

Bridging the Gap Between ELL Families and Education

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Abstract

Parent involvement within their children's education is critical for their educational success. Students that have a high level of parental involvement and engagement, it increases their ability to retain the information, increases their performance in the classroom and increases their test scores overall. Additionally, high levels of parental engagement aids in mitigating behavioral issues with students as well. ELL families face barriers that significantly impact the performance of ELL students, making it essential to implement effective strategies to improve parent involvement throughout the school year. In order to address these limitations, a professional development program is presented here to aid both parents and teachers. The goal of this professional development is to address the factors that prevent a high level of parent engagement for ELLs including raising awareness on the importance of parental involvement in the education of these students, identifying and discussing institutional barriers and limitations that prevent this engagement as well as introducing interventions and resources to address these issues. The outcome of this program is for educators and parents to implement the skills and resources to contribute to ELL students' learning experience. Additionally, it provides teachers with the skills they need to promote parents' involvement in their child's school life and education.

Keywords: English-language learners, parental involvement, professional development workshop, cultural competence

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Chapter 1: Introduction

My interest in addressing the challenge of engaging English Language Learner (ELL) families within the educational system stems from a personal experience that impacted me. As I witnessed the struggles ELL students and their families faced, it sparked a strong desire to find different effective strategies to bridge the communication and cultural gaps that have taken place. Engaging ELL families has and is a critical issue in education. Teachers are accountable for helping ELL children; research shows that not all of them have the proper knowledge and skills to do so effectively. This gap leads to restricted support and poor educational outcomes for ELL students (Stairs-Davenport, 2021). ELL is a phrase used to characterize students who are working to improve their academic and English language skills at the same time. The goal of this capstone is to examine the question of how teachers can engage ELL families and minimize existing challenges regarding communication and collaboration between teachers, schools and ELL families.

This capstone highlights the difficulties that ELL students and their families experience. These difficulties include language barriers, cultural changes, and schools needing to make it an inviting space. Effective involvement fights these challenges and promotes fruitful teacher-ELL family relationships (Stairs-Davenport, 2021). The goal of this capstone is to investigate different techniques for effectively engaging ELL families.

Significance of the Problem

Breaking down language barriers is a crucial part of the ELL experience because engaging ELL families aids in language development and encourages continuous language learning at home. ELLs are frequently required to adjust to a new school system and cultural change. Research shows that engaging ELL families creates an inclusive environment that

respects multiple cultures, fosters a sense of belonging, and improves the educational experience (Fu & Wang, 2021). Due to language barriers, different cultural backgrounds, and prior educational experiences, engaging ELL families provide key insights, allowing students a fair chance. Engaging with ELL families is essential for providing a curriculum that both addresses the needs of ELL students and incorporates culture. Cultural and language understanding can help teachers improve instructional planning and implementation.

Another impact ELL families face is, schools need to create an inclusive setting. Research shows that it will improve educational outcomes for ELLs and bilingual students by addressing the issues they confront (Fu & Wang, 2021). Teachers can boost the academic achievement of ELL students by making families feel welcomed and create an inclusive learning environment (Fu & Wang, 2021). The lack of strong parent, teacher, and schools partnerships is a problem because ultimately the goal is to have academic success. Academic success can be built by opening the schools and making it more understandable to parents regardless of the language they speak and making it a welcoming environment for all families.

Purpose

This capstone project aims to develop effective strategies for engaging ELL families, mitigating the challenges highlighted in the problem statement. By creating strong partnerships between teachers and ELL families, the aim is to enhance communication, cultural understanding, and collaboration, ultimately improving ELL students' educational experiences and outcomes. The planned professional development project aims to give teachers the tools, skill, and knowledge they need to efficiently engage ELL families. During the professional development workshop, parents will be provided with information on how they can become more involved in their child's education. In addition to this, they will also be provided with resource material that allows them to obtain the skill and materials needed to contribute to their

child's education. For teachers, this professional development workshop will teach them how to become culturally competent, the benefits of introducing it into the classroom and how they can effectively do so. They will also be provided with different tools on how to successfully interact and involve ELL parents into their students' educational journey. The PD sessions will cover effective communication strategies, cultural responsiveness, involving families in the educational process, and creating a welcoming and inclusive classroom environment. The expected outcome of this professional development is to empower teachers with the skills and confidence to engage ELL families in a meaningful and impactful way. Teachers will be more equipped to develop solid partnerships after adopting the practices acquired in the PD program.

Summary

Overall, the challenge of incorporating ELL families in education is critical because it affects the linguistic, cultural, and academic development of ELL students. When teachers' lack the ability to successfully engage with families, the outcome for ELLs may be limited support and degraded academic outcomes. The proposed professional development tackles this issue by providing teachers with tools for forming effective partnerships with ELL families. Teachers will learn the skills and have the confidence needed to bridge support gaps through seminars focusing on communication, cultural responsiveness, family involvement, and inclusive classroom practices. Teachers can create increased communication, teamwork, and cultural understanding for ELL students by adopting the strategies they have learnt. Finally, the PD program seeks to create a fair educational experience and to assist ELL students in flourishing. This Capstone thesis includes several chapters. In chapter two I will present a review of ways to include ELL families. Chapter three focuses on putting a PD program in action. In chapter 4 I will present conclusions followed by appendices with the materials and tools of the PD. These chapters provide a thorough examination of ideas, implementation, and outcomes for increasing ELL

family engagement and building an inclusive educational environment for ELL students.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

Theoretical Review

When it comes to encouraging family involvement and engagement in US schools, there are various theories and frameworks to consider; from Epstein et al. (2009) six categories of family participation, to Ho and Willms (1996) four broad dimensions, to Grolnick and Slowiaczek (1996) three types. Epstein's approach in particular puts the onus on the community and school to inspire participation from families. For Epstein et al., the first form of participation is parenting, and noting how crucial it is for the community and school to help and educate families in order to promote a happy home life. Effective home-school communication is at the heart of type two engagement. The third category is volunteerism, and it refers to how communities and schools arrange events and enlist the help of families. The fourth category of Epstein et al. approach is providing families with direction and encouragement for participation at home. The fifth form of decision-making involves families being educated to take charge and participate in choices that are made in schools and communities. Building meaningful relationships with English language learner families is integral to teacher- family collaboration. To achieve this, educators have identified six forms of participation that could foster strong connections between teachers, families and the school community: community collaboration. Specifically, this involves bringing together resources and services to assist families within the school and broader neighborhood.

Founded using Epstein et al. (2011) concept, numerous celebrated organizations, such as the Kellogg Foundation, the Aspen Institute, the Family Leadership Development Institute, and the Child Welfare Policy and Practice Group are at the forefront of family education and empowerment (Ma et al., 2015). Along with encouraging parents to take on a leadership role

within schools, these establishments are committed to cultivating robust family networks in the community. Resources are emphasized in Grolnick and Slowiaczek's theory (1994). They engage their families in three different ways: behaviorally, personally, and intellectually. Participating in school events and making visits to the school constitute behavioral participation. Families' personal participation is how they demonstrate their care and concern for their kids both inside and outside of the classroom. Families that engage in extracurricular academic activities like reading to their kids and assisting them with their schoolwork would be regarded as engaging intellectually.

Ho and Willms (1996) put forth four ideas that are beneficial to academic growth in families. Specifically, parents should engage their children in conversations about school-related topics such as classes, activities, and events. Doing so helps foster healthy progress among students. Home supervision is another aspect, in which families keep an eye on children's screen usage, schoolwork, and socializing with friends after school. Home-school connection is another framework, much like the others, and it emphasizes open communication between staff and families. Last but not least, participating in voluntary activities like the Parent Teacher Organization is claimed to help kids appreciate the importance of education. According to Ho and Willms (1996), home discussion participation has the strongest correlation with students' academic success. One novel family participation concept that integrates several of the four elements covered by Ho and Willms is collective parent engagement.

When it comes to low-income families, Collective Parent Engagement (CPE) provides a unique approach, as outlined by Alameda-Lawson (2014). This strategy focuses on strengthening the social network in comparison to more traditional forms of family engagement such as homework help and conservation. CPE seeks to enable families to collaborate in removing the obstacles that stand in their way. The concepts of intrapersonal, interpersonal, and

behavioral empowerment were created. At the heart of the CPE approach to family participation is knowledge-based training. Alameda-Larson (2014) proposes that social workers worked to build families' confidence throughout the intrapersonal phase, which prepared them for the interpersonal phase. Once areas and families have identified their specific needs and challenges, they can participate in 40 hours of paid instruction, focusing on activities which seek to boost interaction and capacity. Following the training, intervention initiatives will be rolled out. The behavioral phase would be characterized by training and implementation. The community as well as the families and their children's lives were enhanced by the CPE approach to family involvement. This piece speaks to the importance of forging reciprocal relationships between ELL families and the school community. As we explore further in this chapter, establishing a link between families and educational entities is key for the successful academic achievement of such students.

Importance of Family Engagement

Family engagement refers to the active participation of members of a family in the education of their kin. In schools, participation is usually regarded as a responsibility of the parent(s) or guardian. Normally, educators claim that family engagement is a critical element in learning due to the correlation that has been established between the level of parent participation and learning outcomes. The concept has become important due to the increasing need to address challenges that have emerged in the education sector. According to Griffin (2021), demographic changes have become more frequent in modern society. Undoubtedly, the changes have significant impacts on various sectors including education. Changes in student demographics affects the teaching approaches adopted by teachers as they have to address the emerged needs. It also implies an increase in ELL students, which places a lot of strain on schools and educators since the goal must be to provide high quality education to all students.

Therefore, parent engagement is considered as a measure that can help to advance learning among ELLs.

The Crucial Role of Family Engagement in Student Achievement

McClain (2015) examined the relationship between family engagement and educational performance, as well as problematic behaviors, specifically in K-5 schools. This qualitative study aimed to delve into the significance of parental involvement in their child's learning, offering valuable insights into the potential benefits that arise from a more profound commitment to a student's education. To gather data for the study, McClain employed a qualitative grounded theory approach, utilizing interviews, observations, and document analysis as data collection methods. The participation in the study involved parents, guardians, teachers, and administrators from various K-5 schools, providing a diverse range of perspectives and experiences. The study emphasizes the crucial role that parents and guardians can play in enhancing their children's academic performance within the school setting. The findings of the study highlight the pressing need for increased parental involvement in their children's educational journey through effective collaboration and engagement with teachers and school staff.

According to Ma et al. (2016) research, family participation is a crucial determinant of the learning outcomes of students. According to these scholars, family participation, and not financial position, family education, or race, is the best indicator of student accomplishment. Instead, it is the participation of families in the community and their children's education. Based on this premise, the authors conducted a study to determine the relationship between the learning outcomes of children and the level of involvement of their parents in education. The researchers focused on two key periods of learning, early childhood education and early elementary education. The research is a meta-analysis that relied on data from 46 studies based on 100

independent effect sizes.

The findings of the study showed that there is a strong correlation between parental involvement and learning outcomes. The findings also showed that the type of parental involvement and organizational capacity that has been developed by the school had greater implications on the relationship. The authors of the study place a lot of emphasis on the role of parents, indicating that it is greater than the role of schools or communities. The study suggests that the development of effective family involvement in learners' outcomes requires the development of home-school connections, home supervision, and behavioral involvement. These elements are considered as the determinants of strong relationships. Also, the authors note that partnership development to facilitate family involvement requires capacity development, institutional partnerships, and effective leadership. Therefore, learners' outcomes are correlated to the level of involvement of their parents making it essential to ensure that active participation is present from parents.

Enhancing Academic Achievement through Parental Engagement Strategies

The enhancement of academic achievement can be attributed to parental engagement in learning, as suggested by the research literature. According to Jeynes (2011), when families actively participate and demonstrate motivation towards their children's education, it leads to improvements in their grades, completion of homework, test scores, and overall attitudes towards learning. This positive change in attitude stems from the children's realization that their parents are genuinely interested in their school experiences. Furthermore, when parents show a keen interest in their children's education, it fosters motivation to strive for higher grades. McNeal (2015) conducted an empirical study to determine the impact of ecological context affects the educational achievement of adolescents. The study also evaluated the influence of ecological context on parent involvement and relationship with the adolescent's performance.

The study used data from the National Educational Longitudinal Study (NELS:88), a nationally representative database of 8th graders. The study's outcomes support the findings from Jeynes (2011) by stating that specific forms of family involvement significantly contribute to increased achievement in math, science, and reading, as well as higher educational aspirations.

Wong et al. (2018) further emphasize the impact of family interaction by highlighting its potential to reduce dropout rates and enhance students' enthusiasm for active class participation. The study informs the role of parental involvement initiatives have to effectively influence student performance and engagement. The findings indicate a significant correlation between performance and engagement, wherein children are motivated to excel academically when their families actively participate in their education. This involvement extends learning beyond the classroom and creates opportunities for practice and reinforcement at home.

Language Engagement Strategies

Early childhood learning experiences provide kids a better foundation for success in the future. Early childhood family education (ECFE) programs benefit dual language learners (DLLs) and their families in profound ways (Griffin et al., 2021). The article discusses how practitioners can design and implement tailored learning experiences for DLL children and families to leverage the unique information and experiences that they bring to the table. The authors emphasize on the role of educators in developing learning experiences for students who require additional support in school. The culture that educators adopt is equally important in developing the right interventions for students like ELLs, who often require a lot of help to navigate classroom material, especially in the early stages of joining a school.

Griffin et al. (2020) also explore three examples of culturally sensitive ECFE programs – namely the Saturday Family Education Academy, Weekday Family Education Programs, and

Monthly Family Education Days – that can be adapted according to one's own context.

Ultimately, these programs provide a great opportunity for all families, including DLLs, to gain from exposure to early childhood education. The authors emphasize on the role of parents in engaging in their children's learning. They provide examples of programs that exemplify the notion of CPE knowledge-based skills, which provide parents with structured approaches to engaging in their children's education, leading to the development of a culture that embraces engagement. Naqvi et al. (2015) research into the use of 'identity texts' to encourage families to become more involved in their children's educational journey underlines the potential advantages which can arise from such empowering relationships. The study was conducted in one academic year in a large urban setting. The study encouraged families to share their stories with children during library time and data collected from the personal narratives of 11 parents in L1 and English. Interviews were also done with parents and staff to collect data. The Naqvi et al. (2015) review indicates that family or parent involvement in learning is a critical element in the outcomes of a child. Based on the studies, most parents require motivation to participate in the progress of their children, which affects the level of engagement. Also, the presence of capacity to support engagement is critical in encouraging family participation. Overall, it is evident that when schools provide spaces for parents to share their experiences the children at any educational level promotes collective parent engagement (CPE) (Alameda-Lawson, 2014) and positive learning outcomes.

Communication Strategies

Communication is a crucial factor in daily life and a significant indicator in learning outcomes. In education, communication is among the factors that determine the relationship between different stakeholders, especially between teachers and students. The presence of effective communication in educational settings has the potential to improve the relationships

between teachers and students. It is essential in the delivery of lessons as teachers have to be effective communicators in order to successfully teach students. Communication is also vital in facilitating relationships between teachers and other stakeholders within the education system. ELLs and their families are a special group due to the needs of the language gap that exists between them and educators. As it has been evidenced in previous research, communication barrier is one of the factors that prevents the engagement of ELL families. However, the adoption of effective communication has the potential to improve ELL family engagement as is evident from existing research. A study conducted by Kely and Wakabayashi (2020) on family engagement in schools sought to determine the perspectives of parents, educators, and community members regarding family engagement from preschool to grade 12. According to the researchers, the level of family engagement in the lives of children at home and school determines their success in both school and life. The study was conducted in one mid-western state through ten semi-structured focus groups that included parents, educators, and community members. The groups were divided into one suburban group, four rural groups, and five urban groups. Data collection from the focus groups was done in high need communities that exhibited high poverty and other traits that characterize underserved communities.

The qualitative study revealed several themes with communication being one of the major themes from participant's responses. The researchers highlighted that families from minority communities often exhibit lower levels of family engagement due to challenges in engaging with the community or school structure that usually fail to communicate with them. Part of the outcomes suggested that parents from such communities felt marginalized, powerless, and unwelcome in school, leading to limitations in knowledge of their children's progress since communication with teachers was limited. The identification of communication as a critical element in family engagement in this study supports the role of effective

communication in addressing the problem.

The role of effective communication in supporting family engagement is supported further by a study conducted in Hawaiian elementary schools. Chappel and Ratliffe (2021) conducted a study to determine the factors that affect positive school-home communication in Hawaii. The researchers based their study on existing research that shows effective partnerships between families, teachers, administrators, and communities improve the overall performance of students. The study indicates that family engagement is particularly low in families from minorities and low-income backgrounds, which hinders their will and confidence to participate in the schooling of their children. With the support of several studies that have been conducted on the topic of family engagement, the researchers conducted a qualitative multiple study in which they conducted interviews with three different types of stakeholders, made observations of various school events, and analyzed existing publicly available data about the selected schools to determine how they created relationships with parents. Eight elementary schools in Hawaii were selected for this study. 8-25 different stakeholders were interviewed in each school and the collected data subjected to coding to generate outcomes.

The findings of the study revealed that communication is a critical element in parent engagement, especially in underserved or marginalized communities. Three primary themes emerged from the study, personalized, informal, and face-to-face communications. These forms of communication were determined to be the most effective communication approaches in engaging with parents. The authors suggest that the findings of their study have implications on the online communication between teachers and parents given the evolutions being witnessed in technology. The study brings to light an important element in communication between parents and teachers. While a lot of emphasis is being placed on effective communication, there is also a need to ensure that the selected communication methods are those that facilitate proper

exchange of information. In this study, the researchers realized that direct, personalized communication is effective in engaging with ELL.

Chen (2019) explores the role of communication in inclusive education for children with disabilities. The paper is part of the Proceedings of the 2019 International Conference on Advanced Education Research and Modern Teaching (AERMT, 2019). While the paper does not explicitly address ELL, it makes an important inference on the significance of communication in inclusive education. The author of the review highlights that communication between teachers and parents or teachers and students is essential in addressing issues that emerge in teaching. The need for good communication is more important for learners with disabilities as communication usually experiences a challenge. The article indicates that teacher-parent communication is vital in promoting parental involvement in education as parents are important stakeholders in the sector. Increasing attention is being given to the challenges that children with disabilities experience in school in terms of performance and socialization. The attention given to the challenges is the reason behind efforts to have inclusive classrooms that can facilitate concerted efforts to address the issues. Therefore, the authors studied the role of communication in creating an inclusive classroom for underserved children. The review article found that communication is a critical element in establishing an inclusive classroom. Communication occurs between different stakeholders and the existence of good, effective communication is crucial in developing a conducive environment for learners. Parent engagement is achieved through communication with teachers, whereby good communication helps to create the best environment to foster proper communication.

The research presented in this section indicates that communication is a critical element in parent engagement. Communication determines several factors in a school environment, including developing and sustaining a good relationship between parents and

teachers. Poor communication is identified as one of the factors preventing parental engagement in school. Parents with ELL children have a lower level of engagement due to several challenges, including the lack of a good relationship with teachers to encourage their participation. The review also shows that effective communication entails knowledge of effective engagement with parents, which requires teachers to be direct and personalize information sharing to be effective in what they do. Therefore, fostering effective communication strategies is a critical part of CPE initiatives.

Cultural Engagement Strategies

Culture is a vital determinant in the nature of relationships people have. Culture influences the lives of people and determines behavior, values, and beliefs. It is a critical element in education as it influences the practices of students and teachers, making it essential for stakeholders to be culturally competent to facilitate CPE collaboration, and facilitation of learning. Parent engagement in ELL learning is influenced by the cultures of both parents and teachers, whereby the lack of alignment leads to differences in perspectives regarding engagement. Studies on parent engagement indicate that culture is a crucial factor of consideration in efforts to improve engagement. In a study conducted by Ishimaru et al. (2016), the researchers explored the experiences of families facing cultural or language barriers in their engagement with their children's education. The study aimed to examine the effectiveness of employing cultural brokers in various organizational contexts. To collect data, the researchers utilized a mixed-methods approach, combining surveys and interviews with participating families. This comprehensive data collection method enabled a detailed understanding of the challenges faced by families and the potential benefits of incorporating cultural brokers. The findings of the study revealed that families often felt unwelcome, marginalized, and powerless within the education system. Conventional family engagement practices tended to overlook the

importance of cultural considerations, which are crucial for fostering meaningful engagement. To address these issues, the authors proposed the adoption of cultural brokers who could bridge the gaps between educators and families by addressing linguistic, cultural, racial, and power divisions. Cultural brokers could establish an inclusive environment that helps families navigate the school culture, connect parents to available resources, raise awareness about the importance of parental involvement in their children's education, and advocate for necessary changes. The study highlighted the prevalence of cultural differences between educators and parents, which impeded effective parent engagement and hindered the maximization of outcomes for English Language Learner (ELL) students.

According to Evans (2011), who conducted a study on emotional geographies and their implications for family engagement and education policy in the United States, it was found that cultural differences between dominant and non-dominant groups in society are pervasive and have significant consequences for parent engagement. The study involved the participation of teachers, parents, and students in English Language Learner (ELL) classrooms. The research aimed to understand the sociocultural disparities existing within these classrooms and the resulting challenges in achieving educational goals. Through qualitative data collection methods such as interviews and observations, Evans discovered that these sociocultural differences often lead to the alienation or marginalization of parents. Many parents may feel that they are excluded or rendered irrelevant in their children's learning due to their differing cultural beliefs. Additionally, educators who do not share the same cultural perspectives may unintentionally contribute to this exclusionary environment. The findings highlight the need for greater awareness and sensitivity towards cultural diversity in education to foster meaningful and inclusive parent engagement.

With decades of reliable research connecting it to better student outcomes, family and

educator involvement is a critical element of success for any learning institution. Yet, despite its recognizable importance, many educators still find it difficult to bridge the gap between cultural norms and personal relationships when engaging with families (Leo et al., 2019). Although there has been considerable examination of barriers to family engagement, scant research exists on familial participation in exemplary secondary schools - those that have achieved graduation rates above the anticipated norm.

School Administrators Engagement Strategies

Studies on family engagement focus on parents and teachers and ignore leaders, who are critical in determining engagement. School administrators play a critical role in engagement as they are the facilitators of teachers' efforts. School administrators are responsible for directing their staff on the proper approaches to take in engaging parents and providing the required support to teachers through resources. Administrators are also responsible for implementing policies that support the concept of CPE with family engagement. The guidelines they establish are used by teachers to inform their practices and also ensure that they follow existing laws. Despite the significant role of school administrators in engagement, research on them is limited.

Parsons and Shim (2019) explored the role of administrators in increasing parental involvement in a rural state. The study was an exploration of K-12 administrators whose schools are located in a rural state. The goal was to determine how they could improve involvement and engagement of families of ELL students. The study was guided by two primary questions, how did the role of administrators affect parent involvement and engagement in ELL learning? and what measures administrators can take to facilitate greater involvement and engagement? To conduct the study the researchers administered an online survey and held in-person interviews with administrators. The authors focus on the

effectiveness of the strategies that were already in place during the survey and also seek measures that can enhance engagement and involvement.

Several issues are identified and discussed by Parsons and Shim, which reveals some trends in the education of ELLs. The study collected quantitative and qualitative data from the Wyoming Public School Districts. The surveys were administered to various stakeholders including curriculum coordinator, assessment coordinator, special educator director, superintendent, school principals, and psychologists. One of the primary findings was the fact that some respondents indicated that their institutions rarely had ELLs, which made it difficult when an ELL student joined a school. The revelation implied that most schools lacked the relevant support for ELLs based on the fact that they did not have such student demographics. It also implies that teachers lacked the ability or strategy to effectively engage an ELL parent due to the lack of experience, hence leading to low family engagement. Another theme that emerges is the existence of language barriers, which prevents parents and teachers from having meaningful engagements. According to the participants of the study, most parents who do not speak or understand the new language will prefer to stay away from a teacher or the school. The researchers claim that the trend is common since most parents may feel as outcasts or be marginalized based on the fact that they were the minority. Overall, the study's outcomes reveal that administrators have a primary role to play in ensuring that their schools and districts have sufficient support systems to facilitate parent involvement and engagement. Moreover, the study brings to light the fact that rural schools that rarely receive ELLs do not prepare for them, hence contributing to the lack of engagement or involvement due to the lack of preparation and capacity.

Conclusion

I began this chapter with a theoretical review of the literature to inform the outreach and

research question of this capstone thesis: How can educators engage ELL parents? The literature review highlights the challenges of family engagement and the crucial role it plays in students' achievement. Family engagement allows families to play an active role in students' success while understanding the challenges students may face. The review highlights the challenges that ELLs experience and existing interventions. Based on the review, the current implementation of interventions is yet to be fully effective in breaching the gap in family engagement. Parent involvement in the education of their children is vital as it influences performance. However, ELL parent engagement presents various challenges that need to be addressed to enhance performance. The review identifies studies that address various issues surrounding family engagement. The greatest drawback experienced from the literature review was the lack of sufficient studies to address the topic directly. Although the research positively reports that creating a family and school collaboration is crucial for the success of students in our community. It comes to be challenging for teachers and schools to develop effective engagement. Therefore, in chapter 3 of the capstone, I present a professional development for educators and parents as a way to mitigate the issue of engagement to support ELLs in our schools.

Chapter 3: Professional Development Workshop

Parental involvement in children's educational journey is a crucial component of the academic success and education that they obtain. With the parents of English Language Learners (ELL) this involvement becomes increasingly difficult due to the differences present in their child's educational journey in comparison to their own. English Language learners can best be described as students who are learning English as a second language while simultaneously obtaining their education. The factors that affect parents engagement and involvement include identity text, communication, culture, education levels, language barriers, lack of teacher preparation and lack of proper administrative support (Chappel & Radcliffe, 2021; Evan, 2011;

Ishimaru et al., 2016; Kelty & Wakabayashi, 2020; Naqvi et al., 2015; Parsons & Shim, 2020). This demonstrates that there are a host of factors that prevent or limit the involvement that parents are able to have in their child's education. This is an extreme disadvantage for ELL students as they do not have the ability or resources to continue their learning journey from within the home. These barriers have a significant impact on the performance of ELL students, making it essential to implement effective strategies to improve parent involvement throughout the school year. In order to address these limitations, a professional development program needs to be implemented in the school to aid both parents and teachers. The goal of this professional development is to address the factors that prevent a high level of parent engagement for ELLs including raising awareness on the importance of parental involvement in the education of these students, identifying and discussing the present barriers and limitations that prevent this engagement as well as introducing interventions and resources to address these issues. Within this professional development, parents, teachers and staff members are provided with intervention methods on how to better aid the children so that they have equal access to the resources provided to non ELL students. The slides and presentation for all the three sessions of this PD can be found in Appendix A.

Agenda for Professional Development Program

In order to ensure that students can start off the school year as successful as possible, the professional development program will be implemented within the first month of school. This is important because it ensures that parents have the resources that they need to contribute and engage in their child's educational journey throughout the entirety of the school year. Additionally, this professional development program (also referred to as PD workshop) will allow for the creation of a positive relationship and communication between parents and

teachers. With this relationship, teachers are able to communicate with parents about any difficulties that they have with the students as well as allow teachers to get to know students and their culture better. This allows them to create a culturally inclusive and relevant education for all students which can positively contribute to their learning experience.

In order for parents to be aware of this professional development workshop, students will be sent home with a newsletter (see Appendix B) that invites their parents to the workshop and details some of the goals and activities that will be provided to them during this program. There will also be copies of this letter in different languages provided to ELL students to ensure that the parents are able to understand the information and increase the chances of them coming to the workshop. As it notes in the newsletter, parents will meet in the school's library which will provide them with refreshments (finger foods, snacks and portable drinks) where they can engage with one another, teachers and staff members prior to the start of the workshop. The actual workshop will be held inside of the school's auditorium which is extremely spacious and can fit an estimate of two hundred to three hundred people in it. Each of the sessions for the parent/teacher workshop will take place on a weekly basis occurring on Wednesday night after school hours between the times of 6:00 pm to 8:00 pm. Including opening night, this workshop will be a total of three weeks (three total sessions) that will provide teachers and parents with resources and information that they need to aid ELL students. The time frame of 6:00 pm to 8:00 pm is crucial because it allows parents time to pick their child up from school and/or get off of work and travel to the school. It also allows teachers to have an adequate break between the school day and participating in the workshop. The goal of this professional development program in total is for parents, teachers and school administrators to be better equipped aiding the educational journey of ELL students.

First Session: Opening Day Of Professional Development Workshop

The focus of the first session of the parent and teacher professional development workshop is to allow parents and teachers to get to know one another while also providing them with general information about the program and what they may be required to do. Upon their arrival to the auditorium (where the PD workshop will be taking place on the first day), they will be handed a brochure that lists the focus of the program as well as information regarding all three of the sessions (see Appendix C). This brochure provides all those in attendance with information on what they will be engaging in the forthcoming weeks and the primary goal of the program and the methods in which they will be achieved. The brochure will also be available in different languages to ensure that each parent is able to understand the information that is provided to them and what the workshop will be about. They will also be provided with a blank piece of paper along with writing utensils in order to engage in the presentation that will be given to them later in the night.

The first workshop of this developmental program is dedicated to introducing the program to parents and teachers as well as allowing them to get to know one another. This will not only allow parents and teachers to form positive relationships but also with other parents who are facing the same struggles being involved in their child's development. First, parents will be asked to write their names, preferred language, fluency in English and their child's teacher's name. There will be various translators present (professionals, teachers or staff members) to interpret the prompt to all parents in the crowd. While this may be ineffective on time, it is important so that parents who do not speak English or the second most common language will not be excluded from obtaining the critical information and benefits that will be allotted to them within this program. Once all of the papers are collected, each parent will be called and separated

based on their preferred language. Each group (depending on size) will be allocated to a certain classroom in the school to ensure that each individual parent is able to benefit from the information and resources provided during the workshop. After each group is separated, a speaker for each designated group will open by explaining the purpose of the workshop, the benefits for students and what each workshop will entail. Starting the program in this manner is critical for initiating a holistic approach that will be effective for all parents hoping to become more involved in their child's education.

The speaker will begin by identifying the importance of parental involvement in children's education. As found in a study conducted by McClain (2015) they noted that children who had parents involved in their education (such as assistance with homework, going over class material and communicating with teachers) were more likely to receive high grades in class, performed higher on testing and had minimal behavioral issues within the classroom. This demonstrates that students who have parents that are involved in the learning process will receive a host of educational benefits that increase their ability to be successful throughout the school year. Increased levels of involvement can allow students to gain a better understanding of the material which aids them in achieving higher grades. This not only boosts a child's self confidence in their education but also improves their ability to learn. Additionally, it aids in ensuring that ELL students do not fall behind in the curriculum whilst simultaneously learning and absorbing the English language. This retention of information also led to the presence of higher test scores in comparison to students with minimal parent involvement which is necessary for the student to be able to move forward to the next grade/stage in their educational pursuit. Lastly, due to the relationship shared by parent and teacher, students are reluctant to misbehave because of the consequences that may follow. Additionally, due to this relationship, teachers can have a better

understanding of the home life, triggers and issues that the child faces and can mitigate them before they develop into behavioral problems. Starting with this is essential because it will gain both teacher and parents attention as their primary goal is to ensure that the child is able to prosper educationally. It will also demonstrate to parents (who may not have been aware) how impactful their engagement with the child about school material can be for their ability to learn.

Since a host of the first session will be taken up separating the groups and introducing them to the program and its benefits, the remainder of the program will be explaining the brochure as well as important information (such as location and time) for the following two sessions. Lastly, any of the questions that parents and/or teachers may have can be answered by the presenter to ensure that there was no confusion amongst the participants. For the remaining time, parents were allowed to go back into the library and continue having refreshments while also being introduced to their child's teacher. This is important because it allows them to meet one another and build an association with one another. By doing so, they can meet in a less serious manner (such as a parent-teacher conference) and reduce the defensiveness that either party may have and increase the chances of them having a positive foundation to build upon. Rather than jumping straight into a workshop, parents have the ability to build relationships with other parents and teachers as well as learn and ponder on the importance of becoming involved as well as what has prevented them (if they are not active) from doing so.

Second Session of Professional Training Program

During the second week of the professional development program, similar to the first, the parents and teachers will meet in the school library and mix with one another while indulging in the refreshments provided. After each group of parents is formed based on their previous groups, they relocate to a classroom where the first session of the program will begin for them. However,

teachers and other supportive staff members will remain in the library where the first session of the workshop will be held for them due to its space to hold all of them successfully.

Parent Workshop Program

The start of the workshop for the parent groups will begin with them discussing what it means to them to be involved in their child's education. This is important because the present can gain an idea of how parents have been contributing but also identify any weaknesses or room for improvement that he can note and address. Next, they will discuss the limitations or barriers that have limited them from being involved as well. This will allow the leader of the workshop to be able to provide tailored resources and skills that address the direct needs of each parent rather than trying to implement a one size fit all approach. Also, by parents being able to open about these barriers that they face, parents can connect to one another and start to form a relationship where they aid one another and their children during their educational pursuit.

The next step will be introducing to parents how they can alter their living space to foster an environment of learning for their child. As specified by Kelty and Wakabayashi (2020) in order for students to be able to learn effectively at home, they have to be provided with a living space that reinforces and promotes that ability. Some recommendations that parents can implement into their homes that can further promote learning would be to have a dedicated space (professionals, it's a corner of a room or at the dining table) that is allocated as a learning space. While everyone's home life and space differs, it is also important for parents to try and ensure that this space is decluttered and has an adequate source of lighting. Decluttering the space is important because it reduces the amount of distractions that the child has and increases their ability to focus on learning and retaining the information. Parents should also aim to have educational toys (if not accessible, will be provided with resources that can donate such toys)

around the learning environment so that the child does not feel stagnant and can become engaged and enjoy their learning experience. Lastly, differing books (appropriate to their reading levels) should be available if possible as well so that the child has different material to engage in when they are at home. Parents will also be provided with a list of places where they can receive free or reduced priced books and toys (see Appendix D) to ensure that they have the resources that they need to create as much of a positive learning environment as they can.

Next, parents will be separated into small groups where they will discuss what changes they think they could make to establish this learning environment. This allows parents to reinforce the importance to both themselves and provide one another with advice on how they can do so as well. The remainder of the program will consist of reviewing the resources provided to them on the list (Appendix D) that can increase their involvement and engagement in their child's education such as English learning classes, upcoming school events and other tools that would be beneficial to them and the student. For the remainder of the workshop, they will end in the library where they can finish refreshments and reflect on what they have learned with other parents and staff members.

Teacher Workshop Program

For teachers, the first day will consist of information about cultural competency and how it can be implemented into the classroom and their interactions with students (see Appendix E). Due to the high levels of diversity that is present within an ELL classroom, it is essential for teachers to be culturally competent and exude this in their classroom and engagement with the parents as well. Cultural competency can best be defined as having an awareness, understanding and respect for the differing cultures, ideologies, beliefs, traditions and way of life that others exhibit as well as being in tune with their own (Ishimaru et al., 2016). With the introduction of a

culturally responsive pedagogy it connects the lessons provided by teachers in the classroom to the backgrounds and lives of the students that they serve. This skill is essential in a diverse classroom situation because it allows for students of all backgrounds to receive an education that is personalized and relevant to them and their specific needs. Within this student centered approach, teachers focus on the unique strengths, ideas and insights that diverse and minority students have to offer in a classroom environment. Introducing cultural competency in the classroom is beneficial for students of all races (especially ELL children) because it ensures that they have culturally relevant learning material, mitigates the drastic impact that systematic racism can have on children, reduces the lack of representation often present in these environments and it increases a child's involvement and willingness to engage in the class material.

To start the workshop, teachers will be prompted to think and discuss about what a culturally competent education looks like to them and whether they had a teacher and/or classroom that implemented this skill during their educational journey. This is critical because it will allow the presenter to gain insight of what being culturally competent means to the differing people and how much importance they have placed upon it within their classroom. Additionally, by asking them of their experience with a teacher or classroom that prioritized this, it can allow them to see the benefit of having one (or the harm of not having one) can have on a student and their academic success. After this opener, teachers will be provided with a handout that provides them with information on how to incorporate cultural competency into the classroom (see Appendix E). This handout will be utilized as the talking points for a large portion of the workshop as they learn its importance and how it can be implemented within their respective classrooms.

Teaching cultural competency is a pivotal component of the workshop for a multiple of reasons. The most notable one is that it creates a learning environment that fosters a child's connection to the material as well as themselves and their cultures. This increases their willingness and motivation to learn, retain and practice the information due to its relevance and their investment in it. This can result in less disruptions from students in the classroom as well as an increase in performance and literacy. Not only is this beneficial for students' learning abilities, but it is also pivotal in getting parents to be more involved in their child's education. First, by implementing culture and diversity into the curriculum, parents will be more connected to the material and increase the investment that they have in ensuring that their child learns the material. Additionally, it will demonstrate to the parent and/or guardian that the teacher values their culture and does not discriminate or judge their child due to their cultural differences. This is critical because systematic racism in the education system has resulted in both minority students and families feeling marginalized or discriminated against by a teacher, school and/or the curriculum being provided. This is also beneficial because it prepares teachers on how to interact in a respectful manner with parents of different cultures and ethnic backgrounds. Being able to communicate in a respectful and effective manner is beneficial as it allows for the establishment of a positive rapport build between parent and teacher. This rapport can allow teachers to learn about their students, communicate with parents about any issues with the child and increase their willingness to be involved or volunteer at scholastic events. This demonstrates that executing a course on this for teachers guided by the information on Appendix E will be substantial in guaranteeing that teachers understand its importance and the benefits that it has on the educational experience for all parties. After this meeting teachers will discuss what parts of their classroom and/or curriculum is culturally competent and where they need to introduce

improvements. This allows for the presenter (and or other teachers and staff) to provide insight on how this can be introduced into the classroom. Lastly, they will be told to bring in their curriculum for the upcoming week as well as a portfolio of one piece of work created by each student to be utilized for the next development workshop. Once the workshop is completed, parents will reconvene with teachers in the library as they indulge in refreshment and conversation about what they learned and getting to know each other further.

Third Session of Professional Development Program

For the third session of the professional development program, the goal of the sessions is to further provide both teachers and parents with successful solutions for resolving the issues and barriers that are encountered by ELL families when trying to be involved in their child's education. Similar to the two previous weeks, the workshop begins with parents and staff convening in the school library with refreshments being provided to them. After all participants are present, parents will go to their respective groups and be transferred to the classroom where the workshop will take place.

Parent Workshop

For the final parent session of the professional development workshop, parents will be focusing on what they know about their child's education and what they are currently learning in school. When they enter into their respective classrooms, parents will have a sheet of paper and writing utensil present where they will write the grade and class their child is in. First, parents will be asked to write and then share with the remainder of the group in which ways they have begun to take involvement in their child's education. Since they were equipped with the resource handout from the week prior, this is to determine if any parents actually implemented these practices and tools into their daily lives. Once they share these opinions, parents will be asked to

write and share any difficulties or limitations that they have still been facing when trying to become active participants in their child's education. By acknowledging and addressing any issues that parents may still be having is important to ensure that it does not result in them being disengaged from their student's learning for a significant period of time. Once these concerns are addressed they will also be told that to further enhance their understanding of the information, parents can access a copy of the material provided (Appendix C and D) on the school website as well as additional resources. There will also be a forum on the website for parents to learn how to utilize translation tools such as Google Translate to enhance their understanding of student material. For the remainder of their solo session, parents will be asked to write down what they know their child has learned so far this year. This sheet will be handed to teachers as they will utilize these topics to further upon what the parent knows about what their child has learned, ask questions and introduce them to the remainder of the curriculum that will be used for the week so that they can be prepared to help their child.

Teacher Workshop

For the final session of the professional development workshop, teachers are prompted to think and write down the most positive and most negative interactions that they have had with a parent. While doing this writing activity, teachers will be forced to think about what factors contributed to either the positive or negative interaction that they had with the parent. After 15 minutes, a few teachers will (either by volunteer or being called upon) to share these interactions and their story. After each story, the speaker will ask the audience of teachers to discuss what elements they feel contributed to the overall experience that their peers have faced. For positive experiences, it allows the teachers to identify different tools they can utilize during parental interactions to ensure that it remains positive and is the basis for the creation of a relationship

between the parties. For negative interactions, teachers will be able to discern different techniques that could have been instituted (if any for certain scenarios) that could have altered the interaction between them and the parent to a more positive one. Noting the steps necessary to create positive interactions with parents will allow teachers the ability to communicate with them about any academic or behavior problems present. This relationship also increases parents' willingness to be involved in school events as they feel they are respected and valued by the teacher and staff members. Afterwards, the speaker builds upon the information and tools that they have stated to demonstrate how it can be utilized to establish a positive relationship with parents

Joint Workshop

For the second half of the session, teachers and parents will be allocated to different parent groups (preferable one that speaks the same language and/or has a large number of the teachers' students) so that they can focus on teaching parents about what their children are learning in the curriculum. As noted in the research, one of the biggest problems for ELL parents becoming involved in their child's education is their inability to understand the language and/or the material that their child is being taught (Chappel & Ratliff, 2019; Evans, 2011 & Parsons & Shim, 2019). Since there will be more parents than teachers, multiple teachers can go to the same classroom to work with the parents in that particular group. Since teachers have brought both the curriculum and some of their children's work, the second half of this workshop will be dedicated to catching the parents up on what the students have and will learn so they can better assist them with their educational pursuit. Building this foundation will also increase parents' understanding of what their child may learn in the future. Also, teachers will be provided with the worksheet that was filled out by parents so that they have an understanding of how involved parents are and

how what they are teaching is translating into the home. While this may seem like an unorthodox activity to complete, it is essential because it prepares parents on how to be involved in their child's education while also preparing the teacher on how they can aid in this as well. This is also a workshop that can be conducted during school hours with both parents and teachers to ensure that they are remaining involved throughout the school year. During this joint session, parents get to review their child's and other children's work to note any improvements that their child may need to make. They also will be able to talk to the teacher and get recommendations on what they can do to improve their child's class and homework. Teachers will also provide a short summation of some topics that will be covered during the week and open the floor for parents who have any questions, concerns or suggestions on how it could be implemented to suit or reflect a certain or multiple cultures. Lastly, this furthers the establishment of a positive relationship between the teacher and parents.

At the end of the workshop, parents and teachers will be provided with an exit slip (see Appendix F) where they will reflect on what they learned and what skills they will implement into their everyday lives. It also will have a segment that asks them if there is anything they disliked and wished they had learned during the program. This allows the presenters to determine if the workshop has been successful by seeing what parents and teachers were able to retain from the program. It will also be beneficial for the presenters to know any shortcomings that the workshop had so that they can be addressed for future programs. The end of the workshop will consist of parents and teachers convening in the library again to finish the refreshments and engage with one another further.

Conclusion

The professional development activities described in this chapter provided educators and

parents with the tools and knowledge to engage ELL families effectively. Educators are better prepared to develop a friendly and inclusive school community if they address the difficulties mentioned in the literature study. Professional development is critical in assisting teachers' interaction with ELL families, and more tactics and recommendations will be addressed in the following chapter to continue strengthening these efforts. Parents should also be knowledgeable regarding the significance of their involvement in school and actively becoming part of the process. The first session that is described above provides the foundation to achieve the established goals. Subsequent sessions should also be planned based on effective communication with parents and teachers to ensure success.

Chapter 4: Conclusion

Introduction

The population of English Language Learners (ELL) in educational facilities continues to rise and become more diverse as the composition of the national population continues to do so as well. This change in student populations presents significant implications to schools and teachers who are responsible for providing equal education for all learners (Stairs-Davenport, 2021). One of the substantial facets of educational resources that most non-ELL students have access to is the ability for their parents to engage and further their learning within a home environment. The barriers and limitations that prevent effective parental engagement for ELL students include lack of multicultural text/material, communication, culture, education levels, language barriers, lack of teacher preparation and lack of proper administrative support. This indicates that due to most ELL students coming from a household where majority (if not all) of his loved ones speak their native language, the language barrier prevents them from being able to assist further in their education. As educators, intervention methods have to be enacted to minimize the barriers that

prevent parents from being involved. The vast amount of benefits that accompany parental involvement in the academic journey of students (such as higher performance, grades and less behavioral problems) illustrates the need for ELL students to have access to these same resources. Therefore, this capstone thesis examines the overarching research question: How can teachers engage ELL families? The remaining questions that have guided the research and professional development program include: what factors prevent effective parent/family engagement in ELL students? What evidence-based intervention exists to address the issues in effective parent engagement? What are the best practices that teachers and administrators can implement to enhance parent engagement?

Conclusion

Within this capstone, there have been several notable conclusions from the research. One of the conclusions is that while ELL teachers and staff members make efforts to aid in the enhancement of parental involvement, it does not always achieve the desired results. Instead, they face several challenges that hinders them from being able to provide the parents of ELL students with the resources that they need. For parents, some of the challenges that prevent their engagement include lack of multicultural text (Giffin et al., 2021 & Naqvi et al., 2015), communication and language barriers (Chappel & Ratliffe, 2021; Chen, 2019; Kelty & Wakabayashi, 2020), culture (Evans, 2011; Ishimaru et al., 2016 & Leo et al., 2019) and lack of proper administrative support (Parsons & Shims, 2019). This demonstrates that there are a host of present factors that limit the engagement that parents are able to have in their child's educational experience. Due to these barriers, it is essential for teachers and other academic staff to have the tools and resources necessary to aid these parents in becoming active members of their child's education. However, the lack of training in cultural competence in educational

training, lack of training and preparation to teach and support linguistically and culturally diverse students and the failure of present teacher preparation programs to consider the need to provide skills to support parent engagement has resulted in the inability of teachers to provide this necessary support. The lack of sufficient training and knowledge on parent engagement has significant implications on the efforts the teacher makes to achieve this goal.

Utilizing the research and skills found during the research process and presented in Chapter Two as a foundation, the teaching and parent workshop that has been developed within this capstone is done with the premise of providing both teacher and parents with the tools that they need to alter the amount of ELL students that can utilize their parent as a resource. As aforementioned, one of the primary difficulties that ELL parents have are the lack of multicultural text that is accessible to them and their child as well as the language/communication barrier that is present. Within the professional development program, parents were provided with a list of resources (See Appendix C) that can minimize the impact of these factors. As noted by the research, one of the ways that parents can create a positive learning environment for their child is by having a diverse selection of reading material accessible for the child that they can engage in together (Naqvi et al., 2015). On the parent resource information sheet, they were provided with a list of places (both online and in person) that provide children and families with reading materials for a free or reduced price point. Additionally, each of these places have a plethora of multicultural books so it would be able to fit the needs of all the parents/children that utilize it. Not only does this address the lack of access to multicultural text but it also allows them to incorporate their culture into their child's education experience. To meet the challenge present due to the disparity in communication and linguistics, parents were also provided with resources (See Appendix C) that can allow them to learn the

English language for free or at a discounted cost. This is beneficial for students because they feel more connected to their parents as they are going through a shared experience (learning a foreign language) and parents can utilize this information to aid children in furthering their understanding on topics learned in class. This also has positive ramifications on the parents solely as it makes their transition to a predominantly English speaking society slightly easier. Thirdly, by having the school offer these programs to ELL parents, it indicates the lack of administrative support that most parents do not receive. This effort demonstrates to parents that the school cares and is invested in their child as an individual as well as their academic success. Lastly, having the parents and teachers continuously congregate before and after each of the workshop sessions is critical because it allows for the formation of a positive relationship and association between the two parties. Since parents are commonly invited to the school to speak on their child and their academic/behavioral standings, both parties do not enter into the conversation with ease due to the sensitive topic that is being spoken about. With the teacher and/or parent not being familiar with one another, it can also result in misunderstandings that cause damage and discontent within the relationship. The mixers eliminate these stressors as it allows them to meet and get to know one another under neutral pretenses.

With teachers, one of the biggest barriers that needed to be addressed was their training and proficiency in culturally competent teaching. Cultural competency is not only necessary for teachers to be able to interact with parents but it also ensures that they provide a learning environment that suits the needs of the diverse student population. As aforementioned, cultural competency consists of having an awareness, understanding and respect for the differing cultures, traditions, beliefs and ideologies that overs live by (Ishimaru et al., 2016). By instituting culturally responsive pedagogy in the curriculum, it allows teachers to connect the lessons in the

classroom to the lives and history of their students and culture. Not only is instituting a culturally competent classroom and curriculum beneficial for students but it also is pivotal in getting parents more involved in their child's education. Firstly, by providing multicultural text and class material, it enhances the investment of the parent in both participating and ensuring that the child learns the material. Another benefit is that it shows parents the value and respect that their child's educators have for their culture and history, rather than disregarding or minimizing it. Lastly, cultural competency allows teachers to prepare and educate themselves when interacting with parents and children of different cultures. This is significant because it ensures that there isn't any behaviors or communications conducted that could dampen the relationship between teacher and parent. The establishment of a negative relationship is detrimental as it will prevent parents from wanting to be involved in different scholastic events that could be beneficial or impactful for a student. For the professional development program, the session for week two was primarily focused on building the foundation (or furthering on) of cultural competence in teachers. Each teacher was provided with a cultural competency handout (see Appendix D) that provided further information on how to institute it in the classroom and during interactions. This form was to aid them in retaining the information and offer different ways to ensure both the curriculum and classroom is culturally competent. It also listed the benefits of this for teachers to continue reminding them why it is important for students to have these facets in a classroom to further their students' learning. Overall, each of the workshop sessions were designed utilizing the research in Chapter Two to ensure that it would be effective for parents and teachers.

Implications for Student Learning

Students are the greatest beneficiaries for the recommended intervention provided in Chapter three of this capstone. One of the primary motivations for the creation of this program

was the lack of educational support and engagement offered by parents of ELL students. Within the program, researchers ensured to provide resources for all the tools needed to increase their engagement and aid in the creation of a positive learning environment. Various researchers have been able to identify the direct correlation between parent engagement and a student's educational journey. Students with highly engaged parents are more likely to have higher grades performance in class, performs well on tests and present a reduction in behavioral problems (Ma et al., 2016; McClain, 2015). When parents work with their child on different topics or assignments from class, it can further the understanding and retainment of information and increase their ability to achieve academic goals. Additionally, this understanding of the material can further benefit them during test which are necessary for children to be able to progress onto the next step of their education. Next, children are less likely to be disruptive because they enjoy and are invested in the material they are learning. This is because all of their attention is focused on learning something they enjoy so they do not have the energy or focus to expend with one another with disruptive behaviors. Lastly, for teachers creating a culturally competent curriculum and classroom, it provides a tailored and involved education journey where the student is respected and valued as an individual. In an educational system where most minority parents and students are faced with systematic racism, discrimination and microaggressions, it is important for them to feel like their culture should be a source of pride and confidence rather than shame (Leo et al., 2019). This not only allows them to feel safe and willing to learn in the classroom but it also institutes a level of confidence and self-pride in students about their culture and who they are. This program would have a significant implication on the a students learning because it provides parents with the tools to be educational resources within the house. Additionally, it provides teachers with the tools they need to establish a culturally competent

classroom/curriculum and increase the investment of students in the material that they learn. Each of these changes allow ELL students to have access to the same quality of education and resources that are accessible to their non--ELL counterparts. The proposed interventions are being made based on the need to ensure that students are receiving the best support from both parents and teachers, hence positively affecting learning.

Implications for Teaching

The research and professional development workshop illustrates that the collaboration between school and home collaborations are beneficial for students and teachers. With teachers having an e Grigio is amount of responsibilities to maintain, children that receive aid from parents minimize the amount of specialized attention or care that they will need in an educational setting. This allows the teacher more time to interact/engage with other students or provide someone else who is struggling with the ability to receive help. As aforementioned, within the workshop, teachers and parents would communicate with one another before and after each session. This is significant because it allows them to form a positive rapport and association with the parent they can be built upon and utilize throughout the remainder of the academic year. During interactions, teachers learn about the parents of ELL students, understanding various aspects like the needs of the learner, their culture, personalities, experiences, and support. It is an opportunity for teachers to learn something new from parents, which may be useful in teaching or engagement efforts. Another significant implication for teaching would be teaching them the skills of cultural competency. One of the most challenging barriers for teachers is the lack of training in cultural competency and ability to support students/parents with differing cultural and linguistic needs (Chappel & Ratliffe, 2021; Chen, 2019; Kelty & Wakabayashi, 2020). This professional development workshop reduces this by providing them with the tools (see Appendix

D) that they need to implement cultural competence effectively in the classroom and within interactions. This is substantial for teachers as it ensures that students are motivated and educated in their learning experience and increases the amount of students that perform well in class and on tests. It is also beneficial because it minimizes the occurrence of disruptions throughout the classroom. This is impactful because it reduces the amount of time delegates to these distractions and instead allows them to focus on the needs of over students. Overall, the research and recommended workshop activities will have a positive impact on teaching by providing educators with the chance to gather new information about their students and parents as well as tools and resources that can be used to enhance family engagement.

Recommendation

The research on parent engagement is not as broad as it should be, especially with the significance of the problem. Both English Language Learner and minority non-ELL students suffer from the ramifications of having parents who do not have the ability, resources or tools to be an active participant in their educational journey. One facet of lack of parental involvement that was not a major focus of this professional development program was time. Some parents are forced to work differing times/shifts and/or multiple children to attend to which mitigates their ability to be as involved as they would like to be. Further research should be conducted on some tools and resources that can be provided to parents with minimal time accessible to them. Another focus of research would be after school programs as an alternative solution to parents that are unable to be engaged in their child's education. Due to the difference in functionality present in every family dichotomy, there may be some children that even with professional development workshops present, have parents that still can not be involved. Having another suitable option such as an after school program would be essential in ensuring that students

receive as equitable of an education as possible. While it is not a full replacement for parent involvement, students are provided with additional time after school to strengthen their knowledge and understanding on topics that have been covered within class. The impact of systematic racism alters the day to day lives of minority parents and families, often leaving them unable to be as involved as their Caucasian counterparts in their children's education. In order to minimize the effect of this on students' learning experience and capabilities, formidable solutions need to be found and offered in situations where parents/families are unable to be as engaged.

Final Thoughts

Parent engagement is important in the academic success of ELL and all learners. Several barriers exist in effective parent engagement. Issues like lack of multicultural text, communication, culture, language barriers, lack of teacher preparation, and lack of proper administrative support prevent teachers from actively engaging parents in their children's education. The research shows that there is a need for interventions to address the issue given that the number of ELL students is expected to continue to increase. The capstone proposes an engagement session between parents, teachers, and other stakeholders as it can help to address some of the issues. Collaboration between teachers, parents, and relevant stakeholders can help to resolve the problem and enhance performance among learners.

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Appendix A:

Google slides: Presentation

<https://voicethread.com/share/23259379/>

Appendix B:**ELL Parents Newsletter****English Language Learner Parent and Teacher Workshop**

Dear Parents of ELL students,

You have been cordially invited to the ELL Parent and Teacher Professional Development Workshop located at the school where important resources and information will be provided in regards to your role in your child's educational journey. The focus of this event is to address several of the limitations or issues that you as parents are forced to face as your child enters into the school year. Within this program, parents will be provided with workshops that will aid them in developing the skills needed to be as involved as possible in the education journey. Additionally, this will also be a great opportunity to connect and engage with your child's teachers which will be beneficial to you, the students and the teachers. Please join us in this event as we prepare our students to have the most successful and knowledgeable school year possible. Interprets will be present for parents in case you prefer to speak and communicate in your respective native language.

Who: Parents of English Language Learners

When: October 4th, 2023 from 6:00pm to 8:00pm

Where: This workshop will be located in the school's library on the first floor. Parents can enter through the front entrance and walk to the library hall located down the hall. Guides will be available at the school entrance and the entrance to the library hall.

Appendix C:

ELL Parent and Teacher Workshop Brochure



Weekly Agenda

Week One: October 4th, 2023

Meet and Greet

Week Two: October 11th, 2023

Workshop Day One

Week Three: October 18th, 2023

Workshop Day Two

Each meeting is from 6:00pm to 8:00pm.

- Refreshments are provided.
- Translators will be present.

Goals of the Program

The goal of the ELL Teacher and Parent Professionals Development Workshop is to provide students and teachers with the resources that they need to aid their ELL student/child during their educational journey. Due to the various barriers and limitations that prevent ELL students from engaging in their child's learning experience, this program will provide skills and information to parents on how to increase their ability to help their children at home. This program will also provide teachers with the tools that they need to help guide parents on this journey.

Benefits of Workshop

This three week program is dedicated to providing teachers and parents with the information, skills and relationships that they need to ensure that their child has a successful academic school year. This program is beneficial because:



Parents can obtain different resources and materials that will aid them in becoming an active and informed participant of their child's education.



Teachers gain information on how to assist parents become involved in their child's education. This will allow the child to continue learning outside school, increase their chances of retaining the information and increase their success and involvement in the class overall.



Parents and teachers will be able to communicate with one another and build a positive relationship amongst them.



ELL Teacher and Parent Professional Development Workshop

Appendix D:**Parent Resources Information Sheet****Educational Resources to Increase Parents Involvement**

As we have discussed throughout the meeting, there are various resources both locally and online that can aid parents in becoming more involved in their child's education.

Resources for Creating A Learning Environment:*Free or Reduced Price Books and Learning Material*

- **Public Library:** Based on your location, there are multiple public libraries in the area that can provide you with reading material for your child to engage in. Additionally, by bringing your child with you, they are able to have autonomy in their choice of material and increase their desire to read.
- **Alice's Library:** This is an online platform where parents email the platform and they are shipped three different books of their choice directly to their house.

Email: books@alicekids.org

- **Rivet:** An online reading platform with a total of over 3,500 books free of charge to students. Some of the material is based on popular YouTube content to increase children's interest in reading the books. They also are available in different languages for parents to read along with their child. Find this material at: Rivet.com

Free or Reduced Price Educational Toys:

- **Freecycle:** Parents are connected with other parents in their area who are giving away free educational toys. On this platform, parents can look

through a vast array of toys to determine which is best suited for their child and their learning needs.

More information available at: [Freecycle.com](https://www.freecycle.org)

- Craigslist: Similar to Freecycle, Craigslist can connect you with individuals in the area that are looking to give away or sell (at a reduced price) educational toys. Please use precautions when connecting with individuals on Craigslist and only meet individuals for toys and material in a public and well-light area (such as a restaurant or public library).

More information available at: [Craigslist.com](https://www.craigslist.com)

- Temu: Temu is a discounted wholesale website (similar to Amazon) that provides different products at an extremely low price. Parents should be able to find educational material at an affordable price.

More information available at: [Temu.com](https://www.temu.com)

English Learning Resources: Trying to help a child in a language that you do not understand can be extremely difficult, here are some resources to aid you in learning the language yourself:

- Duolingo: Duolingo is a free website and application that parents (and students) can access to get simple and interactive lessons and activities to learn a new language. This website is very child friendly, so parents can use this application with their children and be involved in the learning experience while also learning themselves.

Website available at: [www.Duolingo.com](https://www.duolingo.com)

- OpenCulture: Another free website with over forty-eight languages to learn from. While this application is more adult centered, it still is beneficial in teaching parents how

Website available at: www.openculture.com

- **Job Ready:** It's a program that is based in New York City that offers free classes to adults over 21 years old that have no other resources to become English learners. The schedule is determined by them and is typically offered at night so parents can still work and attend lessons.
More information available at: www.jobready.nyc.gov

School Events: Becoming more involved in your child's education by being participants in school events and programs.

- **Become a PTA member:** Parents can join our PTA team and aid in the creation of activities and educational events for students to enjoy.
Sign up sheets for the PTA are available in the school's main office located on the first floor.
- **Audit a class:** Sit in on one of your child's classes to get an idea of what they are learning so you can retain the information and be able to assist your child better in learning at home. Please ask the teacher what days are available for you to come into the class.
- **Volunteer for trips/school events:** Become involved and greatly help the school by volunteering for trips and school events. Not only do you get to spend some quality time with your child while doing a fun activity, you also can aid teachers and staff members in keeping students safe.

Upcoming School Events:

- First School Book Fair: October 25th, 2023 (During school day)
- PTA Meeting: November 2nd, 2023 @ 6:00pm
- School trip to Children's Museum: November 12th, 2023 (During School Day)
- Thanksgiving Luncheon: November 20th, 2023 (Donations are welcomed!)

**Appendix E:
Cultural Competency Handout for Teachers**

Cultural Competency in the Classroom

During this meeting we will be discussing how cultural competency can be implemented into the classroom and the benefits that it could have on students' academic journey. Please keep this handout as it can be useful for you throughout the school year as a constant reminder of the cultural competence that should be provided to your students.

Culturally Competent Curriculum: Cultural competency has to be etched into the foundation of the learning curriculum in order to ensure that each lesson is relevant and inclusive to all students.

- Implement prompts and assignments that require students to reflect on aspects of their personal lives and connect it to the learning material.
- Include multiple perspectives (such as different authors or historical accounts) into the learning curriculum.
- Get to know your students
- Acknowledge and address any personal biases or judgments of any culture or ethnicity so that it does not affect the learning ability of the child.
- Involve families and communities into the learning experience.

Culturally Competent Classroom: The environment of the classroom should also reflect a respect and value of different cultures.

- Have different reading and learning materials accessible that are about or written by individuals of different cultures (and in different languages).
- Display images and cultural materials throughout the classroom and on display boards to ensure that students feel represented in the classroom.
- Address, acknowledge and speak on any issues of race, gender, religion or culture that arises in a holistic manner dedicated to teaching the student.

- Maintain consistent communication with students and their parents
- Celebrate and/or acknowledge different cultural holidays.
- Implement cultural artifacts such as music, art and literature into the classroom and lessons.

Benefits of Cultural Competency: While developing a culturally competent classroom can be time consuming, the benefits that it has on students' learning capabilities and investment in the classroom is worth it.

- Created an equal and inclusive classroom where students feel like their individuality is respected and celebrated.
- Ensures that diverse students have access to the same support, resources and educational relevance that is provided to non minority students.
- By students having material and lesson plans that connect to them, it increases the level of investment that they behave in the material and their willingness to learn.
- Aid in strengthening the connection between a student and their culture as they get to see it displayed and represented in a positive manner.
- It cultivates and aids in the development of important skills such as critical thinking and the ability to problem solve.
- Provides them with autonomy and grows the trust they have in themselves to make decisions.
- Allow them to become more vocal and reduce the presence of self-esteem and social anxiety issues that derive from lack of inclusivity in the classroom.
- Allows students to learn about and from different cultures and builds their ability to respect and value other cultures, no matter the differences.
- Parents and families will also be more willing to be involved in students learning if the lessons and/or material connects to them and their culture.

**Appendix F:
Parent/Teacher Workshop Exit Slip**

Parent and Teacher Workshop Exit Slip

Name: _____

Teacher or Parent: _____

Was this Professional Development Informative? Yes Or No

1.What did you learn during this professional development workshop?

2.How will you institute this knowledge into your everyday life?

3.Was there anything you wished you learned during the workshop?

4.Is there anything you disliked or would improve about this workshop?