Parents’ Perceptions of Literacy and Its Impact on Student Learning

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Parents’ Perceptions of Literacy and Its Impact on Student Learning

by

Samantha Switzer

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A capstone submitted to the Department of Education and Human Development of The College at Brockport, State University of New York in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Masters of Science in Education
Abstract

The purpose of this qualitative research project is to investigate into the ways of how the involvement and engagement of parents who live in environments of low socioeconomic status may be reflected in the literacy learning and development of their preschool child. Numerous explorations have been conducted on this topic by different researchers; however the method of compiled data was sorted and gathered in a unique way. The researcher observed the preschool classroom on a daily basis for a six week span and was able to see the genuine behaviors and developments of the children. Many questions were researched and answered throughout this project. To what degrees are parents of low socioeconomic status are involved in the literacy learning and experiences of their children within the home? What types of literacy experiences are occurring in the home? How does parental involvement impact the literacy learning and development of the children during early childhood?
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Chapter One: Introduction

This story begins on a bright, sunny morning in September. As the students shuffled in, hung up their jackets and their book bags, they were all so excited to take their money out to purchase books at the book fair. One little four year old boy, whom I shall in my study refer to as ‘Tyler’, sat at the table with his head in his arms very upset. I then approached him to ask why he was upset, our conversation went as follows:

Samantha: “What’s going on Tyler?”

Tyler: “I am so mad!”

Samantha: “I see you are very mad, can you tell me why you’re so mad?”

Tyler: “My mom wouldn’t give me no money for the book store. She said she needed to buy cigarettes at the store.”

Samantha: “Oh I am so sorry she didn’t give you any money for the book store.”

Tyler: “Me too. I am so mad I could cry.”

Samantha: “How about we ask your teacher if after the bookstore we can stop at the school library so you and your other friends who didn’t bring money for the bookstore can have a book too?”

Tyler: “Okay!”
After having this brief conversation with the four years old student it opened my eyes to parents’ ‘priorities and perceptions of the importance of literacy. This made me want to investigate the impact of parents’ perceptions of literacy within their home that are living in a low socioeconomic and do their perceptions of such importance impact the literacy learning development of the children during early childhood.

Problem Statement

Students enter a classroom having different backgrounds and different levels of literacy learning and development. Preschool students have a limited amount of formal schooling; therefore, the literacy learning they are bringing with them into the early childhood education classroom setting has been acquired through their social interactions in various environments in general and from their exposure to literacy at home. Creating a literacy or print rich environment at home is an effective way to increase a preschool child’s vocabulary, assist in their recognition of letters and the sound associated with them; and acquisition of language. Unfortunately, some children, who grow up in an impoverished environment, may live in a household with adults who may have limited education, vocabulary, writing skills, and limited reading and comprehension abilities. Richard Sinatra’s article, *Creating a Culture of Vocabulary Acquisition for Children Living in Poverty*, explains the hardships preschool age children have who are living in poverty. The hardships of these preschool age children range from social, emotional, and educational development. The article explained that children growing up in poverty are at a disadvantage for success in schooling. Some of the factors which may be attributed to this lack of success in schooling are the lack of a print rich environment within the home, limited levels of parent involvement, limited literacy experiences in and outside of the home and limited experiences and social interactions which positively contribute to a child’s acquisition of language and literacy
learning and development during early childhood years. The article focused on the importance of vocabulary development in a child’s early life. Sinatra explains his views on vocabulary found in A. Biemiller’s article “Teaching vocabulary in primary grades: Vocabulary instruction needed”, stating, “vocabulary understanding in the early years of school (preschool, kindergarten, first grade) is influenced more by the neighborhood and family experiences a child encounters and by the level of language interaction that occurs with parents and other language users.” Children living in impoverished environments grow up hearing limited amounts of proper English, which affects their development and support needed in order to academically succeed.

Parent involvement in their child’s academics and parent understanding of the importance of literacy significantly influences the literacy learning and development of a child and their literacy success, and has the same effect on a child’s vocabulary learning. In Steve M. Heath, wrote an article called, A Spotlight on Preschool: The Influence of Family Factors on Children’s Early Literacy Skills. This article explains in detail the effects the upbringing of a child has on their literacy development. The article discussed that phonological awareness; letter knowledge, oral language, and rapid recognition are all intertwined for a child’s literacy development. In this research family factors like family socio-economic status, parents’ level of education and family history were all taken in consideration in the study. The study consisted of one hundred and four participants that were preschool aged children. These children were studied until the end of their kindergarten school year. The results demonstrated that children growing up in a high-risk environment scored significantly lower in literacy development than those who are low-risk students. The study also showed that children who are exposed to literacy at home scored higher than those who are not exposed to literacy at home.
Significance of the Problem

This study is an initial investigation into the ways in which parents, who live in environments of low socioeconomic status, view literacy and how their views may be reflected in the literacy learning and development of their preschool child. There are many interesting reasons to pursue research in this area. Presumably, a number of teachers have students who enter the classroom each day with different funds of knowledge and varying levels of literacy learning. Short of conducting literacy assessments the first day of school to acquire information on the literacy learning and development of students, most teachers can only estimate what type of literacy exposures their students have based on their age of development and what previous and current literacy research studies suggest. Teachers who have a class of students all of low socioeconomic status not only have the task of constructing a common literacy development framework that is student-centered and addresses the needs of each student; in addition, teachers may have to address the social and emotional factors that may impact as well as impede students’ learning in the classroom on a daily basis. Students who live in poverty have hardships that other students do not need to overcome. These may students be confronted with issues such as when their next meal will be, abuse (i.e. physical, emotional and verbal), domestic violence, being evicted from their home, taking care of other siblings, living in a single parent (who has limited education) home, etc.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of my research was to examine the impact of parent involvement and parents’ perceptions of literacy within their home that are living in a low socioeconomic environment. Their perceptions of literacy were examined and the impact the literacy learning development of the children during early childhood was examined. My study allowed the researcher and teachers
to develop a greater understanding and knowledge of the impacts a child’s success in literacy development. My study proved to be more informative to other teachers at my school who are struggling to unfold reasons why students are not at age appropriate literacy development, and if home life and parents’ knowledge of literacy is a factor. My research questions went as follows:

- How are parents of low socioeconomic status actively involved in the literacy learning of their children within the home?
- How do parent of low socioeconomic status perceive the importance of providing literacy experiences within the home?
- How do their perceptions of such importance impact the literacy learning and development of their children during early childhood?

I first conducted a parent survey that thoroughly examined the parent involvement and parent’s/parents’ views on literacy. From those surveys three families were blindly selected to participate in my case study research. The results of the parent survey and results students’ of assessments were also analyzed. The analyzed data then was reported into a case study. The case study created was able to compare and contrast the data collected of the three students. By conducting my study in this manner, it confirmed my study to be valid and reliable.

The methods used to collect data for my study first began using informal assessments of weekly anecdotal notes that were collected throughout the child’s day, especially during the English Language Arts (ELA) block of time in order to collect data. The anecdotal notes were organized and reflected upon. The formal assessments such as The Concepts of Print, Book Handling, and Print Awareness were given in order to seek effective and valid results. By using
an array of assessments I was able to get a better understanding of the students’ development levels in

Rationale of the Study

When I reflect back on my experiences of teaching in urban school districts I always was curious how poverty affected parents’ perception of not just education, but more specifically their perception of literacy. I struggled with understanding the concept of how does the parents view of literacy affect their child’s literacy development. By using a class within the Rochester City School District’s Head Start Program I thought it would be affective because many of the variables are the same. All of the families are of extreme low economic status, which means their standard of living may be below the line of poverty, and all of the children live in similar neighborhoods situated in the inner city. This project was conducted to investigate the levels of parental involvement and engagement in the literacy learning and development of their child/children and their abilities to create an enriching literacy environment, taking into consideration their views of literacy. All participating families had the same variable of being of low socioeconomic status. Questions I further discovered were:

- As a teacher, what is the proper way to approach parents, to discuss the possibility of their child having developmental delays regarding literacy learning?
- What are the best practices and approaches to use as a teacher facilitating the literacy learning of early childhood education students?
- How can I, as an early childhood education teacher effectively communicate to parents the important role the play in their child’s literacy learning and
development; and provide them with literacy materials to use at home without offending them?

Definition of Terms

**ABC Head Start** is in partnership with Rochester’s City School District. ABC Head Start Program also known as Action for a Better Community is a federally funded program to support early childhood education and family development. Head Start provides center and home base support. Center base support is Monday through Friday 8:00am-4:30pm and home base support is scheduled at the family’s convenience. Head Start programs help the children grow and give them structure that will prepare them for kindergarten. Head Start programs give support to the families by finding food, shelter, clothing, and job search help.

**Concepts of Print** is a formal assessment of the child’s knowledge of how a book works.

**Book Handling** is a formal assessment of how a child properly maneuvers and functions with books.

**Print Awareness** is a formal assessment that gathers information of the child’s knowledge of environmental print, shared writing, storybooks, or alphabet books, and their symbols.

Summary

By teaching at ABC Head Start I do my best to comprehend the different perspectives parents have on the importance of literacy. I also see the different levels of literacy interest the each student has. I am intrigued to the comparison of the parents perceptive and the students’ literacy development level and if the two coincide. As a teacher I incorporate literacy because I believe literacy is crucial for child in the early years. My struggle in teaching literacy is the different levels of literacy development for each child. Through this study I want to unfold and
get to the root of, if all the children are the same age, grow up in the same neighborhood, and have the same amount of school, what is being done at home to make such a big gap in literacy development among my students.
Chapter Two: Literature Review

Introduction

Much research has been conducted to aid in the understanding of the importance parent involvement, literacy learning and development in early childhood education, and creating literacy enriched environment at home. However, there has been a limited amount of research concerning an examination of the effects a parent’s belief on the importance of literacy has on their young child’s life (preschool aged child). The sections indicated below will discuss in-depth the importance of parent involvement in a child’s classroom, a literacy enriched home environment, children’s introduction to literacy during early childhood education, effective teacher training and how parent-teacher interaction significantly contributes to the literacy learning and development of children.

Importance of Parent Involvement within a Child’s Classroom

In Janet Goodall and Caroline Montgomery’s article called, Parental Involvement to Parental Engagement: A Continuum, created a diagram of the milestones a child goes through and how parental involvement allows the child to grow in a supportive and nurturing environment. By having the child development in a supportive and nurturing environment the child will be able to meet those milestones in a very effective and efficient way. The continuum illustrates that by having parental involvement evolves into parental engagement. Parental engagement is a key factor to have as the child gets older and reaches those older milestones.

In Daniela Sime and Marion Sherdan’s article entitled, ‘You Want The Best For Your Kids’: Improving Educational Outcomes For Children Living in Poverty Through Parental Engagement, discusses the impact parental engagement has on the development for their child.
This article explains the relationship between parent interactions and their child’s social and cognitive development in education. The study examined interventions with parents engaging in their child’s or children’s classroom, which reflected a positive outcome for both better parenting skills and their child’s or children’s development and engagement with school. The study was based on a qualitative design that included nineteen interviews with service managers and practitioners. There were six focus groups with parents and six activity groups with children that were assessed using pre-determined and emerging codes. The results showed that the parent’s understand and saw the progress their children made with having parental engagement. The parents also explained that in order for their children to succeed in school they needed to manage their academic and financial goals.

**Importance of Literacy Enriched Home Environment**

In Clair E. Baker’s article called, *Fathers’ and Mothers’ Home Literacy Involvement and Children’s Cognitive and Social Emotional Development*, conducted research on the significance of having a literacy enriched environment at home. The study was based on a large sample of African Americans and Caucasians families. The participants were children of the ages of twenty four months and were observed until the participants were in preschool. The participants were retrieved from the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study- Birth Cohort program. The results of the study demonstrated that fathers and mothers who are involved and support a child’s educational growth are at a high literacy development.

Jing Zhao collaborated with Pei Zhao, Xuchu Weng, and Su Li to write an article called, *Do Preschool Children Learn to Read Words from Environmental Prints?* In this article they examined if exposing children to visual environmental print has an effect on the child’s literacy development. In order to do this experiment the researchers observed and assessed children ages
three to five and broke them into groups by dispersing the ages. To properly assess the children they used the method of Print Awareness assessment. This type of assessment simply uses logos that the children look and name. They discovered that all young children exposed to environmental print understand and named the logos being shown. Jing Zhao and the collaborating researchers stated, “The color and logo cues had a larger effect in 3- and 4- year-olds than in 5-year-olds, while the font type cue played a greater role in 5-year-olds than in the other two groups.” The researchers did explain that exposing young children to environmental print can influence their literacy development.

**Importance of Literacy in Early Childhood Education**

Minghua Tan and Jennifer Dobbs- Oates wrote an article called, *Relationship Between Emergent Literacy and Early Social-Emotional Development in Preschool Children from Low-Income Backgrounds*, which explains a study conducted on sixty one preschool children and their parents who live in a low income environment. The participants’ preschool teachers were also given a questionnaire pertaining to the child’s literacy skills. In this study the child’s literacy skills were assessed with a standard language and literacy tests called Expressive Vocabulary Test, Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test (third edition) and Test of Early Reading Ability (third edition). These screenings tested the children’s oral language and print awareness. The results of this study illustrated a wide range of connections between literacy development and emotional development. Certain factors like age and sex influenced the outcomes.

Janet Scull’s researched with Andrea Nolan and Raban Bridie to create an article called, *Young Leaners: Interpreting Literacy in the Preschool Years*. These researchers examined literacy in preschools with as they called it, “3D lens,” to unfold the positives and negatives of
pushing literacy in the preschool classrooms. The researchers states, “This model emphasizes learning that brings together the operational, the cultural and the critical dimensions of literacy, considering these dimensions to be interlocking and of equal importance.” The study was based on observations and interviews of local preschool teachers and their classroom. This study is called the Young Learner’s Project. The result of this study indicated that having literacy enriched classroom is an effective tool for preschool children, however children of such a young age need to learn through play so they never should be forced.

**Effective Teacher Training To Support Literacy Development**

The article, *Promoting Early Literacy Through the Professional Development of Preschool Teachers*, written by, Cristianne Lane, Mary Jo Surges, Evelyn Johnson, Blanche Podhajski, and Jane Nathan, discussed the training through Building Blocks for Literacy for Head Start teachers throughout different areas. The training Building Blocks for Literacy mentors the teachers on different teaching techniques that are hands on and interactive to keep the attention of their students. This type of training explained to the Head Star teachers the importance of literacy development for preschool children. The article discussed a study that was conducted on three different groups of Head Start teachers. One group was trained using live mentoring, the second group used distant mentoring (online tutorials), and third group served as controls. The results of this study showed that all teachers who were given some type of training were very productive and knowledge of the social and emotional development of preschool age children. The article discussed the importance of proper training Head Start teachers need in order to properly serve their families and reach the needs of all of their students. The study also found that with proper training teachers will be able to better serve the Head Start families who are struggling with issues that come with living in poverty.
Author Catherine Compton-Lilly is an instructor at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Catherine Compton-Lilly wrote a book called, *Reading Families: The Literate Lives of Urban Children*. The book discussed her views and experiences she has encountered with working with students in diverse and impoverished environments. My capstone project focuses on how parents living in impoverished environments view literacy and how their views affect their preschool child’s literacy development.

**Importance of Parent and Teacher Interaction**

Author Gregory Cheatham is a professor at Kansas University. He works in the Department of Education and works very closely with the Special Education program. Michaelene M. Ostrosky is head of the Family Goldstick scholar at the University of Illinois and a main leader in their special education program. Together these authors wrote an article called, *Goal Setting During Early Childhood Parent Teacher Conferences: A Comparison of Three Groups of Parents*. This study took place at a Head Start program that examined both the teachers and the three groups of parents. The focus of this article was to investigate the effectiveness of interaction between the Head Start teacher and the parents. Head Start requires teachers to provide parent teacher conferences, home visits, daily logs between each other, and child assessments. The results of the article indicated that parents who participated with an open mind throughout the parent teacher conferences, home visits, daily logs, etc., came up with effective and realistic goals for themselves and child and were able to comprehend the results of their child/children’s assessments.

Author Catherine Compton-Lilly is an instructor at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Catherine Compton-Lilly wrote an article called, *Listening to Families Over Time: Seven Lessons Learned*, that was published in the Language Arts Journal. The article focuses on
the importance of listening to the voices of children and their parents in a diverse community.
The conclusion of the article results in the author explaining all of what she had learned from her students. She then reaches out to encourage other teacher to listen to their students and families.
My capstone project focuses on how parents living in impoverished environments view literacy and how their views affect their preschool child’s literacy development.

Summary

It is indicated that parents who provide literacy enriched home environment create a strong literacy foundation for their preschool child. Parents who communicate with their child’s teachers and participate in their child’s preschool classroom studies explain that these factors have significant amount of support to students learning. Presumably, all teachers have students that enter their classroom each day with different funds of knowledge and exposures to. Most teachers can only estimate what type of literacy exposure their students have based on their age of development and what previous and current literacy research studies suggest. Teachers who have a class with all low economic status students not only have the task to construct a common literacy development framework that is student-centered and addresses the needs of each student.
Chapter Three: Methods and Procedures

This study is designed to make an initial investigation into the ways in which parents, who live in environments of low socioeconomic status view literacy and how their views may be reflected in the literacy learning and development of their preschool child. In this chapter I will discuss the participants, procedure, data collection, and any limitations.

This study will seek to examine the questions of how parents of low socioeconomic status perceive the importance of literacy experiences within the home and how their perceptions impact the literacy learning development of the children during early childhood.

Participants

I invited fifteen preschool children and their parents to participate in data collection. The students attend a preschool through Rochester City School districts Head Start program located in the inner city of Rochester. The ages of the children range from four- to five-years-old, I distributed and collected the parent surveys regarding their involvement in literacy at home with their child and questions regarding their overall views of literacy were answered. After I collected the data three children and their families were blindly selected.

My Positionality as the Researcher

For the purposes of this research study I held the role of interviewer and observer. I interviewed students, observed in the classrooms, surveyed parents on their views of literacy, and administered multiple types of assessments on students. It is important to describe my own positionality due to wanting to acknowledge any beliefs, philosophies, and more that may impact the research. I am a 27 year old Caucasian, female teacher living in a mid-sized city Western
New York. I am from an upper middle class family and grew up in the suburban town outside of Rochester City. I graduated from Niagara University in May of 2010 with certification in Childhood and Special Education (1-6). After graduating I continued my love for education by taking on the role as a Center Director at a local daycare called, Creative Beginnings. After completing the duties of a Center Director I longed to get back in the classroom. I then took a preschool teaching position in an upper class suburb outside of Rochester, NY. While I worked with the young students I was intrigued as to how their brains worked, how they communicated with each other, how they built relationships with their peers, and how much literacy they absorbed. I wanted to learn more so I decided to go back to school. My own schooling continues as a I work toward a master’s degree in Childhood Literacy and Human Development at The College at Brockport, SUNY.

As I continued to fulfill my passion for teaching preschool children I knew I wanted to do more. I applied for a position at a Head Start Program located right in the heart of the city of Rochester. Once I received the position it was quickly apparent that these students come from different family, economic challenges, and background experiences than other students I have taught. Currently, I am a semester away from graduation and as I reflect back on my undergrad and graduate experiences I realize the impact literacy has on young learners. As an educator I believe in building a solid foundation of literacy is so important for a child’s learning development.

I chose this research topic after working with preschool students in the Head Start Program. These experiences lead to my own interest into the importance of literacy for young learners. This curiosity and wonder is the ultimate effect of my desire to continuing growing as a professional in the educational field.
**Procedure of the Study**

I first distributed the parent surveys to gather information pertaining to literacy within the home and their views on the importance of literacy. Once the parent surveys were retrieved I analyzed the data to develop an understanding of the students’ background and prior knowledge of literacy. I then began observing the students and recording anecdotal notes. Anecdotal notes were used to observe the child in his or her class environment. After observing the students, I was able to complete the assessments of concepts of print, book handling, print awareness, and written and pictorial representations.

**Data Collection and Analysis**

During the course of this study, I used several data collection methods, as shown in following sections. The data was collected by using informal assessments such as a parent survey and anecdotal notes. The formal assessments that were used included concepts of print, book handling, and print awareness.

**Parent Survey**

The parent survey was the first instrument completed, which consisted of a series of questions querying parents about home life, literacy involvement at home, and if they are satisfied with their child’s literacy development.

**Anecdotal Notes**

Anecdotal notes are a form of an informal assessment. These notes were taken to record specific student’s behaviors, skills, and outcomes. Anecdotal notes were taken throughout my study on a daily basis.
Concepts of Print

Concepts of Print are a formal assessment of the child’s knowledge of how a book works. A series of questions were asked for each student about how much literacy they are exposed to on a daily basis.

Concepts of Writing

Concepts of writing are formal assessment of the child’s knowledge of writing. A series of questions and writing examples were examined for each student.

Book Handling

Book handling is a formal assessment of the child’s ability to properly manipulate books. A formal form was filled out by myself when observing the child of properly holding the book, how they turn the pages, how they read, etc.

Print Awareness

Print Awareness is a formal assessment that gathers information of the child’s knowledge of environmental print, shared writing, storybooks, or alphabet books, and their symbols.

Data Analysis

Parent surveys were analyzed to develop an understanding of the families’ home life, demographics, thoughts about literacy, and involvement in the classroom. Based from the parent surveys I was able to determine the literacy exposure the students were getting in their own home environment. I was able to watch the child in a natural setting and observe the social interactions as they occurred between the student and his or her peers to see how the behavior’s demonstrated are reflective of the literacy experiences occurring in the classroom. Upon collection of the data
from the various formal assessments indicated above, I was able to analyze the results of the assessments and compare and contrast them to the results of the parent surveys.

**Criteria for Trustworthiness**

As the researcher I was determined to conduct this study to the best of my ability. I wanted to make sure I directed this study in an ethical and unbiased method. I wanted to make sure I was mindful of my educational philosophies and beliefs. I collected and analyzed the data as they were presented. It is important that all measures are taken to ensure validity, accuracy, authenticity, and reliability of the data. To ensure trustworthiness I used variety of data collection techniques. I used surveys, interviews, observations, and an array of assessments. I collected my data in a time frame of six weeks to make sure I had gathered a sufficient amount of data. I made sure I presented myself in an engaged, mindful, objective and professional manner while I gathered data. Before I started my research, I made sure all of my participants were debriefed on my intentions for the survey, interview, observations, and assessments. I was conscious of when my participants needed a break through the assessment process and made sure to grant the participant’s wishes if they asked for a break. My main focus was to ensure dependability of the research through my detailed description of the research process.

**Limitations**

There are limitations that need to be taken into consideration with conducting a study of this nature, such as the duration of the study. My study is only for six weeks, however, if the time to conduct my study were longer, I would be able to collect more data, which would allow for a more in-depth study and understanding of the participants and how parents’ perceptions impact the literacy learning and development of their children. In addition, the integrity of the responses
provided by parents on the survey completed might affect the reliability of the results of my study, if they do not answer the questions honestly.
Chapter Four: Findings

This chapter will discuss the results of my study conducted with three preschool students, examining the impact of parents’ perceptions of literacy and how it affects their preschool child’s literacy development.

Alexandra is four years ten month old, female preschool student. She lives with her mother, father, and younger sister in an apartment complex in the City of Rochester. Her ethnicity is Hispanic and African American. She is a bilingual speaker of Spanish and English. From observing Alexandra she is a happy, social, and healthy little girl. She enjoys participating in class learning new things. Alexandra states, “I am working hard to write my name in Kindergarten.” Alexandra is described by her teacher as a very social, active and happy four years old. She enjoys playing with baby dolls and Barbie’s with her younger sister. She is always smiling and joking around with the other peers in her classroom. She is comfortable meeting new people, both adults and children and making them feel welcomed. Alexandra can stay focused for a good amount of time and has no behavioral issues or outbursts. She is self-efficient and independent at home and in the classroom.

Parent Surveys were the first instrument completed for this case study. The parent surveys were a series of questions pertaining to home life, literacy involvement at home, classroom involvement, family education background and if they are satisfied with their child’s literacy development.

Based on the parent survey for Alexandra both Mom and Dad are very involved with their daughter’s development as a preschool student. Both have expressed their concerns of Alexandra’s needs. Their main concern is making sure she is prepared for kindergarten and later grade levels to come. Both parents express they are willing to do whatever it takes so their child
has a successful and good school experience. Based on the answers in the Parent Survey
Alexandra is being raised in a literacy enriched home environment. Mom explained she is read to
every night by either Mom, Dad or her Grandmother. Mom also explained that in their home
they have books that they own, books from the library, a computer used for literacy games,
paper, pencils, crayons, and markers for Alexandra to write and draw with. Alexandra is being
brought up in a bilingual household. Mom speaks fluent Spanish and Dad speaks English.
Alexandra is able to fluently speak both languages. Both parents have their high school
diplomas and are taking courses at Monroe Community College. Both parents are able to balance
working and being involved with the classroom. Any chance they can get they come to
classroom events and parties together.

Anecdotal notes were completed to get to know the student and his or her classroom
environment. Field notes are useful when observing for extended periods of time. These notes
include in-depth descriptions of children’s solitary activity and social interactions.
Anecdotal notes are the general procedure for recording observations and it is effective to rotate
around the room at different times and different days.

The observation of Alexandra during circle time was very effective. Both teachers sat
with the whole class, placing themselves near the students who were having behavioral problems
during the circle time to keep the other students on task and not disrupted. Alexandra properly
answered questions and was attentive. When the teacher was reading a story Alexandra answered
questions on making predictions and answered questions on how she thought the book was going
to end. Her behavior throughout the entire circle time was very engaging and very attentive.
When other students were starting to get fidgety she was the one that would correct their
behavior. When the teacher would ask what comes next for the routine she would answer
correctly. This observation made it very evident that Alexandra love school and enjoys being a part of the events being done at school.

The interview with the student gives an understanding of language as sociocultural practice and identifies the child’s language and identity. Sociocultural practice develops more for children through the capability to use talk about, and learn through language. The interview questions given to the student help give a better understanding of the literacy environment at school and home.

During the interview Alexandra was very engaged and stayed on task when answering questions. She needed no breaks and was focused throughout the interview. Based on her answered she lives in a Literacy enriched home environment. Both mom and dad read to Alexandra. She explained she reads books with her mom and dad about ants, bugs, and the Bible. Alexandra focuses more on writing and drawing. She explained how she likes to write letters, make Christmas cards, and draw with her little sister. Her perception of reading indicated that she believes adults are good readers because of her exposure to literacy. She’s in a classroom where the teacher reads and at home mom and dad read to her. Below is an excerpt of the interview.

**Samantha:** Why do people read?

**Alexandra:** To read the Bible.

**Samantha:** What do you like to read?

**Alexandra:** “A book about ants, bugs, and the Bible.”

**Samantha:** Who do you read with?
Alexandra: “I read with my mommy and daddy.”

Samantha: What do you like to write?

Alexandra: “I like to write my letters.”

Samantha: Why do people write?

Alexandra: “To write their name.”

Print awareness indicates how aware of print the student is in his classroom environment and real world environment. Print awareness is when children start to tune into symbols and begin to recognize their shapes and form. After children understand that symbols represent things they begin to understand the concept of word and correspond between written and oral language.

Alexandra received a six out of ten correct on the print awareness assessment. Being Alexandra is 4 years old and cannot read she scored very well on this assessment. She was given credit on the labels or logos that he didn’t name but were close at getting to. For example the Runt’s box logo she didn’t say the actual name, “Runt’s”, but said, “candy”, which indicates she saw the picture, didn’t know what it was, but knew it was a candy box. This indicates Alexandra is observant and absorbs the print around her. She was able to answer where she has seen the labels or logos before, she was able to tell what she thinks it says, she was able to tell how she knows, and she was able to point to the labels. This indicates Alexandra is exposed to print by real world experiences. Alexandra was very engaged and certain when answering. Towards the end she began losing interest.
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Books and book handling are huge components in a child’s literacy base growth. Children should be surrounded by books and be able to explore those books at any time. It is so important to switch the genre of books so children can explore and find out what types of books they like. Book handling is a very important concept to observe on a child. Book handling consists of how the child turns a page, reading left to right, starting from the cover, having the book right ways up, looking at the pictures to tell a story, and expressing emotions.

Alexandra was able to choose whatever book she wanted. She chose a Dr. Seuss book. She was able to answer questions point to the cover of the book, point to the back of the book, point to a letter, point to a word, held the book properly, and turned pages properly. I noticed she followed the sentences from left to right. Alexandra constantly explores books and her attention is attentive when someone reads to her. Her behavior is very engaged through one on one attention she gets from the teachers and in a group setting. The book handling observation Alexandra was very engaged and very proud of her after she completed the section. She stayed very serious and involved with the questions. Once she got to question 12 she began to get tired and asked politely if she could go play. I gave her a positive praise and sent her on her way to play. There were no behavioral issues during one on one time throughout this assessment.

Writing and pictorial representations is used through a child’s writing and drawing. As children explore in drawing and writing it is important for the teacher to ask the child what they are writing or drawing about. This conversation helps the child put meaning to drawing and writings and explores a form of communication.
Alexandra’s writing has complete letter formation. She was able to write her name with little to no problem. Her writing is completely clear and has letter formation. She mixed in upper case with lower case letters while writing her name. She also drew a picture of her sister and herself. The picture has two stick figures with a head. The head has a nose, mouth, ears and hair. Both her written and pictorial representation are very developed.

Manny is four years six months old, male preschool student. He lives with his grandmother and younger sister is an apartment complex in the City of Rochester. He’s ethnicity is African American. His native language is English. From observing Manny he seems like a very active boy. He likes to run, jump, play with cars, and build and crash block towers. Manny shies away from participating in class and is only engaged when he is interested. Manny is described as quiet at first and then very talkative once you get to know him. He enjoys playing games on the computer and running around being. However, he struggles in staying focused during large groups. When attention is not directed towards him he tends to act out by kicking his chair, rolling his eyes, and disrupting his friends. During independent play he tends to get out of control with running and being rough with his friends. Manny needs alone times throughout the day to refocus himself.

Parent Surveys were the first instrument completed for this case study. The parent surveys were a series of questions pertaining to home life, literacy involvement at home, classroom involvement, family education background and if they are satisfied will their child’s literacy development.

Based on the parent’s survey pertaining to Manny he lives with his Grandmother and she has full custody of him. English is the predominant language spoken in the household.
Manny’s mother moved from New York and left Manny with his Grandmother at the age of one year old. Recently, Manny’s Mom has moved back to Rochester, New York, however lives in a separate apartment. Manny’s Grandmother explained she tried her best to implement literacy within the home. She helps Manny write his letters and reads to him when she has the chance. His Grandmother also has custody of Manny’s younger sister. His Grandmother emphasized she is very busy and it is hard to balance everything especially with some of her health issues. His Grandmother does not have a high school diploma. She discussed with me that she tried very hard to complete the homework with Manny; however she does not comprehend all of the work set home to him. Manny’s Grandmother wants the best for Manny she has reached out to his teachers to discuss Kindergarten and some of his behavioral concerns.

Anecdotal notes were completed to get to know the student and his or her classroom environment. Field notes are useful when observing for extended periods of time. These notes include in-depth descriptions of children’s solitary activity and social interactions. Anecdotal notes are the general procedure for recording observations and it is effective to rotate around the room at different times and different days.

A observation was during small group. This observation was very effective because I was able to anecdotal notes of how Manny communicated and interacted with other children in a group setting of five students. The small group consisted of the teacher reading the book, “The Rainbow Fish” written by Marcus Pfister. While the teacher was reading, Manny was leaning back on his chair, poking at other children, and kicking his feet. The teacher had to stop three times during the book to correct his behavior. Manny response to the teacher correcting his behavior he would stop his behavior for two minutes and find something else to do that would disrupt the book. After the book the students were able to make their own rainbow fish. The
teacher had the fish cut out, tissue paper, shiny circle pieces, and glue sticks all prepared. Manny was very excited when he saw the materials. He said, “oh this is going to be fun!” During direct instruction Manny was very attentive and engaged. He completed the project needing no redirection or prompting. He had his full attention on the task. Once he was done with making his fish he said, “Look it! Look what I made!” Based on this observation and observations made during assessments Manny is a child that seeks attention whether it’s for the good or bad.

The interview with the student gives an understanding of language as sociocultural practice and identifies the child’s language and identity. Sociocultural practice develops more for children through the capability to use talk about, and learn through language. The interview questions given to the student help give a better understanding of the literacy environment at school and home.

Manny was very fidgety during the student interview. When we started the interview Manny was sitting in a chair, however he could not sit still. He would rock back and forth, move his legs around, flap his arms and would rarely make eye contact. Manny would look down at his lap and get frustrated very easily when answering questions. He showed his frustrations by rolling his eyes and huffing and puffing. He had to take numerous amounts of breaks between questions because he could not stay focused. When the questions were given he comprehended the questions being asked because his answers were on the subject as the questions. Based on the answers of the interview Manny is being read to at home by his mom and grandmother. Manny explained that his mom helps him write letters at home and he “sorta likes” reading and writing with his mom and sister. For things Manny likes to do he said he likes to play with his toys and use the computer. Below is an excerpt from the interview.
Samantha: Why do people read?

Manny: “My mommy reads spooky stories to me.”

Samantha: What do you like to read?

Manny: “A book”

Samantha: Who do you read with?

Manny: “My Grandmama and Mommy.”

Samantha: What do you like to write?

Manny: “I like to write and draw my mommy and my sister.”

Samantha: Why do people write?

Manny: “I don’t know.”

Manny received an eight out of ten correct on the print awareness assessment. Being Manny is 4 years old and cannot read he scored very well on this assessment. He was given credit on the labels or logos that he didn’t name but were close at getting to. For example the Wegmans logo he didn’t say the actual name, “Wegmans”, but said, “grocery store”, which indicates he has seen the logo when he has gone to the grocery store with his mom or grandmother. This indicates Manny is observant and absorbs the print around him. He was able to answer where he has seen the labels or logos before or who he was with when he saw the labels or logos. He shared a story of his recent birthday when he saw the Lego logo. This indicates Manny is exposed to print by real world experiences. He has engaged in print in other
places than his school environment. Manny was very engaged and certain when answering. He kept his full interest and focus when completed this assessment.

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**Figure 4.2**

Books and book handling are huge components in a child’s literacy base growth. Children should be surrounded by books and be able to explore those books at any time. It is so important to switch the genre of books so children can explore and find out what types of books they like. Book handling is a very important concept to observe on a child. Book handling consists of how the child turns a page, reading left to right, starting from the cover, having the book right ways up, looking at the pictures to tell a story, and expressing emotions.

Manny was able to choose whatever book he wanted. He chose a book about Volcanos. He could not pay attention when asked questions. He moved around in his chair and was kicking
his feet on the other chairs. With a smile on his face he purposefully would push things off the table so he would have to get up and pick up whatever he dropped. Manny needed allot of prompting and redirection during the book handling assessment. He responded, “I don’t know” to a number of questions. He pointed to the back of the book for the cover and pointed to the cover for the back of the book. The assessment was cut short because child could not stay focused and began having behavioral outbursts. Some behavioral outburst were randomly yelling, turning and talking to one of his friend when I was asking him a question, and spinning the book around. Once Manny asked if he could go play I thought it was a good idea to stop the assessment. Manny answered ten out of twenty three questions of the assessment, he answered zero questions correct.

Writing and pictorial representations is used through a child’s writing and drawing. As children explore in drawing and writing it is important for the teacher to ask the child what they are writing or drawing about. This conversation helps the child put meaning to drawing and writings and explores a form of communication.

When asked to write his name Manny folded his arms and rolled his eyes and said, “I don’t want to write my name.” When asked to draw a picture of himself Manny again said, “I don’t want to draw a picture.” No analysis was made because child refused assessment.

Frank is four years four months old, male preschool student. He lives with his mother, father, and older sister. His ethnicity is Hispanic, he grows up in a house speaking Spanish, however, his primary language is English. From observing Frank he is quiet, keeps to himself, kind little boy. He enjoys playing with cars and dinosaurs. When Frank feels comfortable he feels confident enough to participate in class. Frank is described as being very shy at first and then slowly opening up. He is a child that never wants to be the center of attention and gets
embarrassed when he is the main focus. Frank has a long time transitioning into preschool. He cried the first three months due to separation from his mom and dad. Frank enjoys playing with dinosaurs and turtles and shares very nicely with his friends. He has no behavioral issues or concerns.

Parent Surveys were the first instrument completed for this case study. The parent surveys were a series of questions pertaining to home life, literacy involvement at home, classroom involvement, family education background and if they are satisfied with their child’s literacy development.

Based on Frank’s parent survey he lives with his Mom, Dad, and older sister. They both speak fluently in Spanish and English. Franks predominant language is English, he understands Spanish, but cannot speak it. Both of Frank’s parents are very supportive of him and are very involved with his academics. Both Mom and Dad have a high school diploma and graduated from the same local high school in Rochester, New York. Based from the survey Mom is the one who works on homework and writing his letters with Frank. They make family trips to Barnes and Nobles and the library. Every night a story is read to Frank at bedtime. They do not have cable in the household and Mom emphasized she tries to get educational movies and TV shows. Both Mom and Dad believe that school is very important for the growth of their children’s development. They believe that being involved with their children’s classroom helps build better relationships with their children.

Anecdotal notes were completed to get to know the student and his or her classroom environment. Field notes are useful when observing for extended periods of time. These notes include in-depth descriptions of children’s solitary activity and social interactions.
Anecdotal notes are the general procedure for recording observations and it is effective to rotate around the room at different times and different days.

An observation of Frank was made during circle time. He sat very quietly on his square to wait for his teacher’s instruction. He participated during circle by singing songs, counting, and singing the Alphabet. He was able to clearly state his predictions of the story before the teacher read the book. During the story he began to drift his attention towards a child’s untied shoe. His distraction made the teacher stop reading the book to redirect his attention back to the book. He was very embarrassed when the teacher pointed him out and responded with, “I’m sorry.” Frank also helped one of his friends who had tripped when walking to the table.

The interview with the student gives an understanding of language as sociocultural practice and identifies the child’s language and identity. Sociocultural practice develops more for children through the capability to use talk about, and learn through language. The interview questions given to the student help give a better understanding of the literacy environment at school and home.

During the student interview Frank sat with poise. He looked a little nervous so it took him some time to process and answer the questions. The questions needed to be repeated to Frank twice because he would say, “I forgot.” However, based on the questions he states that mom and his older sister read to him and write with him. When he was talking or explaining something that he enjoyed like turtles or dinosaurs his faced lit up with excitement. When answering questions that he wasn’t interested in, he would quickly answer the questions, while he answered the questions he would put his hands near his mouth. Throughout the interview he did need a few wiggle breaks. Below is an excerpt from the interview.
Samantha: Why do people read?

Frank: “I don’t remember. Oh! I learn things about dinosaurs and turtles. I remember now!”

Samantha: What do you like to read?

Frank: “books”

Samantha: Who do you read with?

Frank: “my mom.”

Samantha: What do you like to write?

Frank: “Books about dinosaurs and turtles.”

Samantha: Why do people write?

Frank: “Because they pay bills”

Print awareness indicates how aware of print the student is in his classroom environment and real world environment. Print awareness is when children start to tune into symbols and begin to recognize their shapes and form. After children understand that symbols represent things they begin to understand the concept of word and correspond between written and oral language.

Frank was focused for the majority of this assessment. Student was able to choose whatever book he wanted. He could answer questions like point to the cover, point to the back, point to a letter, he properly turned the pages, and held the book in the proper position. Student was able to sit until the assessment was completed. Frank was focused for the majority of this assessment. Student was able to choose whatever book he wanted. He could answer questions
like point to the cover, point to the back, point to a letter, he properly turned the pages, and held the book in the proper position. Student was able to sit until the assessment was completed.

Frank received a six out of ten on the print awareness assessment. He was able to describe where he saw the labels and logos and who he was with. He was very honest and when he didn’t know one he just responded, “I don’t know.” Felix received credit for labels and logos he might not of named correctly, but were in the context. For example, when he saw the “box of cheerios” he responded with, “box of cereal.” This indicates he has seen the box of cheerios before either in the grocery store or even in his own house, but didn’t say the actual name. Based from this print awareness assessment Frank is not only exposed to print in the classroom setting, but exposed to environmental print.

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**Figure 4.3**

Books and book handling are huge components in a child’s literacy base growth.

Children should be surrounded by books and be able to explore those books at any time. It is so
important to switch the genre of books so children can explore and find out what types of books they like. Book handling is a very important concept to observe on a child. Book handling consists of how the child turns a page, reading left to right, starting from the cover, having the book right ways up, looking at the pictures to tell a story, and expressing emotions.

Frank was focused for the majority of this assessment. Student was able to choose whatever book he wanted. He chose a book about dinosaurs and was able to point and tell me the names of the dinosaurs. He was very excited to teach me things that dinosaurs eat and live. He answered all twenty three questions that were asked about book handling. He could answer questions like point to the cover, point to the back, point to a letter, he properly turned the pages, and held the book in the proper position. Student was able to sit until the assessment was completed.

Writing and pictorial representations is used through a child’s writing and drawing. As children explore in drawing and writing it is important for the teacher to ask the child what they are writing or drawing about. This conversation helps the child put meaning to drawing and writings and explores a form of communication.

Frank’s pictures have a very sophisticated form of writing called linear scribble writing. It is very consistent with being horizontally arranged and wavy lines. Linear scribble writing is also known as mock cursive due to not only resembling cursive writing, but having continuous lines up and down. Frank is able to form letters like, F and X. His picture he drew was of himself. The person had eyes, hair, a stick figure body, arms, and leg. He was able to describe who it was he was drawing and what they were doing.

Chapter 5: Conclusion and Recommendations
Introduction

This chapter of my study will delve into the conclusions resulting from the findings of my study. The chapter will also discuss implications not only for the students’ literacy development, but implications of the parents’ perception of literacy. Recommendations for future research will be given.

Conclusion

After reflecting on the results of my study, I noticed that other questions began to unfold especially when rereading the parents’ surveys. All three of the parents perceive literacy as being a very important part of their child’s development. All three parents trust that literacy in the home will only better their child and their literacy development. As I dug deeper into the parents’ survey responses, I noticed that two out of the three parents expressed literacy to be a vital part of their child’s literacy learning and development, and work to create a literacy enriched home environment. These two families take regular visits to the library together, both mom and dad are involved and participate with their child’s classroom, they complete homework together as a family, and read and write with their child. When I looked at the students’ assessments of these two families their scores were very competitive. These two students excelled in their preschool classroom by being attentive, engaged, and interactive.

When interpreting the third parent survey I had to reread and analyze over and over again to figure out how their perceptions were different from the other two families because based on the assessments their child’s literacy development was significantly lower. What I finally found was something beyond what the parent survey and assessments could tell me. A conversation I
was fortunate to have with the third student’s parent when she was completing the parent survey gave me so much more insight than I ever intended to have when writing this Capstone Project. The third student was a child being brought up into a single parent home, that parent being his grandmother. The grandmother had health issues, financial issues, and was taking care of not only a four year old, but a one year old. This student’s mother from birth to the present continues to be in and out of the child’s life and is very unstable. It was clear to me that the grandmother wanted her child to be in a secure, safe, and literacy enriched home environment; however, with other priorities she was unable to adequately provide those experience within her home.

Implications for Teachers

I have found no matter if you are rich or poor you want the best for your child, however there needs to be a certain level of support for these families that need it. As a teacher you not only need to know your students, you need to know the families. Teachers need to use more strategies in their classroom to help assist in ensuring their students have some type of literacy in their home. One strategy teachers can implement is allowing students to borrow books from the classroom. A second strategy teachers should consider using, is sending home packets or short stories and writing pages to keep in the home, so that the teacher can encourage the parents to work with their child on the packets. The third strategy is teachers can provide and send home information on how to create an enriched literacy home environment. For example, making a grocery list with your child, conversations with your child, pointing and asking what things are in the environment, etc. The fourth and final strategy teachers can employ is making sure you are making yourself available and expressing your support for the families.

Final Thoughts
As I think back to my original questions of my study, I have exceeded my expectations of discovering that parents’ perceptions of literacy are not the only factor that impact their child’s literacy learning and development, but also life’s challenges that impact their child’s literacy learning and development.
References


Jing, Z., Pei, Z., Xuchu, W., & Su, L. (n.d.). Do preschool children learn to read words from environmental prints? *PloS One, 9*(1), 1-5.


Appendix A

Child Interview

Child Name: ____________________________________________

Date: ____________________________________________

Reading:
  1) Do you like to read? Why or why not?

  2) What do you like to read?

  3) Why do people read?

  4) What do you read at home?

  5) Who do you read with?

  6) Who is a good reader you know? What makes them a good reader?

Writing:
  1) Do you like to write? Why or why not?

  2) What do you like to write?

  3) Do you like to draw when you write?

  4) Why do people write?

  5) What do you write at home?
6) Who do you write with?

7) Do you send letters or cards to others?

8) Who is a good writer you know? What makes them a good writer?

**Experiences That Inform Reading and Writing:**

1) What kinds of things do you like to do?

2) What do you do well?

3) What do you like to learn about?
Appendix B

Family Literacy Survey
Adapted from SurveyMonkey

1. In a typical week, how often does someone (outside of daycare or school) read with your preschooler for 15 minutes or more?

☐ Never (0 days a week)
☐ Rarely (1-2 days a week)
☐ Some days (3-4 days a week)
☐ Most days (5-6 days a week)
☐ Every day (7 days a week)

2. Who reads with your children (outside of daycare or school) on a regular basis? Check all that apply.

☐ Mother, step-mother, female guardian
☐ Father, step-father, male guardian
☐ Grandmother, step-grandmother
☐ Grandfather, step-grandfather
☐ Brother or sister (full, step, or half)
☐ Other Relative
☐ Person Not Related (nanny, babysitter, neighbor, friend)
☐ No one

3. Which people do your children see reading on a regular basis for work, school, pleasure, or other reasons? Check all that apply.

☐ Mother, step-mother, female guardian
☐ Father, step-father, male guardian
☐ Grandmother, step-grandmother
☐ Grandfather, step-grandfather
☐ Brother or sister (full, step, or half)
☐ Other Relative
☐ No one reads very much

4. About how many children’s books and/or magazines that your children enjoy are in your home right now?
☐ 0 books/magazines
☐ 1 - 15 books/magazines
☐ 16 - 50 books/magazines
☐ More than 50 books/magazines

5. What types of things do you have in your home for children to read or use for writing? Check all that apply.
☐ Books that we own
☐ Books borrowed from the library
☐ Books on an electronic reader
☐ Books on audio tape or CD
☐ Children's magazines
☐ Computer that your children can use
☐ Pencils, pens, crayons, and/or markers
☐ Paper

6. Which of the following things do you or someone else (outside of daycare/school) do with your children? Check all that apply.
☐ Tell a story from memory or make up a story to tell
☐ Teach or talk about letters or words
☐ Sing songs, say poems or nursery rhymes
☐ Play games (including games like peek-a-boo for babies and toddlers)
☐ Watch TV shows focused on learning letters, words, or reading
☐ Have conversations about something interesting or enjoyable
☐ None of these thing
7. Which of the following activities do you or someone else (outside of daycare/school) do with your children? Check all that apply.

☐ Visit the library to look at or check out books
☐ Participate in a library program
☐ Attend story hour at the library or a bookstore
☐ Check out books from the bookmobile
☐ Visit some other place that lends books to children
☐ Visit a bookstore to look at or buy books
☐ None of these things

8. If you have a child who struggles with reading, where have you found help for them that you feel is working? Check all that apply.

☐ School
☐ Tutoring
☐ After-school program
☐ Friend/family member
☐ I haven't yet found help that is working.
☐ I am not sure if any of my children need help with reading.
☐ None of my children struggle with reading.
☐ This doesn't apply to my children.
☐ Other (please explain)

9. Do you or another person who is responsible for your children need help with reading, writing, or speaking English in order to meet personal needs and/or the children's needs? Check all that apply.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Yes, need help</th>
<th>Reading English</th>
<th>Writing English</th>
<th>Speaking English</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Yes, need help</td>
<td>Yes, need help</td>
<td>Yes, need help</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Reading English</td>
<td>Writing English</td>
<td>Speaking English</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
10. Which of the following describes the people who are responsible for your children? Check all that apply.

- At least one person has a high school diploma, GED, or higher degree.
- At least one person is in high school or working to completing a GED.
- At least one person is interested in earning a GED but doesn't know how to get started.
- At least one person is interested in earning a GED but needs reading help first.
- At least one person is interested in earning a GED but is not enrolled for the following reason(s):

11. In the past year, have you participated in any groups, classes, or workshops for parents?

- Yes
- No

12. Would you be interested in participating in parent groups, classes, or workshops on how to read with children if the time and location were convenient, the cost was affordable, and childcare was provided?

- Yes
- No

13. Do you know where to find reading help for your family and/or answers to your questions about reading?

- Yes
- No
14. How many people live in your home on a regular basis? Please include age for each person.

15. What languages are spoken in your home?
☐ Only English
☐ Only Spanish
☐ Only a Native language (please specify Native Language)
☐ English and Spanish
☐ English and a Native American language (please specify Native Language)

16. What would you like to see in our community that would help children learn to read, help families that have problems with reading, or prevent problems with reading from happening?
Appendix C

Concepts of Written and Pictorial Representation

Name: ___________________________ Date: _______ Grade: _______

Procedures: Offer a variety of paper and writing utensils. The italicized phrases are suggestions to
use to engage the child in writing. Ask the child to respond to each item, document all verbal
and nonverbal responses, and save the child's drawing and writing (or a copy), recording the
date, the context, and any other pertinent information.

1. Offer the materials and encourage the child to Write something. If the child declines, suggest
that he or she Pretend to write.

2. Read me what you wrote. If child says, "I can't," ask why, and then suggest that the child
Pretend to read.

3. Tell me about what you wrote. What are this and this? (Get at the terms word, letter, sentence,
period, question mark, and so on.)

4. Write a letter. (Children may respond with an alphabetic letter or write a letter to someone.)

5. What do you write at home?

6. What do you write at school?

7. Why do people write? What kinds of things do they write? Can you write (or pretend to write) any
of these things?

8. Draw a picture.

Figure 7–6, p. 83

9. Make sure the child is looking directly at his/her writing and drawing.
   a. Show me your writing. Show me your drawing.

   b. Is drawing the same as writing?

   c. How are they alike (the same; like each other)? How are they different?

10. Enlarge the following samples to fit on a single sheet of paper or cut each apart to fit on
    separate cards. Ask the child Which of these are writing? Why do you think so?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>bread</th>
<th>n’est-ce pas?</th>
<th></th>
<th>T5A28B</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>go</td>
<td>→</td>
<td>→</td>
<td>K</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FFFFFF</td>
<td>kitten</td>
<td></td>
<td>piñata</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>••••••</td>
<td>Get on the bike.</td>
<td>RESTROOMS</td>
<td>••••••</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

11. Invite the child to write his/her name. Do you know how to write any other names?

12. Write three different-looking names including the child’s and ask him/her to point to his/her
    name and read it.

Adapted from Y. Goodman (1992)

Figure 7–6, p. 83

Appendix D

## Evaluating Print Awareness

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Child's Name: ___________________________</th>
<th>Date: ___________________________</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

### Introduction

Ensure that the situation is comfortable for the student and then explain the procedures: I have some things to show you, and I'd like you to tell me what you know about them. Or, I'm going to ask you some questions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Note whether student has had previous experience with the item:</th>
<th>Have you ever seen this before? Where?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1____________________</td>
<td>6____________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2____________________</td>
<td>7____________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3____________________</td>
<td>8____________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4____________________</td>
<td>9____________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5____________________</td>
<td>10____________________</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Note student's response to the print:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What do you think it is? What do you think it says?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1____________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2____________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3____________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4____________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5____________________</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Note reasoning behind student's response:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>How do you know? What makes you think so?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1____________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2____________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3____________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4____________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5____________________</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Note the part of the graphic display to which student is responding:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What tells you that it says . . . ? Show me with your finger where it says . . .</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1____________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2____________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3____________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4____________________</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5____________________</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
# Book-Handling and Print Concepts

Choose a simple storybook. Title: ____________________________

I would like you to read this book for me. Have you seen or read it before? __________

**If child says NO:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What do you think this book is about?</th>
<th>If child says YES:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Uses illustrations</td>
<td>What was the book about?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uses illustrations and makes</td>
<td>Brief response</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>additional inferences</td>
<td>Detailed response</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uses print</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Show me the front of the book. Show me the back. Where is the title?

____ Front  ____ Back  ____ Title

Open the book to where the story begins. Response: ____________________________

Show me where you read. Use your fingers to show me how you read.

____ Points to pictures  ____ Points to words
____ Goes left to right  ____ Uses return sweep

Read the book. (If the child refuses, prompt with Pretend to read or Use the pictures.)

____ No response
____ Uses picture cues to label
____ Uses picture cues to construct a meaningful, connected story
____ Reads some of the words in the book
____ Reads the words

After reading, the child:

____ Can point to a capital letter; __________ lower case letter.
____ Can frame one word; __________ two words; __________ first word; __________ last word.
____ Can frame one letter; __________ two letters; __________ first letter; __________ last letter.
____ Can frame a period; __________ a comma; __________ a question mark; __________ quotation marks.
____ Can track 4–5 lines of print as you read them.
____ Can read some words. List: ____________________________________________

Tell me something about the story:

------------------------------------------------------------------------

Did you like this book? __________ Why? __________

------------------------------------------------------------------------

---

*Figure 4–3, p. 45*

### Book-Handling Knowledge

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Administration</th>
<th>Instruction</th>
<th>Possible Responses</th>
<th>Child’s Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Show book; title covered by hand.</td>
<td>&quot;What's this?&quot; If child answers with name of book, record and ask, &quot;What's (name of book given by child, e.g., The Hungry Caterpillar)&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;book&quot; &quot;storybook&quot; &quot;story&quot; name of book</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Display book.</td>
<td>&quot;What do you do with it?&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;read it&quot; &quot;look at it&quot; &quot;tell it&quot; &quot;open it&quot;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;What's inside it?&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;story&quot; &quot;picture&quot; &quot;words&quot; &quot;pages&quot; &quot;letters&quot; &quot;things&quot;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Hold on to a page.</td>
<td>&quot;Show me a page in this book.&quot; &quot;Is this a page?&quot;</td>
<td>Points to page. &quot;yes&quot;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;Show me the top of this page.&quot; &quot;Show me the bottom of this page.&quot;</td>
<td>Indicates top edge or toward top. Indicates bottom of page or toward bottom.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Present book upside down and back toward child.</td>
<td>&quot;Show me the front of this book.&quot; &quot;Take the book and open it so that we can read it.&quot;</td>
<td>Any indication of front or first page. Opens to first page.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
<td>&quot;Show me the beginning of the story.&quot; &quot;Show me the end of the story.&quot;</td>
<td>Points to first line or word of story. Turns to last page and points to last line or word.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 4-4, pp. 46-47 (continues) © 2002 by Gretchen Owocki and Yveta Goodman from Kidwatching: Documenting Children's Literacy Development. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Administration</th>
<th>Instruction</th>
<th>Possible Responses</th>
<th>Child's Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Turn back to beginning of story.</td>
<td>“Show me with your finger exactly where we have to begin reading.”</td>
<td>Points to first word on page.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
<td>“Show me with your finger which way we go as we read this page.”</td>
<td>Left to right, on the page, with return sweep.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
<td>“Where then?” (This may already have been done or stated in #8 or #9; if so, check off, but do not repeat.)</td>
<td>Top line to bottom line, with return sweep.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
<td>“Read the book to me.” If child declines, say, “Pretend to read it.”</td>
<td>Record all responses.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>If child doesn’t read book, or after child reads, continue.</td>
<td>“Now I’m going to read you this story. Show me where to start reading. Where do I begin?”</td>
<td>Indicates print on first page.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>Read one page.</td>
<td>“You point to the story while I read it.” (Read slowly.)</td>
<td>Almost always matches spoken with written words. Sometimes matches spoken with written words.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>If there is print on both pages, display the pages. Read to end of story.</td>
<td>“Where do I go now?”</td>
<td>Points to the first line of print on the next page.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>If possible, turn to a page with print and a picture on it. Turn book upside down.</td>
<td>“Can you or I read this now?” “Why or why not?”</td>
<td>“Upside down.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 4-4, pp. 46-47
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Administration</th>
<th>Instruction</th>
<th>Possible Responses</th>
<th>Child's Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Show student how to use masking cards to close “curtains” over “window.” (Use two pieces of dark cardboard.)</td>
<td>“Let’s put some of the story in this window. I want you to close the curtains like this until I can see just one letter.” “Now just two letters.”</td>
<td>One letter correct. Two letters correct.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Open “curtains.”</td>
<td>“Now close it until we can see just one word.” “Now just two words.”</td>
<td>One word correct. Two words correct.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>Open “curtains.”</td>
<td>“Show me the first letter in a word, any word.” “Show me the last letter in a word.”</td>
<td>First correct. Last correct.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>Remove cards.</td>
<td>“Show me a capital letter, any capital letter.”</td>
<td>Points clearly to a capital letter. Points to any letter.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>Close book and pass it to child.</td>
<td>“Show me the name of the book (or story).”</td>
<td>Cover, flyleaf, or title page.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Get at comprehension.</td>
<td>“Tell me something about the story.”</td>
<td>Record response.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>Title page pointing.</td>
<td>“It says here (read title) ‘by (read author).’ What does ‘by (author’s name, e.g., Angela Johnson)” mean?”</td>
<td>Responds appropriately.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23</td>
<td>Title page pointing.</td>
<td>“It says here that the book is illustrated by (read illustrator). What does that mean?”</td>
<td>Responds appropriately.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 4–4, pp. 46–47
Appendix F

STATEMENT OF INFORMED CONSENT FOR PARENTS

I am a student at The College at Brockport, SUNY, and I am conducting a research study to examine how home literacy activities, including reading and writing, affect children’s literacy learning and development. This research project is also a requirement for my Capstone Project for my Master’s Thesis for the Department of Education and Human Development. If you agree to have your child participate in this study, s/he will be asked to complete up to three literacy assessments. You, as the parent or guardian, will be asked to participate in a written survey regarding your literacy involvement in your child’s life.

Your child’s participation in this study is completely voluntary. Being in it, or refusing to be in it, will not affect the services your child receives at this school. S/he is free to change her/his mind or stop being in the study at any time, even after it has begun.

If you wish to have your child participate in the project and agree with the statements below, please sign your name in the space provided at the end of this document.

I understand that:

1. Your child's participation is voluntary, and s/he has the right to refuse to answer any questions. S/he will have a chance to discuss any questions s/he has about the study with the researcher after completing the literacy assessments.

2. Your child's confidentiality is protected. Her/his name will not be written on the survey. There will be no way to connect my child or myself to the written survey or literacy assessments. If any publication results from this research, s/he would not be identified by name. Results will be given anonymously and in group form only, so that neither the participants nor their schools can be identified. Participation will have no effect on grade status.

3. The benefit in this survey includes teachers’ knowledge of how parents’ view literacy and how their views affect students. This will better allow teachers to interact with and accommodate students. Your child may lose exposure to classroom literacy activities. Another potential risk is the parents’ loss of time to the questionnaire.

4. Your child's participation involves participation in three literacy assessments as well as ongoing teacher observations and anecdotal notes. The literacy assessments will be given throughout your child’s day during school hours and take approximately 45-60 minutes (breaks will be given to the child). As a parent, my participation involves answering a questionnaire of 16 questions and answering those questions in writing. It is estimated that the questionnaire will take approximately 30 minutes.
5. Data and consent forms will be kept separately in a locked filing cabinet by the investigator, and will be destroyed by shredding when the research has been completed.

I understand the information provided in this form and agree to allow my child to be a participant in this project. I am 18 years of age or older. I have read and understand the above statements. All my questions about my child's participation in this study have been answered to my satisfaction.

If you have any questions you may contact:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Primary researcher</th>
<th>Faculty Advisor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Samantha Switzer</td>
<td>Debra Joseph-McEwen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(908)770-9870</td>
<td>Education and Human Development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><a href="mailto:samanthamswitzer@gmail.com">samanthamswitzer@gmail.com</a></td>
<td><a href="mailto:DJosephM@brockport.edu">DJosephM@brockport.edu</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

___________________________________________  ______________________
Signature of Parent /Date

Child's name _________________________________
Statement of Assent

Statement of Assent for Observation and Interview  
(To be read to Pre-School age student)

I am a teacher, but I am also a student at a big school called, The College at Brockport, SUNY. I am doing a study to learn important information about what you learn and read at home with your parent(s) and at school. In order for me to do this I will be spending time in your classroom watching you during your ELA time.

If you want to help me with my school work, I won’t write down your name or let anyone else know who you are. Your parent (mom or dad) has given me the okay for you to take part in this study, but it’s up to you if you would like to. If you would like to take part in my study, but change your mind later on, you can tell me that you have changed your mind. It is okay to change your mind at any time.

Write your name on the first line below.

Under your name you can write today’s date, which is ____________.

Thank you very much,

Miss Samantha Switzer

Name: _____________________________________________
Date: ____________

Witness 18 years or older: _______________________________
Letter for Institutional Consent

Have institution print the consent on its letterhead and sign. Note: letter must be signed by the appropriate official at the institution.

To: Institutional Review Board  
The College at Brockport, SUNY

I have read and approve the research study entitled, "__________________________"  
By Samantha Switzer and give consent for the study to be conducted at or through ABC Head Start, Rochester N.Y. The institution may add any other appropriate requirements, so long as information regarding the study is shared with staff of the agency after the completion of the study, so long as parental permission is obtained, etc.

___________________________________  ________________________________
Signature/ Date  
Title of person signing (representing the authority to give institutional permission)
**Parent Recruitment Letter**

To Parents in Room 14,

As many of you know my name is Miss Samantha Switzer and I am your child’s preschool teacher here at ABC Head Start. I am also a student at The College of Brockport, SUNY. I have been taking classes for the past two years and now I am finally gathering research for my final research project. I will be studying how home literacy activities including reading and writing affects children’s literacy development. I would like you and your child to be part of this study. For parents, this means completing the enclosed survey. For your child, this means completing several reading assessments with me at school.

If you would like to participate please complete the attached survey and consent forms. Please return the survey and forms in the Monday Homework Folder.

Thank you so much for your time and supporting me in accomplishing a big goal in my life.

Sincerely,

Miss Samantha Switzer