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CULTURAL AND PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT AFFECT ON ENGLISH LEARNERS READING DEVELOPMENT

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ABSTRACT

Examining the instructional reading strategies that happen in the Bilingual classrooms is needed if we, as educators expect an increase parent or guardian involvement that will support the students' reading development. Research has shown students who have a strong literacy foundation in early elementary years are often successful in later grades Cook, C., Health F., and Thompson, R.L. (2000). The number of ELLs (English Language Learner) increased in U.S. schools, and the literacy gap between ELLs and students who speak English as a first language continues to increase (Rodríguez, 2008). ELLs need to gain oral language skills and literacy in English in an effective manner to gain the same level of proficiency as mainstream students. Identifying effective instructional literacy strategies for children from various linguistic backgrounds will foster in providing suitable instruction to meet ELLs' needs. Examining how teachers strengthen a partnership with caregivers to support K-3 ELLs regarding reading strategies may contribute to the students' reading achievement.

Keywords: English Language Learners, Parental Involvement, Reading Strategies.

INTRODUCTION

English Language Learners are students whose first language is other than English and who are learning English (Vance, 2008). English Language Learners are also students who identified any language other than English as spoken in the home in the Home Language Survey completed on registering for school (Chicago Public School District, 2014). Children whose home is not rich in literacy experiences, such as having books to read, a place for reading, listening to someone read aloud, and who do not receive deep language communication, may not develop the necessary foundation in vocabulary needed to succeed academically (Silverman, 2007).

Teachers must help ELLs become proficient readers by addressing their linguistic and learning needs. Language emerges over time, similar to developing reading comprehension (Brown & Broemmel, 2011). ELLs need additional support inside and outside the classroom to be able to process the language and access background knowledge; identifying reading strategies is significant in helping ELLs gain reading proficiency. When children fall behind in reading, they seldom make satisfactory progress to reach grade level (Barr, Eslami, & Joshi, 2012). Once students fall behind in reading, comprehension falls further behind and leads to weak spelling and writing skills (Barr et al., 2012). These hindrances create a vicious cycle. According to Harper & Pelletier (2010), ELLs perform between 40 and 60 points below native English language speakers on achievement tests; low achieving students are not able to perform academically because they have not gained basic literacy skills. ELLs acquire social English language in two years, and need five to 10 years to gain academic level proficiency in English (Collier, S., & Auerbach, 2011). ELL students are behind in comparison to native English language speakers.

A factor in student academic success is family involvement in the child's education (Gibbons, 2010). Caregiver involvement is important in every child's education; however, it is especially important for the child whose family is from a differing linguistic background (Harper & Pelletier,

2010). Parents who communicate with their child's school are more informed and might serve as a mediator between positive academic achievement and parent involvement (Harper & Pelletier, 2010). Harper and Pelletier (2010) measured native English speaking parents and ELL parents' level of communication, participation, and knowledge of their kindergartners' learning. The researchers found considerable differences between the amount of communication between the two groups of parents and the teachers. Harper and Pelletier suggested the infrequency of communication from the ELL parents could result from language barriers, not a lack of interest in their child's education. Communication between caregivers and teachers is important in building a collaborative partnership between home and school to support the ELL's academic success.

1. Barriers Affecting ELL Reading Achievement

ELLs are affected by differences that English speakers are not, such as cultural backgrounds, and schooling conditions. Students who report English as a second language encounter academic risks that may include underachievement, grade retention, and poor reading acquisition (Gyovai et al., 2009). Not all ELLs with reading difficulties have learning disabilities in neither reading nor any other area. Gyovai et al. (2009) showed schools continue having difficulty with assessment and professional development to service ELLs (Gyovai et al., 2009). ELLs need to receive suitable instruction and support that will prepare them for academic success.

2. Cultural Differences

Cultural differences contribute to the students' learning progress; knowledge of his or her culture will help in understanding their thought process and academic norms (Daniel & Hoelting, 2008). Cultural mismatches challenge ELLs who migrated to the United States, and they must assimilate quickly to being a student and learning acceptable norms. Incorporating the student's culture, first language (L1), and their background knowledge will help develop phonemic awareness and literacy skills (Daniel & Hoelting, 2008). The teacher should create lessons addressing ELLs' needs concerning reading development by using the students' culture as a resource (Daniel & Hoelting, 2008). Developing lessons embracing the students' culture and helping connect the material may positively contribute to reading development. Daniel and Hoelting (2008) suggested in Mexican culture, children and parents show respect by not making eye contact, a cultural mismatch. A common theme throughout the literature was minority parents and cultural mismatches. Teachers can clarify these cultural mismatches by addressing the behavior so it does not interfere with learning (Daniel & Hoelting, 2008). Becoming familiar with the ELLs' culture can help the teacher modify the curriculum to address the ELLs' needs (Mays, 2008). Once the teacher is aware that the ELLs' behavior is part of their culture, the distraction is removed and both the students and teacher should be able to focus on the lesson.

Hardin et al. (2010) found children from diverse cultural and linguistic groups have different experiences, or funds of knowledge, that need to be used as a resource to help develop their language skill development. Oral language development contributes to reading acquisition and supports phonological decoding (DeThorne, Petrill, Schatschneider, & Cutting, 2010). Supporting the student's oral development of their native language will provide opportunities for implementation of cognates (Kelley & Kohnert, 2012). When learning a second language, encoding of new words occur using the student's first language to gain meaning of the word in the second language. Overlapping of the same word's form and meaning may occur in both languages, thereby helping to gain understanding of the meaning (Kelley & Kohnert, 2012). Cognates help by increasing vocabulary and gaining reading comprehension that contributes to reading proficiency.

Students' first language and cultural differences should be used by teachers as a resource to help transform experiences into new learning. Hardin et al. (2010) studied 48 teachers and teacher-assistants in pre-K training as a means to identify and develop developing action plans supporting ELL students and parents. The researchers suggested at the end of the program, the teachers and staff were making greater effort in communicating with parents and increase parental involvement (Hardin et al.,

2010). Teachers began representing the students' cultures in the classroom by incorporating family traditions, creating opportunities for family members to become involved, translating books to the child's home language, and sending home projects. Integrating the home language and culture into the curriculum helped teachers deliver lessons that were more meaningful in culturally diverse classrooms (Hardin et al., 2010). The researchers found that cooperation between parents and teachers of ELLs has a positive influence on the classroom climate and level of learning that occurs (Hardin et al., 2010). A common theme emerging throughout the research showed parent and guardian involvement in their child's school correlates to an increase of student academic achievement.

3. Literacy Strategies

ELLs need specific skills to gain English reading proficiency and meet the same academic goals as students whose first language is English (Oh, Haagaer, & Windmeuller, 2007). Oh et al. (2007) used the Dynamic Indicator of Basic Early Literacy Skills (DIBELS) as a predictor for ELLs' reading success. Oh et al. (2007) examined the development of necessary reading skills in K-3 ELLs who were learning to read using an English language curriculum. The researchers identified letter naming and phonological awareness as key parts for reading instruction. Oh et al. examined these skills to help identify useful strategies for ELL children needing intervention. They found rapid letter naming as a predictor for ELL's reading development. The researchers demonstrated ELL students need a strong foundational skill of rapid letter recognition because that skill may help with decoding words (Oh et al., 2007). The findings in this study helped teachers change their instruction to meet the needs of ELLs in an English curriculum (Oh et al., 2007).

3.1 Fluency

For the purpose of this study, fluency is identified as the speed, accuracy of reading, and comprehension. Reading fluency includes vocabulary knowledge, lexile access, semantic skills, syntactic understanding, background knowledge, and inferential comprehension (Baker et al., 2011). Reading fluency is an indicator of English reading performance for students, including ELLs (Baker et al., 2011). Perfetti (1985) indicated in his verbal efficiency theory, readers who are proficient in basic reading can develop complex comprehension skills. To gain the comprehension skills, the reader must be able to read words accurately and effortlessly. LaBerge and Samuels' (1974) automaticity theory indicated comprehension is gained when the text requires minimal conscious effort. Fluency increases a reader's ability to comprehend the text and make connections. Phonological awareness, vocabulary development, fluency, and comprehension develop simultaneously and contribute to reading proficiency (Baker et al. 2011).

3.2 Prior Knowledge

Lawrence (2007) recommended bilingual students receive strategy instruction focusing on prior knowledge. Activating prior knowledge increases his or her motivation and self-efficacy (Chamot & O'Malley, 1996). Each student brings different experiences that shape their thoughts (Holmes, Rutledge, & Gauthier, 2009). To bridge the academic gap between ELL students and mainstream students, teachers must know how to link the students' cultural background and activate prior knowledge to improve reading and writing acquisition (Holmes et al., 2009).

Chamot and O'Malley (1996) examined the Cognitive Academic Language Learning Approach (CALLA) as an instructional model to increase achievement in ELLs. CALLA was developed on research conducted with both ELL and native English language students to understand the learning process to improve instruction for ELLs (Chamot & O'Malley, 2007). The CALLA approach integrates language development in content areas, explicit reading instruction helping students understand, and remember content by incorporating a student's prior knowledge (Chamot & O'Malley, 1996). Chamot and O'Malley (1996) showed teachers could use CALLA to increase academic success for both ELL classes and regular classrooms as well as low-income students and all other at-risk students. According to Chamo and O'Malley, Reading fluency is an indicator of English reading performance teachers and students to create a community of thinkers. ELLs have unique experiences and using those experiences as a resource will contribute to reading acquisition.

3.3 Vocabulary

Vocabulary knowledge is a major part of early literacy development and provides the foundation for learning. Bilingual students who receive vocabulary strategies usually increase their level of English language competence (Gorman, 2012). Focusing on such skills is important because many children enter school with little vocabulary knowledge to help support literacy acquisition (Silverman, 2007). Silverman (2007) conducted a study examining the effectiveness of a kindergarten vocabulary intervention through storybook read-aloud using the Multidimensional Vocabulary Program (MVP). Silverman compared 44 students speaking English-only (EO) and 28 ELL students to determine if the same type of instruction would be equally effective at supporting the vocabulary development of these two groups of children with potentially different English vocabulary learning needs. Silverman found that even though ELL students had lower vocabulary knowledge at the beginning of the year, they showed faster rates of growth than EO students over the year. Silverman also found ELL students could learn words from instruction as fast as or faster than EOs if teaching methods were suitable to meet the ELL student needs.

Supporting the vocabulary development of ELLs by providing repetitive, introduction to unfamiliar words will help students gain a richer vocabulary, thus improving their output (Anthony, 2008). Teachers need to provide students with repeated opportunities to engage in new activities that offer interactions with the new words (Montelongo, Hernandez, Herter, & Cuello, 2011). Supporting vocabulary development of ELL students may narrow the academic gap between EOs and ELLs (Silverman, 2007). Examining vocabulary strategies used by teachers in the classroom and how they may be implemented outside the classroom with the support from the parents and guardians may contribute to an increase in reading development of ELLs.

3.4 Choral Reading

Reading fosters opportunities to learn new vocabulary and writing styles. Anthony (2008) defined language output as the purposeful language used to increase opportunities to communicate through collaborative conversation, vocabulary, reading, and writing. Reading strategies should occur at all stages of reading, before, during, and after. Strategies to increase output opportunities may include choral reading because this gives the ELLs a chance to take part in producing language, hear the fluency in readers, and recognize if they (ELLs) read or pronounced something incorrectly (Anthony, 2008). Anthony (2008) indicated choral reading is helpful with ELLs because the indirect feedback is less embarrassing and allows the student to continue participating while remaining confident.

A strategy to help ELL students with language output is reader's theater. Reader's theater gives students a chance to engage in dialogue and think aloud, which allows students to understand the thinking process and discuss the strategy used (Anthony, 2008). Reading strategies that provide opportunities for intentional language output help ELL students increase vocabulary and English language proficiency (Anthony, 2008). Teachers could also create a literary environment by including students' background knowledge and providing explicit, repetitive procedures for problem solving. Teachers should model and reinforce these strategies until task completion (Anthony, 2008).

Although the teacher seeks intentional language output, a common theme throughout the literature was that teachers should incorporate background knowledge into the dialogue. Recognizing that students of various linguistic groups can be used as a resource in helping ELLs develop language skills needed to gain English reading proficiency (Hardin et al., 2010). Collaborative conversations should include opportunities for students to have natural conversations in which the teacher is not dominating the discussion (Anthony, 2008). The communicative expectation is for the student to contribute to the conversation and provide longer and more complex responses while connecting to personal experiences and increasing vocabulary.

3.5 Phonological Awareness

Phonological awareness is essential for young learners to develop the skills needed for vocabulary and literacy proficiency. Early intervention through phonological awareness and interactive book reading supports literacy acquisition (Silverman, 2007). Silverman (2007) found

kindergarteners could comprehend oral language at a much higher rate than they can read and teachers should contextualize vocabulary instruction in shared reading. The results showed ELLs could learn the same amount of words from instruction as EO students. EO students knew more of the targeted words before the intervention, but there was no difference between EOs' and ELLs' knowledge of target words at the end of the program or the six week-follow up (Silverman, 2007). Vocabulary is significant because it provides the basis for spoken and written communication (Gorman, 2012). Intentionally targeting the language output of children learning English as a second language is an important strategy to use in the classroom because it fosters vocabulary development and reading acquisition (Anthony, 2008). Providing purposeful language and increasing opportunities to speak through collaborative conversation with students is a predictor of vocabulary scores (Gorman, 2012). Children who receive higher levels of opportunities to speak in a collaborative conversation achieve greater syntactic growth (Anthony, 2008). Engaging students in repetitive, meaningful introduction to unfamiliar words will help students gain a richer vocabulary. (Anthony, 2008). Students who have a first language other than English often see words in their reading they do not know. These unfamiliar words affect their fluency and comprehension (Montelongo et al., 2011). Providing ELLs' strategies to increase fluency may help with reading comprehension. ELLs need specific skills to manipulate phonemes before being able to make sense of printed symbols such as words and letters (Gyovai et al., 2009).

School achievement is lower in children whose first language is not English (Swanson, Orosco, Lussier, Gerber, & Guzman-Orth, 2011). Swanson et al. (2011) examined the cognitive process predicting reading acquisition in ELL children referred to as phonological process and oral language. The cognitive process focuses on short-term memory (STM) and working memory (WM). STM and WM are part of reading acquisition in ELL children. STM predicts word identification and WM predicts comprehension. Swanson et al. (2011) noted a correlation between ELLs' phonological awareness, vocabulary development, and second language reading outcomes. The research showed a link between children who have difficulty reading and second language acquisition because it requires short-term-retention of information that may be a predictor of weak phonological processing (Swanson et al., 2011). However, WM mentally stores and manipulates information. Both WM and STM are used simultaneously in reading acquisition of ELLs. The level of phonological awareness and phoneme manipulation contributes to reading fluency.

4. Benefits of Caregiver Involvement

A child's academic success is based less on income or social status than on the level of adult participation encouraging learning in the home and at school (Grace et al., 2012). A consistent theme of parent or guardian, or caregiver involvement being positively correlated to the level of academic achievement a student will reach surfaced throughout the literature. If caregivers are actively involved in their child's education, the child's reading achievement and academic engagement are likely to improve (Loera et al., 2011). The quality and level of parent and guardian involvement in literacy in the home is an indicator of the level of reading motivation of the student. The influence of caregivers in a minority child's (ELL) education is imperative in helping bridge the academic gap (Loera et al., 2010). Schools cannot isolate caregivers; both need to work together to succeed. Collaboration between caregivers, teachers, and the community leads to a partnership and relationship that can benefit the students (Good et al., 2010).

Children have social, emotional, and physical needs that must be met. A caregiver's failure to meet these needs may have a long-lasting negative effect on a child's academic achievement (Grace, Jethro, & Aina, 2012). Caregivers are the child's first teacher. As the child develops from infant to toddler to preschooler and enters kindergarten, the amount of caregiver involvement affects the influence the caregiver will have on the child's academic achievement (Grace et al., 2012).

Parents and guardians who are involved in their child's education give the child confidence to be academically successful (Eliason & Jenkins, 2003). The parent's perspective toward education affects the child's behavior toward school. The school experiences a child has relate to

the home culture and the level of parent or guardian participation in the student's education. Adults who are involved with their child's education help promote confidence, higher motivation, and improved behavior (Vellymalay, 2010). A common theme present in the literature showed lack of parent or guardian participation leads to poor academic performance. A proposed solution to increase academic achievement is to increase the home-to-school connection. Student proficiency, achievement, and grades correlate to parent or guardian contribution (Henderson & Mapp, 2002). Parents or guardians want to be involved in their child's education, but often do not know how to become part of the school community.

5. Home Literacy Environment

Children in the United States enter kindergarten with various literacy related skills. Evans, Shaw, and Bell (2000) suggested the literacy skills students have in kindergarten was an indicator of academic success they could have in later years. Martini and Sénéchal (2012) stated children's reading skills were established early in the home and are indicators of a child's academic success. Providing children with literacy development activities in the home will have a positive academic outcome (Sénéchel & LeFevre, 2002). Activities such as shared reading contribute to oral language development. Explicitly teaching literacy skills in the home contributes to letter recognition and sound (Sénéchal & LeFevre, 2002).

Exposing children to various literacy activities in the home increases their chances for higher reading proficiency (Burgess, 2011). Literacy activities in the home may include learning vocabulary through shared reading and providing experiences such as taking the child to the library (Burgess, 2011). Supporting a child's education through a partnership with the school is essential in the child's academic success (Collier & Auerbach, 2011). Home-to-school partnerships contribute to the student's academic success. These partnerships empower the caregiver to support their child and incorporate their background experiences, culture, and language throughout the curriculum implemented by the teacher. Providing a literacy-rich home environment supports the child's academic experience and supports the home-to-school connection.

6. Factors Influencing Caregiver Involvement

When teachers and caregivers communicate (regularly), students are more likely to succeed (Good et al. (2010). A direct link of positive academic outcomes exists when communication between the home and school is present. Caregiver involvement provides direct support for long-term academic achievement (Bagin, Gallagher, & Moore, 2008). However, maintaining communication between home and school is a challenge for both sides. Good et al. (2010) found that when teachers and caregivers did not communicate well, the performance of mainstream students and ELLs suffered. Good et al. (2010) also examined the experiences of the ELLs' caregivers and teachers to uncover the barriers hindering ELLs' achievement. Good et al. (2010) suggested the lack of parent involvement and communication between teacher and guardians contributed to student under performance. Caregivers' involvement in their child's education helps bridge the academic gap between students who speak English as their first language and ELL students.

Nevertheless, Good et al. (2010) found ELL caregivers often did not receive support when they moved into new school districts. The researchers recommended teacher training in multiculturalism to improve ELLs' academic success. The researchers believed the training would help teachers become familiar with the students' culture and traditions. This training could be a resource for teachers to increase caregiver participation and establish successful home-to-school relationships (Good et al., 2010). Good et al.'s (2010) study also identified a communication gap between parents or guardians and teachers and revealed a lack in the home-to-school partnership. Parents and guardians explained schools should embrace and respect the ethnicity of the families they serve. Parents and guardians further expressed teachers should be more knowledgeable of the culture and emotional needs of the ELL students so they can provide the academic support ELL students need (Good et al., 2010). Knowing the students' cultural background will provide teachers an

understanding of the community they serve. Teachers will be able to help connect the content being taught, develop, create, and implement strategies targeting the needs of ELL students.

Various barriers, such as the inability to understand English, unfamiliarity with the school system, and differences in the cultural norms, challenge ELL caregivers. Likewise, communicating with ELL parents or guardians, especially those who have low literacy levels in their native language, is a challenge for schools. Offering multiculturalism training to teachers will foster caregiver participation because of the understanding of the culture and trust developed (Varela, 2008). Many ELL caregivers want to be involved in their child's education and will demonstrate it when they believe their culture is recognized as valuable in their child's learning (Varela, 2008). To support the home-to-school connection focused on reading strategies, teachers need to build multicultural partnerships with the parents and guardians. The school needs to embrace the ELL caregivers and their culture by involving them without marginalizing any existing differences (Varela, 2008). Teachers should show an appreciation for various cultures and linguistic diversity; acceptance of cultural differences may help build respectful, trusting home-to-school connections.

7. Teacher's Role in Caregiver Involvement

Teachers are important in the life of a student. Teachers have the responsibility to influence their students' lives and may do so by creating a partnership with the student's family to support the child's academic needs (Edwards & Da Fonte, 2012). Therefore, finding ways to collaborate with parents or guardians is important in a child's education. Collaboration between caregivers and teachers creates open communication that may lead to caregivers feeling comfortable sharing concerns and seeking ways to become more involved. Respecting, accepting, and recognizing a family's culture and incorporating it into the academic process helps create the partnership (Edwards & Da Fonte, 2002). Collaboration between caregivers and teachers provides opportunities for students to include their culture in school projects and may lead to an increase in confidence and acceptance.

Caregiver participation in their child's education within ELL groups is lower and of different quality than groups who speak English as their first language (Auerbach, 2007). A lack of caregiver involvement results from cultural differences (Christianakis, 2011). Loera et al., (2011) show parents want to be active participants in their child's education. Minority parents want to be involved and contribute to their child's education with the support from teachers (Epstein, 1986). A common theme emerging throughout the literature is student learning may improve when caregivers are involved in their child's education. Increasing parent or guardian involvement can occur when schools build direct relationships with caregivers and embrace multiculturalism leading to feeling welcomed (Lumpkin, 2010). Supporting the home-to-school connections may include establishing parent or guardian advisory groups to discuss ways to increase student learning. Conducting annual orientations to promote communication between home and school to encourage participation in parent or guardian-student learning sessions (Lumpkin, 2010) and improve reading development of the students may support the home-to-school connection. Including other family members, such as grandparents, adult siblings, or aunts and uncles will promote an increase in the home-to-school partnership (Lumpkin, 2010).

Communication between caregivers and teachers is important to support the home-to-school connection regarding reading development. Teachers may unintentionally hinder partnerships with caregivers by not explaining homework policies, by not initiating contact, or not valuing the student's home language (Christianakis, 2011). Christianakis (2011) found working-class caregivers did not participate as much as middle-class caregivers. Working-class caregivers were identified as parents of ELLs and middle-class caregivers as English speakers. Teachers involved in Christianakis' study made negative assumptions about the working-class caregivers who did not participate. The teachers failed to mention caregivers did not become involved because they were intentionally not invited or communication was not initiated by the teacher (Christianakis, 2011). Caregivers want to participate in their child's education, but often do not know how to become

involved. Teachers have the responsibility of communicating ways for caregivers to be active participants in their child's education, to support reading development outside of the classroom.

7.1 Teacher Training Regarding Caregiver Participation

Teacher training regarding increasing caregiver involvement and communication with parents creates opportunities to develop partnerships to support students. Programs such as "Child, Family, School Connections" offer teacher candidates opportunities to use strategies to gain caregiver involvement in various ways. Although the program is not specific to increasing caregiver support on reading strategies, the home-to-school connection is recognized as an important factor in a child's academic development.

A factor impeding caregiver involvement in the classroom is teachers may not have the proper training in communicating effectively with caregivers to encourage participation in their child's education. Schools have good intentions of educating children, but education cannot be achieved alone (LaRocque, 2011). This effort requires caregivers' support. Involvement from the student's caregiver is not the same in every school, classroom, or child. Some caregivers are more engaged than others and are involved in traditional ways, whereas other parents participate in nontraditional ways (LaRocque, 2011). Parents or guardians may not participate in the same way; however, their involvement in their child's education contributes to increased academic achievement (LaRocque, 2011). Researchers agreed parental and guardian involvement positively supports a child's academic growth.

The home-to-school connection is helpful to students, caregivers, and teachers. Teachers gain insight into how to better meet the needs of the students, and caregivers develop a trusting relationship with the teacher (LaRocque, 2011). However, some teachers have admitted their training on working with caregivers is limited (Kessler-Sklar, Piotrkowski, Parker, & Amy, 1999). Kessler-Sklar et al. (1999) found that teachers had minimal knowledge regarding various types of participation from caregivers. Many teachers are not receiving suitable training on how to engage caregivers in becoming involved in their child's classroom. Teachers should receive training on approaches to seek parent participation.

Ferrara (2005) analyzed teacher training programs and found the following short falls: a) prospective teachers did not receive suitable training in caregiver communication, those teachers later reported minimal caregiver involvement, b) teachers learn content, but not strategies for building collaborative relationships with parents or guardians, c) prospective teachers received some information regarding parental involvement, but the training did not demonstrate the value parent involvement contributes to the classroom. As a result the "Child, Family, School Connections" program was changed by teacher candidates to provide more tools to increase caregiver involvement. The program was introduced to teacher candidates as a tool to gain insight into the value of parental and guardian involvement. The program focused on strategies used to increase caregiver participation and the teacher's role in the community as a liaison to engage caregivers in their child's education (Ferrara, 2005). Prospective teacher candidates were required to create a parent tool kit, communicate with their mentor, and increase caregivers' involvement in their child's education (Ferrara, 2005).

Epstein's six frameworks model on parent involvment was used as a guide for the parent tool kit on parent involvement (Ferrara, 2005). In Epstein's dimension of the first framework, parenting, she suggests creating a Parent Time Place within the school where caregivers could meet with teachers and information was available for them. Epstein encourages teachers to create a teacher pamphlet providing important information, such as phone numbers and websites in her second dimension of the framework, communication. This document enables two-way communication between caregivers and teachers so that both parties can understand what the child needs for success (Ferrara, 2005).

Volunteering is the third dimension of the framework and may be interpreted in various ways. Caregivers can interpret volunteering as helping in the classroom or office during school hours. Many caregivers work day hours,

therefore volunteering is difficult (Ferrara, 2005). To have a consensus on the expectations on volunteering in traditional and nontraditional ways, a teacher candidate developed a classroom committee of parents and guardians. The committee worked with teachers to design a workshop focusing on volunteering opportunities (Ferrara, 2005). The workshop offered caregivers different options and expectations for volunteering, which may lead to higher school participation from caregivers because opportunities are identified to meet the their schedule.

Part of being involved includes the fourth dimension of the framework, learning at home. This framework supports the home-to-school connection by creating a specific time and designated area in the home for the child to study (Ferrara, 2005). A pamphlet was created by prospect candidate teachers with specific information to help parents understand homework responsibilities. The pamphlet also contained a recommendation for caregivers to contact the teacher if the student is having a difficult time completing the assignment which further encouraged the home-to-school partnership.

The learning-at-home framework encourages communication between the caregivers and teacher to support the student's development in the classroom. The fifth dimension of the framework is decision-making. Parents often do not become involved in school governance issues. Some administrators view parental involvement in governance issues as intrusive (Ferrara, 2005). However, when caregivers become involved in the decision-making process of the school, they join teachers and administrators to collaborate in problem solving. Caregiver involvement will increase in school governance when parents are aware of school issues and think they can contribute to resolving the problem (Ferrera, 2005).

The final framework is collaboration with the community. Students come from various economic backgrounds, and some caregivers may not have the financial resources to purchase what their child needs for school (Ferrara, 2005). Through a partnership with local businesses, the school in the study created a supply cabinet sponsored by businesses and other individuals to provide school supplies for students in need (Ferrera, 2005). Collaboration between the community and school helps support the home-to-school connection by providing needed school supplies to support academic achievement.

Teacher programs focus on content and lack instruction on strategies to gain parental involvement (Kessler-Sklar et al., 1999). Preparing teachers with strategies to collaborate with parents will increase parental involvement and support the child's academic success. Parents and teachers play an important role in the cognitive development of students. Teachers specifically influence the development of the child through lessons and their education philosophy (Lynch, 2010). A teacher's beliefs about reading, strategies implemented, and techniques used in the classroom provide information about a child's learning experience.

Summary and Conclusion

The importance of the home-to-school connection on reading practices of ELLs. Testing data indicate ELLs do not perform as well as mainstream students, but the tests may not accurately measure ELLs academic abilities (Good et al., 2010). Providing lessons and strategies tailored to meet the needs of ELLs will help them gain literacy proficiency and possibly bridge the academic gap. Examining the reading strategies, approaches, and resources teachers of ELLs in K-3 are using in the classroom may help build collaborative relationships between teachers and ELLs' caregivers and increase reading development of students. Particularistic qualitative studies of this phenomenon are warranted and the proposed study may provide information of approaches, strategies and resources teachers of ELLs are using in the classroom to support the home-to-school connections. Although research exists on reading strategies for ELLs, research on the reading strategies teachers use in the classroom that can be used at home to promote the home-to-school connection and increase reading development of the student is sparse.

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