase from 64.3% to 67.9%. Specifically, from experience in the school and in the school district, the problem faced was not the lack of parent involvement but the quality of the parent involvement, in other words, the how and the what type of parent involvement students were receiving. In the researcher's classroom it was the lack of Latino parents' knowledge of parent involvement in general and the lack of parent involvement implementation in literacy practices with their early emergent literacy student. Specifically it was the lack of parent involvement participation from Mexican descent families who brought in practices of cultural bias where it was looked down upon to trouble an educator with questions or build a relationship because educators were viewed as professionals to be respected.

Purpose of the Project

The purpose of this project was to determine the impact of parental involvement through reading trainings on student literacy skills. More specifically, this study sought to determine if there was a relationship between the number of strategies applied by parents who attended training in reading at home and the level of mastery the student demonstrated in early emergent literacy skills through the student's achievement on the trimester school's reading assessment.

Delimitations

This project was conducted at an Early Learning Center in South Central Washington State, in the school year 2014-2015. The classroom was classified as a Spanish Bilingual late exit model program. The school had 559 students, which was made up largely of a Hispanic/Latino population (88.3%) according to the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction's school report card (Report Card, 2014). The

school was identified as a school-wide Title 1 building because it served a population of 90.2% free and reduced-price meals. The school was the third highest fluctuating school in the school district due to mobility. The classroom was composed of 20 Spanish monolingual students from Mexican-American, Mexican, and Salvadorian ethnicities. The majority of the students in the classroom did not attend preschool or any formal public or private education group. The project focused on the kindergarten grade level, yet the students that were to be participants generally came into kindergarten considerably below preschool-kindergarten transitioning benchmarks. Some students knew how to properly grip a pencil or turn the pages of a book while others had never worked with or used either item. Only one student knew some letters in the alphabet in English due to previous preschool experience in English. The school that was researched used the Spanish Bilingual late exit model which taught the alphabet and reading skills and processes in Spanish. Some students could use scissors and cut a simple activity while others struggled properly holding a pair of scissors. Only one student could write her first name as she had been one of two students in the class who had attended preschool. In the classroom there were one full-time teacher and two assistant educators. The first assistant educator was literacy funded for 30 minutes to assist with students low in literacy with interventions and the second assistant educator was math funded for 30 minutes to assist with math interventions.

Assumptions

The assumptions for this research project were that all participants had the ability to act at their own discretion and self-determination. Participants had the liberty and independence to assist the training or implement any of the texts or resources offered willingly at home. Another assumption of this project was that the parents signing the

inventory sheet lists did so with honesty and integrity. The third assumption was that all participants' names would remain anonymous and confidential by changing all students' names to numbers and all family data was assigned a letter. The last assumptions were that all families had access to all 263 Learning A-Z book reader titles, the strategy training, the strategy inventory sheets, resources, and the learning CD. Another assumption was that the students were physically present enough days in school to gain the knowledge of the reading strategies during class and had practiced with the books before taking them home.

Hypothesis

Students who received support at home from parents who assisted in the reading strategies training at school, and had implemented the resources and strategies of a structured reading program with clearly defined expectations and standards, performed higher on the school's trimester reading assessments than students who did not receive this support.

Null Hypothesis

Students who had not received support at home in reading strategies training showed no significant difference in reading scores from students who did.

Significance of the Project

The significance of this project was to understand if parent involvement with reading strategies trainings affected parent involvement success in reading at home and students' early emergent reading skill achievement. Positive results of the research project would help communicate to the kinder center's administration the need for more specific parent reading program training and resources to offer to the parents to improve

student learning. If the results did not turn out as expected it would create a reflective environment in which to question and analyze the program to determine what changes needed to be made so that children's reading skills improved. The project would also help determine if the intervention trainings promoted high expectations from parents in building literacy at home.

Procedure

For a diagnostic assessment the school used the WaKIDs inventory and a kindergarten data assessment. These assessments documented student's entering skills to direct instruction and interventions. The parent connection meeting took place three days before school started, individually with each family for 45 minutes. These meetings served as a foundation to develop family-school partnerships for collaboration, communication and academic success. For the reading strategies training the staff planned to facilitate the training the week of Thanksgiving, giving teachers enough time to teach and practice those strategies beforehand with their students. This also gave time for students to develop critical foundational phonemic skills in order to be able to practice some of these strategies.

The purpose of the training was to instruct parents or student caregivers as a whole group on the importance of literacy practice in the home, with a main focus on expected reading behaviors and strategies to make connections during reading. This was a crucial piece since most Latino families generally practiced cultural bias that reading was based only on the text and not the meaning, comprehension or connections. The second focus was to provide parents with reading strategies to share with their students if they became caught at particular points in the text. The third focus of the training was

explaining the school's literature book program implemented from the Reading A-Z website. The research had only implemented the leveled reader books available in the reading section of the Learning A-Z website. The website had organized the text to match DRA levels. Parents and families had been informed about these levels and how they were correlated to the school's trimester reading assessment and trimester benchmark goals. This information presented in the training had given parents practice with identifying corresponding books to trimester goals and knowledge about text patterns in each level. The fourth focus was connecting parents to outside resources available in Spanish to collaborate with their child for reading success such as the local public library, Spanish newspapers, Spanish iPad apps, Spanish YouTube videos and Spanish websites. Lastly the training provided time for the parents to practice the reading strategies with their child with the guidance of the teacher.

In order to generate success with the training, the training was advertised in union with Snuggle Up. Snuggle Up was the staff's chosen theme and title of the day's activity. The purpose had been to generate student and parent excitement which was successful and had increased family participation. The staff had raised awareness because they had motivated students to wear pajamas, slippers, and bring a favorite stuffed animal or little pillow to the classroom for that day. Many of the students had worn their favorite pajamas and had brought in their favorite stuffed animal to practice reading with their families, which was another key piece to motivation tied with parent involvement success theories. These theories stated that when parents and students were personally invested and motivated they were more likely to be involved. Therefore this had created a fun, engaging, informational activity night.

Upon completion and assistance from the program, parents were incentivized by receiving a learning CD with reading strategies, songs and chants. Students were also incentivized for bringing their families with a freezee coupon from a local donating gasoline station and the classroom with the most attendance had won books for each student. These incentives were part of the philosophy framework of parental involvement motivators. Parent motivation was a critical piece because student success had been shown to tie in from strong parent aims.

For these reasons the program continued with positive reinforcement throughout the year. The students and parents filled out the reading logs which inventoried titles used from the Learning A-Z Reader Program and reading strategies. Students who had turned in their reading log received a prize box toy and fifteen raffle tickets to the school's weekly and monthly prize drawings. Students who had passed the third level of the school's reading assessment had won two slices of pizza for the classroom's end-of-the-year party. After the completion of literature research on parent involvement theory and the concept of high expectation and high motivators, these ideas were conceptualized and resources given to parent in an effort to diminish economic factors that could affect the families of the school since many were from low economic homes. Also for this reason, before the training, families went into the school gym for a presentation from the public library, application for a free library card, and resources available through the library had been given.

After parents were informed, they were instructed to practice from that day forward up to the second trimester conference where there had been discussions of the students' progress using the classroom data wall and student's individual data wall. The

data wall had documented each student's individual level so that parents reflected on the students' progress, the school's trimester benchmark goals, and the overall progress of the classroom. This was another application of theory in which parents who knew what was expected and how to get to those goals had more opportunity for success. The data wall consisted of a jungle theme which documented what level their student was at, their peers, the amount of reading logs turned in, and the reading strategies students had mastered. This had created a visual that both the parents and students could understand, yet had remained anonymous because each student had been assigned a number that their peers or parents had not known. The program continued by distributing more resources throughout the year. The final step of the procedures had been to conduct the school's trimester reading assessment. These assessments were created using the DRA foundations and forms following the same procedures and methods.

Through the use of all the data that had been gathered through sign-in sheets, reading logs, assessment scores, and individual data wall progressions, the information was organized into two groups. The first group was made up of those students whose parents had attended the training and implemented the resources at home through the evidence of reading logs that had been turned in. The second group was composed of those students whose parents did not attend and/or those parents who did not implement the strategies at home. Using excel plot and bar graphs the intent was to create visuals that could represent trends or relationships within these groups showing if the reading training had an impact on students' scores.

Definition of Terms (See Appendices for expanded definitions)

A-Z Learning leveled reader texts. Leveled reader texts were located on the reading section of the Learning A-Z website which was categorized by reading levels.

emergent early reader text. This was printed text which had been given to students as resources.

emergent literacy. Emergent literacy was the foundational reading skills students attained at the beginning of the reading process.

reading comprehension and connection strategies. These reading strategies focused on different ways to think about the text.

reading strategies for decoding text. There were 12 different strategies taught to decode beginning level text.

Acronyms

ATP. Action Teams for Partnerships

AYP. Adequate Yearly Progress

DRA. Developmental Reading Assessment

ELC. Early Learning Center

ELL. English Language Learner

OSPI. Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction

SIP. School Improvement Plan

WaKIDS. Washington Kindergarten Inventory of Developing Skills

CHAPTER 2

Review of Selected Literature

Introduction

The author explored, analyzed, and researched the topic of parent involvement and investigated what factors affect parent involvement practices, the types of parent involvement, parent involvement in the Latino population and specifically researched parent involvement and its effects in emergent literacy in kindergarten. The overall goal of the author was to determine if parent involvement was beneficial in attaining emergent literacy skills for kindergarten bilingual students.

Parent involvement had been strongly established as demonstrating a correlation with high student achievement. As stated in an article by Green, Hoover-Dempsey, Sandler and Walker (2007), “Parental involvement has long been believed to be associated with a range of enhanced school outcomes for elementary...students, including varied indicators of achievement and the development of student attributes that support achievement...” (p. 4). This review of selected literature began with a holistic approach of analyzing parent involvement as a whole. Parent involvement remained a complex issue since it was “unlike other kinds of relationships in people’s lives, the parent/teacher pairing occurs by assignment rather than by choice” (Keyes, 2002, p. 6). Therefore, because of the extended complexity of exploring parent involvement and its benefits, the first subtopic of this literature review was a discussion of the different literature articles analyzed defining what parent involvement was and factors that affected parent involvement in addition to its current defined types. After current key components of parent involvement, this literature reviewed parent involvement in general

and then narrowed down the focus on parent involvement within the Latino/Hispanic population. The challenges, motivators, and strategies that could be applied to achieve parental involvement in the bilingual classroom were addressed.

Research has identified a host of barriers to minority parent involvement, including linguistic barriers, teacher and school practices that are inequitable and reinforce power and privilege, previous experiences of ethnic minority and poor, and the quality of the relationship between school staff, parents, and students.

(Nznga-Johnson, Baker, & Aupperlee, 2009, p.2)

The second subtopic focused on key findings and strategies that optimized parent involvement in the bilingual classroom through application of learning from the literature. As a final point, this literature review was narrowed down specifically to the application of parent involvement within literacy. The primary focus of the third subtopic was to specifically look at parental involvement and its effects in the attainment of early emergent literacy. As stated by Sénéchal and LeFevre (2002), “understanding how different aspects of parental involvement might influence children’s acquisition of reading is of potentially great importance” (p. 1). In summary, this literature review began with the concept of parent involvement theory in general, then applied to the Latino population, and ended with parent involvement in emergent literacy.

What Was Parent Involvement?

Parent involvement was generally defined as the participation of parents in the school with the goal of promoting student success. The complexity began to form when defining participation, who was involved, at what capacity, and in what forms. This subtopic introduced the complexity of parent involvement by identifying what factors

played a role in the practice of parent involvement and by defining what types of parent involvement classes there were and the form of involvement within each. Frequently, parents had a misconception that parent involvement was being present at conferences and school events, signing of reading logs, homework logs, and progress reports, or tending to the occasional behavior issues their student might portray through phone calls or notes home. These examples described particular types within the classes but were not the complete definition of the parent involvement relationship. Parent involvement was not one sole action. Parent involvement was a dynamic partnership that was composed of a complex relationship between the child, the teacher, the parent, the school and the community. Furthermore to add to the complexity of the relationship, this partnership also consisted of the relationships between each of the participating persons of the partnership.

Parent involvement was affected by many factors such as “(1) the degree of match between teacher’s and parent’s culture and values; (2) societal forces at work on family and school; and (3) how teachers and parents view their roles” (Keyes, 2002, p.1). The first factor in direct terms meant that society changed and those changes were in the importance society placed on values, morals, and beliefs, including cultures. The greater the match between the teacher and family’s culture and values, the greater the odds for creating an effective partnership in working with parents overtime. The same was seen on the opposite end of the spectrum. If there were greater differences between the parties, greater effort was needed to promote a partnership. Part of this first factor was further defined in the research of Stormont, Herman, Reinke, David, and Goel (2013). This research focused on the contact and comfort component of parental involvement that fell

under the cultural and beliefs subcomponent of parent involvement from the literature review of Keyes (2002). This research found correlations that defined types of parental involvement classes of contact and comfort. “Parent’s interpersonal relationship with children and teachers emerge as the driving force behind their involvement in children’s education” (Green et al., 2007, p. 6). An important concept was that educators strived not to create perceptions of parent involvement that hindered the success of students. The same could be stated for perceptions parents created to obstruct the relationship. If educators provided a high contact and high comfort parent-teacher relationship that established an open two-way communication, it was less likely that “teachers may feel less comfortable with parents who need the most support” (Stormont et al., 2013, p. 9). The goal was for educators to have met the first factors because teachers found commonalities in the values, beliefs and cultures of both parties important for the success of the parent-teacher relationship.

The second factor that affected parental involvement was also shaped by change. This change however was found in society through work that affected families and schools. “Among these changes were the increased reliance on technology, the changing nature of work, a more diverse population, and a more service-oriented society” (Keyes, 2002, p. 7). For example family dynamics were represented in varied forms. Families could be composed of two-parents (one working parent), two-parents (two working parents), single-parent family, re-married families, blended families (children raised by grandparents or aunt/uncle/sister), or adoptive families. The second factor focused on the concern that schools had not established one continuing adult to speak for the student. In more difficult situations teachers had communicated with other siblings, who had not

demonstrated effective communication skills. Other changes included job stress and amount of hours worked by families. Therefore both parties in the partnership were affected from strains and tensions in society that continued to change as society changed.

The third factor that affected parent involvement had been how each of the parties viewed his or her role in the partnership. This factor had six subcategory components that defined different views both from parents and teachers amongst themselves and the school. These subcategories defined what affected teachers' and parents' performance in roles, sense of worth, expectations, personal qualities, communication styles and value in themselves. The third factor affected parent- teacher partnerships the most because of parents' beliefs. Beliefs were credited to have been the most likely to be involved and the most decisive factor for parents according to Tveit (2009).

The responsibility of educators was to have opened, promoted and maintained the partnership of parent involvement throughout the year. In summary these three factors were important in determining how parents could positively affect the creation and continuing partnership between parents and teachers.

Epstein (1997) describes six different forms of parent involvement. Two of these six parent involvement forms, home-based parent involvement and school-based parent involvement, were researched because of their relevancy to the project. These two forms of parent involvement were influenced by educators by specific teacher invitations or child invitations. These key concepts and ideas were further discussed in the work by Fantuzzo, Tighe, and Childs (2000). The article placed value on establishing a "strategic plan to enhance learning opportunities for all students by targeting what experts believe to be the most fundamental components of effective [parent involvement]

intervention”(p.1). Home-based involvement described concrete things that parents had done to establish a positive learning environment at home. Part of this included providing learning materials, setting aside space for learning activities, and participating in these activities with their children. Home-based involvement also included behaviors describing the active promotion of a learning environment at home for the students. This was done not only by participating but motivating and initiating the learning activities.

School-based involvement was the relationship that existed between the family and the school on specific student issues. Involvement included the communication between the persons such as calls, meetings, newsletters, and two-way note systems. This type of involvement also included activities and behaviors that parents engaged in at school with their children (Fantuzzo et al., 2000).

These three forms of parental involvement were promoted, driven and maintained differently by the types of invitations given for each. There were three forms of invitations parents could receive through educators and all were most successful when given by the teacher. Specific invitations were important because “specific invitations ... from teachers have been identified as motivators of parental involvement...” (Green et al., 2007, p. 1). This could have been due to the fact that “teacher invitations were influential in part because they underscored the teacher’s valuing of parent contributions to students’ educational success” (Green et al., 2007, p. 2). This was important to note specifically because the research included strategies that explicitly asked parents to participate in reading at home. From this same research “...developers ... reported notable success in increasing incidence and effectiveness of parents’ involvement activities through teachers’ invitation to participate in specific involvement activities”

(p.1). Therefore it was specifically important to have invited parents to participate in both home-based involvement and school-based involvement. Another way that educators affected parental involvement was through the promotion of student invitations towards the families that participated. These “student invitations ... powerful in promoting parental involvement, in part because parents ... are motivated to respond to their children’s needs” (Green et al., 2007, p. 5). The last form of invitation for parent involvement was general invitations from the school. These invitations were created by establishing a welcoming, positive, responsive school atmosphere, by school practices that ensured parents were well informed about student’s progress, invitations to events, trainings, and practices that respected and were responsive to parental questions and suggestions. When these invitations were reinforced and specifically made by the student’s teacher, the parental involvement was more successful.

Parent involvement or the parent-teacher relationship was a dynamic partnership that had been composed of important functions, aspects and variables. As shown in the introductory framework by Keyes (2002), each level of the framework was important in particular, specific ways, which could have affected the entire path and flow of the parent/teacher partnership. Each individual level of the framework carried individual attributes that either the parent or teacher or both must have carried out. The theoretical framework helped parents to have met each person’s goals more effectively. The challenge was great, and took willpower and patience but as stated by Keyes: “.....[it is a] systematic model that considers both complexity, dynamics, and interrelationships.....[that] would make a contribution towards preparing teachers to work more effectively with diverse parents they now encounter in school” (2002,

p.8). This same article summarized with statements from each person that composed the parent/teacher partnership. The teacher stated that the entire model gave her permission to change her expectations about parent involvement. The pre-service and undergraduate students were more interested in what to do with parents. Finally a student spoke for the parent saying: "Is it actually possible for a teacher to shape parent/teacher relationships or is it just hit or miss? A parent either likes you or doesn't like you" (Keyes, 2002, P.8). Ironically the student could be right; it was the focus of educators to align their views to those parents whom they had been working.

Parent involvement within Latino Populations

Research supported that there was a drastic difference between parent involvement in general and parent involvement applied to "culturally and linguistically diverse families" according to Edward Olivos (2009, p.1). Parent involvement became more complex with the integration of Latino families because educators had to factor in culture, views, backgrounds and experiences into an already convulsive framework that defined parent involvement. Other factors that were seen in the Latino population were the barriers of language, socio-economic status, low education, academic resources and strategies of how information was obtained to help students. Other factors that arose from Latino immigrant families included how the Latino family related to the U.S. educational system, how they had viewed themselves in American Society, time and experiences they had in the U.S., and the specific treatment parents had received from schools. Other factors included that Latino families and social structure often consisted of mixed-status family members. This meant that family adults could be citizens, permanent residents, or undocumented immigrants, or the children would have been either of these.

For these reasons more factors came into play within the values and beliefs component of the parental involvement framework. “Educators ... view Latino families, either through an “additive lens” ...or a “deficit lens”..., [which] greatly affects the relationship ...and ultimately the level of collaboration that can be expected” (Olivos, 2009, p.1).

Parent involvement particularly within the Latino population demonstrated many barriers and these were apparent through different sets of literature. Olivos stated these parent views,

Some ... may react [to the school system] from ... a survival level (“Tell me what I need to know ... what I should do”), ... from being at an exploratory level (“How do I present myself, what skills and knowledge must I have before the principal or the teacher?”), and others, who might be...well integrated into U.S. culture, may respond with assertiveness knowing what their rights are (“I know what I have to do to get results and have my rights respected”). (2009, p. 5)

The important idea and focus built upon was that an educator could have positively affected the Latino family-teacher relationship.

The most relevant and helpful article for successful strategies for Latino-family partnerships came from the author Sonia N. Sanchez. Through the article the author covered many themes that related to Latino parent involvement in the school system. “These themes are ... case examples that are all meant to be used as tools for involving Latino parents” (Sanchez, 2010, p. 2). The author particularly focused on the partnership that parents and schools developed from the first day of the child’s school experience. Throughout the article techniques needed to have cultivated partnerships were referenced through examples of successful Latino parent involvement programs.

As stated by Olivos, "... educators and parents ... work together to reflect on existing policies ... and their particular circumstances... what practices work with Latino families and in what contexts... examine their personal beliefs and biases to see how these may be affecting their relationship..."(2010, p. 8).

Latino Parent Involvement and Its Effects on Emergent Literacy Achievement

Parent involvement has been seen to positively affect the growth of early emergent literacy achievement. This growth in literacy attainment has been represented in a majority of articles by "the influence of storybook exposure on children's early acquisition of language and literacy..." (Senechal & LeFevre, 2002, p. 4). These findings have been documented with middle- and upper-middle-class English speaking parents who practiced a high frequency amount of home literacy experiences. "... parents reported ... reading storybooks when their child was 9 ... reading occurred frequently in the home... had between 61 and 80 children's books in the home, and ... sometimes visited the library" (Senechal & LeFevre, 2002, p.6). The article offered strategies that an educator could have used for an all English middle-class classroom that could not necessarily be applicable to the bilingual classroom. In order to have promoted and validated the Latino parent, it was essential to have first understood how these parents viewed the learning process for reading. This was important since the values and beliefs of the individuals should have closely matched up in order to have built a strong family-school partnership. More importantly parents were more willing to be involved when strategies parents were accustomed to were validated by the teacher. As stated by Ortiz and Ordoñez-Jasis, it was important that "...family literacy programs have an understanding of Latino family dynamics, cultural traditions, and ways of knowing helps

such programs be more successful” (2005, p.4). Educators focused on what Latino families could have offered and what resources and knowledge students needed to have better opportunities of success in literacy achievement. The teacher’s duty was to “find ways to promote academic learning at home for their students”(Goldenberg, Reese, & Gallimore, 1992, p. 6).

There were two forms of literacy experiences that parents could have been involved with students’ learning at home. Each form affected literacy in a different way. The first form of involvement was labeled as informal literacy activities. These activities main goals were derived from the message from the print and not the text itself. Examples of these activities included parents reading a storybook to a child at bedtime and parents who read child biblical stories with the intended point of teaching values. The second form of literacy at home with parent involvement was labeled as formal literacy activities. These activities were where the parent and the child focused on the print or text of the literature itself such as text patterns or word endings. Both forms of literacy activities positively affected the growth of the student’s reading. Exposure to storybooks predicted oral language skills that composed developing vocabulary, listening comprehension, and phonological awareness. On the other hand formal literacy activities predicted early emergent literacy skills.

In summary of Sénéchal and LeFevre’s findings: “... children’s exposure to books at home played an important indirect role in the development of reading skills. Shared book reading supported children’s ... reading performance once the mechanics of reading were under control and children were reading more fluently” (2002, p. 9). These forms of literacy involvement applied to Latino parent involvement in literacy were

crucial to the success of the student. Therefore for these reasons it was imperative that an educator working with pre-school through first grade students offered as much early emergent texts as possible. This offered the students and families more opportunities to have had informal and formal storybook exposure at home.

The second steps for Latino families were to contribute to the child's early literacy involvement by being trained through an educator with specific strategies and skills on how to read and discuss a book with the child. This was important to the family and the student because those factors demonstrated a higher and stronger correlation with early literacy achievement than did fluency and time. Some of these skills taught parents to focus on phonological awareness, concepts of print, decoding skills, reading comprehension, and connections of text to self or other media. Those factors attributed more achievement of early literacy and benefited the success of reader skills up to fourth grade according to research found by Hecht, Burgess, Torgesen, Wagner and Rashotte (2000). Not only were those factors more highly correlated as opposed to just the factor of fluency and time, but researchers found that parent expectations of the child were a high determinant of reader achievement, higher than other factors. Therefore part of training parents not only focused on strategies or skills but also on expected skills from students throughout the year. Latino parents tended to apply repetition and memory strategies into the process of attaining literacy and so did other parents from low social economic status as determined by Billings (2009). These skills and mindsets were used as a resource to validate the Latino parents' help. The framework did not focus on retraining the parents but added other determining factors into their knowledge. Many of the Latino parents' students benefited from practicing with these two forms of literacy skill

activities. The first exposed the students to a vast amount of storybooks at their reading level, in their language and of their interest. Parents also had incorporated reading strategies' and skills in the storybooks. In summary of the last subtopic, Latino parent involvement in literacy was majorly focused on validating, motivating, educating and training parents on how to best read with their child when school had provided the appropriate resources to do so.

Summary

In summary of all the previous concepts, the research intended to combine frameworks that worked together and provided literacy success for Latino kindergarten students. They built a stronger relationship between the school and the family which resulted in a stronger academic foundation for the child. Other valuable information from frameworks provided information to Latino families about the school culture such as the following three examples. The American school culture revolved around three values different from Hispanic values. Individualism was expected, to think for oneself as opposed to the highly family oriented view or group structure of the Mexican culture and school system. The American school system also valued independence in which a student was expected to work on his or her own versus a project-based curriculum. Promptness was highly valued. Students were expected to arrive at class or a meeting on time versus the collectivist-culture-oriented views of the Hispanic Mexican culture, where the value was taken in people and not on time (Delgado, 2004). The information and knowledge of these frameworks of culture were an important key point that resonated in these readings and was applied in research through family involvement.

Finally the last subtopic generated knowledge that parent involvement positively benefited early emergent literacy skills and it was up to educators to not only provide a numerous amount of literacy resources at the students' level but to also train parents on specific reading strategies such as comprehension, retelling or decoding skills. As one of Delgado's parent's dialogs had stated, from a mother who had read with her son, "...for many years, I thought that all I had to do was listen to him read. This past month, Mrs. Maran taught those of us who speak Spanish how to listen to our children read in English, and we ask questions in Spanish and they can respond in English because they're reading in English" (2004, p. 14). In summary analyzing and pinpointing successful theorists and strategies demonstrated successful results in the attainment of literacy for children in kindergarten. Educators who demonstrated the most success in essence combined all theorists' frameworks determined to find the most benefits of parent involvement in classrooms.

CHAPTER 3

Methodology and Treatment of Data

Introduction

The methodology chosen for this project was action research specifically focused on data gathered from the research participants. The study was quantitative in nature. This had been done by quantifying the number of parents who had attended the reading training and applied the reading strategies at home as evidenced by reading logs. The reading logs had documented and tracked the reading strategies parents had implemented at home. The study also had documented what type of training the parents had attended and the level of reading achievement the student had attained. The federal No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) law required consistent academic improvement until every student was meeting standards. The inability of students to have met an area of standards labeled the school and the district as failing. The school in this research had been identified as a failing priority school due to the low achievement standards. Parent involvement had been seen as such a crucial piece to student academic success that federal law required schools to have documented the level of participation in schools. For this reason the researched school implemented parent involvement as its third school improvement goal after the second goal was directed towards the increase in students' literacy attainment.

The proposed goal was a plan, which integrated different parent activity trainings based on different subjects throughout the year. Parents who attended signed in and the school gathered data throughout the year. Therefore because the school had demonstrated a deficiency in both goals of the school improvement plan, parent involvement and in literacy, the purpose of this quantitative study was to determine and investigate the

impact of the new parental involvement reading trainings on student literacy skills. The focus of the research was to analyze the level of mastery students had demonstrated in literacy skills through the students' achievement skills on the annual literacy assessment. The study compared this data to students whose parents had not participated in the training or had not implemented the reading strategies at home.

The process of the research had provided two different forms for the parents to have received the training. The first opportunity had been a classroom-wide training in which all parents were invited to attend. The second training was a personal invitation to a one-on-one training to those parents who had not participated the first time. After the training, families implemented reading logs that documented the implemented reading strategies with the intent to analyze the progress and implementations of reading strategies at the home of each student. These reading strategies had been explained to parents at the trainings. The purpose of this was to use data to determine patterns or relationships of data between groups and determine how the trainings and reading logs affected students' reading achievement.

Methodology

The action research in this project was a quantitative study focused on descriptive statistics and data. The quantitative part of the research focused on how many families attended either of the reading strategies trainings and how many documented logs the families turned in. This data was collected for comparison to the data on the level of reading achievement gained by the students.

Participants

The participants in the study were the researcher's individual classroom that was composed of 20 Spanish monolingual kindergarten students from Mexican-American, Mexican, & Salvadorian ethnicities. Out of the 20 students in the classroom only three students had a limited amount of social English coming in. The classroom was classified as a Spanish bilingual, late exit model program which was located in an Early Learning Center (ELC) in South Central Washington State. The research was implemented during the school year 2014-2015. The school had 559 students, which was made up largely of a Hispanic/Latino population (88.3%) according to the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction's school report card. The school was identified as a school-wide Title 1 building because it served a population of 90.2% free and reduced-price meals (Report Card, 2014). The ELC had been the third highest fluctuating school in the district, due to mobility issues. The majority of the students in the classroom had not attended preschool or any formal public or private education group.

Instruments

For this project the research used three instruments to quantify the data that was analyzed. The first instrument was parent sign-in sheets that documented parents who had attended either of the two trainings. The second instrument used was the reading logs which documented the implementation of the reading strategies used at home. The last instrument implemented was the school's trimester reading assessment.

The training was developed with the intention of attending to the deficit of Latino parents' understanding of reading skills or strategies to practice with their children other than the basic decoding skills. The training was developed by the school's reading action

team using successful strategies that were implemented the previous year. All 24 kindergarten classrooms administered the classroom-wide training but had not offered the ongoing learning resources, CD or the one-on-one training opportunity for those parents who had not been present. The teachers were given a basic script and accommodated for their individual classroom. The training supplied parents with materials on how to read with their child at home and what strategies to use at home with students when they became challenged with a difficult word. All materials were developed and discussed before the trainings, including the script, the reading skills informational flier with reading connections and the practice reading book. The training was pretested using two different teachers and one non-school community member. The intention for this was to know that the training had been clear, consistent and was directly focused on teaching parents the skills they needed. Although the training was to be offered to the entire school only the researcher's bilingual Spanish classroom was analyzed.

The last instrument was created by the school's 2013-2014 reading action team which had been the school's trimester reading assessment. The reading assessment was created to simulate the Pearson-school publication company developmental reading assessment (DRA). This was simulated due to the assessment's demonstrated reliability, validity and because teachers could not administer the test at other times that did not fall under the testing window dates. The DRA instrument was created by what educators and research literature identified as behaviors composing good readers. The simulated form of the reading assessments followed the same exact procedures with other texts at the same level. The DRA assessment had been analyzed through many reliability analyses such as: internal consistency reliability, passage equivalency, test-retest reliability, and

interrater/expert rate reliabilities. The instrument was used to measure components such as accuracy, fluency, and comprehension. Therefore the relationship between the simulated DRA assessment and the special project's research focus made this assessment instrument an appropriate tool to quantify the data and relationships between the different group variables.

Design

The data collected from this research project could not be used statistically to provide a correlation between both groups. Therefore the data collected was treated as case study research design. This was because the data described what happened after applying the reading strategies training and the process used to describe descriptive questions of what or how has been known as case study research. This design was specifically described as "A case study research method is appropriate when the researcher wants to answer a descriptive question (e.g., what happened?) or as an explanatory question (e.g. how or why did something happen?)" (Gay, Mills & Airasian, 2012, p. 445).

Procedure

The first part of the procedure was establishing the students' needs in their literacy attainment. This determined which reading strategies were introduced first. The second step was to collaborate with other teachers to set up the training date and to establish the script to inform the parents. The next steps were to have materials ready for in-class practice, parent training practice and different text titles for practice at home throughout the reading program for the reading logs. The titles used for this research were books from the reading website program titled readingatoz.com, from the Spanish

levels aa thru C. The students' process for learning the strategies focused on modeling and practicing one reading strategy per week.

Students received two different book titles every day. The first book was practiced in class through modeled instruction, followed by guided instruction and independent practice. Students were then motivated to take books home to read with parents and to sign reading logs. At the end of the day students were given another title with a brief picture walk for the opportunity to have at least two texts per day to practice with. The next steps were to motivate parents to participate in the reading strategies training in an effort to inform parents about strategies to support positive reading behaviors. Families received five fliers to attend the meeting, two fliers two weeks before, two fliers one week before, and one flier one day before. Some fliers were generated by the reading Professional Learning Community action team while the others were generated by the students themselves. The training was intentionally offered at the end of the day which provided more opportunities for parents to attend. The training started at 2:30 p.m. with an informational workshop from the local librarian about the resources at the local library and an opportunity to sign up for a free library card. The training then proceeded with the families going into their child's classroom for the pajama party, in which the reading strategies training had taken place. The training started with having all the students participate in coloring their reading strategies data wall. This instrument documented the strategies students were proficient in and what reading level they had obtained but in a visually, student-friendly format the students themselves could understand. The instrument was completed while parents sat down in chairs to participate in the training. This gave parents the opportunity to listen and ask

questions while their students were actively engaged. Before the training families were encouraged to view the opportunity as important and, if possible, find other arrangements for their younger siblings in an effort to avoid distractions, yet the classroom offered a table where activities were planned for small children. The classroom session began at 3:00 p.m. with a parent introduction to the reading strategies wall, naming each strategy animal icon, referring it to the sheet and its skill to use in difficult words and the resources parents had taken home with them that day. The teacher then read aloud a big book story, paying particular attention to pointing out where students could encounter difficulties and what strategies to teach their child at those difficult points. After the explanation and modeling part of the training was done, the majority of students had completed their reading strategies data wall instrument. At this time parents were encouraged to sit with their children with their pillows, stuffed animals, and blankets and practice reading with their children, using their new knowledge of the strategies.

The literature reviewed had focused on giving motivation, excitement and engagement as factors in parent involvement. For these reasons these festivity components had been factored into the reading training to promote excitement and motivation in families reading with their children at home. Lighting was dimmed and an evening sky with stars was projected using the classroom camera onto a wall. Parents were then instructed about the importance of reading with their child every night and the importance parents' motivation played in a child's own motivation towards reading.

The session concluded with the overview of the reading logs, prizes and reading bulletin board that documented and tracked how many reading logs the students had turned in along with their individual reading instruments that students had colored in. The

parents were then informed that each reading log a child turned in received a small toy prize and a ticket to enter into the bike raffle for each trimester and year-end give-away. The reading data wall instrument and bulletin board were in the form of a safari theme. The theme incorporated all of the reading strategies animal icons, one per reading strategy, and had two palm trees in between all the icons. These trees were connected by four vines that represented the four levels students could be assessed on in reading according to the school district's procedures on assessments per grade level. Students could have read higher texts during the class's reading groups yet teachers could not use the DRA assessment to administer higher levels of assessment than the fourth level in order to keep the test instrument valid for other grade levels since the tests were cold reads. This meant that the student had never read or seen the book before the implementation of the assessment. Each monkey hung on the reading level the student had successfully mastered and on the monkey's tail hung the number of reading logs the student had turned in. As the student progressed through the year his or her numbered monkey would move up onto the next reading level vine and, as the student entered reading logs, the student's amount of bananas increased. Each student's monkey had a number that only the student or family knew for confidentiality reasons. Students that were higher on the banana tree signified that their reading level had risen. The purpose of the data wall was to have communicated to the parents the importance of their interactions towards the student's reading level. Parents were encouraged to come visit the wall and a picture was included in every monthly newsletter so that parents could keep track of their student's progress from home as well.

The implementation of the data wall was informative throughout the school year when parents came in for school conferences, meetings, trainings or school visits in general because parents could see where the overall classroom was expected to be and where their child was. Simple visits such as when parents dropped off their students in the morning or picked their student up for a doctor's appointment gave the parents an opportunity for a quick check of the student's data wall progress. Some parents became extremely motivated to moving their child upward on the data wall. This could have been a competitive stance which then increased the child's motivation in asking for more text books from the classroom. These traits demonstrated characteristics that had been identified in the research that students tended to portray their family's habits and values on school. If parents' value of education had more value than other interests in their lives this was shown in the students' performance at school because parents had higher expectations for them.

At the end of each trimester the teacher exchanged each banana for a ticket towards the school's trimester bike raffle and at the end of the year the same amount of bananas were used to distribute tickets for two classroom prizes composed of a scooter, kite and candy. This was another motivator to students and parents along the way. The data had been quantified by counting how many parents had participated in reading strategies as a whole classroom or the personal training and how much growth their child had demonstrated on the school's trimester reading assessment.

In summary, the study focused on the effects of parents' participating in a reading strategies training and the application of the strategies at home when parents read to their child and finally the strategies' effect on their child's reading achievement scores. The

research began with the student's reading assessment administered as a pre-DRA test. This was administered in October and had assessed the student's reading skills before the parent reading strategies training. The assessments continued throughout the year and assessed the child's trimester progress. The last reading assessment was administered in the third week of April. The research was conducted to help understand how the training affected parent involvement. This information helped teachers understand how motivators and specific reading training for parents affected students and their educational reading success. The data in this study helped determine how many times the parents had implemented the strategies at home and the final outcome of the students' reading scores.

Treatment of the Data

Using the data provided from the sign-in sheets that documented the attendance from both the whole classroom reading training and the one-on-one personal reading training, the researcher created tables comparing the data using Microsoft's Excel program. In the first table, the researcher compared the parents' attendance at either of the two training to the reading level the students achieved. The second table compared the amount of reading logs the students turned in with the level of reading success the students demonstrated. The last table compared the student's amount of reading logs with the type of training the parents had attended.

Using Excel, the data was graphed to display the students' and parents' effects of either of the variables on the students' reading level success and on the motivation towards reading by the amount of reading logs turned in.

Summary

In summary the purpose of the project was to visually display data to determine if the reading program's resources, training and information had provided a positive impact on student's attainment of emergent reading success. Using the methods retrieved from the literature review on the influence of parent involvement in reading at home particularity in Latino families and motivation of parents, the continuing part of the study sought to analyze the patterns found in the data. Using appropriate quantitative data, the correct instruments, methodology, design, procedure, and treatment of data were all crucial in the event of further research to replicate the study.

CHAPTER 4

Analysis of the Data

Introduction

The attempt of the research was to address the needs of Latino families in parent involvement. The research focused specifically on how to train Latino parents. The trainings addressed the researcher's concern in the following ways by providing knowledge, training, books, CDs and different time opportunities. The purpose for this was to offer the training to all parents. The program began at the beginning of the year with instruction of the reading strategies to the students. In November, after the parents' reading training, resources continued throughout the year. The conclusion of the program ended with the last trimester reading assessment which documented the students' ending reading level achieved. The overall impact of the trainings and the reading logs turned in were collected through data and compared within Excel tables.

Description of the Environment

The researcher provided the training to her own classroom. The research was conducted at an Early Learning Center in South Central Washington State, during the 2014-2015 school year. The participants in the study had consisted of 20 Spanish monolingual students in a kindergarten classroom in a bilingual late-exit model. The majority of the students in the classroom had not attended preschool or any formal public or private education group. The program was designed for kindergarten instruction to be performed in Spanish for 80% of the day and in English for the remainder part of the time. The time increments stayed the same throughout the entire year in kindergarten as opposed to first, second and third grade levels that increased their English instructional

time throughout the year. The focus content areas were taught in Spanish which included writing, reading, math, science, and phonics studies.

The research in the study provided parent training on the strategies used during the Spanish reading session of the day. Each reading strategy was represented by a different animal image. Students learned to visually remember each strategy by its animal picture. For example sounding out words sound by sound was represented by a turtle and putting the sounds back together and rereading the word was represented by a snake.

The instruction of the strategies for the students had occurred in Spanish and during the literacy portion of the day. The reading daily session consisted of 55 minutes and was broken down into different reading segments. The first 15 minutes was designated to the whole-classroom discussion and read-aloud text using modeled reading. In this portion of the session the reading strategies were discussed one-by-one on a per week basis. This had focused the week's lessons around each particular strategy. The session's environment was generally respectful and students spoke in low voices, except during discussion portion. The teacher then modeled and practiced the same text using student individual copies. This had specific struggles which gave opportunities for students to observe that strategy being implemented to solve a word. After modeling the students would then repeat the strategy in the same text yet on another page. After the modeled lesson students would either make a connection to the book, a prediction or retell the story and discuss with partners the strategies used. As the students progressed towards the middle of the school year, the modeled lessons changed. Students were asked by the teacher which strategy the teacher needed to use when the teacher stumbled on a difficult word. This demonstrated students' independence and mastery of the

strategies. Students would then practice independently with their own student version of the text, modeling how to use the strategies at difficult points. At the end of the introductory portion of the reading session the class followed up with the guided reading group portion of the day. This was where the students were dismissed into their reading level groups to work at their designated reading centers or with the teacher. This was fundamentally important because students had the opportunity to practice with other students at their individual reading level.

This portion of the day was designed from the district program of Balanced Literacy. The groups were composed by reading levels and changed constantly throughout the year as the students' skills grew. Each reading session time was around 15 or 20 minutes depending on the group's reading level. During this portion of the reading session, the centers were focused on building skills, strategies or fluency for the students' developmental reading behaviors. The teacher was specifically focused on practicing the strategies the students had not mastered yet at their specific reading level. The teacher focused the reading groups' lessons around the strategies that each particular group had struggled with most. Higher groups studied reading strategies that had focused on connections versus the average and lower groups who had studied strategies focused on sounding out words or noticing the first letter of a word.

After the reading center's portion of the session had been completed another modeled read was used with a second text. This modeled read was guided as a whole-classroom and student led. This was an opportunity for celebrations. Students were engaged in demonstrating their reading success. The reading session ended with at least two reading sources for the students to have taken home and practiced. The entire

reading session had allowed students to have practiced different modalities of learning by having heard the text, read the text independently, read the text with partners, and finally had the opportunity of taking the text home to have read with family and filling out their reading logs along with the strategy the student had practiced. Reading independently the book before practicing the book with a partner was extremely important since this had allowed students to observe words the student had difficulty in and circling the word. The peer reading time allowed the students to ask their peer partner a strategy to use or had used to solve the word. Then both the students read the story together when it was time for knee-to-knee reading time. During this time the environment was noisy since everyone was reading out loud.

The environment of the parent training had been quiet at first because all the students had been engaged in coloring in their data wall and reading strategy icons. The parents also had been quiet yet engaged because some parents had raised their hands when they needed more explanation on a certain strategy or questions on filling out the reading log. Once in a while there had been a yelp from the little siblings who were coloring at a nearby table or from a parent's baby held in his or her lap but generally the environment was quiet until the pajama reading part of the training. All the students scattered to different parts of the room floor, or any surface in which they could have put their pillow, blanket and hugged their stuffed animal to have played pretend bedtime.

Hypothesis/Research Question

Students who received support at home from parents who assisted in the reading strategies training at school, and had implemented the resources and strategies of a structured reading program with clearly defined expectations and standards, performed

higher on the school's trimester reading assessments than students who did not receive this support.

Null Hypothesis

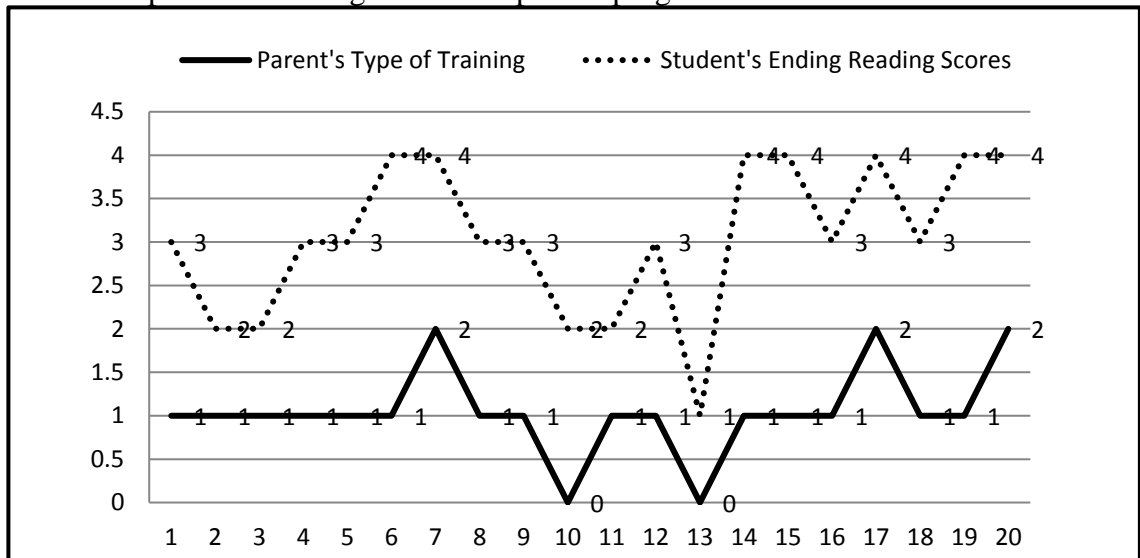
Students who had not received support at home in reading strategies training showed no significant difference in reading scores from students who did.

Results of the Study

In this section the tables represented visually the data that had been obtained from the classroom research. The data was organized into three data sets: the type of training the parents had participated in, the amount of reading logs students had turned in and the reading level the student had achieved. The data sets had been compared visually with linear and bar graphs to examine if there were any particular relationships between groups or if any patterns were portrayed. Non-numerical data had been converted into numerical data for statistical purposes. The non-numerical data included the type of training the parents had attended to and the students and family names. The students and family names were converted into identification numbers and letters. The type of training the family had attended was converted in the following way: the number zero represented the parents who had not attended any of the two training, the number one represented the parents who had attended the whole classroom training, and the number two represented those parents who had attended the individual one-on-one reading training.

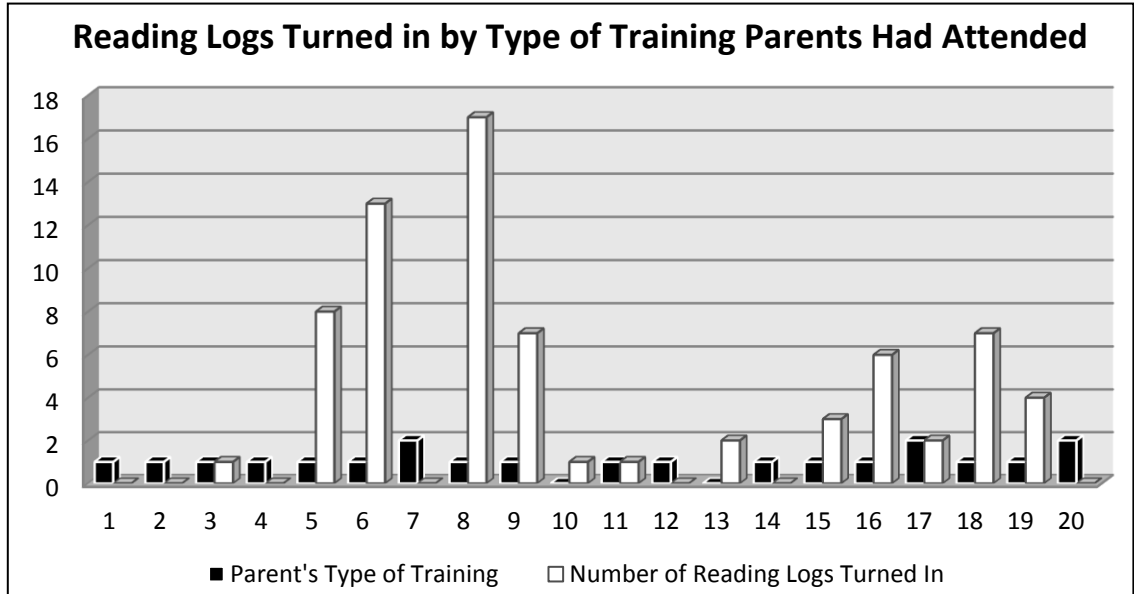
The first table represented the type of trainings each particular family had attended compared to the reading achievement score its corresponding student had achieved. The dotted line represented each student's ending reading assessment score and the black solid line represented the corresponding family's form of training. The data in

this first table demonstrated one connecting visual pattern. The pattern demonstrated that parents who had attended the individual one-on-one training tended to have students that performed at grade level or higher in reading. The same could not be stated for all parents who had attended the general training. This meant that attending the general whole-classroom training itself had not demonstrated a significant impact on the achievement score of a student. The data demonstrated that students whose parents had not attended any of the available training were significantly lower to any of their peers in the class. Therefore the data demonstrated that those parents who had the opportunity to come into the individual one-on-one training had students who were better prepared to be successful. On the other hand those parents who had not participated had not given their students all the possible learning tools to help them progress farther.



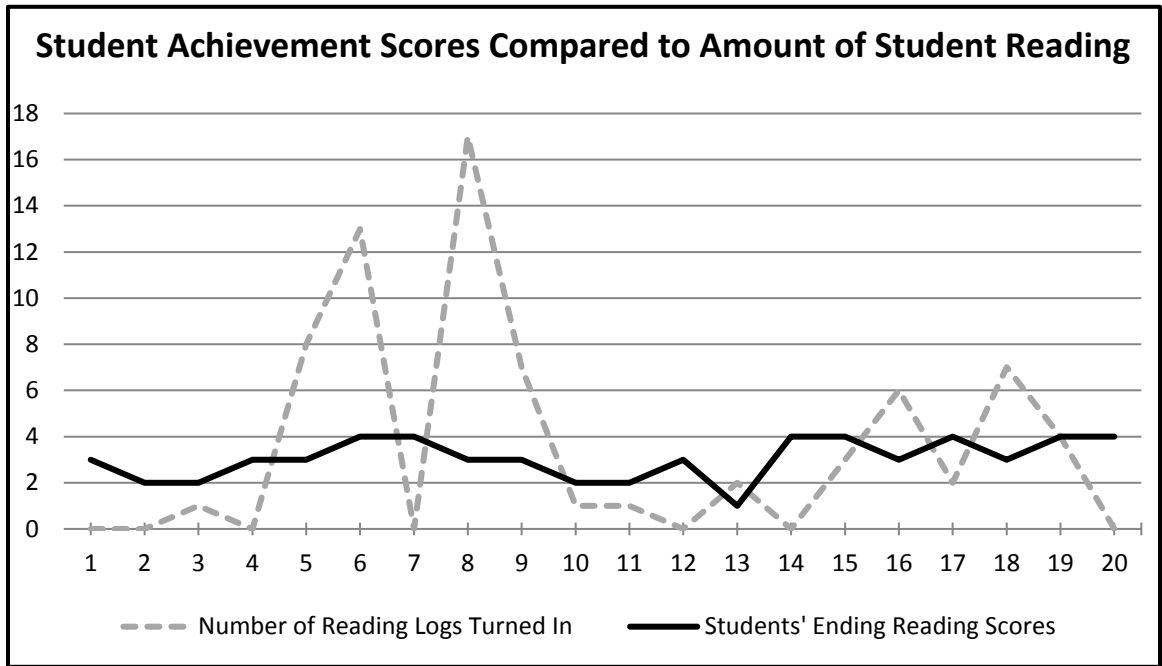
The second two tables demonstrated the amount of student reading logs turned in compared to two different data sets. The following table compared the amount of reading logs turned in by the student to the type of training that particular student's parents had received. The black colored bars represented the type of training the parents had attended in and the white colored bars represented the amount of reading logs the students had

turned in. Neither set of data seemed to affect the other; this could be seen through the comparison of both bars. The type of training had not influenced in any way the implementation of the strategies or the program itself.



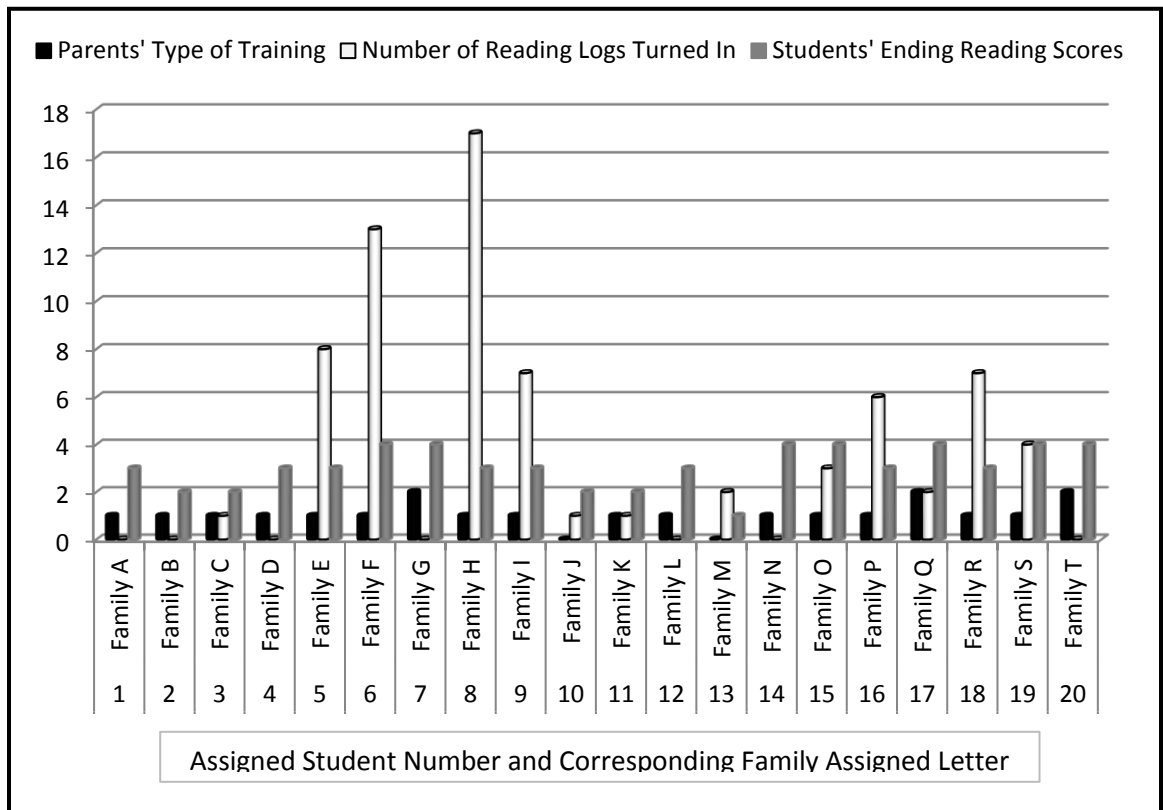
The next table demonstrated a comparison of students’ reading achievement scores with the amount of reading logs turned in. This table used a line graph to visually display the comparison between both sets of data. The black solid line represented the reading level students had achieved at the end of the reading program. The reading levels ranged from level zero to level four. The levels number had represented the complexity of the text. The dotted gray colored line represented the amount of reading logs turned in by the students. The reading log range did not have an ending number since students could turn in as many reading logs as they were able to accomplish. Through the comparison of the two data sets, the visual graph displayed that there had not been any correlation or effect of any of the two data sets onto the other. This meant that students’ amounts of reading logs did not determine their reading success level. Some students had turned in a high amount of reading logs yet their reading scores were not at level. The

opposite was also true as some students had not turned in any reading logs and had accomplished the highest reading level for kindergarten.



The last table compared all three data sets from the collected data. The table's data was visually compared using bar graphs. The black bar represented the type of parent training a particular family had attended. The next white colored bar represented the amount of reading logs each student and his or her family had turned in. Lastly the gray colored bar represented the students' reading level at the end of the program. Through the graph it was visually depicted that the amount of reading logs had no relationship with the other two sets of data. The number of reading logs had not impacted the students' achievement scores. As the amount of reading logs rose or fell the reading achievement score did not follow the same or similar pattern. Through the collection of data it was evident that the only two sets of data that had at least a minimal effect on each other were the type of parent training the families had attended and the achievement score the student had demonstrated at the end of the program. This was visually displayed in

the data because both data sets seemed to have a similar pattern with each other at certain points in the graph. The parents that had attended the one-on-one training had students who had demonstrated higher reading scores compared to their peers. A similar pattern was seen for those parents who did not attend the training or had only attended the whole-classroom training. These students had demonstrated lower reading achievement levels or had not met the ending year's kindergarten reading target.



Findings

The null hypothesis was accepted and the hypothesis tested was not supported in the following ways: First, the amount of reading logs with strategies turned in had no effect on the achievement scores of the students. Some students had not turned in any reading logs at all yet those students had achieved grade level reading scores or the opposite. Students turned in many logs and had not achieved kindergarten reading level.

Second the amount of reading logs had not effectively documented the amount of participation or support at home. This was seen by students who had knowledgeable support at home because their parents had attended the personal training yet had not turned in logs throughout the year. These parents had known what was expected of them and their one-on-one session had given parents the opportunities to ask questions. Their session had demonstrated parents' understating of what was being presented. This setting had been more comfortable compared to the whole-classroom training.

Discussion

Some of the study's findings correlated with expectations that were denoted from the literature in many ways. For example parents who viewed the education process as a high value in their life's priorities transferred these beliefs to their students, since these parents had come in and participated in either of the reading trainings. The same was seen from opposing parents who had not attended the trainings. These families' students had fewer opportunities to master these reading tools as a part of their permanent learning system. The study in general did not support the overall expectation of the parent involvement theory. This was seen through many factors which included the lack of control over the demonstration of participation, the parents' retention of the information and skills parents had been taught, and the opportunities in documenting the parents' values towards education.

Summary

The study was limited to the amount of participants of only one classroom of an n size of 20 with only a one time training of reading strategies. The findings of this research did not support the hypothesis, therefore demonstrating acceptance of the null

hypothesis. This meant that parents who had attended a one-time training on reading strategies had not shown a direct correlation affecting the ending result of students' reading scores.

CHAPTER 5

Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations

Introduction

Parent involvement as a topic was researched in this study for the purpose of knowing if training parents with tools on how to read with their child would increase student's reading achievement scores. The training focused on a range of skills used to work through the first four levels of reading in kindergarten. The goal of the study had been to demonstrate that training Latino parents and being aware of different aspects that affected Latino families provided teachers with the correct tools to train, facilitate, and document how to motivate and incorporate parent involvement strategies into their child's reading achievement success.

Summary

The project's resources, information, opportunities and documentation were set up towards guiding the project towards its intended purpose. The outcomes on the other hand had not supported the general theory of parent involvement. This had been affected by many factors. The first factor that had affected this was the number of participants who had participated during the program. If the amount of families and students had been a larger number the research could have documented more data to represent a more specific and clear pattern of the effects of parents' training on students' reading levels. The second factor that affected the program was how the training was offered. The trainings' strategies could have shown a different pattern of correlation if the training had been organized into several smaller sessions. This would have taught the reading strategies to the parents throughout the year as the students were beginning to implement them in the classroom. Having all the information packed into one informational training

had not provided as much success as seen through the data. The training could have also had more success if all parents had received the training on a personal one-on-one training. Through the project's literature review Latino families needed specific invitations, information, education and directions in an open and safe communication environment. At the conclusion of the program and reflecting on the implementation of the program and the data found it was apparent that informing and educating the parents in a single training was not enough time to build a comfortable relationship and learning opportunity for parents. Some parents felt uncomfortable to open up and ask questions during the whole-classroom training when all families had been present. This information became known in later general report card conferences when parents were in a comfortable individual environment with the teacher. During these conferences at least two parents opened up declaring that they were illiterate. Parents were aware from the beginning that they had been asked for this information in an informal survey at the beginning of the year, yet the parents had not built enough trust and openness to share this information. This information was valuable and was key information towards understanding how to implement the program at other times for a better opportunity for success.

Conclusions

Through the completion of the action research it was evident that the value of the training and its resources had not been implemented in its best form and the high points from the literature review which had explained important key points had not transferred into the implementation of the project. For example, taking into account the need for the families to feel a mutually safe environment, had the trainings all been offered to parents

on a one-on-one basis, more parents would have opened up by asking and understanding the entire trainings content. The training offered many resources, information, strategies, and key details for the student to be successful in each reading level, yet the training was only offered at the beginning reading level, which was where none of the students had difficulties in. Most parents had focused on these beginning strategies, yet the succeeding strategies were those students and parents found difficulty in. Other factors that did not transfer over from the parent involvement frameworks was the in depth view that Latino parents first needed to feel validated and the brief time during the training had not provided sufficient time to validate, appreciate and celebrate the parents' involvement and their student's growth.

Recommendations

From the conclusion of the action research the recommendations from the researcher were the following: First the trainings needed to be separated out throughout the year focusing on the strategies the students were learning at that particular point in time. The trainings could be implemented into four different sessions addressing the four different levels taught in kindergarten. The second recommendation would be to conduct the first training on a one-on-one basis, conducting surveys and relationship-building exercises. After the first trainings the second and following trainings would focus on celebrating the success of the family and the student before continuing to train the parents on the succeeding reading strategies. The fourth training would be composed of small family group training, in which the families would be grouped by similar characteristics only known to the educator in order to ease stress or embarrassment to the families. This would allow parents to create relationships with other parents as the parents learned the

last strategies or practiced strategies the families had not been successful in. This would have to be in an open and safe environment where only the teacher knew about the family's levels in order to provide a safe environment for parents in all trainings. The teacher would then document parent interactions, understandings, and challenges. For those parents who would continue to have struggles, questions or had not demonstrated active participation in the training due to shyness, the teacher would then document this and follow-up the rest of the trainings on a one-on-one basis. The third recommendation would be to detail the strategies used by parents each trimester as a collection of data versus the amount of reading logs. This collection of data would demonstrate if parents were implementing the correct strategies at the correct time of the year. This would focus the support from parents as a growth process versus looking at parent participation as an ending amount total. This information would document what families were actually moving along the reading level progression strategies. The final recommendation would be to conduct the study as a narrative study gathering data, interviews and reflections along the way to address other patterns that may arise that cannot be quantified in data. This would give the researcher more information on how the program could be improved or changed from the parents' view of the program which, overall, was the entire program's focus to involve the parents.

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APPENDIX

Expanded Definition of Terms

Learning A-Z leveled reader texts. These levels were purposefully created to follow DRA and Fountas and Pinnell instructional and assessment levels. The school had paid membership through the district. The program was based on research but had been updated with common core standards. Reading A-Z books offered hundreds of books at developmentally appropriate levels. All books were available in printable student individual copies. These books were sent home and created a student library at home for repeated practice. The Learning A-Z developed its resources with research findings funded by the Put Reading First Federal Initiative. The findings and ease of use of the materials helped educators in teaching reading concepts more successfully.

emergent early reader text. Texts ranged by reading levels focused on different reading skills. The first level focused on one-to-one skills and picture clues. The third and fourth levels focused on ending sounds and sounding out.

emergent literacy. Foundational reading skills were composed of reading one-to-one correspondence of words, directionality left-to-right, return sweep, picture clues, sounding out initial word sounds, ending word sounds, and looking for text visual clues. These were student's initial decoding skills applied on texts leveled one through three.

reading comprehension and connection strategies. The purpose of this was to raise student comprehension and connection abilities. Three different connection strategies were presented and practiced with students: text-to-text, text-to-self and text-to-world. Parents were informed about comprehension strategies and connection strategies during the second trimester. The comprehension strategies shared with parents had consisted of

story setting, characters, main events and beginning, middle and end retelling. All these strategies worked well with students and parents who had accomplished foundational decoding skills in level one and two and who had progressed towards level three.

reading strategies for decoding text. Each specific strategy was represented by a different jungle animal that had been practiced with parents through the implementation of the reading log. Each strategy represented an ability students had learned when reading and becoming caught in a specific word or spot. These reading strategies were each shared with parents during reading events and conferences. Each strategy animal had a similarity to the skill that was taught. This made strategies easier to remember for students. An example was Stretchy the Snake. Students practiced physically stretching out a word and practiced each sound and then putting them together.