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Dueling Perspectives on School to Home Literacy

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Dueling Perspectives on School to Home Literacy

Kimberly Zimmer

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Abstract

The purpose of this qualitative study is to research what the different perspectives are on how to enhance literacy at the home along with what home literacy strategies parents, teachers, and principals would like for the school or district to provide. The goal of this research study is to help inform ways to support my students' parents in closing the school to home literacy gap. This study was completed through interviews with parents, teachers, and a principal in a suburban school district. Through my research, I have found some gaps in the strategies and programs the parents *would* like and those that the district and school already provide and *would* like to provide.

Introduction

Can you help me? That's a question children ask me all the time. Sometimes I refer to it

as the most asked question. I constantly find myself wondering if a child asking for help, is it

because he/she truly needs help or because he/she wants it. One day, when I was substitute

teaching a first grade class, I heard a quiet voice ask me the question first thing in the morning. I

turned to the little girl and asked what she needed help with. She said that the teacher had given

her an A letter page to finish for homework. There was no one to help her with it at home she

told me with tears in her eyes. I knew how she felt. Growing up, both my parents worked full

time. There was no constant source of homework help, someone to read to me, listen to me

reading, or even someone to help me learn to write. My parents were not home a lot for academic

support but they made up for it in other ways because they held literacy in such high regards.

Research Problem

In today's educational world, there is an enormous emphasis on literacy learning. Murphy

& Haller (2015) argue that literacy has become a focal point in education because it is seen as a

gateway to access the curriculum across content areas. Additionally, the result of this is a

powerful and sweeping reform in education (Murphy & Haller, 2015). Schools are concerned

with the reading levels and writing abilities of their students more than ever. Part of the increase

in the concern stems from the introduction of the Common Core State Standards (CCSS)

("EngageNY", 2015). These new standards place an emphasis on the students' levels and

development throughout the school year to reach the state goal of college and career readiness

("EngageNY", 2015). Naturally, along with these changes and developments comes increased

accountability for teachers to get students to achieve literacy mastery. Champ (2015) discusses

how the Annual Professional Performance Review in New York State aims to "improve teacher

effectiveness… [by measuring] student-achievement outcomes and closing the achievement

gaps" (p. 34). By increasing the rigor in the standards, this increases accountability for teachers

in helping their students reach literacy mastery. But, it is interesting to note that this is already

changing.

The involvement of parents in a student's life outside of school is one way to increase

their literacy learning (Lynch, 2010; Dove, Neuharth-Pritchett, Wright, and Wallinga, 2015). For

this study, I define parental involvement when it comes to literacy, as any activity that a parent

does with their child in the form of reading, writing, speaking, or listening. In a study done by

Dove, Neuharth-Pritchett, Wright, and Wallinga (2015) it was shown that when parents were

involved, there was a significant improvement in overall scores. This parental involvement could

be as simple as a parent questioning their child about how their day went. Children who are

actively engaged in literacy activities both in and outside of school are more likely to be

successful in the subject of literacy (Dove et al. 2015). In fact, parental involvement in a child's

academic life is so vital that it was included in the creation of No Child Left Behind Act ("U.S.

Department of Education", 2015).

The goal of the school, where this study takes place, is to have students' families

involved in what's going on at school in the hope of creating a more successful outcome for

students. Sukhbaatar (2014) discusses that there is an increased need for parental support in

meeting the new, rigorous high standards. There appears to be a separation between school and

home life when it comes to a child's literacy learning. How can educators help parents to bridge

the school-home gap?

Rationale

This study is important because studies have shown the high impact parental involvement has on a child's literacy development (Klemenĉiĉ, Mirazchiyski, & Sandoval-Hernandez, 2014). With the implementation of these new rigorous Common Core standards, students need to be immersed in literacy as much as possible. This immersion needs to occur not only in school but also outside of school, in the home setting. Parents and teachers need to find ways to work together to make the best opportunity for students' literacy learning to flourish.

If districts recognize the importance of both literacy learning and parental involvement, then why aren't parental perspectives on literacy investigated more? Perhaps districts need to look into what they can do to help parents take on a more active role than they already are in regards to bringing literacy into the home life. There is a stigma out in the world that parents, especially those that are not more involved, do not care. This is not true according to a study done by Walker, Shenker, & Hoover-Oempsey (2010). They looked into why parents were involved and there were a wide variety of reasons such as motivation, perception, and culture. The bottom line is that parents do care.

I believe that if educators looked more into what values parents see in literacy, then we as educators can really begin to help our students reach literacy success quicker. In addition, this study will help districts and teachers begin to see what supports parents feel they need, in order to enhance the connection between home and school literacy.

Research Question

My research questions are (a) What are some parental and teacher perspectives on how to enhance literacy in the home and (b) What could schools and districts do to help support parents

in enhancing literacy in the home? To explore my questions, I interviewed both parents and

teachers to help me to gather qualitative data for my study.

Purpose

The purpose of my study is to look at what parents think of literacy in the home and

school. Furthermore, I also explore what additional supports parents would like to receive from

both their child's teacher and the school district. The goal of this study is to bridge the gap

between home and school literacy.

Literature Review

There has been a myriad of research done involving parents and the education of their

children (Lynch, 2010; Dove et al., 2015; Klemenĉiĉ et al., 2014; Crosby et al., 2015). The

purpose of this study is to look at what parents think about literacy in the home and what

additional supports parents believe would help with the task of enhancing literacy in the home.

Parental Involvement Leads to Success

Importance of Parent Involvement

There have been a myriad of studies looking into the importance of parental involvement

in a child's education. Some of the questions considered include whether parental involvement

impacts a child's success, does the type of involvement matter, and whether a lack of parental

causes a decrease in academic success, among others.

In a study done by Klemenĉiĉ et al. (2014) it was determined that students whose parents

are involved in school activities not only attend school more regularly but also do show high

achievement and tend to continue their education into college. This is also proven in a study done

by Potter (1998) which argues the fact that parental involvement leads to increased attendance

and grades. What makes Klemenĉiĉ's study interesting is that it includes parental involvement

information for not only the United States but also England and China. These two countries, just like in the United States, are seeking to find ways to involve parents more. This helps to show just how important the world sees parental involvement. It is important to note that Klemenĉiĉ et al. (2014) points out the different terms used in education for parental involvement: parental participation, school-family relations, and educational partnership. When parental involvement is talked about in this study, all of these terms should be considered. No matter the terminology used, the goal is the same: to get parents involved in their child's education as much as possible.

Impact of Early Literacy Involvement.

With parental involvement research, there often comes with it a focus on early literacy (Lynch, 2010; Dove et al., 2015; Crosby et al., 2015). The belief is that if children are exposed to literacy early in life then their chances for success increases exponentially. Nagy & Herman (1987) discuss the importance of reading at home. A child that reads for twenty minutes per night will be exposed to 1.8 million words and likely will be within the 90th reading percentile, while a student who only reads one minute at home will be exposed to only eight thousand words and be in the 10th percentile. This data confirms that exposure to reading at home at an early literacy stage does matter.

In another study done by Lynch (2010), Kindergarten teachers were asked about the literacy skills they believe their students enter kindergarten with. In her study, Lynch argues that a kindergartener's early print knowledge and parent-child print literacy will affect their future academic success. Crosby, Rasinski, Padak, & Yildirim (2015) argue that parents involved in a school intervention lead to a higher academic success rate for their children. The data that Crosby et al. (2015) found spanned over a three year period, giving weight to their argument.

What a parent focuses on when engaging with children during their early literacy years is important. Hindman, Skibbe, & Foster (2014) argue that their study shows that parents focused mostly on what was happening in the story, the comprehension piece, rather than decoding the actual words. This discussion and talk that happened helped to build up their child's oral literacy skills as well as their comprehension skills. Similarly, Truesdell & Hill (2015) argue that the Global Book Hour, which includes various read aloud to students, many of whom are immigrants, allows for similar rich discussions about the text. This helps children to start to identify with different characters within the story, learning the skill to make a connection that will benefit them as they progress through their literacy learning.

Factors that Affect Parental Involvement

In my experience, when someone does something I do not understand, I try to look at the reason why. For instance, when a person commits a crime, one of the important aspects that others look at is the motivation. These studies talked about thus far have demonstrated that parental involvement does play a huge part in the academic success of a student. Other research has been done to look at the why. Why are parents involved in their child's education? What is *their* motivation?

Let's address the stigma that I feel is in the educational world: parents do not want to be involved. The research suggests that parents do want to be involved. In my research, I have found numerous studies such as Skibbe et al.'s (2013) research that include many parental participants. This is why looking at the motivation for parental involvement is important. Why do so many parents want to be involved, even in research studies about their children? Walker, Shenker, & Hoover-Oempsey (2010) describe three different types of parental motivation: "personal psychological variables, contextual motivators, and school responsiveness to family

life" (p. 14). According to Walker et al., (2010) personal psychological motivation for parents includes role construction, efficacy for helping children learn. It boils down to the idea that psychologically, parents want to feel important and valuable in helping with their child's education. The contextual motivators are invitations to be involved from people such as students, teachers, administrators, and other parents. Finally, school responsiveness to family life is an important motivator for parents because they want their home life to be recognized as important. Walker et al. (2010) goes on to talk about how families benefit and feel more involved and motivated to be involved when there are assignments that include the family members. An assignment that often can include family members is homework. Madjar, Shklar, & Moshe (2016) argue that when it comes to homework, many times the students' and parents' mastery goals often match up. There is a desire on both the student and parent side to reach mastery of the content. This could be a possible reason parents chose to be involved.

Perfection.

In order to reach mastery, there is often the belief that everything a child does needs to be perfect, I believe. There are plenty of clichés in the world, one of which is that nothing is perfect. Perfectionism is something that many people, I believe, want to achieve. This is why my students get upset when I point out an error they made. Stoeber & Rambow (2007) argue that student perfectionism comes from perceived parental pressure. In an interesting study done by Skibbe, Bindman, Hindman, Aram, & Morrison (2013) parents were tasked with helping their child write an invitation. There were no specific requirements for the invitation itself. Skibbe et al. (2013) observed the amount of support the parents gave their child. This writing task was done once at the beginning of the year and then once at the end. They found that in the beginning of the year parents were focused on getting everything correct. The parents in this study were motivated by

precision because they felt their child could not complete the task precisely on their own. As the year went on however, the parents' need for precision decreased as their child's academic success and independence increased. This correlates to Stoeber & Rambow's (2007) study that found that frequently, perfectionism did lead to academic success and positive outcomes for students.

Socio-Emotional Importance.

When children see their parents motivated and involved, they become more motivated to see their own academic success (Pino-Pasternak, 2014). Pino-Pasternak (2014) argues that point that parents are "critical socialization agents in children's developing motivation" (p. 352). What this means is that what a parent sees as important, the child most likely will as well, specifically socio-emotionally. I define socio-emotional importance as the effect emotions have on a parent or child's perception of school and literacy. English Language Learners (ELL) are students who do need emotional support both at school but also from their parents. In my classroom, I have two ELL students with whom I need to keep in mind their socio-emotional state of minds. The more a parent is involved and emotionally supports an ELL the less likely it is that they will have emotional instability learning a new language and culture (Niehaus & Adelson, 2014).

One of the key areas that parental motivation plays a huge role is homework. Oftentimes, in my own classroom, reading homework goes home and comes back incomplete. Gonida & Cortina (2014) looked into parental motivation and style when it comes to homework. This study found that parents' own beliefs about their child along with their own personal goals for them affected the way they helped their children with homework. Interestingly, the lower academically the parents saw a child, the more control they took when helping them (Gonida & Cortina, 2014). Parents are motivated to help their children to be successful and if they feel that taking

control is the way to make it happen, then that's what they will do. This ties back to Stoeber &

Rambow's (2007) study that perfectionism is related to parents and that it can have a positive

outcome in the end.

Common Core Literacy in School Today

Another factor that plays a significant role in parental motivation and involvement are the

state standards. Here in New York State, like many other states, we have adopted the Common

Core State Standards. These standards have a significantly more rigorous approach to children's

education than previously before. With the new rigorous standards come increased expectations

(Allyn, 2014).

The literacy component of the CCSS is now ingrained throughout the grade levels with

high expectations for the students. According to the EngageNY (2015) website, where the CCSS

are found, the goal is to help students to reach mastery of the standards for "college and career

readiness". There has been much discussion about how students with disabilities and struggling

readers will meet these high literacy expectations. Murphy & Haller (2015) interviewed, as part

of their study, teachers with multiple years of experience about the literacy standards shift

because of the CCSS. The heightened awareness and rigor of the literacy standards are making

some teachers, even seasoned ones, feel under qualified according to Murphy & Haller (2015).

They are struggling to adapt their lessons to not only their students' wide variety of needs but

also to the new rigorous literacy standards.

New Literacy Standards.

Literacy standards not only include the general areas of reading and writing but also now

include language, speaking, and listening ("EngageNY", 2015). The integration of all five areas

is because all "processes of communication are closely connected" ("EngageNY", 2015).

Because literacy also involves speaking and listening, studies have been done to research those two areas (Ijalba, 2015). There is a focus on oral skills in a study done by Ijalba (2015) in which she argues that there is evidence "linking oral language skills with literacy" (p. 208). Furthermore, these oral language skills are foundational to later literacy proficiency. With the inclusion of speaking and listening to literacy standards, it has become more important than ever to help students build up their oral language skills. This is already being done in homes today with parents, through everyday conversations with their children. This is a practice that should be and is being continued because a child's oral skills are so important to their success.

Along with new literacy standards, comes new modes of literacy. Redmond (2015) talks about media literacy and its new place in education today. According to Redmond's (2015) study, she believes that educators need to use media literacy because it "help[s] students develop the knowledge, skills, and dispositions to live, contribute, and thrive in the digital world of the 21st century" and that "we need to amend how we think about texts and diversify the kinds of texts we choose to integrate into our curricula" (p. 10). I have noticed this in my own teaching experiences. Children today are much more technology friendly and love to use it whenever possible. The writers of the Common Core State Standards acknowledge and accept this technological evolution in education. In the "Reading Standards for Informational Texts K-5," section of the standards there is the inclusion of technology. According to the New York State P-12 Common Core Learning Standards for English Language Arts & Literacy found on EngageNY (2015), grade 5 students should be able to "draw on information from multiple print or digital sources…" (p. 21). This is just one example from the standards that includes some form of technology. Using media literacy to build up literacy skills could be in the form of eBooks, reading websites, or tablets.

Why is there a focus on literacy? According to Allyn (2014) literacy "opens the doors to freedom of the mind and provides a source to access and share information, knowledge, ideas, fears, and hopes" (p. 1). Children use their literacy skills to connect and understand across all content areas. This is why there is such a focus on literacy in education today. So, why is understanding the educational literacy world around us today important to understanding parental involvement and motivation? As educators, our goal is to provide a bridge between school and home. We want our students to learn new skills, strategies, and information in school and bring that information home with them. Unfortunately, that is not always what happens. There is a gap between school and home literacy life. Supporting parents, in order to get them even more involved than they already are, will hopefully help to bridge that gap and bring literacy more into the home.

Methodology

The purpose of this qualitative study is to determine parental perspectives on literacy, and what schools can do to support parents in further enhancing literacy at the home. In order to complete my qualitative study, I interviewed parents and classroom teachers using a set of questions found in the appendix of this study. The answers to the questions helped me complete a constant comparative analysis of what parents think of literacy, what supports they receive and more importantly, wish to receive from the school.

Setting

The school district in question is in a suburb located about fifteen minutes from the city of Rochester, New York. The elementary school in this study has a free or reduced lunch rate of just over 60%. The interviews took place either in the home setting for the parents or on the

phone at a time convenient to them. The school was the setting for the teachers and principal interviews at a time during the day convenient to them.

Participants

In total: three parents, one principal, and three teachers were interviewed systematically and separately for approximately twenty minutes each over a period of three weeks. The principal was interviewed using the classroom teacher questions. The parental participants in the study are parents whose children attend school in the same suburban district. The teacher participants also belong to the same suburban district. To protect the participants' identities, I use pseudonyms for all participants.

Data Collection

During the interviews, I took extensive notes on the response to each question. The interviews were also audio recorded and then transcribed within three days of the interview. The answers to the questions were compared between the parents and then coded for key terms such as technology, desired supports, and in school support. I used the same process to compare the teacher and principal responses. I do not assume to speak to all parents, teachers, and principals.

Positionality

My role in the study was as an interviewer and observer. Looking at my biases in the study, I come into this research with an AIS Literacy teacher mind frame. My students are struggling readers who tell me they often do not participate in literacy activities outside the school day. When my students do read at home, often, their parents tell me they focus a lot on comprehension questions which does support what I am doing in my classroom with my struggling students. This knowledge affects how I look at the data I collected, especially when it came to the parent responses to what teachers can do to better support their home efforts. In my

opinion, if parents are focusing on increasing comprehension skills, then schools should be providing them strategies to aid their efforts. My personal experience as a child whose parents both worked also affects how I view my data. Growing up, my parents were not home to help me engage in early literacy more. Perhaps, this is why this study is so important to me and why I want to help support parents as much as possible.

Trustworthiness

In order to research my questions in a trustworthy manner, I have referred to multiple sources to triangulate my data, asked my peers to read my work for accuracy of my findings, my colleagues critically reviewed my work, and I cited multiple sources of research related to this topic to support the trustworthiness of my data and research processes.

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Data Analysis

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After completing all seven interviews, I looked at my data and found three common areas of discussion: technology, summer programs, and desired supports.

Technology

Since, we live in a digital world, it is important to consider technology's role in education. Children are often on their computer, tablet, smart phone, or other electronic devices. I asked parents, in their interviews, specifically about the use of technology. All three parents unanimously agreed that technology plays an important role in our culture and should in our school.

Julia was a parental participant in this study. When asked question six of the Parent Interview Questions, found in the appendix, she immediately replied that "yes, 100%" technology should be used in schools. She went on to use a very common term in the education field when it comes to literacy: 21st century learning. Julia explained that we live in a "21st

century world and schools should embrace it." In a perfect world, Julia as well as another

participant Darla, feels that schools should provide *all* with either individual or easily accessible

iPads or eReaders. These two parents believe that this technology would help students to engage

in literacy activities more while also using their 21st century skills.

One of the popular devices used today is an eReader. The use of an eReader allows

people to read anywhere and everywhere, digitally carrying their library with them. Another

parental participant, Kelly, talked about a website offered by her school that allows students to

access eBooks from home, RAZ-Kids. This site is managed by the teacher, who assigns the

students a particular reading level. Acting as if playing a game, the students are able to read

books to earn virtual rewards. Kelly describes that her fourth grade son often loves to read RAZ-

Kids books on his tablet when he gets home from school.

Figure 1 below shows all seven responses from all seven participants having to do with

technology. This figure demonstrates helps to show the lack of teacher and principal responses

having to do with technology.

Figure 1

Technology Responses

TECHNOLOGY RESPONSES	Parent 1 Julia	Parent 2 Kelly	Parent 3 Darla

	-100% is important -21st century learning -Provide iPads/computers	-Like using technology -Positive tool to learn important skills -Surrounded by technology -Websites to practice skills and have fun with literacy -Listens to books on iPod	-Websites and eBooks are a great idea -Know my children enjoy eBooks and websites for literacy -Phonics apps on tablet -Provide individual tablets
Teacher 1 Marianna	Teacher 2 Jade	Teacher 3 Nelly	Principal Lauren
	-Reading A-Z website		

Summer Programs

Another major theme found throughout my data was the idea of what to do during the

summer and what summer programs should be available to students. It is well documented that

children lose multiple months' worth of learning during the summer months (Patterson, 1925;

Paechter, Luttenberger, Macher, Berding, Papousek, Weiss, & Fink, 2015). The teachers and

principal I interviewed in this study all talked about the desire for additional summer programs.

The goal of these summer programs would be to help students retain the learning done during the

school year at home over the summer.

Participants Lauren, Marianna, and Nelly all discussed the idea of a "mobile library" or

"caravan" as a way to help students to retain their reading progress during those long summer

months. According to these participants, a caravan full of books and other literacy materials and

activities would visit neighborhoods surrounding the schools. Students would be able to take out

books and engage in literacy rich activities. The idea was even brought up by Lauren, to include

food to entice families to participate as well. I inquired as to why a mobile library would be

necessary when the public library for the town in which the school is located is about five

minutes from the school itself. Nelly explained to me that many of the parents either do not have

reliable transportation to the library or are often times working outside of the library hours.

Bringing the library to the parents and students would eliminate that concern.

Another literacy summer program discussed by Nelly was the idea of summer school or,

as she would like to call it, "Summer Reading Camp". The school district does currently offer a

summer school type setting for students who are struggling readers. Nelly believes, as did

Marianna, that all students in the school should have the right and ability to attend a summer

school program to help to combat the lack of retention. Similarly, Lauren brought up the idea of

offering Saturday school to parents throughout the school year as well as the summer. This

Saturday school idea would provide students additional time to work on the literacy skills taught

to them during the regular five day school week. Jade, believes that summer school should be

available for all struggling students at no cost to the parent.

Figure 2 below shows the responses from all seven participants having to do with

summer programs. This helps to show the lack of parental responses having to do with summer

programs.

Figure 2

Summer Program Responses

SUMMER PROGRAMS RESPONSES	Parent 1 Julia	Parent 2 Kelly	Parent 3 Darla
Teacher 1 Marianna	Teacher 2 Jade	Teacher 3 Nelly	Principal Lauren

-Transportation to library both the school and town library -Pre-K and Summer programs to get books -Reading summer camp -Mobile library	-Summer school program for struggling readers at no cost to parents	-Reading caravan to come to a park, at least once a month -Summer school (to be called something else) for all students -Open library hours during the summer	-Mobile library with food truck -Summertime book fairs

Desired Supports

The last major theme I found in my data had to do with what the desired supports all my participants wanted to help enhance literacy in the home. These supports, all seven believe, would help parents to enhance their child's literacy in the home.

In my data, both Julia and Kelly cited the idea of choice books. Julia wanted books that were of interest to students. She believes that if her child had a choice in the genre of book that he/she could choose, then he/she would be more excited and apt to read and engage in literacy. Kelly felt the same. She too mentioned the importance to find both age appropriate and high interest books for her child. Her child is an advanced reader and often times has trouble finding books that are at his level, age appropriate, and of interest to him. In fact, this is so important to Kelly, that she would like a whole enrichment program in the school to help child like her son. Similarly, Darla talked about the idea of a family book project and night based on interest books for kids. She explained that, "I want a book that my son is interested in… that we can read together and create a project on. We could even go into the library and have a story time with that book." To these parent participants, choice of interesting books is important to them.

Books were also a common theme for my teacher and principal participants. Like Darla, Jade would like to have Literacy Nights or as she called it "Popcorn and PJ" nights where parents can come with their children to the school to actively participate in school activities. Similarly, both Marianna and Nelly would like the library to have evening hours where parents and children can come to school to check out books to read at home thus enhancing their literacy experience at home. Lauren would like have a partnership with the town library to help parents get books for their children there as well. The idea of a mobile library or reading caravan to go to their park or neighborhood was brought up as well. Once again, this will help children and parents have more access to books during the summer months.

Figure 3 below shows the responses from all seven participants having to do with technology.

Figure 3

Desired Supports Responses

DESIRED SUPPORTS RESPONSES	Parent 1 Julia	Parent 2 Kelly	Parent 3 Darla
	-Book list for choice	-Finding age appropriate books that are interesting -Enrichment program to challenger her above grade level son	-Family based projects such as book reports -Library Night where whole family could visit with reading/story time of interest books
Teacher 1 Marianna	Teacher 2 Jade	Teacher 3 Nelly	Principal Lauren

-More money for books to bring home at the students' reading levels -More than one end of the year book to bring home -Library evening hours -More school nights with parents that are events that have to do with literacy -Mobile library	-More opportunities for literacy nights -Popcorn and PJ's night supported by school and town library -Teacher professional grown -Collegiate circles to read newer research and learn strategies	-Reading caravan -Homework buddies with community members -Open library hours to show school is thinking about literacy	-Mobile library -Saturday school -Partnership with town library -Community model

Findings

After analyzing my data, I came up with two major findings. The two findings were that there are dueling perspectives and there is a difference in desired supports. My additional finding was that the school supports were not always easily located on the school website.

Dueling Perspectives

Looking at the data that was collected and coded, it was easy to see that there were dueling perspectives when it came to parents, teachers, and the principal. This is demonstrated in *Figure 1, Figure 2,* and *Figure 3* above.

While the parents all talked about how important technology was to their child's literacy engagement at home, only one teacher mentioned technology. Jade talked about the literacy website Reading A-Z which provides literacy resources such as printable books and the extension website RAZ-Kids that allows kids to read book online from any tablet or computer. Redmond (2015) discusses the importance of multimodal texts and that they aid in "develop[ing] the knowledge, skills, and dispositions to live, contribute, and thrive in the digital world of the 21st century" (p. 10). Even Julia, one of the parental participants, mentioned that same 21st century learning term that Redmond mentioned. This helps to show that literacy engagement with the use of technology is important to parents. This is shown in *Figure 1* found both in the

Data Analysis section of this study as well as the Appendix. This is shown in *Figure* 1 found

both in the Data Analysis section of this study as well as in the Appendix. According to my data,

technology is important to the parents but not as relevant to the teachers or principal. It is

important to point out that this is not to say that technology is not important to teachers or

principals.

Looking at *Figure 2,* it is clear that the teacher and principal participants in this study

have a focus on summer programs. They discussed programs such as mobile libraries, summer

school/reading camps, and other library (both school and town) summer hours. The parental

participants in this study did not mention summer programs or supports at all. It is reasonable to

assume that the teachers and principal in this study cited so many summer program supports

because of the belief that "summer vacations interrupt the rhythm of learning and may result in

the loss of knowledge and skills" (Paechter et al., 2015, p. 1399). Once again, this is not to say

that parents do not care about supporting their child's learning during the summer.

Lastly, when you look at *Figure 3,* it is easy to tell that the parents desired supports that

were different than those desired by the teachers and principal. The parents were more concerned

with having more books that interested their child while the teachers and principal desired

additional library hours both at the school and town library.

These figures from my data collected and analyzed illustrate that there is a difference or a

duel in perspectives around how to enhance literacy at the home.

Desired Supports

As already discussed, there is a difference in the supports that the parents, teachers, and

principal would like to help enhance literacy at the home. Yes, both desired support around books

but in different ways. Parents were focused more on book options while the teachers and

principal were more focused on accessibility. Sciurba (2014) discussed in their study the idea that having choice in books, especially in male readers, allows children the opportunity to pick texts that interest them and that they can see themselves in. Perhaps, I believe, this could be one reason why book choice is important to parents.

Nichols Hess, Greer, Lombardo, Lim (2015) help to give insight as to why accessibility to libraries is important to the teachers and principal. In their study, they discuss that there is a direct link to the use of libraries and the academic success of students. The more the library is used, the greater the academic success (Nichols Hess et al., 2015). If parents cannot bring their children to the library, Lauren, Nelly, and Marianna want to bring the library to them in the form of a mobile library or reading caravan.

There is also the consideration that parents want technology to be included to help to enhance literacy at the home. Julia and Darla feel that each student should have complete access to a computer or tablet such as an iPad. This will help students to access literacy rich websites or apps as well as act as an access point for eBooks.

School Website

Once I completed my data collection and analysis, I realized how important technology is to parents. Roman & Ottenbreit-Leftwich (2016) discuss how affective teacher websites can be when used affectively for communication purposes. Futhermore, Althauser & Jones (2012) discuss that district and teacher websites make it easier for open communication. So for these reasons, I decided to look on the district and school website to see what I could find based on the information given to me during my data collection.

The teachers and principal mentioned the use of summer school programs in the school. I could not find anything on the school website about summer school. I tried looking on the

district website and could not find information on there either. This would make it difficult for parents to find out information about summer school via technology, I believe. Both Lauren and Marianna had mentioned the use of AIS services in the school. I did find information about AIS services through two of the AIS Literacy providers' websites.

Since Jade, one of the teacher participants mentioned the Reading A-Z website and by extension Raz-Kids, I decided to look on her personal teacher website. Under a technology tab, Jade did have a link to the Raz-Kid website which made it easy to access. Even though Nelly did not mention technology, I did look to see if she had any literacy websites listed on her webpage. Nelly also had Raz-Kids listed along with others.

Another area of the school and district website I looked for was the library. The school did have a library page which listed both student and family resources. I did not find however, any information about the town library. I found this interesting considering the importance the town library played in Marianna, Lauren, and Jade's interviews.

Conclusion

From these findings I can conclude that yes there are dueling perspectives between teachers and parents on how to enhance literacy in the home. I can also conclude that parents desire technology supports and book choice while teachers want summer programs and library support.

Implications

Based on my findings, I have come up with two implications: schools should include both the wants of parents and teachers when deciding on what school programs and supports to provide as well as parents want to be involved and want a 21st century learning environment at

home as well as school. This means helping parents have access to technology as well as different websites, apps, and eBooks for students to use both in school and outside school.

Including the Wants of Parents and Teachers

As a teacher, it is important for me to know my students as well as know my parents. If I know my parents want access to different technology or websites, it is my job to advocate for them. Roberts & Siegle (2012) argue in their article that teachers need to be advocates and fight for policies that make sense for their students. I believe, as a result of this study, that teachers should take it a step further and be advocates for our parents as well. Through my data analysis, I saw that were was a difference in what the parents wanted and what the teachers wanted. One groups' wants does not trump another's wants, they are equally important and both should be valued. Districts should consider every angle and perspective when choosing which programs to support, what to allocate money too, and who in the community to partner with.

21st Century Learning

The parents interviewed in this study want their children to engage in 21st century learning at both home and school. Grigsby (2015) discusses the idea that schools should begin to adapt the way they traditionally think and set up libraries. Furthermore, Grigsby talks about how students and teachers should be involved in the discussion around how to set up the library to include 21st century learning modes such as computers and eReaders. I believe that we should take this a step further and include parents in this discussion as well. I agree that the library and even the classrooms need to include more 21st century learning opportunities for students.

Julia and Darla mentioned an interesting idea: personal laptops or tablets for students. I believe if the money is available, schools should allocate money to purchasing a tablet for every student. Hocanin & Iscioglu (2014) go as far as to say that tablets are "becoming popular in

classrooms… many teachers see them as being a common accessory- as common as a pen or pencil" (p. 13). Knowing how parents feel and the increasing technological trend, I believe it is my job as a teacher to include literacy activities that involve technology as much as possible. Furthermore, I need to make these literacy activities accessible from the home. Purchasing a tablet for each student that can be used at home or at school would make this much more feasible.

Limitations

As with any study, my study has limitations. The first limitation is that my sample size for my data was limited. I only used seven participants from one school within a suburban district in this study. Because of this, my study cannot be generalized to all schools, districts, parents, teachers, or principals.

Recommendations for Further Research

Looking at my findings and how they answered my study, I found two areas that could further be studied.

The first is that I believe the teachers and principal should be questioned specifically about technology. I have spoken numerous times about how important the parental participants in my study feel about technology and its importance. I believe teachers and principals should be given the opportunity to share their beliefs and additional supports around the idea of 21st century learning and technology.

Looking at the desired supports that teachers and the principal wanted, surrounding mostly the library, my second recommendation would be to look into the effectiveness of evening library hours at the school. Would parents and children make use of these hours? I feel

that parents should get the opportunity to share their thoughts on library evening hours and if it would be beneficial.

Closing

  I set out on this study to see explore the different perspectives around enhancing literacy in the home. I learned that parents and school staff do have differing perspectives about literacy supports. I wonder if my own parents had the supports they needed to help me enhance my literacy learning in the home, would that have helped me be more successful early on in my education? I believe so. I plan on taking my findings and implications and using them to help me support my students' parents in their endeavor to enhance their child's literacy at home.

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Appendix

PARENT INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

PSEUDONYM:

1. How do you feel about participating in literacy activities in the home?

2. What are some literacy activities your child interacts with in the home?

3. How do you feel about the support you receive from the district or school when it comes to bringing literacy in the home?

4. In what ways do you already receive support from the school? How do you feel about those supports?

5. What ways can the district, school, or your child's teacher do to help support you in bring literacy more into the home?

6. How do you feel about schools providing electronic supports such as websites or eBooks in an effort to bring literacy more into the home?

TEACHER INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

PSEUDONYM:

1. What supports do you have in place to help parents bring literacy more into the home? How are they helpful to parents?

2. In what way does the school or district help support parents in bringing literacy into the home?

3. In what ways is students bringing their literacy learning home with them beneficial to their academic success?

4. In what ways can districts support parents and teachers more to help close the home, school literacy gap?