Parent-Teacher Partnership: Workshops to Support Family Engagement in Student Reading Comprehension

by

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ABSTRACT

During the winter semester of 2018, I conducted a series of four workshops to teach parents (n = 6) strategies that could be used from home with their fourth-grade struggling readers. This study was situated in an elementary school located in North Las Vegas, NV. I invited students that scored two or more years below grade level, as indicated by the STAR Reading Assessment (a grade equivalency assessment).

The purpose of this study focused on how family engagement resulting from the implementation of four small group workshops delivered by the teacher (and researcher) could affect reading performance of students who were below grade level.

This mixed-methods action research study was informed by Bourdieu's Theory of Cultural Capital (1977), Bandura's Theory of Self-efficacy (1986), and school, family, and community partnership models.

Quantitative data included pre- and post-intervention parent surveys, post-intervention student surveys, and pre- and post-intervention student reading assessments. Qualitative data included field notes and post-intervention parent interviews.

A repeated-measure t-test found the difference between student pre- and post-assessment to be statistically significant, $t(9) = -3.38$, $p = 0.008$. Findings also indicated that parents utilized the skills learned, increased their self-efficacy in regards to family involvement, and overcame obstacles.

I dedicate this work to my wonderful family. Without their motivation, guidance, and support, this would have not been possible.

Mom, thank you for always listening and providing comfort in times of uncertainty.

Dad, thank you for your unconditional support.

John, thank you for providing me with continuous feedback and encouraging words.

Sarah, thank you for your cheer and patience.

Lastly, I would like to dedicate this work to anyone who is unsure of pursuing higher education. If you are hesitant in your abilities to succeed in graduate school, I am here to tell you that you can!

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction and Purpose of the Study

"There is no program and no policy that can substitute for a parent who is involved in their child's education from day one."

—Barack Obama

Larger Context

In recent years, parent involvement in children's education has been receiving increasing attention. Importantly, family engagement in children's education has been shown to foster higher achievement scores (Epstein, 2002). To understand parent involvement, a working definition for the term will be necessary. Parent involvement and family engagement, as defined by Title I, has been viewed as the participation of families in regular, two-way, and meaningful communications involving students' academic learning and other school activities. This involvement has included ensuring parents play an integral role in assisting children's learning, encouraging families to be actively involved in children's education at school, and assuring families are full partners in children's education. This means families were to be included in decision-making, i.e., budget meetings, curriculum selection, school and community events, etc., and on advisory committees to assist in the education of their children (Henderson & Mapp, 2002).

When schools, families, and community groups have worked together to support learning, children have tended to perform better in school, stayed in school longer, and liked school more (Henderson & Mapp, 2002). Data collected over the past ten years have revealed students with involved parents, regardless of socioeconomic level or

cultural background, have tended to perform better on tests, passed classes, attended school, have developed better social skills, and graduated and gone on to postsecondary education (Henderson & Berla, 1994).

Because family engagement in children's education has yielded beneficial results, policy makers incorporated language to encourage family engagement in the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. The policy stated parents and community must be encouraged to play an integral role in children's education. Nevertheless, schools have had flexibility to determine how family engagement was to be implemented. Most schools have invited parents to participate in fun-filled activities; however, such activities fail to make parents an integral part of the academic achievement of students (Paredes, 2011). For example, families who attended school events rarely discussed student performance, apart from parent-teacher conferences. In most schools, student academic and/or behavioral performance has been exclusively communicated with parents via parent-teacher conferences and during report card and progress report distributions. This communication has primarily been one-way, with the teacher reporting to the parents on children's performance. Obviously, more needs to be done to (a) make parents feel welcome and (b) support parents so they can participate fully in their children's education. Additionally, more needs to be done to aid parents in understanding they play a crucial role in the development of their child's academic experiences (Paredes, 2011).

In the 2012 National Household Education Survey, 76% of students had parents who attended a regularly-scheduled parent-teacher conference, 74% had parents who attended a school or class event, 42% had parents who volunteered or served on a school

committee, 58% had parents who participated in school fundraising, and 33% had parents who met with a guidance counselor (Noel, Stark, & Redford, 2013). Thus, as the 2012 National Household Education Survey suggested, parents were more involved when the focal points of a meeting or event were geared toward academic or behavioral achievements of students such as parent-teacher conferences. This provided families the opportunity to engage with school leaders and teachers on relevant information that involved children's academics, something that all parents have seen as being important, irrespective of the cultural capital parents may possess (Lareau, 1987).

Moreover, despite being the most comprehensive federal education legislation in the United States, the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) of 1965, passed during Lyndon Johnson's administration, did not incorporate language with respect to family engagement under Title I. In 1973, President Richard Nixon enacted ESEA changes that required all schools receiving Title I funds to establish Title One Parent Advisory Councils (TOPACs), which would have a membership elected by and composed of parents (Mapp, 2012). Unfortunately, these stipulations were short-lived. The reauthorization of ESEA in 1982 erased most of these requirements by shifting the focus to other key educational elements, leaving the ESEA without strong family engagement provisions (Mapp, 2012). More than a decade later, President Bill Clinton reformed this act by reinserting family engagement stipulations for schools receiving Title I funds. These mandates required schools to allocate 1% of their federal funds to the development, encouragement, and maintenance of family engagement.

In 2001, ESEA became known as the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB). This reform further enhanced the stipulations about family engagement. Despite these conditions and allocation of funds, it was evident that most state education agencies (SEAs), local education agencies (LEAs), and schools were struggling to meet these comprehensive requirements. NCLB focused on accountability in terms of student academic scores by schools in order to receive federal funds. Some schools established programs designed to be consistent with respect to encouraging and fostering family engagement, but they were merely being compliant to receive funds. These compliant programs did not ensure the equality of family engagement programs being implemented by better performing schools. In addition, other NCLB stipulations, such as testing and professional development requirements, absorbed the majority of the schools' focus leaving minimal time to plan for meaningful family engagement programs. "Accountability-based policies such as NCLB do not provide adequate guidance and support to build district capacity for change and is insufficient to produce deep changes in educational practices" (Terry, 2010, p.80). President Barack Obama's reauthorization of ESEA as Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) of 2015 reflected the importance of strengthening and supporting family engagement, both through specific programs designed to involve families and communities and through policies that were established to empower and engage families. This reauthorization was undertaken to provide parents the ability to be knowledgeable about their child's academic performance and to be included in the educational process. Moreover, the policy was designed to eliminate the view that family engagement was a discrete activity. Instead, the legislation was constructed to ensure family engagement was to be an integrated strategy between

families and educators to promote students' education. ESSA was designed to allocate resources, through the new Family Engagement and Responsibility Fund, to districts and schools that have comprehensive, systemic plans for sustained family engagement. The legislation required schools to allocate at least 2% of their Title I fund to the development and sustainment of these programs. In addition to the 2% Title I fund, districts would be allotted an additional 1%, about $145 million, for grant programs that support, incentivize, and help expand district-level, evidence-based family engagement practices (Mapp, 2012). ESSA stipulated that all Title I-funded schools and districts were to use family engagement strategies that increased student achievement and created a welcoming environment and opened communication and strong collaboration between families and their children's teachers, schools, and districts. Further, the legislation proposed that implementing a checklist of activities was inadequate to meet the requirements of the legislation and required data-driven practices.

The overall purpose of this reform was to support family engagement to empower families by giving them a stronger voice and opportunity to be involved in their children's education. By doubling the funding in the new stipulations, the Department of Education placed greater importance on family and community engagement in student's education as compared to previous reforms, such as ESEA and NCLB.

Although incorporating a family engagement component is vital, policy makers have not addressed a larger concern; the interdependence between poverty and family engagement. Across the United States there are opportunity gaps between the students that have access to resources (medical care, glasses, tutoring, etc.) and those that do not.

Carter & Welner (2013) stated that, "on average, lower-class children will achieve at lower levels than children from higher social classes" (p.61). There are many challenges that are associated with parents of lower social classes. Children from these families are not read to aloud, exposed to complex language and vocabulary, and experience hardship such as low-income, frequent lay-offs, family stress, and lower levels of family involvement and supervision (Carter & Welner, 2013). Consequently, these children are deprived of learning opportunities which effects cultural awareness and self-confidence (Carter & Welner, 2013). Anyon (2014) stated, "the confluence of these and other hardships in poverty neighborhoods and families has been found to have consistently negative effects on children's performance on standardized tests" (p.85).

Although changing current policies to increase wages, desegregate communities and schools, and provide more affordable housing seem like the only solutions to bridge the opportunity divide, states have started looking at other possibilities. Many states and school districts see these inequalities and, for this reason, have developed and mandated components of family and community engagement within school annual improvement plans as a way to increase student achievement. Increasing family participation is one of the six key focuses for increasing student achievement set forth by the Clark County School District, Southern Nevada (CCSD Fast Facts, 2016). Through legislation, Nevada has made family engagement mandatory across school districts. Nevada Revised Statute (NRS 385.635) states that school districts must review and evaluate programs implemented by schools. These programs must be research based and meet the four criteria listed; building relationships and creating welcoming environments; building the

capacity of both school staff and families by providing: Classes for families on various topics of interests including support learning at home, professional development for school staff on family engagement and cultural competency; home visits; and Academic Parent Teacher Teams (NRS 385.635).

In an effort to scaffold the various federal and state requirements the Advisory Council on Family Engagement has been created. The Advisory Council provides a research-based model and resources for addressing family and community engagement (Advisory Council on Family Engagement, n.d.). This model includes six standards for family and school partnerships:

1. Welcoming all families into the school community
2. Communicating effectively
3. Supporting student success
4. Speaking up for every child
5. Sharing power
6. Collaborating with community

Although many of these standards are conducive to increasing family-school partnerships, there is no component that directly focuses on providing classes for families on various topics of interests as stipulated in NRS 385.635.

Local Context

"Profesor, no hablo Inglés. No puedo ayudar a mi hijo en la lectura. Qué debo hacer?"

-Anonymous Parent

Clark County School District (CCSD), the fifth largest school district in the nation, has continued to serve over 320,000 students in the southwest areas of Nevada. Compared to previous years, CCSD has seen the greatest increase in student population. There are over 133,000 Hispanic students enrolled in PreK– 12 grade classrooms. Hispanic students make up 43.4% of the student population in CCSD. By comparison, 30.2% of the student population are Caucasian students, 12% African/American, 6.6% Asian, and 7.8% are classified as "other" (Clark County School District, 2015).

Further, data demonstrate Hispanic and African-American students are consistently scoring below their Asian, Caucasian, and American Indian counterparts on a criterion-referenced test used in the district. To overcome this achievement gap, teachers are required to identify students who are performing severely below grade level using a norm-referenced test, Renaissance Learning's Star Reading Assessment. Once the student is identified, a Response to Intervention (RTI) plan is created. This plan provides students with additional instruction in a small group setting to aid in closing the gap between the students' identified deficiencies and grade-level standards. Tovar (2009) described RTI as a conceptual and functional process for identifying students who may be at academic and/or behavioral risk. Unfortunately, most of these students never "catch-up;" instead, their performances have been shown to be stagnant, despite the RTI

process. Moreover, these students have been retained or pushed along without having developed necessary fundamental skills to make them successful in their subsequent grade placements.

I have been serving CCSD for over six years as a fourth-grade teacher at at-risk schools. Every year since I began teaching, I have had severely underperforming students. On average, every year my classroom receives three to four students who are classified as being severely below grade level (not including Special Education students), identified as "Urgent Intervention students" as per the Renaissance STAR Reading Assessment. The RTI process, as stated above, is designed as a way to intervene and help students reach grade level. Despite implementing extra academic support such as Tier 3 instruction, intensive support tailored for students who are two years or more below that of his or her peers (Ervin, n.d.), or individualized computer-based intervention programs such as i-Ready or Imagine Learning, students have still not been making adequate growth to be prepared to proceed to the next grade level. Additional efforts beyond the RTI process will be required if we want to ensure students are prepared to meet expectations for their upcoming grade.

Tom Williams Elementary School (TWES) uses the STAR Reading Assessment to gauge students' grade equivalency. All the students classified as "in need of Urgent Intervention" are required to have an RTI plan. During the 2015-2016 school year, TWES had 22 (24%) first graders, 38 (38%) second graders, 19 (23%) third graders, 11 (13%) fourth graders, and 13 (13%) fifth graders performing severely below grade level, with a red code indicating a need for "Urgent Intervention". Thus, 103 students out of

the 452 (22.7%) students were in need of an RTI plan. The majority of these students were EL students with non-English speaking parents (Tom Williams Elementary School, 2016).

How much more can we do in the classroom? Teachers have been exhausting all intervention options in the classroom; therefore, we need to begin looking at other alternatives. To move our students to their respective appropriate grade levels with respect to reading, we need to utilize a great weapon that is hiding in our midst—the families. Family engagement has been shown to be a successful way of improving student academic progress (Paredes, 2011). With the support of families, students can engage in more extended instruction at home. Teachers and families need to become a team if we want to see students succeed and surpass our expectations (Paredes, 2011). The one thing that all students have in common, regardless of demographics, is the simple fact that all children have the ability to succeed (Spellings, 2005). With the help of parents, family members, and caregivers, this process becomes easier and far more impactful. The belief that family engagement is critical in establishing and maintaining good academic performance is widespread and regarded as common sense (Robinson & Harris, 2014).

Being able to communicate effectively is the main hurdle to overcome when trying to engage families' participation in their children's education. However, most of the students in the RTI process, with respect to English Language Arts (ELA), are English Learners (ELs). Their families are also ELs, or non-English speaking. This makes communication extremely difficult for teachers. But, what if the teacher speaks

Spanish? Communication would not be a factor. This can be a powerful benefit when attempting to create "buy-in" and trust for family engagement.

Many schools attempt to bring the community into the school by hosting several fun events per year. Although this is one way to encourage parent participation in children's education, participation tends to be limited because there is no strong connection to student academic performance. Parents have stated that the two most influential events during the school year are open house and parent-teacher conferences. To encourage more families to be involved in children's academics, we need to offer a safe and welcoming environment where families can discuss children's academic performance and learn new skills that they can implement at home to better assist their children in their academic endeavors.

To encourage families to become involved in children's learning, TWES invites families to several functions such as Coffee and Conversation, Breakfast with Books, Parent Teacher Conferences, Open House, Family Picnic, and Fall Family Festival. TWES makes a big effort to encourage families to participate in school-wide functions. However, only one of these functions is focused on academic matters. Parent teacher conferences have a 98% attendance rate because parents have an opportunity to communicate with their children's teachers about academic and behavior performances. To better support our "Urgent Intervention" students and assist them in moving toward to grade level performances, we need to engage our families in more academically-focused opportunities than the functions listed above. Teachers need to develop skills to work

with families who in turn can support student learning. Non-English-speaking families must be provided with skills to support their children at home in ELA acquisition.

For the purposes of this study, I will focus on my grade-level, fourth-grade. Currently, 15% of my fourth-grade students are enrolled in an RTI plan. Despite one-on-one intervention, small-group Tier 3 instruction, and individualized computer-based instruction, students have not been able to make adequate growth. Given these outcomes, it is clear that more needs to be done.

After conducting parent-teacher conferences, parents of these urgent intervention students were saddened and/or frustrated by their child's lack of performance on the STAR Reading Assessment. After a brief scolding of their child, they would turn to me and ask, "What can I do to help him/her get on grade level?" My simple response was, "You need to have your child read nightly and practice his/her sight words." This was followed by parents stressing their lack of family-to-child academic assistance due to the language barrier. In my case, 75% of parents do not speak English. They were concerned that they could not help their child in reading because they do not know how to read in English. Despite this very real concern, Paredes (2011) was able to assist non-English speaking families to work with their children to improve children's reading skills by engaging in academic parent-teacher teams (APTT), a family engagement model designed to improve parent-teacher collaboration to increase student achievement and parent self-efficacy.

Purpose of Study

This study focused on how parent involvement resulting from the implementation of four small group coaching sessions delivered by the teacher can affect reading performance of students who are below grade level. Despite language challenges, families learned new skills to support their child's reading comprehension and become a "home activities teacher" (Robinson & Harris, 2014), also known as a parent-tutor. The students performing below or severely below grade level were tracked and monitored to determine if family engagement at home influenced student ELA acquisition. Students were tested and monitored using STAR Reading Assessment every four weeks. The data from these assessments were shared with parents throughout the 16-week duration of this study. Parents were able to learn new skills and made aware of student growth in ELA throughout the 16-week intervention period.

Research Questions

Four research questions guided the conduct of this project. The four research questions are provided below.

RQ 1: How do families of students who are under-performing students in ELA perceive their roles with respect to assisting their fourth-grade children in reading?

RQ 2: How and to what extent do families implement content specific reading skills that are taught to them?

RQ 3: How and to what extent does teaching of content specific reading skills to families of under-performing students affect respective fourth-grade students' reading performance?

RQ 4: What are student's perceptions regarding family-to-child nightly engagement?

Summary

Chapter 1 discusses the need for improving family engagement in schools and school districts. To see students achieve their maximum potential, schools, teachers, and families must establish and maintain a certain level of involvement, a partnership that has the ability to yield tremendous returns, especially in regions such as the one in which this study is situated. The intended intervention for this study was to engage families in their child's education by hosting parent-workshops that taught parents' reading comprehension skills and strategies to better help their children from home. This was monitored, over a 16-week period, to determine change in student reading performance.

CHAPTER 2

Theoretical Perspectives and Research Guiding the Project

"Parents' attitudes, behaviors, and activities related to children's education influence students' learning and educational success."

—Hoover-Dempsey

The theoretical perspectives and research guiding this project are presented in five sections. I begin this chapter by examining how cultural capital influences families' abilities to engage in their children's education followed by a review of related literature. The second conceptual theory guiding this study was that of self-efficacy and I have explored how parent's self-evaluation of abilities influences their desire to engage in their children's education. Next, family engagement frameworks and considerations related to this action research will be discussed. Finally, I will discuss how previous cycles of inquiry informed this dissertation.

Theory of Cultural Capital

Pierre Bourdieu's (1977, 1984) theory of cultural capital (CC) suggested that individuals or a group of individuals attain capital that supported the individuals' economic or social statuses. Bourdieu argued that individuals' and families' cultural resources comprise a distinct form of "capital," which should be regarded on equal terms as economic resources, economic capital, and social networks and connections (Jaeger, 2011). In addition to objectified and institutionalized capital, individuals obtained capital through embodied resources, or symbolic elements such as perceptions, manners, skills, and credentials, to name a few. For example, families who sent their children to summer

camp or took them to the zoo have provided CC to their children, which may be quite different than what their peers may possess. Another example would be taking children to the library beginning at age four and continuing that practice through middle school. This latter example illustrates how something taken for granted by many families has fostered greater amounts of CC that may not be available to many students.

The more CC individuals possessed the higher social class one obtained, thereby making them more socially dominant than individuals with lesser amounts of CC. This notion reflected inequalities between groups of people who possessed lesser amounts of capital. Unfortunately, these inequalities have pervaded our education systems. Education institutions have not been value neutral; instead, they have been laden with the values of the dominant class (Bourdieu, 1977; Paredes, 2011). Individuals with higher CC have entered the educational environment with advantages over their counterparts.

Lareau (1987) stated that CC influences parents and students alike. It has influenced the degree to which parents engaged in academic tutoring with their children and how students viewed their educational endeavors. Parents who are not "fluent" in educational practices in American schools will be less likely to instill education-going capital towards their children (Lareau, 1987). Thus, students experience a disadvantage when placed in an educational setting compared to their counterparts who have possessed more education capital because of their families' experiences with educational practices, beliefs, and attitudes (Lareau, 1987). For example, families who have minimal education may be less involved in their children's education due to lack of knowledge regarding school systems, content knowledge, and preconceived notions derived from negative education experiences. Individuals with less CC encounter constraints that fostered

unequal access to institutional resources that could possibly have added to their capital (Lee & Bowen, 2006). families who possess a high level of education capital will be more likely to raise their children to have similar beliefs and attitudes towards education. As a result, these families' CC continues to grow and becomes dominant compared to students who did not share these same experiences. In addition, students from families with high levels of CC will approach academic challenges with greater sense of internal control over success than students from lower-socioeconomic families who possess less CC (Usher & Kober, 2012).

Students obtain capital by passively acquiring beliefs and attitudes from their parents or by parents actively, or deliberately, transferring cultural capital to their children (Jaeger, 2011). This ongoing, building of capital promotes educational success, either by passive or active negotiation of cultural reproduction. The greater an individual's CC, the greater her or his advantage is for procuring additional capital that will benefit those individuals and their family members (Lee & Bowen, 2006). However, parenting behavior has been found to be different among different populations, and because parents expressed different values and behaviors, children's motivation was affected differently. The transfer of CC has shaped background factors, such as financial resources, educational knowledge and attainment, lived experiences, and context, as well as the unique values of each parent (Usher & Kober, 2012).

Bourdieu (1977, 1984) claimed individuals with higher socioeconomic status (SES) transferred their dominant capital to their children, increasing their chances of success in an education institution. Thus, middle- and upper-class individuals were viewed as the dominant classes, marginalizing the lower-class immigrants who possessed

limited CC. These disadvantaged families, particularly socioeconomically-disadvantaged families with minimal capital, families of color, ethnicity, and linguistics, have the potential to influence children from an early age and continue to influence children throughout their academic careers. Carter & Welner (2013) stated that the United States has among the lowest levels of intergenerational social mobility – and one of the highest levels of influences of family socioeconomic status on students' achievement and later earnings.

So, what can be done to promote CC in schools in a way that will encourage parent involvement? Gottlob (2009) stated that because CC affects social interactions and the way one views oneself and others, families who were not members of the Caucasian, middle-class mainstream culture did not feel comfortable in school settings and were reluctant to express their views and, as a consequence, were not able to advocate effectively for their children. Thus, it is the school's responsibility to help families acquire the capital they need to successfully navigate the system and the school's responsibility to act in a way that is responsive to the cultural values of the community it serves (Gottlob, 2009). School systems need to make active decisions in fostering its community's cultural capital in a way that views parents and students as equals. Gottlob's (2009) study confirmed that families viewed education as an important element in their children's development. However, these families, mostly second language learners, or with low-SES, feared participating in their children's education due to their own lack of CC with respect to education. Despite their lack of participation in their children's education, they still valued and cared for the education of their children. In addition, Gottlob's (2009) research suggested that parents want to be treated with respect

and that their current capital is still important, despite what the school views as "valued" capital. Thus, in order to promote more family engagement, we must nurture and advance families' current capital through respect, dignity, and trust (Bryk & Schneider, 1996). Despite their backgrounds, families have brought value to their children's education. It is incumbent upon the school to foster CC in a way that brings families and schools together to further expand student's academic resources.

Despite the limited research pertaining to CC and family engagement in their children's education, much of the research suggested there was a correlation between families' CC and student achievement. A study conducted by Pishghadam and Zabihi (2011) revealed that CC and families' education level positively influenced students' ability to achieve in school. In addition, the study indicated individuals with higher levels of literacy and cultural competencies outperformed their counterparts in academic challenges, though, literacy level was the best predictor for student achievement.

Similar to this study, Lareau and Weininger's (2003) comparison of two families, one African-American middle-class and one African-American family living in a public housing project, revealed that, despite the fact that both families cared for their child's education, they negotiated challenges associated with their child's school differently. The family of the middle-class student was more confident in addressing concerns than that of the poor family who accepted circumstances due to lack of resources or knowledge. The middle-class family was able to utilize CC, in the form of financial, communication, and content knowledge resources, which was not available to lower-SES families. Also, in the middle-class family, the parent routinely intervened in various institutions on behalf of her child, and the parent clearly transmitted required skills to her

child. The child took advantage of capital in both education and social negotiations through this diffusion of capital.

On the other hand, the parent from the African-American family living in a public housing project, despite believing in "fighting for your child," did little to assert concerns or questions when attending a parent-teacher conference, something that middle-class parents were prone to do (Lareau & Weininger, 2003). The parent's passivity, however, was not the results of indifference in her child's education. Instead, the data suggested the passivity stemmed from a combination of her belief that education was the province of professional educators rather than parents, and a sense of deference towards persons in positions of institutional authority, such as teachers.

This outcome confirmed that parents with less cultural capital, especially low-SES families, struggle with advocating and providing resources that promoted their child's academic success. The most prevalent challenges included the lack of financial support, and lack of knowledge of the institution, in this case, the educational system, particularly not knowing how to assist her child at home despite the minimal support given by teachers (Lareau, 1987). Not being able to fully benefit or fulfill expectations from the support given by the teacher may be due to the lack of knowing educational jargon due to one's own limited education capital, and not because the parents did not recognize the legitimacy behind the expectations (Lareau, 1987).

Clearly, the research suggests inequalities between parents with different backgrounds (Carter & Welner, 2013). These inequalities need to be addressed by schools and teachers to better serve students and build relationships between families and educators (Epstein, 2002). One thing that all families have in common is the fact that

they want to see their children succeed (Lareau, 1987) thus, making it worthwhile to invest energy and resources in the conservation and development of capital amongst both students and families.

Theory of Self-Efficacy

Self-efficacy reflects individuals' beliefs in their abilities to accomplish or carry out a behavior that allows them to attain a desired goal (Bandura 1988, 1997). Bandura's (1986) framework of self-efficacy was defined as "people's judgments of their capabilities to organize and execute courses of action required to attain designated types of performance that exercise influence over events that affect their lives" (p.391). Thus, in this framework, people created self-perceptions of capability that become influential to their pursuits (Barnyak & McNelly, 2009). Individuals with higher levels of self-efficacy tended to undertake more challenging tasks, established higher goals for themselves, and persisted longer to achieve their goals (Barnyak & McNelly, 2009). In contrast, individuals who were not as self-efficacious perceived complicated tasks as too difficult to negotiate and, thus, never engaged or prematurely relinquished the task or behavior.

Self-efficacy has been described as the foundation for human motivation, well-being, and personal accomplishment because, unless people believed their actions produced the outcomes they desired, they had little incentive to act or to persevere in the face of adversities (Pajares, 2002). Accordingly, self-efficacy played an influential role in determining whether individuals would undertake the difficulties and uncertainties associated with the task at hand. It should be noted that self-efficacy was not the only factor in determining the investment in a behavior or task. Bandura (1989, 1997) suggested that self-efficacy was derived from four sources of information: personal

mastery experiences, vicarious experiences, verbal persuasion, and physiological arousal. These sources suggested strongly that schools and educational professionals exerted substantial influence on families' sense of efficacy for helping their children succeed in school (Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2005).

Families who lack fundamental skills regarding parent-child involvement may view their children's education as daunting or too difficult in which to be engaged. These families may have been cognizant of the necessity to intervene in their children's education, but due to a lack of knowledge, their self-efficacy did not permit them to make an appropriate investment; they lacked the positive sense of efficacy for assisting their child at home. Researchers (e.g., Eccles & Harold, 1996; Hoover-Dempsey et al., 1992; Sheldon & Epstein, 2004; Paredes, 2011) have reported positive correlations with student academic performance when families' self-efficacy fostered their ability to immerse themselves in school-initiated activities such as parent-teacher conferences, open house, and regular two-way communication with classroom teachers. For this reason, schools and education professionals must provide families with support and resources that will improve their general perspective and belief in accomplishing a task, in this case, assisting their children at home with academic skills and becoming involved in their children's education at school; "It is not a partnership if one side does not provide the other partner access to important knowledge" (Paredes, 2011, p.25). For example, a parent who does not know how to add or subtract fractions with unlike denominators will have low efficacy in assisting his or her child with this particular skill. Thus, education professionals must provide families with tools that will improve parents' self-efficacy in supporting their children's learning. This can be done by simply showing families how

to search related video tutorials online. This form of parent-teacher involvement will increase the belief that families have in supporting their children with mathematical skills, despite their minimal knowledge of adding and subtracting fractions.

Hoover-Dempsey et al. (2005) argued that self-efficacy was a contributing motivator to family engagement because families made their decisions about involvement, in part by thinking about the outcomes, such as student achievement, likely to follow their actions (Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2005). Families with high efficacy with respect to their belief of level of responsibility in their children's academics will make positive decisions about active engagement in their child's education and, as mentioned above, will persist through challenges and obstacles to attain successful outcomes. Hoover-Dempsey & Sandler (1997) suggested three attributes were related to why and how families become involved in their children's education. For the purposes of this study, the focus will be on the second factor, parents' feelings of self-efficacy. In their analysis of self-efficacy in immigrant parents, they stated that parents lacked confidence in their abilities to direct their children's academic trajectory, as it may be very different from their experiences in their home country (Tang, 2015). This assertion can also be connected to non-English-speaking parents. The inability to communicate effectively with their children's teacher or to engage in parent-child tutoring due to language barriers can produce low levels of efficacy in regards to how they perceive their capabilities to become involved in their children's education.

Tang's (2015) study of precursors to parent educational involvement, with an emphasis on immigrant families who may have faced more involvement challenges compared to non-immigrant families, suggested that parents' self-efficacy, as one of the

two involvement antecedents, was a significant predictor of home-based involvement. The analysis of the at-home survey data indicated that higher levels of self-efficacy predicted higher levels of home-based involvement whereas higher levels of opportunities for involvement predicted lower levels of home-based involvement (Tang, 2015). These results were similar to those obtained by Ice and Hoover-Dempsey (2011) in a longitudinal study of home- and public-school parents' motivations for home-based involvement. A summary of results indicated that invitations for involvement from children were the strongest predictors of family engagement. In addition, parent-reported social support and parental self-efficacy for involvement also contributed to home-based family engagement and correlated with student proximal achievement outcomes. Student-initiated invitations for family engagement, either implicitly or explicitly, were a powerful contextual motivator for family engagement (Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2005). Invitation for family engagement, either from children, teacher or school, appeared to activate many parents' wishes to be responsive to their children's needs and supportive of their educational success, thus, enhancing their family engagement efficacy.

School, Family, and Community Partnership Models

Overlapping Spheres of Influence. Joyce Epstein has developed a framework to build school, family, and community partnerships that will improve school programs and school climate, provide family services and support, increase parents' skills and leadership, connect families with others in the school and in the community, and help teachers with their work (Epstein, 2002). The overarching goal for these partnerships is to help all students succeed in their academics and in social interactions.

By incorporating the theory of overlapping spheres of influences, students are aided in becoming the best versions they can be while engaging the school, family, and community. The overlapping spheres of influence (see Figure 1) puts the students in the center while placing the school, family, and community interconnectedly around them. When all three form a partnership, and work to meet short-term and long-term goals, students benefit in ways that would not be possible otherwise. By putting the students in the center, students become empowered to take control of their education, development, and success in school. This is seen when partnership activities are designed to engage, guide, energize, and motivate students to produce their own success (Epstein, 2002).

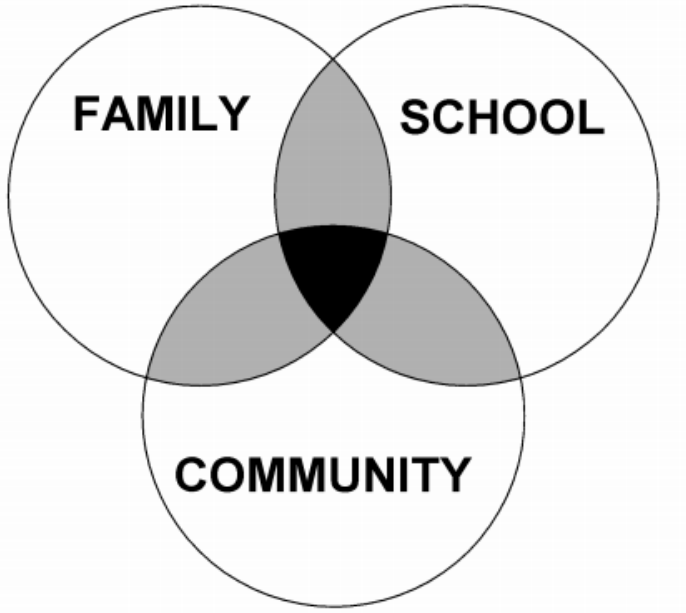

Figure 1.

Overlapping Spheres of Influence

With various elements making each school unique, schools must use Epstein's framework in a tailored fashion that meets the needs of their students and families. However, Epstein's research of successful programs at various grade levels has found

that there are three components that must be addressed: recognition of the overlapping spheres of influence on student development, attention to various types of involvement that promote a variety of opportunities for schools, families, and communities to work together, and an Action Team for Partnership (ATP) to coordinate each school's work and progress (Epstein, 2002).

Once the school understands the need for involving families and community to enhance student achievement, the school must consider Epstein's (2002) six types of family engagement:

(a) *Parenting* – Helps all families establish home environment to support children as students

(b) *Communicating* – Design effective forms of school-to-home and home-to-school communication about school programs and their children's progress

(c) *Volunteering* – Recruit and organize parent help and support

(d) *Learning at Home* – Provide information and ideas to families about how to help students at home with homework and other curriculum-related activities, decisions, and planning

(e) *Decision Making* – Include parents in school decisions, developing parent leaders and representatives

(f) *Collaborating with the Community* – Identify and integrate resources and services from the community to strengthen school programs, family practices, and student learning and development (p.14)

These six types of involvement where delineated to guide the development of school, family, and community partnerships. The results or improvements will depend on the quality of implementation of these types of involvement.

Once the ATP is selected, goals must be set that meet the school's improvement plan. There are two goals that need to be created and aligned to the school's improvement plan: an annual goal, and a three-year goal. With any effective school program, data collection and monitoring must be addressed. It is up to the ATP to determine how they will measure and monitor whether or not goals are being met. Implementing Epstein's framework will require a component of evaluation from the ATP.

The purpose of the ATP is to establish a committee that will facilitate the school, family, and community partnership in a way that is continuously improving. The ATP must create an action team, obtain funds and others support, identify a starting point, develop a three-year outline and a one-year action plan, and continue planning and working for improvement. "This teamwork requires teachers and administrators to establish and maintain a school-based team, and official committee of teachers, parents, administrators, and others (nurse, office staff, custodial staff, social workers, etc.) to work together to plan, conduct, evaluate, and continually improve goal-linked activities that engage all families and selected community partners in productive ways" (Epstein, 2013, p.116).

Although utilizing a program such as this seems promising and bound to provide improvement, especially in Title I schools that are required to have a parent and community involvement component to maintain grant funding, it is clear that challenges

in implementation will arise. Paredes (2011) outlined several challenges to the above framework that are also representative to other situated contexts:

(a) Epstein's framework is broad in scope and does not have a component to regularly connect parents and teachers to improve student learning.

(b) There is a lack of emphasis in teachers coaching parents in academic skills to build their knowledge and capacity to be involved appropriately.

(c) Districts do not have the manpower or expertise to oversee the planning, implementation, and professional development of ATP at each school.

(d) Districts are best served by an affordable, internal, systemic initiative that is sustainable and in which teachers and parents become the experts (pg. 17).

Finally, much like the challenges outlined by Paredes (2010), this framework misses the importance of teachers coaching parents in academic skills and the budget deficits being experienced by the setting of this action research. Schools that do not have the manpower nor the budget to sustain a program as outlined above may need to alter the framework to appropriately meet the needs and resources of the school.

Academic Parent Teacher Teams. Academic Parent Teacher Teams (APTT) is an approach to family engagement that utilizes families and schools to meet goals, that have been mutually set, to increase student achievement. This framework gives families concrete information on their children's academic progress and provides them with skills, strategies, and resources to use at home with their children to reinforce targeted grade-level learning goals (WestEd, 2015).

Paredes (2011) developed APTT as a way to increase family engagement and improve student achievement. By replacing the traditional parent-teacher conference

with a series of three 75-minute team meetings that include the teacher and the parents of all the students in the class, along with one 30-minute individual session between the teacher and each student and their parents, families are able to support their children from home utilizing the resources and skills acquired during the APTT meetings (WestEd, 2015). These meetings follow six essential elements; welcome and team building; foundational grade level skills; share data; model practice activities; facilitate family practice of activities; and facilitate setting SMART goals.

(a) Welcome and Team Building: To facilitate the development of strong, trusting relationships that lead to collaboration and mutual support beyond the classroom.

(b) Foundational Grade Level Skills: To help families gain a deep and practical conceptual understanding of the skill and how it can be applied anywhere and anytime to support student learning.

(c) Share Data: To increase knowledge and understanding of grade level measures of success to cultivate high expectations and shared responsibility for student learning growth.

(d) Model Practice Activities: To clearly demonstrate and discuss the types of activities that promote growth in the selected foundational grade level skills.

(e) Facilitate Family and Practice of Activities: To provide families materials and hands on opportunities to practice activities that promote student growth in the foundational grade level skills.

(f) Facilitate Setting SMART Goals: To support families as they take an active role in setting high expectations and monitoring their child's growth and achievement (Paredes, n.d.).

APTT fosters equity among parents and teachers by sharing responsibility of the child's educational goals. The parents are able to increase knowledge of specific content related skills and strategies. In turn, this increases the parent's self-efficacy and confidence to negotiate with parent-child academic engagement, thereby increasing family cultural capital. APTT has been utilized by many schools across the nation, 18 states and over 200,000 families. Although APTT is tailored for whole school or grade-level implementation, it has the potential to be modified to be implemented by a single teacher for a single classroom. A principal of an elementary school in CCSD stated, "We have APTT meetings during the day while students are in specials (i.e., Art, Music, etc.). The classroom teacher delivers the meetings within contracted work hours" (S. Popek, personal communication, December 19, 2017). If these meetings are not held during contracted time, it is up to the educator to schedule accordingly. In some cases, principals can compensate teachers' extra duties through school budget.

Connections to This Action Research

From Pierre Bourdieu's (1977, 1984) cultural capital (CC) theory, researchers can gather several connections for future innovations regarding the way this action research was guided. First, educational professionals must consider that some parents already invest in their children's education by actively or passively transferring their capital to their children. As stated above, these students enter the school system with an advantage over their counterparts because they will be able to tackle rigorous cognitive demands

already familiar to them or with relative ease due to their prior experiences. Thus, schools need to acknowledge the different CC students bring to the classroom based upon the CC provided by their parents. Education professionals can embrace the valuable knowledge that all parents, regardless of status, bring forth and make an effort to maintain and develop new knowledge based on CC, which students bring with them. Paredes (2011) claimed, "Parents have significant knowledge and experience to offer their children and the schools…[thus,] Parent involvement programs must capitalize on the knowledge and experience parents already possess, that is on their own cultural capital" (p. 23). This can be achieved by cultural capital exchange between parents and children in the classroom, sharing experiences, and fostering and promoting new learning and habits.

It is important to respect families' diversity in capital in an unbiased way. Instead of considering how to change how families are rearing their children, education institutions need to inform families of current supportive skills to aid their children's learning, particularly how to navigate the school systems, and express the important role they play in their children's academic success. The message schools send family's needs to change from "you need to be a better parent" to "by becoming an active member of our educational team, we will coach you in the skills you need to be more effective in the way you help your children learn at home," thus improving their cultural capital with support and resources (Paredes, 2011). This can be achieved by making an effort to learn from differences. For example, the way parents know and view their children should not be something that needs to be overcome, rather something that serves as a generative

ground in which teachers can move beyond their regarded ways of knowing and seeing children (Shim, 2013).

One of the most common misconceptions about linguistically-diverse populations is that English language proficiency is linked to intelligence (Shim, 2013). Teachers commonly mistake one's lack of English proficiency with a lack of capital in education. In this circumstance, it is clear why marginalized parents refrain from parent involvement. "While teachers may very well understand this concept theoretically, in practice, such judgments occur more often than not, and it requires a conscious effort for teachers not to demean the marginalized students and parents by making false assumptions" (Shim, 2013, p.24).

All families want to see their children succeed, but lack of content knowledge impedes them from negotiating with difficult and challenging tasks or behaviors. To promote parent involvement, education professionals must address parents' self-efficacy in ways that enhance their abilities to negotiate various parent-school, parent-teacher, parent-community, and parent-child involvement initiatives. Once these partnerships overcome obstacles and achieve intended goals, they will be more likely to negotiate with more pressing or strenuous concerns (Epstein, 2002). The more self-efficacy one has, the more determined one becomes in tackling the task or behavior at hand. This is where Epstein's (2002) framework fails to provide sufficient guidance in teacher-led workshops that can coach parents with child-appropriate grade-level academic skills.

Also, because parents make their decisions about involvement in part by thinking about the outcomes likely to follow their actions, school professionals would benefit from informing parents of the power of family engagement (Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2012).

This can be done by demonstrating the relative ease of accomplishing this behavior and by providing parents with workshops to enhance their self-efficacy when assisting their children at home (Hoover-Dempsey et al., 2012).

Further research results have suggested children's invitations for parent involvement is a great motivator for parents to assist their children in their academic tasks. As such, teachers and schools need to encourage students to seek family assistance and support when doing homework.

To increase parent's self-efficacy for family engagement, schools must make parents feel welcomed, valued, and expected to play a prominent role in their children's education. This makes parents more motivated to assume an active role in helping their children succeed in school (as cited in Hoover-Dempsey, 2005). Teachers and schools invite parent involvement when they support parent's and respect parents' life-contexts such as work schedules, language, etc., which fosters family engagement as their efficacy increases.

Previous Cycles of Inquiry

Previous cycles of inquiry have led to this action research project which encompasses teacher-led workshops that coach parents about skills needed to better support their children from home.

During Cycle 0, a qualitative interview protocol was created by the researcher to measure how and to what extent non-English-speaking parents assisted their children in reading, and how and to what extent non-English speaking parents viewed their role with respect to assisting their fourth-grade children in reading. There were six interview questions asked after pre-interview questions (i.e. age, marital status, work schedule etc.).

The questions on the interview protocol included the following: How do you assist your child in learning to read? How do you help her/him to understand what she/he is reading? How much time do you dedicate to supporting your child's reading development at home each night? What factors or obligations prevent you from supporting your child's learning to understand what she/he is reading? Three themes derived from the analysis of the resulting data were identified: *making reading mandatory*, *learning at home*, and *student fighting with parent*.

All participants stated that reading at home is made mandatory by allocating time for student reading. All parents stated that they, or another parent, assisted their children in reading by having the child read for 15 minutes nightly. In addition to this allocated time, all parents probed their child in order to ascertain if the child understood the context of the selected text. One of the fathers stated,

"I make sure he is reading every night, despite my son telling me that he already read at school."

Parents were asked if their lack of English proficiency affected their ability to assist their child in reading. Surprisingly, one parent stated that not knowing English does not affect his ability to support his child in nightly reading. This parent was able to use resources, other children, devices, etc., to clarify any misconceptions about literary concepts.

"If we don't know how to say a word, or don't know the meaning of a word, we ask our oldest son. If he doesn't know, we use our tablet to help us."

Another interesting theme that appeared in all participants' statements was the fact that all students were fighting with their parents about reading. Parents stated that, at

times, it can become a chore to get their children to read because students are constantly stating that they already read, or that they did not need to read tonight.

The results suggested that, despite what teachers may believe, limited- and non-English-speaking families are attempting home-based family-to-child involvement. It can be concluded that teachers, despite their preconceived notions about minimal family engagement in the EL community, need to foster and facilitate continuous family engagement. Resources and support must be given to these groups of parents in order for them to overcome the challenges associated with their involvement in their children's reading.

During the next cycle of action research inquiry, the researcher investigated the perceptions held by parents of severely below-grade-level students as it relates to their levels of family-to-child academic engagement. Analysis of data resulting from qualitative interviews revealed two categories: *parent willingness to be involved*, and *challenges preventing family engagement*.

Despite the various challenges parents face, work schedules, lack of resources, communication barriers, lack of content knowledge, etc., parents still have the desire to assist their children as a parent-teacher. Both participants described how, no matter what their roles were outside of the home, they still had an obligation to assist their children in succeeding in school.

Parents believed that, along with their children's teachers, they were responsible for their children's learning. Examples of statements from parents included the following two quotes:

"I believe that teachers are there to teach what I cannot teach at home. However, I feel that parents should also do their part at home. I make sure that my son doesn't struggle with his homework."

"I feel that as a parent, I have to do my part. Even though I am limited to what I know, I still have to do my part."

Nonetheless, there are times when the differences in education make it difficult to assist their children from home. Although parents are willing to negotiate in family engagement, they need support from the school and teachers to better facilitate this process. Some families come from different countries, causing a misalignment in content strategies. The way parents were taught to do things simply does not correlate with the methods used in the United States.

Providing resources to educate parents on how subject matter is being taught, in terms of rigor and processes, can assist parents in helping their children from home. Families are not familiar with the rigors of Common Core State Standards, causing them to feel confused and helpless in their efforts of being involved in their child's learning. Supporting parents by teaching them in a workshop setting how to determine book levels, how to analyze test scores, and how to use comprehension strategies while reading can improve the levels of family-to-child academic engagement and parent self-efficacy.

Parents are feeling the need for additional support. They are feeling that they do not have the support needed to fulfill the expectations required of them. One parent stated that she tries to help her daughter when she sees her struggling, but that sometimes, she lacks the content knowledge to do so.

Previous cycles of inquiry have informed this research in several ways. Parents are willing and able to assist their children from home. Preconceived notions of challenges affecting parent participation or willingness to be involved have been partially discredited. These parents have shown an interest in their children's academics and want to be more involved. Survey analysis has revealed that parents are interested in continuous workshops that will educate them in the following categories: understanding test data, understanding Accelerated Reader and how to select appropriate books for their children, improving reading skills, improving math skills, helping with homework, and nutrition.

Summary

This chapter has covered the theoretical lenses guiding this action research project. Using the theories of cultural capital and self-efficacy to develop a family engagement program that utilizes Epstein's (2002) six types of involvement and Paredes' (2011) APTT may have substantial influences on student academic and social success. Additionally, this chapter discussed how previous cycles of inquiry informed and guided this research to better understand parent perception and their willingness to engage in family engagement.

CHAPTER 3

Methodology

"Education is the passport to the future for tomorrow belongs to those who prepare for it today."

—Malcom X

Purpose of Study

This study focused on how family engagement resulting from the implementation of several small group coaching sessions delivered by the teacher can affect reading performance of students who are below grade level.

Four research questions guided the conduct of this project. The four research questions are provided below.

RQ 1: How do families of students who are under-performing students in ELA perceive their roles with respect to assisting their fourth-grade children in reading?

RQ 2: How and to what extent do families implement content specific reading skills that are taught to them?

RQ 3: How and to what extent does teaching of content specific reading skills to families of under-performing students affect respective fourth-grade students' reading performance?

RQ 4: What are student's perceptions regarding family-to-child nightly engagement?

Setting and Participants

Setting. Tom Williams Elementary School is situated in the center of Las Vegas, Nevada, as part of the fifth largest school district in the nation, Clark County School District (CCSD). This school district serves over 316,000 students, with enrollments increasing annually. Of these students, 133,438 students are classified as "Hispanic." Thus, English learners (ELs) make up roughly 18.40% (59,000 students) of the entire student population in the CCSD.

The school selected to participate in this study, Tom Williams Elementary School (TWES), consists of 62% ELs (Tom Williams Elementary School, 2015). 93% of students identify themselves as Hispanic, 4% as White, and the remainder 3% as Black, Asian, or other. Enrollment is 924 students, with 11% of these students receiving Special Education services (SPED) and 100% receiving free lunch. TWES has 35% of students proficient in ELA and 24% proficient in Math. To facilitate literacy proficiency, decrease the learning gap, and increase graduation rates of these students, we must provide support in addition to what is currently being offered.

Participants. In the spring of 2018, six fourth-grade classrooms were selected to participate in a mixed-methods action research study. For the purposes of participation in this study, all students and their parents in the selected classrooms must have been classified as "severely below grade level" (two or more years below grade level) or "below grade level" (one year below grade level) using the Renaissance STAR Reading Assessment, an assessment tool used as a benchmark and for progress monitoring throughout the academic school year. In addition, 13 of the 14 parents that agreed to participate were limited or non-English speaking. Every year, roughly 8% of my students

are classified as “severely below grade level” and 12% as “below grade level.” The EL students meeting these criteria and respective parents were eligible to participate in this study.

Role of the Researcher. As a fourth-grade teacher at TWES, I used my classroom, along with five other fourth-grade classrooms as my sample. The fourth-grade population at TWES consisted of 146 students, of which 32% were at or above benchmark, 14% on watch, 23% in need of intervention, and 30% in need of urgent intervention, as classified by STAR Reading Assessment. Once I identified which students met the criteria for this study, I obtained consent from their parents. As the teacher and the researcher, I was responsible for the development of the intervention, and developing, distributing, and analyzing all study materials.

As a Spanish-speaking professional, I was able to effectively communicate with the limited or non-English speaking parents, as most of them were Spanish speaking. Although there were no cases of the following, parents who did not speak English or Spanish would have been asked to have a translator present during the intervention and during anytime communication was required between parent and researcher/teacher. The translator could have been the student or another child or adult associated with the respective family. The use of visuals and modeled behavior were used to insure that non-English or Spanish speaking parents felt welcomed, understood the content delivered, and maintained engagement throughout the workshops.

Intervention Framework

Participants were invited to participate in a series of four workshops throughout a duration of sixteen weeks. I developed and presented the workshops in my classroom, at

TWES. Initially workshops were planned to be held on multiple dates to accommodate parent schedules. For example, a Tuesday workshop would have been repeated on Friday to generate more participation. However, there was no need for this accommodation due to the number of participants being low. Other forms of increasing participation included the use of Parent Link to send out text message reminders of upcoming workshops, the use of flyers to communicate, Edmodo as a way to communicate with parents outside of the workshops, and raffling of prizes such as school t-shirts, sweatshirts, and learning materials. Despite planning for the use of Edmodo, it was not used due to the parents' limited computer knowledge and access to technology.

There were a total of four workshops focused on increasing family engagement, specifically teaching parents, or primary caretakers, how to verify if and how students were actively engaged in nightly reading. By having parents actively monitor student nightly reading, parents became more engaged with their child's education and fostered an environment conducive for academic growth. In previous cycles of research, parents have stated that they struggled with verifying if their child was actually reading. "I only tell her to read. I can't help her actually read. I even tell her to write two pages about what she reads." Statements like this suggested that parents struggled with implementing strategies that fostered active reading. For this reason, the overall goal for the workshops were to show parents ways of monitoring their child's reading as to improve student reading comprehension and increase discourse between child and parent.

The workshops followed a framework of delivery using four components (see Table 1): building trust and networking (15 minutes), data analysis (10 minutes), content specific skill (20 minutes), and goal setting (15 minutes). This framework was inspired

by Paredes' (2010) Academic Parent Teacher Teams (APTT) elements for effective meetings.

Table 1

Workshop Framework of Delivery

Component	Purpose
Building Trust & Networking	To build a safe and synergistic environment for sharing ideas, best practices, and trust. To increase collaboration and support between participants during and after the workshops.
Data Analysis	To identify grade reading proficiency and to identify specific student reading levels. To develop a common language for analyzing student and grade-level data.
Content Specific Skill	To increase parents understanding of content specific reading skills and how they can be used at home to ensure active nightly reading.
Goal Setting	To help parents set SMART goals for their children in a way that will encourage monitoring of expectations and student achievement.

Building Trust & Networking. This component was critical in that establishing a safe and trusting environment between participants fostered meaningful collaboration,

mutual purpose, and overall inspirational vision (Hargreaves & Fullan, 2009). Through ice-breakers or team-building exercises, I built relationships with families that encouraged trust and mutual purpose, thus, assisting in establishing real change (Rost, 1993). Additionally, this gave parents an opportunity to share their personal funds of knowledge. Funds of knowledge recognizes that parents bring knowledge from their abundance of resources within their families households and lived experiences (Moll and Greenberg, 1990).

I made this component evident by using various strategies. I explained the purpose for the workshops, modeled and participated in team-building activities, demonstrated appreciation of the value that parents had to offer by asking questions and encouraging families to voice comments and/or concerns, and provided families with opportunities to share their own knowledge and expertise. For families to share sensitive information and become active participants of my change effort, I displayed humility and empathy (A. Mishra & E. Mishra, 2013).

I encouraged networking between parents by making myself available to answer any misconceptions and to provide additional support. Networking was done at every workshop but was not limited to in-person sessions only. I encouraged the use of Edmodo groups so parents could go online to further network, asynchronously. Edmodo was the intended platform where parents and the presenter could asynchronously meet to maintain continuous support and motivation. However, due to the limited computer knowledge the parent's possessed and limited connectivity, parents were not able to use Edmodo as a networking tool. Despite this shortcoming, parents organically exchanged contact information and maintained a small level of connection outside the scheduled

workshops. This was evident by seeing parents establish friendships, walking into the workshops together, and engaging in conversations in the parking lot after the workshops.

Hargreaves and Fullan (2009) present the work of Douglas Reeves in their book, *Change Wars*. Reeves discusses the five levels of networks. By engaging in collaborative learning (we-do, and you-do), parents were able to establish networks that enhanced hands-on learning, and continuous support. Fullan (2001), in his book *Leading in a Culture of Change*, suggests that knowledge building comes from networks. Thus, if parents work in collaborative groups, networks have the potential to flourish.

Data Analysis. To truly know how well one is doing, one must track progress quantitatively; otherwise, the desired outcome will remain stagnant. This component established a common language for interpreting and analyzing STAR Reading Assessment and Accelerated Reader (AR) data. I made this component evident by informing parents about why data are used, how they are used, and how to monitor data, progress monitor, to ensure that student growth is achieved. Tovar (2009) stated that "progress monitoring is an efficient way for determining the effectiveness of instruction, guiding classroom intervention, and gathering information for future intervention programming" (p.14). After imputing data into Excel and creating a compressed image file (JPEG), I presented overall grade-level data and individual student data at every workshop. This was intentionally done so that parents could compare their child's data to similar peers. We celebrated achievement, discussed potential challenges, and asked open-ended questions prompting further reflection.

Maintaining a level of anonymity was critical for confidentiality. Thus, each student was assigned a number that only the respective parent knew. For this to occur,

considering that the assessment tool used did not provide the desired data graphs, I developed an Excel spreadsheet of the data desired, overall and individual, substituting student names with numbers. The parents were provided with their child's secret number during the first workshop.

Content-Specific Skill. Each workshop included a content-specific skill component that met grade-level standards. I selected the skills that could easily be understood by parents, and that students could independently complete from home. All grade-level teachers met before the workshops were scheduled to analyze student pre-assessments. From there, we determined student deficiencies. It is important to note that the largest student deficiencies were not always selected to be used for parent workshops. Teachers, working collaboratively with the presenter, must select the most appropriate skills which parents could easily use from home to verify student active nightly reading.

The selection of skill specific activities must meet the overall purpose of the workshops. This particular study seeks to increase family engagement in a way that helps families monitor their child's nightly reading, but most importantly, verify that their child is actively reading contrast to passively reading.

This workshop component incorporated Fisher and Frey's (2008) gradual release of responsibility framework. The content delivered followed the three components of the gradual release framework; guided instruction (I-do), collaborative learning (we-do), and independent practice (you-do). The gradual release of responsibility framework was designed to facilitate the transfer of knowledge. For guided instruction, I explicitly modeled how to use a skill or accomplish a task. Parents then were able to work with partners (other parents) to practice the new skill (we-do). Lastly, parents were able to

practice the new skill independently from home, without partners or myself to guide behavior.

Goal Setting. Establishing goals during each workshop maintained focus and mutual purpose. Subsequently, parents were encouraged to set SMART goals following each workshop. These goals could have been set for students by the parents or by the parent for the parent. The presenter provided SMART goal templates and modeled how to set a reasonable goal, one that had the potential to influence student growth in reading.

After parents have established their SMART goals, they revisited them at the following workshop where they could celebrate attainment, adjust the goal, or set a new goal. With open-ended questions, parents were able to share their goals with each other and discuss potential limitations.

Procedures

All of the preparation and procedures for the intervention were administered and collected during the spring semester of 2018. First, using STAR Reading Assessment, I gave all fourth-grade classrooms a pre-assessment to determine benchmark grade equivalency. Using six fourth-grade classrooms from TWES insured that there were enough students to participate in this study. Once the analyses of the pre-tests were completed, using simple random sampling I invited 30 parents of students performing "severely below" and "below" grade level to participate in this study. Parent consent forms were sent out soon after the pre-assessment.

Once consent forms were received, parents were invited to attend a series of four workshops throughout a 16-week duration. These workshops consisted of content specific skills that parents could use from home to monitor their child's reading and how

to analyze, interpret, and monitor student assessment data. Each workshop was conducted in my classroom after school for a duration of 60 minutes. Parents were exposed to reading skills, purpose for using the reading skills, explicit modeling of the reading skills, guided practice (parents use reading skills with other parents), immediate feedback and coaching, and opportunities for student progress monitoring, goal setting, and networking.

After the third workshop was delivered, participating students completed the STAR Reading post-assessment. Once the analysis of assessment data was completed, parents were invited to participate in the fourth workshop where the information was shared. Additionally, parents completed a survey to further measure and confirm perception. Finally, students completed a survey to measure their perceptions of the intervention. Once post-interviews, pre- and post-surveys, and assessment data were collected, I analyzed and categorized qualitative data into codes and themes. Table 2 illustrates the timeline and procedures of the study.

Table 2

Timeline and Procedures of the Study

Time Frame	Actions	Procedures
Mid-January	Student pre-assessment	Students take pre-assessment Analyze student data
Early February	Selecting participants and obtaining consent	Select "severely below" and "below" grade level students to participate. Send parent consent letters. Invite parents to upcoming workshop
Late-February	Workshop 1: *Narrative Elements* Pre-intervention Survey	Introduction Building Trust/Networking Pre-survey Data Analysis Content Specific Skill Model expectations Parent practice Feedback period Goal Setting Next workshop details
Late February	Student Progress Monitoring using STAR Reading Assessment	All students complete progress monitoring to be shared with parents at next workshop. Analyze student data
March	Workshop 2: *Sequence*	Introduction Building Trust/Networking Data Analysis/Progress Monitoring Content Specific Skill Model expectations Parent practice Feedback period

		Goal Setting Networking Next workshop details
Late March	Student Progress Monitoring using STAR Reading Assessment	All students complete progress monitoring to be shared with parents at next workshop. Analyze student data
April	Workshop 3: *Cause and Effect*	Introduction Building Trust/Networking Data Analysis/Progress Monitoring Content Specific Skill Model expectations Parent practice Feedback period Goal Setting Next workshop details
Late April	Student post-test using STAR Reading Assessment	All students complete post-test to be shared with parents at next workshop. Analyze student data
May	Workshop 4: *Compare and Contrast* Post-intervention Parent Survey	Introduction Data Analysis/Progress Monitoring Content Specific Skill Model expectations Parent practice Feedback period Goal Setting Post-survey Networking/Potluck Workshop Conclusion
May	Post-intervention Interview Post-intervention Student Survey	Simple random sample Invite four parents Conduct post-intervention interview

Administer post-
intervention student survey

Intervention Workshops

Workshop One. As parents entered the classroom, I directed them to their seats. Folders containing their child's names were placed on desks with all necessary materials provided to successfully complete the workshop (i.e., pencils, post-it notes, colors, data graphs, and content specific handouts). In addition to their independent folders, parents had an iPad with the screen displaying the pre-survey hosted by Qualtrics. The intent was for parents to begin the survey as the remainder of parents entered. However, as mentioned above, due to technology malfunctions and parents' lack of technology use, we completed the survey using hard copies.

After the survey and a brief introduction, we began the Building Trust and Networking component of the workshop. I selected a team building activity called, *Classroom Web,* which allowed us to introduce and provide one interesting fact about ourselves. After everyone had an opportunity to share, we had yarn string connecting us together much like a spider web indicating how everyone is here for similar reasons. Parents were given a few more minutes to network and get to know each other.

The second component of the Workshop Framework of Delivery was data analysis. I presented a bar graph illustrating each participant's child in regards to how they are performing in February's STAR Reading Assessment. To maintain anonymity, student names were substituted with numbers that only the respective parent had access

to. I explained to parents that their child's secret number could be found inside their folders. As expected, most parents did not know how to read the bar graph and/or decipher its meaning. Thus, I spent several minutes explaining how to read the data and what a typical peer should be scoring at this point of the academic year. After parents were able to determine how their child was performing, we discussed the need for increased family engagement.

During the content specific skill component of the Workshop Framework of Delivery, parents learned two strategies for *narrative elements*; 5-Finger Retelling and Story Taco. Parents were able to complete these activities using *The Little Red Riding Hood* as a Spanish video story. After parents had time to practice completing these activities, they were asked to reflect on the process. Specifically, how these activities could help their child with their nightly reading? How could these activities be modified?

The last 15 minutes of the workshop were reserved for goal setting. I briefly introduced and modeled how to set a SMART goal. Parents were then able to complete their own SMART goal and share them with other parents. These goals were used to help parents hold themselves accountable on how they assist their children with their nightly readings.

To see the complete presentation used during Workshop One, please visit the following link: https://www.slideshare.net/secret/tRtApfi6xZGcEX.

Workshop Two. Following the Workshop Framework of Delivery, parents and I engaged in a 15 minute team-building activity called, *Candy Fusion*. This team builder encouraged parents to answer specific questions related to family engagement. Parents were asked to sort their M&M's by color. The color they had the most indicated a

respective question they had to answer. For a complete list of questions and to see the activity in more detail, please refer to p. 53.

During the Data Analysis component of this workshop, parents viewed their child's STAR Reading data for the month of March. The data, in the form of a bar graph, was compared to February's STAR Reading data to determine if there was any growth. The bar graph represented all of the student participants using their secret numbers. Additionally, a hard copy of this information was made available to each parent in their individual folders. To help parents understand the meaning of the data, I modeled some examples of student scores. I modeled how to determine if there was any growth, how to determine the exact amount of growth, or lack thereof. Parents were given time to determine possible reasons as to why their child increased, stayed the same, or decreased on the assessment.

During the Content Specific Skill component of this workshop, parents were introduced to *sequencing*. After a brief introduction of the skill, I modeled how to use two graphic organizers and a foldable to determine the sequence of a story. The graphic organizer handouts and materials for the foldable were placed inside parent folders. Parents used the Spanish video story, *The Three Little Pigs*, to complete the sample activities. Parents were able to complete these activities collaboratively and had ample time to discuss how they could use these activities from home.

During the last 15 minutes of the workshop, parents revisited their SMART goals from the previous workshop. They determined if they met their goal or if they needed to modify their goals. Several parents met their goals and were happy to celebrate their child's improvement. Parents shared their SMART goals with one another and discussed

potential challenges. For some parents, this encouraged them to go back and create a more realistic goal.

To see the complete presentation used during Workshop Two, please visit the following link: https://www.slideshare.net/secret/9KH4Nn1WwBYc7x

Workshop Three. During the Building Trust and Networking component of this workshop, parents and I engaged in an activity called, *Mingle, Mingle, Mingle*. For this activity, parents were given a set of index cards. Each card contained a question or prompt for the parent to answer. After selecting the question or prompt of choice, parents had to walk around the room sharing their answer with as many parents as they could. Parents took turns reading and answering questions/prompts. Sample questions/prompts included: "What do you do before, during, and after reading a story with your child?" "Discuss a challenge you have encountered when helping your child with his/her homework." "Share a successful tip for motivating your child to complete his/her homework." "How do you help your child develop good study habits?" "What kind of profession do you think your child will go into when they grow up, why?"

During the Data Analysis component of the workshop, parents were able to see their child's grade-equivalency scores for the month of April. This data was then compared to March and February. Again, I briefly modeled how to compare the bar graphs and answered any questions that parents posed. By this point parents had become proficient at reading the data and determining if their child had increased or decreased in their reading levels.

The reading skill for this workshop was, *Cause and Effect*. After introducing the skill I modeled how to use a flow chart and a cause and effect foldable as activities

students could complete from home. Parents collaboratively completed their cause and effect foldable using the Spanish video story, *Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day*. After parents had time mastering the activities, parents reflected on how they could modify or supplement these strategies. Parents discussed challenges they predicted to have, ways they could enhance these activities, and specific times they planned to use these activities.

Additionally, parents were given resources to use from home. There were a total of six leveled-readers focusing on cause and effect given to each parent. These leveled-readers included; *Alice's' Birthday Cake*; *Severe Weather*; *Earthquakes, Volcanoes, and Tsunamis*; *Dead Zone*; *Frogs at Risk*; and *Titanic Treasure*. These leveled readers were sourced from Reading A-Z, an online website hosting reading materials for students grades K-5. Each book came with a Spanish copy to bridge the language barrier between parent and child. Additionally, a cause and effect flow chart was included for each leveled reader. I explained and modeled how these leveled readers could be used to support their child's understanding of the focus skill.

During the Goal Setting component of this workshop, parents celebrated and modified previous SMART goals. Parents were given time to share their goals and to discuss limitations, challenges, and benefits of their goals. By this point, parents had become comfortable with one another and were willing to share their goals and experiences. Some parents developed goals together.

To see the complete presentation used during Workshop Three, please visit the following link: https://www.slideshare.net/secret/AQU06KGFKq4w4n.

Workshop Four. Although this workshop was intended to begin with Building Trust and Networking, it did not occur until the end due to a surprise potluck. By this point, the parents had developed an appreciation for the workshops that, without my knowledge, they planned a surprise potluck to celebrate the conclusion of the workshops.

After parents found their seats and folders, I began by posing the following reflective question, "What is the one thing you have liked the most about our workshops?" Parents were given time to reflect and share their thinking.

During the Data Analysis component, I began by going over student end-of-year (EOY) STAR Reading data. Similar to the previous workshops, this data was presented using an Excel bar graph. Once parents located their respective child's data, they compared it to April, March, and February STAR Reading scores. Here, parents were able to determine and visualize how their child performed throughout the intervention period.

The Content Specific Skill for this workshop was, *Compare and Contrast.* After introducing the skill, I modeled how to complete a compare and contrast bubble map. Using an anchor chart, parents helped me complete a bubble map comparing and contrasting the characters of *Little Red Riding Hood* to that of *The Three Little Pigs*.

After we discussed how the bubble map could help students understand the skill better, and how it could be used to help students read with purpose, I passed out reading activities that parents could use from home. There were a total of five passages focusing on the respective focus skill given to each parent. The passages included; *Birds and Dinosaurs*; *Mother Cats and Kittens*; *School of Skate*; *Sunrise, Sunset, or Not?*; and *Troubles at Reading Railroad*. These passages were sourced from ReadWorks, an online

website hosting thousands of articles for students grades K-12. Each passage came with a series of questions pertaining to compare and contrast.

During the Goal Setting component of the workshop parents celebrated and modified their goals. Many parents felt the need to increase their time reading with their children. Some parents expressed their desire to visit the public library more. Other parents established more long-term goals. Although there was not another workshop scheduled, parents still had the need and desire to modify their SMART goals.

To increase participation, the post-survey was completed prior to the potluck beginning. Parents were given a hard copy of the post-survey. I proctored the survey in an effort to finish with enough time to Build Trust and Network, "potluck".

Instruments and Data Sources

Pre-intervention Survey. Initially I developed the pre-intervention survey (appendix A) using Qualtrics but, due to technology limitations, seven (70%) of parents completed the survey using hard copies. This was done during the first workshop (February of 2018) to increase response rate. This survey instrument followed a 5-point Likert scale, where *5 = strongly agree, 4 = agree, 3 = neutral, 2 = disagree, and 1 = strongly disagree,* to measure parents' perceptions with respect to how they assist their fourth-grade children in reading. Sample items included: "I believe I am responsible for my child's learning in addition to his/her teacher," "There are obstacles that prevent me from getting more involved with my child's education," and "I am motivated to help my child at home with his/her learning (i.e., homework, reading, math, and writing)."

Post-intervention Interview. After the parents completed the four workshops, semi-structured interviews were conducted to measure the following research questions:

How do parents of students who are under-performing students in ELA perceive their roles with respect to assisting their fourth-grade children in reading? How and to what extent do parents implement reading skills that are taught to them? Using simple random sampling, three parents were selected to participate. Due to scheduling limitations (ending of the academic school year), only three parents were selected. These interviews ranged from 45 minutes to 80 minutes. Sample questions included: "How do you assist your child in learning to read? How do you help her/him to understand what she/he is reading?", "What are your views on helping your child read?", and "How have the workshops helped you monitor your child's nightly reading?"

Post-intervention Survey. In addition to the parents' final interviews, all parents were given a 25-item post-survey consisting of statements following a 5-point Likert scale, where *5 = strongly agree, 4 = agree, 3 = neutral, 2 = disagree, and 1 = strongly disagree,* to measure parents' perceptions of how they assisted their fourth-grade children in reading, and willingness to continue practicing and implementing the learned skills with their children. Parents completed this paper-based survey during workshop four. The parent post-intervention survey was administered in May of 2018. Of the 10 parents, nine parents (90%) completed the post-intervention survey. This survey contained the same constructs and items as the pre-intervention survey. Again, originally this survey was intended to be completed using Qualtrics but due to parents limited technology use, it had to be completed using hard copies.

Post-intervention Student Survey. At the end of the intervention, 10 students were given a pencil-and-paper based survey with statements using a 5-point Likert scale, where *5 = strongly agree, 4 = agree, 3 = neutral, 2 = disagree, and 1 = strongly*

disagree. Sample items include: "I enjoyed working with my parent/s in supporting my reading comprehension," "I found the time spent with my parent helpful in increasing my reading proficiency," "If I had the chance to continue working with my parents in my reading, I would," and "I felt ready to take the STAR Reading Assessment." Only the students of the parent participants were administered a post-intervention survey. This survey was intended to measure student perception of nightly reading. Descriptive statistics allowed assertions to be made in relation to research question four; "What are students' perceptions regarding family-to-child nightly engagement?"

Pre- and Post-assessments. The pre-assessment was used to determine eligibility to participate in this study and to serve as a benchmark for student grade equivalency. This assessment was administered on a monthly (in-between each workshop) basis as a progress monitoring tool. During workshop two and workshop three, parents were able to see the extent to which what they were doing from home had positively or negatively influenced their child's reading proficiency. After the third workshop, targeted students completed the final post-assessment to measure overall changes in reading proficiency. The results were analyzed, compared to their respective pre-assessments, and visual representations of the data were prepared for parents to analyze during the fourth and final workshop.

Using Renaissance STAR Reading Assessment, 14 students completed the pre-intervention reading assessment in January of 2018. To monitor student change in reading, progress monitoring was conducted in February, March, and April, respectively. Student post-intervention reading assessments were completed in May. Although four parents (29%) did not participate after consenting to the study, their fourth-grade students

were still assessed. Ten (100%) of students completed the pre-assessment, progress monitoring for April, and post-assessment while nine (90%) of students completed progress monitoring for February and March, respectively.

Renaissance STAR Reading Assessment. STAR Reading Assessment is an evaluation used to monitor growth of student proficiency in reading. This assessment uses a beginning-of-year, middle-of-year, and end-of-year model to measure student mastery of content. Additionally, throughout the academic school year, students are given progress monitoring tests, as seen fit by the teacher. This means that teachers do not have to wait for the next testing window to open before monitoring student proficiency. This allows for additional data points in order to keep a closer watch on student reading development. Because this test is quick (roughly 15-20 minutes) and data are available instantly, it is a convenient way to monitor student growth without compromising significant instructional time in the classroom.

STAR Reading Assessment uses two methods to measure test reliability, internal consistency and test-retest correlation coefficients (Renaissance, 2013). In a study using a random national sample of over 1.2 million STAR Reading tests with 5,000 students per grade revealed an average reliability coefficient of 0.97 for internal consistency and an average reliability coefficient of 0.90 for retest reliability.

Additionally, STAR Reading Assessment uses several methods to justify test validity. Renaissance places high importance on alignment between the knowledge and skills measured by the assessment's test items and the knowledge and skills intended to be taught and learned in a given curriculum at a given grade level or levels (Renaissance, 2013). For this reason, STAR Reading Assessment is aligned to both state and national

curriculum standards including Common Core State Standards. To compliment and corroborate validity, STAR Reading Assessment collected a wide range of correlations between scores on STAR Reading and scores on other recognized measures. The average correlations observed in these studies ranged from 0.60 to 0.87, strong correlation (Renaissance, 2013).

STAR Reading Assessment is a computer adaptive test (CAT) that increases or decreases in rigor as the student answers questions. If a student answers questions correctly, the test will begin to increase the rigor for the following questions. The domains tested include the following: foundational skills, reading literature, reading informational texts, and language. These domains and respective skills meet the standards set by the state and allow the teacher to pin-point student strengths and weaknesses. The data collected from this assessment are presented in a grade-equivalency format which makes it simple for teachers and parents to track progress and interpret data.

Accelerated Reader. Accelerated Reader (AR) is a program used to keep track of the number of books read by students. Although it was intended for parents to analyze the data generated by AR for their child, it was not explicitly modeled or used because several fourth-grade teachers were not enforcing the use of AR in their respective classrooms. This would have proven difficult to use throughout the intervention as I was not able to require teachers to use AR. AR could have been used exclusively to monitor how many books students were reading during a one month period and to determine if books read and tests passed had a connection to student reading growth on the STAR Reading Assessment. Additionally, having students reading from home and passing AR

quizzes at school could have indicated that parent participants where in fact enforcing nightly reading.

Data Analysis

Using a mixed-method design, five sets of quantitative data were collected: student pre-tests, student post-tests, post-intervention student surveys, and pre- and post-intervention parent surveys. These data sources were coupled with qualitative data to corroborate the findings. The qualitative data collected included field notes and post-intervention interviews. These data sources are aligned to their respective research questions in Table 3.

Quantitative Analysis. STAR Reading Assessment pre- and post-tests were used to measure whether growth over time was statistically significant. In addition to running descriptive statistical procedures, I computed a repeated-measures *t*-test to determine if the post-treatment mean was significantly higher (at an α-level equal to .05) than the pre-treatment mean for my treatment group (Smith & Glass, 1987).

Parent and student surveys were used to determine whether the workshops had an impact on participants' beliefs, views, and self-efficacy regarding family engagement and student reading performance. Using a repeated-measures *t*-test and descriptive statistics generated a method of examining and describing parent and student attitudes and perceptions towards the intervention. This illustrated any perceptual changes over time. A repeated-measures *t*-test compares two measures taken on the same individuals (Mertler, 2014).

Qualitative Analysis. I analyzed interviews following a grounded theory approach to uncover emerging categories and themes (Strauss & Corbin, 2008). First, I listened to the audio recordings followed by transcribing them into Word documents. From there, open coding was used to give phrases and words initial labels. Once I completed open coding to generate the initial labels, axial coding was used to combine codes into larger categories. After further reviewing of the transcripts and current categories, I merged categories into themes as presented by patterns and interpreted meaning (Rossman & Rallis, 2012). Similarly, student open-ended responses and field notes, in the form of Word documents, were analyzed using the same grounded theory approach. The field notes were used to corroborate the assertions generated by the interviews.

Table 3

Sources of Data Aligned to Research Question

Instrument	Research Question
Student Pre-test	RQ 3: How and to what extent does teaching of content specific reading skills to families of under-performing students affect respective fourth-grade students' reading performance?
Pre-intervention Parent Survey	RQ 1: How do families of students who are under-performing students in ELA perceive their roles with respect to assisting their fourth-grade children in reading?
Post-intervention Parent Interviews	RQ 1: How do families of students who are under-performing students in ELA perceive their roles with respect to

	assisting their fourth-grade children in reading? RQ 2: How and to what extent do families implement content specific reading skills that are taught to them?
Post-intervention Parent Surveys	RQ 1: How do families of students who are under-performing students in ELA perceive their roles with respect to assisting their fourth-grade children in reading? RQ 2: How and to what extent do families implement content specific reading skills that are taught to them?
Post-intervention Student Surveys	RQ 4: What are students' perceptions regarding family-to-child nightly engagement?
Student Progress Monitoring and Post-test	RQ 3: How and to what extent does teaching of content specific reading skills to families of under-performing students affect respective fourth-grade students' reading performance?
Field Notes	RQ 1: How do families of students who are under-performing students in ELA perceive their roles with respect to assisting their fourth-grade children in reading? RQ 4: What are student's perceptions regarding family-to-child nightly engagement?

Summary

Overall, this intervention was intended to deliver strategies and tools to parents of struggling readers, as identified by the STAR Reading Assessment, that could increase

student reading proficiency. Through Cycle 0 and Cycle 1 of my research, parents have suggested that a workshop context would be ideal for increasing their abilities to become parent-tutors for their children. Statements such as, "I believe that understanding how to select appropriate books for my child would help me better support my child" and "Learning how to better monitor my child's reading would make me a better supporter of my child's learning" have been used by parents. These serve as evidence that many families are willing to become actively involved in their child's education. Increasing parent involvement efficacy in a way that nurtures student academic achievement was the primary focus of these workshops.

CHAPTER 4

Data Analysis and Results

"If you can not measure it, you cannot improve it"

—Lord Kelvin

Results from the study are presented in three sections. In the first section, results from the analyses of quantitative data are presented. In the second section, results from the analyses of qualitative data are presented. The qualitative data is presented using assertions generated by themes. The theme-related components and quotes are included to reinforce the assertions generated. The third section provides answers to the four research questions guiding the study using respective research questions as a framework.

These quantitative and qualitative data results were used to answer the following research questions:

RQ 1: How do families of students who are under-performing students in ELA perceive their roles with respect to assisting their fourth-grade children in reading?

RQ 2: How and to what extent do families implement content specific reading skills that are taught to them?

RQ 3: How and to what extent does teaching of content specific reading skills to families of under-performing students affect respective fourth-grade students' reading performance?

RQ 4: What are student's perceptions regarding family-to-child nightly engagement?

Results from Quantitative Data

Quantitative data are presented in four sections. The first section includes information regarding the reliability of the parent pre- and post-surveys. The second section presents information comparing the parent pre- and post-surveys using repeated-measure *t*-tests for the four constructs of the survey along with descriptive statistics related to parents' perceptions of their role with respect to assisting their fourth-grade child in reading. This is followed by comparisons of the students pre- and post-intervention reading assessments using a repeated-measure *t*-test. The fourth section presents student post-intervention survey results using descriptive statistics.

Reliability of parent survey. The pre- and post-intervention surveys used to evaluate change in perception of parents' role in assisting their fourth-grade child with nightly reading consisted of four constructs: (a) perception, (b) environment, (c) obstacles, and (d) satisfaction. Items for each of these constructs are presented in Appendix A in English and Spanish. Using SPSS (v. 24), I calculated Cronbach's alpha (α) to measure the reliability of each construct. Examining the parent pre-intervention responses yielded reliabilities of .57, .79, .79, and .72, respectively, for each construct listed above. Constructs b, c, and d had reliability coefficients greater than the acceptable .70, confirming the reliability of the construct (Tavakol & Dennick, 2011). Construct a, however, did not meet the acceptable threshold. This may be partially due to the small number of items within the construct. It is important to note that I had to delete one item that was not consistent with the other items for two of the four constructs.

However, none of these constructs yielded a coefficient of less than .70 prior to the deletion of said item.

Results from parent survey. Parent pre- and post-intervention surveys utilized the same constructs and items. This was done intentionally to compare means between parents' pre- and post-surveys. To accomplish this, parents were asked to write their student secrete number on the top of the survey instrument. This allowed the pairing of parents' pre- and post-surveys to accurately measure change in responses within constructs using a repeated-measure *t*-test. To increase reliability only parents that completed both pre- and post-surveys were used in this analysis, $n = 6$. Before comparing pre- and post-surveys, it is important to illustrate general analysis of these instruments using descriptive statistics.

Pre- and post-intervention general analysis. In the perception construct of the survey instrument, parents were asked three questions related to their perceptions regarding parent-to-child engagement. The item, mean, and standard deviation for responses in the pre- and post-surveys are listed in Table 4. The mean and standard deviations are based on a 5-point Likert scale as follows: *5 = strongly agree, 4 = agree, 3 = neutral, 2 = disagree, and 1 = strongly disagree.* Thus, the closer the mean was to 5.0, the more agreement parents felt to the respective item, or statement.

Table 4

Means and Standard Deviation for Perception Construct: Pre- and Post-intervention

Perception Construct	Pre-perception: means (standard deviations)	Post-perception: means (standard deviations)
I believe I am responsible for my child's learning in addition to his/her teacher.	5.00 (0.00)	5.00 (0.00)
I am motivated to help my child at home with his/her learning	4.67 (0.51)	4.50 (0.54)
When my child needs help with reading homework, I am able to help him/her	4.83 (0.40)	4.50 (0.54)

Note: $n = 6$

All parents believed that they were responsible for their child's learning in both the pre- and post-intervention survey. This perception did not change. Interestingly, there was a slight decrease in parents' perception regarding their motivation to help their children with reading. Despite the slight decrease, parents still agreed with the statement. Similarly, parent's perception regarding their abilities to help with their child's reading homework decreased slightly. Yet, their responses still maintained a level of agreement.

The environment construct consisted of eight items seeking to measure an environmental change as it relates to family engagement. Table 5 reveals parent's pre-

and post-survey responses by mean and standard deviation. These items were based on a 5-point Likert scale as follows: *5 = strongly agree, 4 = agree, 3 = neutral, 2 = disagree, and 1 = strongly disagree.*

Table 5

Means and Standard Deviation for Environment Construct: Pre- and Post-intervention

Environment Construct	Pre-environment: means (standard deviations)	Post-environment: means (standard deviations)
My child has a quiet place to do homework and engage in nightly reading	4.00 (1.26)	4.33 (0.81)
My child has his/her own collection of books.	3.50 (0.83)	4.00 (0.63)
I ask my child questions about his/her nightly reading	4.17 (0.75)	4.50 (0.54)
I monitor my child's nightly reading.	4.33 (0.51)	4.33 (0.51)
I monitor my child's homework.	4.50 (0.54)	4.67 (0.51)
I engage in meaningful conversation with my child about his/her day.	4.50 (0.54)	4.50 (0.54)
I engage in meaningful conversation with my child about his/her learning.	4.50 (0.54)	4.67 (0.51)
My child has a quiet place to read.	4.17 (0.98)	4.33 (0.81)

Note: n = 6

Analysis of these items, in the pre- and post-responses, indicated that parents had a high level of agreement with environment-related statements. Parents had utilized environmental strategies to better support their children in reading. For instance, parents agreed with the statement, "My child has a quiet place to read." Yet, when asked again, at post-intervention time, parent responses still averaged within the agree portion of the scale. Interestingly, parents reported a neutral level when asked, "My child has his/her own collection of books." However, parent post-responses averaged within the agree portion of the scale. Two of these items remained stagnant with no increase or decrease. In comparison to the perception construct, none of these items decreased.

The obstacles construct consisted of seven items following a 5-point Likert scale as follows: *5 = strongly agree, 4 = agree, 3 = neutral, 2 = disagree, and 1 = strongly disagree.* This construct measured parents' attitude towards obstacles that may prevent them from engaging in parent-to-child nightly reading. Table 6 reveals parents' pre- and post-survey responses by mean and standard deviation. Again, the closer the mean was to five, the more agreement parents felt to the respective item.

Interestingly, parents reported disagreement with five of the seven items in this construct. For example, parents responded with disagreement with the following statement, "Sometimes I feel that I cannot help my child with his/her learning." However, when parents responded to this same statement in the post-intervention survey, they averaged with agree. Parents feel that they cannot help their children with their learning despite the intervention.

Additionally, five of the seven items increased, albeit small. For example, parents reported disagreement with the following statement; "My child gets upset when I try to

help him/her with nightly reading." After the intervention, parents reported a less level of disagreement, closer to neutral. Most interesting, item two in this construct revealed a positive effect. Pre-survey indicated that parents agreed with the following statement, "Being limited-English speaking prevents me from helping my child with his/her nightly reading." Yet, post-survey analysis revealed that parents are neutral about this statement.

Table 6

Means and Standard Deviation for Obstacles Construct: Pre- and Post-intervention

Obstacles Construct	Pre-obstacles: means (standard deviations)	Post-obstacles: means (standard deviations)
There are obstacles that prevent me from getting more involved with my child's education.	3.50 (1.22)	3.17 (1.47)
Being limited English speaking prevents me from helping my child with his/her nightly reading.	4.00 (1.26)	3.00 (1.26)
My child gets upset when I try to help him/her with homework.	2.83 (0.98)	3.17 (1.72)
My child gets upset when I try to help him/her with nightly reading.	2.67 (1.21)	2.83 (1.72)
The academic language used in homework assignments prevents me from helping my child with his/her nightly reading.	2.83 (0.75)	3.33 (1.50)
The homework instructions are confusing.	2.83 (0.98)	3.33 (1.63)
Sometimes I feel that I cannot help my child with his/her learning.	2.67 (0.81)	3.67 (1.50)

Note: n = 6

The satisfaction construct consisted of four items. The item, mean, and standard deviation for responses in the pre- and post-survey are listed in Table 7. The mean and standard-deviations are based on a 5-point Likert scale as follows: *5 = strongly agree, 4 = agree, 3 = neutral, 2 = disagree, and 1 = strongly disagree.*

Table 7

Means and Standard Deviation for Satisfaction Construct: Pre- and Post-intervention

Satisfaction Construct	Pre-satisfaction: means (standard deviations)	Post-satisfaction: means (standard deviations)
I am satisfied with the way I help my child with his/her learning.	3.83 (1.32)	4.17 (0.75)
I am satisfied with the teacher's ability to help my child with his/her learning.	4.17 (0.75)	4.67 (0.51)
I am satisfied with the school's ability to help my child with his/her learning.	3.83 (0.98)	4.83 (0.40)
I am satisfied with the level of communication I have with my child's teacher.	4.00 (0.63)	4.83 (0.40)

Note: n = 6

Parents' perception of satisfaction increased in all four items within this construct. For example, parents reported more satisfaction with their abilities to help their children

with learning, parent-to-family academic engagement. Before the intervention parents were neutral with this item statement. However, after the intervention, they agreed with their satisfaction regarding their abilities to help their children learn. Similarly, parents went from a neutral (pre-intervention) to an agreement level (post-intervention) with their satisfaction in the school's ability to help their children learn. The other items, satisfaction with their child's teacher and satisfaction with the level of communication between parent and teacher, remained within the agreement range despite the incremental increase.

In the following section I will compare these constructs using a repeated-measure (paired samples) *t*-test.

Pre- and post-intervention comparisons. The final quantitative analysis for the parent survey was a repeated-measures *t*-test. This was done to determine if there was a statistical difference in means between the pre-intervention and post-intervention responses. This test compared the four constructs mentioned above: perception, environment, obstacles, and satisfaction.

Construct 1 consisted of three items associated with parents' perception of parent-to-child engagement. Construct 2 consisted of eight items associated to the environment in relation to parent-to-child engagement. Construct 3 consisted of seven items associated to obstacles related to the participation of family engagement. Lastly, construct 4 consisted of four items associated to the levels of parent satisfaction as it relates to family engagement. Using the Transform function in SPSS, items in each construct were summed prior to the repeated-measures *t*-test with the following maximum values: Construct 1 = maximum value of 15.00; Construct 2 maximum value

of 40.00; Construct 3 maximum value of 35.00; and Construct 4 maximum value of 20.00. Table 8 includes the results from the pre-intervention and post-intervention paired samples *t*-test.

In this paired samples *t*-test, I wanted to ascertain whether the mean difference between scores on the two occasions were different from zero with a value of $\alpha < .05$, as seen in Table 8.

Table 8

Results from the Pre- and Post-intervention Parent Survey Paired Samples t-test

Construct	Means (std. dev.)	*t*	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Pre_Perception	14.50 (0.83)	1.00	5	.363
Post_Perception	14.00 (1.09)			
Pre_Environment	33.66 (4.03)	-0.95	5	.383
Post_Environment	35.33 (3.44)			
Pre_Obstacles	21.33 (4.92)	-0.34	5	.744
Post_Obstacles	22.50 (9.35)			
Pre_Satisfaction	15.83 (2.85)	-3.16	5	.025*
Post_Satisfaction	18.50 (1.51)			

Note: $n = 6$
* $p < .05$

Three of the four constructs had no statistically significant difference between pre- and post-intervention means. This may have been due to the low number of participants who completed the survey instrument. Additionally, there could have been response irregularities in the form of dishonesty or lack of conscientious responses. In

contrast, however, the satisfaction construct revealed statistically significant difference between means, $t(5) = -3.16$, $p = 0.025$.

Results from student assessments. Table 9 depicts descriptive statistics for the five reading assessments: pre-test (T1), progress monitoring for February (T2), progress monitoring for March (T3), progress monitoring for April (T4), and post-test (T5).

Table 9

Means and Standard Deviations for STAR Reading Assessment Scores

Reading Assessment	M	SD
T1: Pre-test	2.4	0.6
T2: Progress Monitoring	2.7	0.8
T3: Progress Monitoring	2.9	1.0
T4: Progress Monitoring	3.1	1.2
T5: Post-test	3.1	1.1

A repeated-measures *t*-test was conducted on the student pre- and post-intervention assessments. The repeated-measures *t*-test, as shown in Table 10, revealed a significant difference in scores for pre-test ($M = 2.4$, $SD = 0.6$) and post-test ($M = 3.1$, $SD = 1.1$). The repeated-measure *t*-test found this difference to be statistically significant, $t(9) = -3.38$, $p = 0.008$. These results suggest that student scores increased following the intervention. Specifically, student's scores increased with continuous family engagement.

Table 10

Results from the Student STAR Reading Assessment Pre- and Post-intervention using a Repeated-measure t-test

Reading Assessment	Means (std. dev.)	*t*	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Pre-assessment	2.45 (0.63)	-3.383	9	.008*
Post-assessment	3.17 (1.16)			

Note: $n = 10$
* $p < .05$

Results from student survey. The student survey consisted of two constructs: (a) perception and (b) time. Appendix C clearly denotes each item used in this survey. Using SPSS, I calculated Cronbach's α to measure the reliability of the *perception* construct. The reliability coefficient produced by the four items in this construct was .67. Construct *time* was not measured for internal consistency as it was intended to provide general information regarding students' engagement with parent-to-child nightly reading. The open-ended questions were used to corroborate qualitative findings.

Using SPSS, descriptive statistics were calculated to better understand students' perceptions regarding family-to-child nightly engagement, as shown in Table 11. Following a 5-point Likert scale, where *5 = strongly agree, 4 = agree, 3 = neutral, 2 = disagree, and 1 = strongly disagree,* students reported enjoyment when working with their parents with nightly reading ($M = 4.2$, $SD = 1.3$). Students reported that the time spent with their parents helped them increase their reading skills ($M = 3.8$, $SD = 1.3$). Similarly, students agreed with the desire, if given the chance, to continue working with their parents in nightly reading ($M = 4.3$, $SD = 1.3$). Students agreed that the time spent

reading with their parents helped them feel comfortable taking the Star Reading Assessment (M = 4.4, SD = 0.6).

Table 11

Descriptive Statistics for Student Survey Perception Construct

Item	M	SD
I enjoyed working with my parent/s with my reading activities.	4.2	1.3
I found the time spent with my parent/s helpful in increasing my reading skills.	3.8	1.3
If I had the chance to continue working with my parent/s in my reading, I would.	4.3	1.3
Because of the extra reading practice with my parent/s, I felt comfortable taking the STAR Reading Assessment.	4.4	0.6

Note: n = 10

Furthermore, computing descriptive statistics for the *time* construct in the student post-intervention survey revealed that seven students (70%) read more than 20 minutes per night, two students (20%) read 10 minutes or less per night, and one student (10%) read 11-20 minutes per night. On average, students read 25 minutes per night. The second item in this construct related to the number of days per week students engaged in nightly reading. Compared to the previous item, nine students (90%) completed this question. Descriptive statistics revealed that, on average, students engaged in nightly reading three days per week.

Results from Qualitative Data

This section presents the results of the analyses of qualitative data. Data sources included three parent interviews, student open-ended responses, and field notes. Important to note, one of the interviewed parents was the spouse of the parent that participated in the workshops. The mother was not able to make the interview; therefore, the father took her stead. Also, only open-ended responses of students who had parents participating in the workshops were used, $n = 10$.

First, the themes, theme-related components, and assertions are presented, as shown in Table 12. Then, each of the themes are discussed. The assertions generated from the data are supported with participant' quotes.

Three themes were generated from the grouping of codes: (a) using strategies learned, (b) parent self-efficacy, and (c) overcoming obstacles.

Table 12

Themes, Theme-related Components, and Assertions*

Themes and Theme-related Components	Assertions
Using Strategies Learned 1. Parents motivated their children to read. 2. Parents held their children accountable. 3. Parents set appropriate time goals for reading. 4. Parents shared student-completed activities. 5. Parents used skills learned from the workshops. 6. Parents used skills and strategies with siblings	Parents used content specific skills and strategies to engage in meaningful parent-to-child nightly reading.
Parent Self-efficacy 1. Parent perception of family engagement changed. 2. Parents used parent-to-child nightly reading as an opportunity to learn English.	Parents' self-efficacy in regard to family engagement increased through learned skills and strategies.

3. Parents demonstrated motivation linked to their desire to see their child succeed. 4. Skills and strategies learned increased parents motivation to engage in parent-to-child nightly reading. 5. Parents were more willing to read with their child when child actively invited parent-to-child engagement. 6. Parents used resources (audio books, internet, siblings, and libraries) 7. Parents modified strategies to work with writing and listening. 8. Parents understood family engagement as being developmental.	
Overcoming Obstacles 1. Siblings assisted with nightly reading. 2. Parents prevented child from lying about their nightly reading. 3. Parents utilized a reward system to motivate child with reading. 4. Parents overcame communication obstacles when communicating with teachers. 5. Parents' house-hold obligations (i.e., chores) inhibited parent-to-child nightly reading less.	Parents have overcome obstacles and continue to find resources to better assist their children in reading.

Note: Themes are in italicized font.

Using strategies learned. Assertion 1— *Parents used content specific skills and strategies to engage in meaningful parent-to-child nightly reading.*

Field notes, student responses, and post-intervention interviews with three parents provided insight into their perceptions in regard to family engagement. The following theme-related components comprise the theme which led to the assertion: (a) parents motivated their children to read; (b) parents held their children accountable; (c) parents

set appropriate time goals for reading; (d) parents shared student-completed activities; (e) parents used skills learned from the workshops; and (f) parents used skills and strategies with siblings.

The three parents interviewed reported using motivational strategies with their children. Parents wanted to see their children improve their reading grades and tried to encourage their children to practice nightly reading. Parent A reported motivating her son with motivational speeches, "You want a better life when you grow up. You don't want to work like your father." Parent B stated that he did not use monitory rewards with his children. Instead, he would motivate his children by rewarding them with a trip to the park. Parent C used her motivation in the form of reward. She allowed her son to use his PlayStation 4, watch movies, or use his tablet after his nightly reading. In addition, parents reported end-of-week rewards. One parent let her daughter select what restaurant they would visit if her daughter completed nightly reading during the week. Her daughter answered an open-ended question with, "Things that motivates me to read is that my mom says if you read for 30 minutes each night she will let me pick where we are going to eat." In another student response, the student stated that he was motivated to read to his siblings. "I like reading with my sister." Three students were motivated by simply being reminded to read by a parent.

Parents reported holding their child accountable through the use of tracking and monitoring. One parent stated that she has a calendar tracking nightly reading. When the child finishes reading, he gets to put a star sticker in the respective day. Additionally, Parent A had her son read within hearing distance. "I have my child read aloud. Then, after a couple of pages, I have him summarize what he has read. He does this in Spanish,

so I can understand. This is how I make sure he is actually reading." Parent A also has her son use the strategies learned during the workshops; i.e., five finger retelling, and story taco. Parent B stated that he signs a paper every night reporting that his daughter read. "Well, normally she will study reading 20-30 minutes every day. I sign the forms that she brings to us to sign as well to monitor her reading done at home." Some parents reported grounding their children if they refused to read. Although this is not a suggested strategy, parents seemed to agree with this tactic.

At first, during Workshop 1, parents wanted to set strenuous goals with respect to how long their child would read every night. One parent wanted to have her son read 1 hour per night. Parents discussed some potential drawbacks with this goal, leading parents to agree with the recommended 20-30 minutes of nightly reading. Parent A reported having her son read for 20 minutes, take a little break, then continue reading for another 20 minutes. This was the same parent that initially wanted her child to read 1 hour every night. "I let him read for 20 minutes, when he is done reading I let him rest for 15 minutes. He will go out to play with the ball, maybe even watch a little television during this time. Then he resumes to finish his homework." Parent A reported that this worked best for her son and it helped maintain his focus. Parent B stated, "Their obligations are to finish their homework and read. When my wife gets home, they'll read an additional 15-20 minutes with her." Parent C, in contrast, had her son read for 10-15 minutes each night, Monday through Friday.

Moreover, parents demonstrated using the skills and strategies learned by bringing in student-completed activities. These activities were supplied during the workshops. One parent brought her son's completed story taco, an activity provided in

Workshop 1 focusing on narrative elements. She enjoyed bringing her son's work and sharing positive reflections. This helped parents discuss how their implementation of skills and strategies were progressing. Another parent shared her enthusiasm of seeing her child read every night by stating, "It makes me feel good seeing my daughter enjoy reading. I have even started taking her to the library." Additionally, parents enjoyed discussing how they used the skills and strategies learned in their everyday life. A mother reported using content specific skills while watching movies and soup operas. Her daughter would complete that month's activities using televised modalities in addition to her readings. Parent A stated, "I ask him to explain to me what he is doing, what he is reading. Every two or three pages he reads, I stop him and ask him about what he just read. I ask him to tell me what the characters are doing."

Three of the ten students enjoyed reading with their siblings. "I like reading with my brother." "I love reading with my family." One student reported feeling smarter when she read to her younger sister. Students liked having their younger siblings present while reading so they could look at and discuss the pictures. Students stated using the strategies in their reading class and at home with younger siblings. For example, they would use echo reading, and a-b partner reading at home. During the workshop's parents would ask for more materials and activities for their younger children. After workshop 1, I made sure to have extra materials. To no surprise, most of the available handouts, materials, supplies, and stories were taken during the following workshops.

Parent self-efficacy. Assertion 2— *Parents' self-efficacy in regard to family engagement increased through learned skills and strategies.*

Field notes, student responses, and post-intervention interviews with three parents provided insight on their perceptions in regard to Parents' self-efficacy. The following theme-related components comprise the theme which led to the assertion: (a) parent perception of family engagement changed, (b) parents used parent-to-child nightly reading as an opportunity to learn English, (c) parents demonstrated motivation linked to their desire to see their child succeed, (d) skills and strategies learned increased parents motivation to engage in parent-to-child nightly reading, (e) parents were more willing to read with their child when child actively invited parent-to-child engagement, (f) parents used resources (audio books, internet, siblings, and libraries), (g) parents modified strategies to work with writing and listening, and (h) parents understood family engagement as being developmental.

Parents' perceptions of family engagement changed. As the intervention progressed, parents felt more comfortable working with their child in nightly reading. At first, parents knew that their child should read, but they did not know what questions to ask, what strategies and skills to use, and if their child was, in fact, actively reading. Many parents stated that they told their children to read every night but failed to follow up with a purpose for reading. Statements such as, "Now I know how to make sure he is reading", "Using the activities from the workshops help keep her focused and it lets me know that she read", and "I feel more confident in my ability to read with my son", attest to parents increasing their understanding of what parent-to-child nightly reading entails.

Parent A stated that hearing her son read helps her understand English better. This motivates her to engage in nightly reading with her son as she also wants to increase her knowledge level. Parent A has minimal formal education, equivalent to elementary

school in the United States, so the more she works with her son allows her to gain knowledge of the English language. “He has even motivated me to learn English.” During Workshop 2, a parent suggested using reading time as a way for them to learn English. Parents laughed and agreed with the suggestion.

Similar to what research has suggested, all parents were motivated by seeing their children succeed. Parents reported being pleased with the improvement in their child’s grades. Parent B stated that he enjoyed seeing his children read every night and that he believes it had a positive influence on all his children. “I am not sure what strategies my wife used but I know that it helped all my children not just my fourth grader.” Parent C understood the importance of nightly reading and is motivated to see her son increase his reading fluency and comprehension. “I want to continue to see him read better and, most importantly, understand what he is reading. This is very important for child development and it enhances brain thinking.” Additionally, parent A stated that she does not want to see her son drop out of school and struggle through life, much like herself. “I motivate him because I want to make sure he does well in school, unlike myself. I didn’t even finish primary school, but I want to make sure he does. I want him to be successful. I am more concerned about his future because he’s approaching his teen years. I certainly want something better for him, more than my husband and I can provide.”

The skills and strategies learned have increased parents’ motivation to help their children read. Prior to the intervention, parents demonstrated a desire to help their children but did not know how. “I was frustrated and desperate for helping but I didn’t know how to.” “I was afraid to confuse my child more and contradict how the teacher teaches.” Parents feared helping their children or lacked the knowledge of best practices.

The workshops increased their self-efficacy by removing the fear and the lack of content knowledge. Parent C stated that she is confident in her abilities to help her son and that she wants to continue helping her son. "I feel better about helping my son. I want to keep building on my habits of having a productive reading session with my son and increase his level in reading." Parent B said, "We will continue reading every night because it is working." Parent A stated, "It motivates me to keep going forward with these strategies. I see the results in everyday life activities, as well." The same parent said, "I do want to thank you for teaching me these strategies. I know in the past I had no idea of how to help my children, but now I feel like I have different tools under my belt that will help me teach my son at home."

Similarly, parents reported an increase in their desire to help their children read due to their child's persistent invitations to read together. Parents noticed their children enjoyed reading aloud to them and felt their children take reading seriously. "He asks me to stop what I'm doing and to read with him", stated parent A. Although parents struggle with English, they still try to read aloud with their children. Parents reported taking turns reading paragraphs. Most times, although, parents simply read their own text while their children read their independent books. Parent C said, "I read with my son, not just tell him to read. I hope this increases his love for reading." Two of the three parents interviewed felt strongly about reading with their children. In contrast parent C did not read with his daughter but made sure his daughter read with her oldest sister. Parent C felt that the oldest sibling would be able to help more. "We rely a lot on her older sister because for her it's easier to translate the material to us. Most often, she ends up helping her since she is older and has already seen the material before." "She asks her sister to

read with her." To corroborate this, students also reported enjoyment reading with their siblings and family members. "I love reading with my family."

Parents demonstrated increased self-efficacy by using resources such as audio books, siblings, the internet, and libraries. They demonstrated methods to accomplish or carry out a behavior that allowed them to attain a desired goal. A mother stated using audio books as an alternative to books several times per week. This helped her daughter maintain focus. Another parent replied by stating that she had used audio books with her child and found her to be more engaged in the listening. As mentioned above, parents are adapting learned skills to be used with other text modalities, such as television. Another parent enjoyed taking her daughter to the local library to find books and to attend Story Time. Later, she would do cause-and-effect activities using the story read aloud during story time. Parent A and B used the internet to look up unfamiliar words. "We look up the word in the internet and it helps us say the word." Parent C stated using video stories on YouTube. "He enjoys watching the story books on YouTube." Importantly, parents were still using the activities learned to reinforce reading skills. Parent C would have her son complete a sequence foldable, provided in workshop 2, while watching video stories on YouTube.

Similarly, parents demonstrated an increased level of self-efficacy by being able to modify strategies learned to include writing and listening. Parent A reported having her son write summaries about what he read. "I also have him write about what he is reading. I think this will help him with his writing." Although this is not a strategy learned from the workshops, it confirms that parents are modifying what they know and encouraged cross curriculum learning. The same parent had her son read labels when

visiting the grocery store. "I have him read labels of stuff he wants from the grocery store before I buy it for him." "I also try to ask him what is being taught in class that day, so I can try to expand it further at home." Parent C stated having her son sequence his weekend. She used sequencing, a skill learned, with daily events not just text. Another parent stated having her son journal several days per week about his day. Later, she would have her son read his journal entry to her. This allowed for a conversation to form with her son. Most interestingly, this same parent stated sitting next to her son while he completed a journal entry just in case he needed help. "I try and help him with his writing as much as I can, so I sit with him and help him come up with ideas. Not every time, but sometimes"

Moreover, parents demonstrated a firm understanding that family engagement is developmental. At first, this did not seem to be the case. However, as the intervention progressed, parents seemed less concerned with their child's scores and more concerned with how their child was responding to parent-to-child nightly reading. "I am getting better at making time to read with my child. I know he enjoys reading with me, but I can't always make the time. I will keep doing what I can, but I do know that it's getting easier and easier." Parent B stated, "My wife and I are going to keep doing what we can. Keep up the good fight. I have all the confidence that my daughter will get better at reading." During the fourth workshop, parents discussed how they will continue to use the skills learned over the summer. One parent stated that she would make sure to have more conversations with her son's teachers and ask for help whenever possible. Another

parent expressed how she wanted more workshops. "I hope my child's teacher does something like this next year. I want to keep learning how to help my daughter."

Overcoming obstacles. Assertion 3— *Parents have overcome obstacles and continue to find resources to better assist their children in reading.*

Field notes, student responses, and post-intervention interviews with three parents provided insight on how parents overcome obstacles that may prevent them from engaging in nightly reading with their child. The following theme-related components comprise the theme which led to the assertion: (a) siblings assisted with nightly reading, (b) parents prevented child from lying about their nightly reading, (c) parents utilized a reward system to motivate child with reading, (d) parents overcame communication obstacles when communicating with teachers, and (e) parents' house-hold obligations (i.e., chores) inhibited parent-to-child nightly reading less.

As stated above, parents have utilized resources to better assist them in parent-to-child engagement. Particularly, all of the parents interviewed stated having siblings, in some form or fashion, assist their fourth grader or themselves when reading. Many of the parents in the intervention used Spanish as a primary language at home. Three parents used a combination of English and Spanish, and one parent only used English although she fluent in Spanish. Parents reported a lack of understanding when their child reads in English. Similarly, parents did not feel comfortable reading aloud in English due to fear of decoding words incorrectly. To overcome this obstacle, parents enlisted the help of older siblings as a means to translate information. If the fourth-grade student was not able to translate English text into Spanish, siblings would assist. This was done when

implementing questioning strategies learned during the workshops. Parent A expressed how her son gets frustrated because he has a difficult time answering her questions in Spanish. "He gets mad at me when I don't understand certain things in English. Especially when I ask him to translate something for me. He gets mad at me for not knowing English." Parent B stated, "At first, she reads it to us in English, and that's a problem because we don't understand the language. So now, she will translate it to us in Spanish so that we can understand what she reads and follow up appropriately with any help she may need." Also, "there is a communication disparity at home where she cannot really translate in Spanish everything she reads in English. It makes it difficult for us as parents to help her. We rely a lot on her older sister because for her it's easier to translate the material to us. Most often, she ends up helping her." Parent C stated having her son's older sister assist when she fails to understand a word. "His sister is fluent in English and Spanish, so she helps out a lot when I get stuck on something." Although there is a language obstacle, parents understand the importance of reading in English. Parents expressed how they want their children to be fluent in English and Spanish but place more importance in English.

Two of the three parents expressed their prior concern of having their children lie about their nightly reading. Prior to the intervention, they felt that their children would be passively reading and lying about what they have read. Through accountability, parents have been able to resolve this concern. Parent A reported, "Previously he would not tell me things correctly. He would lie about what he read when retelling me the story. I would know this because my husband would tell me something entirely different. Now, I feel that he is being honest with his work." With consistent parent-to-child reading and

higher accountability, trust in her son has improved. Parent B stated that he does not incentivize his daughter too much for fear of her lying. "You hear stories about kids changing their grades to get money from their parents. I don't want my daughter to be dishonest." Now, this parent uses the skills and strategies learned to help keep his daughter accountable. "If she doesn't fill in her assignment correctly, I know she did not read very well. This is the same when I ask her questions about the story. You just know." Students have become aware that their parents will be following up with questions or that there is an activity to be completed while reading. This may have contributed to the change in parent's trust.

Parents stated that implementing a reward system assists with keeping their children motivated to read, thus, preventing any student resistance from engaging in nightly reading. As stated above, prior to the intervention parents were not sure if their children were actually reading or just sitting in their rooms passively reading, or worse, lying about their reading. Additionally, some parents felt that their children were not motivated to read. They reported their children getting frustrated when asked to read. Parents found that their fourth-grade children began to look forward to reading when there was a reward system in place coupled with purpose for reading. This corroborates student statements of enjoying reading with their parents and actively inviting them to engage in parent-to-child nightly reading. A mother stated that her daughter likes reading every night, Monday through Friday. If she completed her reading practice during the week, the mother would let her daughter decide what restaurant they would visit over the weekend. Parent A stated that her son gets motivated to read now because he enjoys reading aloud to her. In addition, he receives a reward in the form of toys, visits to the

park, and free-time with devices. Parent C, similarly, used rewards to keep her son motivated to read. Parent B stated that he does not use monetary rewards but does take his daughter to the park when he sees her completing nightly reading.

Moreover, similar to what research has suggested, parents have become less timid to communicate with teachers. This is partially due to the level of trust we have developed. However, communication between parents and myself is not the extent of it. Parents have reported asking more questions to teachers, seeking advice on how to better assist their children (not just participating students but for siblings, as well), and monitoring grades and behavior. I have observed participating parents' wave and engage in conversations with teachers, myself included. Parent A stated, "At first I couldn't talk to Mrs. Smith (pseudonym). Now, I talk to her everyday after school. My son translates our conversations and I understand her better." Parent B, "I like that there is an open-line of communication. I think more would be great." This statement attests to the desire parents have to be able to communicate with teachers more. Similarly, parent C stated, "I talk to my younger son's teachers more now, but it's still hard to communicate because of my English is not so good." Parents see the value in communication but still feel that it is difficult due to the language barrier. Nonetheless, parents are engaging in two-way communication with teachers.

Although household obligations and, for some parents, work schedule are still obstacles, parents are overcoming them and becoming better at allocating time to engage in parent-to-child nightly reading. During the first workshop, parents expressed their concerns with obligations getting in the way of engaging with their child's reading. Parents simply needed to set goals and allocate time to accomplish this task. With

consistency they noticed it getting easier. "At first it was hard to put things on hold. Now I use some of the strategies while we do other activities. It has certainly gotten better." With consistent effort and modification of strategies, parents are engaging more in parent-to-child reading. Parent A stated, "I try to set a consistent time where we sit down and read together, but sometimes it's hard. I have to get dinner ready, laundry, and all that other stuff. I have noticed my son taking on more responsibility so that helps." Similarly, parent C reported challenges associated with making time to engaged in nightly reading. Her son has to attend physical therapy once-twice per week, her daughter attends dance lessons, and her oldest son plays soccer. Many parents struggle making time due to other obligations yet do their best to negotiate family engagement opportunities. By attending the workshops, they demonstrated a desire to help their children succeed. Parents are willing and motivated, despite obstacles, to improve their child's education.

Findings Based on Research Questions

This study focused on how parent involvement resulting from the implementation of four small group coaching sessions delivered by the teacher can affect reading performance of students who are below grade level. Despite language challenges, families were able to learn new skills to support their child's reading comprehension and become a "home activities teacher" (Robinson & Harris, 2014), also known as a parent-tutor. The students performing below or severely below grade level were tracked and monitored to determine if family engagement at home influenced student English Language Arts (ELA) acquisition.

Results from the analysis are discussed using the research question as a framework. Both quantitative and qualitative examples will be discussed to explain complimentary and contradictory findings.

RQ 1: How do families of students who are under-performing students in ELA perceive their roles with respect to assisting their fourth-grade children in reading? Prior to the intervention, parents believed that they were responsible for their child's education and that they were able to assist their child in nightly reading. Although there was a slight decrease in parents post-intervention responses compared to their pre-intervention responses, parents continue to believe that they are able to assist their child in nightly reading, $n = 6$. The slight decrease may be a result of parents' new knowledge of what family engagement is. Parents are moving away from reminding children to read and adopting a more engaging approach; parent-to-child nightly reading. There are still parents that find the language a challenge, but they still find ways to become involved.

Parents began and concluded the intervention with a sense of responsibility in respect to their child's reading. "I believe I am responsible for my child's learning in addition to his/her teacher." All parents, $n = 6$, selected "strongly agree" in both the pre- and post-intervention survey.

The answer to this research question was simple: all parents perceived they had an important role in their child's reading. Parents felt the same way at the end of the intervention. Parent C stated, "The teacher is not the only one responsible because they are responsible for multiple subjects and concepts. Teachers are exposed to teaching

multiple children not just mine. I focus only on her at home, however, I do agree it's a team effort." Parent A stated, "I want him to be successful." Similar responses were given by other parents. Parallel to what Lareau (1987) suggested, all parents want to see their children succeed and thus, perceive to have a major role in their child's learning, not just reading.

RQ 2: How and to what extent do families implement content specific reading skills that are taught to them? Parents have embraced the workshops and are willing to negotiate in parent-to-child nightly reading. As stated above, parents were enthusiastic to share their child's completed activities, share their positive reflections, and come up with solutions to barriers that may interrupt nightly reading. Learning the content specific reading skill and accompanying strategies increased parent' self-efficacy, motivation, and desire to engage in nightly reading with their child. These simple strategies were modified to accommodate their busy schedules. For example, on the day's parents could not designate formal time to read, they would practice learned skills using other modalities (i.e., television, life events, and comparing items at the grocery store). They were not limited by obstacles and became resourceful when needed. Additionally, parents enjoyed the activities so much that they began using them with older and younger siblings.

Parent A reported using skills and strategies during weekdays. On the days she could not formally engage in parent-to-child reading, she would closely monitor to make sure he was actively reading. Similarly, parents B and C used siblings to assist in completing nightly reading. An increase in student love for reading was also reported by

two parents. "She enjoys reading now." "I can tell he is reading more. I don't have to keep reminding him to read. His teacher also said he is doing much better in class."

Parents have become more knowledgeable in how to assist their child in reading. Their self-efficacy has improved and has contributed to students desire to read. As stated in the above section (Student Survey) students have increased their motivation to read. This can be contributed to the added family engagement. By increasing parent capacity in assisting their child with reading, their children have become more willing to read. Parents are excited and intrinsically motivated to continue with family engagement. For some, they want to continue seeing their child grow on the STAR monthly assessment, but for others they simply want their children to develop a passion for reading and maintain steady progress. Gratitude statements are as follows: "I want to thank you for teaching me these strategies. I know in the past I had no idea of how to help my children, but now I feel like I have different tools under my belt that will help me teach my son at home. Thank you very much." "Thank you for taking interest in helping our daughter. You have done so much for us and we are grateful." "Thank you for teaching me how to motivate and hold him accountable. I wish there were more teachers that care about our children as much as you do."

Parents are grateful and, most importantly, willing to participate in family engagement. For a parent, a teacher who takes interest in the success of their children transmits motivation and inspiration for continued family engagement.

To summarize, parents are implementing learned skills and strategies that are taught to them. This is evident in their discussions, artifacts shared, and gratitude.

Additionally, parents want more opportunities to learn, either English, or ways to better support their child's education.

RQ 3: How and to what extent does teaching of content specific reading skills to families of under-performing students affect respective fourth-grade students' reading performance? A repeated-measures *t*-test was conducted to determine if there was a statistically significant change in students' reading performance, as seen in Table 10. This compared student' pre- and post-test using the STAR Reading Assessment. Using student grade equivalency (GE) as a measure, students performed better in the post-test compared to the pre-test. Descriptive statistics revealed a significant difference in scores for pre-test ($M = 2.4$, $SD = 0.6$) and post-test ($M = 3.1$, $SD = 1.1$). The repeated-measure *t*-test (at an α-level equal to .05) revealed a statistically significant difference between means, $t(9) = -3.38$, $p = 0.008$. however, there are some considerations to address.

Although the analysis revealed a statistically significant difference, it is difficult to infer that this difference was solely associated to the intervention. Students were subjected to a constant, meaning that students continued to receive instruction from their classroom teacher. This too may have contributed to student increase in the post-test. Similarly, students were exposed to the test several times through progress monitoring. Although the STAR Reading Assessment is computer adaptive and utilizes different questions to measure skills, students are still exposed to similar questions as the prior month. Therefore, students may have become more comfortable taking the assessment or memorized the wording of particular question types.

The change in student reading scores cannot be solely attributed to the intervention, but what is certain, students did in fact make growth, albeit small. The small increase in mean scores still labels these students as "below grade-level". Chapter 5 will discuss future cycles of research that may increase struggling readers' scores in a way that can increase their reading performance faster.

Moreover, there were positive feedback from students in respect to their participation in the study. Students reported an increase in motivation. They look forward to reading, particularly when their parent was engaging in parent-to-child nightly reading. Additionally, students felt more comfortable in taking the STAR Reading Assessment. Prior to the intervention, students rushed to finish the test. As the intervention progressed, students realized that their parents were monitoring their scores. Thus, they spent more time taking their test. Student statements include: "I need to beat last month's score"; "I feel more comfortable taking the test". Similarly, when students failed to increase their scores, they demonstrated frustration.

To summarize, the answer to research question three was as follows: students did in fact increase their GE scores between pre- and post-tests, as represented by the repeated-measures *t*-test. However, the intervention cannot take all the credit for this growth. Additionally, students increased their motivation to succeed in the assessment. They demonstrated an increase in conscientious test-taking by taking their time and demonstrating either excitement or frustration when the test concluded. Students' motivation increased as a result of parent accountability.

RQ 4: What are student's perceptions regarding family-to-child nightly engagement? Student growth on the STAR Reading Assessment was exciting to see, but

it is important to measure students' perceptions in respect to family-to-child nightly reading. It was evident that students started taking their assessments with increased seriousness. Knowing their parents were maintaining a close eye on their scores motivated them to do their best. Students enjoyed the activities their parents were employing at home. Most importantly they enjoyed working with their parents. Students reported (Table 12) agreement when asked if they enjoyed working with their parents with their reading activities, $n = 10$. Similarly, when asked if they had the chance to continue reading with their parents, they agreed ($M = 4.3$).

It is clear that students desire to further develop their reading skills through nightly parent-to-child reading, but contrary to what the repeated-measures *t*-test revealed (when comparing student pre- and post-assessments), students reported feeling neutral when asked if the time spent engaging in nightly reading with their parents helped them increase their reading skills ($M = 3.8$). Although the analysis revealed students two-tenths away from agreeing, it is still firmly placed in the neutral scale. Chapter 5 will discuss future cycles of research where this can be addressed.

Overall, students enjoyed working with their parents and would continue this form of family engagement despite not feeling a strong connection between time spent with parents and their reading development. This could be attributed to the desire of having their parents demonstrate an interest in their education. Additionally, they may enjoy reading with their parents because it provides an opportunity to engage in dialogue or a means to feeling intrinsic reward. In any case, more research must be done to increase student's perception in respect to their parent's engagement attributing to their reading success.

Summary

This chapter provided information on the procedures taken when analyzing both quantitative and qualitative data. There were interesting findings throughout the intervention process, as revealed by the analysis. Quantitative data supported, and at times, contradicted qualitative data. Yet, one thing is certain, students appreciated and desire having their parents or caretakers engaged in their education. The intervention helped parents gain skills and strategies to assist their children from home. This increased student motivation, passion for reading, and their overall GE scores using the STAR Reading Assessment. Finally, the last portion of this chapter provided answers to this study using each research question as a framework. Chapter five will discuss opportunities to improve on this study and possible future cycles of research.

CHAPTER 5

Conclusions

"At the end of the day, the most overwhelming key to a child's success is the positive involvement of parents."

—Jane D. Hull

At the beginning of my doctoral learning and research journey, I encountered a disconnect between teachers and parents. I spent many hours contemplating various ways to bridge the involvement gap between these two stakeholders. How can I get more parents to engage in their children's learning? How can I increase student achievement and growth through family engagement? To be honest, I was primarily concerned with the latter, as there is an overwhelming emphasis on student achievement and growth in my situated context. To me, it made sense! If I showed parents how to help their children, students would naturally increase reading proficiency.

Through rigorous reconnaissance and planning, I developed an action plan to address my problem of practice. Through further planning and collaborating with committee members, something fascinating happened—my paradigm began to shift from teaching parents to a more collaborative mindset, one where teachers and parents would work together. From an extensive literature review, I knew that simply teaching parents how to do a task was not sufficient in generating an authentic desire to invest time in family engagement. Thus, I developed the workshop framework of delivery which had a networking component. Families possess tons of lived experiences that could be shared and utilized to effectively negotiate family engagement. This was the key! I knew I had

to give parents a voice and help them build self-efficacy and education capital to motivate them to help their children.

Although the networking component was vital to my workshops, it did not play the sole role in, what I think, was the success of the project. Parents needed to know how their children were doing compared to their peers. Thus, a data analysis component was embedded into my framework. Coupled with content-specific skills and goal setting, parents could build their capacity in assisting their children with nightly reading. This entire process began to further shift my paradigm. I no longer worried about making students go from "severely below grade-level" to "on-level". Instead, I focused on building a level of trust among parents, a trust that would flourish into a team. Without embarking on this journey, I would have never had such a radical paradigm shift.

The purpose of this study focused on how family engagement resulting from the implementation of four small group workshops delivered by the teacher (and researcher) could affect reading performance of students who were below grade level. Despite my paradigm shift, I still fulfilled the purpose of this study. With the help of parent and student participants, I confirmed the effects on student reading scores. Using the methods discussed in Chapter 3, I was able to determine the extent to which the workshops I designed were useful. The four research questions guiding this study were successfully answered (Chapter 4) but still left one unanswered question. What do we do from here? In the following sections of this chapter I will discuss implications for practice, implications for future research, limitations of this study, and personal lessons learned.

Implications for Practice

Creating a school environment where parents feel welcomed and valued makes a lot of sense, considering it presents a model for increasing parent-to-child engagement. Nevertheless, schools and teachers lack the structures for this to occur, thus creating a barrier in implementation. Prior to embarking in this action research project, Tom Williams Elementary School (TWES) established family engagement events in the form of Fall Family Festival, Coffee and Conversation, Open House, and Story and Snack. Although these events did align with family engagement components, they failed to empower parents to participate in parent-to-child *academic* engagement.

Data from this action research study provide evidence that parents feel a sense of responsibility to their children's education. Parents desire involvement when it directly influences their capacity to participate in their child's education. Although having events that invite parents to the school builds community, it fails to build parent self-efficacy and capital to become an active member in assisting their children with learning.

Findings from this study provide the following implications for practice:

- School-family engagement structures need to build parents' capacity to participate in parent-to-child academic engagement. There needs to be a shift in the way schools view family engagement. Family engagement needs to be student-centered, focusing on student and parent learning, not merely a social or fundraising event.
- Teachers need to share student data (test scores) and compare them to typical peers. Parents do not know what a particular score indicates if

there is not a comparison to what the child should be scoring. This needs to be done on a monthly basis using progress monitoring and goal setting.

- School support and professional development are essential factors in the continuation and expansion of parent workshops. However, care must be taken to not have another mandate required by the teacher. Thus, school leadership teams should facilitate the workshop design and development in conjunction with teachers. This could be done during a staff development day, prep buy-out, or site-based collaboration time (SBCT).
- Parent workshops need to be flexible and address topics and skills that parents want to learn. For this reason, there must be a level of autonomy between grade levels in regards to content-specific skills.
- Using the workshop framework of delivery to increase parents' capacity to participate in parent-to-child engagement has the potential to increase student academic scores, but more importantly, generates a level of community between teacher and parent that has numerous benefits such as increased attendance, knowing students and parents at a deeper level, increasing student love for learning, etc.
- The partnership between parents and teachers should be student-centered and academically driven. For this reason, initiatives should include more than strategies for monitoring student reading. Instead, workshops should facilitate the active reading between parent and child. This will enhance the relationships and passion for reading between parent and child outside

of the school, thus, extending every opportunity for the development of reading.

The intervention for this study (parent workshops) was grounded in participants needs and what related research suggested. Despite there being similar family engagement designs and program recommendations, developing a simple-to-use framework and intervention was key to minimizing teacher responsibility. There is much required of teachers—simply adding another taxing initiative did not seem fair.

TWES would benefit by implementing this form of family engagement across grade-levels. Currently, our school community is strong. Teachers and administration are well-liked among parents, but more can be done. I want teachers at TWES to feel the level of compassion and appreciation that parents have shown me throughout this intervention. This level of rapport, almost friendship-like, is what will separate us from having a strong school community to becoming a team where parents are authentically involved in decision making and actively participating in student-centered learning.

Implications for Research

This cycle of research is not the conclusion of my endeavor to bridge the gap between school and parents. It is quite the opposite, in fact. Results from this study have inclined me to seek further avenues to increase student-centered and parent-to-child engagement.

Because students showed statistically significant growth—albeit small—in reading, it leaves me wondering if it was truly a direct affect from the parent workshops. I would like to develop a study that has a direct connection from student scores to parent content-specific skills learned. For this to occur, my school would have to employ the

use of a more robust progress monitoring tool such as Evaluate. This assessment allows teachers to pinpoint a skill to a particular question, something STAR Reading Assessment fails to do. For example, if a content-specific skill was "compare and contrast", I would be able to track how a particular student did on compare and contrast question types over time. This would directly correlate workshop content to student growth on that particular item, not overall grade equivalency as found in this study.

Furthermore, I would like to conduct a similar, yet refined, study but utilizing more participants. I do not feel that my school is ready to incorporate all grade-levels into utilizing my framework, but I do believe that intermediate grades would be able to do so. We could pave the road to having a school-wide initiative by having third, fourth, and fifth grade teachers present parent workshops for their particular classrooms or grade levels. A study of this size would be able to yield better reliability and generate increased family and community partnership, not to mention increased parent buy-in and parent leaders.

The last implication for future research involves longitudinal data collection that tracks student reading performance over the course of several academic school years. This will allow me to determine if the continuation of parent workshops contribute to student reading achievement throughout grade levels. Ideally, I would like to track students from third-grade to fifth-grade, while maintaining continuous workshops for respective parents. I do not want to only measure student scores, but also parent perceptions and development of self-efficacy in regards to their capabilities to participate in parent-to-student academic engagement.

There are many implications for future research. However, my next cycle of research extending from this study will be using a longer time frame, perhaps one entire school year. It will utilize the workshop framework of delivery to invite all parents of one classroom to attend monthly workshops. This study will utilize Evaluate as the primary assessment to monitor student beginning-of-year, middle-of-year, and end-of-year scores. Additionally, there will be monthly progress monitoring. The purpose of this study will be to connect content-specific skills taught to parents to student mastery of that particular skill. These workshops will be centered on the student's academics utilizing parents as an active participant in their child's learning. The key emphasis here is to shift from parents monitoring their child's reading to actively participating with their child in nightly reading utilizing purpose and intent for each reading session. How and to what extent do parents' knowledge of content-specific skills affect student mastery of respective content specific skills?

Limitations

There were several limitations to this study that may have contributed to the impact and reliability of the findings. One limitation that should be noted relates to the sample sizes of the participants for parents and students, $n = 6$ and $n = 10$, respectively. The number of participants was small compared to the number of students TWES serves, over 700. Thus, making the assertions and generalizations difficult to accurately represent the actual population of parents and students at TWES.

The second limitation relates to the amount of time allocated to the intervention process. To meet my graduation deadline, I had to keep my study within a semester time window. This prevented me from recruiting more participants and extending my data

collection methods. Data from fourth-grade teachers who were non-participants could have yielded insight on how students' academic and social behavior have changed throughout the course of the intervention, and how parent communication between participating parents and non-participating teachers have changed. Additionally, more parents could have been interviewed to generate a deeper breadth of corroboration or contradictory evidence to the findings.

The third limitation of this study is related to the time I have spent serving TWES. In the 2016-2017 school year, TWES was selected for Turnaround Zone (TAZ) due to its consistent low academic performance. This required the implementation of a new administrative team and revamping of the schools' structures. For TWES, it meant receiving over 90% new staff. This is where I come in. The principal selected to take over TWES selected me as one of the new teachers to join the TWES family. For parents, this meant their community would have a new, yet unfamiliar, group of individuals educating their children. This proved to be a limitation when attempting to recruit parents to participate in my study. I was an unfamiliar teacher that had not yet built a relationship with the community. I believe that this was the reason as to why my participant size was so low.

Moreover, student growth, as discussed in Chapter 4, cannot be solely attributed to the intervention. Students were still receiving classroom instruction in conjunction to the intervention. Thus, it is not fair to assume that the intervention was the catalyst for student growth. Equally, students were subjected to the same reading assessment overtime. This may have generated a test-re-test bias. Although the assessment used different questions to measure student growth, the similarity in question types

(particularly wording) could have given students a slight advantage in responding accurately. These limitations are constants – ones that are difficult to overcome given the population under study.

The final limitation relates to the reliability of my survey constructs. As mentioned in Chapter 4, I deleted one item for two of the four constructs in my parent survey instrument because I did not find them relevant to the respective construct. Though, it is important to note that the two constructs had a reliability coefficient of over .70 prior to the deletion of the item. Reliability coefficients for three of the four constructs of the parent survey were well within the acceptable range for quality research, but one construct (perception) did not have acceptable reliability, .57. This could be due to the low number of items within that construct (three items) and the low participant size, $n = 6$.

Personal Lessons Learned

This action research project has allowed me to develop many skills and practices that I never thought I could attain. Through coursework, I have learned the essence of true change. I have been able to diagnose a problem down to its very root, explore pertaining scholarly research and theoretical frameworks, plan and implement an intervention, and evaluate its effectiveness. I would like to say that all of my learning and experiences came in a smooth and trouble-free manner, but I would be lying. This has been a learning process, one that required a lot of time and dedication, in addition to a few setbacks and unforeseen trials and tribulations. Most importantly, through several cycles of research, I have built confidence in engaging in action research. I look forward

to develop my skills and understanding of research as I continue to engage in future cycles of research.

Prior to enrolling in the doctoral program at ASU, I felt inspired and motivated to begin the next phase of my education. Soon after, I began to feel overwhelmed. As a full-time student and a full-time teacher, I found myself struggling to find balance between my course work, career, and family obligations. It left me asking, "Is this worth it?" and "Will I succeed?" I had to refocus and remind myself why I was doing this. In short, I knew that parents desired opportunities to build their understanding of ways they could better assist in their children's success. I knew that I wanted to help these parents. I knew I did not want to sit idle on this problem of practice. I would like to say that these reminders were enough to keep me focused, but they were not.

Attempting to comprehend a problem and develop a method of addressing a problem of practice is something that takes great focus and dedication. I have learned to be patient and flexible in my learning and practice. The adage, *Rome was not built in a day*, holds true. I learned the value of patience through the developmental nature of trust-building and relationship-building between individuals.

Similarly, the action research process is a complicated and messy negotiation that requires patience and flexibility. I had to learn from my mistakes and take my time when addressing possible solutions or alternatives. At times, I felt as if nothing was going as intended. Instead of forcing an intervention, idea, or task, I learned to reflect in the moment. I reminded myself that this study was not supposed to be for me, but rather for the parents I serve. It is very easy to get frustrated or disillusioned when something that you have planned and designed fails to go according to plan. However, in this moment of

spontaneity comes an opportunity for learning. For me, this moment proved to be of significant value to my study. If I could send a message to myself during the intervention process, I would say, "Kevin, stop trying to see results right now. Allow it to be developmental and focus on building trust with parents."

Moreover, I have learned the value of time and the important role it plays in conducting quality action research. When I realized my participant size would be significantly smaller than what I originally intended, I felt defeated. I was worried about not making an impact and skewing my results. There was little to be done prior to the commencement of my workshops, but for future cycles of research, I would allocate double the time in the recruitment process to ensure adequate participant size.

Additionally, I underestimated the time needed for parents to complete the pre-survey. I thought they could complete an online survey, but given their limited technology use, I was incorrect. Consequently, I had to provide a hard-copy survey during the second workshop as I was not prepared for this to happen. However, this was not the extent of this setback. Some parents were not inclined to complete the survey, while others had a difficult time despite the survey being in Spanish, their primary language. I learned to expect the unexpected and to plan for the worst-case scenario. This leads me back to time. If I would have spent more time piloting my survey and allocating sufficient time for parents to complete the survey, I might have been able to prevent this setback.

Having patience and planning additional time are the two main lessons I have learned throughout my journey, but not the extent of them. Here are some of the things I have learned about completing an action research project:

- Use cycles of research to understand the situated problem deeper. This will assist in the effective development and implementation of an intervention.
- Do not fear scholarly research. Yes, it can seem daunting to read text that, at times, seems dry and dense, but it is a useful way to fully understand a problem.
- Document scholarly research and organize them in a Word document. This will facilitate retrieval and citations at a later date.
- Action research is not a punch-in, punch-out negotiation. You will find yourself constantly thinking about your study. Carry a note-pad and pencil to document random moments of reflection or inspiration.
- Spend time building trust with your participants. Without their trust and full commitment, the quality of your findings may become questionable.
- Review and test findings at multiple times. Share these findings with colleagues to ensure accurate interpretations.
- Talk about your action research project with whomever will listen. This is important to break away from "tunnel vision" and see things in a new perspective.
- Read over your notes and work to maintain a consistent level of understanding. Action research is a time-consuming process and it is easy to forget important details.

- Find inspiration and love for your work. This will help maintain focus and propel you to the finish line.
- Continue to read scholarly research throughout your action research project. Literature review is not limited to the reconnaissance phase of action research. Much to the opposite, you want to stay relevant with your topic and develop inspiration for future cycles of research.
- Do not be disheartened when the results you wanted are not achieved. Instead, look deeper and find evidence of the actual impact you made.
- Finally, thank your participants, colleagues, and family and friends for being an essential role to your study, either in allowing you to learn from them or inspiring you to complete your study.

I have learned a great deal from this process and I am certain that the next cycle of inquiry will bring new lessons learned. As mentioned above, there are several avenues I would like to venture on to extend this study. One thing is certain, my paradigm will no longer be solely focused on student growth. Instead, I will focus on the parents and understand that student growth is developmental. The more parents and families participate in parent-to-child (student-centered) engagement, the increased probability students will succeed academically.

Final Thoughts – A Shift in Paradigm

In my experience, as an elementary teacher and in conducting this study, schools and school districts need to shift their focus from solving problems and getting results as fast as possible to a more authentic and practical system. Continuously, schools

implement new curriculum, programs, mandates, and the like, to address a problem (usually focusing on student growth and achievement), yet they fail to see a powerful ally – families. Schools need to implement a supportive infrastructure that builds capacity and networking opportunities for families to participate in parent-to-child (student-centered) family engagement. We must stop focusing on the fastest way in achieving student growth and proficiency and begin concentrating on the families in a genuine and authentic way. Taking the time and effort to establish a supportive infrastructure will produce more than just student growth over time, it will build a strong community between all of the important stakeholders influencing student success. I invite you to begin talking to parents, listen to them, learn from them, and become a collaborative team – a united coalition for student success.

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APPENDIX A

PRE- AND POST-PARENT SURVEY

Introduction

I am Kevin Chamorro, a doctoral student in the Mary Lou Fulton Teacher's College at Arizona State University. My doctoral focus is on home-based parent-child involvement as it relates to reading acquisition and comprehension skills.

The purpose of this research study is to examine your perceptions on how you help your child with reading. The data collected from this survey will be used in a dissertation, presentations, and publications. Results may be released to my employer, organizations, participants, and schools as appropriate however, your name will not be shared.

Your participation is voluntary. If you choose not to participate, answer one or more of the questions, or withdraw from the survey at any time, there will be no penalty whatsoever. You must be 18 years of age or older to participate.

This survey questionnaire will be administered two times throughout the duration of this study. Participants should expect to take approximately 15 minutes to complete the 31 questions.

Only the primary investigator (PI) and the Co-PI will have access to the data. The data will be stored on a password-protected computer for four years. Any published quotes will be anonymous.

Verbal consent will be obtained from all participants and no written consent forms will be completed or stored. I would like to thank you for your participation.

If you have any questions or concerns please contact me at 702-324-0851 or email me at kchamorr@asu.edu.

Instruction:

Please plan to spend 15 minutes to complete this survey. You will select one option for each question by circling the appropriate number.

5 = Strongly Agree
4 = Agree
3 = Neutral
2 = Disagree
1 = Strongly Disagree

Parent Perception

1. I believe I am responsible for my child's learning in addition to his/her teacher.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

2. I am motivated to help my child at home with his/her learning (homework, reading, math, and writing).

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

3. When my child needs help with reading homework, I am able to help him/her.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

Home Environment

4. My child has a quiet place to do homework and engage in nightly reading.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

5. My child has his/her own collection of books.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

6. I read while my child is reading.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

7. I ask my child questions about his/her nightly reading.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

8. I monitor my child's nightly reading.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

9. I monitor my child's homework.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

10. I engage in meaningful conversation with my child about his/her day.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

11. I engage in meaningful conversation with my child about his/her learning.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

12. My child has a quiet place to read.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

Obstacles

13. There are obstacles that prevent me from getting more involved with my child's education.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

14. My work schedule prevents me from participating in my child's education.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

15. Being limited English speaking prevents me from helping my child with his/her nightly reading.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

16. My child gets upset when I try and help him/her with homework.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

17. My child gets upset when I try and help him/her with nightly reading.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

18. The academic language used in homework assignments prevents me from helping my child with his/her nightly reading.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

19. The homework instructions are confusing.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

20. Sometimes I feel that I cannot help my child with his/her learning.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

Satisfaction

21. I am satisfied with the way I help my child with his/her learning.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

22. I am satisfied with the teacher's ability to help my child with his/her learning.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

23. I am satisfied with the school's ability to help my child with his/her learning.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

24. I am satisfied with the level of communication I have with my child's teacher.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

Background

25. Who is completing this survey?

Mother	Father	Other

26. What is the primary language spoken at home? For example, what language do you speak to your child most frequently?

English	Spanish	Other

27. What is your ethnicity? Please circle one.

Caucasian	African American	Hispanic/Latino
Native American	Asian	Other

28. What is your highest level of education?

Some High School	High School Diploma	GED	Trade School
Some College	College Graduate	Master's Degree	Doctoral Degree

29. How many children do you have?

30. Do your children live with you?

Yes	No	Other

This completes the survey!
I want to thank you for your participation. Please feel free to contact me with any questions or concerns at 702-324-0851 or email me at Kchamorr@asu.edu.

Encuesta Para Padres

Introduction

El propósito de este estudio de investigación es examinar sus percepciones sobre cómo ayuda a su hijo a leer. Los datos recopilados de esta encuesta se usarán en disertaciones, presentaciones y publicaciones. Los resultados pueden ser divulgados a mi empleador, organizaciones, participantes y escuelas, según corresponda; sin embargo, su nombre no será compartido.

Su participación es voluntaria Si decide no participar, responde una o más de las preguntas o se retira de la encuesta en cualquier momento, no habrá penalización alguna. Debe tener 18 años o más para participar.

Este cuestionario de la encuesta se administrará dos veces durante la duración de este estudio. Los participantes deben esperar tomar aproximadamente 15 minutos para completar las 30 preguntas.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact me at 702-324-0851 or email me at kchamorr@asu.edu.

Instruction:

Please plan to spend 15 minutes to complete this survey. You will select one option for each question by circling the appropriate number.

5 = Totalmente de acuerdo
4 = De Acuerdo
3 = Neutral
2 = Desacuerdo
1 = Muy en desacuerdo

Percepción de los padres

Esta sección se relaciona con su percepción con respecto a su rol con la participación académica de padres a hijos.

1. Creo que soy responsable del aprendizaje de mi hijo además de su maestro.

Totalmente de acuerdo	De acuerdo	Neutral	Desacuerdo	Totalmente de desacuerdo

2. Estoy motivado para ayudar a mi hijo en casa con su aprendizaje (tarea, lectura, matemáticas y escritura).

Totalmente de acuerdo	De acuerdo	Neutral	Desacuerdo	Totalmente de desacuerdo

3. Cuando mi hijo necesita ayuda para leer la tarea, puedo ayudarlo.

Totalmente de acuerdo	De acuerdo	Neutral	Desacuerdo	Totalmente de desacuerdo

Ambiente en el hogar

Esta sección se refiere al entorno del hogar de su hijo.

4. Mi hijo tiene un lugar tranquilo para hacer la tarea.

Totalmente de acuerdo	De acuerdo	Neutral	Desacuerdo	Totalmente de desacuerdo

5. Mi hijo tiene su propia colección de libros.

Totalmente de acuerdo	De acuerdo	Neutral	Desacuerdo	Totalmente de desacuerdo

6. Mientras mi hijo está leyendo, leo mi propio libro, revista, periódico, etc.

Totalmente de acuerdo	De acuerdo	Neutral	Desacuerdo	Totalmente de desacuerdo

7. Le hago preguntas a mi hijo sobre su lectura nocturna.

Totalmente de acuerdo	De acuerdo	Neutral	Desacuerdo	Totalmente de desacuerdo

8. Superviso las lecturas nocturnas de mi hijo.

Totalmente de acuerdo	De acuerdo	Neutral	Desacuerdo	Totalmente de desacuerdo

9. Superviso la tarea de mi hijo revisándola todas las noches.

Totalmente de acuerdo	De acuerdo	Neutral	Desacuerdo	Totalmente de desacuerdo

10. Entablar una conversación significativa con mi hijo al hablar sobre su día.

Totalmente de acuerdo	De acuerdo	Neutral	Desacuerdo	Totalmente de desacuerdo

11. Participo en una conversación significativa con mi hijo al hablar sobre su aprendizaje.

Totalmente de acuerdo	De acuerdo	Neutral	Desacuerdo	Totalmente de desacuerdo

12. Mi hijo tiene un lugar tranquilo para leer.

Totalmente de acuerdo	De acuerdo	Neutral	Desacuerdo	Totalmente de desacuerdo

Obstáculos

Esta sección se refiere a los desafíos que puede tener al participar en la participación académica de padres a hijos.

13. Otras obligaciones (tareas del hogar, diligencias, escuela, etc.) me impiden involucrarme más en la educación de mi hijo.

Totalmente de acuerdo	De acuerdo	Neutral	Desacuerdo	Totalmente de desacuerdo

14. Mi trabajo me impide involucrarme más en la educación de mi hijo.

Totalmente de acuerdo	De acuerdo	Neutral	Desacuerdo	Totalmente de desacuerdo

15. El idioma inglés me impide ayudar a mi hijo con su lectura nocturna.

Totalmente de acuerdo	De acuerdo	Neutral	Desacuerdo	Totalmente de desacuerdo

16. Mi hijo se enoja cuando trato de ayudarlo con la tarea.

Totalmente de acuerdo	De acuerdo	Neutral	Desacuerdo	Totalmente de desacuerdo

17. Mi hijo se enoja cuando trato de ayudarlo a leer.

Totalmente de acuerdo	De acuerdo	Neutral	Desacuerdo	Totalmente de desacuerdo

18. El lenguaje utilizado en las tareas asignadas me impide ayudar a mi hijo con su lectura nocturna.

Totalmente de acuerdo	De acuerdo	Neutral	Desacuerdo	Totalmente de desacuerdo

19. Las instrucciones de tarea suelen ser confusas.

Totalmente de acuerdo	De acuerdo	Neutral	Desacuerdo	Totalmente de desacuerdo

20. A veces siento que no puedo ayudar a mi hijo en su aprendizaje.

Totalmente de acuerdo	De acuerdo	Neutral	Desacuerdo	Totalmente de desacuerdo

Satisfacción

Esta sección se relaciona con su satisfacción con respecto a su nivel de participación académica de padres a hijos y apoyo de la escuela y los maestros.

21. Estoy satisfecho con la forma en que ayudo a mi hijo con su lectura.

Totalmente de acuerdo	De acuerdo	Neutral	Desacuerdo	Totalmente de desacuerdo

22. Estoy satisfecho con la habilidad del maestro para ayudar a mi hijo con su lectura.

Totalmente de acuerdo	De acuerdo	Neutral	Desacuerdo	Totalmente de desacuerdo

23. Estoy satisfecho con la capacidad de la escuela de ayudar a mi hijo con su lectura.

Totalmente de acuerdo	De acuerdo	Neutral	Desacuerdo	Totalmente de desacuerdo

24. Estoy satisfecho con el nivel de comunicación que tengo con el maestro de mi hijo.

Totalmente de acuerdo	De acuerdo	Neutral	Desacuerdo	Totalmente de desacuerdo

Preguntas de Fondo

25. Quién está completando esta encuesta?

Madre	Padre	Otro

26. Cuál es el idioma principal que se habla en casa? Por ejemplo, ¿con qué idioma le habla a su hijo con más frecuencia?

Ingles	Espanol	Otro

27. Cuál es su estado civil?

Caucasian	Afroamericano	Hispanic/Latino
Nativo Americano	Asiatico	Otro

28. Cual es tu nivel más alto de educación?

Algun escuela secundaria	Diploma de escuela secundaria	GED	Escuela de Comercio
Algun Universidad	Gruadado de la Universidad	Maestría	Doctorado

29. Cuántos hijos tiene?

30. Tus hijos viven contigo?

Si	No	Otro

This completes the survey!

I want to thank you for your participation. Please feel free to contact me with any questions or concerns at 702-324-0851 or email me at Kchamorr@asu.edu.

APPENDIX B

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Introduction (provide participant with recruitment consent form)

I am Kevin Chamorro. I am a doctoral student in the Mary Lou Fulton Teacher's College at Arizona State University. I work as a fourth-grade teacher at Paradise Elementary School. My doctoral focus is on home-based parent-child involvement as it relates to reading acquisition and comprehension skills.

The purpose of this study is to add to the research on the perspectives and practices of limited-or non-English speaking parents in respect to how they assist their children in nightly reading practice. The data collected from this interview will be used in a dissertation, publications, and presentations. Additionally, the results will be used to determine parent workshops that can be used to increase at home parent-child involvement in nightly reading practice.

This is a one-time interview. Participants will be asked to answer a set of interview questions. It should take approximately 15 minutes to conduct each interview. The interviews will be audio recorded and transcribed. There will be no interventions or lab procedures. The interviews will be held at Paradise Elementary School in room 32.

Additionally, there will be no compensation for participation and there are no foreseeable risks for participating in this study. There are no direct benefits to participants, but they may benefit from reflecting on current strategies and practices of home-based parent-child involvement in nightly reading practice.

Only the PI and the Co-PI will have access to the data. The data will be stored on a password-protected computer for four years. Only the research team will have access to the recordings. The recordings will be deleted immediately after being transcribed and any published quotes will be anonymous.

Verbal consent will be obtained from all participants and no written consent forms will be completed or stored.

Are you willing to participate in the survey and have your interview recorded and transcribed?

Questions (Parents)

Interview Questions for non-English Speaking Parents Assistance and Perceptions of Fourth Grade Reading Strategies

1. How do you assist your child in learning to read? How do you help her/him to understand what she/he is reading?
2. How much time do you dedicate to supporting your child's reading development at home each night?
3. What factors or obligations prevent you from supporting your child's learning to understand what she/he is reading?
4. Do you feel that being a non-English speaker affects your ability to assist your child in helping her/him to understand what she/he is reading? If so, how?
5. What are your views on helping your child read?
6. How do you motivate, reward, and hold your child accountable for their nightly reading practice?
7. What can teachers do to better assist you in your parent-child involvement? What types of workshops would you consider to be most effective?
8. How have the workshops helped you monitor your child's nightly reading?
9. How will you continue to use your new knowledge of reading strategies/skills to continue helping your child engage in nightly reading?
10. What comments or questions do you have?

Closing:

Thank you and your child for participating in these interviews.

APPENDIX C

STUDENT SURVEY

Introduction

I am Kevin Chamorro, a doctoral student in the Mary Lou Fulton Teacher's College at Arizona State University. My doctoral focus is on home-based parent-child involvement as it relates to reading acquisition and comprehension skills.

The purpose of this survey is to examine the perceptions held by students that are 'severely below grade level' regarding their participation in nightly reading practice. Data collected from this survey will be used in a dissertation, presentations, and publications. Results may be released to my employer, organizations, participants, and schools as appropriate however, your name will not be shared.

This is a one-time survey questionnaire. Participants should expect to take approximately 10 minutes to complete this eight-question survey. Additionally, there will be no compensation for participation and there are no foreseeable risks for participating in this study.

Only the primary investigator (PI) and the Co-PI will have access to the data. The data will be stored on a password-protected computer for four years. Any published quotes will be anonymous.

Verbal consent will be obtained from all participants and no written consent forms will be completed or stored. I would like to thank you for your participation.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact me at 702-324-0851 or email me at Mr.Chamorro1900@yahoo.com.

Instruction:

Please plan to spend 10 minutes to complete this survey. You will select one option for each question by circling the appropriate number.

5 = Strongly Agree
4 = Agree
3 = Neutral
2 = Disagree
1 = Strongly Disagree

Student Perception

1. I enjoyed working with my parent/s with my reading activities.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

2. I found the time spent with my parent/s helpful in increasing my reading skills.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

3. If I had the chance to continue working with my parent/s in my reading, I would.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

4. Because of the extra reading practice with my parent/s, I felt comfortable taking the Star Reading Assessment.

Strongly Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly Disagree

5. How much time do you and your parent/s spend on your nightly reading practice?

_____ minutes per day.	_____ days per week.

6. In your own words, what are some things that might prevent you from doing your nightly reading practice?

7. In your own words, what are some things that might prevent your parent/s from helping you with your nightly reading practice?

8. How do you get motivated to begin your nightly reading practice?

Closing:

This completes the survey. Thank you for your time.

APPENDIX D

PARENT CONSENT FORM

Dear Parent:

My name is Kevin Chamorro and I am a doctoral student in the Mary Lou Fulton Teachers College (MLFTC) at Arizona State University (ASU). I am working under the direction of Dr. Craig Mertler, a faculty member in MLFTC. We are conducting a research study on parent's perception of reading comprehension strategies and how they are used to support their child's reading skills from home. The purpose of this study is to better understand the current situation with respect to how you assist your child in his/her reading comprehension as a home educator.

As a participant in this study you will be asked to attend informative workshops, a total of four lasting 60 minutes each, at your child's school. The workshops will begin in February and end in May allowing one workshop per month. These workshops will assist you in helping your child from home. These workshops are intended to increase your knowledge and practice as a parent teacher. You will be able to understand how to interpret Star test scores, understand reading strategies for struggling readers, and utilize Accelerated Reader to select appropriate books. I will keep an observation journal as a form of data gathering. The purpose of this journal is to retain important information for conversations we might have during our workshop seminars.

Additionally, you may be asked to attend an interview concerning your knowledge, experiences, attitudes, and beliefs about reading with your child. The interview will take 20-35 minutes to complete. I would like to audio record this interview. The interview will not be recorded without your permission. Please let me know if you do not want the interview to be recorded; you also can change your mind after the interview starts, just let me know. Additionally, two surveys will be administered for completion, one in the beginning of the study, and one at the end. This survey will measure your perception on parent-to-child involvement. Lastly, your child will be given a survey to measure perception regarding their experience with nightly parent-to-child involvement.

Your participation in this study is voluntary. If you choose not to participate or withdraw from the study at any time, there will be no penalty whatsoever. You must be 18 years of age or older to participate.

The benefit to participation is the opportunity for you to reflect on and think more about reading comprehension strategies parents use with their young readers as home educators. Interview responses will also inform future work and allow me to better understand the perceptions of parents as home educators. There are no foreseeable risks or discomforts to your participation. The data will be stored in a password protected computer and a locked file cabinet for a duration

of four years. The audio recordings obtained during the interview will be deleted upon transcription and identifiers will be removed.

Your responses will be confidential. Results from this study may be used in reports, presentations, or publications but your name will not be used.

If you have any questions concerning the research study, please contact the research team – Dr. Craig Mertler at Craig.Mertler@asu.edu or (602) 543-2829 or Kevin Chamorro at Kchamorr@asu.edu or (702) 324-0851.
Thank you,

Kevin Chamorro, Doctoral Student
Craig Mertler, Associate Professor

Please let me know if you wish to be part of the study.

If you have any questions about your rights as a participant in this research, or if you feel you have been placed at risk, you can contact the Chair of Human Subjects Institutional Review Board through the Arizona State University (ASU) Office of Research Integrity and Assurance at (480) 965-6788.