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Are Urban Parents Familiar With Ways to be Involved in a Child's Education?

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ARE URBAN PARENTS FAMILIAR WITH WAYS TO BE INVOLVED IN A CHILD'S EDUCATION?

By

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I would like to acknowledge the following people for their unwavering support throughout the time I was working on this thesis:

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Armando ~ Helping me realize my potential and serving as a much needed role model whom I respect.

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To all of you... My most sincere thanks for your love and support. God bless you all. ~ PSD
Abstract

The purpose of the research was to ascertain if parents of students who attend school in an urban setting could identify ways to be involved in a child’s education at home and at school.

The research was conducted over an eight week period. The subjects of the research were adults from various parts of the country. However, it should be noted that out of the twenty urban parents that took part in the research, the vast majority of them resided in the Rochester, New York area.

The research was collected through interviewing the participants. The interviews were conducted over the phone or in person, depending upon the wishes of the participant.

The results of the research collected show that most urban parents know how to be involved in a child’s education at home and at school. However, it is important to point out that although most parents were only able to identify one to three ways to be involved in a child’s education at home or at school.

One of the suggestions for implications for future research include establishing a sound criterion that would gauge not only the quantity of answers given by parents, but also the quality of answers. Another suggestion would be to obtain a more random sample of urban parents, perhaps one that doesn’t have a large percentage of its parents in a centralized location in and around the city of Rochester.
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CHAPTER I

Statement of the Problem

Purpose

The purpose of this research was to ascertain if urban parents can identify ways to be involved in a child’s education at home and at school.

Introduction

One of the most primal parenting instincts is wanting the best for children and taking responsibility to ensure success takes place. Parents tend to have a natural inclination to feed, clothe and love their children. Parents tend to nurture their children in such a way that only parents can. When a situation warrants, even the gentlest of mothers will not hesitate for a single moment to come to the defense of their children when they are threatened or when they happen to be in harm’s way.

This responsibility should not stop at our most basic needs. Parents are the first teachers of their children. Thus, parents also have the daunting task of tending to the needs of their children’s education. However, when it comes to public education, some parents allow those instincts of protection and assurance of success to dissipate. For a variety of reasons, some understandable and others
not, many parents leave the job of educating their child solely in the hands of teachers. Although school is the primary place of knowledge gained by students, there needs to be a strong partnership between the home and the school to ensure success for all children.

Parents simultaneously trust in the authority of professional educators and look to them to come up with solutions, and at the same time complain that educators are not dealing adequately with the problems facing our children in our schools today (Bloom, 1992). This double standard creates a feeling of animosity. Parents resent the fact that their child may not be progressing as well as might be expected, and the parents are not able to provide support at home as an intervention: This might be due to the fact that many do not know how to support their child’s learning.

Variations in family environments and activities in the home have created a need for urban schools to reconsider their approaches on how best to involve parents in the educational concerns of their children (Jennings, 1990). Families can provide a vast amount of talent, energy and insight to their children. In fact, the family structure plays a vital role in student performance (Henderson & Berla, 1994). If parents are willing and able to be involved in the education of their child, are they aware of acceptable behaviors that can enhance learning?
Need for the Study.

One of the biggest concerns in education is the topic of parent involvement. Time and time again there is discussion about this sensitive matter among parents, teachers and administrators. This issue of the participation of parents surfaces even when it is not identified as central to the discourse (Glasgow-Winters, 1993). A Nation at Risk (1983), released twenty years ago by the National Commission on Excellence in Education, summoned parents to participate actively in the "work of the schools." However, Olmsted (1991) points out that many parents do not perceive themselves as teachers, even as teachers of their own children.

The scarce amount of research that has been conducted thus far on parental belief systems suggests that many parents hold a variety of beliefs about children and parenting that influences their practices at home (Miller, 1988). For example, one belief that many parents have is that educating children is the responsibility of the teachers, "just as they don't have to be involved in putting out fires once the fire department has been given that job" (Seeley, 1989, p. 46). Parents who believe in this theory are contributing to the ever growing problem of effective parent participation. Hence, it is necessary for schools to consider ways to bridge the gap between home and school.
Educational researchers have long stressed the importance of home-school connections and have suggested that involving parents in students' education can lead to impressive gains in achievement (Allen & Masson, 1989). If parents know some various activities they can do to be more involved with their child, and if they realize the positive ramifications of parental involvement, everybody wins. However, children will only benefit from this if parents take action with the knowledge that they possess. Educators need to know why some parents are involved in the education of their child, while others are not. Some parents may need to be presented some guidelines on how to effectively be involved as a parent at home and at school.
CHAPTER II
Review of the Literature

Children develop their attitudes and values at an early age from the dynamics of their home environment. The first teachers of our children are the adults in the home. Educators are looking to the parents of their students to take an active role and become involved in the education of their child. Through the use of a survey, McCarthey (2000) found that parental involvement in children’s learning is positively related to their achievement. We know from other researchers such as Epstein (1988) that children of parents who volunteer in classrooms tend to achieve higher levels than those whose parents do not.

Although parental involvement at home or at school may provide somewhat of an advantage at school in student achievement, not all parents are active in their child’s education. Using a survey, Muller and Kerbow (1993) discovered that parents who earn a higher income and those who possess more education tend to be more involved in their children’s education.

Many schools spend a considerable amount of time, energy, and resources to encourage parents to be more actively involved in the education of their children. In fact, parents embracing the idea that they can enhance their children’s education has been referred to as an “institutional standard” (Lareau, 1989).
There has been a considerable amount of research that addresses how parents can become involved in their children's education and how to increase parental involvement (Sanders & Epstein, 2000). However, despite all of the attention that this subject has managed to gain, educators, especially those in urban schools, are continuing to struggle to understand why parents do or do not become involved in their child's schooling at home and at school (Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler, 1997). Do parents of urban children know how to become actively involved in their child's schooling? If so, then why don't more of them do so? If not, what needs to be done to build a stronger relationship between home and school?

What is Parental Involvement?

Many educators state that they are in favor of parental involvement, yet, there is no clear definition of the term. Many are probably referring to parents' participation in home-school activities such as fundraising, classroom assistance or field trips while other educators are referring to special programs designed to encourage parents of young children to become more involved with their children in learning activities at home. Parental involvement, therefore, is an extremely broad area and can be defined in a variety of ways.
Grolnick, Benjet, Kurowski and Apostoleris (1997) defined parental involvement as any resources that parents are willing to invest in their children. Although educators spew forth much rhetoric in its favor, parental involvement is not always regarded favorably by school personnel (Henderson, Marburger & Ooms, 1986).

In her work, Henderson's (1988) focus on three aspects of parental involvement yielded the following results. First, studies have demonstrated that providing a home environment that is conducive to learning has a strong impact on student achievement. This includes parents having high expectations of children and helping to foster positive attitudes about learning. Secondly, getting parents involved in the educational programs of the school also resulted in positive outcomes. Parents tended to develop better attitudes themselves toward schools, and teachers worked to improve their instructional methods causing student performance in the academic areas to increase. Lastly, Henderson found schools that maintained high levels of student achievement also had high levels of parent and community support and involvement. Thus, comprehensive parental involvement is viewed as a critical component to the overall success of the school (Fredericks & Rasinski, 1989).
The focus of this research paper was two forms of parental involvement based on Epstein's model of the five types of parental involvement: (1) parental involvement at home and (2) parental involvement at school (Epstein, 1995, Epstein & Dauber, 1991).

Role of the Parent at Home

Interacting with a child at home with school-related or any other activities pertinent to learning represents a direct impact the parents have on a child. Some examples of home-based activities are reviewing the child's work and monitoring progress, assisting with homework, going on various field trips (e.g. museums, nature centers, libraries...), discussing school events or subjects with the child, providing enrichment activities pertinent to success at school and taking part in phone conversations with the teacher. These types of interactions that take place outside of school have been referred to as the "curriculum of the home" (Walberg, 1984).

These activities certainly have a positive impact on educational achievement. For example, Epstein (1991) found that parental involvement with children at home can be a reliable predictor of higher reading and writing achievement. Also, when parents and their children engage in conversations
pertaining to school, these students tend to perform better academically, all the way up through the high school level (Keith, 1991). These studies provide evidence that parental involvement can make a significant contribution to a child's educational success.

**Role of the Parent at School**

Making a presence at school is another way for parents to convey to their children that education is important and it is valued. Interacting with teachers, administrators, and other school personnel can affect student achievement because the children see that their parents are taking a vested interest in their schooling (Stevenson & Baker, 1987). Taking time to go and visit the school in some capacity gives parents the opportunity to see their children mingling with their peers. In fact, Muller and Kerbow (1993) state that parental involvement at school allows parents an optimal view of their child's education. Parents are able to take note of the school environment, observe teachers educating their child, and interact with the school community as a whole.

Other examples of school-based activities may include driving on a field trip, chaperoning an event at school, volunteering in the classroom, coming to school for scheduled conferences, and serving on a parent-teacher advisory board.
Although this is in no way an exhaustive list, any one of these activities or a combination of both sends a very clear message to the child that education is indeed valued at home.

**Role of the Teacher**

The classroom teacher also plays a vital role in the dynamics of parental involvement in school. The challenge for the teacher is to get the parents involved at home to reinforce concepts and ideas taught in the classroom. Teachers play a significant role bridging the gap between home and school because it is their responsibility to get the parents involved as much as possible. Since teachers believe that parents should help at home and at school, then educators must demonstrate this with an active program of parental involvement. Because many parents at the primary level do help, with or without guidance from the classroom, teachers who are not already using parent-involvement techniques should consider how to best mobilize this available resource more effectively (Epstein & Dauber, 1991). If parents say that they would help if only they were shown how, then teachers must consider ways to organize home learning activities to help parents make productive use of the time that they spend helping their children.
Sharing this information could be done at an open house or a planned curriculum night in order for the parents to get a better grasp of some strategies to best help their child in all academic areas. Perhaps an informal meeting with parents could be planned complete with activities, food and drink in order for educators to portray a non-threatening environment for those parents who may be reluctant to attend.

A hidden agenda that educators may keep in mind as well may be for the parents and teachers to get to know one another on a more personal level through informal discussions relating to children and the curriculum. Sharing some information between parent and teacher about the child that may not otherwise have been given the opportunity to be shared, could prove to be an enlightening experience for all parties.

Role of the School

Even with the wealth of research devoted to effective communication between home and school, the grim reality is that schools do not reach many parents (Louks, 1992). Schools often unintentionally deny families access to school literacy by their rigid adherence to packaged programs such as basals. Because of this, parents may tend to feel isolated because they think that children
must do a special kind of reading at school, and that they can only be taught
“highly sophisticated reading work” by competent and experienced professionals
(Shockley, 1994). By schools’ denying families access to school literacy,
educators have perpetuated the myth that parents are no longer interested about
the education of their child, when, in fact, the contrary is true. Parents may just be
looking for the schools to allow them access to an exclusive institution in order to
assist their children.

Because the experiences of some families are different from our own, it is
easy to make assumptions of a parent’s willingness or unwillingness to become
involved. These assumptions could very well serve as a bias, which, in turn,
conflict with our best intentions. Best practice may be simply to assume that
every parent wants to be informed of ways to enhance the learning of their child in
any way, shape or form. All too often, educators may assume that the opposite is
ture. This shallow way of thinking only creates more animosity between home
and school.

Barriers to Parental Involvement

Despite the connection between parental involvement and school
achievement, Muller and Kerbow (1993) found that only 15% to 26% of mothers
volunteer at their children's schools. They also pointed out that parents who are employed full-time tend to be less involved at school than parents who are not employed full-time. Aside from work patterns, other barriers may have an impact as to why urban parents are reluctant to become involved with their child's schooling.

Some parents do not become involved at the school because they do not feel welcomed or invited. Epstein (1986) found that as many as 12% of elementary school students' parents reported that they have never been asked to become involved in the classroom.

Many parents do not take an active role at school because of their own negative experiences at school (Finders & Lewis, 1994). Their own personal experiences create obstacles to involvement. Some parents who have dropped out of school may not feel confident or they may feel uncomfortable because they simply equate school to an "unpleasant environment" from their own experience in school (Epstein, 1991). Needing to care for family members at home, these individuals' limited schooling makes it difficult for them to help their children beyond the early primary years of school. For some, this situation is compounded by language barriers and lack of literacy skills. Therefore, these parents remain unwilling to step back into a classroom and relive uncomfortable memories which
have caused them to distance themselves from school. This feeling of disengagement can have a negative impact on the child, resulting in less than adequate achievement.
CHAPTER III

Methodology

**Purpose**

The purpose of this research was to ascertain if urban parents can identify how to be involved in a child’s education at home and at school.

**Research Questions**

1. To what extent do urban parents know how to be involved in a child’s education at home?
2. To what extent do urban parents know how to be involved in a child’s education at school?

**Subjects**

The subjects of this study consisted of twenty urban parents of children in the primary grades (K-3). When discussing the “parental” aspect of this paper, the parents are referred to as mothers and fathers, although at times, there may be other family members included in the research such as grandparents, aunts and
uncles, as well as foster parents. For simplicity sake, the interview process took place between the researcher and the adult, or whomever was deemed the primary care provider.

**Materials**

The materials for the research included two questions in the form of an interview. These questions served as a foundation from which another final question may or may not follow. This final question will be asked of the participants who have received a score of 3 or higher on a rubric.

In order to qualitatively as well as quantitatively measure a subject’s response, a rubric was used to determine the score of a subject.

**Procedures**

This study took place over a ten week period. During this time, interviews were conducted at a setting in which the interviewee felt most comfortable. More often than not, the interview took place over the phone, at their own home, or at school. The interview was conducted to gather information to learn if urban parents could identify some activities that would relate to parental involvement.
Analysis of Data

The data from the interviews was categorized into home activities and school activities. Two raters used the rubric to determine to what extent parents know how to be involved in a child's education.

Interview Questions

The following questions were asked of the subjects to get an in-depth look at their perceptions of what it means to be involved in a child's education.

What are some things a parent can do to support a child's education at home?

What are some things a parent can do to support a child's education at school?
CHAPTER IV

Results of the Study

Purpose

The purpose of the study was to ascertain if urban parents can identify how to be involved in a child’s education at home and at school.

Findings

Throughout the course of the study, which lasted a total of eight weeks, the findings of the study were quite intriguing. The majority of the participants in the research were a random sample of parents who lived in the city of Rochester. However, in an effort to obtain a representative sample of urban parents, not only were participants gathered from different quadrants of the city of Rochester, but from different cities from various parts of the state as well. In fact, several of the participants lived in different parts of the country. These participants were interviewed for the research through telephone conversations. A sample of parents from one school or even several might have skewed the research to a certain degree.

The data show all parents, except for one, were able to identify at least one behavior that could be construed as being involved in a child’s education either at home or at school. The rubric used analyzed parent responses in terms of the
quantity of their answers and not the quality of their responses. Given all the data collected through the interview process, it was observed that, indeed, urban parents do know how to be actively involved in a child’s education. However, to what extent is a different matter altogether, due to the fact that the responses that were gathered during the interview process were analyzed purely from a quantitative perspective and not qualitative.

**RUBRIC**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Percentage of Respondents</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Zero - Subject identified 0 ways</td>
<td>1 out of 20 - 5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low - Subject identified 1-4 ways</td>
<td>17 out of 20 - 85%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium - Subject identified 5 -9 ways</td>
<td>0 out of 20 - 0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High - Subject identified 10 or more ways</td>
<td>2 out of 20 - 10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The research that was conducted shows that most parents can identify several ways to be involved in a child’s education, while others are unable to. In fact, the participants’ responses varied from not being able to identify any ways of being involved in a child’s education, to identifying a bevy of ideas. Out of the 20 subjects, only one was not able to identify any ways to be involved in a child’s education. Seventeen of the twenty subjects were able to identify two or three ways to be involved in a child’s education. According to the rubric that was used, this would qualify as a score of low.

On the other hand, two of the subjects were able to identify an abundance of ideas to be involved in a child’s education at home and at school. This resulted in a score of high on the rubric.
CHAPTER V

Purpose

The purpose of the study was to ascertain if urban parents can identify how to be involved in a child’s education at home and at school.

Conclusion

I chose parental involvement as the focus of my research because many of my colleagues as well as I are at a loss when we try to figure out why parents are unable or unwilling to take part in such a vital part of a child’s life. My colleagues and I often become extremely frustrated when there is a lack of parental support in the home. Rather than get irritated about it, I wanted to try to be part of a solution, or at the very least, find out what parents knew about parental involvement.

My intent of the study was to find out what parents perceive as parental involvement. The data that were gathered in this study clearly show without a doubt that most urban parents do know how to be involved in a child’s education. The majority of the parents who participated in the interview named several ways to be active participants in a child’s schooling at home as well as at school.

As the research indicates, many of the parents did a wonderful job listing
several behaviors that do play a role in parental involvement. However, of the respondents interviewed, only a very small percentage was able to identify more than seven ways of participating either at home or at school. In fact, these same participants of the study were able to identify more passive ways to be involved. For example, the majority of the respondents mentioned basic ways to be involved in a child’s education such as reading to their child, helping with homework and going to parent-teacher conferences. However, only one of the participants mentioned playing music in the home to assist with pattern and rhyming. Although this qualifies as just one answer as far as the data is concerned, this kind of statement is really quite significant. She also stated that she would contact the child’s teacher for the next calendar year and gather the reading materials that were scheduled to be used. This particular person went on to say that she could read the stories to her child prior to the student encountering them for the first time during the school year. Reading the story to the child would at the very least assist the student with the comprehension aspect of the story, as well as listening and vocabulary skills. Once again, although this datum will only qualify as one idea, it is quite significant and insightful.

On the other hand, 17 of the participants in the study mentioned only two or three ways to be involved at school or at home. Moreover, these same subjects
tended to give more rudimentary ways to participate in a child’s education. These parents who responded at a rather basic level in terms of answers, neglected, for whatever reason, to share some of the more significant behaviors that could be exhibited in becoming involved. These particular parents could very well be doing some of the aforementioned “enrichment” activities with their child. If that is the case, then why were none of them able to articulate that to me?

These participants mentioned helping with homework at home, taking time out of the day to read with their child for at least 15 minutes every day and attending conferences set up by the teacher to assess the growth of their child. Although reading with your child and assisting your child with their homework are certainly important, as well as meeting with a child’s teacher, they failed to mention much more than those three basic ideas.

There are so many more activities that could be done outside of the school that could tremendously enhance the learning taking place in the home. Taking your child to the planetarium, watching educational television, listening to books on tape while driving in the car and volunteering in the classroom are all wonderful ways to be actively involved in a child’s education. However, due to the fact that the research conducted was an interview, I was unable to guide or coax some individuals into telling me some additional things that they were
unable to come up with on their own. Additionally, at the end of the interview and after I had gathered the essential data, I wanted to give them some other ideas just to enlighten them in a sense. I am unsure if urban parents know how important these additional ideas are.

The research that I conducted clearly asserts that parents can indeed identify ways to be involved in a child’s education. Whether they named one way or twenty ways to be involved is not the most important question in terms of the child’s welfare. The critical element that is imperative to the well-being of the child is if urban parents do participate in the education of their children. The subjects of the study identified a multitude of ways to be involved at home and at school. However, it remains to be seen if parents actually act on their knowledge and put these ideas to good use, thus benefiting the child.

One of the respondents to the interview was a female parent of one of my students. She was able to name a significant amount of ideas and activities that a parent could do to be involved in a child’s education; some of the statements were quite insightful. This parent was giving me many ways to be involved at school, including meeting with teachers, volunteering in the classroom and offering to chaperone field trips. As she was giving me this wealth of information, she stopped herself and in a somewhat shameful way stated, “I know I haven’t been
too good about these things." She said this because the only time I have seen her for this entire school year has been the very first day of school when she dropped off her child. Her only words to me on that first Wednesday after Labor Day was, “Be tough on him.”

This particular parent was quite articulate and well-educated. She was a single parent and had a decent job. After contemplating the thought for a moment, I felt compelled to ask her as to why she has not been to our classroom to support her son’s learning. She stated that this had been a hard year and that she and the kids just moved. After that initial statement, she went on to say that there really was no excuse and that she is going to try to come in between now and the rest of the year. Whether she does or not remains to be seen. However, I am fortunate to have had the opportunity to at least get her to think about becoming more involved with her child’s education, at least at school anyway.

Observations from Data

Most of the interviews were conducted in person at the home of the subject or at a mutually agreed upon location. However, four of the interviews were conducted via telephone due to distance.

While conducting the interviews with the participants of this study, I was
able to notice some peculiar happenings. I understand that being interviewed can be a very uncomfortable situation, especially for those people who do not have the best experiences in school. Perhaps there was a sense of guilt for some of these parents for not knowing many ways to be involved in a child’s education. Maybe there was some self-reflection going on which may have helped these respondents lose their train of thought. Either way, there is a reason why the participants of the study responded as they did. I observed parents becoming uncomfortable to a certain extent. As the data show, the majority of the participants in the study were able to identify several ways to be involved in a child’s education. However, the expressions on the faces of many of the subjects were quite a telling measure of just how uncomfortable they were. Their body language was clearly an indicator that they did not want to be asked these interview questions. In fact, almost all of the participants, upon hearing the first question, had some general discomfort, while at the same time attempting to answer the question appropriately.

For those parents who exhausted their responses after two or three answers, the discomfort level seemed to get greater. This period of silence, while the participant was attempting to give more information, was actually making me feel quite uncomfortable as well. In fact, for the one respondent who was unable to articulate a response, I was downright embarrassed for him. For some of these
parents, being asked these certain types of questions may have brought back some negative experiences of their own schooling, or some negative thoughts about how their parents interacted in their own schooling. This anxiety and discomfort may have played a role in the extent of their answers, even after being assured by the researcher that there are no right or wrong answers and that all answers are acceptable.

Upon entering the homes of several of the participants, I noticed other adults in the home. More often than not, these other adults were males and I inquired as to whether I could interview them for my research. The males would then inquire as to the content of the research that was being conducted. When I responded that the focus of my research was parental involvement, the males would respond with a statement resembling, "Oh, I work a lot and I don't do that stuff. She does." This unwillingness to share some ideas may be a sign of being uncomfortable, or perhaps it is an avoidance strategy. I was not able to include these two individuals as part of my research because they never really granted my request to be interviewed for my study. Perhaps the disinclination or the thought of being interviewed something pertaining to school was too much for them to handle. Either way, these males' reluctance to take part in the interview and their statements to me speak volumes in terms of them not taking an active role in a
child’s learning environment in the home or at school.

**Implications for the Classroom**

An overwhelming amount of research clearly shows that parental involvement is a key element in a child’s achievement level. However, communication patterns have changed over the years and the parents may feel disconnected with the school. Urban parents may view schools as an unpleasant place, perhaps due to their own personal experiences. Therefore, it is imperative that schools do everything they possibly can to ensure parents feel welcome and are encouraged to become active participants at school. This participation can be in the form of serving on a PTA committee, volunteering in the classroom, chaperoning school extra-curricular activities, or serving on an advisory board. Even getting parents to come and pick up their child from school may be a monumental step for some. To what capacity parents are involved is not the key issue. However, closing the communication gap between school and home and making parents feel more comfortable in a school setting are the critical components that need to be dealt with immediately.

Schools and communities must work together to foster relationships with families. One-on-one communication between parents and teachers, additional
school personnel such as parent liaisons and community businesses and organizations working with the schools can vastly improve relationships between urban parents and their children's schools. These suggestions could lead to personal relationships with school staff, thus creating a better school community.

Schools need to also demonstrate ways for families to work with their students to promote learning at home. This may be done through videos, pamphlets, inservices or books. These demonstrations should inform the families how to engage their children in meaningful learning tasks. Families may also need to be shown ways to provide an environment that promotes learning, as well as how best to communicate with the schools to learn what is being taught to their child and how the child is progressing.

As far as the classroom teacher is concerned, I play a vital role in encouraging parents to become active in school and at home. I have learned a great deal from this study, not only from my own perspective, but from the perspective of the urban parents.

As a teacher, I need to give parents ideas on how play a major role in enhancing their child's learning. Moreover, I need to explicitly demonstrate to these parents how to go about doing this. It is not enough to tell parents what to do, they also need appropriate behaviors to be modeled for them because some of
these parents have no prior experience with helping their child. I am quite sure that parents want to be of assistance, and I truly believe that many of them just need to be shown how.

Next year, at the beginning of each marking period, I am going to set up an informal workshop for my own parents. I have already discussed my idea with colleagues of mine and they are going to follow suit as well. We have had plenty of discussions about the lack of parental involvement in our school and we believe if you are going to complain about a problem, you need to take part in a solution for that problem. Indeed, we as a first grade team are going to reach out to as many parents as we can. We are also attempting to reach out to our other school members as well. In fact, I have been involved in some discussion in terms of helping to facilitate a workshop throughout our district. Hopefully, for the sake of all the children in our school district, it will come to fruition.

Whatever we can do to help get the message out to parents is well worth the effort. The results of this work will be long standing because they will be benefiting the children. In years to come, when these young children have children of their own, perhaps they will be just slightly more well versed in terms of parental involvement than their own parents were. The positive ramifications of the schools providing information to parents on how to be involved in a child’s
Education could affect the future success of children for generations to come.

Implication for Future Research

As more research is gathered and analyzed in years to come, it is imperative that a more random sample be obtained. Most of the subjects for this particular research were obtained through people that I knew. I asked colleagues of mine from my own school as well as other urban schools to assist in gathering the data. In an effort to get a random sample of urban parents, I contacted people whom I knew on a personal level. However, the few subjects that I was able to interview by telephone from different cities across the country were close acquaintances of mine, thus perhaps skewing the results of the research.

In addition to getting a better random sample of subjects, it is important to get a better representative sample in terms of socio-economic status. The majority of the urban parents who participated in the interview were probably bordering around the poverty level. The research may have been more conclusive if the socio-economic status of the participants was more balanced.

The majority of the participants in the research were African-American single mothers, many of whom are, for one reason or another, not working. Once again, a more random and representative sample may have given a clearer
depiction of urban parents’ responses in terms of parental involvement.

In my estimation, demographics certainly played a critical role in the results of the interview. Many of the parents interviewed may have had negative experiences associated with school while growing up, thus preventing me from getting a truly accurate portrayal of urban parents as a whole.

The rubric could have been devised in a different way to better gauge parents’ responses qualitatively. While some parents mentioned reading to your child and helping with homework, very few discussed taking a child on field trips or providing a well lit quiet place to do homework on a consistent basis. Perhaps another assessment could be used to measure qualitative responses as opposed to quantitative responses. Moreover, to add another dimension to an assessment, researchers could measure passive ways to help with a child’s education as well as more active ways.

The topic of the research conducted was very interesting and the results were even more intriguing. However, the findings of the study would most likely have been significantly different if the participants were chosen more representatively in reference to critical elements such as their gender, race, marital status and earning power.

It is my hope that the research conducted, albeit skewed to a certain
degree, will have a positive impact on future generations of the success of children.
References


