

Strategies to Increase Parental Involvement Among English Language Learners Throughout
Elementary School

by
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Abstract

English language learners have a difficult time becoming a part of the school community while learning the English language. The overarching question of this capstone is how we can increase parent involvement among English Language Learning parents. As educators, we can do our part to ensure that parents are involved in their child's education. This involvement goes beyond helping the children with their work. ELLs parents are hesitant to participate in their child's schooling because of the language barrier and the differences in cultural and linguistic backgrounds. The research shows that there are different strategies that teachers can implement throughout the school year to get parents involved. These strategies are home visits, teacher and parent professional development, family sharing time, family literacy project and parent questionnaires. The goal of the professional development is to provide teachers different strategies they can implement to increase positive parent-school relationships. The professional development will take place before school starts and will consist of the teachers and administrators of the school.

Keywords: English language learners, home visits, professional development, sharing, time, involvement, communication.

Chapter 1: Introduction

Problem Statement

As a special education teacher in a school where more than half of the students are English Language Learners, it is so important to ensure that there are proper ways to communicate with these families throughout the school year. Communicating with parents is challenging due to language barriers and especially when having to explain services. We spend ten out of the twelve months with these students and there have been cases where I have not spoken to a parent more than three times in a year. This is not because the parents do not care or do not want to be involved in their child's education but often it is because there is a language barrier between the families and the teachers. Families play a huge role in their child's education, but teachers and parents do not share similar linguistic or cultural background producing inconsistencies in services and instruction. Thus, causing rifts between the parents and the educators since educators are unsure of how to connect with parents who are linguistically and culturally different (Bell et al., 2017).

This capstone is focusing on how schools can increase parent participation. The professional development is going to talk about the different ways that schools can involve the parents throughout the year with each other to ensure the students have success throughout their education. With the use of communication, we can also promote success in their educational journey which can promote relationships and understandings.

According to Panferov (2010) engaging parents as advocates for school success in the home is particularly important for ELL's. Being a parent to a child in school can be intimidating as it is, but it becomes more intimidating for parents of ELL students because of the minimal English

proficiency. Some of the terms that are going to be used throughout this paper are ELL which stands are English Language Learners and ENL which stands for English as a New Language. Another term that is going to be used is communication and involvement.

Significance of the Problem

This problem effects all ENL students from grades pre-k to twelfth grade. However, in this capstone I will narrow the focus to grades kindergarten to fifth grade. Students need a lot of support throughout their elementary education from teachers as well as their families. According to Rolander (2018), parents become embarrassed when trying to communicate with their children's teachers because of the language barrier. Rolander also states that the most common barrier when it came to effective parent-teacher communication is the English-language ability. This can affect the student in all subjects in school. The lack of effective communication increases linguistic, sociocultural and assessments challenges ELLs face in schools.

Purpose

Schools and ELL families need to find ways to create communities that support both students academically and socially. In order to achieve this goal, I propose conducting professional developments (PD) for the school staff. The purpose of the PD is to inform and create dynamic ways to foster and manage family-school relationships. The teachers will come up with ways that they communicate throughout the school day whether it be through a texting app, email, or phone call with their child's teachers. According to Ramirez and Soto-Hinman (2009) teachers must get to know the families of their students to effectively enhance parent communication. Holding a professional development before the school year begins will

allow the teachers to prepare different ways to communicate and get to know the parents as well as the student. Teachers will collaborate and build capacity to open avenues of communications. Educators will share what has worked in the past and design new ways to create a welcoming environment for ELL parents and students. Teachers will also work together to create a welcoming environment for parents in the beginning of the school year. The teachers will think of different things that they can implement and invite the parents.

In the beginning of the professional development teachers will share out ways that they have communicated with parents in the past and if they were successful or not. Teachers will also share different ways that they allow their parents to get involved within the classroom through the entirety of the year. The professional development will be a one-day training a week before school starts. This professional development will be held before school starts because it will be a good way for teachers to plan to ensure that they are creating positive, strong relationships for the students before school starts. It will also give the teachers the opportunity to do some research if they find that they like one strategy better. The teachers will be given a power point presentation. This power point presentation will go into the different ways that teachers can get the parents to become active participants in the classroom. These topics will include home visits, professional development, parent support groups, parent sharing time literacy project and parent questionnaires. The power point will include a definition of each tool as well as examples of each tool if applicable. Teachers will receive the power point as a printout so they can take notes throughout the professional development and refer to it later. There will also be a spot for the teachers to take notes if there were any strategies that were shared out that were not included in my power point. In addition to the

one-day PD in the summer, teachers will meet again mid-year to evaluate school-home relationship. Teachers will use this time to reflect on strategies used and plan for the next school year.

Summary

Our job as educators is to ensure that our students are learning and growing every single day. With increasing population of ELL students, we have a hard time ensuring that we can meet those specific needs without the involvement of the parents. If the parent has questions, concerns, or thoughts throughout the year they will have an open and successful line of communication with their child's teacher. Hopefully by having an open line of communication, parents will feel more comfortable in reaching out to the teachers. Chapter two of this capstone project will review the literature on parent and school partnerships. In chapter 3 I will provide a description of the PD and materials. In chapter 4, I will present my conclusions.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

English language learners face difficulties throughout their education for a few different reasons. One of these reasons being that these students' parents do not speak the English language which can cause a rift when it comes to their participation in school. Parents feel scared or embarrassed to participate because of the language barrier. Schools can increase parent participation by doing different things. For instance, Teachers and administrative staff can work together to complete home visits. Home visits are when the teachers, principals, support staff go to the child's home before school starts. This is a way for them to introduce themselves, speak with parents and families, find out details about the child's homelife and background and give the parent information about upcoming events and the best way to contact them. This first meeting allows the parents to get a sense of relief and feel comfortable with their child's teacher as the year goes on. Parents may feel a little taken back at first because they feel like they are being targeted but once they realize that the teachers are there for the success of the student, they become a little more open.

Another thing that can be done are professional developments for the teachers. This allows the teachers to come together and learn new information on the best practices and approaches for working with families of ELL students. Some teachers may have used specific tools to communicate with parents that were beneficial. Some teachers may have created different nights where parents can come into the classroom that may have been successful. These professional developments for teachers is a great way for the teachers to work together to find the best ways to get parents involved in their child's school year.

The goal for all schools should be for parents to feel that they can participate in parent support programs. These programs can consist of the parents, teachers, and administrators coming together to benefit the students. Schools have a lot of leeway when it comes to these programs because they can do it once a month, every other month, or twice a month if they wanted. This gives the parents and teachers a chance to come together and discuss things that are happening in the school. It gives the parents a chance to be active participants in their child's education and allows them to feel included in what is happening.

Sharing time between the teachers and students in school allows the students to go home and talk about their traditions and cultures with their parents. Creating stricter guidelines for these story time artifacts allows the parents to be involved in the child's sharing time presentation. This also allows the students to get to know each other culturally and is a chance for the teachers to get to know the student's cultural backgrounds.

Home Visits

Louie and Knuth (2016) studied home visits and their impacts on low performing schools with high ELL population. The participants in this article consist of a principal and ELLs from a district that has been on an improvement plan for three years and are consisted of to be a high-poverty school district. This article talks about the positive impact that home visits can have on ELL students. It also talks about how once the home visits are completed; parents are more likely to be involved throughout the year. For example, Louie and Knuth say that after the principal visited ELLs homes and the administrator was able to get to know the parents on a first name basis. Once the principal addressed a parent by her first name, she felt appreciated and welcomed in the school. Later, when the parent was asked to participate in her sons'

academics, she said yes without hesitation because of the prior experience she had with the building principal. This article supports my research question because it speaks about the positives that home visits can have on a when it comes to involving the parents. For example, home visits give teachers an opportunity to find out the native language of the family, information on their family members and previous school experiences, identify different ways that parents and teachers can be supported throughout the year and the teachers can learn about the student's community.

Louie and Knuth speak about the dos and do nots of home visits. While home visits are beneficial and proven to work. However, it is hard for teachers to visit every single home especially if the school has a high ELL population. Another tip is for teachers to write down the family's name phonetically to remind them the proper way to say it, which parents of Ells appreciate. This also will increase parent involvement because during the visit the teachers can come with school contact lists, newsletters, community and school resources and a school calendar. Teachers can pair up and visit homes with multiple students, in different grade levels, enrolled in the school. These recommendations will be used in my professional development because the teachers will schedule home visits with families to start the year off with successful teacher-parent relationships. Louie and Knuth say that completing home visits can serve as an entry point to support language instruction and cultural competence.

Wormeli (2014) talks about how teachers and students can become burnt out throughout the school day because of the continued repetition. For us to understand why students might be struggling throughout the school day we need to ask ourselves a few simple questions. Wormeli talks about how students could be dehydrated or hungry. They may not

have had the best sleep or there might not be enough lighting in the room. To be able to help students thrive, we need to understand their background. This can be done through home-visits either before the school year starts or as we notice our students struggling.

Wormeli states that when practitioners and administrators conduct home visits, they can see familial culture and personal interests, hear stories of previous challenges and triumphs, and often enjoy a meal or small snack together. Another point that was made in this article that connects to my research question is that parents often feel like the teachers are coming to visit because something is wrong but later realize that teachers are visiting to get to know the families and to be more involved within the child's academics as well as family life. In fact, parents notice that teachers are visiting because they genuinely care and want to get to know the students and families; parents are more receptive to phone calls and e-mails about their child.

Levine et al. (2008) talks about how parents of ELL students do not attend parent teacher conferences or open houses in the beginning of the year. Teacher's crumble feeling like the students' parents do not care about their child's education. The article talks about how to create positive teacher-parent relationships. The authors recommend that teachers need to move past the thought that the problem lies within the ELLs families and communities.

Levine et al. notes that for parents to feel comfortable with the teachers and feel like there is an open line of communication, schools need to promote mutually enriching partnerships. One way that this can be done is by completing home visits. The article talks about how these home visits must take place before the school year begins. The teachers should be assigned a student or multiple students to go to their house and meet with the

family. The article talks about the importance of bringing an interpreter to ensure that the family feels comfortable. However, educators need to be aware that parents feel like the home visits are a way for teachers to check up on them and not see the home visit to get to know the families and students before school starts. By conducting these home visits these parents are given the opportunity to start to trust the teachers and be able to work together because they feel comfortable.

Conducting home visits can create positive relationships between parents and teachers. When there is a good foundation for the relationship, parents are more open to reaching out to the teacher for help or if they have any questions. When teachers go to these homes, they can learn about the student's family, their home life, and their community. Parents and teachers can talk about the best form of communication so that there aren't any problems throughout the year of trying to contact the families.

Professional Development for Teachers

As indicated by Levine et al. (2008) teachers often feel defeated when working with ELL students because they feel as though their students' parents do not want to be involved. However, teachers of ELL students may not know how to connect with the parents in a way that makes them feel welcomed. Often teachers do not share the same culture and have different linguistic backgrounds. Something that teachers can participate in is professional developments to help them better navigate ways to communicate with these parents throughout the year.

Bell et al. (2017) conducted a year-long project. The purpose of this study was to provide teachers with professional development that could strengthen their ability to connect with parents of ELL children. The study consisted of 48 teachers that were from two different

districts. They taught pre-kindergarten through grade three. According to Bell et al. “most educators do not receive adequate preparation to teach this population before entering workforces and they have limited opportunities to use their knowledge in an ongoing basis throughout their careers” (p. 10). For teachers to be able to work with students and involve the parents, schools can offer professional developments that will give teachers different ideas on how they can positively communicate with the parents regarding their child. The findings of this study showed that by providing professional development there was an increased knowledge of how to successfully collaborate with parents. The study provided teachers with ways to positively foster early literacy development and a way for them to understand and value the different cultures and home languages of their students and parents.

Teachers also feel like they are not adequately prepared to communicate with the parents therefore they feel like they cannot help the students. Hansen-Tomas et al. (2013) collected data using a survey. The participants of this study were faculty and staff members of 13 different school districts across North Texas. Although this survey was sent to 13 schools, only ten responded. The survey that was provided was open to any teacher and staff member who worked with ELL students. The survey consisted of yes and no questions as well as open ended questions. Looking through the results of the questionnaire it was shown that teachers struggled to communicate with parents because of the language barrier. Teachers felt that it was difficult to help the parents without using a translator and if they wanted to write a note and send it home, they could not because they felt it would not be interpreted the way it was meant to be.

Chen et al. (2008) conducted an 18-month professional development training that teachers can participate for 18 months. Teachers received training on The Sheltered Instruction. It is called The Sheltered Instruction and Family Involvement (STFI) helps to improve the academic achievement of English Language Learners. It aimed to help to encourage a positive family involvement practice. Having a positive family involvement can help students do better in their education. The people that were a part of the professional development were provided with articles and books on different ways they can get parents to become involved throughout the year. The teachers then worked together to come up with strategies that they can use to encourage parent involvement. At the end of the project the participants learned about how to work positively and effectively with family members of their students. The participants found that there is a direct link to academic achievement and positive parent involvement. Teachers discussed ways that they can get their families into the classrooms to increase parental involvement and different activities that can be implemented.

Kalayci and Ergül (2020) speak about the many ways teachers have involved parents throughout the years. The author indicated that teachers said that they involve the parents by sending home detailed letters or videos on how to do their homework. Other teachers said that they send an information message about the topics that they are going to be learning throughout the week to all their parents. Teachers said that they are giving parents their emails and using apps to communicate with the parents.

At the end of the day, teachers need more training on how to involve the parents. Kalayci and Ergül states that 72% of the teachers stated that they need further training about parent involvement techniques. Although teachers would benefit from trainings, they felt that

parents would benefit from the trainings as well. One teacher said that she feels the parents would benefit from the trainings more because the parents are not reading any of her letters that are being sent home daily. Teachers also reported that parents need to support their children academically as well as motivationally. In addition, teachers needed support which in turn would help them and parents.

The conclusion talks about how parent and teacher training can change the home environment in a positive way and have a positive impact on the students' academic achievement. Both the teachers and parents can benefit from professional development training for a better, stronger partnership. If parents are not reading the letters regarding homework or activities that are going on in school, then we not only need to provide training for educators but also for parents.

Parent Support Program

Parent involvement is crucial in a child's education, but it is often thought that parents are not involved in their child's academics because they simply do not care. However, parents are not involved sometimes because of the lack of relationship between the teacher and parent. Sometimes they do not share the same backgrounds or cultures, so it is hard to connect and create those relationships. Being able to participate in a professional development is a great way for teachers to learn more about ways that they can successfully reach out to their students' parents to ensure communication and involvement throughout the year.

There is sometimes a rift between educators and parents because of the differences in cultures. Parents may feel nervous or embarrassed to reach out to teachers and teachers may become frustrated with parents because they feel that the parents simply do not care. Georgis

et al. (2014) talks about how it is important for parents to be involved in their child's education. "Parental engagement is often described in terms of involvement in school-based activities such as parent-teacher conferences, committee services, and volunteering" (p. 23). This study consisted of parents with ELL students. To help parents, feel involved and comfortable, they were provided with three different types of support groups. They could be a part of a classroom support for ELL students' or an afterschool program that provided activities for their child or a parent support group. The parent support group consisted of different parents of ELL students and the parents had the opportunity to attend parent information meetings. These parent information meetings were held once a month at night. These meetings were held at the school and hosted by the principal and teachers.

One of the findings that came from these support groups was that parents were able to talk to each other and navigate together involvement in their child's academics. With the parents coming to these monthly meetings and being involved, they were able to voice their concerns, likes and dislikes. Likewise, parents were able to become a part of the community and have a say in their child's schooling. One main takeaway from this article is that it emphasized how parents can be involved in their child's academics but not all in the same way. Giving parents multiple opportunities to be involved throughout the year and showing them that they can trust the school and teachers causes them to want to do more and be more involved.

Parents can be involved in their child's schooling by participating in programs that are in the community. Wee (2020) studied how Korean-English bilingual families were able to participate in a literacy program named Family Storytime. This program was held every Sunday

at the local church. Although this was done outside school, it gave parents the opportunity to be participants, and they were also able to be facilitators. The article states that the study provides different examples for specific ways that bilingual parents can become involved in the family literacy within their school as well as their communities. Participating in Family Storytime gave them an idea of what it could be like to be an active participant in their child's education. It also allowed parents the opportunity to bring literacy skills they learned during this story time into the schools.

Providing parents with support groups in and out of the school environment can allow parents to be an active participant and a facilitator. Family story time gives them the opportunity to build relationships with the teachers as well as the principals and administrative staff. Family story time can also give the parents a sense of relief and cause them to feel comfortable enough to ask questions and want to participate. Allowing parents to participate in ELL support groups also gives them the opportunity to connect with other parents who may be experiencing the same feelings. Lastly, these parent support groups give the parents a chance to sit and talk with parents about ways to communicate and other ways the parents can get involved besides just by helping their children with their work.

Parent Sharing Time

Protacio and Edwards (2015) studied how as the years go on there has been an increase in immigration which means that there is an increase of immigrant children into the school systems. These immigrant children as well as their teachers could benefit from the support of the parents. Protacio and Edwards. points out that, "Research and practice have both demonstrated that parent involvement is central to academic achievement: Schools that

support meaningful parent involvement have high levels of student achievement” (p. 413). This article talks about sharing time which can also be referred to as show and tell, rug time or news time. There was an example given in this article about how a little girl needed something for sharing time and because they were rushing, there was not much thought that went into what she was going to share. There can be ways to reconstruct sharing time so that it has a meaningful interaction between ELLs and their parents. According to the authors a way that teachers can ensure that parents are spending time coming up with something meaningful for their child to do at sharing time, the teachers can provide a more detailed guideline. This article focuses on two different immigrant families that had already been exposed to sharing time. The two students that participated were in first grade. The students were both asked to explain what sharing time was and their responses showed that there was a missed opportunity for parent-child interactions. After the students were asked to give their definition on sharing time, the two mothers were asked what they thought the definition of sharing time was. Both mothers admitted that they did not have a clear idea on what the students did during their sharing time which resulted in them not being directly involved. The parents and their child were then involved in a sharing time activity where they were asked to bring three different artifacts that can accurately represent their culture.

Protacio and Edwards note benefits for this type of in class activity. There are a few benefits to this sharing time. The child gets the opportunity to ask their parents about different cultures and traditions of their family. In addition, students have the opportunity to come into school and share cultural practices with classmates and teachers with their classmates and the

teachers. In turn, the teacher gets the opportunity to learn more about the student's home life, culture, and traditions.

Sharing time, show and tell or circle time is a way for the students to get to know each other on a level higher than just academics. The students can bring in artifacts that represent them culturally. They are also able to spend time with their parents at home figuring out what kind of artifact they want to bring to class. With stricter guidelines, parents can become more involved at home with their child when it is time to decide what they want to bring into the class. Incorporating the homes' cultural and linguistic diversity into lessons gives the parents and teachers the opportunity to communicate with each other to ensure a successful story time.

Family Literacy Project

Louie and Davis-Welton (2016) look at a family literacy project which can involve the parents as well as the teachers an administrator. Louie and Davis-Welton indicate that "schools' welcome parents and community members as parents in their children's academic and social development by tapping into their funds of knowledge to support students' academic success" (p. 598). Creating a literacy book project allowed students to go home and interview their own families. Students use this information to create books and provided their classroom with more enriching literacy. This project was a way for parents, ELL teachers and community members to work together to be an integral part of the student's literacy and academic development. The authors described four different leveled books that the students created as a way to differentiate levels of English acquisition. Level one was a picture book that had english labels. The students drew pictures and then wrote a few words under each of their pictures. Level two

consisted of a picture book that had more words to create simple sentences. Level three had a simple story with text structures. The students drew pictures and wrote their own sentences. Level four, which was the most complex, was sentences with more details to support their pictures.

Some takeaways that this article provided was that the students were eager to write their stories and share their work. Students took constructive criticism well and used it to make their story even better. The teachers worked closely with the families and the families treasured the process of the student's story writing. Furthermore, parents and teachers worked closely together and allowed increased parent involvement in their child's education. Another benefit of this family project is that it increased ELL's self-esteem and helped them become better adjusted in the school setting.

Parent Questionnaire

A good way for teachers to gain information about their future students the students' parents is by sending home a questionnaire. Harper and Pelletier (2012) gave a questionnaire to the parents of ELLs. The questionnaire consisted of questions that pertained to their child like their name, gender, date of birth, grade, and teacher. The questionnaire also had questions that would help the teacher to get to know the parents. There were questions about parent's educational background and demographic information. The parents were also asked to give a rating on their child's ability to do mathematics and their ability in reading. Harper and Pelletier indicated that using a parent and student questionnaire in the beginning of school can provide the teachers with the information that they need to support the child. Teachers can create questionnaires with questions based on the parents' cultural beliefs, education background,

emergency contacts and other important information that the teachers feel like they would need throughout the year. The authors also highlight that this is also a great tool for the teachers to get to know the parents and to give the parents a chance to express themselves and their feelings. Teachers can add a section on their question if the parent has any concerns or thoughts throughout the year. This is a way to start fresh in the beginning of the year by creating an open and trusting relationship with the parent.

Conclusion

Overall, teachers cannot assume that parents are not getting involved because they simply do not care about their child's academics. Parents and teachers need to work together in the beginning of the year to create positive relationships that will allow educators to develop effective communication skills that can result in positive school-home relationships. As said earlier in this chapter, teachers and administrators can plan and make home visits before school starts. Organizing home visits provides educators with the opportunity to meet with the families and learn some information about the kids and parents before the school starts. It also allows families to become comfortable with the teachers and staff.

Administrative staff can provide the teachers with professional development. This can allow the teachers to learn culturally coherent ways to interact with the parents. Sometimes teachers write quick notes home to the parents, and it is translated in a different way the teacher meant which can cause tension between the parents and teachers. Therefore, it is important that teachers use professional translators (Levine et al., 2008). Providing teachers with professional development can allow them to create meaningful relationships that benefit the students in the long run and get the parents involved throughout the whole year.

In other instances, parents can be part of lessons and units. Teachers need to find ways to include the household language, culture, and traditions. For instance, by incorporating projects such as story sharing time. This allows them to converse with other parents of ELLs and to become an active participant in the community. By becoming an active participant in the community, the parents can learn from other parents and get a sense of what they want for their child in their own school. parents can create relationships with other parents who may be going through the same thing with trying to connect with teachers. Becoming an active participant in the community can ease their mind when it comes to being an active participant in the classroom.

To create a welcoming environment for the parents, teachers can create calendar of events. They can invite the parents in for parent teacher conferences, volunteer opportunities which can take place via zoom or in person. The parents can become a part of the committees at the school as well as being involved in monthly meetings. Parents and teachers can collaborate to create class or grade level activities.

Lessons and units of study in the classroom can incorporate the cultural and language of the child's home. For instance, parents can get involved with the student's story sharing times in the classroom. This allows them to help the child better understand their culture and traditions. By sitting down and helping their child choose an artifact that has meaning, the child is learning about their culture and bringing their culture into the classroom. This also allows the students and the teacher to get to know each other better. Teachers can provide a step-by-step direction guideline for the parents to follow when they are picking out their artifact. Lastly, students and parents, despite their English skills, can be involved in a family literacy project. As

described, students will write stories based on questions that they ask their families. This also allows the families to become an active participant in their child's academics because they are teaching them about their culture and helping them create a book for school. Parents feel more involved in their child's academics when they have a chance to express their cultures. In chapter 3 of this capstone, I will describe a professional development and materials informed by the research presented here.

Chapter 3

Introduction

This chapter of the capstone is going to go over the professional development that will be given to the teachers before school starts. This will be a one-day professional development that will discuss the different options teachers and administrators can implement in order to increase parent involvement throughout the year. The teachers will meet again in the middle of the year to share what strategies they have used over the course of the past few months. This midyear meeting aims to have teachers reflect on parent-school relations and plan for the next academic year. The teachers will be given an electronic copy of the PowerPoint if they want to take notes while the professional development is happening and as a resource until the mid-year meeting. The teachers will hear about home visits, parent training, teacher training, sharing time, parent questionnaire and family literacy. The teachers will be given an example questionnaire, and a list of strategies. After going through the entire presentation, I will have the teachers fill out a form with which strategy they are most eager to use and which strategy they think they will not use in their classroom. The materials for the PD can be found in the Appendices.

Professional Development Day

Opener

I will open the PD by asking the teachers what their favorite season is and why. This will give the teachers an opportunity to turn and talk with each other and share out. This may ease the nervousness of some of the teachers who are participating in the PD.

PD Activities

The learning target for this one-day PD is, “I can use one or more strategies to increase parent involvement throughout the year.” This learning target will be introduced after the question so that the teachers are fully aware of the goal for this PD. After I introduce the learning target, I will ask the teachers if they have any questions before I begin. I will then provide the teachers with a handout that has a check list of the strategies that the teachers can use when they get back into their classroom (see Appendix A). As I read through the list of strategies, I will ask the teachers if they have participated in any of these strategies already. If they have, I will ask them to share their experience. I will go over every slide in the power point and explain each strategy to the teachers. There will be time during each slide for teachers to share experiences they have had, questions or concerns about these strategies.

The first strategy that I am going to go over is home visits. The teachers will learn about different ways that they can implement home visits before the school year starts. These home visits can also be implemented throughout the school as the teachers see fit. Louie and Knuth (2016) explain the importance of home visits in order to foster positive relationships between teachers and ELL families. Next teachers will watch a video on home visits and the importance of home visits. The administrative team can set up a committee that helps teachers get in touch with the families to set up these home visits. Louie and Knuth (2016) talk about the importance of home visits especially in low socioeconomic school districts. They talk about how home visits can have a positive impact on families and how they can be completed as teachers and administrators feel necessary. Home visits made the parents feel more comfortable and gave them the chance to learn about the activities that they could participate within the school.

The second strategy that the teachers will learn about during this PD is professional development for teachers. I will explain to the teachers that the professional developments are designed to help teachers better communicate with ELL parents to increase the involvement throughout their child's academic school year. Bell et al. (2017) states that most teachers do not receive adequate training to teach the ELL population before entering the workforce. With that being said, teachers have had limited exposure to the proper ways to communicate. Chen et al. (2008) states teachers do not have enough training to deal with families in low-income districts, so they created an 18-month teacher training. This professional development provided teachers with ways to create positive parent-teacher relationships and it was researched that having a positive family-teacher relationship can help students do better in their academics.

The third strategy that the teachers will be educated on during this PD is a parent support program. A parent support program is where parents can come together to meet with other parents and to learn about different activities within the school district. Parent support programs can take place in the school itself or in the community. Parent support groups allow parents to become comfortable with teachers and administrators as well as a part of the community. This can ease their stress, if they have any, when it comes to communicating with the parents. According to Georgis et al. (2017) parent involvement can come in many different forms, and it can be in the form of parent teacher conferences, committee services and volunteering.

The fourth strategy that will be discussed at this PD is Parent sharing time. Parent sharing time is something that takes place within the classroom. The students go home and have conversations about their cultures and traditions with their families and then they bring

the learned information back into the classroom to share with their teacher and peers.

According to Protacio and Edwards (2015) having parents involved in their child's academics has a direct link to higher levels of achievement.

The fifth strategy that will be discussed at this PD will be family literacy project. Similar to parent sharing time, students will go home and discuss their culture and heritage along with their family traditions with their families. While going over this strategy in the professional development, teachers will create a list of activities which they can share and implement in their classroom. The teachers can then come and reflect on these projects during the mid-year meeting. According to Louie and Davis-Weldon (2016), "schools' welcome parents and community members as parents in their children's academic and social development by tapping into their funds of knowledge to support students' academic success" (p. 598). Louie and Davis-Welton report on a book writing unit of study. Students used their ZPD to illustrate and write about a topic. The books were shared with parents to get their input and brought back to the class. After multiple edits the children added their books to the library. The students will bring the learned information back into the classroom and write a book about it. The teachers can publish these books and put them in the classroom library. This allows the students to get to know each other and as well allowing the parents to bring their heritage, traditions, and cultures into the class.

Lastly, the teachers will learn about and provided an example of a parent questionnaire (see Appendix B). These parent questionnaires are most beneficial if they are sent out in the beginning of the year. Teachers can tailor these questionnaires based off the specific information that they want to know about their child and the families. Teachers can ask about

the most effective form of communication, what languages are spoken at home and who lives in the home. Teachers can also use this questionnaire as a way to create birth charts, different types of celebrations, monthly needs letter, a weekly question and answer with parents. This gives parents a chance to share information that they feel may be important to know throughout the year. Harper and Pelletier (2010) express how these questionnaires are a great tool for the teachers to get to know the parents and to give the parents the chance to express themselves, their feelings, and any information they feel is important to know about.

The outcome of this PD is to engage teachers and teach them about the different strategies that they along with the administration team can implement to increase parent involvement throughout the year. The teachers and administrative staff will learn about different strategies and the benefits each strategy has when it comes to parental involvement. At the end of the PD the teachers will be able to decide and discuss which strategy they feel would work best for them in their own classroom.

After each strategy is discussed, the teachers will have time to ask questions and talk amongst their colleagues. The teachers will be able to answer other teachers' questions based on past experiences they have had. This will encourage turn and talk throughout the teachers. When all the questions are done, the teachers will take an exit ticket. The exit ticket will consist of two questions (see Appendix C). Question number 1 will be, "Which strategy are you most excited to use?" and the second question will be, "Which strategy do you think you will not use in your classroom?" The information will be looked over and the results will guide the next PD. If most teachers agree on one strategy, the next PD will be geared towards that strategy.

Mid-year PD

After the first professional development a committee will be formed of a few teachers who are willing to set up the next professional development. There will be a following professional development held in the middle of the year. This professional development will give teachers the opportunity to discuss their findings. The teachers will come prepared with the handout that was provided to them in the first PD (see Appendix A). This will give them the chance to review what strategies they have used and if they were successful. This professional development will also give the teachers a chance to share strategies that they have used and were not presented in the first professional development. The teachers can share their strategies and get feedback on the implementation and reflection. Teachers will re-write plans as a way to build stronger relationships with parents for next school year.

Chapter 4: Conclusion

Introduction:

The purpose of this capstone is to address the overarching research question of, how can we increase parental involvement among English Language Learning students. English Language Learners (ELL) are falling behind in schools because of the language barrier and the lack of parent involvement. Although some may think that the lack of parent involvement comes from the parents not caring, it comes from the parents being embarrassed and afraid to communicate with anyone at school because of the potential language barrier. Together, teachers and administrators can implement different strategies to increase parental involvement within their child's elementary education.

Conclusion:

During the research part of this capstone, there was a lot of information that I came across and information that I learned. Parents of ELL students are scared and embarrassed to be involved in their child's education because of their language barrier or because of their educational background. Teachers automatically assume that parents do not want to be a part of their child's education because they simply do not care. After doing research, I came across multiple strategies that teachers as well as the administrative staff can implement within their schools and communities to increase parental involvement all while making parents feel comfortable. Teachers can invite parents into the classroom to be a part of the child's learning. They can do this by creating family sharing time as well as family literacy projects. Louie and Davis-Welton indicated that they "welcome parents and community members in their children's academic and social development by tapping in their funds of knowledge to support

students' academic success" (p. 598). This allows the parents and students to work together to gather information about their culture and traditions and share it with the rest of the class.

Teachers can provide questionnaires that allows the families to provide the teachers with any information they may feel would be beneficial to have throughout the year. Teachers can also provide parents with information that parents would benefit from having such as calendar of events and important contact information. Parents can attend different professional developments within the school and the community to help them become more familiar and comfortable with the teachers. During my research I also have come to find that teachers would benefit from professional developments as well because research shows that sometimes teachers are not prepared to deal with students who do not speak English as a first language. Levine et al. expressed that teachers can often feel burnt out and defeated when working with ELL students because of the lack of parent involvement. Teachers feel as though parents do not want to participate in their child's education because they are un-interested and do not care.

Implications for Student Learning:

The goal of this capstone is to provide teachers with different strategies that they can implement into their classroom that will increase the involvement of ELL parents. By doing this, parents are given different opportunities to be involved and communicate with teachers regarding their child throughout the year. These different strategies allow parents and students to work together to build relationships and bring those relationships into school. Protacio and Edwards (2015) state that, "research and practice have both demonstrated that parent involvement is central to academic achievement: Schools that support meaningful parent involvement have high levels of student achievement" (p. 413). Being able to start the year off

on a good note and creating positive teacher-parent relationships sets the student up for success throughout the year.

Implications for Teaching:

I think that teachers across the board as well as administrators will benefit from the information that I researched. Kalayci and Ergül indicated in their article multiple different ways that teachers and administrators can get ELL parents involved throughout the year. Some of the ways that were mentioned in their article were sending home detailed letters or videos on how students can complete their homework. This was giving parents the opportunity to learn the work with their child in order to successfully support their education. Another way that Kalayci and Ergül stated that teachers could get involved was by sending parents informational messages or newsletters home to inform the parents about the topics that the students would be learning. Parents are the teachers while the students are at home and ensuring there is a positive relationship with the parents is a huge part of a child's academic success. I think teachers as well as administrative staff will take these strategies and implement them because it gives them a way to communicate with the parents and build relationships while making them feel comfortable within the community (Wee, 2020). If teachers start off the year by implementing these strategies, then they will start the year off on a good note with the parents. This also gives them the opportunity to have an open line of communication with the parents in case it is needed throughout the year.

Recommendations:

I think that teachers should continue to research on their own. I think that the best way to find out strategies that work, is to create your own strategies. Teachers may already use

something in their classroom that they feel really works for increase parent involvement. I think continuing the professional developments every few months gives the teachers a great opportunity to learn from each other. They can learn what works in the classroom and what needs some tweaking. I think that teachers could reach out to teachers in other schools within the district to see what they are doing to reach out and build these positive relationships.

Final Thoughts:

Overall, I think that being a good teacher means that you are constantly growing and changing your ways year by year based on experience. I think that starting a professional development for the teachers and continuing to meet throughout the year is a great place to start. This gives teachers the information they need on each specific strategy and then they have the freedom to put their own spin on things. What may work for one teacher and one parent may not work for others so the fact that these strategies are able to be modified based on the relationships is huge. I also think that giving the teachers the opportunity to come back halfway through the year and speak on the strategies they implemented plays a really big role in ensuring these strategies are successful. Teachers can share their different approaches to specific strategies and other teachers can take that information back with them to their classroom and try to implement them that way.

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Appendix A:

1. Home visits

Yes _____

No _____

2. Teacher Professional Development

Yes _____

No _____

3. Parent Professional Development

Yes _____

No _____

4. Family Sharing time

Yes _____

No _____

5. Literacy Family Project

Yes _____

No _____

6. Parent Questionnaire

Yes _____

No _____

Appendix B

Please fill out these questions based on your child:

1. What is your child's name? _____
2. What is your name? _____
3. Does your child go by a nickname? _____
4. What is your child's age? _____
5. What language(s) is spoken in the home? _____
6. What is your child's native language? _____
7. Who lives in the household? _____
8. What is your child's favorite subject? _____
9. What is your child's least favorite subject? _____
10. What is the best email to reach you? _____
11. What is the best phone number to reach you? _____

Appendix C: Exit Ticket

Exit Ticket:

Which strategy are you most excited to use?

Which strategy do you think you will not use in your classroom?
